

Challenges Regarding Implementation of the Redeployment Policy in Limpopo Province, South Africa

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ABSTRACT This paper investigated the challenges regarding the implementation of redeployment policy in the Limpopo Province, in South Africa. The objective of the paper was to explore the challenges facing redeployed educators. This paper used a qualitative approach. A thematic approach was used in analysing the qualitative data from the interviews. Five educators who were affected by redeployment and six school principals were purposively sampled for the study. The paper revealed many challenges which redeployed educators face. The researchers recommended that all principals tasked with redeployment in different schools should adequately follow the right procedures set for the implementation of redeployment policy. In addition these principals must communicate the information well to all educators in their schools.

INTRODUCTION

Redeployment means the removal of over-staffed schools to understaffed schools. This is done to bring equity in schools in as far as staffing is concerned. Recruitment of new teachers is done through provinces but sometimes lack of funding is the problem. In South Africa new teachers are automatically placed if they have been funded by Funza Lushaka. However, a number of new teachers prefer to be placed in semi-urban areas. The policy of educator redeployment was adopted in 1997. This was as a result of the imbalances between white schools and black schools. It was therefore necessary to redistribute available resources equitably (Department of Education (DoE) 2005).

Redeployment is not only used in South Africa but also used in other countries. This concept is used across the private and public sectors. Almost all companies use redeployment in order to achieve equity (Naiman 2000). However, redeployment has its own challenges. The following are some of them: resistance to relocate, lack of trust and lack of administration capacity.

The Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) of South Africa adopted the policy of rationalisation and educator redeployment in February 1997 (ELRC 2001). This was done, because of great imbalances between the White schools and Black schools. There was an urgent need to redistribute the available human

and physical resources more equitably. According to Nmutandani (2009), the government of South Africa implemented this policy to ensure equity in the provision of education, which includes the appointment of educators to schools. The need for this policy is the result of a large proportion of the education budget being spent on educators' salaries, with very little left to improve education.

Redeployment is not a concept and a strategy that is uniquely South African. It is also not a tool that is exclusively used in the education sector, but across the spectrum of private and public sectors (Bougardt 2011). Redeployment is employed on a global scale in all private and public spheres. Some of the areas and countries where it has already been used to some degree include Namibia and Guinea (Tshabalala 2003).

The pitfalls they came across after redeployment were that productivity does not always follow after the reduction of staff; results of productivity and costs are mixed after redeployment; the morale within the downsized organizations collapses; it disrupts the sound structure of the organization and quality of productivity and services often go down (Clark 2007). In fact, countries all over the world have done redeployment at some stage in the public and private sectors. Even organizations like the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization use the redeployment concept (Naiman 2000). Redeployment comes in a number of ways and some of these are the

following: traditional redundancy which is followed by outplacement, internal redeployment, transfer to the new organization or outsource service provider, leave of absence, flexible working schemes, retraining and voluntary attrition (Seabury 2013).

It is against this background that this study sought to explore the challenges affecting redeployed educators, focusing on how redeployment affects an educator's performance in the work-place, pitfalls encountered in the process of implementing redeployment policies and strategies to reduce the stress of redeployed educators within Vhuronga 1 Circuit in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province. This study was guided by the following critical question: "What challenges do redeployed educators experience in the Vhuronga 1 circuit in the Vhembe district of the Limpopo Province."

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the challenges facing redeployed educators, and to come up with strategies to reduce the stress level of redeployed educators.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, both literature and empirical investigations were conducted to gather data on the challenges affecting redeployed educators. A thorough study of primary and secondary sources was done to collect more information on the challenges affecting redeployed educators. The researchers used qualitative research in order to get in-depth information and first-hand information on the phenomenon being studied.

Conceptual Grounding

Redeployment means the process of moving educators to different schools or sending them to work in a different school in to effect equity and justice in their distribution (Zengele 2013). According to Zengele (2013), redeployment is the transfer of permanently-employed full-time teaching staff from one educational institution to another. This means that educators are moved to achieve fairness in order to make schools function effectively successfully. The process of educator redeployment is an ongoing issue that still affect schools and educators.

In view of the shortages of teachers in certain schools, the Republic of South Africa had to institute changes within its education system (Crouch and Perry 2003). Chisholm (2004), indicates that prior to 1994, the education system in South Africa promoted separateness rather than common citizenship. This separateness promoted wide disparities in the education. This therefore means that the quality of educators and distribution of resources in schools varied. In order to solve this the government embarked on a system of rationalization and redeployment. This involved the transparency of educators to schools where there was a greater need.

The Effects of Redeployment of Educators in Limpopo

Redeployment means you stop the hiring of teachers and transfer teachers who are in excess to other areas. In 1997 the Education Labour Relation Council adopted the policy on redeployment and this resulted in some provinces losing educators while others gained (Douglas 2005).

