

The Fear to be Equal: A Latent Contributory Factor to Poor Matric Results in Limpopo Schools

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ABSTRACT The aim of the paper is to report on and discuss the existence of the fear factor as a latent contributor to poor grade 12 results in Limpopo schools. Although educators are part of the latent fear factor, learners and parents are victims by being negatively affected. Fear factor occurs clearly during classroom teaching, particularly at the level of assessment, when learner performance is being measured. This is an empirical paper researched within the qualitative research approach. The research methods employed were literature review and interviewing technique. Out of the population of 543 underperforming schools across the province's five Districts, 12 were sampled. In each school, three participants were interviewed. Two of the findings are that there is institutional performance sabotage by educators and that some educators delight in the underperformance of learners. The researcher concludes that further studies be undertaken on fear factor dimension, given its destructive role.

INTRODUCTION

One secondary school underperforming is one too many. Generally, there has been relatively little research both nationally and internationally that addresses the key question of whether supporting educators to divest themselves of the fear factor would not lead to superior matric performance (Meyer 2008: 10). A plethora of literature reviewed on educational management and leadership, specifically on educators suffering from the fear factor, confirmed that fear could prevent an educator from being productive. This is a practice which Act no.76 of 1998, namely, Educators Employment Act does not condone (Waghid 2003: 44). The significance of this study lies in the fact that upon exposing fear factor as a latent contributor to poor matric results, the performance of many schools could be salvaged. Emphasising the danger of fear in a person, Chikane (2012: 11) reminds that an environment of fear can inhibit the free flow of information and dialogue. This stresses how urgently the challenge of fear by educators has to be reported on and discussed to save the performance of schools (Clark 2009: 56). An educator suffering from the fear factor could obstruct learners from progressing (Levin 2011: 18). Learner performance in every school originates in the classroom (Van Deventer and Kruger 2010: 55). That happens when fear harboured by educators is put under control. Improvement in the class-

room interactions stands to facilitate good performance (Clarke 2009: 66). Bernstein and McCarthy (2011: 11) advise that performance could be enhanced when fear is not allowed to disturb the production of brilliant results. Ramphela (2011: 21) agrees when stressing that housing fear by educators is no justification to fail learners. Eksrom et al. (2000: 23) remind that fear factor or no fear, matriculants deserve the best from educators.

Interpretivism and the Learning Organisation Philosophy have been selected to undergird this study. The relevance the researcher found in these theoretical frameworks facilitated their choice (Moloi 2005: 26). A research problem of this study is whether underperformance of Limpopo grade 12 learners is due to incompetent classroom educators, or owing to incompetent school managers, or as a result of hard to teach learners or a combination of all of the above. Research evidence vindicates that Limpopo schools struggle with performance, mainly because classroom educators are latently involved in institutional performance sabotage owing to the fear they are harbouring. Such a practice by the educators is against the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. The above research problem was best investigated through the guidance of Interpretivism and the Learning Organisation Philosophy (Feinberg and Soltis 1985: 103; Higgs and Smith 2010: 67). The two theoretical frameworks enabled the investigator to frame the study and to make meaning from the whole concept of fear factor in rela-

tion to poor learner results. The selected theoretical frameworks emphasise the significance of understanding and validating interpretations in their own contextual terms, instead of emphasizing the need to verify interpretations against an “objective” world. Since fear is latent, it was through these theoretical perspectives that the researcher was able to report on and discuss about scholastic underperformance being attributable to the fear factor by educators. Interpretivism and the Learning Organisation Philosophy enabled the researcher to study the responses of individual actors namely, educators, learners and parents and the social meanings that they shared with one another as regards poor matric results emanating from fear factor (Higgs and Smith 2010: 55). Mueller (2011: 8) advises that the Learning Organisation Philosophy enables all to be learners in a school wherein they are able to question, investigate and seek solutions together for the school improvement purposes. These frameworks assisted the researcher to learn the responses of individual actors and social meanings that they share with others in the process of teaching and learning. Fascinating about the theoretical perspectives is that they accentuate the importance of the 21st century secondary school educators having to provide emotional and psychological therapies to the current learners, in the process of their lesson delivery (Kendall and O’Gara 2007: 16). Such a practice lessens fear factor from completely influencing educators to arrest the scholastic performance of learners under their tutelage. Lehlaha (2011: 39) adds that the education system and the school have a key role to play in ensuring the protection, care and support of all children in the classroom and the school on top of guaranteeing their scholastic advancement. Interestingly, Mabote (2008: 1) advises that it is only schools bereft of strong management and visionary leadership that could experience poor classroom passion important for producing good results. Interpretivism and the Learning Organisation Philosophy assisted the researcher in pursuing the aim of the study which is: to report on and discuss the existence of the fear factor as a latent contributor to poor matric results in Limpopo schools.

