



## Research Article

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# Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Retirement in Gauteng Schools

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## Abstract

*The focus of this study is on the exploration and description of the teachers' perceptions regarding retirement in Gauteng schools. As a result of qualitative research method through literature review and interviews which were used in collecting data from the teachers as participants, the results revealed that teachers from the sample size are aware of their retirement times. But this came with mixed perceptions of what to expect and the level of readiness differed, due to lack of informed guideline, including anything that prepares them for their retirement. Based on the above results, it can thus be recommended that the Department of Education in South Africa, should conduct yearly workshops to make teachers aware of what retirement entails. This will help teachers to prepare themselves in advance for retirement.*

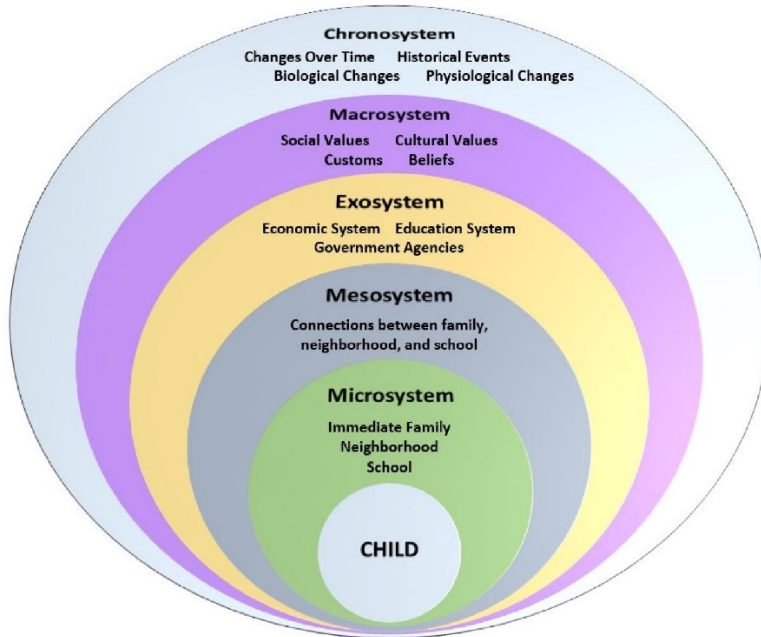
**Keywords:** Teachers, retirement, perceptions, Gauteng schools, South Africa

## 1. Introduction and the Background of this Study

Teachers' perceptions on retirement are based on their experiences, opinions, and expectations about retirement and this can affect their lives. Some teachers may perceive retirement as time to pursue better new careers and have job satisfaction. Others on the other hand, might perceive it as a time of hopelessness and loneliness while others perceive it to be a time to socialize and enjoy leisure. To this end, retirement brings an adjustment which can pose significant problems depending on the perception of the retiree towards the retirement change (Nwizu,1997). "Change" could be negative or positive depending on teachers' perceptions towards it and the type of support given to the retiree. Based on the above discussion, theoretical framework, research question and research aim of this study are thus stated respectfully below as follows:

## 2. Theoretical Framework

This research study is based on the teachers' perceptions regarding retirement in Gauteng schools. The theoretical framework used in this study is Bronfenbrenner's eco-systemic theory. The below diagram explains more of what this framework entails. For an example, Bronfenbrenner (1986) divided a person's environment five systems. They are stated as microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. They are in concentric circles as indicated below in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979:24)

According to this theoretical framework, the school, which is part of the focus of this study is viewed as a system linked to other systems which are in constant dynamic interdependent relationship. For example, when a teacher is negatively or positively affected by this retirement, the community becomes indirectly or directly affected too. The ecological systems from Bronfenbrenner's theory are compared to the spider grid which is likened to a system". In this context, this means that what happens in one part can affect the other parts such as micro, meso, exo, macro and chronosystem. Based on the above explanation, this research views teachers' retirement as an important point that needs to be intensively researched on to further empower, prepare and make them/ teachers aware of what retirement is all about.

## 3. Clarification of Concepts

The following concepts below are clarified because, concept clarification in this study is creating an understanding of how words are used.

