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Human Resource Policies' Effect on Teacher Career Progression: Unravelling Systemic and Structural Teacher Career Advancement Barriers

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to find out secondary school teachers' perceptions of the impact of human resource (stay) policies on secondary school teachers' career progression in Bikita District of Zimbabwe. The flexible question that this research sought to find answers to is whether human resource (stay) policies are not teacher career progression retardants that contribute towards the production of career progression bonsaied secondary school teachers. The study adopted a qualitative approach in which an interpretivist philosophy was applied. This study is hinged on an inference line of inquiry to find a cause and effect on human resource stay policies and teacher career progression. A hybridized research design comprising multiple case studies and a phenomenological design was adopted. Referral snowballing sampling was employed and six Focus Group Discussions of six members per group were conducted on a sample of 36 teachers from selected secondary schools from the district. Data were analyzed thematically. The study established that the training and development policy, reward policy, and promotion policy, which are structural and systemic components at the stay level of the human resource function contain physiognomies that constrict the career progression of teachers in the Bikita District. The study concluded that existing policies discourage internal vertical progression as well as external mobility of teachers to other ministries and external organizations.

INTRODUCTION

Once an individual enters the organization via recruitment, selection, and placement gateway and finally gets settled, the idea of career advancement and growth dominates the mind (Armstrong and Taylor, 2023). As employees work toward realizing their full potential, career advancement creates a large window through which employees can satiate the relevant egoistic and self-actualization needs upheld by Maslow's Hierarchy (1943) and reinforced by Aldefer's ERG (1963) theory (Ihensekhien & Arimie, 2023). At the inception of the employment relationship, both the employer and employee develop certain expectations of one another (Khanyeza & Katrodia, 2022). Apart from the expectation of fulfillment of extrinsic rewards, the employee has an array of intrinsic expectations that s/he feels the employer is indebted to satisfy (Anjum et al., 2021).

The employee's perception and feeling concerning the extent to which the employer cares about his well-being in general and career advancement, in particular, is pertinent (S Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2023;). This concern for employee advancement is a demonstration of the employer's concern which the worker perceives as organizational support (POS) (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2023). Career progression as an intrinsic expectation of opportunities and advancement options compels individuals to join institutions (Patterson et al, 2021), and develop functional behavior of high performance and organizational commitment as well as corporate citizenship behavior. Lack of career progression prospects is one major cause for dislike by many to join certain occupations (Wang et al., 2020). The Provision of a career progression-supporting environment can therefore not be ignored.

Despite the zeal for career progression which employees have indicated as wanting the employer to satisfy as reported by literature, (Chagelishvili, Surmanidze, & Patsatsia, 2023), there is still a serious outcry of career stagnation from teachers the world over (Chaaban et al., 2022), in the Sub Saharan Africa (Habler, Bennet & Damani, 2020), and in Zimbabwe in particular (Ngwenya, 2021). The lack of career progression is evident through teachers remaining in the same position doing the same duties for a very long time and receiving the same salary level which demotivates many of them (Amzat, Ismail & Al-Ani (2022; Habler, Bennet & Damani (2020). This non-progression concern existing particularly in Zimbabwe is against Ndengwa (2021) who posits that each employee of every company hopes to advance quickly in their career, and progression motivates them to participate actively in their job-related activities. Deprivation of career advancement opportunities to employees in general and more so to Zimbabwean teachers who crave the egoistic need is tantamount to need disenfranchisement whose tremor results in dysfunctionality and withdrawal behavioral attributes. Demotivation, dis-identification, disengagement, absenteeism, presentism, and disorientation (Musamali, 2018) are as well behavioral outcomes of deprived and disenfranchised and career-stagnant personalities. The aftermaths of career stagnation are long-fetching and quite disastrous to individuals living the stagnation horror as well as to organizational performance outcomes. Whilst research effort has indicated an array of factors that impede teacher career progression, for instance, Abdi (2023) cites limitations on access to education and training and lack of job opportunities, Yagan (2022) indicates personal experiences, social environment, while Paragayanan (2021) attributes teacher career stagnation to lack of financial resources, low educational qualifications, work pressure, promotion anxiety, and lack of support and career decisions.