Literature review indicates that fear is the first emotion that typically hits all human beings (Meyer 2008: 11). Learner performance is determined by the interactive relations of the classroom incumbents (Modiba 2001: 108). Literature

study as unveiled in Ramphela (2011: 21) demonstrates that due to the fearby educators, the educational destiny of many matriculants end up being stolen away. This is buttressed by Bernstein and McCarthy (2011: 8) when remarking that scholastic underperformance brought about by the latent fear factor deserves to be prevented before worsening. Although there are studies that ascribe poor performance of schools, to the type of primary schools attended, others acknowledge the indisputable contribution of fear (Clarke 2007: 68). Hence this study chose to place focus on poor matric results as created by educators suffering from the fear factor (Marishane et al. 2011: 54). Coetzee et al. (2008: 164) express a deep-seated wish by parents about their siblings making educational progress with their studies. This confirms that every parent is saddened, whenever her learner fails. Literature review confirms that fear contributes to unending poor results. Literature study indicates that learners are being taught by educators who at the same time regret their success. Maake (2011: 129) argues that the behaviour of such educators is tantamount to “hunting with the hounds and running with hares”. With other educators, such an occurrence is inadvertent while with others it is deliberate (Alpha 2002: 280; Chisolm 1996: 89; Zaleznik 1991: 87). The review of literature confirms that fear has the potential of turning into a jealousy which allows its holder to pretend (Khumalo 2011: 8).

Levin (2011: 8) declares that fear could drive its holder to do half-job that leads to poor matric results. This has been a common phenomenon with the sampled schools. What encourages this is the excessive desire to dominate by educators. Some of the victims of fear factor do deny its existence. Educators housing in themselves the desire to dominate are unlikely to fail to arrest the performance of learners (Mueller 2011: 11). No wonder that learners entrusted to such educators persist to underperform (Mgxashe 2011: 15). The review of literature depicts such educators to be cruel to learners hence earning labels like educational double-dealers or educationally two-faced professionals (Hawley et al. 1984: 55).

Van Deventer and Kruger (2010: 155) and Marishane et al. (2011: 49) indicate that classroom populated by undependable educators, would have these features:

Educators treating learners with disrespect,
Educators adopting the holier than thou attitude against learners,

Educators having low morals and less commitment to teaching and learning and thus ushering in a negative school climate,

Educators being unfeeling to learners,

Educators entrenching a negative and closed school and classroom climates that are hard to promote a sound and healthy learning and teaching traditions,

Educators perceiving their principals as hindering them in their professional duties,

Educators who are not trustworthy and thus operating within a negative learning and teaching atmosphere, and

Educators who are antagonistic to colleagues and thus operate in a tense workplace environment that is unhealthy for teaching and learning.

Levin (2011: 8) articulates that, fear is a condition of the mind that should never be allowed to flourish in schools. Southey (2012: 12) shares a heart-rending statement to the effect that as long as schools are infested with educators who are not averse to institutional mediocrity, institutional underperformance could persist.

Objectives

This paper sets out to report on and discuss the existence of the fear factor as a hidden contributor to poor grade 12 results. The second objective relates to exposing how educators could operate with disharmonised agenda as regards the job of teaching and learning where on the one hand they teach and on the other they block learners from achieving.

METHODOLOGY

Out of the population of 543 underperforming schools across the province's five districts, twelve secondary schools were sampled. Convenient purposeful sampling was resorted to in view of the nature of the problem under study and such a sampling type was found to be in line with the research paradigm and data collection techniques for the study (Babbie 1992: 232).

