



## Teacher Recruitment, Motivation and Retention at Rural Schools in Namibia

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**Abstract:** Teacher motivation is an integral part of the success of the teaching and learning processes. The purpose of this study was to establish the factors underlying teacher recruitment, motivation and retention within a rural context. A case study design was employed as a methodology for the study. The collected data was analysed by establishing themes and emerging categories. The study established that teachers at rural schools were motivated by crucial work-related factors which were both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature. Employment opportunities, family background, leadership, rural environment and support services were some of the major factors motivating teacher to be recruited and retained with rural school teaching. The study recommended that school leaders should acquire a holistic understanding of the diverse factors motivating teachers, so that they can nurture these factors and motivate teachers appropriately. This will ensure that rural schools remains with motivated teaching personnel for improved performance.

**Keywords:** *Recruitment; Retention; Rural areas, Rural schools.*

### Background of the Study

The centrality of an effective teaching team for improved learning outcomes cannot be over emphasised. Any attempts aimed at improving school performance and human resource management should emphasise the advancement of working conditions of teachers (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). Many studies have been focusing on the working conditions of teachers and teaching with specific emphasis on identifying characteristics of good teaching for improved learner performance (Arnon & Reichel, 2007; Devine, Fahie & McGillicuddy, 2013; Sahin & Cokadar, 2009).

Amid research findings and recommendations made, the status of rural teachers and their working conditions continue to deteriorate (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011; Kulkarni & Mitra, 2015; McCormack & Thomas, 2003). Considering the fact that rural areas

can be geographically, socially, culturally, personally and professionally isolating (Beutel, Adie & Hudson, 2011; Hannun, 2009), it is clear that coping with working in a rural context is challenging, especially if the rural environment is not a familiar living and working environment. In order to cope with working in rural areas, it is important for teachers to learn ways of adapting to rural working environment.

Schools in rural areas provide education to learners who are vulnerable because of family backgrounds, poverty, lack of guardianship, lack of nutrition and lack of high educational attainment within families (Hardré, Sullivan & Crowson, 2009; Shahidul & Karim, 2015). Due to these socio-economic factors, dropout rates are very high in rural schools and in some cases learners leave schools prematurely (Hardre, 2012). Therefore, working in rural schools demands that teachers be cognisant of the socio-economic circumstances of the learners they are going

to teach and the environment in which they are going to work (Howley, Theobald & Howley, 2005).

Rural school teachers should prepare to work in an environment where learners drop out of schools earlier than expected and should therefore be prepared to take meaningful measures to address this rural tendency (Arnold, Newman, Gaddy & Dean, 2005). This demands the ability of the teachers to counsel learners and explain how important it is to complete school. This teacher intervention and understanding of learners' circumstances is essential in fostering learner motivation to remain in school (Hardré & Sullivan, 2008).

It is clear that living and working in rural schools is characterised by several challenges as compared to urban schools. Living and working in rural environments depicts isolations from essential goods and services, working with learners who have no interest for education, inadequate physical facilities and being exposed to multi-grade teaching. Rural schools are faced by challenges related to poor teacher status, poor career advancement, neglect of teachers, unqualified teachers and difficulties in recruiting qualified teachers (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). Working with parents who have low educational expectations and therefore not supportive towards the education of their children poses an additional challenge to teachers working at rural schools (Legotlo, 2014; Mulkeen & Chen, 2008).

In view of the above background, it becomes clear that teachers in rural areas work under harsh conditions. This necessitates the need to motivate them to cope with the realities of rural areas without compromising their quality of output as manifested in their learners'

performance. Hence, teacher motivation becomes an important subject in contemporary education literature. Teacher motivation has been a topic of interest to many researchers worldwide for a long period. Although quality teaching has become the focus of many education systems across the globe, Salifu and Agbenyega (2013) emphasise that more attention should be given to teacher motivation as this motivation pertains to quality teaching and improved learning outcomes in schools.