Despite the propensity of people policies to help in the establishment of career advancement supporting the work environment (Kunarz, 2021), a direct juxtaposition of career progression to human resource stay policies to establish a causal and effective relationship in career advancement is limited. The dearth of research on human resource

policy's effect on career progression also exists despite Dzimbiri (2021) hint when he indicated that the human element's aspirations and desires in organizational life are often ignored when coming up with a robust institutional structural and systemic infrastructure such as human resource policies. The USAID Report (2022) buttresses Dzimbiri's sentiments through its advancement of the platitudinous, constrictive, and oddity character of human resource policies.

This study therefore anticipates to find out the summative retardant influence of the human resource stay policies on secondary school teacher career progression in Bikita District of Zimbabwe. The policy effect on teacher career progression will be deduced out of inference from perceptions gathered from the teachers, who are the victims of career stagnation. Through unearthing the physiognomies that constrict career advancement of secondary school teachers in Bikita Secondary Schools. Subsequently, this study intends to answer the question of whether human resource policies are paraphernalia for the production of Bikita District secondary school teacher career bonsais or not, and if so, consequently call for policy review towards the creation of career progression-friendly policies.

The objectives of this study are thus two-fold, where firstly the study is required to explore Bikita District Secondary School teachers' perceptions of human resource stay policies on teacher career progression and subsequently to unearth the systemic and structural obstacles that hinder Bikita Secondary School teachers from career progression.

This study hangs from the Elitist theory by Pareto, Mosca & Michaels; (1900s). This classical theory explains the employer-centric character of public and organizational policies and how this has a negative effect on the career progression of employees in general and Zimbabwe teachers in particular. The Elitist theory explains that the elites occupy the prestigious stratum in societies and they possess power, wealth, different skills and they also enjoy a monopoly of vital information, and policies and directives are a product and resultant effect of their actions and inactions (Salawu, 2023). This theory underscores the preponderance and stratification of teachers as handy-persons at an operational level and principal officials in the education governance system of Zimbabwe and elsewhere as elites. According to Anyebe (2018)

the elite theory holds that public policy and all other forms of policies are a reflection of the interests of the governing elite. By nature of policy construction whose main contributor is the elite and the agent of capital, even human resource policies are constructed to address workplace issues with an explicit employer bias. Mutongoreni et al., (2023) posit that policies can be regarded as reflecting the values and preferences of a governing elite. The central claim of the elite theory is that institutional policy is not determined by the demands and actions of the generality of employees, but rather by the ruling elite, whose preferences are implemented by political officials and institutional agencies (Ikelegbe, 1996).

The elite in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education of Zimbabwe, from the above discussion remain the makers and shakers of human resource policies and are the custodians of these policies, and therefore the policy pendulum swings in favor of and according to their wishes. The majority of the population, teachers included, is destined to be under the authority of the few who have special abilities including skills, affluence, cunning, and intelligence and policy tools at their disposal to control and manipulate them into maintaining and accepting their least positions in society (Miguel, 2022; Salawu, 2023). Deprivations and short-changing tendencies could be evident in teacher non-progression because the (government) who plays the pipe determines the tune (progression or non-progression) (Irikefe, Mukoro & Sokoh, 2023). Organizations as microcosms and miniatures of the greater society, (Miguel, 2022) are replete with elitism, and deliberate systematic domination. *Operationalization of Human Resource stay policies as systemic and structural components*

Guided by the Dzimbiri (2021) definition of Human Resource Management as the management of entry, stay, and exit of employees in the organization, the stay stage is the focal point of analysis for this study. Armstrong and Taylor (2023) assert that human resource policies should exist at each stage in the human resource chain of activities from the entry of employees to their exit. Dzimbiri (2021) projects that organizational malfunctionality and dysfunctionality is attributable to these structural elements such as. This significance of the structure line of thought has prompted this research to check on the systemic variable (HR

policies) of their freeness from secondary school teacher career stagnation (institutional dysfunctionality) physiognomies. Since HR policies address employee issues they are also referred to as people management strategy (Gratton & Truss, 2003). HR policies therefore are a critical element of the broader organization strategy which is a game plan, a unified design, and a long-ranging perspective of securing an advantageous position that management uses to operate successfully and achieve organizational objectives (Alsaedi, 2017).

