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The influence of educational provision on teacher performance and learner outcomes among Limpopo primary schools

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In the study reported on here the problem of inadequacies in educational provisioning among public schools that has a negative influence on teachers' productivity and learners' academic outcomes was examined. The primary objective of this study was to examine teachers' and principals' perceptions on the influence of educational provision on teacher performance and learner outcomes. The study was informed by critical social theory. The study tapped from the interconnection of constructivist and interpretivist paradigms and qualitative research, in using lived experiences and reflections of participants. Semi-structured interviews and observations were used to collect data from 5 school principals and 10 teachers in 5 primary schools in the Limpopo province, South Africa. Inadequacies in school provisioning was found to influence teacher performance and learner outcomes, causing psychological stress and low morale among teachers as a result of poor working conditions. Inadequacies in school resources constitute an unfair and unjust practice by the Department of Education and infringes upon learners' right to education. Such infringement exacerbates learners' demotivation, which subsequently results in them dropping out of school. Poor schools ultimately exclude Black students from quality education in South Africa. I recommend that the Department spearheads the implementation of the Framework on Equitable Provision of Infrastructure in Public Schools as a matter of urgency to ensure equity and access for poor schools.

Keywords: educational exclusion; learner outcomes; school provisioning; social justice; teacher performance

Introduction

Research shows a relationship between the physical environment in schools and "teaching and learning effectiveness, as well as student learning outcomes" (Department of Education, Republic of South Africa, 2008:7). Furthermore, recent research indicates a lack of access to quality basic education experienced by South African learners in 80% of the poor public schools (Spaull, 2013) – 74% of schools are without libraries, 80% lack science laboratories, and 63% lack computer centres (Amnesty International, 2020). This is a clear indication of education exclusion to the underprivileged, and a pure contravention of human rights, and children's rights to better education, in particular.

Despite this knowledge, the present government is not doing enough to transform the inequitable educational provisioning adopted from the apartheid system to provide educational infrastructure and resources for a better teaching and learning environment. A lack of commitment towards educational transformation, through adequate educational provisioning, makes striving towards social transformation, educational inclusion and social justice a futile exercise. Critical social theory was used as a lens to examine teachers' and principals' perceptions on the influence of educational provision on teacher performance and learner outcomes among poor primary schools in Limpopo.

Background

The effects of colonialism and apartheid are felt strongly in the education of poor rural South African children. The inequalities of educational provisioning in South Africa are traceable to the former Minister of Native Affairs, Hendrik Frensch (HF) Verwoerd, who authorised the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (Veriava, 2017). The lasting effects were engraved in the education system and the post-apartheid efforts and interventions have not succeeded in overcoming them fully. The education of the Black South African was designed for everlasting doom that prevailed for 41 years under apartheid rule. In these 41 years, historically advantaged schools benefitted from the uncontested cultural capital and human investments at the expense of Bantu schools that taught an inferior version of education, characterised by high pupil-teacher ratios, unqualified and under-qualified teachers, and a lack of books, libraries, laboratories and other resources (Veriava, 2017:222).

Apartheid educational policies created high levels of inequality and poverty (Van der Berg, 2007). There are ceaseless cycles of inequality and poverty caused by inadequacies in the human capital in South African schools. The lack of human capital has a devastating impact on schools' learning outcomes. The poor quality of teachers and school management teams is the new plague confronting public schools. The quality of teachers has a direct bearing on learner outcomes, while the capacity of school leadership is also known to influence curriculum implementation.

Critical social theory emphasises social transformation and human emancipation and capacitation, for which education has a capacity to achieve. There is a strong conviction that education has the potential to capacitate and empower citizens and offer spaces for enhanced socio-economic development of poor people. Education is, therefore, regarded as a tool to individual and collective success, particularly in Third World economies (Smith & Ngoma-Maema, 2003). In advising the youth and children in South Africa, particularly

those whom he represented, the former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela was known for his slogan that "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" (Eiffel Corp, 2018:para. 1). Based on this belief in the social and economic transformative power of education, governments invest large amounts of capital in education in order to promote teacher performance and attainment of quality academic outcomes, which subsequently stimulate economic development and growth (Kimani & Bhorat, 2014). Such large sums of money are channelled into salaries and Section 27 allocations for non-fee paying schools. Ironically, the provision of school buildings and digital infrastructure is beyond the budgetary scope of the Department of Basic Education.

