

**THE WORKERS COMMUNITY OF THE SOWETO
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION'S VIEW
ON RATIONALISATION**

BY

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ABSTRACT

In the last few years, government budgetary constraints, together with policy-makers' ongoing interest towards accountability, resulted in the introduction of the rationalisation policy in both the education and public service departments.

This situation led to the formation in 1996 of the college of education restructuring team. Issues under discussion by this team are not yet opened for public debate. However, these issues have a direct link to the proposed inquiry of my study. One of the issues was that, the provinces needed to rationalise colleges of education in preparation for them to be incorporated into the higher education sector. Another issue is an over supply of teachers in South Africa, especially in the Gauteng Province.

The notion of retention of staff at the remaining colleges is questioned, because of the rationale behind the rationalisation policy, which is to "address the inequities of the past." This rationale serves as a contradiction when staff at the closing colleges is left to decide their uncertain future.

In view of the above prevailing circumstances, this study strives to investigate the views of the worker community at the Swot College of education, and investigate the coping mechanisms that workers employ during the rationalisation process.

The study found that the rationalisation policy brings problems to both the employer and the employee. Workers become frustrated and less committed in their work during this process. This process has also proved to be very expensive to the employer.

LIST OF TABLES

	PAGES
TABLE 1: THE EFFECTS FO RETRENCHMENT ON THEIR FAMILY AND LIFESTYLE	31
TABLE 2: THE WORKER’S WILLINGNESS TO BE DEPLOYED	35
TABLE 3: THE EMPLOYER DOES NOT CARE	36
TABLE 4: EMPLOYEES’ FEAR	38

LIST OF ADDENDA

ADDENDUM 1:	MEMORANDUM
ADDENDUM 2:	MINUTES OF THE MEETING BETWEEN GDE AND THE RECTORS OF COLLEGE OF EDUCATION.
ADDENDUM 3:	DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY
ADDENDUM 4:	GLOSSARY.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION ONE OVERVIEW	PAGES
1. INTRODUCTION	1-2
1.1 RESEARCH INTEREST AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM	2-3
1.2 THE MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH	3-4
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	4
1.4 AIMS FO THE RESEARCH	5
1.5 THE MAIN THEORETICAL VIEWS	5-6
1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	6-7
1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS	7-8
1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE SECTION	7
1.9 SUMMARY	8
 SECTION TWO: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	
2. INTRODUCTION	9-14
2.1 THE EFFECTS OF RATIONALISATION ON ON WORKER'S MORALE	15-16
2.2 THE EFFECTS OF RATIONALISATION ON THOSE ON THOSE WHO KEPT THEIR JOBS	16-17
23 CONCLUSION	17

SECTION THREE: DATA – COLLECITON AND PROCESSING

3. INTRODUCTION	18
3.1 DATA SOURCES AND PROCESSING	18-19
3.2 PARTICIPANTS	19-20
3.3 NEGOTIATING ENTRY	20
3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN	21-22
3.5 METHODOLOGY	22
3.6 STRATEGY FOR DATA COLLECTION	22-24
3.7 INTERVIEWS	24-27
3.8 ORGANISING DATA	27
3.8.1 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS	27-28
3.9 OPEN CODING	28-29
3.10 AXIAL CODING	29-30
3.11 THE EFFECTS OF RETRENCHMENT ON THE FAMILIES AND LIFESTYLES O F THE INTERVIEWEES	30-32
3.12 HOW THE EMPLOYER DEALS WITH REDEPLOYMENT	32-34
3.13 THE WORKERS' WILLINGNESS TO BE DEPLOYED	34-37
3.14 EMPLOYEES' FEARS	37-38
3.15 COPING MECHANISMS	38-39
3.16 CONCLUSION	39-40

SECTION FOUR DISCUSSION FINDINGS

4. INTRODUCITON	41-43
4.1 DISCUSSION OF DATA	43
4.1.1 LACK OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND STAFF	43
4.2 WORKERS AS OBJECTS	43-44
4.3 THE EFFECTS THAT RATIONALIZATION WILL HAVE ON THE QUALITY OF THEIR LIVES	43-47
4.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PRACTICE OF THE PEOPLE INVESTIGATED	47-48
4.5 RECOMMENDATION TO POLICY MAKERS AND FUTURE RESEARCH	48
4.6 CONCLUSION	49-50



SECTION ONE

OVERVIEW

1. INTRODUCTION

Rationalization is the 'buzz word' that has often been heard in the corridors and boardrooms of business and the corporate world. In the government's effort to address the inequities of the past it was introduced to the education and public service departments. This study will set out to gain insight into effects of the rationalization policy on workers in the education and public service departments. The main aim of this study will be to investigate the views of these workers on rationalization in the workplace. A second aim will be to identify the coping mechanisms that workers employ during the rationalization process.

It is assumed that changes brought about by the restructuring and the rightsizing of the education and public service departments has negatively impacted on the worker community at the Soweto College of Education. This situation has been exacerbated by there being no clear-cut policy on the rationalization of colleges of education. This situation has created many problems for the worker community at Soweto College. These problems will be discussed throughout the study.

Community education suggests that strong partnerships are built and developed through dialogue. Therefore, dialogue between the employer and the employee is perceived as crucial in decision-making processes. Furthermore, community education is concerned with the empowering of communities. Empowered communities participate in discussions that affect their well being and the development of their community.

With this view in mind, this study will be conducted within the parameters of community education, which aims at educating the community; emancipating and empowering the community through democratic dialogue; developing sound relationships of mutual trust within communities; and the building of '*Gesellschaft within Gemeinschaft*, '(Sergiovanni, 1994:14).

1.1 RESEARCH INTEREST AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

Decisions taken in 1996 at the Education Labour Relations Council {ELRC} pertaining to rationalization of education, did not only shock the teaching fraternity, but also the college sector. This decision was the redeployment of educators. These decisions have interested me in the direction of investigating the rationalization of educators and public service workers at Soweto College. Of the nine colleges of education in Gauteng province, only four were to remain in operation by the end of 1998, amongst them the Johannesburg College of education, which is one of the well-established and prestigious white institutions of education. Soweto College, on the other hand, was closed down at the end of that year. This has implications for the future of the worker community of this college, which is uncertain at the moment.

