

# Social (in)justices during the educator developmental appraisal process: A post-apartheid South African case study

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## Abstract

Globally, the appraisal of educators remains a contested issue as the process, which aims to provide support and development to educators, is generally considered a punitive measure for educators. Within the South African context, the Integrated Quality Management System is used to evaluate educators. Drawing on Fraser's theories of social justice, this article explores the perspectives of 11 educators regarding educator developmental appraisal in post-apartheid South Africa as a catalyst for social (in)justice. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using critical discourse analysis. This article highlights the importance of social justice practices in enhancing learner achievement and foregrounds the (in)justices often witnessed during the appraisal process. Findings reveal that the developmental appraisal process has the potential to promote social justice; however, contextual factors seem to be hindering the successful implementation of the appraisal process.

## Keywords

educator developmental appraisal, educators' perspectives, Integrated Quality Management System, social justice, South Africa

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## **Introduction**

Educators play a pivotal role in facilitating quality education (UNESCO, 2014), thus teacher education and professional development have been identified as factors that predict the quality of education (Metlife Inc, 2008). In this regard, professional development forms part of the appraisal system that uses the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) to evaluate educators in South Africa. Moreover, developmental appraisal ensures the promotion of educators' professionalism, directed towards restoring the culture of learning and teaching in schools (Mpungose and Ngwenya, 2014; Naidoo, 2006).

Developmental appraisal aims to enhance the individual performance of educators by identifying their strengths and weaknesses (Monyatsi et al., 2006). Professional development is carried out through classroom observations and peer reviews within the South African context. The educator compiles a Personal Growth Plan (PGP) through self-evaluation and their Development Support Group (DSG). The DSG comprises of the educator's immediate senior and a peer. Their function is to provide mentoring and support (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2003). The plan informs the School Improvement Plan (SIP), and professional growth opportunities are made available internally at school and externally by the Department of Basic Education (DBE).

Mestry et al. (2009: 475) posit that educators' continuous professional development is paramount in 'creating effective schools'. Since the inception of IQMS as an appraisal tool in South Africa, a surge of interest has prompted exploration about issues such as the perceptions of educators and School Management Team (SMT) members on the performance management system, continuous professional development in schools, and the successful implementation of IQMS (Hlongwane and Mestry, 2013; Mchunu and Steyn, 2017; Molapo, 2002; Thokane, 2010). Educators' perceptions are essential to evaluate the impact of appraisal systems on educators' professional practices and student learning (Paufler and Sloat, 2020). This study, thus, aimed to ascertain if the professional developmental activities that educators engage in yield socially just outcomes.

## **Background**

An appraisal is used to evaluate an employee's performance by reviewing and evaluating their daily work (Lekome, 2006). Educator appraisal is potentially a transformational process that enables educator self-development, with the educator being 'a resonance reservoir to be filled by running streams' (Rowling, 2003: 11). Educators' appraisals should be conducted in a manner that is transparent and that recognize their strengths and weaknesses to draw up developmental programmes (Rambuda, 2006; Ramnarain, 2008).

Educator appraisal initiatives undertaken in other countries have been spurred by a demand to improve learner performance. In USA, the evaluation process has elicited mixed responses. Evaluation outcomes dependent on learner performance (Darling-Hammond et al., 2012), inform decisions such as hiring, retaining, and promoting educators (Amrein-Beardsley and Collins, 2012; Jensen, 1981; Pullin, 2013). Nonetheless, other educators see the evaluation process in a positive light (Jiang et al., 2015), and are optimistic about its potential to contribute to professional development (Gilles, 2017). In England, the traditional 'top-down' approach has been replaced, in recent years, by a 'bottom-up' approach, where schools and teachers are responsible for evaluating themselves (Brady, 2016). Even though teachers are capitalizing on the limited opportunities for professional growth provided by the appraisal to improve their work, what they want is professional feedback and support, rather than a managerial model of teacher development (Down et al., 2000). Teachers have expressed dissatisfaction where the appraisal process was disconnected from their

professional development and lacked the capacity to provide educators with feedback on the quality of their work (Ingvarson and Chadbourne, cited in Down et al., 2000).