Velez (2007) defined teacher motivation as an encouragement of teachers to do their best in the classroom. Similarly, Naomi, Ronald, Isaac and Raja (2012) conceptualised teacher motivation as the freedom to try new ideas to achieve appropriate responsibility levels. This freedom brings about the arousal and continuation of teachers' behaviours. In support of these definitions, Salifu and Agbenyega (2013) emphasise that teacher motivation refers to the tangible and intangible working conditions that have the potential to influence teachers positively to demonstrate desirable behaviours leading to high quality professional practice. Drawing insights from these definitions, teacher motivation is the underlying force behind teachers' actions. All over the world, the available literature evidence revealed little progress made in the area of teacher motivation.

Traditionally, it has always been difficult to attract and retain teachers and other professionals to rural areas (Lock, 2008; Miller, 2012). Teaching at rural schools continues to deteriorate as the problem of attracting and retaining qualified teachers still remains (Heeralal, 2014; Owusu-Acheampong & Williams, 2015). Rural school locations and socio-economic conditions serves

as major barriers in attracting, retaining and supporting talented teachers (Elfers & Plecki, 2006).

The World Bank attributed low learner achievement at rural schools to the problem of low retention of high-quality teachers in rural schools (Aziz, 2011). Lack of talented and quality teachers culminates in poor quality teaching at rural schools as only capable and professionally qualified teachers engender quality teaching in schools (Aziz, 2011; Hammer, Hughes, McClure, Reeves & Salgado, 2005; Jimerson, 2003).

In Europe and the United States, problems of recruiting and motivating teachers still exist (Moon, 2007). In California, thousands of unqualified teachers are still working in the elementary school system, necessitated by the absence of a motivated and qualified teaching staff (Moon, 2007). South and West Asia is also facing a looming teacher shortage in pursuit of quality education (Mhando, 2006). In Africa, Burkina Faso has officially declared the supply of teachers a national crisis (Dladla & Moon, 2006). In Ghana, several initiatives for promoting education have excluded the issue of teacher motivation resulting in teacher shortages (Agezo, 2010). In Namibia, low teacher motivation prompted the Ministry of education to implement financial incentive as a motivation and retention strategy (Kavishe, 2012).

Despite little attention on teacher motivation, studies conducted have revealed the correlation between teacher motivation and improved performance. Motivation can profoundly shape teachers' ultimate performance (Armstrong, 2009; Robert, Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2012; Legotlo, 2014; Urwick, Mapuru & Nkoboti, 2005). The necessity to focus attention on teacher motivation is premised on the recognition that

teachers play an important role in the learning process of learners as role models (Chireshe & Shumba, 2011; Griffin, 2010; Kayuni & Tambulasi, 2007; Legotlo, 2014; Steyn, 2002; Urwick, Mapuru & Nkoboti, 2005).

The motivation of teachers is therefore very important as it directly affects learners' performance potential, which is closely related to the quality of education they receive (Alam & Farid, 2011; Naomi, Ronald, Isaac & Ranjith, 2012). As such, employers have a responsibility of ensuring that teachers perform to the best of their abilities. To execute this responsibility successfully, employers should conceptualise factors that affect teachers' motivation and performance. Different countries implement various strategies to motivate their teachers to teach at rural schools. In view of the financial incentive that was implemented in Namibia to motivate qualified teachers to locate to rural schools, this study sought to discover the factors that motivate teachers to be recruited at retained at rural schools, and establish whether teacher motivation is exclusively a monetary function or not.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A well-motivated teaching team is essential for the provision of quality teaching in every school. Teacher motivation profoundly shape teachers' ultimate performance. The motivation of teachers is an important determinant as it directly affects learners' performance potential, which is closely related to the quality of education that the learners receive. Despite this importance, little knowledge exists about the factors that motivate teachers, as teacher motivation is usually closely and exclusively, linked to monetary rewards. The lack of recognition of a host of factors motivating teachers have led to education leaders not motivating teachers appropriately. The study was

aimed at discovering the factors motivating teachers to locate and remain with rural school teaching. This discovery will ensure that factors motivating teachers are nurtured appropriately for enhanced teacher recruitment, motivation, retention and performance within rural school contexts.

### **Methodology**

The methodology employed for this study is described according to the following layout.

