

Chapter 59

Cost of Poor Quality Management on Organizational Performance in Educational Settings

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this case study was to explore teacher absenteeism in both primary and secondary schools administered by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) in South Africa. Further, the chapter focuses on how this phenomenon of teacher absenteeism is managed in schools and by the departmental authorities and its implications on the organization. This chapter proposes a number of quality improvement strategies that can be employed to mediate teacher absenteeism and enhance quality management of the problem.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The South African Department of Basic Education was established in 1994 when the former National Department of Education was divided into two, namely the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHET). The DoBE administers all schools from grade R to grade 12, which includes the adult literacy programs. The main aim of the DoBE is to develop, maintain and support a South African school education system for the 21st century. In achieving this aim, its vision is to develop an education system in which all learners will have access to lifelong learning, education and training opportunities, which will, in turn, contribute towards improving the quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic South Africa. Its mission is to provide an accountable leadership which will help pursue and achieve the objectives of the South African education system.

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At the top of the department is the Minister of Education who is the political head of department assisted by the deputy Minister. The director general or the superintended general is responsible for the professional administration of the department. The national Department of Basic Education is divided into 9 provincial education departments which are responsible for the provision of education to all the 9 provinces of the Republic of South Africa. In addition, they have powers to develop education policies and legislation in consultation with the national department. The political heads in these provincial education departments are called Member of Executive Committees (MECs) for education. The administrative heads are provincial education directors. The districts and circuits are also responsible for servicing schools with any educational requirements. Circuit managers are responsible for ensuring that schools under their jurisdictions perform according to the expected standards.

To ensure that quality education is provided to its learners, the Department of Basic Education proposed an action plan. According to this strategic Action Plan 2019, the Department of Basic Education (2015) envisages to “improve the frequency and quality of the monitoring and support services provided to schools by district offices, partly through the better use of e-Education”. This objective is also intended to ensure that teacher absenteeism is monitored and managed. The intention of this intervention was an attempt to deal with the challenge that this chapter is addressing, which is teacher absenteeism and the cost of poor quality management thereof.

SETTING THE STAGE

This chapter focuses on the cost of poor quality management of teacher absenteeism in the DoBE. Knowledge has been constructed through a qualitative and interpretative approach. An analysis of extant relevant literature was conducted to construct knowledge. In addition, document analysis related to literature on teacher absenteeism in the Department of Basic Education was surveyed. This case provided the executive summary and the organization background of the case investigated. In the organization background, the structure of the organization in terms of management was provided. Section one provided the executive summary and the next section will focus on the culture of the Department of Basic Education. It will be argued that teacher absenteeism is a culture that had been established in the majority of schools administered by the DoBE. The following section will explore the vision and mission of the DoBE and the strategies it employs in achieving its objectives particularly its intentions to deal with teacher absenteeism and the poor quality management of it. Detailed information which includes statistical data related to teacher absenteeism will be given. Further, the discussions in this chapter will also cover the concerns of management. This will be followed by the implications of poor quality management of teacher absenteeism on quality education, learning outcomes and the budget of the Department of Basic Education. There is also the provision of the discussions on the current challenges the organisation is facing. The solutions and recommendations will finally be provided as the last section.

CULTURE OF THE DoBE SCHOOLS

The behaviour of every employee in the organisation is critical in advancing the objectives of that organisation. In this case, teacher absenteeism negatively impacts on the performance of DoBE, particularly schools. Rosenblatt and Shirom (2005) contend that studies in various countries (including South Africa)

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