THE TEACHER TURNOVER CRISIS. EVIDENCE FROM SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

In spite of numerous strategic interventions by the department of basic education to retain educators in the profession, there continues to be a high number of educators leaving the profession. This attrition of skilled personnel has had an adverse effect on the capacity of the state to realize its millennium development goals. These goals include achieving universal primary education by 2014. A key focus of the South African government strategic objective is to ensure the country has skilled expertise in various fields i.e. commerce, education, industry, science and technology etc. This goal can only be achieved in an environment of sustained investment in human capital development by the government. In the arena of education a significant contribution of the country's focus has been directed to teacher development. Despite these gargantuan efforts on the part of government, there continues to be a brain drain with high educator turnover. A tacit indication of this massive investment in education is the fact that of the R165 billion budgeted for education, R2.7 billion has been earmarked for teacher development. This clearly points out to the strategic importance of leadership and human capital development as critical areas for broad human resource development goals of the state.

INTRODUCTION

T his article examines the crisis of teacher turnover in South Africa, by providing a brief overview of the available literature on the subject and outlining causal factors leading to the problem. The table below gives an indication of the magnitude of the problem particularly since the post apartheid era.

The Cape Professional Teachers Association is an employee body that looks after the conditions of service of educators argued that up to twenty thousand teachers leave the profession every year (IOL News: 2008). In a reply to a parliamentary question, the Minister of Basic Education indicated that "between 2005 and 2008, 24,750 teachers left the profession". She further said that "South Africa is only producing 8000 teachers annually when about 20 000 teacher graduates are needed" (IOL News, 2010). A significant number of these teachers are poached by overseas countries with promises of better working conditions and in particular better salaries. Of concern is the fact that South Africa is losing the best teachers in scarce skill areas such as mathematics, science, technology and languages. One teacher Dudley Stuurman who is qualified to teach mathematics up to Grade 12 pointed out that he is leaving the country to teach in Bahrain in view of the fact that "the R6500.00 I get after tax is not enough for me to pay for a bond and a car ".

The existing literature on leadership, power and influence processes provides a theoretical basis for understanding the leadership process in formal organizations (Jacobs, 1970:1). Literature supporting leadership and effective leadership in particular is ever increasing. This implies the success of any institution, or any group within an institution, depends largely on the quality of its leadership. In general it is critically important that individuals are positively influenced towards the achievement of goals for the success of the institution. The relevance of this statement lies in the fact that in order to achieve the goals of quality education in South Africa, it is a *sine qua non* that educators be treated as professionals, with

dignity and respect, which is hardly the norm. The section below provides a conceptual overview of literature in the area of employee turnover. The remainder of the article will provide a comprehensive synopsis of the factors in South Africa that have contributed to the problem of high teacher turnover and the recommendations that can be considered to remedy the problem. Table 1 shows the percentage of terminations from 1997-2004

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

| Year | Termination Cause Excluding Contract Expiry | | | | | | |
	Deceased	Dismissal/Desertion	Medical Reason	Resigned	Retirement	Severance Package	Transfer
1997/98	7.%	9.1%	4.6%	43.1%	6.5%	28.4%	1.3%
1998/99	12.7%	3.4%	7.5%	44.3%	13.0%	15.8%	3.3%
1999/00	15.5%	4.6%	9.9%	48.2%	15.9%	4.9%	0.9%
2000/01	15.9%	3.6%	9.5%	51.1%	16.7%	2.5%	0.6%
2001/02	15.6%	3.4%	8.6%	48.3%	14.1%	9.4%	0.5%
2002/03	17.4%	3.2%	8.3%	53.6%	16.1%	0.9%	0.4%
2003/04	17.7%	2.2%	8.7%	53.1%	17.7%	0.2%	0.3%

This table shows the percentage of terminations in South Africa from 1997-2004. Source: MTT study

LITERATURE REVIEW

Wisegeek website (2012) describes employee turnover as the ratio of the number of employees a company must replace in a given time period to the average number total employees. Employee turnover occurs when employees leave their jobs and must be replaced. High employee turnover is prevalent in an environment where there is high dissatisfaction within the work environment. Replacing existing employees is costly to organizations and is destructive to service delivery (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009: 411).