With educators regarded as the moral fibre of society and quality education as a driver of growth, Indian education has emphasized educators' accountability and professionalism (Dwivedi, 2012; Virani, 2015). However, educators in India have been apprehensive of the appraisal process, citing various reasons for their disapproval (Bambawale et al., 2018; Rajput and Walia, 1998). These included deeming the appraisal process as bureaucratic (Worku, 2019) and an enforced discipline rather than part of professional development (Eye, 1975; Paufler and Sloat, 2020), and the appraisal system being non-transparent and hierarchical, with limited active discussions. In 1992 Zimbabwe adopted a performance management system to ensure the delivery of services such as education (Mathwasa and Duku, 2015; Nkoma and Shoshore, 2021). Educators were of the view that the process merely served as paper records; the educator developmental appraisal did not address their skill deficiencies and, thus, did not contribute to their professional growth or enhance their performance (Mathwasa and Duku, 2015; Pretorius and Ngwenya, 2008). Furthermore, the lack of resources (such as furniture, textbooks, sporting equipment and stationery) was an obstacle to the appraisal process and, therefore, the attainment of quality education (Garira et al., 2019).

Brazil's involvement in the global phenomenon of educator appraisal culminated in the 1980s (Rothen and Santana, 2015). Teaching performance appraisal policies were revised to strengthen educators' careers and to hold them accountable for learner academic achievements and enhance the quality of their teaching (Zatti and Minhoto, 2019). However, Rothen and Santana (2015) describe the evaluation process as a political activity with a centralized, top-down approach that ranks schools, which, in turn influences the school's reputation as well as access to resources. These schools are unfairly appraised and punished for outcomes, based on external evaluations. The objective of the evaluation in this regard, is to monitor what is being taught in schools, and does not enhance educator development as results are treated superficially (Brooke, 2016).

In light of the above it is clear the educator appraisal process often serves as a means of performance management and 'is merely an inversion of the older system of external evaluation' (Brady, 2016: 536). The process itself remains hierarchical and does not consider contextual elements like resources and socio-economic status. This accountability practice employs punitive measures to monitor, assess, and discipline teachers to ensure they are submissive (Eye, 1975; Foucault, 1984). Not only does it create distrustful work relationships (Codd, 1999; Glass, 1975; Yongjun, 2013), but it also goes against the 21st century concept of working skills that are characterized by democratic teamwork and high levels of trust relations (Avis, 2003).

A further criticism levelled against developmental appraisal proclaims that this process subjects educators to performative pressures, requiring them to comply with narrow targets and evaluations designed by others (Ball, 2003). Not affording educators an opportunity to participate in the designing of the appraisal criteria is a violation of their right to participate in decision making that impacts their performance appraisal (Samuel and Berhanu, 2019). Instead, teachers 'want feedback and support to be based on a professional, rather than managerial model of teacher review and development' (Down et al., 2000: 221). Besides, support in the form of feedback and appreciation, improves teachers' feelings of competency (Anderson et al., 2019). In addition, an effective appraisal system is one that ensures transparency and considers the school context (Bell, 1998).

Analysis of the South African schooling system has revealed that one of the factors contributing to inequalities is incompetent educators and poor educator performance (Mouton et al., 2013). Educator appraisal in the form of IQMS serves to identify the weaknesses of educators for developmental purposes (De Clercq, 2008). Professional development potentially enhances learner

development and ensures effective schools (Mestry et al. 2009; Msila, 2009). It would appear, from the discussion above, that the professional quality of educators has a positive correlation with learner achievement (De Clercq, 2008; Menlo and Poppleton, 1990).

Like with many other areas of transformation in South Africa, quality assurance in education has been tarnished by the legacy of apartheid. The focus was more on controlling the individual than it was on developmental purposes or quality assurance (Biputh and McKenna, 2010). In the new dispensation, education has been identified 'as a critical priority for meeting the broader challenge of creating a democratic and prosperous society' (DBE, 2000: 3). Thus, IQMS, an appraisal system that identifies educators' competencies and incompetencies, was introduced in 2005 to enhance the quality of education (Lekome, 2006; Queen-Mary and Mtapuri, 2014). The new system's essential elements include a consultative approach, and not a top-down approach; self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and considers contextual factors (Biputh and McKenna, 2010). This system was designed to restore the culture of teaching and learning and reinstate educators' professional development (Kolobe, 2014).