HR policies, since overshadowed in organizational strategy are a deliberate and proactive management game plan constructed out of strategic thinking of how the organization can maximize agility out of the people resource. Since the employee is the most expensive resource to maintain (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Chi & Holt, 2023, Muhammed, Hadi & Shihab, 2020), short-changing the employee's career advancement interests and expectations can be an extension of the objective achievement. Therefore, borrowing from Dzimbiri (2021) there is a high likelihood that in coming up with the current human resource policies in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe, the egoistic behavioral and human element inclinations and implications of teacher advancement and progression element could have been ignored due to their cost implications on the Ministerial balance sheet.

Training and Development Policy

Training and development policies and practices in many countries are the right of management and are not recommended by the law, yet they remain very pivotal (Tayeb, 2005 in Wulnye, Aikins & Abdul-Fatal, 2018). Organizations are also increasingly recognizing the need to use the best training and development policies to clean up their personnel to enhance their spirited benefit to accomplish agreed goals (Onyekwere & Emerine 2020). Training and development policies are therefore options that are not compulsory and enforceable. This is despite some Studies of training conducted in the USA which indicate that training is rated as very important by 94% of human resources (Joyce, 2006). Treating the training and development policies peripherally exposes the employees to psychological contract abuses and violations. Research by Mitchell (2024) established that

training in the whole of Africa is not treated too seriously and is delivered in a majority of cases through a 'cascade' model, whereby a small number of centrally-trained individuals are charged with training colleagues (generally subordinates within the civil service structure), who train others until this training reaches classroom teachers. The inadequacies of this one-size-fits-all training model are well documented, and its use in the region has been the source of much frustration for teachers (Bett, 2016; Sasere & Makhasane, 2023). Little or no attention is found to be paid to considering the teachers' perspectives on the effectiveness of the formal and informal training programs (Tuncel & Cobanoglu, 2018 in Mahara, 2024). Eisenberger et al., (2001) in Shapiro (2009) is vehement when he say fulfilment of obligation extends beyond terms formally stipulated and incorporates implicit and assumed understanding as well. Even if the law does not enforce training and development policy frameworks, the employee views it as an employer's implicit contractual obligation embedded in the psychological contract.

Reward Policy

Reward policies deal with a plethora of issues relating to what, how much, and when employees are rewarded for their input towards the achievement of equal pay, external competitiveness, and internal equity among other issues. (Acheampong, 2024). Reward policy reflects internal job value, external job value, and the value of the person (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023). Maintaining the same salary level and job bottlenecks are also indicators of career non-advancement (Kwon, 2022). The compensation level does not only have a big impact on how well employees will perform (Acheampong, 2024) but is also one of the indicators of employee career progression (Chaaban et al., 2022). The Reward Policy is therefore very important for the performance of the employees (Daniel et al., 2019). It was also asserted by Macapagal and Ricafort (2023) that the key to a positive and quality life is a productive career which is depicted by its economic benefits. A good policy therefore should stipulate rates that are not far away from the regional and international market.

Promotion Policy

Teachers believe that a more transparent promotion policy, with clear criteria and guidance,

would as Kasapoglu, (2020) argued greatly improve teacher opportunities for career progression. Ghamrawi and Abu-Tineh 2023 note that the teaching profession offers a relatively flat career trajectory that lacks satisfactory leadership roles for experienced teachers who demonstrate expertise in the field. In many low and middle-income countries, promotion opportunities for teachers are scarce (Evans & Yuan 2018), and this renders the teaching career a virtually dead end (Kelly 2022). Amzat, Ismail & Al-Ani (2022) admit a lack of promotion opportunities in the teaching profession which they indicated as the major cause of high attrition in South Sudan. Conversely, career non-progression victims usually reciprocate with a low level of personal commitment due to lower motivation and engagement (Thalmus & Cam, 2023), and choose quiet quitting in response to their employers' actions (Hopke, 2022). In situations where higher positions attainment is lacking and difficult many employees choose also to disengage from the organization or leave the firm altogether (Hom, Allen, & Griffith, 2019). Employee productivity increases as a result of higher employee engagement (Eldor, 2016 in Acheampong et al., 2024). The Zimbabwean education system must provide training and support to secondary teachers regarding promotion requirements and policies. To the contrary, the Permanent Secretary in the MoPSE (Mrs. Thabela) also acknowledges that teachers face a plethora of challenges in Zimbabwe, which include limited opportunities for continuous professional development, lack of promotion, and insufficient reward as well as limited professional growth (GoZ, 2020).