What is of interest is that information from government documents suggests that many problems and questions have come up as a result of this policy. For instance, theoretically, the rationale behind rationalization in South Africa is that it is recommended. But problems manifest themselves when it comes to practice. The rationale behind rationalization in the South African context was that it would address the inequities of the past as mentioned earlier on in the abstract. In the Department of Public Service

and Administrators Annual Report (1997: 16), it is stated that:

Operationally, rightsizing was aimed at determining the minimum Number of which would be adequate to deliver a particular programme, having regard to factors such as government policy and priorities, appropriate service delivery levels and the budgetary ceiling set by cabinet.

Management experiences problems of criteria that will be employed in determining the minimum number of staff without losing the much-needed expertise of workers.

Questions that are being asked are:

1. How does the rationalization policy hope to address the inequities of the past when the majority of the people who are going to lose jobs are the ones who have been marginalised?
2. Is the rationalization policy not going to leave the historically disadvantaged communities more disadvantaged than ever before?

This state of affairs has motivated me to investigate the whole process of the rationalization of workers in the education and public service departments, specifically those employed by the Soweto College of Education.

1.2 THE MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

Soweto College came into being in 1978 as an initiative of Anglo-American Corporation. Anglo-American Corporation saw the need for a teacher training college in Soweto, not only to address the shortage of qualified teachers, but also to help Black community in and around Soweto who could not be admitted at the nearby existing white teacher training colleges. It WA also to help the black community who could not afford to pay the fees for boarding and lodging at the then existing colleges of education

which were far away in Amanzimtoti, Natal and in Lovedale in the Transkei.

Soweto College has had its share of achievements and has significantly contributed to producing teachers who in their own way have made a difference to the lives of many Sowetans. For many years Soweto College has provided employment to many people, the majority being people who live in Soweto. The worker community at Soweto College is comprised of management, administration, lecturing staff, ground staff and the cleaning staff.

Changes in the restructuring of education and public service departments have negatively impacted on the Soweto College worker community. Because of these changes out of the nine Colleges of Education in Gauteng, only four will remain in operation at the end of December 1998 as mentioned earlier on. This means that Soweto College is one of the colleges that will be closing. The knowledge that the college will be closing down, has been frustrating to the workers. The end of 1998 saw the end of Soweto College and a beginning of uncertainty for the worker community.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study posed the following research questions:

1. How does the worker community view the policy of rationalization in the workplace?
2. What coping mechanisms do workers employ during the process of rationalization?
3. What problems do workers encounter when faced with this process?

1.4 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The study wants to accomplish the following aims:

- a) The general aim of this research is to investigate the phenomenon of rationalization of workers at Soweto College.
- b) The main focus will be to investigate the views of the workers on rationalization in the workplace.
- c) It also aims to identify the coping mechanisms that workers employ during the Rationalization process.

In trying to achieve these aims, I hope to establish the problems that the worker community might have encountered during this process. To understand the effects that rationalization has on their future and career aspirations. I also hope that these aims will help me to findings that will ground my theory.

1.5 THE MAIN THEORETICAL VIEWS

In this study the main inquiry will be within the framework of critical theory. The discussion will be guided by theories propagated by Cohen, Freire, Habermas, Sergiovanni and Vella, amongst others. It is my opinion that the engagement of these authors' thoughts I forward and that their theories serve as a tool for comparison in grounding my theory.

Le Compte and Preissles (1993:147) explains that:

Data collection strategies also are informed by theory; the techniques chosen must match the constructs in the theory so that the data collected answer the questions posed in the study.

Researchers Allen & Martin (1985:1), Freire (1994:84) and Sergiovanni

(1994:3) warns against the tendency of policy makers, who alienate and divorce themselves from their communities during the planning phase of a policy. They observed that policy makers plan in isolation in their ivory towers. This action seems to go against the aim of community education, which encourages participatory dialogue within communities. Theory therefore suggests that in situations where organizations for example, are in the process of rationalization, a platform for dialogue must be made available by the employer, so that the worker community can be able to air their views, and hopefully help negotiate their roles in the reformed institution.

Freire's theory (1994:80) further suggests that dialogue is important between partners, because, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship which mutual trust between the dialogues is the logical consequence. Based on this theory it is evident, I presume, that mutual trust should be the cornerstone in the building and the developing of sound relationships within partnerships. It is assumed that the exclusion of this principle where partnerships are concerned will and may create problems between employer and employee. This study will confine itself within the framework of critical theory to extract the views of the worker community through dialogue.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study, the qualitative research method will be adopted over the quantitative research method. Bodgan and Biklen (1982:28) explains that:

The qualitative research method 'demands that the world be approached with the assumption that nothing is trivial, that everything has the potential of being a clue which might unlock

a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied.

This approach guides the researcher to enter the inquiry with no pre-conceived judgements, but allow him to experience the real life world of the subjects in his study. Hence by being on the spot the researcher will be able to understand the thinking, talking and the way of doing things by the people in the setting.

The strategy to be followed will be the qualitative research interview. The advantage of using this strategy as explained by Kvale (1983:173) is that:

Ordinary people are able to describe their own life- world, their opinions and acts, in their own words. In contrast to the multiple-choice questionnaires with questions and answers already formulated by experts.

By allowing the interviewees to describe their own life-world as far as the rationalization policy is concerned, I hope to be able to investigate how the worker community views this policy, and to discover the copying mechanism that they employ during this process.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS.

For the purposes of this study the following terms will be used to mean:

Employer will mean management, government, organizations companies, corporations and business. On the other hand worker community will mean employee, community, people, individuals and society. Whilst rationalization will mean rightsizing, downsizing and restructuring.

1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE SECTIONS

The rest of the study will be organized into four sections. Section two will be the development of the conceptual and theoretical framework. Section three will describe the method of the study and the research techniques used in the gathering of data. This section will also explain how the data was collected and analyzed. Section four will be the discussion of findings, validation of data and recommendations. The limitations of the study will again be explained.

1.9 SUMMARY

In this section the research topic has been postulated. The research interest and background was stated. The aim and motivation of the inquiry was argued. The research design has also been presented clearly and argued from the baseline of the research problem and aim. Section two will now be undertaken to demarcate the conceptual and theoretical framework of the research problem.