In 2008, Department of Basic Education provided a policy framework on equitable provision of infrastructure for all public schools. The primary objective of the policy was to "regulate and formalise the provision of school infrastructure and to provide guidelines towards an equitable provision of an enabling physical teaching and learning environment for all learners in South Africa" (Department of Education, Republic of South Africa, 2008:8). South Africa, as an observer member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), should be moving at the same pace as the other 37 member countries in using the Framework on Equitable Provision of Infrastructure of Public Schools in guiding informed governance, distribution, utilisation and management of school resources (OECD, 2017).

Despite this policy framework, 12 years down the line there is still prevalence of poor school infrastructure and schools are still classified into poor and rich categories. Poor schools have meagre infrastructure and low learning outputs that create a population of destitute citizens without hope for the future. This phenomenon is prevalent in schools that receive large sums of Section 27 allocation, but fail to change such inputs into desirable academic attainment. The education system that has put social transformation on its agenda is dismally failing children by allowing two systems of education to prevail for the past 26 six years. The most privileged children receive quality education in affluent schools, with adequate supply of school resources and infrastructure, and competent teaching and management personnel. The opposite occurs with underprivileged learners in under-resourced schools.

Similarly, in rich countries, poverty still predicts educational outcomes of those affected. In Canada, a cycle of poverty was found to be imminent among 16.7% of children from impoverished households because of their low levels of readiness (Ferguson, Bovaird & Mueller, 2007). This situation is worse in South Africa, with 51% of children living in poverty (Von Fintel, Zoch & Van der Berg, 2017) attending 80% of poor public schools (Spaull, 2013) and 70% of such children receiving their education in no-fee schools (Taylor, Wills & Hoadley, 2019:31). Apart from school-related factors, educational outcomes are influenced by family incomes and, to some extent, by community characteristics and social networks (Ferguson et al., 2007). On the other hand, children from poor families, receive education of poor quality in poor schools (Van der Berg, 2008). In South Africa, such schools were inherited from different education systems that included Bantu Education. The settings for such public schools in rural areas and townships that served mainly Blacks and Coloureds resembled exactly what Verwoerd anticipated for the education for Black people. This perpetuates exclusionary and often discriminatory affordances for the poor children who are persistently deprived of quality education provision in the public schools. For education as a public good to serve its purpose, the Department of Basic Education needs to address the institutionalisation of apartheid and create equal spaces for all children. The majority of such children are located in historically disadvantaged schooling systems, which serve Black and Coloured children in the main (Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2019).

The study reported on here contributes to the epistemology on the influence of educational provisioning on teachers' productivity and learner outcomes. Furthermore, this study offers alternative ways in which the social reality of teacher productivity and learner outcomes could be examined. In lieu of the above, the primary objective of this article was to examine teachers' and principals' perceptions of the influence of educational provision on teacher performance and learner academic outcomes. The primary research question of the study was how school resource provisioning influences teacher productivity and learner outcomes in selected poor schools in Limpopo.

Research Problem

In this study I examined the problem of inadequacies in educational provisions among Limpopo primary schools and its influence on teacher performance and learner academic outcomes. A lack of educational provision in 80% of the poor public schools (Spaull, 2013) serving 70% of Black children in no fee schools (Taylor et al., 2019) is characterised by a lack of books, libraries, laboratories and other resources (Veriava, 2017:222). This is indeed a manifestation of educational exclusion and social injustices that Black people encounter in an education system that subscribes to social transformation. The

Department of Education is the major contributor to the perpetuation of this poverty in its failure to change the circumstances of Black children from poor families. Instead, poor Black children are left with no option but to receive education of poor quality in poor schools (Van der Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson, Spaull & Armstrong, 2011). The Department has failed to provide quality education for all. Furthermore, it has dismally failed to achieve the no-child-left-behind policy as expounded by the United Nations Millennium Goals that has been globally adopted.

In the 2020 State of the Nation Address (SONA), President Cyril Ramaphosa announced the rolling out of the 4th Industrial Revolution in Education, wherein selected schools in the Gauteng province were targeted for piloting such a project. It was an insult to teachers and learners working at and attending poor schools to comprehend this government move, since they remained destitute and without hope for a better tomorrow.