METHODS

Inference from teachers' perceptions on how stay policies affect their career progression was used to find a cause-and-effect on HR stay policy and secondary school teacher career stagnation. This study adopts a postmodernist approach (Christana et al., 2015), toward unearthing the retardant nature of HR policies toward Bikita District Secondary school teachers' career stagnation. A qualitative methodology was chosen in this research and two designs namely multiple case study and phenomenological designs were hybridized. The multiple case study is adopted to circumvent the idiosyncrasy and generalizability of

the data set associated with the use of a single case study as was opined by Crompton (2023).

The phenomenological designs are more suitable for this study to gain out-of-interaction data resulting from discussion among participants, for example questioning one another, and commenting on each other's experiences in the phenomenon (Kothari, 2019). Focus Group Discussions were opted for since data generated through, FDGs is deeper and richer than those obtained from one-to-one interviews according to Creswell & Creswell (2018). FDGs were also chosen for this research informed by Gundumogula and Gundumogula, (2020) who advanced that there is the interaction among participants with spontaneity and this improves the findings.

The population in this study were all Secondary school teachers in Bikita District whose total was 772 (The Zimbabwe Primary and Secondary Education Statistics Report, 2023). A population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that possess the characteristics the researcher aims to investigate and who conform to specific criteria (Rudansky-Kloppers, 2021). Whilst the sample size for this study was 36 teachers, qualitative inquiry according to Creswell & Creswell, (2018) has no stringent rules regarding the sample size and Saunders, (2017) also reiterates that data saturation guides the sample in most qualitative studies. However, the referral snowballing sampling technique was used where research participants (teachers) participated in the selection of new potential participants (schools and teachers) for the proposed study (Berndt, 2020). Elfil & Negida, (2017) also concur and posit that in the referral snowballing method, researchers frequently ask the participant to provide them with access to other participants who have the desired qualities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perceptions of the Promotion Policy

In response to whether the promotion policy upholds the career progression of secondary school teachers, the respondents highlighted the following:

“The promotion criteria is not spelled out clearly in the correspondences and circulars which are extended to us. This opens room for favoritism and nepotism. Many of us without connections

to higher-ups find ourselves unable to advance from our current positions” (Tr3 in FGD2).

“Of late promotion has inclined to political affiliations. Meritocracy no longer finds space in the promotion system. The ‘teachers for ED’ political groups has also implicitly influenced promotions of individuals who are considered politically upright” (Tr1 in FGD 4).

“I feel undervalued, unrecognized, and unacknowledged by the ministry for the output which I always produced. Just imagine attaining a hundred percent pass rate for my ‘A’ level classes every year and no upgradation. I am left questioning what level of effort would actually warrant a promotion.” (Tr1 FDG 1).

Overall, secondary teachers in Bikita perceive the promotion policy to be opaque, lacking transparency, and not adequately recognizing their skills and contributions. These findings above point to a flawed promotion policy constricting the teachers’ career progression. Teachers believe that a more transparent promotion policy will greatly improve their opportunities for career progression. This concurs with Kasapoglu (2020) who posits that transparent and regularly communicated promotion policies increase prospects for teacher career advancement. The promotional policies must reflect fairness, equitability, and freedom from biases to ensure equal opportunities for all teachers. The perception of the respondent (Tr1 in FGD1) resonates with Taylor et al. (2011), who noted that the teaching profession offers a relatively flat career trajectory that lacks satisfactory leadership roles for experienced teachers who demonstrate expertise in the field. Informed by Taylor et al., (2011) realizations above as well as the respondents on the dead-end nature of teaching careers, systems, and policies promoting teachers’ external career mobility are therefore encouraged. Where there is no space to accommodate high fliers in the system, an outlet valve should be created to enable external movement. Secondment of secondary school teachers to other organizations such as education administration departments, research institutions as well as universities can provide motivation and opportunities for teachers to consider other career pathways. Work contexts that do not permit experienced and high-potential employees to attain Maslow’s (1943)’ higher-order needs of esteem and self-actualization disenfranchise and subsequently

lead to a feeling of disengagement and disidentification in the employees.