#### **Research Design**

The purpose of this study was to establish rural-based conditions and their influences on the motivation of teachers. In executing this purpose, a qualitative case study investigation was used as a qualitative research methodology. A case study allows an exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project or programme functioning in a real-life context, and provide specific and contextually rich data (Simons, 2009). In case studies, the aim is to provide an explicit context of a phenomenon, out of which new insights can be developed (Moriarty, 2011). Insights from the case study can then be transferred to other situations with similar conditions. A case study design was relevant to this study, as the study was characterised by ‘how’ and ‘why’ research questions, addressing more contextual issues, and sought to explain why certain behaviors have occurred, their causes and effects in a particular setting (Yin, 2009).

#### **Sampling and participants**

Participants consisted of five school principals, two education officials and twenty-eight teachers. Participants were sampled from two education offices and five rural schools of Omusati region, Namibia. Participants were sampled using non-probability

sampling techniques. In non-probability sampling, the researcher has no way of forecasting or guaranteeing that each member of the population will be represented in the sample and some members of the population have little or no chance of being sampled (Leedy & Omrod, 2005). In non-probability sampling, the researcher has the prerogative to judge the population and produce the sample. School principal participants were sampled by means of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling involves the researcher handpicking the participants to be included in the sample based on the researcher’s judgments of participants’ typicality to the phenomenon of study (Chiromo, 2009). As principals were in charge of schools as learning institution in rural areas, they were better positioned to articulate rural-based issues and how they influenced teacher recruitment, motivation and retention at their respective schools.

Teacher participants and two education officials were sampled using snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling is a type of non-probability sampling technique where the sampled members indicate other members who could provide rich information for the study (Chiromo, 2009). School principals and education officials assisted the researcher to engage with long-serving teachers and education officials in the region. Long-serving teachers in the teaching fraternity in a rural setting were well-positioned to outline the conditions that confronted successful teaching and learning as well as teacher motivation in rural areas. Similarly, long-serving education officials who discharge education administration and management in Omusati region, could equally contribute meaningfully to the research intentions. Figure 1 below summarised the sampling process that generated the sample for the study.

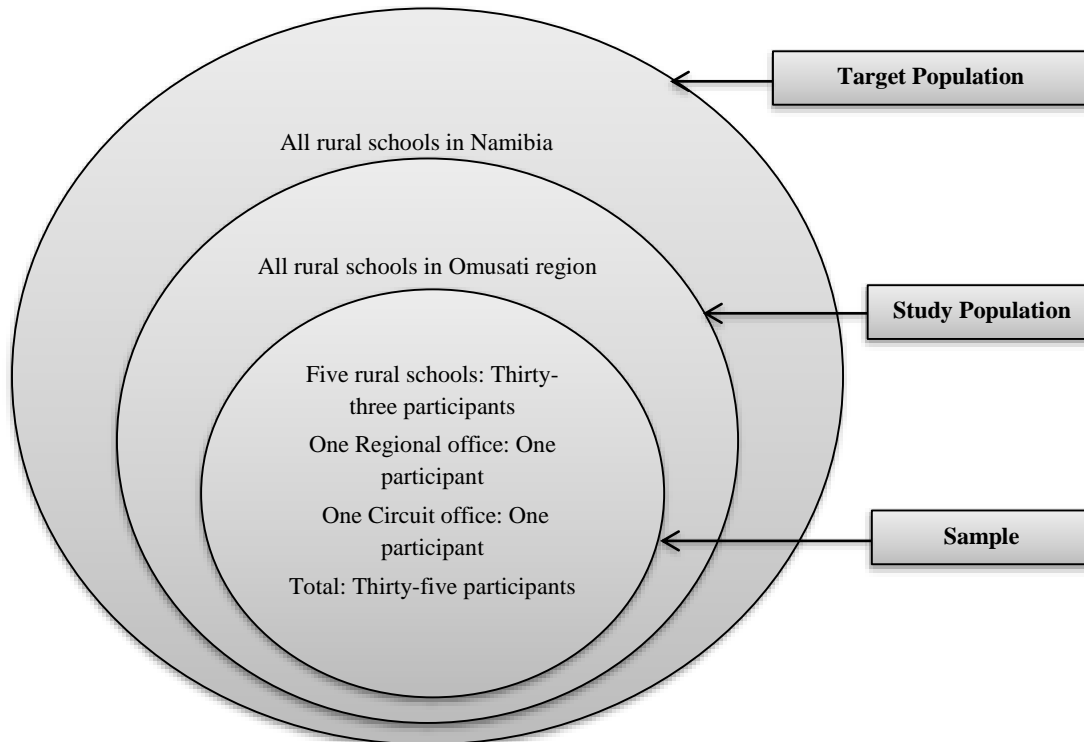


Figure 1. A schematic presentation of the sampling process used for the research.

