
Recruiting Competent Teachers in South Africa for a Sustainable Future: The Role of School Governing Bodies

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Abstract

Given the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030 agenda, several countries have introduced various initiatives and reforms towards attracting and recruiting competent teachers to empower the next generation so that they can face global challenges and transform and sustain the development of society through education that is inclusive, equitable, of quality, and life-long. This study is, therefore, concerned with the role of school governing bodies to recruit competent teachers for a sustainable future. The study is grounded within the interpretative paradigm using a case study approach for data collection from a small sample consisting of ten school governing Bodies (SGBs) in uMkhanyakude District. The findings from this study establish that SGB members perform supervisory duties, prepare interviews, and conduct marking and selection as well as recommending staff. However, members of the SGB were not aware of the qualities required of competent teachers for a sustainable future. Furthermore, the study indicated that external influences and a shortage of qualified teachers are the major challenges encountered by members of SGBs in the process of recruiting competent teachers. The study concludes that the role of SGBs is significant and should not be downplayed if sustainable education that can transform our world is to become a reality.

Keywords: *Competent teachers, school governing bodies, sustainable future*

Introduction

Quality education is central to the realisation of the objectives of the Sustainable Development Agenda of the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, which projected 2030 as the proposed year of achievement by all member states (United Nations, 2015). Although the main objective is to transform our world by strengthening universal peace and ensuring sustainable global, social, economic, and environmental development (United Nations, 2015), quality education is pivotal to the achievement of this goal (Chankseliani and McCowan, 2021: 1). Remarkably, a series of global development goals were previously pursued. Starting from the Principle of Sustainability in 1972 (Stockholm, 1972); Our Common Future, 1987; the Brundtland Report (Oslo, 1987); Agenda 21 (Rio, 1992); Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000-2015); and in 2015, SDGs 2030 (Lozano, 2008:1838). However, as the agenda for the post-2015 SGD was being formed, the United Nations General Assembly announced the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development for the period of 2005 to 2014 (UNESCO, 2014a:9, b:9-12, and c: 6 as cited in Gokool-Ramdoos and Rumjaun, 2017: 72), prioritising improved quality education and rejuvenating its goals towards recognising the importance of sustainable development (United Nations, 2002). The decade also produced a central goal of promoting learning for sustainable

development across all levels of education in all member countries. To put it differently, learners, as the next generation, are to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values required for discovering solutions to present sustainability challenges (UNESCO, 2014a: 9).

Importantly, the responsibility of empowering the next generation so that they can face the global challenges and transform society for a sustainable future lies heavily on teachers. Considering that the SDG 4 target has identified teachers as the major actors in the achievement of inclusive, equitable, quality, and lifelong learning (Nketsia *et al.*, 2020: 49), the process of recruiting these actors requires urgent attention. Essentially, qualified, or competent teachers are adjudged to be central for achieving any meaningful education and learning outcomes (Masinire, 2015: 2-3; Muremela *et al.*, 2020: 1744-2532), since how much and what learners achieve and learn in school depend largely on the competence and effectiveness of the teachers (Muremela *et al.*, 2020: 1744). Accordingly, recruiting competent teachers in schools is regarded as the only vehicle for quality education and engendering healthy societies for a sustainable future (Gokool-Ramdoos and Rumjaun, 2017: 72-89). However, the achievement of education for sustainable development, which is now entrenched in the SDG 4 target, may be hampered by a shortage of competent teachers.