A number of motivational theories can be used to describe why educators who experienced redeployment may have emotional distress. Educators who face redeployment ultimately feel that their sense of security is being affected. If educator's livelihood is affected s/he might become aloof from the rest of the staff members (Maile 2005).

Mosoge and Taunyane (2012) indicate the following as some of the resistances that individuals may display: reveal antipathy, loss of morale, resistance and uneasiness and uncertainty and loss of confidence. As a result they misuse time and resources, misuse of information, do not give enough consultation time to learners and as a result produce poor quality learners. In some cases they get involved in theft, and destruction of property, display unsafe behavior in the work situation.

Redeployment also effects individual educators in different ways because it causes families to relocate from one place to another and this results in financial problems. Redeployed educators become discouraged and lose interest in their work and their relationship within the school may become tense. The role of school managers in schools is badly affected by the redeployment process due to the implementa-

tion of the policy (Mulford 2003). This results in sour relationships between educators who are in excess and the school managers. As a result these educators become depressed and they even refuse to teach learners.

Educators lose interest in their work and this causes tension within the school. Redeployment has negatively affected the role of school managers in schools. This has led to suspicion as some teachers who are affected refuse to teach. This therefore means that redeployment needs to be handled with care.

Challenges of Redeployment on Educators

The following are some of the challenges of redeployment of educators: lack of administration capacity, resistance to relocate and lack of mutual trust.

Lack of Administration Capacity

Lack of administration capacity may result in inaccuracies occurring and this might cause stakeholders such as unions and political parties getting involved and staff members become overloaded. Lack of correct statistics and overloaded classrooms result in Black schools lacking in administration capacity. Lack of administrative support is seen as the school manager may have competing issues and being unavailable for teachers' problems (Bays and Crockett 2007). When issues of redeployment come to the fore, school managers need to prioritize this issue as it might affect the whole school.

Resistance to Relocate

Disruption of spouse's are the worst affected as a number of teachers do not want to work in the rural areas. Many teachers prefer areas where facilities such water, electricity and schools are available for their family members. According to Mthombeni (2002) and Lumadi (2014), schools in rural areas suffer because educators do not want to be redeployed to such areas because there are no facilities such as adequate accommodation, water and electricity in some rural areas.

Lack of Mutual Trust

Most redeployed educators do not trust their school managers due to the inaccurate informa-

tion that they get from their principals regarding the redeployment process. Mutual trust between the education officials and teachers unions deteriorates quickly become eroded. According to Xaba (2011), the manner in which school managers and school governing bodies run school affairs leaves teachers with no trust that their redeployment process will be run properly.

High Failure Rate of Learners Due to Redeployment

Problems created by redeployment affect all schools as the level of productivity goes down. This results in high failure rate and redeployment also contributes to high failure rate. This results in high failure rate. Redeployment does not only disrupt the smooth running of the school but also affects the experienced educators because they contribute to low quality education (South African Democratic Teachers' Union) (SADTU Limpopo Province Secretariat 2016). Many countries have a challenge of under-qualified teachers who are based in rural areas. Many qualified teachers do not want to work in the rural areas due to social and cultural situations. When redeployment comes some of these teachers choose to go on early retirement or move to other professions (Adedeji and Olaniyan 2011). Some of the schools end up under-staffed and learners being taught by inexperienced educators.

Strategies to Reduce Stress of Redeployed Educators

Staff feels stressed when there is a threat of redeployment in schools. School managers need to be aware of signs of severe stress in their staff. This means that school managers should give educational and as psychological support to their staff. Woolfolk (2010) indicates that staff members affected should be encouraged to acquire new skills in their profession.

The following are some of the strategies of reducing stress amongst redeployed educators:

Incentives

Some countries endeavoured to make redeployment in rural areas attractive by offering hardship allowances, the incentives may be special study leave or better training opportunities

(DoE 2011). The Department of Education (2011) indicated that these were some of the incentives to be given to staff members redeployed.

Communication

Good communication is very good in school management. The principals need to ensure that channels of communication are open and that staff members are encouraged to use them. Hellriegel et al. (2001) state that the principal of the school has to ensure that the channels of communication throughout the management structure of the school are explicitly formulated to lower the stress level of educators and to address unresolved issues, permitting two-way communication. School managers spend most of their time communicating and therefore they should be able to communicate effectively. This could involve giving instructions and also listening to the grievances of his/her subordinates especially during the period of redeployment (Hellriegel et al. 2001). This could only happen if a school manager affords the opportunity to his/her subordinates to communicate freely.