In each secondary school, three respondents were interviewed. Researchers utilised convenient purposeful sampling to select twelve sec-

ondary schools in the province. In each of the selected school, three respondents were secured, namely, an educator, a learner and a parent. There was a good balance of the gender in the senses that overall, 18 males and 18 females became research respondents. In each of the twelve secondary schools, an individual interview with each of the three respondents lasted for thirty minutes. Responses were tape recorded and notes kept as part of the field-notes. The interview schedule containing questions for each category of respondents, facilitated data collection. The researcher concluded the process of data collection when convinced that the aim of the study has been accomplished and that data gathered were saturated (Creswell 2010: 143).

There was a good match between Interpretivism, the Learning Organisation Philosophy and the qualitative research approach. The latter enabled the investigators to make an in-depth understanding of the fear factor as being behind the poor matric results. This signifies that to address the expressed research problem, an inquiry using a qualitative approach was undertaken to ascertain the views and experiences of various role players involved in curriculum delivery in schools. An in-depth interviews as well as literature study as data gathering methods were utilized within the sampled schools. In each school, three respondents were subjected to an in-depth personal interviewing regarding the fear factor and underperformance. An interview schedule was developed in advance and piloted with some schools which were not part of the research sample. It identified shortcomings and ambiguities which were timeously remedied. Literature study as partnered with in-depth interviews helped to corroborate and triangulate the secured responses from research respondents (Higgs and Smith 2010: 73).

Analysis of qualitative data focused on understanding rather than dwelling much on explaining social actions and events within their particular settings and contexts. The analysis of data was never handled as an independent stage apart from all other research steps (Niewenhuis 2007: 47). To be specific, data analysis involved sorting the collected information into categories, formatting the information into a story, creating themes out of the data, and writing a qualitative text. Data analysed were generated for a particular purpose, derived from particular

methodologies, looked at from a particular perspective and reported on and discussed from a particular point of view (Maykut and Morehouse 1999: 127). To sum up, data analysis procedure entailed capturing, coding and analysis into themes. An inductive approach to analysing the responses from the research respondents was undertaken to allow patterns, themes, and categories to emerge rather than being imposed. Similar responses were grouped together into categories which were subsequently utilised for the discussion of this study's findings. This identification of themes provided depth to the insight about understanding the individual views of the educators, learners and parents pertaining to poor scholastic performance being ascribed to fear factor (Creswell 2010: 60). The researcher analysed data pertinent for the study utilizing the constant comparative method, an approach requiring that all the tape recorded data be transcribed and typed verbatim. Copies of transcripts were made to be used in data analysis. Data pages were coded to their sources that is either as educators, parents or learners. Ultimately, the researcher emerged with themes and categories and applied them to author findings for the study (LeCompte and Preissle 1993: 163).

RESULTS

Institutional Performance Sabotage

The research question guiding the study is: to what extent is the fear to be equal with learners by school educators, leads to the manipulated underperformance at Limpopo Schools? It is a worrying phenomenon to have a set-up in schools whereby institutional incumbents are sabotaging performance. This is an uncommon practice whose existence is an eye-opener on why other schools flourish whilst others struggle. Such a state of affairs is better captured by an analogy stating that one hunts with hounds and runs with hares (Maake 2011: 11) referring to educators who pretend to support learner achievement when in fact they espouse learner underachievement. This has been one of the extraordinary research findings with regard to underperformance emanating from fearfactor by school educators. Teacher 1 of school A was quick to accept that: "teaching by its very nature is a lonely profession and easy to be disturbed by the fear factor". Learner 8 of school H states that "we have for long seen that our un-

derachievement has been remote-controlled by our educators". Parent 2 of school C concurred in this way: "there are teachers who delight in the under performance of students because of fearing stiff competition with them in the near future". Evidently, the prevalence of the housed fear in an educator could influence her to stoop so low to the level of celebrating learner underperformance instead of rejoicing at learner performance (Meyer 2008: 16). The researcher contends that arresting learner advancement, is not an unpleasant practice confined only to secondary schools alone, but prevalent even in institutions of higher learning, particularly with masters and doctoral studies. Abundance of evidence about that prevails.