Although several efforts and policies have been put in place by the political leaders of many countries, including South Africa, towards the successful realisation of the SDG target, these efforts may prove abortive if teachers are left behind. Thus, Chisingui and Costa (2020: 29) have emphasised the need to give decisive attention to the process of integrating educators into the school system in the pursuit of the SDG agenda. Commendably, as part of the South African government's efforts towards achieving equitable, inclusive, quality, and lifelong learning for all citizens, the process of recruiting teachers was decentralised (Department of Education, 2016: 10). The responsibility of recruiting quality teachers now includes the active involvement of communities and school authorities because they are perceived to be closer to the learners (Parker and Leithwood, 2000: 37-67). Hence, the idea of the school governing bodies (SGBs) emerged (DoE Strategic Plan, 2015: 1-74). Thus, Quan-Baffour (2006: 9-11) stressed that an SGB is mandated not only to instil discipline in schools, but also to appoint, recruit, and promote staff, among other duties, for the realisation of a well-educated, skilled, and highly developed citizenry vision (DoE Strategic Plan, 2015: 1).

The composition of an SGB in South Africa comprises elected parents or guardians who are either the biological fathers or mothers or persons legally eligible to take custody of a learner in the school, the school principal, school educators, the persons who are duly employed by the school to teach or instruct learners, elected learners in Grade 8 as learners' representatives, and members of staff who are not educators but are employed by the school (Department of Education, 2004: 52). According to the South African Schools Act of 1996, which established the SGBs, a parent must be the chairperson of the SGB and be assisted by the school principal. Therefore, the obligations of recruiting competent teachers in schools requires the SGB to be acquainted with legislation and government policies relating to personnel and the labour force. Regrettably, most parents who are the chairpersons of SGBs are uneducated (Heystek, 2010: 110), thereby compelling them to rely on the school principal and teachers for effective leadership and guidance in most decision-making situations (Karlsson, 2002: 335). Obviously, uneducated parents serving at the highest level of affairs of the school may lack the requisite skills and may be deficient in their capacity to function effectively during the recruitment process. Given the forgoing, Sithole (2011: 529) and Xaba (2011: 201) lament that uneducated chairpersons of the SGBs who are not trained and can barely communicate in any languages other than their local language may be a disaster to the achievement of quality education for a sustainable future.

What the literature says

To the best knowledge of the authors, not many researchers have focused on the process of recruiting competent teachers for a sustainable future in relation to the role of SGBs in South Africa. However, a plethora of research endeavours were conducted on the challenges of

recruiting and retaining teachers for schools not only in South Africa, but in other parts of the world. For instance, a quantitative study was carried out in the United States of America by Wilkins (1998: 1-24) on the process of recruiting in Virginia. The outcome of the study revealed that the quality attributes of a good teacher contribute to learner development. Gaytan (2008: 117-132) examined some essential steps in recruiting and retaining quality teachers for the development of a quality teaching system. The study emphasised a need for highly qualified teachers if lifelong learning is to be sustained. Buchanan *et al.* (2013: 124-141) conducted research on the retention and alteration of teachers among 54 selected novice teachers.

The findings of the study revealed that collegiality and support, student engagement and behaviour management, professional learning, isolation, and workload were some challenges responsible for the high rate of alteration in Sydney. See, Morris, Gorard, Kokotsaki and Abdi (2020: 26) conducted a comprehensive and rigorous review on the empirical evidence of teacher recruitment and retention. Searching through 13 electronic databases such as Google, Google scholar, and other sources; a total of 120 pieces of research were synthesised. Their findings reveal that attractive salaries were the major factor attracting people into the teaching profession, but this does not guarantee their retention. Unfortunately, none of these researchers, except for Wilkins (1998: 1-24), paid attention to the process of recruiting competent teachers for the possibility of quality and sustainable education.