Motivation

Motivation is a drive that encourages an individual to act in a certain way. For these reasons leaders should be encouraged to motivate educators. This should be done when teachers are demotivated. According to Mwamwenda (2010), motivation is a way of encouraging an individual that to act in a certain way. Mwamwenda talks about intrinsic as the inner motivation stems from the individual himself/herself and whereas extrinsic motivation is caused by external factors such as rewards and punishment. It therefore necessary to consider external factors such incentives as indicated under the heading Incentives in this paper. It can be assumed that it is necessary for school managers to negotiate the effects of change and find solutions to manage this change by using extrinsic motivation. According to Mwamwenda (2010), school managers should be responsible for motivating educators intrinsically and extrinsically, especially where there is lack of drive and enthusiasm to perform their day-to-day activities after the introduction of the redeployment process.

Culture

Sanchez (2004) sees culture as the way in which a group of people come to terms with their problems and also how they solve them. In schools this determines how school managers run the activities within the school. This, therefore, means that schools that are properly run will not experience problems when redeployment takes place. Schools that transparent way of dealing with issues that affect staff normally solve a number of problems.

Climate

Climate refers to the atmosphere in which people work and also their interpersonal relationships. School climate is a mutual interpersonal organization that shows a sincere warm and friendly atmosphere which can help in the lowering of stress atmosphere which can help in the lowering of stress level of workers. Climate is a measurable aspects of the work situation that are observed by employers who work within the institution and motivate individual workers (Holloway 2012). In this regard it can be deduced that climate refers to the way in which redeployment is done. Sincere and friendly atmosphere always promote the peaceful redeployment of staff members.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following are the major findings that stem from the main research questions of the study:

The Concept Redeployment of Educators

The findings of this study showed an excellent understanding of what redeployment is for both the educators and school managers. School managers who were interviewed in this study understood the concept redeployment. The most common definition of redeployment, according to the school managers is the movement of educators from over-staffed schools to understaffed schools. Just as with the school managers, different educators defined redeployment differently, but the most common understanding was the movement of educators declared in excess in a school, to schools which are under-staffed. This shows that the respondents in this study

had an understanding of what the concept redeployment meant.

This is supported some of the school manager who said that:

The transfer of skills from the centre where is less required to a centre where it is mostly required. The determining requirement of such a transfer of skill is educator people ratio and need.

One of the educators said that:

It is the movement of educators who are declared in excess or additional to the staff development from a school a low staff establishment to a school that has a high a establishment but understaffed with the purpose of bringing equity in education as far as staff provision is concerned.

This seems to agree with Zengele (2013) who says that the process of moving educators to different schools effect equity and justice in schools. Their understanding appears to be the same with the definition of Zengele and other scholars.

Challenges of Redeployment in Vhuronga 1 Circuit

The findings of the study clearly indicated that the implementation of the redeployment policy is marked by many problems. Findings show that the process has brought about disputes between school managers and educators and not all school managers are in support of the implementations of the policy in the Province and in the Circuit. Based on the findings of the study and the literature study, it is clear that educators endure many frustrations when affected by redeployment.

Challenges of Redeployed Educators

The interviewed school managers pointed out the following as the main challenges of the redeployment exercise:

It causes instability of enrolment; sometimes the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) convince school managers to refuse educators based on ethnicity and tribalism and this a long time for the Department to address disputes emanating from the process. Wrong matching of posts by the Department of Education affects curriculum change. One school manager said this about the challenges of redeployment: “*primary*

schools are being used as dumping zones”. Another school manager could not hide his frustration about the process, and he said the following:

We are forced to do away with some subjects because when we have fewer educators it means we cannot offer different streams. And when do not offer some streams, then we have fewer learners wanting to join our school because of the limited options. And in some instances, when some educators leave and enrolment increases, getting educators takes time.

Some teachers had this say about challenges of redeployed educators that “the challenge is sometimes educators have to relocate to places so far away from home. Because of the distance, the cost of transport may higher”. Another educator said that,

Sometimes an educator is taken away from a school where he knows the weaknesses and strengths of the learners and how to deal with those learners and going to a new school means that s/he must first adapt. And sometimes educators from poorly performing schools are sometimes redeployed to schools which were performing better and sometimes take learners backward.

The matching of posts by the Department of Education affect the running of the school and encourages educators to teach for the sake of teaching. Redeployment causes multi-grade class teaching in some schools and creates workload for the school managers. School managers do not like educators who have been declared in excess as they think these are teachers who did not cooperate with their previous schools. This is what Bays and Crockett (2007) say when they indicate that, lack of administrative support, means that the school manager have competing issues for example being unavailable for teachers’ problems when they have to attend to them (Bays and Crockett 2007).

Some educators have some substantial reasons for not accepting a referral, whereas the employer expects them to accept the position. Learners from where the educators come from have sometimes left with no teachers as sometimes these teachers are specialized in certain areas. Redeployment reduces the teaching work force if the process is improperly timed. Challenges that affected educators who have been redeployed are the Department’s lack of support, lack of support from colleagues, delays in the submission and receipt of accommodation.