## **Theoretical/conceptual framework**

Social justice, guided by the principle of justice, plays a significant role in education's everyday discourse (Jacobson, 2018). For some, it implies equal treatment for all citizens before the law, while, others perceive it as equality of opportunity (Fraser, 2008a). Taparelli, on the other hand, believed that even though men were created equal in the eyes of God, all men are not equal (cited in Burke, 2010). Individuals are considered superior, based on their wealth, knowledge, and character (P'erez-Garz'on, 2017). These superior individuals can bring order into society and, therefore, have the right to rule that society (Burke, 2010) and the ruling class endeavour to maintain their position. This influence was evident in the educational sphere, where individuals received 'the appropriate education assigned to their social-economic position- and mobility was frozen' (Ornstein, 2017: 542).

One of the leading theorists in social justice is Nancy Fraser, who centred her conception of justice on the principle of parity of participation. She argues, 'according to this principle, justice requires social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers' (Fraser, 2007: 28). In her initial work, Fraser (2003) claimed that social justice could be achieved through redistribution (distribution of resources and wealth) and recognition (revaluing disrespected identities). With globalization, Fraser (2005) realized that a third political dimension of justice was necessary. The political sphere of society should give political voice to all its citizens and recognize their right to influence decisions that affect them – this is an aspect of representation (Bozalek and Boughey, 2012).

Fraser's theory served as a lens to analyse and explore the social (in)justices incurred during the developmental appraisal process. The description of social justice seen through a post-apartheid South African lens for this study pays attention to issues of distribution, recognition and representation during the appraisal process. In the past, principals have been the primary decision makers in school. Despite the call for democratic schools through greater participation in decision-making, principals afford subordinates little or no participation in school-based decision making because their involvement is viewed as unproductive (Mncube as cited in Mokoena, 2011). Elicker et al. (2006) propose that leaders need to be mindful of the decision-making processes during the appraisal process as educators who are given a voice and treated with respect and dignity are more likely to accept the appraisal process and development in a positive light. Besides, restriction of voice during the decision-making process, leads to lack of representation and misrecognition.

## Research methodology

This paper emanated from a broader sequential mixed methods design study titled Educator developmental appraisal in post-apartheid South Africa: Catalyst for social (in)justice? A case study in two township and two suburban secondary schools informed the qualitative phase. The aim thereof was to yield a more complete understanding and new inferences (Guetterman and Fetters, 2018). According to Niewenhuis (2015: 76), 'a key strength of the case study method is the use of multiple sources of evidence and techniques in the data gathering process'. Criticism levelled against the case study methodology is to the effect that this technique is based on a single case and cannot, therefore, be generalized to the entire population (Niewenhuis, 2015). However, a case study is not limited to one site only – although it is defined as an enclosed system (Niewenhuis, 2015).

Another criterion applied was quintile rankings. As part of the redress process, the amended national norms and standards for school funding provided that schools be classified into quintile rankings (Van Dyk and White, 2019). The quintile ranking is based on the average earnings, unemployment status, and the literacy level of the community in which the school is based (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019). Quintile One schools are impoverished, while Quintile Five schools are affluent. Schools in Quintiles One to Three are classified as no-fee schools and receive more funding per learner from the Government than schools in Quintiles Four and Five.

School A is a no-fee secondary school in a township in the East Rand. The community around the school is disadvantaged as unemployment is rife, and consequently, the school has a quintile ranking of one. Despite these challenges, the school had maintained an excellent matriculation pass rate, attaining 85.7% in the 2020 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations. School B is an ex-House of Delegates school in an Indian suburb. The school serves learners from the immediate neighbourhood. Comparatively, about 60% of learners come from nearby informal settlements. The school is a fee-paying school, with a quintile ranking of five.

Situated in a suburb, School C is close to an area of substantial economic development. The majority of the learners are transported from the surrounding townships. The school is a no-fee school with a Quintile Two ranking. The school has introduced a non-compulsory school fund payment to meet its financial obligations. However, the school is struggling to meet its financial obligations as parents are not willing to pay the school fund. School D is in a township. Most learners come from poor socio-economic backgrounds. The school is classified as a Quintile Three school, and is a no-fee school. Nonetheless, the school achieved a pass rate of 96.6% in the 2020 NSC examinations.

In selecting participants, we considered rank to elicit different responses from educators of different post level. Thus, we conducted interviews with four educators and seven SMT members. Participants for the interviews were selected with the guidance of the principals of the schools. We referred to participants by pseudonyms and assigned codes to them. The four educators were identified by Code E and assigned numbers One to Four. The seven SMT members were identified by Code SMT and numbered One to Seven. Participants SMT1, SMT2, SMT3, SMT4 and E3 were from School A, SMT7 and E2 from School B, SMT5 and E1 from School C and SMT6 and E4 from School D.