The available literature posits that factors causing employee turnover are common in different industries. Some of these factors (particularly with relevance to the teaching profession) are the following: 1.) The economy, relating to the availability of other higher paying jobs. 2.) The performance of the organization where an organization perceived to be in economic difficulty will raise the specter of impending layoffs leading to workers seeking alternative employment 3.) The organizational culture involving the reward system, the strength of leadership, the ability of the organization to elicit a sense of commitment on the part of workers, and its development of a sense of shared goals amongst others will influence such indices of job satisfaction as turnover intentions and turnover rates. 4.) The characteristics of the job because some jobs are intrinsically more attractive than others. A job's attractiveness will be affected by many characteristics, including its repetitiveness, challenge, danger, perceived importance, and capacity to elicit a sense of accomplishment. A jobs' status is also important, as are many other factors. Source: (SIGMA Assessment systems.com).

Bennel and Akyempong (2007:4) point out Maslow's hierarchy of needs as one motivational theory that postulates human needs that must be met. There are five 'levels' of need, namely physiological (thirst, sex, hunger), safety (security, stability and protection), love and belonginess, self-esteem and self-actualization. A key proposition is that if the lower level needs remain unmet, the higher level needs cannot be fulfilled. This theory is particularly relevant to teachers because meeting the basic survival needs for food and shelter as well as security in conflict situations are the daily major challenges for teachers in many countries One of the famed points of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory refers to the inextricable relationship between high and low order needs. This means that as much as employees can achieve self-actualization, it is equally pertinent that low order needs pertaining to remuneration, job satisfaction be satisfactorily addressed.

Research reveals that institutions in South Africa periodically assess their employee's needs and levels of needs satisfaction. They follow a "one size fits all" approach (Robbins, Odendaal, Roodt, 2003:131). The attendant effect of this approach has had the invariable effect of demotivating and demoralizing employees to an extent that productivity levels are negatively affected. Celep (2003) in Xaba (2008: 288) posits that teachers levels of commitment is determined by their beliefs and acceptance of the school organization's goals and values, the willingness to exert effort on behalf of the school and a strong desire to keep up membership in the organization. Lower commitment to the school organization affects both the effectiveness of the school and causes teachers to be less successful or leave the profession. The human capital labor choice and compensation theories argue that individual choice of profession and their derived utility is not only affected by pecuniary rewards (monetary incentive earnings) but also by its non-pecuniary rewards (status of the profession, probability of being employed, opportunity costs and more holidays (SACE, 2010:4).

Poor levels of commitment invariably lead to low morale which Ngambi (2011: 763) points out can gradually destroy employees' commitment, adversely affect the product or service they offer and alienate clients and customers. Employee's satisfaction within the work environment is related to physical, psycho-social, emotional and economic factors (George, Louw & Badenhorst, 2008:1).

A major source of teacher dissatisfaction arises from disparities between the teaching profession and other professions with respect to the time, mode of payment of salaries, fringe benefits, promotion prospects and working conditions (Adelabu, (2005:10). This dissatisfaction invariably results in brain drain, which is defined by Shinn (2002) in Semela & the Institute of Education, Research & Training (2011), as a term coined by the 'British Royal Society' to describe the outflow of scientists to the US and Canada in the 1950's and 60's.

Dissatisfaction with working conditions invariably influences the psyche of teachers to the extent that they become radical. However teacher radicalism can become muted once the national system of education is institutionalized. On the other hand Samoff, 1994; & Carnoy, 1996, 1996) in Chisolm (1999,: 112) postulate that, there is growing literature which lists teachers' resistance at the workplace as manifested in high levels of absenteeism to the introduction of new controls brought about by structural austerity measures. In some aspects, teachers are regarded in the same way as other economic migrants in Africa in that they are often separated from their spouse and families due to the lack of suitable housing, the reluctance of spouse and children to live in rural areas and other economic and social factors (Bennel, 2003: 494). Teachers are according to Jansen (1998:28) also expected to reorganize the curriculum, increase the amount of time allocated to monitoring individual student progress against outcomes, administer appropriate forums of assessment and maintain comprehensive records. This places an inordinate burden on teachers' capacity to provide effective teaching, resulting in high resignation from the profession particularly since these demands are not balanced by a concomitant improvement in salary and fringe benefits.