SECTION TWO

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this inquiry will be to investigate the views of workers on rationalization in the workplace. A further study will be to identify the coping mechanism that workers employ during the rationalization process.

In arguing the stated research questions, I will draw my arguments within the framework of critical theory. The discussion will be guided by theories propagated by Freire, Habermas, Sergiovanni, and Vella, amongst others.

In view of the definition on rationalization; workers' views cannot be excluded during the rationalization process. Virtue's illustrated English dictionary (1979) defines rationalization as:

A system or principle under which employers and employees in a particular industry or group of industries combine to eliminate wasted methods and promote efficiency.

Virtue's definition suggests that a combined effort by the employer and the employee should be engaged in during the rationalization process. When this effort is overlooked by one of the parties the whole process ends up in failure. Freire (1992: 83) observes that many political and educational plans have failed because:

Their authors who are policy planners designed them according to
 They're own personal views of reality, never once taking into account
 the men-in-a-situation to whom their program was ostensibly directed.

Therefore Freire (1992) and Vella (1994) agree with Dressel's (1991: 85)
 suggestion that the phase of policy preparation be shared with and modified
 by the views of those affected. Because when this is done the policy will
 now be by "A" with "B" and not by "A" for "B", (Freire 1992:82).

This raises the question of how and when the workers' views should be
 heard with regards to the rationalization policy. Forester (1985:264) is of
 the opinion that both the employer and the worker community should
 adopt the policy in pursuit of interaction. The policy in pursuit of
 interaction seeks to establish a framework of interaction in which the
 workers can air their views directly to the employer, and can inform the
 employer of what they want and need, during the rationalization process.
 It is noticed, however, that most policy makers during the time of planning
 do establish a framework of interaction at national and provincial levels.
 However, this practice falls short at institutional and community levels.

Allen and Martin as quoted by Hargrieves, (1985:1) also observes that:

Academics and researchers tend to locate and address policy issues
 at macro, and national level and neglect the process by which it is
 interpreted and implemented at local and institutional levels.

Theory warns that such tendency leads to negative effects such as
 reductionism and determinism. Reductionistic tendencies have to do with
 indoctrination, reduction to a smaller unit in a negative way, of workers as
 individuals and groups. Therefore a policy that determines the integrity of

a community will receive resistance from the people, no matter how good its intentions are.

Sergiovanni, (1994:3) explains that organizations change over time. As they change it is understood that their intentions will also change. However, he warns organizations that, whilst they are busy with changes within their organizations, they must not divorce themselves from the people they serve in search of their own goals and purposes of their organization.

This argument is strengthened by Freire's discussion of praxis. According to Freire (1992:12), leaders have the responsibility for innovation and for putting things together. They also have to take a stand in certain issues, like rationalization, for example. However, he warns that as they are busy with their endeavors, they should not deny praxis to the people. He further stresses that when true praxis is denied to the people, leaders deny them the right to voice their own words and to think their own thoughts. Hence, such practice cannot be tolerated in a democratic country such as South Africa. The employer should avail a platform where the worker community can play their role as subjects in the change, and where they have a say in the transformation of the organization.

Freire (1992:120) and Vella (1994:97), are of the opinion that a policy, which accommodates and treats people as the subjects will be successful. This is because the society will have taken part in the decision making process, and will not have been left out. Therefore the worker community should be treated as subjects during this rationalization process, and should be given an opportunity to put forth their views.

In strengthening the above mentioned opinions of Freire (1992) and Vella

(1994) with regard to people being treated as subjects, Habermas, as cited by Honneth, (1991:28) indicates that “subjects acting communicatively always come to an understanding in the horizon of a real world”. The importance of this understanding cannot be overemphasized, because when people are treated as people and not objects, they take pride in what has been decided upon collectively. In this way the policy becomes theirs because they have developed it for themselves. This minimizes the question and criticism of “by whom” “for whom”, postulated by Vella (1994). Furthermore, Freire’s (199:74) theory emphasizes that when workers become subjects in issues that concern them, such as rationalization, they will be able to overcome their false perception of reality. Reality in this case, as mentioned in section one, is that all workers in the workplace stand to be rationalized in the period of change and restructuring of organizations. This is a new experience for workers in the education and public service departments.

Returning to the definition of rationalization, which demands a combined effort between employer and employee, it is my understanding that this combined effort will be achieved through dialogue. Freire (1992:73) defines dialogue as the “encounter between people”. Therefore, the worker community must engage in dialogue with the employers. The employer must not be seen as denying the workers the right to voice their opinions. If this is done, it would appear that the employer is not committed to the addressing past inequities through the rationalization policy, but rather that he is imposing his own personal view to the worker community.

Gilliland, (1997:32) on the other hand, suggests that dialogue within the organization about the implications of the rationalization process, for instance, should be encouraged between the employer and the employee. This practice will help the workers to see the information through their

own perceptive. They will also be able to seek clarity on any ambiguities that may crop up during the discussions, directly with the employer.

This practice is endorsed by Levin (1998:135) who reiterates Fritz's and Halpin's (1991:18) warning that, "interpreting policy via a reading of a correspondence is a hazardous procedure". It is assumed that people see and interpret issues in different ways, especially when this happens through correspondence. Hence it is imperative that communication channels be open between employer and employee, so that each person can engage in a participatory dialogue.

Freire (1992:81) substantiates the importance of dialogue by observing that, without dialogue there is no communication. In addition, communication through a reading of correspondence leads to problems. Therefore, an organization that seems to ignore or even inhibit dialogue in their approach during the rationalization process will be violating the democratic right of the workers to a participatory dialogue. This organization will be seen by the workers to be "the modern western corporation of *Gesellschaft*". Sergiovanni, (1994:10) explains that:

In the corporation, relationships are formal and distant. In such relationships what is of importance is the success of the corporation. Everybody knows his place and job. Role expectations are followed to the latter. Accountability must be achieved at all costs.

It is however acknowledged that organizations have to compete with other organizations. They have to restructure themselves to meet the demands, the changes, and challenges that are apparent in the modern world. However, in doing so they must not lose sight that every organization is comprised of people who are employees. That is why Sergiovanni, (1994:14) advises that "too much *Gemeinschaft* blocks progress. By the

same token, too much *Gesellschaft* creates loss of community!’’ This situation suggests that employers must not be insensitive to the employees’ needs, and on the other hand the employees must not be co-dependent on the organization to the detriment of their future.