It was envisaged that data would be collected using focus group interviews, but due to COVID-19 semi-structured interviews were conducted instead. Face-to-face interviews are appropriate where it is essential to obtain depth of meaning; and where the researcher wants to gain insights into the phenomenon under study (Gillman, 2000; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). These interviews which ranged in duration from 25 to 50 minutes were conducted with three educators, six departmental heads and two deputy principals. The researchers obtained ethical clearance from the University of Johannesburg, Faculty of Education Ethics Committee and permission to conduct

research from the Gauteng Department of Education. We also obtained written consent from the participants prior to the interviews.

## Data analysis

We aligned ourselves to Merriam and Tisdell (2016) who contend that data analysis is a complex process that involves moving between data and interpretation. The semi-structured interviews were analysed using critical discourse analysis (CDA). Mullet (2018) contends that CDA helps explore relationships between educational practices and social contexts. Multiple realities were preserved by supplementing the transcriptions which constituted seventy-one pages of raw data from the interviews with field notes, and document analysis to clarify misconceptions. The analysis of documents is a 'supplementary way of collecting data in order to add rigour to a study' (Cardno, 2018: 626). The documents in question were the schools' IQMS summary score sheet, and school improvement plan.

## Integrated findings and discussion

### *The purpose of educator appraisal*

It became evident during the interviews with participants that educators are aware of the purpose of educator appraisal. Participant E1 shared the following in relation to the purpose of educator appraisal:

The appraisal is a thorough yet supportive and developmental process designed to ensure that all teachers have the skills and support to carry out their roles effectively. It helps to ensure that teachers can continue to improve their professional practice and develop as teachers.

Thus, the supportive process of educator developmental appraisal aims to enhance the professional practice of educators to enable them to discharge their responsibilities. Participant SMT7 confirmed this by saying that: 'Educator appraisal is a vital tool for schools . . . it assists educators in improving their knowledge and teaching styles so that they can better cater to all of their student's needs'. Developing educators' professional knowledge and equipping them with pedagogical skills enhances their knowledge and teaching styles. This view is also supported by several theorists (Danielson, 2001; Queen-Mary and Mtapuri, 2014; Weber, 2005), who postulate that educator appraisal facilitates the development of educators' skills and enhances their competencies; and this, in turn, improves their teaching strategies and ensures better quality of learning and teaching, as well as enhancing the institutions' overall effectiveness.

On the contrary, Participant SMT4 indicated that the appraisal system has no value: 'According to me, this appraisal system is just a waste of money because I am going to get that 1%, but does it make a difference in society?' Even though educators acknowledged that the appraisal system is linked to monetary gain, they saw no inherent value in the process as it did not benefit the learners that they teach. Bisschoff and Mathye (2009) share the same sentiments and maintain that this paper-driven system is not cost-effective, and that as educators they only benefit from a meagre 1% salary progression.

Other than the salary progression, the appraisal process alerts educators to the crucial role of the appraisal system in improving education quality, as well as the overall performance of learners. These educators also shed some light on factors that impede quality teaching and learning. Participant E1 highlighted the challenges that learners from townships encounter in suburban schools:

Most of the learners are from the township and are usually disadvantaged learners. They can use resources to improve their learning, but some parents are unemployed. They cannot afford to purchase these resources because of their family backgrounds. These are the excuses that we get. This affects the performance and the results of the school.

Likewise, participant E2 described the impact that the socio-economic status of learners has on the learning and teaching quality, which are linked to her performance as an educator:

The socio-economic backgrounds of learners affect their performance. If learners come from poorer backgrounds, they cannot afford all the necessary tools, such as calculators or math sets. The theft of such equipment is also common. As a physical sciences and mathematics educator, I believe that the lack of equipment can affect my subject's overall results. This lack of equipment would mean that my learners will achieve low marks, reflecting poorly on my teaching abilities and portraying me as a bad educator in the IQMS process. I am sure that many educators around South Africa feel the same way that I do.