In South Africa, several studies emphasise the challenges of retaining qualified teachers in rural schools without paying attention to the process of selecting competent teachers. For instance, Mokoena (2012: 43-53) and Mafora (2013: 227) focused on the strategies and management of teacher retention in a rural school district. Masinire (2015: 2-14) has drawn insights from rural pre-service teachers on issues relating to recruiting and retaining teachers in rural schools in South Africa. However, the study indicates only the challenges of retaining teachers in rural schools and no issues relating to the teacher recruitment process. Mabida (2018: 1-69) explored the experiences of principals in recruiting and retaining qualified educators in rural schools. The results of the study showed the challenges faced by school principals in recruiting and retaining qualified educators. Recently, Muremela *et al.* (2020: 1744-2532) also investigated the challenges of retaining qualified teachers in rural schools in Limpopo. Similarly, several other studies such as Cappy (2016: 119-140), Davis and Steyn (2012: 11-24), Pillay (2014: 1-9), and Singh and Francis (2010: 302-316) were only concerned about challenges of retaining qualified teachers in schools, without giving attention to the process and requisite attributes of competent teachers for a sustainable future. More recently, Nakidien *et al.* (2021: 1-13) carried out a study on the possible limitations and possibilities of achieving SDG 4 in South Africa. Using the instruments of teachers and teacher education, the study found that South African schools are not well enough equipped to attain SDG 4 levels of quality, equitable, and inclusive education. The study suggests the involvement of all interested stakeholders in providing additional training for teachers on the ideals of SDG 4.

Additionally, the role of SGBs in recruiting competent teachers for South African schools has garnered limited research interest. However, a few studies have been conducted on related issues, such as the role of SGBs in underperforming schools (Bayat *et al.*, 2014: 41-50). Some of these studies blame poor or underperforming SGBs for the lack of necessary skills, roles, and responsibilities. For instance, Duma (2013: 99-107) assessed parent participation in the governance of rural schools from the school principals' perspectives. Maimane and Ndlela (2015: 241-247) investigated the role, capacity, skills, and knowledge of SGBs in the democratisation of public schools in the KwaCeza Circuit. Important among other findings was the limited knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of the parents, thereby adversely affecting school governance. Makhuvele *et al.* (2019: 189-210) investigated the capacity of SGBs in policy interpretation and implementation. Their study also affirms that the majority of SGB members are illiterate and are not adequately trained for that purpose. The study by Mphethi (2016: 2) focused on the financial role of SGBs; Selamolela (2019: 2) examined the role of SGBs in students' performance, while Quan-Baffour and Arko-Achemfuor (2014: 171-178) advanced the need to train SGB members in good governance in rural schools for the realisation of quality, equitable, and inclusive education. To this end, it is clear from literature that the involvement of SGBs in recruiting competent

teachers for a sustainable future lacks research attention. This is the gap which this study seeks to bridge.

Theoretical Framework

To position this study accurately, a theoretical perspective that can guarantee a sustainable future for the educational system was critically considered. Therefore, the competency theory proposed by Azemikhah (2005:1-12) at the 13th Annual International Conference on Post-compulsory Education in Australia served as a theoretical framework. Basically, competency theory focuses on teaching qualities that enable the reorientation of learners towards transforming themselves and their society. The theory lays claim to certain professional values, knowledge, and skills that are inherent in individuals. Competency theory is rooted in the constructivist theory and it involves cognitive, ethical, functional, personal, and mental abilities that can attract an employer. The theory lays emphasis on the three elements of competency development, the minds, the physical events, and the equilibrium. According to the theory, the mind explains the mental ability of an individual acquired for effective performance; the physical events are kinetic activities involved in the acquired skills; while the equilibrium ensures skills acquired are capable of reorientating learners to learn to live and work sustainably.

Essentially, competency theory upholds that the competence of teachers should be learner-centred, and they should be capable of providing solutions to the present sustainable challenges (Azemikhah, 2005:3). Hence, Korsun (2017:117) states that education for sustainable development can only become a reality when concerted efforts are directed towards recruiting qualified and competent teachers whose priority is learner transformation, which may pave the way to holistic human development and its relations with the natural environment (Kapenieks, 2020:50). The choice of this theory lies in its strength, which attributes professional efficacy and performance to personalise the interconnection between the three aforementioned elements as instruments to achieve education for sustainable development (Salite *et al.*, 2020:1-6). Thus, when recruiting teachers, the competency domains, such as attitude, knowledge, and skills, are the requirement of competent teachers for a sustainable education (Nessipbayeva, 2012:148). Hence, the recruitment committee or panel, in this case the SGB, are expected to focus on these competency domains.