Deterioration of Teaching and Learning Moods

Excellent performance hinges upon quality teaching and learning. But where the fear factor has sets in, and its severity is not lessened, quality teaching and learning could be greatly compromised. That is when deterioration of teaching and learning surface. Expectedly, such an occurrence descends the delivery of classroom lessons to their lowest ebb. The researcher found teaching and learning in the sampled schools to have deteriorated and fear factor stood out to have been the driving force. This point is being accentuated by the words of learner 3 of school D when complaining that "nearly all our educators do not have the interests of learners at heart in view of how uncommitted they are to their work". Parent 1 of school I had this remark to make "these days teacher attitude leaves much to be desired when coming to assisting matriculants to progress at the end of the year. Apparently their internally unresolved fears fuel this". The words of teacher 10 of school J sums everything up when stating that "the sense of insecurity and safety of our jobs, require that teaching as a profession and teachers as professionals be re-professionalised as part of bringing back the missing passion into the profession". The researcher strongly argues that matriculation underperformance is tied to the fear factor from educators who have to assist matriculants to achieve every year (Van Deventer and Kruger 2010: 155). Southey (2012: 12) reminds that only educators who are not averse to institutional mediocrity, collapse the spirit of quality teaching and learning. The investigators instant-

ly declare that educators deteriorating the core-business of the school, owing to fear in themselves, are educational misfits deserving to be uprooted from the teaching profession.

Failure to Acquire Key Skills

Learners at matric level are anticipated to have mastered key skills to assist them to join the world of work or to be ready for tertiary education. But with educators stagnated in fear, that could remain far-fetched. Evidently, as long as educators are fearful of good learner results, the future of countless matriculants would remain uncertain. Fear factor could be regarded to be undermining matriculants and all other stakeholders involved in education. This is the case because when matriculants are under-taught just because educators were ill-prepared, that leads to poor scholastic results. Such a state of affairs was found to be prevalent in the sampled schools and of having a share in the poor matric results produced there. Learner 10 of school I puts the point well when recounting that “how can we hope to learn anything of value from educators who vividly leave in constant fear of our scholastic advancement”. Parent 9 of school E laments the undedicated teachers in this way “how do we hope to have 100 percent matric pass performance from teachers who visibly out of internal disharmony are always underprepared to support learners to achieve at the end of the year”. Teacher 7 of school C articulates that “South African education is not doing well, not at all especially at secondary schools where as educators we are inconvenienced by the superior performance of our matrices, given fighting over green pastures with them in a distant future”. Views of research informants gravitate to one point which is that failure to acquire key skills by Limpopo learners is a deliberate act by educators housing fears, and no accident at all, notes the researcher. Adding his voice to the sorry state of Limpopo schools, Mnisi (2012: 13) and Mashele (2014: 17) remark that schools have become secondary places where kids go to be idle or play, to pass time but not a formal learning institution, where basic essential skills are acquired. On the basis of what obtains in Limpopo schools, the investigator concedes to the above.

Undependable Educators in Schools

The prevalence of educational double-dealers in schools is a disaster enough for Limpopo schools. This suggests that the fear factor could be so intense in an educator to the degree of blinkering her from drawing a line of distinction between what is permissible and what is not in terms of good matric results and poor ones. Research-based evidence confirms that underperforming schools were found to be held back by amongst others two-faced educators who were driven by the housed fear factor. The observation of parent 10 of school B is intriguing when revealing that “the kind of teachers chaperoning our learners are a complete wrong role models due to the lack of internal peace in themselves”. Learner 2 of school F concurs by disclosing that “as matriculants, these days we rely on no one but ourselves because our adult teachers grapple with fear of the unknown, and thus pretend to help us when in fact they only delay our scholastic advancement”. The remarks by teacher 4 of school J are fascinating when arguing that “as a school educator whose school normally underachieves, I am the first to admit that creating matriculation underperformance due to the housed fear factor in one, is a cruel educational bondage to be confronted without fear or favour in the interest of resuscitating genuine passion in teaching and learning”. The researcher proclaims that it can only be received with mixed feelings when brave educators, acknowledge how blinkered fellow educators could be due to the fear factor. The investigator notes that fear motivates some teachers to do the antithesis of what the teaching profession tolerates. Senge et al. (1994: 30) see the solution in supporting such educators to overcome the destructive fear factor. This is being accentuated by Modiba (2012: 30) when advising that educators have to be averse to institutional underperformance ascribed to the fear factor.