Socio-economic status is once again, considered a precursor for academic success. Learners from deprived backgrounds, who attend schools with higher quintile rankings struggle to acquire the appropriate equipment to execute their tasks effectively. This, in turn, impacts negatively on their academic achievement. This further deprives poor learners in the sense that they are being denied access to a decent standard of living (Fraser, 1997). In this regard, Wang (2018: 485) affirms that obstacles such as material resources impact learner achievement and hinder 'participants from successfully achieving their goals for justice and equity'. Poor learner performance reflects badly on educator competence. Consequently, this impacts negatively on the IQMS scores of educators. In this regard, several scholars (Bisschoff and Mathye, 2009; De Clercq, 2008) proclaim that the IQMS process is flawed as it fails to consider contextual factors that affect the educator's performance.

Most schools seem to contend with socio-economic challenges, irrespective of their geographical location. Participant E4 described the impact of community unemployment on learners in township schools:

When you look around currently, you look at our socio-economic situation, most people are unemployed. Even those who strive to get to grade 12 are roaming around the streets. Therefore, does a learner see it necessary for them to finish school? It is evident amongst the learners that some only attend because the school can provide them with a meal. They lack interest in the school itself.

Participant E4 recounted some of the challenges that learners in impoverished communities where the rate of unemployment is high are faced with. Even learners who have passed Grade 12 are found roaming the streets. Consequently, learners see no value in attending school. Also, poverty levels are so high that some learners only attend school because free meals are provided. Nonetheless, this initiative highlights the transformative approaches by Government to restructure social systems (Fraser, 1995) to ensure that learners who, in the past, were not able to learn because they were hungry are fed on a daily basis. For most of these learners, there is no escape from the cycle of poverty. Participant SMT4 exemplified this when she commented: 'Is there any change in our society? Is there anything I am doing with the knowledge I have acquired'?

Judging by the comments made by Participant SMT4 above, one can conclude that educators see no value in IQMS, and this is because the process does not bring any notable changes in township communities. Even though educators are knowledgeable and can impart this knowledge to their learners, the status quo remains. Thus, educators see IQMS as futile, and are of the view that it underestimates their value and hinders their attempts to promote social justice

(Mestry et al., 2009). Socio-economic inequalities in this regard, hinder the promotion of social justice (Wang, 2018).

Besides the factors hindering education that we identified earlier, the teacher-learner ratio is another cause for concern. Participant E3 complained about the high number of learners in the class:

The teacher-learner ratio is crazy because it gets to 1:50 or more in different grades. Maintaining order in the classroom is challenging, and delivering the content impacts my score. I will not be sure that I have reached everyone in the class.

Overcrowding remains a concern in township schools, with the ratio reaching 1:50, while the teacher-learner ratio in secondary schools is supposed to be 1:35 (Bisschoff and Mathye, 2009; Chisholm, 2004). Thus, it can be difficult for educators to maintain discipline because of the class sizes. It is also practically impossible for educators to meet all learner needs, thereby reducing their effectiveness in the classroom. This finding is corroborated by the findings in the TALIS 2009 report (OECD, 2009), and the study conducted by Khan and Iqbal (2012) which revealed that effective teaching was not possible in overcrowded classrooms as educators had to contend with discipline problems.

It is clear from the responses above that participants are divided in respect of the appraisal process and its role in enhancing educator performance, which, in turn, can enhance learner performance. Wang (2018) maintains that educators are a significant asset in the promotion of social justice, but, even though policies have been formulated to redress these injustices, the application of these policies remains a challenge. Educators attribute this to contextual factors linked to the school's geographical location. The constraining factors seem to outweigh the developmental aspects and make it difficult for educators to promote social justice within the school environment. Thus, educators will be more committed to the process if they understand the appraisal process (Monyatsi et al., 2006). This revelation leads to a review of the process of IQMS, which is an essential aspect in this theme.

### *The process of educator appraisal*

Participants alluded that IQMS has transcended from the old inspectorate appraisal style to a more supportive and developmental approach. Participant E4 shared her sentiments regarding the purpose of the appraisal process:

IQMS is some sort of an appraisal. It has moved away from where we used to have an inspectorate coming and checking on you. Perhaps, you were even scared to indicate where your weaknesses are. So, I think that IQMS looks at the situation holistically. The way they use it, it starts down there. It is not a top-down process like it used to be. That is where democracy comes in. I will decide on the date for my class visit. I would plan to ensure that the lesson is well structured. And also, it is developmental.