Objective and Research Questions

The main concern of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the roles and responsibilities of SGBs in recruiting competent teachers for a sustainable future in uMkhanyakude District schools. Specifically, the study seeks to address the following research questions:

- What were the roles of the SGBs in the recruitment of competent teachers into schools for a sustainable future?
- Were the SGBs aware of the qualities required of a competent teacher for a sustainable future?
- What were the challenges encountered by SGBs in recruiting competent teachers in the uMkhanyakude District?

Method

This study was premised within the interpretative paradigm (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:1), which involved a qualitative research design. This design was deemed appropriate, given the nature of the design, which relied on a case study approach for data collection from a small sample size. The population consisted of SGBs in the uMkhanyakude District. Ten secondary schools that recently appointed their members of their SGB in the last two years were purposively selected to participate in the study. In this study, the SGBs comprised the teacher representative, departmental official heads, and parent representatives since they constitute the interview committees or panels for teacher recruitment and selection in uMkhanyakude District schools. An unstructured in-depth-interview was scheduled and used to source information that

answered the 'what, how, and why' from the participants. The questions were worded in English and IsiZulu to eliminate language barriers and allow free expression from all the sampled respondents. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim. Responses were analysed to establish cohesion and trends in the carrying out of the task of teacher recruitment and selection in uMkhanyakude District's schools.

Ethics is the morality of any research. The study adhered to the international ethics of research by ensuring confidentiality and respecting the voluntary nature of the participation by the participants, and the authors assured the participants that the information gathered would be used for research purposes only.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study, followed by discussions of each result based on the responses of the ten participants as derived from the three research questions raised in this study. The respondents, who were members of SGBs, were presented with these codes; PR for Parent Representative, SP for School Principal, DOH for departmental official heads, and Sch. for schools.

Research question one

The first research question, was: *"What were the roles of the school governing bodies in the recruitment of competent teachers for schools for a sustainable future?"* According to the South African Schools Act of 1996 and the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, SGBs are entrusted with the role and responsibility of promoting and ensuring quality education in the best interests of society. Learners are the output of educational investment and are the major agents of change. Thus, the future of the society is directly proportional to the choice(s) of the SGBs in the teacher recruitment process. The following themes emerged:

- supervisory roles
- preparation of interview questions and marking
- selection and recommendation of qualified candidates/teachers

Supervisory role

The responses from the participants revealed that both the parent representative and the school principal, as chairpersons of the SGB, perform supervisory roles in the recruitment of teachers. In the words of the participants:

PR 1, Sch. A: *"I played a supervisory role in ensuring that the whole recruitment exercise was fair and professional enough so that we appoint teachers who can train our children well because our children are our future."*

SP 1, Sch. A: *"I was involved as the principal to oversee the recruitment process. Primarily, the school principal is statutorily mandated to announce or defrost vacant posts like level one, departmental heads, and deputy principals as a member of the SGB at a school level, while at the district level, principals' vacancies are done, so it is part of my role as the school principal to detect vacant positions."*

SP 2, Sch. B: *"In the last few years, as the school principal I have been taking a leading role in the teachers' recruitment exercise, since as the school head, I know and understand the school needs better."*

From the foregoing, it is evident that both the parent representatives and the school principals, who are arrowhead members of the SGBs, perform supervisory roles and leadership roles in recruiting competent teachers for a sustainable future. This outcome substantiates the position of Fessehatsion (2017: 139-140), Sefeane (2013: 112), and Sithole (2011: 529), as well as the Employment of Educators (EEA) Act 76 of 1998 that elected that the parent representatives and the school principals are obliged to play supervisory and leadership roles in the best interest of

the school. Given the importance of recruiting competent teachers for a sustainable future, the involvement of all education stakeholders is germane. Hence, the findings from this study established the important role of parents as well as the school principals in the teacher recruitment process, which, according to Sithole (2011: 253), is the voice through which parents participate and recommend the most suitable and qualified educators to teach their children for a future that is sustainable.

