Factors Affecting Teacher Morale in Select Independent and Public Schools in South Africa

[1]CD Mc Ilrath, [2]K K Govender

[1,2] Regenesys Business School

Abstract

Since teacher morale in South Africa appears to be at an all-time low, it is important to research the factors affecting teacher morale. Thus, this research focused on a sample of teachers in the Greater Benoni Area, in the Gauteng Province, to examine the relationship between the factors contributing to the morale and the current level of morale among the teachers. The study aimed to ascertain the teachers' perceptions of the morale and the relevance/ importance of the factors contributing to their perception of the morale.

The single most significant findings of this research were that:
- all the identified factors played a significant role in determining the levels of teacher morale,
- the morale is low among teachers at both independent and publics school in the Greater Benoni Area, Gauteng, South Africa.

It is recommended that the leadership of the schools develop strategies to manage the factors which are contributing to the low morale, which if left unchecked will contribute to inter-alia, teacher shortages as well as poor performance.

Keywords: education; teacher morale; performance; schools; South Africa

Introduction

South Africa is characterised by vast socio-economic inequalities and the country is currently experiencing the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic across all sectors, primary among them being education. In addition, the country is plagued by endemic corruption, protests, high unemployment, in-equality and poverty, some of which have their roots in the apartheid era.

With respect to the state of education, Dr Mamphela Ramphele, a former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, asserts that a dysfunctional education system as "one of the consequences of a deep-woundedness in our society" (Morgan and Dale-Jones, 2011). Teachers are not immune to the realities of this tough socio-economic climate and the current socio-economic environment. Clearly, there are vast divides amongst the teaching population in terms of inter-alia, their geographical location, resulting from urban and rural settings (Morgan and Dale-Jones, 2011).

Although unemployment is a global phenomenon, the concern is that in South Africa, the unemployment rate among people aged 15-34 remains at around 38% (Statistics SA, 2018). Many of the youth are not being absorbed into the labour market as they have little or no education and a limited skills set. Saunders (2002) as cited in Morgan and Dale-Jones (2011) assert that one of the reasons for the high unemployment rate is the "failed education system". Teachers are at the heart of this system and they are experiencing the "brunt" of the political and socio-economic dissatisfaction.

Morgan and Dale-Jones (2011) emphasize that the Teachers Upfront dialogue which was held in Gauteng, emphasised the low morale among teachers, with some participants arguing that teachers should not be blamed for the failure of the current educational system, as reported in the Mail and Guardian newspaper.

Unfortunately, there is much negative press about the South African educational system, which also alludes to dysfunctional schools, incompetent teachers, lack of teacher training facilities, all of which reflect poorly on teaching as a profession.

As reported in the Herald (24 May 2018), Angi Jones states that "if government hopes to improve the educational system in South Africa, it will need to look seriously at teacher morale". She argues that teachers are under the

"cosh" and are suffering physically, mentally and spiritually. Moreover, she continues by saying that "teachers are our national treasure" and that if the trend of teachers leaving this "noble profession" continues, then "the country will be in serious trouble".

Teaching today is becoming increasingly demanding due to various reasons and the expectations placed on teachers today appears to be increasing exponentially in South Africa (Liebenberg, 2017). This is most definitely having an effect on the teacher morale, since according to Miya (2017), teacher morale in South Africa appears to be at an all-time low. There is a shortage of well-qualified teachers and teachers are either not entering the profession after qualifying or leaving for various reasons (Miya, 2017). Thus, there is need to understand the factors that contribute to teacher morale, either positively or negatively. Once these factors are identified and acted upon, the educational system will be able to not only attract, but also retain top quality teachers.