Teachers in 80% of the poor schools provide learners with education of poor quality and the consequence of this is evident in the poor academic performance of the learners. However, there is a dearth of literature in South Africa on the extent to which educational provisioning influences teacher performance and learner outputs. The South African educational dynamics cannot be compared to any other contexts in the developing and developed countries, particularly in respect of the education of poor Black children.

Research Objective and Questions

The primary objective of this article was to examine teachers' and principals' perceptions on the influence of education provision on teacher performance and learner outcomes. In striving to achieve the stated objective, the following main research questions were formulated:

1) What is the magnitude of educational provisioning on teaching and learning?
2) How does school provisioning influence teacher performance?
3) How do school provisions influence learner outcomes?

Theoretical Framework

Critical social theory was used in this study to understand social transformation, human emancipation and capacitation, and social justice as crucial tenets of human development. Critical social theory offers a basis to question "knowledge base with the implicit goal of advancing the emancipatory function of knowledge … in promoting the role of criticism in the search for quality education" (Leonardo, 2004:11).

This study was informed by critical social theory which was used as it sheds light on "the social mechanisms that create and perpetuate social inequities" in public schools, and among teachers and learners, and it creates space for critical reflection and engagement (Kirkham, Van Hofwegen & Harwood, 2005:11) required to bring social transformation and justice in these educational institutions and settings. Inequalities are prevalent in South African, and are reflected in learners living in improvised households, poverty, poor schools, overloaded teachers, inadequacies in school resources and infrastructure, and non-supply of stationery and textbooks in public schools (Spaull, 2013). The use of critical social theory in this study creates a platform for critical awareness and engagement in society and among educators. These processes also affect the Department of Basic Education that is expected to spearhead the funding allocation processes that could close the gaps in school provisioning in ensuring social transformation and social justice dearly needed by learners enrolled in poor schools.

Literature Review

Literature was reviewed with a strict focus on the educational provision immanent in teacher performance and learner outcomes as informed by critical social theory.

Educational provisions

The education systems in South Africa have ignored academic achievement evident in learner output and focused on educational provisions such as money spent, infrastructure and programmes in measuring educational productivity (Hampel, 2005). This is not in line with critical social theory that stresses the value of social transformation and human emancipation and capacitation, as supported by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) documents.

Educational provisioning is defined as the "provisioning for the various educational inputs that are necessary to provide learners with a quality education" (Veriava, 2017:220). Measuring educational outcomes has become a priority to education ministries in establishing the level of inputs in relation to teacher productivity and learner outcomes. The South African government has adopted neo-liberal policies that brought along fiscal imbalances and budgetary pressures and sorely requires real statistics of educational and teacher productivity (Hanushek & Ettema, 2017). The adoption of these policies in an unequal education system causes a failure of the education system and plans to social transformation, human emancipation and capacitation, and social justice, which results in educational exclusion of many poor South Africans.

Large sums of money that have been spent on education in the main for 41 years was shifted to the education of poor Black children in the past 26 years. However, apartheid legacies have been more entrenched in education of low quality

characterised by poor school structures, lack of resources and strategic infrastructure, poor quality teachers and low learner output (Mlachila & Moeletsi, 2019). Adequately resourced schools improve the school climate such that teachers and learners build relationships in appealing physical and human aspects. Research confirms the direct relationship between school climate and learners' academic performance and teachers' productivity (Adeogun & Olisaemeka, 2011). Secondary school teachers that serve low-performing Hispanic and Black-majority schools in low-income Californian populations reported less positive school climates, including staff-student relationships, norms and standards, student facilitative behaviour, and perceived safety (Jain, Cohen, Huang, Hanson & Austin, 2015).

Teaching and learning in the 21st century has dramatically changed due to the emergence of educational technology. Countries across the globe have changed and currently prioritize the supply of schools' educational technologies. The Department of Education, Republic of South Africa (2004) released an electronic education (e-education) policy that guides the integration of teaching and learning with information and communication technology (ICT); yet, 16 years down the line schools still do not have internet connectivity and electronic technology (e-tech) to apply the e-education policy.

Teacher performance

It is difficult to measure teacher performance and quality, without schools and the Department adopting and using a teaching framework that guides their teaching. Measurement of teaching performance commences with the translation of "a vision of effective instruction into a model that makes explicit what competent performance is" (Milanowski, 2011:20). The validation of the framework should be focused on teaching behaviour and skills that constitute effective teaching including instructional planning, knowledge of curriculum, instruction delivery and efficient classroom management (Milanowski, 2011). The teaching behaviour and skills that constitute effective teaching are reflected in the four-domain framework, namely, planning and preparation; classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibility (Danielson, 2013).