Jansen (2001: 560) argues that there is a national obsession with educational outputs which diverts attention away from the educational inputs required to redress the historical inequalities that continue to bedevil the educational system after apartheid in South Africa. This along with many different interrelated factors have thwarted recent efforts at quality improvements including the rapid expansion in enrolment rates and the absence of classrooms and teaching and learning resources (Davidson, 2007: 158).

Teachers teach and work in schools that are usually administered by managers, who are known as principals or headmasters. The conditions of teachers' working life is influenced to a greater extent by the administration and leadership provided by principals, and it is widely assumed that school leadership directly influences the effectiveness of teachers and the achievement of outcomes of learners (Harlinger and Murphy: 1986) in (OECD, 2001:1). Principals are supposed to be dynamic and organic individuals

able to motivate teachers to ensure that the goal of quality education and leadership is provided to learners and their immediate communities. The objective conditions however demonstrate that a number of these managers are found wanting in so far as the provision of dynamic leadership is concerned.

The Mathew Goniwe School of Leadership has been made available for principals to undertake leadership and management training. This institution provides strategic management training to school managers. Strategic management and planning requires a radical shift for schools that previously focused on short term tasks and adopted a culture of dependency. The reality is that despite these interventions, there is limited evidence of a strategic approach to school management (Moloi, 2008: 466).

The overview outlined in the preceding paragraphs is meant to provide a contextual analysis of the situation prevalent in the schools and its attendant contribution to the problem of teachers leaving the profession. Hall, Altman, Nkomo et al. (2005) postulate that the process to change one's job is preceded by a process of job evaluation and determining alternative employment opportunities. Dissatisfaction with the workplace can be a very strong incentive to seek alternative employment opportunities elsewhere. This implies that leaving one's place of employment is not a decision to be taken lightly particularly in the context of the tough economic conditions in South Africa and globally especially in the past two years of the global economic meltdown.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCE

South Africa continues to experience a situation where teachers are resigning from the profession in droves. The following factors although not exhaustive are amongst some of the fundamental reasons behind the high turnover rate of teachers from the profession.

Educator workload is one of the main challenges facing the teaching fraternity today. The advent of the new curriculum of education, the Outcomes Based Education and the National Curriculum Statement (NSC) has implies the erosion of instructional time into the programs of teachers and schools (Chisholm, Hoadley, Kivulu et al. 2005). Teachers are now burdened with additional administrative responsibilities that in the past were the preserve of clerks employed by schools. These administrative responsibilities amongst others include the capturing of learner marks (Continuous Assessment /CASS), filling of learner portfolios without the attendant provision of office space, preparing learner reports, compiling data on learners progress on a quarterly basis which form the basis of the progress reports, preparing reports on learners social and family background, pastoral duties, professional duties like meetings, workshops, seminars, conferences and countless other responsibilities as enshrined in Chapter 3 3.1 (b) of the *Employment of Educators Act* (Act 76 of 1998).

Over and above this, teachers are expected to serve on committees which can number up to fifteen. These committees, range from Learners-Teacher Support Material, Sports, Fundraising, Exam etc. These committees take away from time teachers are supposed to spend in the classroom. For instance the government declaration that a majority of schools in townships and rural areas are to become "no fee schools" as reflected in the *Education Laws Amendment Act* (Act 24 of 2005) has placed the management of these schools with an additional responsibility to source funding for activities other than those that have to do with teaching and learning. This is because the Act only makes provision for funding of activities related to teaching and learning i.e. learner teacher support material and infrastructural development. This requires teachers, parents and learners to utilize precious teaching time to organize activities like beauty pageants in order to supplement the meager funds the school has in its kitty.

The amount of time that teachers spend on planning for lessons is disproportionate to the time spent presenting lessons in class. Department heads occasionally check teacher files with the main focus being whether the teachers has daily, weekly and quarterly lesson preparation forms for his/her subjects. On

average teachers spent 43-46% of their time in the classroom teaching. The national policy expects teachers to spend between 64% -79% of the 35 hour weekly schooling period, on actual teaching *Employment of Educators Act,* 1998(Act 76 of 1998). In some schools hardly any teaching takes place after lunch on Fridays. This trend is also reflected on pay days when educators receive their salaries. The situation is much more acute in rural areas where banks are situated far from places of work, forcing educators to leave work early on month end, navigate treacherous roads in an effort to access financial institutions like banks.