It is against this background, this paper reports on a study conducted to examine the factors that affect teacher morale in both Independent and Public Schools in the Greater Benoni Area in Gauteng Province, South Africa.
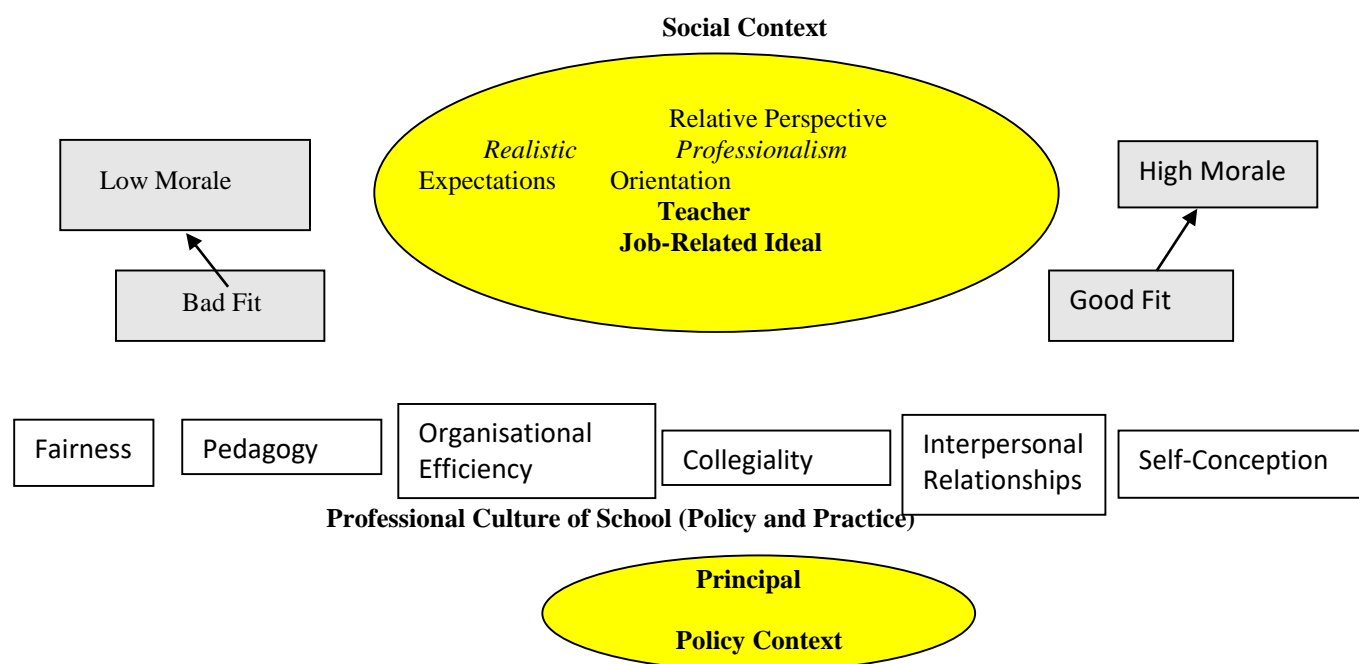
Literature Review

According to Hart (2000 cited in Evans, 2001), the literature on teacher morale reflects a general ambiguity, which has never been fully resolved in terms of a "consensus definition". Not only is research on teacher more fairly limited, it is also not current (Senechal, Sober and Hope, 2016). Teacher morale has been defined as a "phenomenon or process" and a "perception or state of mind" (Senechal, Sober and Hope, 2016). Teacher morale also includes characteristics such as well-being, satisfaction, energy levels, enthusiasm and hope and according to Senechal et al. (2016), teacher morale is used interchangeably with terms such as stress, commitment, depression, etc.

The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire, developed by Bentley and Rempel (1970,) which is still used today, defines teacher morale as the "professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual and group goals in a given job situation".

The second model depicted in Figure 1, which is designed by Evans (2001), defines teacher morale as a "state of mind determined by the individual's anticipation of the extent of satisfaction of those needs that he or she perceives as significantly affecting his/ her total world situation" (Evans,1997, p.832 cited in Senechal et al., 2016).

Figure 1: Evan's Model of Teacher Morale

Source: Senchal et al. 2016

The Evans Model (Figure 1) above was borrowed from research done by Hoyle in 1975 (Senechal et al., 2016). This model focuses on two components which are central to this research project, namely, teacher and job-related ideal and the culture of the school. The job-related ideal reflects an "individual's current values, needs and

expectations" (Evans, 2001 as cited in Senechal et al., 2016). According to Evans (2001), the aforementioned, namely, the individual's current values, needs and expectations, are influenced by three factors, namely:

- *Relative perspective* which includes ideologies and the way an individual thinks about work in relation to personal life.
- *Realistic expectations* which is influenced by perspectives. In other words, what the individual expects from the work situation.
- *Teacher's professional orientation* which includes the above two factors. Clearly, what is important to one teacher is not necessarily important to another.

Factors affecting Teacher Morale

In order to extract the factors affecting teacher morale, the Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire which consists of 100 questions, was used in conjunction with the Evans Model, to identify common themes, which resulted in ten (10) factors that were identified, which may affect teacher morale. These include the following:

- Teacher benefits and Remuneration
- Interpersonal relationships and a sense of "belongingness"
- School Goals and Culture
- Policy and Curriculum
- Parental involvement and interference
- Levels of pupil discipline
- Leadership and Management
- Working conditions and environment
- Opportunities for growth and development
- Teacher workload

For the purpose of this research, all the above factors were considered as independent variables and their relationship with teacher's perceptions of the morale which prevailed in their schools, which was defined as the dependent variable, was examined. A brief discussion of each of the 10 variables/factors will suffice, since an exhaustive discussion cannot be conducted in the context of a research paper.