In defining the features of quality teachers, Spaull (2013) outlines four attributes: teacher professionalism, teaching inclination and commitment, teaching competencies, and pedagogical content knowledge. Two important teacher education frameworks offer a policy framework for teacher education, even though they fail to offer sufficient guidance to pre-service teachers in their teaching practice when they engage in work-integrated learning (WIL). The Teachers' Norms and Standards offers seven roles of a teacher whereas the Minimum Requirements for Teachers Education Qualification (MRTEQ) policy offers level competency descriptors (Department of Higher Education and Training, Republic of South Africa, 2015). However, teachers in poor schools experience multiple challenges ranging from overcrowded classrooms due to a lack of classrooms and an increased workload. Furthermore, research shows a lack of textbooks and strategic learning and teaching materials (Amnesty International, 2020). Du Plessis and Mestry (2019:S1) further identified "a lack of parental interest in children's education, insufficient funding from the state, a lack of resources, underqualified teachers, and multi-grade teaching [as] some of the barriers to effective education." Social justice is not served in the education system for teachers in poor school that experience these challenges and nothing is done to solve their predicament. The majority of such teachers become stressed and suffer from stress-related workplace illnesses such as depression and heart attacks.

Finally, the Department of Basic Education was proud to release the Professional Development Framework for Digital Learning (Department of Basic Education, Republic of South Africa, 2018). This framework guides teachers on how they should integrate digital technologies and pedagogies to achieve 21st-century teaching competencies. Research indicates that school leadership in "communication, conflict management, supervisory and motivation strategies" influences the performance of teachers (Etomes & Molua, 2019:109). However, a lack of educational technologies and internet for teachers and learners in public schools (Lekgothoane & Thaba-Nkadimene, 2019), mostly required for blended learning during difficult times brought along by COVID-19, pose a serious challenge to public schooling and to teachers in particular. They need to ensure that COVID-19 protocols are observed, and save the academic year at the same time.

Learner outcomes

> "… with the exception of a wealthy minority, most South African pupils cannot read, write and compute at grade-appropriate levels, with large proportions being functionally illiterate and innumerate" (Spaull, 2013:3).

The above state reflected by Spaull (2013) confirms that 70% of the learner population receives education in 80% poor and dysfunctional schools. Such children are disadvantaged and they remain illiterate and innumerate despite passing through the entire primary school education system. Inadequacies in education provision is the main cause, despite the schools getting a larger

share in the allocation of Section 27 funding. Educational provision influences educational productivity, which entails teacher performance and learner outcomes. The 70% of poor learners has had a negative impact on the South African learner outcomes in the Annual National Assessment (ANA) local measurement, as well as international tests (Van der Berg et al., 2011). Poor schools and poor learners pose a threat to children's right to education as indicated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). Critical social theory was used in this study to critically reflect on poor education services offered by the Department of Basic Education as a result of poor educational provisioning.

Murtin (2013:2) confirms that "South Africa has achieved remarkable progress in educational attainment relative to other emerging countries, but the quality of basic education for a large fraction of the Black African population is still very low." Murtin further outlines factors that cause failure in the quality of poor Black children's education as a lack of investment in school resources and infrastructure, a lack of learning materials, a lack of school leadership capacity, poor quality of teachers and poor teaching of English and mathematics among Black Africans. In this study, focus was on the influence of education provision, such as a lack of investment in school resources and infrastructure and a lack of learning materials.

Research Design

The study was underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm. The interconnectedness of interpretivism and the qualitative research approach afforded me the opportunity to tap into the lived experiences, perceptions and reflections (Thanh & Thanh, 2015) of school principals and teachers regarding the extent of inadequacies of school provisions and how such inadequacies influence teacher performance and learner outcomes. A case study design was used in this study because "it provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their contexts" (Baxter & Jack, 2008:544). Semi-structured interviews and observations were the primary research instruments to collect data from five school principals and 10 teachers in five purposively selected schools. The use of the semi-structured interviews allowed me to delve into the lived experiences and perceptions about the influence of school provisions on teacher performance and learner outcomes. I was able to create a dialogue with the participants that allowed for probing questions, (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). The selection criteria were based on the school enrolment (+400 learners); poorly resourced schools experiencing overcrowding and staffing challenges. Data were analysed using thematic and narrative analysis. In the effort to achieve trustworthiness and rigour of the research process, various methods were used.