Most educators feel stressed because their inability to cope with this workload. Studies reveal that a significant number of teachers are absent from work as a result of psychological factors, fatigue, physical illness necessitated by being overworked. Yet evidence from previous research (Buwalda & Kok, 1991; Mwamwenda, Monyooe & Glencross, 1997) in Milner and Khoza (2008: 4) reveal that teachers stress levels in South Africa is extremely high and little appears to be done in the education sector to combat or ameliorate this issue. This coupled with the fact that there is still a significant number of vacant posts in the profession clearly points out to the need for hiring more teachers. It also implies workload problem will continue unabated for the foreseeable future. It is within this context that many educators resign from the profession for other perceived greener pastures.

Other critical factors leading to increased workload is the historical inequality in pupil teacher ratios. At one stage it was reported that Kwazulu Natal Provincial Department of Education had the highest teacher-pupil ratio at 38:1(Jarvis: 1999). Personal experience has been that in certain classes a teacher would have up to 51 learners in class. International comparative studies reveal the trend in some countries like the UK is 18:1 with countries in North Africa standing at an average of 19:1 (Huebler, 2008: 1). School Governing Bodies (SGB's) at historically advantaged institutions are able to use their massive budgets to employ additional teachers to alleviate the problem of high teacher-pupil ratios. Sadly the same privilege cannot be enjoyed by schools in historically disadvantaged areas owing to lack of finance.

The goal of universal education for all young people is being pursued at the expense of teachers whose labor is being exploited with little regard to their well-being. The end result is teacher inability to provide individual attention to slow learners. The consequent effect is adversely affecting the provision of quality education, which is needed if South Africa is to be a competitive player in the global world of commerce, technology culture, international political institutions and the economy.

Lost prestige is also a reason leading to the mass exodus from the profession. Most studies undertaken by researchers, casually glance at matters of education and general observation reveals the prestige the teaching profession enjoyed in the period before 1990 has largely degenerated. Kayuni and Tambulasi (2007: 91) point out that in the 1940s' to 1970s' teachers were seen as bringers of progress, modernity and development and were rewarded and respected accordingly. The profession which produced educators of note like the esteemed Zephania Mothopeng, T.W. Khambule amongst other luminaries, has now become the last resort amongst students when they enroll at institutions of higher learning. Teachers were the considered the *crème de la crème* of society. Unfortunately the professional prestige associated with teaching has declined at an alarming rate. If you can randomly enter any classroom in a South African school and ask learners their careers of choice, the likelihood of finding a learner interested in pursuing teaching as a profession is minimal.

In an effort to arrest this malaise, The Department of Basic Education has made available the Funza Lushaka Bursary Scheme to entice students to enroll in teaching programs at universities in South Africa. Recipients of the bursary are required to teach at a school for the same number of years that they receive the bursary (Department of Basic Education, 2008). Preliminary studies reveal that a number of students apply for the bursary scheme not because of the attraction to teaching as a profession but rather as a result of the broader socio economic situation in South Africa. To avoid the likelihood of sitting at home

without any prospects of employment, young people consider enrolling for a teaching qualification as better than nothing. "At least you are guaranteed that you will find work after completion of your studies "is a popular mantra amongst young South Africans. The same cannot be said about millions of young South African who are unemployed and with no foreseeable prospects of getting money to enroll at institutions of learning. Extensive studies are however yet to be conducted to ascertain the extent this intervention of the Funda Lushaka bursary scheme has assisted in restoring the attractiveness of the profession to young people.

The general decay in the moral fiber of society has to a larger extent also contributed to the degeneration of the teaching profession invariably contributing to many educators leaving the profession. The profession is generally perceived to have gone to the dogs. Learners at schools are generally disobedient, ill-disciplined and have no regard for authority. Bullying is only regarded as a Grade 2 offence in the Code of Conduct (2007:16) drafted by the Department of Education. This means that unlike Grade 4 offences which can be reported to the SAPS, bullying is largely considered a minor offence even though its effect has contributed to lady teachers fearing for their safety at schools. The promulgation of legislation outlawing corporal punishment has left teachers powerless to deal authoritatively with growing acts of intimidation associated with bullies in schools. The principle of *in loco parentis* is no longer the cornerstone of teacher-learner relations in schools owing to the fact that learners have all the rights and power to determine the school agenda as they deem fit.