Preparation of interview questions and marking

The findings in this study revealed that departmental official heads who were members of SGBs were involved in the recruitment process and performed the role of preparing the interview questions and marking and scoring them.

DOH 1, Sch. A: *"I was involved in setting questions, and I also allocated marks in another panel."*

DOH 4, Sch. D: *"I was the one reading questions to candidates."*

Findings from this study revealed that other DOHs, who are members of the SGBs, also carried out the responsibility of preparing the interview questions, marking them, and scoring objectively. Although there were no available studies that have established the specific roles of each member of the SGBs as this study does, a similar study by Sithole (2011: 523-531) affirms that the role of recruiting educators in South African schools, as indicated by the Department of Education in school Acts, lies with the SGBs (EEA of 1998; the South African Schools Act [SASA], 1996). Given the findings from this study, it is obvious that it is not any SGB member who can perform the recruiting role, however the school principal plays a supervising role during the recruitment exercise, as shown in this study. This result is in support of Diko and Letseka (2009: 228-236), Duma (2013: 99-107), and Maimane and Ndlela (2015: 241-247), who confirmed that the principal is entrusted with the responsibility of supervising the recruitment process.

Selection and recommendation of qualified candidates/teachers

The third role performed by SGB members who participated in this study was the selection and recommendation of qualified candidates. Accordingly, the EEA of 1998 obliges SGBs to select and appoint qualified candidates for advertised vacant positions in schools. Common to all the principals from six schools: A, B, C, D, E, and G, is this expression:

PR 2, Sch. B

"Usually when it is time to select qualified candidates for advertised positions, a meeting of all the members of the school governing body is convened, and qualified candidates are selected and recommended. Records of the meeting are kept as evidence for the future in the form of minutes endorsed by all that were present to avoid dispute."

PR 3, Sch. C:

"As a member of the SGB I do not have the capacity to appoint any staff, but I can recommend to the recruitment panel or the school management team since they are the ones that know the right candidates for the job"

PR 6, Sch. F:

"We make sure that the whole process is very confidential, and there is no favouritism. since every member of the SGB is involved in the selection process."

DOH 6, Sch. F:

"Yes, we join in selection and recommendation. We normally make recommendations towards the end when all the scores have been added up, and we have identified the best candidates for the job."

SP 8, Sch. H:

“According to the Schools Act, which says no appointment can be made without the recommendation of the SGB, we always make sure to involve parents’ representatives during the selection process. Recommendation of the best candidate is done based on the needs of the school and post requirements. So, permit me to say we own the process from beginning to end.”

According to the participants, the selection and recommendation of competent teachers are another role of members of the SGB. This outcome indicates that statutorily, the SGB members are performing their roles as stated by the EEA 1998. The finding corroborates the studies by Diko and Letseka (2009:228-236), Mabida (2018), Sithole (2011:523-531), and Quan-Baffour and Arko-Achemfuor (2014:171-178) that SGBs are assigned to select and make recommendation for the final appointment of competent teachers.

Research question two

The second research question asks: *“Were the school governing bodies aware of the qualities required of a competent teacher for a sustainable future?”* The realisation of the SGD 4 relies heavily on the input or involvement of teachers as major actors in achieving equitable and quality education. Particularly, according to the UNESCO Position Paper on Education post-2015, the emphasis is on recruiting and retaining well-trained and motivated teachers who are competent enough to use participatory pedagogical, gender-responsive, and inclusive approaches to ensure effective learning outcomes (Nakidien Singh and Sayed 2021:2-13). Hence, at the point of recruitment, SGB members should be able to identify qualities that are expected of every competent teacher to promote lifelong learning for all, such as attitudes (tolerant and able to work with a diverse younger generation with diversity), knowledge (curriculum and pedagogical approaches), and skills (communication, information technology, observational tact, creativity and innovation, and leadership). Responses from the participants indicated that most SGB members are not aware of the qualities required of competent teachers for a sustainable future.