The use of member checking and peer debriefing were used for data verification. Member checking was used from notes collated in the field to corroborate the data from interviews and observations.

With peer debriefing, peers from the same discipline, but who did not participate in the research, were involved in validation of the research process, from inception to publication; and checking on the choices of design and methods, results and final development of the manuscript for dissemination to a greater public.

This article was developed from data collected during my doctoral studies culminating in my dissertation entitled: "Lessons learnt in the implementation of school leadership and management programme by universities of Limpopo province in South Africa." The study met all criteria of working with human participants and was granted research protocol licence TREC56/2016.

Results

In this study the guidelines of Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen and Kyngäs (2014) that involve three main research phases, namely preparation, organisation, and reporting of results, were followed for content analysis. The aim of using content analysis was to ensure that suitable data were collected, "making sense of the data, and selecting the unit of analysis" (Elo et al., 2014:2). Content analysis was used to scrutinise participants' life histories, lived experiences, perceptions and reflections narrated during interviews about the extent of inadequacies of school provisions and how it influences teacher performance and learner outcomes. The research questions were aligned to the data collected, and the next process was coding, categorisation and development of themes. In order to ensure anonymity, pseudonyms were randomly allocated to the participants, e.g. Principal Participant 1 to 5; and Teacher Participant 1 to 10.

Three themes, namely, school provisioning, teacher performance and learner outcomes were established from the data. The themes were organised according to the three primary research questions and each theme was divided into several sub-themes. Themes and sub-themes are presented first, and then the discussion of each theme or sub-theme is supplemented by narratives.

Table 1 Themes and sub-themes

Research question	Theme	Sub-themes
What is the extent of the impact of educational provisioning on teaching and learning?	Inadequacies in school provisions	• Inadequate strategic infrastructure, water and sanitation. • Lack of learning and teaching support materials (LTSM) • Lack of digital resources • Lack of teaching space • Classroom overcrowding
How does school provision influence teacher performance?	Factors that impede teacher performance	• Teachers not working to their best abilities • Poor working conditions • Teacher psychological stress and related illnesses • Discourages teachers from becoming lifelong learners • Low teacher morale • Lack of commitment
How does school provision influence learner outcomes?	Causes of poor learner outcomes	• Low learner outcomes • Demotivated learners • Drop-out of school • Tampers with learners' educational rights

Table 1 reflects the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data and how these relate to the specific research questions.

Inadequacies in School Provisions

From the main research question on the extent of the impact of educational provisioning on teaching and learning, the theme on the inadequacies in school provision was derived. Teachers' and principals' views show that the schools did not have strategic infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories, computer centres, flushing toilets and clean water and sanitation. Principal Participant 2 explained:

> *The issue of depriving rural schools of the necessary infrastructure is not a new thing in South Africa. The failure by the ruling party to bring equity in schools is tantamount to perpetuating the apartheid laws in the new democracy. My school is without running water, library, laboratory, computer centre as well as shortage of classrooms.*

In support, Principal Participant 4 explained the inadequacies in classrooms, and a need to more classroom spaces:

> *I was a learner in the same school where I am currently serving as a head teacher, but nothing changed, except the visibility of six mobile classes. My school does not have adequate classrooms and the mobile classrooms are also full to capacity. The school requires at least four new blocks of classrooms. Teaching in overcrowded classrooms is a challenge to teaching and learning.*

On the other hand, Teacher Participant 3 stressed a shortage of furniture in her school, which resulted in disciplinary challenges during teaching and learning. She highlighted the following: "*My school has a shortage of school furniture, and students share desks and chairs. This is a serious problem because it causes disruptions and sometimes provokes learners' fighting during teaching as they will be negotiating their sitting spaces.*"

Teacher Participant 7 confirmed:

> *My learners experience challenges in the lack of textbooks, year in and year out. Letters were written to the Circuit Offices, but nothing came of that. The school has lived with this challenge for the past four years when the school enrolment increased.*

Data from interviews and observations confirmed that there was a dire lack of school provisions. The research participants echoed the same sentiments on inadequacies in school provisioning and indicated that the challenges identified affected different schools differently. Veriava (2017) confirms the sentiments expressed in this study in showing a significant lack of school provisions such as books, libraries, laboratories and other resources. Apart from infrastructural provisions, the results show a lack of LTSM; a lack of digital resources; a lack of teaching space; classroom overcrowding, and inadequate water and sanitation.