Druker (1992:100) cited by Sergiovanni, (1994:13-14) notices that, unlike family, organizations are purposively made to specials in their industry; therefore they will rationalize unproductive workers. The community on the other hand, is defined by the bonds that hold them together as members. They share values and interests, for example, the need to be employed and not to be dismissed from the workplace.

Ewert (1991: 352) points out that social actions, which are embedded in policy, should be made public to the community and not be treated as private phenomena by policy makers. These social actions must be meaningful and be understood by other participants within a social context. This means that intensive explanation of the policy must be done at all levels and not is restricted to the national level only. Allen and Martin (1985) also criticized this practice earlier on. Therefore, the workers must be informed of the rationalization policy at the workplace, so that the policy can make meaning to them, as it is going to affect their lives.

In summary, it is evident that the rationalization policy is to be in place for some time. Therefore the importance of participatory dialogue between the employer and the worker community cannot be underestimated. The worker community should be given a platform to air their views in regard to the rationalization policy.

2.1 THE EFFECTS OF RATIONALISATION ON WORKERS' MORALE.

Due to the fact that literature reviews are constructed analytically, and in the same manner that data is analyzed, Le Compte and Preissle (1994:154) explains why researchers consult and use them. These authors explain that researchers use them to match theories, studies, and evidence to the specific questions, methods, and conclusions, that are relevant to the study in question. In the pursuit of getting workers' views in similar circumstances, evidence was drawn from studies that looked at the same question, population and setting, with specific reference to rationalization at the workplace. The workers raised the following concerns.

The literature reviewed indicates that the rationalization policy in South Africa has come under fire from all quarters of the community. Cheryl Carolus, the then ANC secretary general, criticized the ministry's implementation of the policy. She said that "the policy had been inadequately communicated and had negatively affected the morale of the teachers," (Bisseker, 1997: 41).

Marais and Scheepers (1996:5) quotes Classen and Backer (1998:42) who observes that:

The majority of the workers feel that loyalty falters towards an Organization that pays no attention to their fears and frustration.

They note that workers become bitterly unhappy at this process. Workers also feel that the employer has wronged them. Workers are much concerned about their future career prospects and they experience feelings of distrust towards the employer. Freire emphasizes the importance of trust in a relationship.

Freire, (1992: 80) emphasizes that "trust is contingent on the evidence

which one party provides the other of his true, concrete intentions ”. The above mentioned views of the workers seem to point out that the vital aspect of a sound relationship has been neglected. There seems to be no trust between the employer and the employee.

2.2 THE EFFECTS OF RATIONALISATION ON THOSE WHO KEPT THEIR JOBS

The increasingly high rate of organizations’ restructuring over the last two decades of the twentieth century has had a remarkable impact on both those who lose their jobs and those who remain behind. My discussion will be on evidence drawn from the Pittsburgh Post–Gazette case. This case highlights the coping mechanisms that were employed by the surviving employees after the rationalization of their organization.

According to this article, survivors in a rationalized organization suffer as much as those who have been retrenched. They have to come up with various strategies to heal, and to cope with the situation they now find themselves in. For instance, in this organization, the senior managers, in trying to cope with rationalization, gave their employees permission to express their anguish and to voice their concerns about their future (Ambrose, 1996:127).

They also sought advice from external consultants on how to enable a grieving and healing process. They encouraged their employees to express their anger and not to suppress it. Ambrose (1996:127-128) quotes one of the workers saying:

We were allowed to vent our anger, The first thing was that people vented their hostilities. There was some union posturing about here where am I going to land and what is going to happen to my job?

But then we moved forward and said how are we going to become one staff.

Senior management went on to give employees a forum to mourn their losses, and begin to heal them. Ambrose, (1996:129) cites a senior editor as saying:

We felt it was important for the staff to take charge of their own healing and find out what they needed to do to recover.

Another coping strategy used by senior management was to involve employees in decisions that affected them. Employed workers were expected to participate in discussions. Counseling as a coping mechanism was made available to workers who were having difficulties in adjusting to the new management and colleagues.

2.3 CONCLUSION

Theory suggests that policy-makers should involve the people for whom the policy is intended, right at the preparation phase of policy planning, administration and implementation. Policy-makers should not distant themselves from the worker community. Forums for participatory dialogue should be encouraged at all levels and should not be restricted to national and management levels only. The top down approach employed by many organizations should be discouraged because it brings with it many problems for both employer and employee. It is observed that employees show resentment when they are taken as objects in issues and decisions that concern them directly. They prefer that the employers should treat them as subjects, because they collectively would have arrived at those final decisions and conclusions. Therefore, organizations should strive for sound relationships between them and their employees and dialogue according to Freire (1992), is one method to be used.

SECTION THREE

DATA-COLLECTION AND PROCESSING

3. INTRODUCTION

This section describes the methodology and procedures used in conducting this research. Data sources and processing will be identified. The plan, design and strategy for data collection will be described in full. Data will be organised through the process of coding. The final categories will be drawn and explained at the end of the section. This section in particular will focus on the views of workers on rationalisation in the workplace. It will also investigate the coping mechanisms that workers employ during the rationalisation process.

3.1 DATA SOURCES AND PROCESSING

The data for the study was gathered through interviews and a literature review. I used interviews as sources of data because interviews help the researcher to find out things that cannot be directly observed. Feelings, thoughts, and intentions cannot be observed, or the meanings that people attach to things that happen in the world. Interviews also help the researcher to probe beneath the surface and brings detail from the interviewee, so that the researcher can be able to understand the interviewee's perspective on a situation.

Data was processed through coding. Strauss and Corbin, (1991:57) explain that, “coding represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualised, and put back together in new ways”. During data collection, I simultaneously analysed data. This was done by asking questions and by making comparisons. The three types of coding, namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding were used interchangeably throughout the process of analysis.

3.2 PARTICIPANTS

Due to time constraints, the study was delimited to the Soweto College of education’s ground staff, with the exception of one lecturer who was included in the sample. The participants comprised of three gardeners, four security guards, a driver and a lecturer. They were all males except for the lecturer who was a female. I must mention that I approached members of the administration and the academic staff, but they refused to participate in the study. They gave as their reason that they were too busy and could not slot me into their daily programs. Some even said, “what is the point, our opinions do not matter. After all, the college is definitely closing down”.