Unhealthy and Unsound Schooling Environment

Enabling schooling atmosphere facilitates the delivery of quality teaching and learning. Where the fear factor is dominant in school, such a kind of a schooling environment would be hard to establish. Research evidence shows that fear gets boosted where the teaching and learning tones of the school are unhealthy and unsound.

A remedy to address the severity of the fear factor in schools is to ascertain that the prevailing teaching and learning environments are perennially favourable. Part of doing that is to have the kind of school culture and climate that accentuate a high performance tradition and practice within the school. Succeeding in sowing a top performance attitude and culture within the institution, would be an essential part of replacing mediocrity with excellence. The investigator found the sampled schools to have the strong fear factor due to the absence of the healthy and sound schooling environment. Learner 9 of school J captures the articulated point adequately when divulging that “when I am at our school and at home, no difference is being felt. Both settings are characterized by a sense of hopelessness”. Parent 6 of school 3 confirms that “the type of school environment where our learners attend is largely demotivating and disheartening to teaching and learning”. Teacher 6 of school C protests that “it is the education department that has to shoulder the blame for the lack of inspiring teaching and learning atmosphere in our schools. That would have been easily restored if corporal punishment was still permissible to relieve us of fearing to call learners to order whenever their behaviours are unacceptable”. The investigator notes that educators, who were the sufferers of the fear factor, were incapable of bringing about noticeable differences in the lives of their learners. Mnisi (2012: 13) reckons that unfavourable school environments deprive most black children of their cultural identity and practices, as well as intellectual developmental nourishment and nurturing.

Demeaning Institutions

Schools largely stand or fall on the basis of images they enjoy within their communities. For instance, a secondary school whose matric results are always brilliant stands a good chance of creating and maintaining an inviting image from members of the public. The reverse holds. Where the bulk of the educators are victims of the fear factor, and that condition influences them to demean their school, the image, integrity and credibility of the school could be greatly compromised. In this study, the research evidence reached by the investigator indicated that most schools were demeaned from inside-out by educators who were afraid of their excellent

learner results. The investigator attributes such a scenario to the substandard school leadership and mental erosion suffered by school incumbents. A solution is inculcating in all stakeholders, a sense of ownership for the entire institution and a spirit of unconditional pride for the school and its prosperity. Research evidence demonstrated that the fear factor played a key role in influencing educators to stand against their own institutions. In view of the above, parent 8 of school F had this to say: “it is as if educators are unsure of whether they are permanently appointed to serve at their schools or not. Educators appear to be having something inside that makes them destroy other than protect schools they are serving at”. Teacher 2 of school G remarks that “as educators, at times we inadvertently destroy our own schools because of fearing that by supporting them more, those in charge may feel terribly exposed especially if their own subjects frequently underperform”. “Learner 9 of school E reckons that “even we learners we are not proud of our own schools, because of having learnt the demeaning behaviour from our educators”. It is explicit that the housed fear factor in research respondents taught them a worrisome lesson of self-centredness and individualism. To overcome underperformance requires strengthening the spirit of selflessness and generosity among all the stakeholders (Hofstee 2010: 98). This as Nchabeleng (2013: 13) reminds, would be an integral part of freeing educators who deliver their lessons being paralysed by the fear of learner achievement.

Absence of Instructional Leadership

In every school, there must be someone who oversees the core-business there through providing instructional leadership. In this study, the researcher accessed research evidence vindicating that most Limpopo schools are bereft of instructional leadership and are generally witnessing leadership paralysis. Furthermore, evidence abounds attesting to the point that most schools are suffering from the severe fear factor that leads to underachievement. As the research evidence shows, fear gets strengthened where educators are left with no leader to guide them on their responsibilities of curriculum delivery. The expressed point is competently captured by teacher 9 of school C when remonstrating that

“education is experiencing sufficient curriculum changes that are in the main scary especially when no support is forthcoming from our school superiors”. Learner 9 of school J concedes by arguing that “it is vivid that our educators fear curriculum changes, considering how badly they remark about them openly”. Parent 10 of school D protests that “daily, learners come from schools with tasks requiring that we help them with, when even their teachers do not know the answers. Is that fair? No it is not”. Utterances of research respondents highlight the need to allay fears by educators in Limpopo schools, to facilitate the delivery of decent lessons in the classrooms and the provision of firm instructional leadership (Meyer 2008: 38; Van Deventer and Kruger 2010: 58). The investigator advises that in this era of countless curriculum changes, absconding on the provision of curriculum leadership aggravates poor learner results for schools.