### 3.1 Retirement

Some people describe retirement as un-affordable while others may be forced into retirement by poor health or redundancy (Dwyer & Mitchell, 1999; Ayi-Bonte, 2013)

### 3.2 Teaching

According to Sequeira (2012) teaching is a set of events, outside the learners which are designed to support internal process of learning. This implies that one should first self-motivate oneself before motivating others.

### 3.3 Perception

Scott (2003:24) defines perception as a process which occurs when the brain identifies and makes meaning of the information sent to it through messages from the sensory organs. Perception occurs in the brain and refers to the meaning an individual attaches to the selected information received through or gathered through the eyes.

## 4. Literature on Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Retirement in Gauteng Schools

Retirement has evolved from a requirement for senior workers to a complex process involving, difficult decisions including poor health, insufficient financial resources, negative attitudes towards work and increasing family commitments. Some scholars describe retirement as the exit from a "career" job into bridge employment or a reduction in hours rather than complete exit from the paid workforce (Feldman, 1994 & Asamoah, 2012). According to Belsky (1984) retirement is a transition from the world of work activity and rest, especially in respect of retirement due to old age or long years of service. Still others regard retirement as un-affordable since some people may be forced into retirement by poor health or redundancy (Dwyer & Mitchell, 1999; Ayi-Bonte, 2013). Nsirimobi and Nguwede (2005) describe retirement as a threat to many workers who may be unsure how to spend their lives after retiring from active service.

## 5. Research Question

Research question can be explained as that which gives a researcher direction in his/her the study. Based on the above, the research question can thus be formulated in this study as:

- what are teachers' perceptions regarding retirement in Gauteng schools?

## 6. Research Aim

From the above research question, the aim of the study is thus derived and is formulated as follows:

- to explore and describe teachers' perceptions regarding retirement in Gauteng schools

## 7. Research Method and Data Collection

This study took a qualitative research approach and is interpretive exploratory in nature. It focused on trying to obtain answers to the question, "What are teachers' perceptions regarding retirement in Gauteng schools, and to gain an in depth understanding of teachers' perceptions regarding retirement in Gauteng schools.

Qualitative research is usually interpretive and in this study the researcher made interpretations of the primary data collected to discover and understand worldviews of the people involved i.e., teachers and their perceptions regarding retirement.

To answer the question: What are teachers' perceptions regarding retirement in Gauteng schools, a generic approach was thus used as this study explored and described teachers' perceptions regarding retirement in Gauteng schools. The advantage of using this generic approach included its flexibility, adaptability, and cost-effectiveness. Such research allows the researcher to be with the participants and to empower them at the same time.

## 8. Data Collection

Data in this study was collected using, individual and focus group interviews. This qualitative data collection approach was chosen in this study in order to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues i.e., teachers' perceptions regarding retirement in Gauteng schools. From three schools, six retiring teachers (three females and three males per school) were selected as participants. These participants were given chance to express their perceptions and views about a specific phenomenon (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2017). Both these individual and focus group participants were further allowed to express their views freely about teachers' perceptions regarding retirement in Gauteng schools. These participants were arranged at a time convenient for them with no disturbance with teaching and learning time, or professional duties during a normal school day and has lasted about 45 minutes. Also, with their permission as interviewees, the researcher was able to audio-record their responses to allow for the data to be reinterpreted during data analysis. Questions based on, what are teachers' perceptions regarding retirement in Gauteng schools? were asked. Interestingly, the responses from both individual and focus group interviews were similar and this according to Lambert & Loisel (2008) enhances data richness.

## 9. Data Analysis, Findings, and Discussions of the Result Study

Data analysis is the process of systematically applying logical techniques to describe and evaluate information. Data obtained from interviews were analysed using thematic analysis which is a method of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data aligning with the research approach question (Braun et al., 2019). According to Braun and Clark (2019) thematic analysis should be seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis, as it provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis.

From this study, the following results emerged:

- That teachers' perception varies from happy positive mood to the anxiousness of what waits for them when they gain the status of a retiree.
- That happiness it is no longer going to be a regulated environment and maybe can use the time to do things they always wanted to do but not able.
- That the Department of Education is not preparing them for the next life and both scary and exciting experiences of those who went before them.
- That the Department of Education is not having options to retain the experienced skilled based teachers on the willingness to mentor, coach and contribute differently to the value chain.