In response to this, I came to the realisation too, which is observed by Cohen (1985:12) that:

The boundary may be perceived in rather different terms, not only by people on opposite sides of it, but also by people on the same side.

I therefore came to the conclusion that although all the workers at Soweto College are facing rationalisation, they do not respond to it in the same way.

The language used during the interviews was the home languages of the interviewees. These included Xhosa, Zulu, Southern Sotho, Setswana and Sepedi. This was aimed at allowing the participants to express themselves in the languages they know best, and understand well.

3.3 NEGOTIATING ENTRY

The entry point seemed to be no problem at the beginning of the study, due to the fact that participants were all colleagues. However, these circumstances did not make me to take advantage of the situation. I went to my head of department, informed her about my research, and I go permission and support from her to go ahead with my research. I also went to the other heads of departments who also supported me and gave me permission to go on with the interviews. I then approached my colleagues to arrange the interview dates, time and venues. However, when the time came for the actual interviews, people declined to participate, and the study was then delimited mostly to the ground staff, who were very eager to air their views.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

I chose the qualitative research method over the quantitative research method. This method helped me to understand that everything has the potential of being a clue which might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied, (Bodgan & Biklen, 1982:28). Quantitative methods on the other hand, “uses standardised measures that fit diverse, various opinions and experiences into predetermined response categories by manipulating variables” (Patton, 1987:9).

My main reason for using a qualitative research design is that, meaning is of essential concern to the qualitative approach. By coming into contact with the participants, the researcher gets to know them better, through their gestures, tone of voice, their way of thinking, their fears and joys. All this makes meaning to their existence. Bodgan and Biklen, (1982:29) observed that:

By learning the perspectives of the participants, qualitative research illuminates the inner dynamics of situations, dynamics that are often invisible to the outsider.

Qualitative research is not a single entity, and is not similar to ethnography. Rather, qualitative research is an umbrella term that covers an enormous variety of methods and approaches to the study of human behavior. Hence, qualitative researchers tend to analyse their data inductively. Bodgan and Biklen, (1982:29) are of the opinion that:

Theory developed this way (inductively) emerges from the bottom up rather than from the top down), from many disparate pieces of collected evidence that are interconnected.

In this way I was able to construct and develop a picture which takes shape, as I collect and put the pieces of the puzzle together.

In a deeper sense, qualitative research is concerned with processes, rather than simply with outcomes. This process has three major components, namely, data, analytic procedures and literature study. Data can come from many sources, such as documents, observations and interviews. There are a number of different analytical procedures that are used to form theories about the research, through a process called coding. The different types of coding being, open coding; axial coding and selective coding were adopted.

3.5 METHODOLOGY

The data for the inquiry was gathered through the focus group interview. I chose to engage the participants in a focus group interview due to the following reasons. Due to time constraints, I wanted to gather as much information as I could within an hour of interviewing from eight participants. Another reason was to get high quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others, as explained by Patton (1987). The context being that the rationalisation process directly affects all the participants. I also drew up

Interview guides to serve as a guide during the interview, to make sure that all relevant topics were covered.

3.6 STRATEGY FOR DATA COLLECTION

Due to time constraints and the negative response from the administration and lecturing staff at the Soweto College, the study was delimited to the ground staff. The data was collected from two hours' interviewing

sessions. One hour was dedicated to the ground staff, and another one-hour session of interviewing was conducted with a lady lecturer during the September holidays. The focus group of eight was dominantly male. All the participants were black adults.

Two of the males were elderly, and one of them is due for his pension at the end of the year. The language spoken by the participants is vernacular. They speak Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, South Sotho and Sepedi as their home languages. The adults have minimal to no exposure to formal education. This is especially true for the gardeners, and most the of the security guards. The language used throughout the interviews had to be the home language of the participant. Knowing the languages of the subjects helped me in establishing easy communication relations with them. Using the first language of the subjects is considered by Agar (1980) to be important in gaining sensitivity to the finest of nuances expressed through language.

Present in the focus group were the three gardeners, four guards and the driver. I spent some time explaining the purpose of the research and emphasised the importance of honesty in answering the question during the interviews. I also convinced the subjects that as the worker community that is facing rationalisation, they had the opportunity to say everything that they wanted to say about this process. I had to explain how important and valued their participation would be in my research.

Although I intended to interview the participants following the interview guide I had prepared, I found that I had to change my style of

interviewing. I now had to address the participants as “*tata*¹ and *mfowethu*²”. The reason for doing this was to relax the participants and to create a conversational atmosphere, and at the same time to show them respect because of them being males.

When the two elderly men were speaking, I could not interrupt them, but had to nod in reassurance, and let them finish what they were saying before I could go to the next question. Had I interrupted they would have interpreted it as being rude, or me not regarding what was said as being important. This approach helped to provide me with a holistic view of the subjects as people, rather than people as my subjects (Vella, 1994).

The interviewees were told that their names and identity would be kept confidential and that I was going to make use of the cassette recorder to record their responses. This alarmed them, but they were satisfied that their names would be kept confidential. The interview proceeded well. The participants were through in answering questions. I found that most of the participants were eager to be interviewed, and I put this down to me giving them a hearing and the time to air their views. It took me three days to transcribe the taped interviews.

To present a picture of what transpired from the focus group interview, the following is a synopsis of the interview.

3.7 INTERVIEWS

Setting: A focus group interview was conducted with eight members of the worker community of Soweto College of Education. After an

*tata*¹ = father
*mfowethu*² = brother

Setting: A focus group interview was conducted with eight members of the worker community of Soweto College of Education. After an explanation of the purpose of the interview, which had to do with the views of the worker community and the coping mechanisms that they employ during this process, the following umbrella question was asked:

Interviewer: "I would like you to tell me what your opinions are concerning the closing down (rationalisation) of the college".

Mr. D, an elderly security guard said the following:

I want to start it here. The first thing that the department did when it started to work (democratic S.A. 1994), it started by cutting our money. There was some money that we used to get; it used to amount to R600.00 and R800.00. That money is no longer there. Again our government cut the money that we used to get yearly on the date you commenced working for the government. He stopped that payment. The next thing the government is cutting down the Colleges. Even then, we just hear people say. The government never came to us, to tell us that the college is closing down. He never told the workers what to do.