The low level of morale and employee engagement as a result of flawed promotion criteria raised by Tr1 in FGD4 concur with Mabhoyi (2020) projection that concern for teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and wellbeing is pertinent in the Zimbabwean teaching profession. To address these concerns, the Zimbabwean education system must provide training and support to secondary school teachers regarding promotion policies and promotional criteria. This training should aim to increase teachers' awareness and understanding of the promotion policy, as well as provide them with the necessary skills and qualifications to meet the criteria for promotion. Furthermore, a review of the promotion policy by the education authorities in Zimbabwean to ensure transparency, merit-based criteria, and recognition of teachers' qualifications and contributions is essential for a conducive working environment.

Perceptions of Training and Development Policy

In response to whether the training and development policy upholds the career progression of secondary school teachers, the teachers revealed a lack of autonomy, inequity, stagnation, and disconnection of the policy and the existence of gaps between topics trained and actual teacher needs and requirements.

“Our specific deficiencies and external mobility aspirations are not considered and addressed by the current policy and circulars. The training policy is not only too old to require a revamp but is also disconnected from our deficiencies reality. Circular reference A/231/12 of 1997 which is still effective even now has a very limited category of degrees as it permits us to pursue only classroom-related qualifications. I also would want to be an administrator at the Provincial offices but the policy does not provide for such.” (Tr1 in FGD2)

“There is really nothing I can do than to attend their workshops. I have been teaching ‘O’ level and ‘A’ level examination classes for the past ten years now. The workload which I have does not permit any movements out of the class for a single day. Even my request for leave and time off for me to go to university to attend degree of my choice is short down every time. My Headmaster always refer me to a very to olden Public Service General Leave Regulations notice

42 of 1979 which avers leave as a privilege and not a right” (Tr3 in FGD1).

“Teaching is a very dead-end career my brother, Training choice outside institutionally recommended programs is very restricted. We are not allowed to pursue any other reasonable qualifications away from the very few classroom-oriented programs stipulated by Ministry of Education and Culture circular A/231/12 of 6 January 1998 Even those who pursue programs recommended by the ministry still take years for their qualifications to be recognized. Had I known, I should not have considered this droning profession....same chair, same classroom for this whole period since I started this career is quite disturbing” (Tr5 in FGD 1).

“I bemoan the opportunity cost of the time I waste attending to repetitive and sometimes irrelevant training sessions. The opportunity we are deprived and which we forgo on not attending to critical and personal career educational desires is un-compensable. In fact we are career plateaued and our creativity and growth is constricted because of these repetitive training sessions unnecessarily emphasized by these training policies and circulars. Our dream for other lucrative jobs away from this mind-numbing talk and chalk is destroyed” (Tr4 in FGD5).

“The Ministry provides a very limited quota per the whole region and the probability of us being approved for our study leave to pursue qualifications of our choice is next to none. Our school Heads are still referring to policy A/162/1 which was communicated by the Ministry to the regional directors in 1999. The maximum number that should be released to attend courses from Masvingo Province is just 17 teachers out of 772 teachers from 49 secondary schools in the Province according to that circular. Make your calculations and see if the probability of any of us being seconded for a career development exercise is not next to zero.” Tr3 in FDG 2

The above sentiments do not only communicate an external mobility regulative and constrictive policy but a straight-jacketed and undifferentiated career model. The findings are inconsistent with what the Career capital theory by DeFillippi and Arthur (1994) upholds in the work context. The career capital theory posits that individuals are encouraged to accumulate career capital through various experiences, exposures, and

knowledge. In a case where a policy confine and constricts teachers' ability to accumulate career capital outside of the teaching field, their external mobility and progression is limited. The career capital that teachers are deprived of is a strategic means for their employability elsewhere (changing career contexts and career diversification). Findings from respondent Tr4 in FDG5 above are inconsistent with the provision of a conducive career environment enabling teacher external mobility. This scenario is consistent with Mwova and Langat (2021) who pointed out that whilst a large number of employees have the potential to change jobs, organizations must take a long-term perspective to have suitable career management interventions for their employees. Concerns of very restrictive study quota provisions require to revisit so that it can accommodate a large number of prospective study applicants. The stance is also supported by the Protean Career model (PCM) by Hall (1996) which emphasizes and upholds that a career should not only be flexible but also individually directed.