The above findings are so frustrating, particularly in the South African context where the country needs the retention of skilled and experienced retiring teachers. Moon, (2006) supports the above results and statements by mentioning that the education policy structure is too weak to achieve any involvement or overlap of direction with retiring teachers. This means that a review of teachers' pension arrangements should be amended as stated by DfES, (2006), that a key element of proposed changes to the arrangements is currently under consultation to try to retain the experienced long-serving teachers by providing flexible arrangements.

### 9.1 *Trustworthiness*

Trustworthiness is a scrupulous and meticulous process carried out to recognize important influences occurring when conducting the research and it can be divided into credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (du Plooy- Cilliers, 2017). Shenton (2014) adds that trustworthiness is the process of ensuring the conformability, dependability, credibility, and transferability of a qualitative research study

### 9.2 *Credibility*

Credibility refers to how accurately the data, provided by the participants, was interpreted (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2017). In this study the researcher will achieve credibility when spending time with the participants during the individual and group interviews. The researcher will also make use of triangulation by obtaining information from different research methods and then find common threads through the different data.

### 9.3 *Dependability*

Dependability relates to the consistency of the findings. To achieve this, the researcher will keep a detailed audit trail which will describe the research steps from the start of a research, including the data collection and analysis and then reporting the findings (du Plooy- Cilliers, 2017).

### 9.4 *Transferability*

Transferability refers to the outcomes of the research to be applied to similar situations (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2017). The research will achieve this through providing a thick description.

### 9.5 *Confirmability*

Nieuwenhuis (2016) refers to confirmability as “the degree of neutrality”. This means ability of the results of a study to be confirmed or corroborated by others.

## 10. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations in this study include informed consent, freedom to withdraw, confidentiality and beneficence. Very importantly as a researcher, I will remain responsible to honour any promise made including giving feedback of the results once the research is completed. The participants have the right to trust in the research process and feel safe (du Plooy-Cilliers et al 2017). Before the research is conducted the researcher will obtain ethical clearance from the University of Johannesburg's Ethics Committee.

### 10.1 *Informed Consent*

The participants were made aware that their participation in the study was voluntary under their own free choice. They will thus be clearly informed about what they will be expected to do, for example their identities will be protected and be informed of how the results will be used (du Plooy-Cilliers et al 2014.)

### 10.2 *Withdrawal from participating in the interviews*

The participants were informed that they may withdraw anytime because participation in this study is voluntary. It is therefore very important that they are made aware of their freedom to leave the

study at any stage during the process and they are also permitted to decline to take part in the study if they choose to.

### 10.3 Confidentiality

Participants were reassured during the interviews that their details, for example their names will not be revealed without their permission and their audio recorded responses will be destroyed after two years.

## 11. Limitation of this Study

This study is limited to the Gauteng Department of Education in Gauteng Province and the selected three schools in the Tshwane North district. It will not be possible to generalise these findings to other schools in other provinces in the country without conducting further research. The researcher's own bias was considered with the objective of total objectivity in the observations and interpretations made by the teachers as participants.

Due to these limitations, this study should be deemed to have certain constraints, yet the findings still have value in the light of the research being conducted in the field

## 12. Recommendations

Based on the above discussions, it can thus be recommended that:

- The Department of Education in South Africa conducts yearly workshops to update teachers and make them aware of what retirement entails.
- The Department of Education in South Africa retains the experienced skilled based teachers up-to 65 years of age, with an aim of holistically mentoring newly employed teachers into the teaching fraternity.

## 13. Conclusion

Life expectancy in South Africa has increased and therefore it requires proper planning including ensuring sufficient savings, psychological preparedness and information to career shift considerations, leisure, and mental health. Gaining insight into the kind of support required by teachers who are about to retire can ease the burden of ill health on the health system and reduce the level of vulnerability of the elderly. Based on the above discussion, the researcher is of the view that further research be conducted on this study to empower the retirees with knowledge regarding retirement in the whole of South Africa.

## 14. Acknowledgement

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