Mr. B. said:

It's just been quiet. As we are waiting for them today (22-09-1998). What is it that they are going to tell us. It's only today that they are coming to tell us where are we go to.

Mr. C. said:

There are things that we do. Even if I haven't bought a house, there are things that I do, like a person who has bought a house. I have children, I educate them. When

they say today the college is closing, I don't know where I will be taken to.

Mr. D. further said:

We see these vacancy lists that came in September 1998. The explanation of these lists will come on at a later stage. They have time limits. These posts have problems. Because, here at the college we fought for years, fighting for the six to six working hours without pay. Now this has been corrected. At these schools this is not done, where it is done, you find that the principal does not like you to get this money, and this he does by not signing the approval form, other principals are like that.

Mr. F. said:

That is troubling us. Our government does not like us, he doesn't like us. We had trust in our government, saying that he is the government for the Black people, he'll treat us alright but he is treating us badly, he gives us no hope.

Mr. A. who is a gardener responded in the following way:

The department came late to the people. We are supposed to know by now that the College is closing, where you will start working next year. Now, when they come now it means that they don't care for us. We are taken as something that has been borrowed. As if there is nothing that you are working. But, when you are at work, you feel all right when you are cared for. But when you are not cared for, at times, you also don't care.

Mr. A. indicated that some time back, he went to the head office to ask about the status of the college, and was told that the officials will come to the worker community. He went on to say:

They said they will come, they will come. Now, when they come at this time, they are late; they are coming very late.

That's what is worrying us about our present government.

3.8 ORGANISING DATA

3.81 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS

There was no specific point at which the data collection ended and analysis began. The two often overlapped. After organizing the data to make sure that all the field notes were accounted for, I proceeded to coding. In the left margins I coded the information by paragraph, using colored pens to identify the main sections to my research. The main areas that I identified were determined. These had to do with the worker communities' views on the rationalisation policy, and coping mechanisms during this process. After the broad areas were identified, I started with open coding in each section, which is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data (Strauss and Corbin, 1991). At the same time, I did axial coding, which is the putting together of these same data, but in a new way, and by making connections between categories. Data was organised within the main conceptual framework drawn up from the research essay, namely, the views of the workers and the coping mechanisms that they employ during the process. Clear categories of meaning manifested themselves through the emergence of patterns on the prevailing thought about this policy. This came

strongly from both the written and verbal reports. Comparison of sources on this process also helped in the organization of data.

From the literature study, issues such as the top down the approach, low morale, brain drain, communication problems, and emotional feelings were identified. There is a general consensus amongst employees that the rationalization process has been a top down process in many organizations. Top management has sat alone in planning, administering and implementing this policy. In most cases information has been restricted to management, resulting in huge communication break downs between employer and employee. In actual fact there has been no dialogue at all.

This situation has directly led to low morale, where employees no longer feel committed to an organization they do not trust. Other employees have opted for severance packages rather than to face rationalisation. There is also a massive outflow of much need expertise who has gone for greener pastures. These circumstances have further led to the brain drain which has proven to be very costly to employers. In all respects, there is evidence from all the sources of data that I consulted that the rationalisation process has brought with it many problems for both employer and employee.

3.9 OPEN CODING

This was my first step and I started by naming categories. This procedure helped me in choosing the name that seemed most logically related to the data it represented. I came up with the following categories:

- a) Low morale = L.M
- b) Emotional feeling = E.F.
- c) Insufficient communication channels = I.C.C
- d) Brain drain = B.D.

3.10 AXIAL CODING

I proceeded to axial coding which was my next step, and here I focussed on specifying the categories in terms of the conditions that gave rise to them. For an example:

- a) Low morale L.M. caused by:
 - Decline in employee commitment
 - Lack of enthusiasm, frustration
 - Demoralized, unhappy, distrust
 - Diminished productivity
 - Broken promises, which are all properties of, L.M.
- b) Emotional feeling E.F. caused by:
 - Frustration, distrust, resentment, hostility, grief, anger, trauma, uncertainty, disillusion, unhappiness, which are properties of, E.F.
- c) Insufficient Communication Channels caused by:
 - lack of information, lack of consultation, late consultation, no information and information restricted to management, which are properties of, I.C.C.
- b) Brain drain B.D. caused by:
 - Golden handshakes, voluntary severance package, blanket approach on the implementation of the process, massive outflow of much needed expertise, which are properties of B.D.
 - In all the indicated categories, workers experienced high levels

of low morale, emotional feelings, brain drain and insufficient communication channels almost daily.

3.12 THE EFFECTS OF RETRENCHMENT ON THE FAMILIES AND LIFESTYLES OF THE INTERVIEWEES

Half of the participants had major problems related to retrenchment; one of them concerned their houses. Most of the workers had just acquired home ownership status through the Reconstruction and Development Project. They are in the low income group and they expressed their fears in the following way:

Mr A.:

My complaint is one. I have just bought a house. I have two years in that house. You see. Now that the college is closing, I don't know how are we going to pay these houses? You see.

Mr C.:

The house is my problem. I have bought a house. What will I do if? they give me what is mine (pension) and say I should go, and find out that what I have (pension) is not equal to what I owe for the house. Because the year that I have worked are few. How will I cope with the balance of the house?

Participants also indicated that other than housing they had other commitments, which would really suffer, were they to lose their jobs.

Mr. D. said:

There are things that we do. Even if I have not bought a

house, there are things I do, like a person who has bought a house. I have children, I educate them.

Another interviewee, Mr. E. said:

Because we have many needs and commitments, one can't say I'm not going there.

Mr. H. said:

I have a house, my children, my family and many things to do.

Table one illustrates the effects of retrenchment on the family and the lifestyles of the participants.

TABLE ONE: THE EFFECTIVES OF RETRENCHMENT ON THEIR FAMILY AND LIFESTYLE.

Participants	House loan	Education of children	Family to look after	Other things to do
A	I have bought a house			
B	The house is my problem			
E				Many needs and commitments
D		I have children to educate		
H	I have a house	My children to educate	My children to look after	

The subjects in my study had various concerns that are brought about by the rationalisation process. These lead to frustration, anxiety and mistrust. They were also worried about their pension. This is reflected in the following comments.