Strategies to Reduce the Challenges Facing of the Redeployed Educators

School managers suggested that the Department consider schools that have increased enrolment and advertisement should be done accordingly. One school manager indicated that: *“the Department should do post provisioning in time around August to September to be implemented next year. The Department should first consider schools that have increased enrolment to allocate post establishment.”* The redeployed educator must have a choice; the school that have redundancy must have a choice from the pool of excess educator. Redeployed educator must be financially compensated, they must be given leave with pay to acquaint themselves with the environment, and in-house training should be conducted to capacitate educators with scarce skills.

The two educators suggested that:

A rule must be made that allows learners to move to another school after three years thereby eliminating overcrowding at one school. Establish a rule that prevents learners from one school to another without valid reasons, such as relocation of parents, parents' divorce or medical matters; strict supervision of schools and educators to make them work hard and pass learners; educate parents to have the mentality that says what matters is not the performance of a school but how dedicated the learner is; educators need to be better prepared to handle change and to know what expected during the redeployment process; representative bodies for educators, in consultation with the funding bodies, should immediately establish a professional institute for learning and teaching which educators can attend and get more information based on redeployment in general.

However, not all recommendations made by the respondents can be implemented since some of the recommendation might be unfair to learners and parents. Woolfolk (2010) and Mwamwenda (2010) suggested that staff members affected should be motivated to acquire new skills. It is important to look at possible incentives that can be offered to deployed teachers. Good communication is needed when this process is done and this could be done by encouraging deployed teachers.

The findings of this paper demonstrated that both educators and school managers have an excellent understanding of what redeployment is. Although, the policy itself has good intentions, these unfortunately, are undermined and frustrated by poorly-planned execution or implementation strategies of redeployment. The implementation of redeployment is marked by many problems. The findings show that redeployment brings frustration to both school managers and educators facing redeployment process. In addition, not all school managers support the implementation of the policy in the Province and in the Vhuronga Circuit. Based on the findings of the study and the literature study, it is clear that educators endure many frustrations when affected by redeployment.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the paper was to explore the challenges facing redeployed educators, focusing on how redeployment affects educators' performance in the work-place, pitfalls encountered in the process of implementing redeployment policies and strategies to reduce the stress of redeployed educators. The paper revealed that there are many challenges faced by school managers and redeployed educators, including disadvantaging schools by wrong matching of posts and bad timing process, the feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, stress; personal/family related problems; adapting to the new environment and lack of support from the department, unions and schools. Redeployment, promotion and early retirement, are perceived as difficult transitions by the individuals involved as they must make major life adjustments. The redeployment process moves extremely slowly and unevenly, leaving educators demoralised and plagued by uncertainty. Therefore, the Department should critically analyse, investigate and review the existing redeployment strategies and policies by consulting the relevant stakeholders to develop strategies that will be easier to understand and implement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations pertaining to the paper are presented:

With regards to both school managers' and educators' understanding of the term 'redeploy-

ment' respondents understand the meaning of redeployment. What is needed, is a thorough discussion of how redeployment works and consultation in with affected parties and teacher unions. It is recommended that assistance be provided to schools facing difficulties in policy implementation. The department should provide all stakeholders with adequate training so that there is a clear understanding of the policy and a sense of trust between the employer and the employee as failure to develop trust between the two parties ultimately impacts negatively on the schooling system.

School managers as heads of schools must be given the power to control and manage their schools. Any decision taken should be discussed with them. Educators need to be consulted regarding the choice of schools. The Department should instil a sense of certainty and job security to the teachers declared in excess, as this will go a long way in reducing negative emotions such as anxiety, uncertainty and mistrust. Assistance should be provided to schools managers and educators facing difficulties in redeployment policy implementation. The department should provide all stakeholders with adequate training so that there is a clear understanding of the policy in order to meet redeployment policy during the process of redeployment. Some educators may be more willing to move to their home areas, than to other rural areas. This is particularly true where different languages are spoken in different areas. Educators who are married are likely to value the possibility of postings close together, and even posting newly qualified teachers with a classmate may help the newcomers to settle into an area.

Based on the challenges mentioned by the school managers and educators, the Department should provide the correct model of matching posts to ensure that the curriculum needs of the schools are met. Both educators and school managers should have valuable knowledge and experiences of what is happening on the ground. The Department needs to consult with the various stakeholders when implementing such contentious policies so that the policy becomes flexible and case-specific.

The following are some of the strategies that need to be taken into consideration when implementing redeployment of educators: Proper consultation should be done. School's plan with affected staff members and schools should be

done and prepared on time to be implemented the following year. Prior to the implementation of policies, the officials should be adequately trained and that redeployment policy may not be undermined. Redeployment should meet the curriculum needs of the school.

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