Educators confirm that professional development, characteristic of the apartheid era, which was entrenched in fear and hierarchy, is now a thing of the past. The IQMS has moved away from an inspection model, and now aims to provide support to educators (Bisschoff and Mathye, 2009). The above excerpt highlights that professional development is now considered a holistic approach, where educators are confident to reveal their weaknesses because they know that this is crucial for their professional development. Corroborating Participant E4's view, Participant E1 shared his thoughts on the IQMS process thus:



IQMS is a process that helps you identify your strengths and weaknesses to improve yourself in areas you are struggling in. At first, you score yourself, your mentor comes and scores you, and then you discuss your scores. Why did it go up? Or why did it drop? So, for me, that is fair. It does not happen behind closed doors, and they do not tell you your final score. Everything is explained to you. You are told why your scores dropped and what you need to improve. After dropping scores, our school comes up with a plan to assist you with improving your scores.

Participant E1 also emphasized that IQMS is conducted, using the principles of fairness and democracy. The inclusion of fairness and affording voice to educators during the appraisal process is crucial to supporting representative justice and promoting just work environments (Keddie, 2012). During the verification process, both the appraiser and appraisee discuss the scores before they are finalized. The appraiser provides reasons for changes in scores. The lowering of the scores by the appraiser is not seen as a punitive measure – instead, it is seen as a way of affording the appraisee an opportunity to improve.

However, not all educators share the same sentiments regarding IQMS as a democratic process. Participant E3, for instance, shared a somewhat conflicting perspective: ‘It was imposed on me, so I do not think it is democratic. Well, I would say democratic because it was discussed with the unions’. It should be noted that within the South African education system individual educators do not participate in policy implementation decisions, but are represented by the unions. Thus, educator professionalism is tied to educator unions (Heystek and Lethoko, 2001). In most cases, these decisions are merely imposed on educators. When the majority of individuals are excluded from participating in matters of social justice that concern them, their right to meta-political representation is denied (Fraser, 2005).

Similarly, Participant E2 lamented the fact that IQMS is not an egalitarian process: ‘It is not a democratic process. It is only a compromise between you as a teacher and your departmental head. The scores are predetermined and are compromised, even though we say that we are involved in it’. What emerged from these responses is that educators are not scored in a manner that reflect their worthiness, but are settling for predetermined scores. A high score in this regard, would imply that the educator does not need professional development (Queen-Mary and Mtapuri, 2014). This forces educators to settle for lower scores than they think they deserve. In addition, educator appraisal is still conducted in a hierarchical arrangement, which contradicts the democratic principles embedded in the IQMS process (Du Plessis and Eberlein, 2018). However, scores attained by the SMT on the appraisal score sheet painted a different picture with the SMT scoring relatively high in terms of managing the staff by applying the principles of democracy.

Participant SMT1 voiced another and slightly different viewpoint on the IQMS process. While agreeing that an appraisal is an essential process as it plays a role in motivating educators, this participant was dissatisfied with the IQMS process and commented strongly that the department should come up with a new system:

Teacher appraisal is critical; it also plays a huge role in motivating teachers. I also have a view of the current system that we are using. It is just a lot of paperwork, and if the department can come up with something manageable. Because in the end, IQMS becomes just compliance because we need the paperwork. But it is not helping. Some people use it as a punitive measure; you score them less if somebody did something wrong. So, my point is that they should develop a new system. They said that IQMS is not going anywhere, but I think they need to look at it.

Even though educators appreciate the value of educator appraisal, they nonetheless, perceive the process as time-consuming, as it involves too much paperwork. The findings made by the researchers

is corroborated by a study by Kolobe (2014), who stresses that there should be minimum paperwork during the appraisal process. Furthermore, educators feel that the system that is currently being used is not an accurate reflection of the educator's performance. Several scholars (Elliot, 2015; Monyatsi et al., 2006) acknowledges that the process is often punitive and is used as a control mechanism to undermine educators' professional autonomy, instead of supporting and developing them. The perception held by SMT members of educators as inferior and unworthy of esteem validates Fraser's (2008b) view of misrecognition, where individuals suffer from status inequality.

### *The benefits of educator appraisal*

Educator effectiveness can be enhanced by professional development. The results of this study reveal that educators agree that professional development is necessary. Participant E1 noted in this regard that 'IQMS has been designed to prepare an environment for teacher development, to evaluate the performance of the educator, to identify specific needs of educators for support and development'. Participant E4 supported this view, by stating that:

I suppose in education, one needs to be developed all the time. There is just no way to be stagnant with things changing all around us. Therefore, it means that an individual needs to be professionally developed to be suitable and fit in with the times.