The dissatisfactions reported by the respondents (Tr4 in FDG5 and Tr1 in FDG2) are indicative of high de-skilling and neglect of the teacher's very burning career progression desires which is symptomatic of the need for individual career modeling programs. The findings are consistent with Armstrong and Taylor, (2023) who affirm that individually tailored programs enable a deeper focus on an employee's aims and aspirations from the identification of the handicaps faced by an employee in accomplishing his goals to the solutions in terms of re-skilling or reassignment elsewhere. Sentiments from Tr1 in FDG2 are consistent with the one-size-fits-all training approach espoused by Mitchell et al., (2024) which appears to be the most prevalent form of formal teacher training and development provision for teachers in the Southern African region. The one-size-fits-all training model is a recurrent concern amongst teachers as it lacks deficiencies and preference inputs from teachers themselves. Career progression management, in particular training and development interventions, should therefore consider the individual's progression cravings. Superimposing training and development activities on employees as has been indicated from responses by Tr1 in FDG2 is career development counter-

productive. Such individual career development incidences obtained in the MoPSE are favorable to the organization as alluded to by Armstrong and Taylor (2023) who indicate that top organizational leadership always must adopt institutional-centric activities and programs that are organizationally benefiting as they see things from long-term organizational value addition perspective. The above divergent interests between teachers and their superiors confirm that the quintessential nature of conflict of interest between subordinates and managers has long been an organizational phenomenon. The utterances from respondents indicate that the divergent and conflicting nature of employee career interests and management career priorities breeds employee dissatisfaction. Therefore this means that individuals need to be proactive and take charge of their career progression if they are to achieve career advancement (Järlström, Brandt & Rajala, 2020). The workload concerns raised in this current study by Tr3 in FDG1 were also consistent with (Khan & Siriwardhane, 2021) and (Booth et. 2021) who enunciated the workload as constricting the career progression for academics in Australia and teachers in England respectively. Workload as a career progression constricting mechanism has therefore stood out as an international problem cutting across all academia-related professions.

Perception of the Rewards Policy

In response to whether the reward policy supports secondary school teachers' external mobility and internal career progression of educators concerned the teachers indicated that the salary was insufficient to cater for the upkeep of their families and more-worse to pay for fees at the cheapest universities and colleges. This is a serious cause for career stagnation which constricts the impetus for career advancement. The salary ranges and differentiations between positions were also decried as too narrow and compressed to motivate a beginner into aspiring to a higher position.

"We are a laughing stock and the working poor. Do you expect a salary which is inadequate to feed me and my wife and our two kids to afford me going to any college? Its better I concentrate with the education of my children, moreover the marginal earning out of these so called academic qualifications is quite disappointing" (Tr3 in FDG6).

“The salary difference between, the senior teacher, the deputy Headmaster and this school’s headmaster is just too low to motivate me to apply for the Headmaster and deputy headmaster positions even though I now possess the right qualifications and experiences notch for those posts. There is too much responsibility which does not commensurate with salary provided. Its better I remain a senior teacher” (Tr4 in FGD 6).