Teacher Benefits and Remuneration

Vroom (1964 cited in Chamberlin, Wragg and Hagres, 1992), in his Expectancy Theory, questioned the extent to which teachers are motivated by money and suggested that "people should not be expected to work for rewards they do not find attractive". This suggests that teacher's effort and performance is not a simple equation and that teachers enter the profession for reasons other than remuneration.

Keskonis and Siddiqi (n.d. cited in Ogedegbe and Bashiri, 2014) indicate that morale is an important perception that allows employees to be more productive with improved levels of performance. Remuneration and benefits become a "pay for competence" issue which increases employee morale, "provided the benefits are seen as equitable".

Interpersonal Relationships and a Sense of Belonging

Interpersonal relationships and a sense of belonging are intrinsic motivators of behaviour which refer to a sense of interdependence and how people influence one another, share thoughts and feelings and engage in activities with one another (Peters, Le Cornu and Collins, 2005 cited in Curee, 2012). Failure by teachers to feel a sense of belonging leads to social isolation, loneliness and decreased morale (Goodman, 1993 cited in Curee, 2012).

School Goals and Culture

Miller (1981 cited in Willis and Varner, 2010) indicates that there is a clear link between the school culture and teacher morale. School culture results from the conscious and unconscious interactions, values and practices found in a school and is often shaped by the school's history and traditions. Positive school cultures create environments conducive to professional satisfaction, teacher morale and effectiveness and crucial to teacher morale, when examining school culture, are the quality of relationships and interactions experienced by the teacher.

Policy and Curriculum

There appears to be incongruence between the role of teachers and education policy change, since educational policies and curricula often only become reality once implemented at micro-level (Smit, 2001). Clearly, the way teachers experience educational policy in South Africa can and does affect the levels of morale.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is regarded as an important element for effective education and learning to take place at schools (Epstein, 2001 cited in Hornby and La Faele, 2011). This parental involvement improves parent-teacher relationships, school climate, pupil behaviour and work ethic, a sense of teacher well-being and morale. When parental involvement "crosses the line" from participatory activities to "hijacking" classroom activities, unwelcome parental involvement and parental interference is the result, which may contribute to low teacher morale.

Levels of Learner Discipline

Unacceptable behaviour of pupils in South African schools remains a major concern for stakeholders in the teaching profession (de Witt and Lessing, 2013). Negative behaviour, which involves ignoring and disrespecting teachers, tends to undermine teacher authority. According to Axup and Gersh (2008, cited in de Witt and Lessing, 2013), these behavioural problems are affecting the teachers psychological well-being, which then leads to stress and burnout.

Leadership and Management

School leaders and management have the power to influence teacher morale by their actions (Hunter-Boykin and Evans, 1995 cited in Robinson, 2010). Leadership and management play a crucial role in a teachers "sense of belonging" and this adds to a sense of improved teacher morale (Lumsden,1998). He indicates that principals and teacher leaders of schools who engage with and are supportive of their teaching staff, tend to enhance teacher productivity and ultimately, teacher morale.

Working Conditions and Environment

A school environment contributes to the overall climate of a school and is regarded as a crucial factor in determining the level of teacher morale (Black, 2001). Lumsden (1998) suggests that a healthy school environment and good levels of teacher morale are closely related.

Opportunities for Growth and Development

Gibson (2009) indicated that the "principal task of the teacher is to teach students and this task should be carried out with a high sense of commitment, which commitment refers to morale" Ongoing professional teacher development not only keeps teachers up-to-date with "best practice", new technologies, curriculum development, available resources, etc. but also gives teachers the opportunity to collaborate and experiment with fellow colleagues who work in similar environments and cultures. This collaboration creates a sense of community which can boost teacher morale.

Teacher Workload

Irwin (2018) indicated that the workload of teachers is becoming increasingly administrative in nature, with an increased focus on "tick-box" duties, which deflect from the teacher's core function. Irwin (2018) concludes that these "anti-educational measures have increased teacher workload and damaged school effectiveness". According to Hepburn (2018), teacher morale has been "seriously damaged" by mounting levels of bureaucracy and increased workloads.