Educators in this study concur that educators must keep abreast with the latest developments, and that they must adapt their skills and knowledge to remain relevant within the sector. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) concur and state that educators must keep abreast of the latest trends and developments in an ever-evolving world, as failure to participate in professional development would lead to their stagnation. Participants in this study echoed similar sentiments. Participant E2 shared her viewpoint:

To improve one's skills so that it can help them to perform their work more productively. In education, we can enhance the learners' learning experience. With professional development, we can become competent in teaching. With the new skills we learn, we can introduce different classroom techniques to improve learners' understanding.

Pedagogical skills enhance educator competency, increase productivity and enrich the learning experiences of learners. Educators control the teaching and learning environment in respect of the content and transmission of knowledge, skills, and values (King and Newman, 2000; Komba and Nkumbi, 2008). Professional development focuses on amplifying educators' knowledge, skills, and attitudes to enhance learners' learning experiences (Mestry et al., 2009). The scholars further maintain that the support given to educators is rarely transferred to their practice because they display a poor attitude and culture towards professional development (Mestry et al., 2009).

For professional development to be effective, the educator must be intrinsically motivated. Participant E4 concurs with this statement when she said: 'If IQMS is used correctly, it can be developmental. But also, it depends on an individual, how open that individual is. If the individual is not open enough, you may not be able to reach that individual'. Thus, irrespective of the merits of professional development, the process will only be successful if individuals embrace this training. This statement is in line with that of Komba and Nkumbi (2008) who indicate that no external pressure can match educators' intrinsic motivation. Motivation is not the only factor that influences professional development – hence, Participant E2 provided a meaningful explanation on why educators do not seize opportunities for their professional development:

Educators do not want to develop themselves professionally as it is expensive, and they cannot afford it. Some also think that since learners are not working hard or respecting them as educators and their subjects, why must they continue to grow for people who do not value that growth. We are not getting any results from the little we deliver to the learner. So, whether you are professionally developed or not, it will not make any difference.

As shown above, Participant E2 advanced reasons as to why educators are not keen to develop themselves professionally. First, upgrading qualifications is done at the educator's expense, and educators are constrained in this regard. Second, due to some educators' perceptions of the lazy, unscholarly, and disrespectful attitude of learners, educators may question the usefulness of developing themselves. On this view, learners are not performing according to expectations, in spite of the efforts that educators invest. This leads educators to perceive themselves as the victims of injustice rather than (or in addition to) their learners.

Considering the responses above, it is possible for one to identify various factors that hinder educators' professional development. However, professional development could take place in multiple ways such as short one-day workshops organized externally, or activities organized internally by the school and Communities of Practice (CoP) (Rogan and Grayson, 2003). Participant E1 shared his experiences on professional development workshops that DBE offers:

Professional development involves attending workshops at The Palms, where you meet other educators. Educators share different ways to make the concept more accessible to learners. You end up realising that the method you are using is confusing to the learners. That is the benefit of attending workshops. You also get resources like past papers and study guides, which you can use to uplift your knowledge. You understand the subject area better than before.

The Department of Basic Education runs valuable content workshops to educators at no cost. These workshops offer support to educators in relation to their content knowledge. Similarly, Participant E3 stated that:

If there is a particular topic that I don't feel confident with, the coordinator compiles the information and sends it to the district. The district compiles its list, and educators are called to a workshop at The Palms during the holidays. You come back with information that you have to share with your colleagues teaching the same subject.

Evidence once again, suggests that professional development does take place. This finding is affirmed by the relatively high scores educators received in performance standard five which focusses on participation in professional development. Educators acknowledge in this regard that these short workshops are beneficial to them. Participant E3 highlighted this view thus:

Now and again, with changes taking place, professional development is necessary. It does help to have professional development in cluster groups where we communicate. We have somebody tackling a particular concept. Whatever was a challenge to me becomes cleared up, and I can do that in class. So, that is when we can share information and ideas or assist one another professionally.

It is evident from Participant E3's response that educators participate in CoP. These support networks provide a platform for educators to share ideas that would benefit their practices. Ordinary-political justice is promoted on this platform as educators are included and participate as peers (Fraser, 2005). At these sessions, mediation of the curriculum is done, and pedagogical delivery is enhanced. Cluster groups provide valuable learning experiences as educators share and reflect on

their practices (De Clercq, 2008; Opfer and Pedder, 2011). On the other hand, Participant SMT4 shared a different perspective on professional development:

Then I write [about] my development, who is going to develop me? Somehow, the department is not playing its part because somebody trained to be more experienced than me should come and develop me. Even the workshops they hold are 40 hours long. How am I going to apply something which is done for 40 hours?