Figure 1 above shows the sample that was used to provide data as empirical evidence, and the target and study population from where it was drawn. The empirical data for this study was collected using the data collection methods as discussed in the next section.

### Data Collection Methods

The researcher reviewed existing literature pertaining to rural communities, rural schools as well as teaching and learning in rural areas. To complement the data from the literature reviews, an empirical investigation was commissioned, which used individual and focus group interviews. Individual interviews were conducted with school principals, on a voluntary basis, at their respective schools, as well as with two

education officials at their respective offices. During data collection, the anonymity of school principals were safeguarded by using names such as Principal one (P1), Principal two (P2), and so on. Schools were referred to as School A, School B, and so on. The names used for education officials were C1 and R1 respectively. Their offices were regarded as Office A and Office B. The Circuit Office to which the five schools belonged, was regarded as Circuit 1.

Semi-structured focus group interviews were conducted with teachers at their respective schools, in a focus group of six teachers. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed the researcher to generate a considerable amount of data about the

participants' collective opinions and experiences with regard to the phenomenon of study (Moriarty, 2011). Focus group participation was voluntary, and all members of the focus group and other participants were given background information about the study, that the Regional Director has granted permission, the aim of the focus group interview, and anonymity and confidentiality surrounding the research. In conducting the interviews, researcher followed an interview guide and written down the responses from the participants. For anonymity of teacher participants, the researcher used names as Teacher one (T1), Teacher two, (T2), and so on, to relate specific data to participants during presentation.

As focus group interviewing explores the views of diverse groups of people, the researcher was able to unpack different perspectives within the group in relation to the topic of discussion (Choy, 2014). In addition, asking a group of people to respond jointly to common questions can yield varied and detailed data on the same topic (Dudwick, Kuehnast, Jones & Woolcock, 2006). The questions for both the individual and focus group interviews were open-ended questions in order to provide opportunities for both the interviewer and participants to discuss certain topics in more detail (Hancock, 2002). The open-ended nature of the questions provided opportunities for the participants to provide as much information as possible regarding the phenomenon of study and for the researcher to prompt participants for a deeper understanding of the subject that was studied (Yauch & Steudel, 2003). The data was analysed according to the themes and categories, which emerged from inductive categorisation (Atieno, 2009; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The findings were interpreted and discussed in relation to the existing literature

findings. The interpretation and discussion also made use of the verbatim excerpts from the interview data because they carry authenticity and weight of the research findings in relations to the research intentions.

#### **Data Collection Procedures**

The research sites consisted of five schools in Circuit 1, and two Education Offices. All the research sites belongs to Omusati Education Region. The Regional Director granted approval for conducting the study. The researcher visited research sites and explained the research intentions to all participants, and obtained informed consent from the participants. After an appointment schedule was agreed with the participants, the researcher started collecting data by starting with rural schools. The researcher firstly interviewed school principals and then held focus group interviews with teachers at every rural school sampled. When all participants were interviewed at all rural schools, the researcher then visited the two education offices, which were in different towns and interviewed the sampled education officials.

#### **Trustworthiness of findings**

Triangulation and member checking established the trustworthiness of the research findings.

**Triangulation:** Triangulation is the use of multiple methods to data collection in order to enable these methods to complement each other and to confirm that the data present common codes and themes (Kahn & Best, 2006, Creswell, 2014; Leedy & Omrod, 2005). The use of different methods in a study compensates for their individual limitations and exploits their respective benefits (Guba, 1981). This study employed data triangulation as one of the types of triangulation.

Data triangulation involves using different sources of information to increase the trustworthiness of the study findings (Creswell, 2014). Triangulation involves using different sources of research instruments, such as interviews, focus group discussions or participant observation that utilises different informants to enhance the quality of the data from different sources (Anney, 2014). The researcher has used different data collection methods in this study, which included individual interviews with school principals and education officials, as well as focus group interviews with teacher participants. These multiple methods all produced data that complemented each other in addressing the research goals. The similarities in responses of the informants represents the authenticity of the research findings.