An understanding of the above factors which were extracted from two previous well-document research studies (the Evans Model and the Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire), created context for this exploratory study which was conducted among a sample of teachers and managers of both public and independent schools in a select region in South Africa.

Research Methodology

A quantitative approach was used, since 'quantitative studies based on the research problem typically involve a description of the phenomenon and a search for pertinent variables and their inter-relationships. Moreover, this study explored relationships between variables, which relationships can only be ''tested'' using quantitative data.

Population, Sampling and Sample

The target population for this study included all teachers from both Independent and Public Schools in the Greater Benoni Area. However, time and cost factors were considered, along with the need to be realistic regarding the data collection, thus only a sample of the population was surveyed. Purposive sampling method was used and 200 questionnaires were dispatched to eight (8) schools in the Greater Benoni Area. A total of 139 useable questionnaires were returned, which response allowed for an error of margin of 8.28%, which is well within the accepted range.

Data Collection

As mentioned above, the survey questions were adapted from the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire and Evans Model of teacher morale. The questionnaire comprised of three sections; Section A consisted of 15 questions related to the biographical data of the participants; Section B consisted of 25 questions that attempted to probe the perceptions of teachers regarding the importance of the factors affecting teacher morale and Section C consisted of the same 25 questions, which probed the perceptions of teachers regarding the actual levels of teacher morale.

The questions were constructed on a five-point Likert scale, where 1= Not important at all and 5= Very important.

DATA ANALYSIS

Both descriptive and inferential statistics are reported. Although the research items were extracted from previously developed and validated instruments, it was deemed necessary to assure the validity and reliability of the adapted questionnaire, as this will ensure that the research processes and findings are credible and acceptable. The Cronbach alpha value of the 85 item measurements was calculated as 0.773, which was deemed acceptable, and confirms the validity of the questionnaire. Although there are different types of validity, only content and construct validity were considered, since construct validity refers to the interpretation that is used and given to a set of scores (MacMillan and Schumacher, 1993, p. 224).

Research Findings

Table 1 reflects the biographical data of the respondents.

Table: 1 Biographical Data

•	Male respondents	24.5%
•	Female respondents	75.5%
•	English medium schools	64%
•	Afrikaans medium schools	18.7%
•	Dual medium schools	15.8%
•	Parallel medium schools	1.4%
•	Independent schools	30.2%
•	Public schools	69.8%
•	Primary schools	41.7%
•	Secondary schools	51.1%
•	Combined schools	6.5%
•	Special schools	0.7%
•	Educator respondents	79.9%
•	Management respondents	20.1%

It is evident from Table 1, that the vast majority (75.5%) of the respondents were female, which could be considered normal, as there are more female teachers in South Africa. The vast majority (79.9%) of the respondents were level educators, with those in management being 20.1%.

Table 2 reflects the perceptions of teachers regarding the importance of the various factors affecting teacher morale. The data is largely self-explanatory with all factors being perceived as being ''Important". For example, if one considers the response to question one concerning the importance of ''working as teams', it will be apparent the an overwhelming majority (95.7%) of the respondents indicated this as being and important factor.

Table 2: Perception of the Importance of the Factors Affecting Morale

Questions			Not important at ,	Not important	Uncertain	Important	Very important	Total
1) How important is it that a school has teachers working as a team?	**B1**	**Count**	1	1	4	20	113	139
		Row N %	0,7%	0,7%	2,9%	14,4%	81,3%	100,0%
2) How important is it that a school have teachers who are appreciated by their colleagues?	**B2**	**Count**	0	0	6	24	109	139
		Row N %	0,0%	0,0%	4,3%	17,3%	78,4%	100,0%
3) How important is it that a school acknowledge teacher successes and frustrations?	**B3**	**Count**	0	2	12	35	90	139
		Row N %	0,0%	1,4%	8,6%	25,2%	64,7%	100,0%
4) How important is it that a school has a curriculum that is supported by all the stakeholders of the school?	**B4**	**Count**	0	0	2	35	102	139
		Row N %	0,0%	0,0%	1,4%	25,2%	73,4%	100,0%
5) How important is it that a school offer financial incentives to experienced educators?	**B5**	**Count**	4	5	15	46	69	139
		Row N %	2,9%	3,6%	10,8%	33,1%	49,6%	100,0%
6) How important is it that a school recognise teachers who improve their qualifications?	**B6**	**Count**	1	0	12	41	85	139
		Row N %	0,7%	0,0%	8,6%	29,5%	61,2%	100,0%
7) How important is it that a school remunerate fairly and transparently for work done?	**B7**	**Count**	1	1	14	26	97	139
		Row N %	0,7%	0,7%	10,1%	18,7%	69,8%	100,0%
8) How important is it that a school administer		**Count**	4	2	9	23	101	139