Even though the educators may identify elements for growth, they are not given the proper support or development takes place in the form of short workshops, which are not effective. In this regard, Monyatsi et al. (2006) concur that educators consider professional development ineffective, because first, it happens sporadically and, second, it is carried out by incompetent appraisers. Similarly, Participant E2 drew attention to the fact that IQMS does not yield any notable progress:

The IQMS process is done for the sake of compliance, and it is only for paperwork to qualify for the salary increment. No feedback or development is being done concerning it. So, it does not justify the purpose. No programmes are made available to increase the competency and skills of the teacher.

An essential aspect of the appraisal process is feedback and development. Educator evaluation is seldom used for feedback that links classroom performance with instructional practices, but is, instead, used to justify salary increments (Buttram and Wilson, 1987). The point raised by Participant E2 could indicate that professional growth, even at school level, is not taking place. Monametsi (2015) supports this view and maintains that SMT members who are part of DSG are not fulfilling their role of managing educators' professional development at school level. However, Du Plessis and Eberlein (2018) contend that it is unrealistic to expect departmental heads to take responsibility for the subjects that they are not qualified to manage.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

When exploring whether the professional developmental activities educators engage in lead to socially just outcomes, it became evident that educators are aware that educator appraisal aims to promote the effectiveness of schools. If provided with the proper support, educators can be effectively developed, and effective educators contribute positively to learner achievement. However, schools do not have the necessary capacity to effectively monitor and support educators during the appraisal process. In addition, as with many other schools in the country (Mpungose and Ngwenya, 2014) the SMT lacks the capacity to develop educators professionally in their departments, which aligns with the findings of this research. This is attributed to several factors that include, among others: lack of understanding of their role in the appraisal process, time constraints, educator resistance, and lack of training (Monametsi, 2015).

Professional development carried out by the department of education itself is sporadic, with only some educators. Even so, these support sessions provide a forum for educators to share and reflect on their practices. While, educators are participating in CoPs, they are not personally upgrading their qualifications due to financial constraints. They also see the process as futile as learners fail to perform according to expectations and, thus, lack intrinsic motivation, which Msila (2009) regards as crucial for professional development and for success. Professional development programmes will remain problematic until educators are afforded meaningful learning opportunities (Shalem, 2003).

The researchers' findings suggest that educator developmental appraisal has the potential to promote social justice. The appraisal process identified educators' weaknesses for developmental purposes. Professional development improved educators' pedagogical skills leading to enhanced delivery in the classroom, and enhanced learner performance. By adopting transformative approaches and restructuring the underlying social systems as evident in the educational system, the root causes of injustice can be addressed (Fraser, 1995). Thus, educators may be viewed as the driving force to level the playing field for learners and enabling equitable participation in the economic and social spheres of life. When economic equality is achievable, the redistribution of rights and opportunities ameliorate harms of injury (Fraser, 1997).

Participative decision making has been found to positively correlate with work performance (Liu et al., 2012) and in this study educators wanted to be afforded a voice during the appraisal process. The amount of voice afforded to participants was influenced by the relationship between the appraisee and the appraiser. Fraser (2005, 2008a) reminds us that restricting educator voice leads to ordinary-political misrepresentation. When educators are excluded from participating in matters of justice that concern them, it could signify marginalisation of individuals and meta-political misrepresentation (Fraser, 2005).

Bearing in mind the aforementioned, it is recommended that (1) DBE institute measures in schools to ensure that the appraisal process is conducted in a democratic manner, and is not used as a punitive measure or merely for compliance purposes; (2) SMTs be trained in professional development to enable them to serve as professional appraisers who can effectively support and develop educators. Crucially, assigning learning areas to SMTs should be done in line with their qualifications and expertise; and (3) DBE should review its policies on upgrading educator qualifications. Provision must also be made for incentives linked to salary increases.

Educator developmental appraisal has been identified as a factor that influences education quality, which is measured in terms of learner achievement, which is viewed as a key driver of promoting social justice. However, contextual factors such as the capacity to support and monitor educators, seem to be hindering the successful implementation of the appraisal process. These contextual factors further exacerbate social injustice.

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