Nonexistent security in schools has left teachers vulnerable to gun toting learners and their friends in surrounding communities who are able to enter school yards at will and terrorize teachers. Instances of learners physically attacking teachers have been widely reported in the media to the extent they are no longer deemed newsworthy. Teachers have become numb and are used to this phenomenon. The South African Police Service conducts regular searches at schools and illegal weapons ranging from guns, dagga, knifes and drugs have been found on learners (Looklocal newspaper: 2011).

Attrition rates in any profession are invariably linked to the issue of remuneration. Beardwell and Holden (2001:514) explained that the salary of a particular job reflected beliefs about the worth of jobs based on scope, level of responsibility, skill requirements, objectionableness of duties, commercial worth and strategic relevance. Over and above that Bull (2005:22) postulates that job satisfaction is an important area of research because it is correlated to enhanced job performance, positive work values, high levels of employee motivation and lower levels of absenteeism, turnover and burnout. The trifle remuneration enjoyed by teachers in the public sector has seriously compromised organizational performance. This goes against the grain of provisions of the *White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service Delivery (1997*) (Batho Pele) in particular section3 (8) value for money which require public servants to provide services economically, effectively and efficiently. This principle cannot be achieved on the kind of salaries teachers are paid.

Recruitment agencies have reported that they receive up to 250 calls a month from teachers interested in being placed on their waiting list for possible opportunities to teach abroad where they are likely to receive up to three times the salary they receive in South Africa (Footsprint Recruiting; 2009). The Department of Basic Education is now recruiting educators from countries such as Zimbabwe and Cuba particularly in areas such as mathematics, science and technology. This practice defeats the country's skills development agenda given the fact that after the contracted period of work the expatriate teachers simply pack their bags and leave for their homelands without having transferred the requisite skills to local teachers. It is therefore not surprising to see a significant number of educators leaving the profession for better job avenues elsewhere.

The Department of Basic Education has introduced a performance based reward system called the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) in an effort to enhance quality assurance in the teaching

fraternity. The public was informed that "IQMS signals a new approach to performance evaluation in the South African school system" (Report on the IQMS: 2006). Teachers were to be remunerated in accordance with their performance in and outside of the classroom. However for teachers to be adequately rewarded for their performance, there is a need for the performance evaluation process to be conducted by properly trained managers which is not currently happening in schools.

The reality in South Africa is that Development Support Groups (DSG's) consisting of the teachers' immediate supervisor the Head of Department (HoD) and a peer educator have been found wanting with regard to capacity in implementing the basic principles of the IQMS (The Voice- SADTU: 2009). The end result has been that almost all educators in the system have been receiving the 1% once off annual amount based on performance irrespective of whether the teachers have been providing a quality service. Results for the national senior certificate in South Africa have been progressively declining in quality over the years coupled with the poor performance of learners in mathematics and science, and in international literacy assessments compared with their peers internationally (City Press, 3 July 2011). This is indicative of the general discontent of educators with their condition of service and in particular this suspect performance management evaluation system.

One fundamental reason behind the massive migratory movement of teachers from the professions has been demonstrated over the years by the high number of teacher's strikes over poor salaries. Haffajee and Bisseker (2002: 30-32) point out that teacher widespread demonstrations, picketing and strikes has been the order the order of the day in South Africa. Almost every year teachers in the public service engage in organized and wildcat strikes over the conditions that they find themselves in. More often than not the strikes end not because teachers are happy with the outcome of salary negotiations, but rather because they feel the pinch of the salary deductions that are to be effected on their salaries in line with the principle of no work, no pay as enshrined in the *Labour Relation Act* (Act 66 of 1995).

Teacher's strikes have become an annual ritual with the issue of salaries always at the center of the dispute between the employer and the employees. In an effort to provide their kids with quality education, many parents are taking their children out of the public schooling system and enrolling them in private schools despite the exorbitant costs of doing so. This signals a motion of no confidence in the public schooling sector largely as a result of the unending teacher strikes bedeviling this sector. Bernstein (2010) argues that these strikes have highlighted the government's failure to improve apartheid era education levels that have South Africa behind the other societies in the world. A doubling of the education budget to R165.1 billion ($22.4 billion) in the last five years has failed to reverse a decline in the number of educators leaving the profession.