**Member checking:** Member checking seeks to establish whether the participants agree with what the researcher have written about the data they provided during the inquiry (Ary, Jacob, Sorensen & Razavieh, 2010). Member checking requires that the data interpretations and discussions should be continuously tested with participants from whom the data was solicited (Guba, 1981). The aim is for researcher to solicit feedback and share his or her interpretations of the data with the participants to help clear up miscommunication, identify inaccuracies and help obtain additional useful data.

For this study, the researcher went back to the participants and shared the interpretation and

discussion of the findings with them. This was meant to establish common grounds on the research outcomes with participants. This iterative process ensured that the findings that was presented in the report were a true and genuine reflection of the data collected from the participants.

## Findings and Discussion

The significance of conceptualising the factors motivating teachers to be recruited and retained at rural schools cannot be over-emphasised. An in-depth comprehension of the factors motivating teachers at rural schools can help school leaders nurture these factors for improved teacher motivation and quality of teaching and learning in rural schools. The collected data was analysed thematically, by making sense of the collected data through reviewing the data often and organising the data to generate themes. After the themes were generated, they were assigned codes.

Each set of data that manifest particular points of emphasis for a specific theme were coded with the code of the specific theme to serve as categories for the theme, and so that it was easy to be traced in the data set during data analysis, as well as for references during later stages of interpretation and discussion. The analysis of the data collected revealed that the recruitment, motivation and retention of teachers in rural schools were informed by diverse factors. These diverse factors are thematically presented in the following Table 1.

Table 1

*Themes and Their Categories as Established by Thematic Analysis.*

Code Name	Name of Theme	Categories for the Theme
A	Promotional posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head of Department</li> <li>- School Principal</li> <li>- Increased salaries and allowances</li> </ul>
B	Family background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Place of origin</li> <li>- Familiarity with the rural setting</li> <li>- Low cost of living in rural areas</li> </ul>
C	Leadership attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Humane school leadership</li> <li>- Exemplary and visionary leadership</li> <li>- Shared leadership</li> </ul>
D	Environmental challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accommodation facilities</li> <li>- Physical facilities</li> <li>- Teaching and Learning resources</li> <li>- Health and protection services</li> </ul>
E	Employment opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of entry posts</li> </ul>
F	Support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continuous professional development</li> <li>- Workshops</li> <li>- Visit by education officials</li> <li>- Timely remunerations</li> </ul>
G	Financial incentive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Location of the school</li> <li>- Category of financial incentive</li> </ul>

Table 1 contain the themes and their emergent categories that were established from the analysis of the data. These themes and their categories are interpreted and discussed next.

#### **Promotional posts**

The promotional posts that were available at schools in rural areas motivated teachers to aspire for positions of influence. The two common promotional posts that were available to rural school teachers were the Head



of Department and School Principal posts. Participants expressed the availability of promotional posts at schools in rural areas as an important factor to locate and remain at rural schools. Apart from prestige and self-esteem, management posts also implied increased salaries and allowances resulting in *“teachers going to rural areas because of opportunities such as promotional posts”*. Considering the benefits that comes with promotional positions, holders of promotional posts were likely to remain in rural areas regardless of geographically-related challenging conditions. Based on the same argument, teachers were not motivated to locate to rural schools if opportunities for career growth, such as promotional posts, were not available, or benefits accompanying promotional posts were not adequate.

#### **Family background**

Some teachers originated from rural areas with their homes and families still located in the rural areas. As they have grown up in a rural environment and were used to rural conditions, they preferred to remain with their families to render assistance to their families. Participants explained that teachers were motivated to remain in rural areas because of familiarity with the environment and closeness to their family. Participants revealed that *“teachers have their families to look after, they really wanted to remain at rural areas. In addition, “teachers were there at rural areas because they were happy with the rural environment”*. The expressions of the participants concurred with the literature findings that living and working in a rural area can be rewarding, as rural areas were safe and a pleasing experience with nature and community members (Adie, 2012).