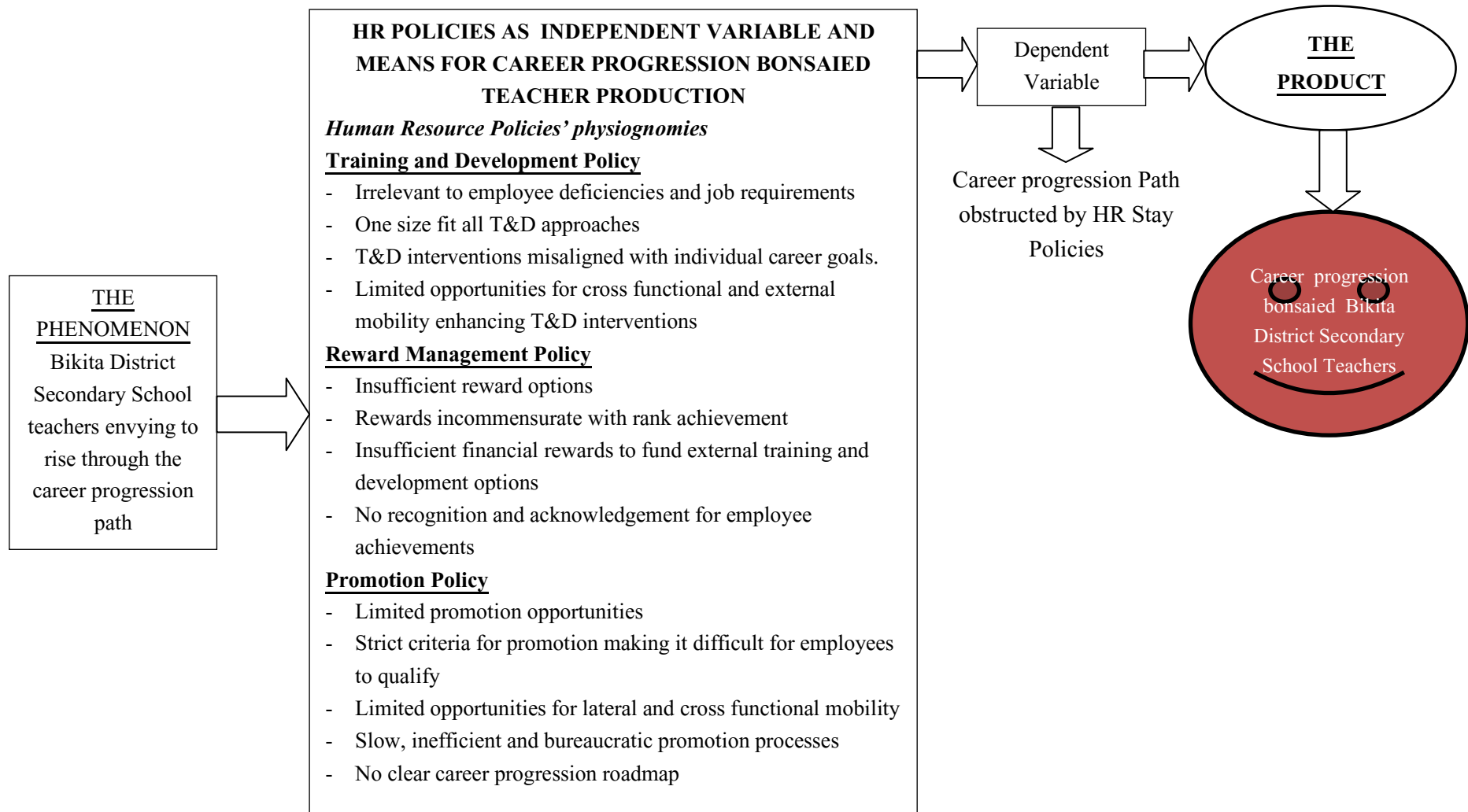
“The bigger proportion of our salaries are in the Zig Component when all the academic institutions demand payment in United State Dollars. It’s not that we do not know the value of continuous knowledge up gradation. For your own information by virtue of us choosing this teaching profession it may also mean that we have a fervent orientation towards lifelong learning but our salary situation confine us to organizationally provided internal career development interventions” (Tr2 in FGD3).

Implicit in these findings above is that the reward policy advances too low compensation even to address the bread and butter matters of the educators concerned. The salary is regarded by the respondents to be too low to finance the career advancement aspirations of the teachers concerned. The findings resonate with Mabhoyi (2020) who reiterated that the Zimbabwean Government has remained intransigent to the teachers’ need for decent remuneration in what is probably an effort to keep teachers neutralized by poverty and alienated as an intelligentsia class. The findings also concur with Macapagal and Ricafort (2023) who project that the government’s commitment towards employee compensation is key to a positive quality of life and cursor to a productive career which is depicted by its economic benefits. This finding concurs with Janer and Deri (2021) who established that 90% of the teachers in Sorsogon did not pursue advanced studies due to financial implications. This finding emphasizes compensation as a systemic

career development constrictive component affecting teachers across the globe. Findings have also unearthed that teachers who have aspirations for career advancement to higher positions within the education system are indirectly discouraged by the irrelevant rewards accumulating with their ascension. This observation resonates with Williams and Morey (2018) who found that remuneration is among critical potential willingness factors considered before application for school leadership positions. The finding is also consistent with Klyachko and Tokareva (2017) who established that there is a high expectation that an increased teaching salary would rid teachers of the need for side hustles and wanting to earn on the side, including by tutoring private jobs, and leave them more time for professional development which enhances their career progression. Money is again self-evidently a motivator extra money is not only instrumental in motivating people to work but also settles a myriad of esteem and self-actualization and related needs espoused by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs of 1943. These needs also include needs for career advancement and additional knowledge acquisition.