salary increases and benefits in a transparent way?	**B8**	**Row N %**	2,9%	1,4%	6,5%	16,5%	72,7%	100,0%
9) How important is it that a school enable teachers to provide a satisfactory standard of living for their family?	**B9**	**Count**	1	0	7	14	117	139
		Row N %	0,7%	0,0%	5,0%	10,1%	84,2%	100,0%
10) How important is it that a school provide ways of improving the teaching skills of teachers?	**B10**	**Count**	0	1	3	28	107	139
		Row N %	0,0%	0,7%	2,2%	20,1%	77,0%	100,0%
11) How important is it that a school has a vision that accommodates teacher aspirations?	**B11**	**Count**	0	2	13	45	79	139
		Row N %	0,0%	1,4%	9,4%	32,4%	56,8%	100,0%
12) How important is it that a school allows teachers to effectively use their skills in the school environment?	**B12**	**Count**	0	0	3	43	93	139
		Row N %	0,0%	0,0%	2,2%	30,9%	66,9%	100,0%
13) How important is it that a school has a sense of congruence between its needs and my own needs?	**B13**	**Count**	0	0	19	47	73	139
		Row N %	0,0%	0,0%	13,7%	33,8%	52,5%	100,0%
14) How important is it that a school have good levels of pupil discipline?	**B14**	**Count**	0	0	2	27	110	139
		Row N %	0,0%	0,0%	1,4%	19,4%	79,1%	100,0%
15) How important is it that a school deal with disciplinary matters in an	**B15**	**Count**	0	0	2	21	116	139
		Row N %	0,0%	0,0%	1,4%	15,1%	83,5%	100,0%

appropriate way?							
16) How important is it that a school have teachers who are happy at school and who enjoy teaching?	**B16**	**Count**	0	1	4	21	113	139
		Row N %	0,0%	0,7%	2,9%	15,1%	81,3%	100,0%
17) How important is it that a school has a well-balanced curriculum?	**B17**	**Count**	0	1	2	28	108	139
		Row N %	0,0%	0,7%	1,4%	20,1%	77,7%	100,0%
18) How important is it that a school encourage good interpersonal relationships among stakeholders?	**B18**	**Count**	1	2	5	42	89	139
		Row N %	0,7%	1,4%	3,6%	30,2%	64,0%	100,0%
19) How important is it that a school allow teacher input into policy formulation?	**B19**	**Count**	2	0	8	39	90	139
		Row N %	1,4%	0,0%	5,8%	28,1%	64,7%	100,0%
20) How important is it that a school creates an environment that all stakeholders can feel proud of?	**B20**	**Count**	0	1	3	34	101	139
		Row N %	0,0%	0,7%	2,2%	24,5%	72,7%	100,0%
21) How important is it that a school has a teacher workload that is fair?	**B21**	**Count**	0	2	7	23	107	139
		Row N %	0,0%	1,4%	5,0%	16,5%	77,0%	100,0%
22) How important is it that a school deals with parents in a professional manner?	**B22**	**Count**	0	1	5	19	114	139
		Row N %	0,0%	0,7%	3,6%	13,7%	82,0%	100,0%
23) How important is it that a school has a principal who	**B23**	**Count**	1	0	2	22	114	139

displays a participative style of leadership?		**Row N %**	0,7%	0,0%	1,4%	15,8%	82,0%	100,0%
24) How important is it that a school have parents who are actively involved in their children's education?	**B24**	**Count**	0	1	9	20	109	139
		Row N %	0,0%	0,7%	6,5%	14,4%	78,4%	100,0%
25) How important is it that a school have teachers who are actively involved in the decision making process?	**B25**	**Count**	0	4	9	52	74	139
		Row N %	0,0%	2,9%	6,5%	37,4%	53,2%	100,0%