SP 7, Sch. G: *“SGBs need workshops on the code of conduct for educators and the teachers’ pledge so that they know what qualities a competent teacher should have.”*

SP 9, Sch. I: *“The SGB need to consider competence when selecting teachers, and not be biased towards certain individuals as this does not promote equitable and quality education.”*

DOH 10, Sch. J: *“You should not forget we are in a rural area. Most qualified teachers prefer teaching in urban areas. So, we just have to employ those who are available to teach the learners. Rurality and relocation of teachers from rural to urban areas have a bad effect on teacher employment in our area.”*

SP 2, Sch. B: *“What qualities are we talking about? when the fate of a professional person is determined by an illiterate person who can’t even express himself/herself in English, only because he/she is an SGB member.”*

From the above narration of the participants, it is obvious that the SGB members are not aware of the qualities required of a competent teacher. Recruiting teachers in the rural area for a sustainable future remains a possibility, because the mandate of UNESCO on teachers, teaching, and teacher education, which has been summed up in the SDG 4c, that the supply of qualified teachers towards the achievement of sustainable development by 2030 across all member countries, whether developed or underdeveloped, should be prioritised (Sayed and Ahmed, 2015:330-338; United Nations, 2015:52). This finding agrees with Nakidien *et al.* (2021:6), who assert that the South African education system can only be on the path to realising SDG 4 when a commitment to recruit qualified and competent teachers becomes an apex to political leaders. Mabusela (2016:101) blames the inability of SGB members to identify the qualities expected of a competent teacher on the illiteracy of members of SGBs, especially in the rural areas, and notes that an SGB needs to be clear about the features of the job to be filled when recruiting candidates. Deacon (2013:65-70) suggests that the appointment of competent teachers should be based on

the candidate's ability to implement the educational goals of equity and inclusiveness, recognise and address barriers to learning, and know how to plan for diversity. According to the competency theory reviewed in this study, the emphasis should be on teachers' qualities that enable the reorientation of learners towards transforming themselves and their society (Azemikhah, 2005:1-12). Thus, teachers need to possess certain professional values, knowledge, and skills for sustaining the future of the society.

Research question three

In addressing the last research question on the challenges encountered by SGBs and competent teachers in uMkhanyakude District. The results show that:

- External influence
- A shortage of qualified teachers in scarce skill subjects were the major challenges encountered when recruiting competent teachers for a sustainable future.

External influence

Although the Collective Agreement No.2 of 2005 by the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) obliged the trade unions to recommend a representative who should serve as an observer during the recruitment exercise and not interfere with the process, the responses from the participants in this study indicated that the teachers' trade unions do influence the recruitment process, which does not go down well with the SGB members.

SP4, Sch. D: *"The greatest challenge we encountered during the recruitment process was external influence by the teacher trade union. They politicise education excessively. They are not interested much in candidates' or interviewees' expertise, but in their political affiliation."*

DOH 4, Sch. D: *"Unions are selling posts, and as a result schools get unsuitable educators with very bad behaviour, who are not dedicated."*

SP 6, sch. F: *"Shame! The interference of the teachers trade union is a big challenge and a threat to the recruitment process. They want to bring in their comrades to be appointed in posts."*

SP 7, Sch. G: *"You see, it is problematic when unions can easily break the resolutions of the ELRC as per recruitment. Since teacher recruitment is a process of the ELRC, the role of teachers' unions is to observe the process since SGBs are not part of the ELRC."*

DOH 5, Sch. E: *The whole process is unfair when unions show interest and influence the recommendation of their preferred candidates who do not have the necessary qualities."*

These remarks show that external influence is a challenge encountered by SGB members in the delivery of their mandate of recruiting competent teachers. It constitutes a risk to the success of recruiting competent teachers who should be able to promote equitable, quality, and inclusive education. Thus, pressure from political office holders does interfere with the attainment of education for sustainable development. This outcome is supported by Bush and Gamage, (2001: 39-41), Sithole (2011: 523-531), and Xaba (2011: 201-211), who affirm that SGBs are not really succeeding because of the challenges faced by them in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. Their studies claim that constituency influence constitutes an obstacle in promoting quality education in the best interest of the learners.