Factors that Impede Teacher Performance

From the second research question on how school provision influences teacher performance, the theme on factors that impede teacher performance emerged. Principal Participant 1:

> *A lack of teaching and learning essentials derails school management's duty to offer adequate instructional leadership that brings better school results. A lack of digital technologies and teaching and learning materials destabilises school plans of integrating technology in teaching and learning. It is difficult, if not impossible, to use five laptops in 15 classrooms.*

Principal Participant 3 supported his colleague on the issue of inadequacies in school provisions, and factors that impede their plans to transition to a digital teaching and learning environment. He reiterated:

> *After computer training by 60% of the staff composition, organised by one university in Limpopo province, every staff member was on board and ready to change from traditional pedagogies to digital ones. However, the plans and interest shown by teachers was quenched by lack.*

Teacher 6 indicated how poor working conditions caused her health problems that left her with no

option but to arrange for early retirement. She highlighted:

> *My school experiences a challenge of teacher supply because it is a small school with 292 enrolled students, and I am the only qualified maths teacher. I am teaching Intermediate and Senior phase alone. And this is too much. I arrive home very tired. This overloading of periods has caused me distress that resulted in high blood pressure and continuous headaches. I feel I can't take it anymore. I am planning early retirement because my health is also deteriorating.*

The research findings indicate that teachers are not working to their optimal level because of inadequacies in school provisions. Participants commented on their workplaces as poor working environments that caused them not to achieve their instructional leadership plans and digital teaching and learning plans. Instead, such conditions caused them psychological job stress and related illnesses. This finding is in line with Lekgothoane and Thaba-Nkadimene (2019:28) who found "teachers' stringent working conditions deny them access to pedagogical technologies that facilitate teaching of the 21st-century skills." Participants further indicated that their poor working conditions were stressful and this reality discouraged them from executing their tasks as expected of teachers as lifelong learners. They further identified a lack of commitment to their job because they experienced low teacher morale because of their stringent working conditions.

Causes of Poor Learner Outcomes

The third theme emanated from the third research question on how school provisions influence learner outcomes. Principal Participant 4 submitted the following: "*My school has a challenge of perennial learner underperformance. Stringent working conditions demoralise both teachers and learners and negatively affect teaching and learning commitment.*"

Principal Participant 5 added her own experiences: "*Lack of school's strategic resources. My school experiences the challenge of teaching and learning materials, overcrowded classrooms and sitting space. These challenges have long-lasting effects on the attainment of learner's outcomes.*"

Teacher Participant 6 stressed the infrastructural backlog in previously disadvantaged schools that caused educational exclusion among public school learners:

> *The Department of Education cares less about education of the African child in rural areas, because it is not succeeding in addressing the backlog of school resources and infrastructure. In one way or another, an African rural child is educationally excluded from quality education.*

Participants identified teachers' and learners' demotivation as the main cause of poor learner outcomes. They further indicated that government's failure to supply adequate school provisions was tantamount to infringement upon the rights of children to quality education.

Discussion

The research findings emanating from teachers' and principals' views point to inadequacies in school provisioning that deprive teachers the opportunity to discharge their duties and responsibilities as required and learn from more resourced workplace experiences. The findings identified that the schools do not have strategic infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories and computer centres. Furthermore, in many of these schools there are no flushing toilets or access to clean water supplies and proper sanitation. The findings show a lack of LTSM; a lack of digital resources; a lack of teaching space that results in classroom overcrowding; and a lack of adequate classroom furniture. These findings are in line with Veriava (2017) who verified that poor schools were without strategic infrastructure. A lack of basic infrastructure and classroom resources was used prior to 1994 as discriminatory tool to ensure that a Black child received a watered-down education. However, its continuation after 1994 is an indication that public school learners are educationally excluded from mainstream quality education – rural Black children in particular. A democratic South Africa that propagates social transformation and social justice is dismally failing poor communities and poverty-stricken households.