Table 3 reflects the perceptions of the actual level of morale in the institution currently. The same interpretation as provided for Table 2 will apply to this table.
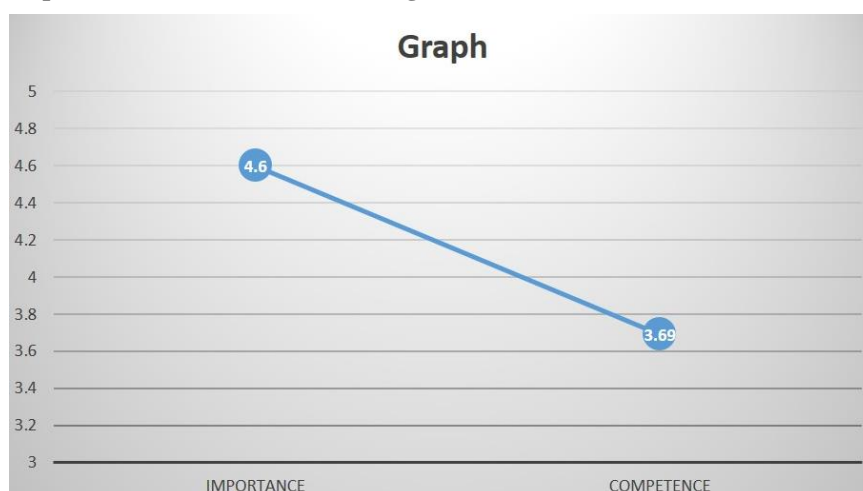
TABLE 3: Perception of the Importance of the Factors Affecting Teacher Morale

Question	Section C	Mean		Mode	Rank
C 23	How competent is your school at having a principal who displays a participative style of leadership?	**4.19**		**5**	**1**
C 22	How competent is your school at dealing with parents in a professional manner?	**4.11**		**4**	**2**
C 12	How competent is your school at allowing teachers to effectively use their skills in the school environment?	**4.04**		**4**	**3**
C 20	How competent is your school at creating an environment that all stakeholders can feel proud of?	**4.02**		**4**	**4**
C 10	How competent is your school at providing ways of improving the teaching skills of teachers?	**3.93**		**4**	**5**
C 15	How competent is your school at dealing with disciplinary matters in an appropriate way?	**3.90**		**4**	**6**
C 17	How competent is your school at having a well-balanced curriculum?	**3.86**		**4**	**7**
C 11	How competent is your school at having a vision that accommodates teacher aspirations?	**3.85**		**4**	**8**
C 1	How competent is your school at having teachers working as a team?	**3.82**		**4**	**9**

C 4	How competent is your school at having a curriculum that is supported by all the stakeholders of the school?	3.82		4	9
C 14	How competent is your school at having good levels of pupil discipline?	3.82		4	9
C 18	How competent is your school at encouraging good interpersonal relationships among stakeholders?	3.78		4	10
C 13	How competent is your school at having a sense of congruence between its needs and my own needs?	3.72		4	11
C 2	How competent is your school at having teachers who are appreciated by their colleagues?	3.65		4	12
C 19	How competent is your school at allowing teacher input into policy formulation?	3.65		4	12
C 16	How competent is your school at having teachers who are happy at school and who enjoy teaching?	3.65		4	13
C 24	How competent is your school at having parents who are actively involved in their children's education?	3.51		3	14
C 3	How competent is your school at acknowledging teacher successes and frustrations?	3.49		4	15
C 9	How competent is your school at enabling teachers to provide a satisfactory standard of living for their family?	3.45		3	16
C 6	How competent is your school at recognising teachers who improve their qualifications?	3.43		4	17
C 8	How competent is your school at administering salary increases and benefits in a transparent way?	3.38		3	18
C 25	How competent is your school at having teachers who are actively involved in the decision making process?	3.37		4	19
C 21	How competent is your school at having a teacher workload that is fair?	3.35		3	20
C 7	How competent is your school at remunerating fairly and transparently for work done?	3.34		4	21
C 5	How competent is your school at offering financial incentives to experienced educators?	3.12		4	22

Figure 2 depicts a comparison of the ''Importance'' of the factors affecting teacher morale with the ''Competence'' which implies their perception of the current level of morale.

Figure 2: The Importance of the Factors Affecting Morale and the Current level of Morale

When examining Figure 2 above, which relates to teacher's mean scores regarding both the importance of the factors affecting teacher morale and their perception of how the factors are currently applied in their schools (competence), it can be noted that there is an incongruence between the mean scores. It appears that when answering questions regarding the importance of the factors affecting morale, a respondent most often will indicate their espoused theory of action. When the espoused theory (which is the importance) placed on a specific factor by a teacher matches his/her theory in use (competence), then they are considered congruent (Argyris and Schon, 1974, p. 7). The problem occurs when a teacher's ideal situation (espoused theory or importance) is not the same as the theory in use (competence), then feelings of dissonance may occur (Weiten, 1992, p. 598).