Shortage of qualified teachers in scarce skill subjects

The last challenges facing SGBs members in recruiting competent teachers is the shortage of finding qualified teachers in scarce skill subjects. Although this is not particular to South African schools, as noted by du Plessis and Mestry (2019), it poses a serious hindrance to the realisation of SDG 4. Thus, there is a high likelihood of recruiting people who are not trained teachers to fill this gap, especially for subjects such as physics, mathematics, and science in districts like uMkhanyakude. This challenge will ultimately compromise learners' outcomes and have detrimental effects on the economy and society.

SP 2, Sch. B: *“we are facing a big challenge of a shortage of qualified teachers in certain fields.”*

SP 7, Sch. G: *“The issue of the shortage of qualified teachers is everywhere in South Africa, but more problematic in rurals because many teachers do not want to stay in rural areas owing to the lack of social facilities.”*

DOH 5, Sch. D: *“We do not get many applications from young and qualified teachers to teach at our schools as is the case in urban schools, and we do not get specialized teachers to teach a subject like computers, for example.”*

DOH 8: Sch. H: *“One major problem we encounter in recruiting competent teachers for our rural schools is that newly qualified teachers see rural areas as areas with fewer opportunities for professional advancement.”*

Undisputedly, the shortage of qualified teachers, as found in this study, constitutes a challenge for SGB members in the process of recruiting competent teachers, which poses a threat to life-long learning and the achievement of the sustainable development goals, in particular SDG 4. This outcome corroborates the findings of several previous studies, such as du Plessis and Mestry (2019), Garcia and Weiss (2019), Kapeniaks (2020), Korsun (2017), Muremela *et al.* (2020), and Uleanya and Gamede (2019), that a shortage of qualified teachers hampers the process of recruiting competent teachers and thereby jeopardises the achievement of equitable, quality, and inclusive education for all.

Conclusion and Suggestions

This study has focused on the role of SGBs in recruiting competent teachers for a sustainable future. Drawing from the SDG 4c, which positions teachers as central to the realisation of educational goals, with the responsibility of developing the next generation that can face the global challenges and transforming and sustaining the development of society through education that is inclusive, equitable, quality, and lifelong (Nketsia *et al.*, 2020). However, owing to the peculiarities of various countries, including South Africa, governments have initiated several educational reforms to promote and achieve the SDGs by 2030. The findings from this study established that SGB members perform supervisory duties, prepare for interviews, mark said interviews, and conduct staff selection and recommendations. However, findings further revealed that members of the SGBs were not aware of the qualities required of competent teachers for a sustainable future. Furthermore, the study indicated that external influences and the shortage of qualified teachers are the major challenges encountered by members of SGBs in the process of recruiting competent teachers.

The study concludes that the role of SGBs is significant and should not be downplayed if sustainable education that can transform our world can become a reality. The authors, therefore, recommend the use of intensive workshops, seminars, training, and retraining for SGB members to enable them to carry out the recruitment exercise properly in the best interest of the learners. External influences should be eliminated, while deliberate efforts should be made by rural dwellers and educational stakeholders to recruit and motivate scarce skills teachers for rural schools. Future researchers should consider interventional research approaches to establish the effectiveness of past strategies employed by governments in promoting equitable, quality, and inclusive education for all. Given the outcome of this present study, it cannot be generalised as a true reflection of all schools in South Africa because of the limited number of participants sampled. Hence, future studies should consider employing a larger sample.

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