Teachers who originated from rural areas did not feel isolated, but content with their rural comfort zones. In

addition to familiarity with rural environment, the cost of living in rural areas was less demanding than in urban areas, especially when residing with family members, which was common to living in rural area (Hull, 2003). Beutel, Adie, & Hudson (2011) argued that the negative perception of rural communities, interpreting rural areas as inferior places, was unjustified as contemporary studies with new teachers revealed satisfaction. A good image of rural communities can be developed by promoting positive aspects of rural communities to potential beginner teachers. This ensures that a positive perception is created among beginner teachers with the hope that they will develop interest to live and work in rural schools.

#### **Leadership attributes**

The commonly known statement by John Maxwell that *“everything rises and falls with leadership”* implies that leaders need to motivate their employees for their employees to feel valued and part of the team. From the interviews with participants, it was clear that they attributed teachers’ decisions to remain at schools in the rural environment to effective and humane school leadership. A school principal participant revealed that, *“as a supervisor, I always tried to lead my teachers by example. In other word, the teachers were motivated by my actions”*. This was triangulated by another participant, who observed that *“the motivation level of our teachers was very high. Therefore, when I came here, teachers were not really on task, but now once the bell rang, everyone was heading to the class. I think they are very much self-motivated now as a result of me practising what I preached”*. Therefore, the leadership attributes of school principals, informed teachers’ attachments to rural schools.

The manner in which teachers were influenced, such as the leader leading by example was what motivated teachers to remain committed to rural schools and execute their responsibilities to the best of their abilities. The examples that was set by their school principals as a leaders, have inspired them to be self-starters and self-driven teachers. The positive influence of the school principals on teacher motivation resulted in good learner performance which in turn raised motivation levels amongst teachers, as *“teachers have high motivation levels due to good results the school enjoyed in national examinations. We always set targets and that is what was motivating teachers to push hard”*.

The visionary leadership of the school ensured that targets were set to be achieved, and that everyone was geared to pro-actively function towards the realisation of the set targets. The leader’s responsibility related to ensuring that teachers were energised to achieve the targets that were set. With regard to the visionary leadership experienced at rural schools, satisfactory learner performance was achieved, regardless of the presence or absence of financial incentive, which was generally believed to be the motivator for teachers to perform. One participant confirmed the inevitability of improved learner performance because of effective leadership, by stating that *“the improvement in the performance of schools was a result of leadership. When financial incentive was introduced, good school performance has already been there as a result of our strategic plans and targets on what we should do and these strategies started in 2005, way back before the implementation of financial incentive in 2010”*.

It was clear that regional leadership influenced school leadership, enabling school principals to influence

teachers optimally in pursuing set targets. This practice prevailed before the implementation of financial incentive. Teachers have always been motivated by setting their own targets and getting support from leadership to achieve these targets. Teachers’ good performance as a result of their motivation, can therefore not be exclusively linked to financial incentive. Apart from leadership, shared leadership existed in the regional structures that served as motivation for teachers. Educational leaders shared the responsibilities of motivating teachers, as Directors and Inspectors of education visited rural schools and interacted with teachers. The moral support teachers enjoyed with this gesture motivated teachers to strive for high ideals with their retained teaching at rural schools.

#### **Environmental challenges**

Teachers were motivated by an environment that was both physical and psychosocial conducive for them to execute their teaching responsibilities successfully. Every participant has referred to accommodation as a motivating factor for teachers to locate and remain at rural schools. It was clear that teachers experienced an acute shortage of housing in the desolated rural areas. Participants explained that *“there was a problem of accommodation at rural schools. Teachers can come and teach here but they have to commute from towns due to lack of accommodation. This made teachers to leave to other schools with accommodation and where they will feel comfortable and motivated”*. Teachers want to teach at rural schools and *“go to schools in rural areas due to passion, but they leave these schools again due to a lack of accommodation”*, expressed another participant.

The lack of accommodation in the rural environment has caused teacher exodus at rural schools to schools

where accommodation was provided, despite these teachers' passion to teach at rural schools. For some teachers, their passion for rural school teaching compelled them to settle for accommodation relating to temporary structures typical of informal settlement constructions. These constructions were not comfortable and did not provide proper safekeeping against crime, especially during holidays when teachers have to leave. Proper accommodation in the sense of basic housing constructed with bricks would have motivated teachers to stay at rural schools. Apart from not being safe, the temperature change in an informal housing structure (shack) was unbearable in winter when it was very cold and in summer when it was very hot, which resulted in teachers not being able to acquire sufficient rest.