In extension, employees would also consider compensation fair if it is sufficient enough to settle their daily survival requirements as well as pay off career development costs. Therefore the existing reward policy in Zimbabwean secondary schools is perceived to be a constraints that hinder teachers from fully realizing their potential and advancing in their careers. Many secondary teachers perceive their level of compensation as impotent to sustain the cheapest college diploma fees and therefore helpless to individuals who would want to progress to external professions away from the ‘cottage’ and ‘blackboard’.

Framework Emanating Out of the Findings



Source: Framework conceptualised by the researcher: 2024

Results Framework Explanation

The status quo is characterized by human resource policies as the Independent Variable and means which is impeding Bikita District Secondary School teachers' career progression which is the Dependent Variable. The people policies at the human resources management cycle's stay level as guided by Dzimbiri (2021)'s compartmentalize the human resource management activities and chains them into three broad stages employee entry, employee stay, and finally employee exit in and out of the organization. The policies at the employee stay level, where the employee will have settled and start to envy for career progression impede the teacher's career progression. These policies have dysfunctional career progression retarding physiognomies highlighted under each of the training and development policies, reward policy, career management policy, and promotion policy in the conceptual framework. These physiognomies make the human resource stay policies get in the way to impede the career progression of the teacher. The end product are career progression bonsaied secondary school teachers. Therefore according to this framework, teachers are stunted in their career advancement not through their fault but through policy infringement and lack of necessary support. Ultimately, had it not been for these human resources stay policies determining proceedings in the organization, teachers could be progressing well vertically through the organization through internal positions and also via external mobility to other organizations.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes, through inference from respondent perceptions that human resource stay policies constrict secondary school teachers' career progression through certain provisions imbedded in the policy framework. The study also concludes that human resource policies at the stay stage in particular training and development, promotion as well as reward management in the MoPSE of Zimbabwe are formed up of Permanent Secretary's circulars, statutory instruments, and real policies relating to the human resource activities.

The study further concludes that the current policies referred to in the MoPSE are not only quite old but oppressive colonial material, having been enacted in 1979, almost fifty years ago. These

policies discourage internal vertical progression as well as external mobility of teachers to other ministries and organizations. Preparation of employees for external mobility and cross-departmental transfers through allowing diversified training and development is lacking as secondary teachers are only confined to internal on-the-job training programs. The policies indirectly discourage external movements and cross-ministerial employee mobility by providing a condition of unpaid leave to the prospective non-education related diploma and degree course applicants during the whole period of their study.

These policies are either created and communicated from within the MoPSE (intra-ministerial) as well as communicated from the Public Service Commission (inter-ministerial) whereon the Public Service Commission is an independent commission mandated to administrator (through an act of parliament Chapter 16:04) the Public Service and set the conditions of service of its members.

The study has also established that very limited study quotas and slots are provided per region or province and subsequently to districts. The chances of an applicant succeeding in getting permission is quite slim and this study quota system limits the progression potential of the secondary teachers

It is also concluded that the salary gaps between positions and leadership levels is too compressed to motivate teachers to envy promotions. This study therefore concludes that people policies at the stay level of human resources activities, in particular training and development, promotion and reward management are indeed structural and systemic paraphernalia for the production of career progression bonsaied secondary school teachers in Bikita District of Masvingo Province Zimbabwe.

The study recommends the MoPSE revisit the current policies and abrogate provisions that stiffen the career advancement of secondary school teachers. In doing so this allows and promotes upwards progression of the concerned teachers to higher levels.

To promote external mobility unpaid leave conditions should be removed from the training policy provision so that individuals can also pursue other non-teaching training and development-

related programs whilst getting their pay. This pay consideration goes a long way to solve the basic necessities and family requirement challenges that affect teachers whose pay is ceased during the duration of the study.

The beauty of one's promotion resides in the salary improvements and changes from one position to the other. It is therefore recommended that salary gaps be significantly improved to motivate teachers at the entrant level, senior teacher level, head of department, and Deputy Headmaster positions to envy promotion to the next position of authority.

This study also recommends the Public Service Commission and MoPSE encourage and recommend their staff to engage in online and distance learning programs and therefore abandon the study quota system since members can study whilst offering service at their schools and no significant disturbances are done to the teaching and learning process.

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