Absence of the Culture of Teaching and Learning

In a school setting, just like in any other organization, when incumbents are being exposed to a particular practice for long, that becomes part of the tradition and culture of that organization (Christie 1998: 289). One of the amazing findings for the study has been the absence of the culture of teaching and learning in struggling Limpopo schools. The researcher claims that, that gave room for the fear to be strengthened. It emerged as no shock to researchers that the fear factor was strong in those schools. Research findings pointed out that the absence of the culture of teaching and learning was the missing element in enhancing performance. That allowed the fear factor in educators to be powerful and to lead to unacceptable learner results. Teacher 8 of school E contends that “sowing and inculcating a culture of teaching and learning has to start with the school principal for all to emulate”. Parent 7 of school B remarks that “these days, many schools are practically alone because no one there appears to be sufficiently committed to his or her duty because of living in an era of fear for the unknown”. Learner 3 of school H observes that “Our teachers appear to fear responsibility enough such that they cannot encourage a culture of teaching and learning when they know that they will not be ready to successfully monitor and supervise that”. On

the basis of the above, the researcher agrees with Senge et al. (1994: 308) when articulating that, where people have been totally liberated from any form of fear, the likelihood of them being educationally productive could emerge.

Absence of Staff Development Programme

Remaining a life-long learner, keeps one's knowledge fresh and always renewed. Such a practice deserves to be applicable to professional educators as well. Many underperforming schools where the fear factor featured prominently were found to be without staff development programmes. One of the conclusions there-searcher is making with regard to the fear factor being severe there is ascribed to the absence of the staff development programmes. Research evidence indicates that had those schools developed staff development programmes for their educators, the likelihood of fear being stronger would have been lessened. Teacher 10 of school H contends that “in view of the existence of the general sense of fear in people these days, the concept of life-long learning for educators is better said than practised”. Learner 10 of school I consents when asserting that “motivated educators who are also life-long learners are likely to inspire and stimulate learning in the classroom, but with the kind of educators we have who are afraid of inspiring us, life-long learning philosophy remains an ideal dream for myriad schools”. Parent 5 of school J sums this point up when concluding that “the harboured fear factor by principals will take time to allow them to pursue the development of their schools and that of their subordinates and learners”. Evidently, the concept of life-long learning is significant for both educators and learners although its success depends on managing fear well to allow learner performance to take place (Clarke 2009: 58). On the basis of the research evidence, the investigator asserts that staff development programme may not be everything, in an institution, but it is definitely something in terms of extricating schools from poor learner performance to praiseworthy and magnificent learner results (Lindle 2002: 570).

Nonchalant Attitude by Parents

Schooling by its very nature is a stakeholder-profession. What this signifies is that suc-

cessful teaching and learning depend upon the active involvement of parents, learners and educators amongst others. In an event where one component is not playing its part adequately, the school could head for an unpleasant learner results (Dicey 2010/11: 19). Evidence gleaned from the research enquiry indicates that in the sampled schools, fear on the part of educators was severe and that the involvement of parents in the education of their learners was missing. It emerged as no shock to the researchers, to note that fear was overwhelming those educators, to the level of suppressing magnificent learner results. To the researchers, it was as if parents have outsourced caring and support of their own children to educators who were already overburdened by fear, which made it difficult for them to deliver quality lessons in the classrooms. The unpleasant impact of the fear factor was always traceable to poor matric results produced by Limpopo schools. Parent 10 of school J avers that “it is understandable when scores of parents fail to be fully involved in the education of their little ones, because it is a challenging task which even teachers as trained professionals struggle to cope with”. Learner 10 of school G succumbs to the view shared above by declaring that “as matriculants we find ourselves in the educational crossroads because of neither receiving parental support nor teacher-motivation on our studies”. Teacher 10 of school L emphasizes that “a load of work to be performed these days by we educators, prevents us from fully supporting our learners. The existence of fear in us notwithstanding”. Research findings revealed that such collaboration was missing in the sampled schools due to various reasons, the fear factor being one of them. The researcher aligns himself with Ndebele (2006: 2) when cautioning that the remedy is the neutralization and marginalization of all the identified disturbing factors, fear included, to enable scholastic achievement to occur. The investigators place a huge weight to the centrality and essentiality of this finding, given the reality that today’s learners resent and resist schooling, something that calls for the involvement of their parents in their education no longer an option but an obligation and a legal requirement (Kramer 2006: 21)