Since Minister Naledi Pandor observed that research shows that there is a link between the schools' physical environment and "teaching and learning effectiveness, as well as student learning outcomes" (Department of Education, Republic of South Africa, 2008:8), school provision has not changed. The formulation and proclamation of the Framework on Equitable Provision of Infrastructure of Public Schools has therefore apparently failed to change the dilemma of 80% poor schools, because the findings of this study demonstrate that the situation of inadequacies in school provision still prevails. This points to the reality that the Department of Education has apparently failed in the implementation of the policy prescripts. Poor schools continue to experience educational exclusion in South Africa, when the Department fails to implement its policies to change its circumstances.

Inadequacies in school provisioning influences teacher performance and learner outcomes. Teachers submitted that they did not work to the best of their abilities because they were constrained and distracted by poor infrastructure. Teachers concurred that their schools were living examples of poor working conditions resulting in psychological stress and related illnesses. This study validates others such as Peltzer, Shisana,

Zuma, Van Wyk and Zungu-Dirwayi (2009:247) that found considerable stress-related illnesses among educators, namely, hypertension, heart disease, stomach ulcers, asthma, mental distress, and tobacco and alcohol abuse.

Furthermore, respondents indicated that working in dilapidated school infrastructure without adequate teaching resources was demoralising and dissipated the teachers' morale. They indicated how the inadequacies prevented them from becoming lifelong learners. They cited a lack of school internet connectivity and a lack of school e-tech as the reason for them lagging behind the technological advancement of teachers. This in line with Minister Naledi Pandor's findings that poor school buildings induce negative teacher attitudes toward school. Furthermore, teacher fatigue is also exacerbated by extreme temperatures in congested classrooms (Department of Education, Republic of South Africa, 2008). As alluded to earlier, measuring teacher performance in poor schools using the same measuring tool as those in wealthy schools is unfair and unjust.

Inadequacies in school provisioning coupled with effects of low teacher performance create a serious blow to learner outcomes. The consequences are evident in the few students who start Grade 1 and finish Grade 12. School conditions influence low learner output and subsequently, those who cannot bear such pressure, drop out of school. This is because learners who are demotivated tend to regard education as a waste of time. This finding is in line with the view that poor school infrastructure influences learners' absenteeism, dropping out of school, and learners' mental ability and concentration span (Department of Education, Republic of South Africa, 2008). Teachers' low morale, poor school infrastructure, poor teaching and learning materials and demotivating learning environments all contribute towards low learner outcomes in poor schools. Poor schools and the circumstances in these schools actually infringe on the right of poor children to quality education. This means that in poor schools, poor children are educationally denied access to quality education, and this is social injustice to Black South African communities.

Conclusion

With this study I strove to examine teachers' and principals' views on how inadequacies in educational provisioning influence teacher performance and attainment of desired learner outcomes. The primary objective of this article was to examine teachers' and principals' views on the influence of educational provisioning on teacher performance and learner outcomes. The study was informed by critical social theory. The research findings show inadequate strategic infrastructure, water and sanitation; a lack of LTSM; a lack of digital resources; a lack of teaching space and classroom overcrowding. In addition, it was found that teachers were not working to their best abilities, which resulted from poor working conditions; teacher psychological stress and related illnesses; teachers' discouragement from becoming lifelong learners; low teacher morale; and a lack of commitment. It was further revealed that a lack of educational provisioning results in low learner outcomes, which demotivated learners and cause them to drop out of school. Such deprivation constitutes an infringement of learners' rights to education. Poor Black communities are sadly educationally excluded from quality education in South Africa.

Recommendations

As it strives towards social transformation and social justice for all through its allocation from fiscus, the Department of Basic Education should address infrastructural and resource backlogs in rural public schools. Furthermore, the Department should address the challenge of understaffing and teacher overload by hiring more teachers to fill vacant posts and create new posts according to the staffing provisioning model. In addition, it should provide teacher and learner stress management programmes to help those affected by stressful and stringent working conditions. Moreover, I recommend that the Department of Basic Education should uniformly apply the Framework on Equitable Provision of Infrastructure of Public Schools and other related policies to ensure equitable distribution of resources to poor schools. In the interim, teacher performance measures should be considered not to apply to teachers serving in poor schools. The existing schools' psychological services should be made free of charge for teachers and learners working at and enrolled in poor schools.

Note

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