One grave feature which cannot be overlooked is the sensitive issue of deployment of teachers to schools. In allocating staff to classes, account should be taken of the qualities, experience and expertise of teachers and matching these to curricular objectives. Where applicable, the redeployment of teachers should be carefully planned and regularly reviewed (IIEP, 2009). With the advent of democracy it was hoped that teachers in historically advantaged schools would be willing to contribute to the democratic project by offering to be redeployed to historically disadvantaged schools with high intake of learners and a poor resource base. The intention was also to achieve a reasonable ratio of one teacher to 30-35 learners. However, a negligible number of teachers took up this offer. This has left a bitter taste for predominantly African (black) teachers who have not seen the fruits of integration as envisaged by the democratic project.

Many disillusioned teachers left the profession and opted to take severance packages. Included in this group were some of the most experienced members of the profession. With the subsequent exodus of teachers from the profession, the government was compelled to rehire retired teachers and lure them back to the profession. This led to the negotiation of compromises which included offering these retired

teachers senior management positions in the schools (Chudnovsky, 1998:1). This move generated a great deal of bitterness amongst teachers left in the profession and led to subsequent resignations owing to the perception that they were not taken seriously as working professionals.

Teacher disillusionment has also been caused by what is referred to as cadre deployment, where members of the ruling party in government get preference over promotional posts. While other teachers with the requisite skills, experience and qualification may spend their entire career as Post level one educators (entry level). Members and leaders of the South African Democratic Union (SADTU) which is an alliance partner to the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC) get preferential treatment when it comes to promotional posts in the public sector. This occurs irrespective of whether these members are qualified or not (News24:2011). A lot of teachers and, civil society and members of the public have bemoaned this practice as part of the spoils system the ruling party is renowned for. The practice has had an attendant effect of demoralizing and demotivating committed and competent teachers who are ultimately lost to the profession because they cannot stomach this blatant system of patronage and being overlooked despite their competency.

The legacy of apartheid has left the profession in dire straits. Hopes that the advent of democracy will tilt the scale in favor of professionalization of the teaching profession have not materialized as expected. The massive financial injection in education has not been met with concomitant investment in the teacher as the most fundamental constituent part of the education milieu. In order to halt high teacher turnover, the following recommendations are provided: 1.) Decisive measures over and above the Fundza Lushaka bursary scheme need to be commissioned to market teaching as a profession. 2.) Competitive remuneration packages have to be offered to teachers almost equal to those offered by independent schools to halt this migration. 3.) The professionalization of teaching not as a theory but rather in practical terms. 4.) Incentives for teachers who continuously produce good results is necessary in order to motivate and inspire them to remain in the profession. 5.) Massive investment in infrastructure development seeing that one of the causal factors of high pupil-teacher ratio is the shortage of schools particularly in rural areas. **6.)** Enforcement of strict disciplinary measures on learners will restore the confidence of teachers in the profession and make them buoyant to go an extra mile in providing quality education to learners. 7.) To seriously invest in the area of teacher training and development unlike the current trend where teachers are trained in the implementation of a new curriculum in 5 days and be expected to be competent. 8.) Reopening of teacher training colleges to cope with the increased demand for teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

This study has some limitations which can be addressed in future research. One shortcoming of the study is reliance mainly on literature review and document study as a research methodology. Over and above this is the problem of obtaining reliable data on the number of teachers resigning from the teaching profession. It is difficult to obtain reliable statistics on the actual extent of the problem. This can be attributed to the highly sensitive political environment in South Africa around the actual usage of statistical data. Employee organizations like SADTU do not have reliable data on the magnitude of the problem and other data may be outdated. A new area of study for future research (which is very relevant the topic) could be the reasons behind the closure of a large number of schools in townships/suburbs.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The findings in this study are pertinent in assisting to understand political, social, cultural and economic context underpinning the high teacher turnover from the teaching profession in South Africa. The article further outlines comprehensively the literature available on the subject of employee turnover and the causal factors that are compelling teachers to resign from the profession in numbers. The study is able to point out that one of the fundamental reasons that cause employee resignations is adverse conditions of

service of educators in the workplace. The article was able to provide available data that demonstrate the extent of the problem. This data was obtained from the Department of Basic Education, research institutions and the literature available on the subject from secondary sources. The data proved conclusively that there is a disproportion between the number of teachers joining the profession and those leaving the profession with the scales heavily tilted in favor of those resigning from teaching. The article contributes in understanding a critical issue that if left unattended might undermine the socio-economic strides that South Africa has made since the advent of democracy in 1994.

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