DISCUSSION

The researcher contends that the practice of institutional performance sabotage and arrest-

ing the progress of learners by educators, is a foreign culture. By and large, it deteriorates the teaching and learning enthusiasm on the part of the genuinely devoted educators within the school. It further leads to a stage where the acquisition of key learning skills by learners, is no longer an apex priority for a school. Such undependable educators, contribute less to the creation of a healthy and sound schooling environment that promotes the success of quality teaching and learning that earns a dignity and good image for a school. Educators who succeed in arresting scholastic achievement of their learners, do so where the provision of instructional leadership by institutional head is missing together with the institution’s culture of teaching and learning (Staff Reporter 2015: 6). The prevalence of nonchalant attitude by parents to the education of their children and lack of staff development programmes in schools, contribute to the intensification of institutional performance sabotage that leads to the production of poor grade 12 results. Staff Reporter (2015: 6) emphasises that there is no better way to explain the damage the current school system causes to the life prospects of South African children with the unceasing and continuing poor grade 12 results. Sehume (2015: 11) proposes that containing and eradicating poor grade 12 results will require that the country’s schooling system be approached in line with the transformation of schooling as envisioned by the country’s National Development Plan. Modiba (2015) concludes that for schools to overcome institutional performance sabotage which leads to poor grade 12 results, educators have to view themselves as hero educators who teach super learners who are capable of producing hero or super results in a super school.

CONCLUSION

As it has been demonstrated in the discussion of the research findings for this study, both the review of literature as well as the theoretical frameworks undergirding this study played a critical role in talking to the findings of the study. They also provided the better context within which the entire study had to be located and comprehended. Small wonder that some educators were exposed by research findings to have been involved in institutional performance sabotage and arresting learners when they have to progress scholastically.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends that the practice of institutional performance sabotage and arresting of scholastic performance of learners, be nipped on the bud before it spreads. As regards inadequate teaching passion demonstrated by educators, it could be remedied through re-professionalization of teaching. The challenge of learners not acquiring key skills from educators, who are insufficiently dedicated to their work, could be surmounted through strong stakeholder collaboration in education. The same applies to schools being infested with undependable educators and those having unhealthy and unsound schooling environments that instigate scholastic underachievement. Educators in those schools require de-conditioning and re-conditioning in the context of reorganised, restructured and re-cultured school environment, for the creation of institutional renewal. The challenge of educators demeaning institutional integrity together with the absence of instructional leadership could be addressed through reviewing the school vision and mission statements to make them owned by all institutional incumbents. On the absence of the culture of teaching and learning and the staff development programme, the researcher recommends for the re-introduction and re-launch of the teaching and learning campaigns partnered with the emphasis of life-long learning philosophy for all the organisational incumbents. Concerning the adoption of the nonchalant attitude by parents in the education of their own children, the researcher recommends that parents be consistently reminded that ancient wisdom violated leads to disaster, meaning that every parent shoulders a responsibility for bringing up her child and providing her with decent schooling.

LIMITATIONS

The limitation of this paper is that much as it reveals that not all educators are at school to help learners to progress scholastically, the paper is not revealing other variables behind underperformance experienced in many schools. The only variable being exposed in the paper is that of the fear factor. The other limitation of the paper is that focusing solely on the fear factor as being behind the underachievement of schools, could compromise the complexity of

schooling. This is not to dispute the destructive role played by the fear factor to trigger poor grade 12 results in Limpopo schools.

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