Mr. C. said:

I don't know whether they will give me my contributions and say that I start afresh at Mshukantambo, a school nearby Soweto College. That is my problem, whether they will transfer my pension fund and let me continue there; that is what I don't know.

Mr. E. had this to say also:

This thing is troubling us. It has disturbed me a lot, especially our working. He explained that coming to work was no longer exciting.

He further said:

You always ask yourself what is going to happen when the college closes. We don't know when we go, because we have many commitments, one can't say, I'm not going there, as long as one is still offered the work he has been doing, and the salary remains the same.

3.12 HOW THE EMPLOYER DEALS WITH REDEPLOYMENT

In trying to address the problem of redeployment of the ground staff, the department sent vacancy lists to the college, and insisted that the ground staff should apply as soon as possible for these posts.

These lists came from the department during the second week of September 1998. They list vacancies that exist at schools in Soweto. However, these are closed vacancies, which means that people who are currently not employed by government cannot apply for them. There was consensus among the participants in my

study that these vacancy lists brought with them a number of problems:

Mr. B. said:

We have problems with these vacancies. It is said that you must apply on your own. Not that you are taken there, by them.

Mr. A's views were:

This thing is wrong, because they say you must apply. It can happen that you may not be wanted at these schools, you see. Because when I get it well. At these schools that we are supposed to go to, there are people there, who are doing this thing of working without being paid, doing voluntary work.

He further said:

Principals, there, are looking at taking those volunteers and put them in those vacancies. So when you go there by yourself, they may not take you. It would be better if the department could make a way and send you there himself. But then it is because "*akasihoyanga tu³*".

Mr. D. had the following to say concerning the vacancy lists:

We see these vacancy lists that came in September. They have time limits. These posts have problems, because here at the college, we fought for years fighting for the six to six working hours without pay. Now this has been corrected.

akasihoyanga tu³ = the Government does not care for us.

At these schools this is not done. Where it is done, you find that the principal does not like you get this money, and this he does by not signing the approval forms. Others are like that. That is troubling us.

3.13 THE WORKERS' WILLINGNESS TO BE DEPLOYED

The issue of redeployment was constantly raised during the interviews. Some participants did not mind being deployed to other places of work, as long as it did not affect their present status and salary. Only one of the subjects was not in favour of redeployment at all. The participants also voiced their concerns that, much as they do not mind working elsewhere, they were worried about transport problems that might come up because of redeployment.

The following comments reflect the views of some of the interviewees.

Mr. E. said:

We had an advantage of the college being near to where we live. Transport wise, I would not mind working in Lenasia, because it is nearby. But if I have to go to the East Rand, it will be difficult because it is far away. This will cause problems but as long as one is working under the government, I do not mind.

Mr. F. on the other hand said:

I agree with Mr. E. if it happens as long as this place, which is Soweto college is still under the government, we wish

and won't mind working under the government, as long as we are not removed.

What Mr. F. said was not the same to Mr. E's statement. Mr. F. did not want to be removed from the college, and yet Mr. E. on the other hand was willing to work somewhere else as long as the government would still employ him.

Mr. H. also contributed by saying:

I still second the men who have said, even if we can get work far away. I will work. I do not mind. I will work, without work things are bad.

Table two illustrates the workers' willingness to be deployed.

TABLE 2. THE WORKERS WILLINGNESS TO BE DEPLOYED

Participants	Transport	Employer
E	It should be available	As long as it is still the government
F	Able to travel daily	Must still be government
G	Able to travel daily	Take me anywhere
H	Even far away I don't mind	I will work

I further asked the interviewees how they felt about this emotional feeling of betrayal and anger towards their employer, who is the government, since it was shared the majority of them. They felt that the government did not care for them at all, they were now useless. They said:

Mr. A.:

Now when they come now, 22nd September 1998 it means that they do not care for us. We are taken as something that has been borrowed. As if there is nothing that you are working. But when you are at work; you feel all right when you are cared for. But when you are not cared for, at times you also do not care.

Mr. D who said shared this sentiment:

Our government does not like us; he does not like us. We had trust in our government, saying that he is the government for the black people. But he is treating us badly. He gives us no hope.

Mr. B. said that they were being cast away, while Mr. A. said:

But then it is because we are not cared for you see.

Table three illustrates the views of the workers about their employer, the government.

TABLE 3. THE EMPLOYER DOES NOT CARE

Participants	Late consultation	Treatment
A	Now when they come now at this time, they are coming very late	Taken as something that has been borrowed
B		We are being cast away
D		But he is treating us badly

The impression of an employer that does not care was an issue that comes up strongly from the views of the participants in my study. They complained about the way this rationalisation has been administered at the college. Nobody seemed to know the truth

about this process. Management also did not have concrete information except that the college was definitely closing. Whilst in the dark about this process, many concerns and problems related to rationalisation were raised, such as children, unemployment and fears. When asked how they feel about coming to work during this process, participants expressed their feelings in the following way:

Mr. E said:

You know, when you come to work you are no longer
Enthusiastic like before.

Mrs. T, the lecturer said:

Teachers are demoralized and they can't teach in an
enthusiastic fashion.

3.14 EMPLOYEES' FEARS

Participants also pointed out that unemployment is rife. Many things happen when you are unemployed. They are concerned about crime and alcohol; here are their views:

Mr. H. said:

I see that I am still young. I won't survive, staying at home
and taking a pension. Again, it will be used and drunk up
in no time.

Mr. E. said:

Staying at home leads to many things, you think of doing
many things.

Mr. G. said:

Staying at home lead to mischief. Your future is doomed.

Table 4 illustrates the fears expressed by the participants.

TABLE 4. EMPLOYEES' FEARS

Participants	Crime	Alcoholism
H		Taking a pension, it will be used and drunk up in no time.
E	You think of doing many things.	
G	Staying at home leads to mischief.	

Participants felt free to express their fears among one another in a conversational way. Ultimately, individual perspectives and experiences emerged (Patton, 1987:135). Though I have termed these fears as unfounded, they are real fears to the participants.

3.15 COPING MECHANISMS

Despite their own fears of losing their jobs, one of the interviewees expressed concern for those attending the college.