Thus, from Figure 2, it can be noticed that their appears to be an incongruence (dissonance) between the respondent's mean scores on the items associated with ''importance'' and items associated with ''competence.'' When dissonance occurs, teachers will attempt to reduce this dissonance by using avoidance, substitution and devaluation" (Sergiovanni and Starratt, 1998, p. 318). The results of this dissonance will then manifest as low teacher morale.

It was hypothesized that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of male and female teachers for both the 'importance'' and 'competence'' of the factors affecting teacher morale. However, this was not upheld, since the outcome of the t-test was a p=value of 0.05%, which implies that there is a sense of congruence between the perceptions of both male and female educators regarding the 'importance' and 'competence' of the factors purported to affect staff morale at the schools.

With respect to the hypothesis which stated that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of respondents from the Independent and Public Schools, for both 'importance' and 'competence' of the factors affecting teacher morale, the high p-values for mean scores of both Independent and Public Schools (.607 and .419 respectively), indicate that the hypothesis is also not upheld.

Table 4 reflects the ranking, according to the means of the perception of ''importance'' and ''competence'' of the ten factors that affect teacher morale. In order to establish whether there are statistically significant differences in the mean scores between the factors relating to 'importance' and those relating to 'competence,' several hypotheses were postulated and tested using the 2-tailed t-test.

TABLE 4: Ranking of Factors affecting Morale in terms of Importance and Competence

FACTOR	IMPORTANCE MEAN	IMPORTANCE RANK	COMPETENCE MEAN	COMPETENCE RANK
1. Teacher benefits and remuneration	4.52	10	3.32	9

2. Interpersonal relationships and a sense of belonging	**4.62**	**6**	**3.62**	**8**
3. School goals and culture	**4.53**	**9**	**3.73**	**6**
4. Policy and curriculum	**4.67**	**3**	**3.77**	**5**
5. Parental involvement and interference	**4.73**	**2**	**3.80**	**3**
6. Levels of pupil discipline	**4.79**	**1**	**3.85**	**2**
7. Leadership and management	**4.59**	**7**	**3.77**	**5**
8. Working conditions and environment	**4.66**	**4**	**4.03**	**1**
9. Opportunities for growth and development	**4.56**	**8**	**3.78**	**4**
10. Teacher workload	**4.63**	**5**	**3.68**	**7**

The relationship between the learner's behaviour and teacher morale was examined and it was established that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of ''importance '' and ''competence''. This is reflected in Table 5.

Table 5: The Relationship between Learner Behaviour and Teacher Morale

Factor 6	**Type**	**Mean**	**Rank order**	**Student t-test (p-value)**
Levels of pupil discipline	Importance	4.79	1	$P<0.05$
	Competence	3.85	2	*

Table 6: Relationship between Parental Involvement and Teacher Morale

Factor 5	**Type**	**Mean**	**Rank order**	**Student t-test (p-value)**
Parental involvement	Importance	4.73	2	$P<0.05$
	Competence	3.80	3	*

and interference				

* Statistically significant at the 5% level (p<0.05)

Table 6 reflects that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores regarding 'importance'' and ''competence'' which implies that parental involvement and interference is a key influencer of the level of teacher morale.

The next relationship was postulated as follows: There is a significant difference between the mean scores of Importance and competence for working conditions and environment as an identified aspects of teacher morale and the outcome of the t-test procedure is reflected in Table 7.

Table 7: The Relationship between Working Conditions and Teacher Moral

Factor 8	Type	Mean	Rank order	Student t-test (p-value)
Working conditions and environment	Importance	4.66	4	P<0.05 *
	Competence	4.03	1	

* Statistically significant at the 5% level (p<0.05)

Table 7 indicates that there is indeed a significant relationship between the hypothesized variables cited above, since the p value is less than 0.05% .

It was next hypothesized that there is a significant relationship between the mean scores of teacher benefits and remuneration and teacher morale. The results in Table 8 confirm this postulation.