The challenging conditions in which teachers resided at schools in desolated rural areas included a lack of electricity, lack of running water and bathroom facilities. Participants emphasised that teachers were truly motivated to teach even at schools in rural areas. However, the housing conditions for teachers impacted negatively on their motivation and teaching performance. These difficult living conditions forced teachers to relocate to comfortable environments (Marwan, Sumintono & Mislán, 2012; Ncube, 2013).

Participants pointed out that government's attempt to provide accommodation for teachers was not adequate to accommodate all teachers in need of housing. *"Government only constructed a house that can accommodate two teachers"*, which resulted in teachers having to share facilities such as *"sharing a room three of us [them]"* and having *"one bachelor flat only that accommodated those teachers from far, while the rest of the teachers have to commute"*.

In addition to housing provision, teacher motivation is also influenced by available resources and facilities. Physical facilities within teaching context pertained to classrooms, laboratories, libraries and staff rooms, whereas outside the school setting, it included establishments such as hospitals and police stations. The presence or absence of physical facilities and instructional materials determine the motivational levels of teachers and their eventual teaching performance. Participants emphasised the demotivating effect of misconceptions relating to assumptions that competent teachers can improvise in the face of facilities and teaching aid shortages. Although valid to a certain extent, participants emphasised that proper teaching for the sake of successful learning, requires applicable facilities with related teaching equipment.

With reference to the vast distances between rural schools and major towns, essential services such as police services and medical facilities served as important factors influencing teacher decision to locate to rural schools. Considering the fact that their working conditions were usually poor and prone to possible ill health, teachers needed clinics in rural areas for medical help. Teachers also needed safety and protection as provided by the presence of police services.

It was clear that even the most generous financial incentive could not compensate for the harsh realities of rural life associated with a lack of proper housing, electricity, medical care and policing. For that reason, *"if the government could improve facilities at rural areas, teachers will be motivated to stay even if the financial incentive was low"* because proper facilities and essential services in the work environment was

important in ensuring a motivated teaching team at every rural schools.

### **Employment opportunities**

In the face of high rates of unemployment in developing countries, being employed underpins teacher motivation to teach at rural schools. As employment opportunities in urban areas were scarce, teachers sought employment opportunities at rural schools where there were more entry level vacancies available. For that reason, *“teachers went to rural areas not because there was financial incentive but because there were employment opportunities”*. The need to be employed was more prominent than financial incentive because even when financial incentive was stopped for a long period of time at rural schools in Namibia, *“there was no difference, no teacher said ‘I will not go to rural areas because there was no financial incentive’, teachers were still getting employed there”*. It was clear that *“financial incentive was not the motivating factor; teachers go to rural schools because they need to be employed, especially new graduates”*. Creating and timely filling of teaching vacancies at rural schools, will ensure a constant flow of teachers to these schools.

### **Support services**

Despite the fact that teachers were qualified and possessed subject knowledge, they needed support in executing their duties. Without support structures, teachers lost morale because of the magnitude of challenges with which they were faced with. The support that teachers needed related to opportunities for professional development such as *“people with whom to share our [them] subjected-related problems with”*. In this regard, it was stressed that workshops should be organised for teachers to discuss their subject-related problems with one another and to share

skills on content delivery. This was because the success of teachers in addressing teaching challenges was a function of their professional preparedness and competencies (Lingam, 2012).

Congruent with findings by other scholars (Hammer et al, 2005), a lack of opportunities for workshop-based professional development contributed to incompetence at rural schools resulting in poor learner performance. An important factor for professional development was the availability of assistance accompanied with expert knowledge from regional educational offices. Participants requires that *“support services personnel should come down to teachers at rural schools”*, to acquire first-hand knowledge of school-related problems. Participants stressed that *“Education Officers were needed to come down to schools so that we [schools] can tell them our problems, rather than sending circulars which do not speak for themselves.*

Participants felt strongly that regardless of the geographical location of rural schools, which made it difficult to reach these schools, diverse efforts should be exploited to ensure that teachers receive the support they required. The geographical locations of rural schools deprived teachers of access to support services, as these schools were difficult to reach resulting in teachers at rural schools being deprived of support services such as frequent visits by advisory officials or school inspectors (Hammer et al, 2005). Despite their remoteness, efforts should be made to render the required support services to teachers in rural schools.