Table 8: Relationship between Benefits and Teacher Morale

Factor 1	Type	Mean	Rank order	Student t-test (p-value)
Teacher benefits and remuneration	Importance	4.52	10	P<0.05 *
	Competence	3.32	9	

* Statistically significant at the 5% level (p<0.05)

Discussion

The findings confirm that teachers' remuneration does influence their morale and this is not in line with Vroom's (1964 cited in Chamberlin et al., 1992) Expectancy Theory where he questioned the extent to which teachers are motivated by money. However, Jacobson (1992) indicated that teachers do respond to and are perhaps are driven by financial incentives. According to Keskonis and Siddiqi (2012 cited in Ogedegbe and Bashiri, 2014), remuneration and benefits become a "pay for competence" issue, which relates to and influences levels of teacher morale.
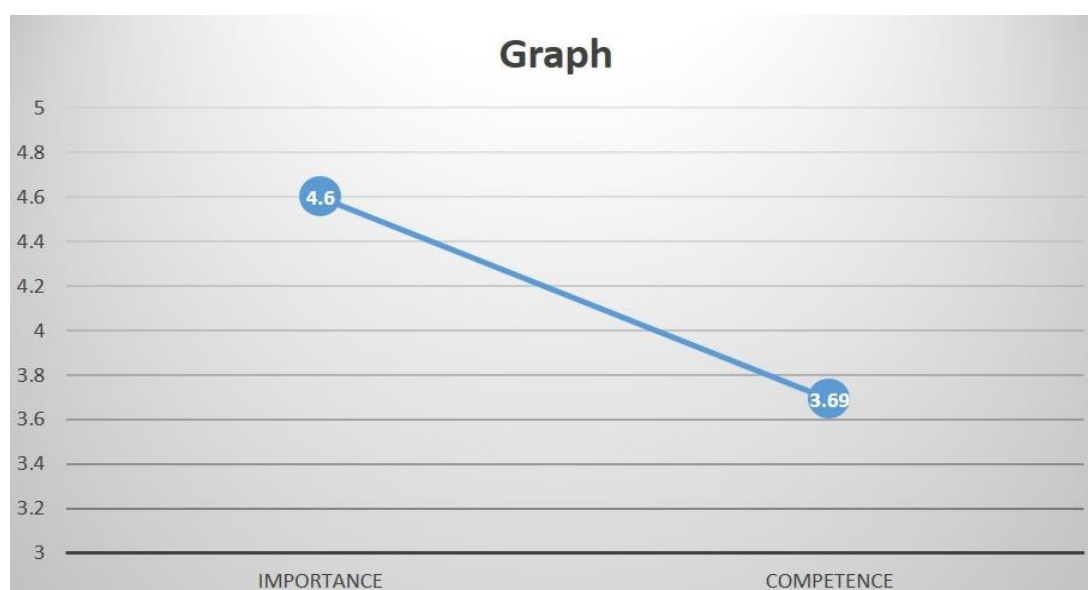
Parental involvement can be categorized as either positive or negative and positive parental involvement is regarded as an important element if effective education and learning is to occur (Cox et al., 2005 cited in Hornby and La Faele, 2011). When parental involvement "crosses the line" and becomes interference, the results can have a "detrimental" effect on teacher morale (Loop, 2009). The findings of this study concur with that reported in the

literature, since it was found that levels of pupil discipline in schools are one of the major contributing factors to increased levels of stress and unhappiness in schools (McIlrath, 2005).

The literature review indicated that in South Africa, the emphasis tends to be on policy formulation and not implementation (Bowe, 1992 cited in Smit, 2001). It was further indicated that teachers are often absent in the policy discussion process, which is contentious and may lead to lower levels of teacher morale. This was also confirmed in this study, since extrinsic factors such as policy changes do impact teacher morale.

Figure 3 depict a composite picture developed from the response of all 139 teacher participants and concerns their perception regarding the ten factors that affect teacher morale. Their perception revolved around the abstract concepts of 'importance' and 'competence.' The graph clearly indicates that there is an apparent difference in the relationship between 'importance and competence'. It was found that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores for all ten factors affecting teacher morale for both items associated with importance and competence, at the 0.05% level of significance.

Figure 3: Mean Scores of all Factors affecting Teacher Morale

Therefore, based on the findings it may be concluded that there are low levels of teacher morale in both Independent and Public schools in the Greater Benoni Area.

Recommendations

In general, schools need to focus more on all ten factors that have been identified in this research and ensure that the levels of 'competence' or perception of the current morale level is improved. The three main factors in terms of their importance to contributing to levels of teacher morale will briefly be isolated in terms of further recommendations. Schools need to improve their levels of pupil discipline. If they are able to achieve this, levels of teacher morale will improve as teachers will have more time to focus on their core responsibility and less time on dealing with pupil disciplinary matters. If this is achieved, the levels of teacher morale may improve significantly. Schools need to create ways that enhance positive teacher-parent interaction. School Principals need to find ways to minimise and or control "helicopter" parents that are currently having a negative impact on teacher morale in schools. Teachers also need to be more involved in policy and curriculum development matters at a national level, as this will reduce tensions between the policy developers and policy implementers, who are the teachers.

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