A crucial part of teacher support motivating them to persevere with their teaching endeavours was

meticulous and timely remuneration. In this regard, teachers received little support from the Human Resource Division of the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoEAC), with regard to the timely processing and payment of salaries, especially salaries for new appointees. Apart from a demotivating effect on the psyche of teachers who were not paid on time, they were also affected physically in the sense of “*no teacher can teach effectively on an empty stomach*”. This affected negatively proper teaching which was further jeopardised by teachers who were forced to leave their classes to visit the Human Resource section of the Directorate of Education to enquire about their outstanding salaries.

The study discovered that “*new appointees were not paid their salaries well on time. These teachers struggled for three to four months without getting paid, they were forced on a regular basis to travel in order to make enquiries at Human Resource offices, to find out when they will be paid*”. The snowball effect of decreased learner performance because of lost teaching time spent on approaching the Directorate of Education for outstanding teacher salaries implied the Directorate of Education was an accomplice in jeopardised learner performance. When teachers were unjustifiably blamed for poor learner performance, they were demotivated which can be recovered with the Directorate of Education discharging responsibility for their part of adequate learner performance, namely timeous remuneration of teachers.

### **Financial incentive**

An effective reward system retain the high performers in the organisation with these rewards related to employee productivity (Carragher, Gibson and Buckley, 2006). Even though the majority of

participants were of the view that many factors motivated teachers to locate and remain at rural schools, the importance of financial incentive was acknowledged. Financial incentive motivated teachers to apply for teaching posts at rural schools because many teachers, before accepting vacant positions at rural schools, “*would contact the Circuit Office to enquire where the school was located and the category of financial incentive for the school*”. In many instances, these teachers enquiring about financial incentive were already employed, but “*financial incentive attracted teachers to rural schools as they were not attracted before*”. It was clear from the interviews with participants that the implementation of financial incentive has encouraged teachers to teach at rural schools, which has contributed to an increase in the proportion of qualified teachers at rural schools. However, the overall teacher motivation at rural schools, cannot be entirely attributed to financial incentive, but to a host of other factors of which financial incentive is one of them.

Overall, this study discovered that the recruitment, motivation and retention of teachers in rural schools were informed by a host of factors, which factors relates to promotional posts, family background, leadership attributes, environmental challenges, employment opportunities, support services and financial incentives. These discoveries as research findings were made from the analysis of the data collected from the participants.

## **Conclusion**

Teacher motivation is an integral part of the success of the teaching and learning processes. This is even more important in rural areas where the living and working conditions are very challenging to teachers. Hence,

teachers need to be motivated and to be recruited and remain with rural school teaching. Despite this importance, little progress was made in the educational management field to advance efforts meant to motivate teachers to remain with rural schools' teaching. Popular to the view that teachers were motivated by monetary rewards, the study established that there were diverse factors that motivated teachers to locate and remain in rural schools, dismissing any notion that teacher motivation is a monetary function. These factors relates to teachers being attracted to rural areas due to promotional posts and the benefits that comes with such promotion, bonding with their family backgrounds in rural areas, the humane leadership of rural schools, enriching experience and cost-cutting measures that was reaped in rural areas, employment opportunities that were available especially to new recruits, support services that were made available to teachers in rural areas and the financial incentive that

were given to teachers locating to schools in rural areas.

The study revealed that teachers in rural schools were motivated by a host of factors all of which deserves attention by school leaders, to be natured for an appropriate and balanced motivation of teachers in rural school settings. Therefore, motivating teachers requires school leaders to fulfil crucial motivating factors which are both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature. The positive fulfilment of these factors in return motivate teachers to increase their performance which can be demonstrated by their learners' level of achievement in standardised national examinations. Continuous attainment of desired learner achievement can prompt school leaders to continuously, adhere to fulfilling and nurture teachers' motivating factors in order to energise teachers to maintain increased learner achievements among rural schools.

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