Mrs. T. said:

The lecturer as a worker, finds it difficult to cope because we find we being workers with an employer that is not very sensitive to the question of coping to start off with.

She further said:

Because we did not know what direction to take and what to do, we ended up saying, okay, let's just sit and teach these poor students, and make sure they finish their course first, because their situation is worse than ours is.

I assume that what Mrs. T meant by the students' situation being worse than theirs, was that those students who might not make it

and fail at the end of the year, will have to repeat the year at a finishing college in Pretoria. The implications thereof are that this college offers distance education, which might be a problem to the student who for the past three years has been getting full time tuition. There might be some curriculum changes that they have to deal with in this finishing college. What interested me was the following mechanisms employed by Mrs. T during the rationalisation process. She said:

As an individual, I felt the need; maybe, it would be a better way of trying to cope, if I furthered my studies in some area that has nothing to do with science education, which I have always been involved with.

The participants expressed the above views about the whole process of rationalisation.

3.16 CONCLUSION

The final themes that were identified and presented in this section both from the interviews and the literature review are that:

- a) Low morale (L.M.) caused by emotional feeling (E.F.) in most case leads to problems.
- b) Low morale (L.M.) caused by insufficient communication channel leads to emotional feelings, which becomes a problem.
- c) Therefore low morale, emotional feeling, insufficient communication channels and brain drain are problems resulting from the rationalisation process.

What has also transpired is that all these categories are manifested in management problems, which are related to the planning,

administration and implementation of the policy. It has also emanated that rationalisation is a very expensive exercise. It definitely causes low morale and emotional upheaval in both employers and employees lives.

Most of the issues that came up strongly and those that were not so strong from the views of the worker community is that the participants indicated to me that they were worried about their pensions. This meant that if they were given these pensions the government would never again employ them. They also pointed out that other employment organizations do not have housing subsidies. Therefore, their main worry was that they would become part of the unemployed population of South Africa.

Therefore the final themes became:

- a) Management problems
- b) Low morale
- c) Emotional problems and
- d) Brain drain.

SECTION FOUR

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4. INTRODUCTION

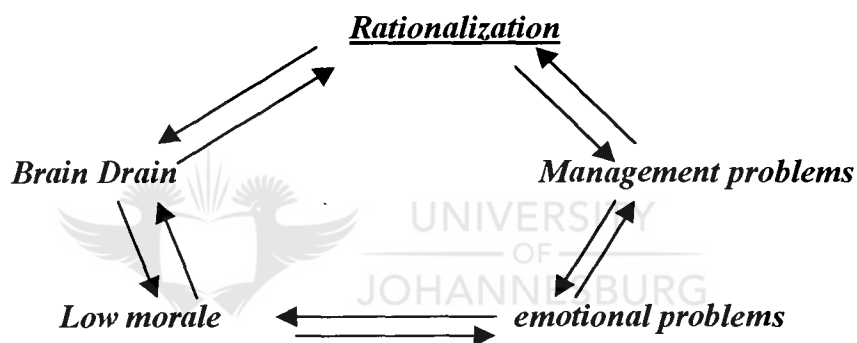
The study sets out to gain insight how the rationalisation policy in the education and public service departments affected workers. The main purpose of the study was to investigate the views of people on rationalisation in the workplace. A second purpose was to identify the coping mechanisms that workers employ during the rationalisation process.

The worker community at the Soweto College of Education is comprised of management, the administration and the clerical personnel, the academic personnel who are senior and junior lecturers and the ground staff, who are cleaners, gardeners and the drivers. The ideal situation would have been to investigate the views of every worker at the Soweto College of Education. However, ultimately only the security guards, gardeners and the driver became the subjects of the study, with the exception of one lecturer. It is assumed that the workers will be hardest hit at the end of this rationalisation process. Historically, the workers have been disadvantaged during the apartheid government. They have a limited education and are not multi skilled. Therefore, the chances of them getting jobs elsewhere without lowering their present low status are remote. The lecturer on the other hand seems to stand a better chance of being redeployed in both the public and the private sector.

In this study I also explored through the literature the views of the workers and their coping mechanisms in similar circumstances. Similarities and patterns were identified from both the participants' responses and those found in literature. This led to the following final themes:

- a) Management problems
- b) Emotional problems
- c) Low morale and
- d) The brain drain

The following diagram will show how these themes are linked to one another:



It has emerged from the study that management problems encountered in the planning, administration, and implementation of the rationalization policy are linked to emotional feelings experienced by the worker community. These feelings of fear, anxiety and frustration are also linked to low morale, where a decline in employee commitment is exhibited. This situation also led to the brain drain, where some of the much needed expertise was lost at the college one Afrikaans and one English lecturer have been deployed to the Johannesburg College of Education, and a handful of lecturers have applied and received severance packages. Those who were of fifty eight, have been given pensions. The implication here

is that management will experience more problems as the worker community is frustrated, demoralised, and are leaving in large numbers. It is management that has to strategize in bringing back the trust and the working spirit of the workers.

4.1 DISCUSSION OF DATA

4.1.1 LACK OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

What has emerged from the study is a direct contradiction to the definition of rationalization, where a combined effort between the employer and the employee is emphasised. The staff at Soweto College of Education were not part of the process, only the casualties of it. The employer is seen to have separated himself from the worker community in the planning, administration, and implementation of the policy. He is seen by the worker community to have taken the position of being the modern western corporation of *gesellschaft*, (Sergiovanni, 1994:10). In the corporation, relationships are formal and distant. In such relationships there are bound to be problems. Freire (1992) is of the opinion that these problems emanate from the failure experienced by policy planners whom the policy will ultimately serve. The policy makers planned in isolation in their ivory towers, and lost contact with the worker community. By so doing, they robbed the worker community of the chance of putting forth their fears and their frustrations about the implementation of this policy. Workers were denied a democratic dialogue during the phase of policy preparation in which Dressel (1981:85) suggests should be shared with and modified by the views of those affected. Those affected in this instance are the worker community.

4.2 WORKERS AS OBJECTS

In this study the worker as a result of this process experienced strong emotional feelings. The worker community felt that they have been

treated as “nothing”. Mr. M, who was a subject in this study, managed to sum it up effectively when he said:

“We are taken as something that has been borrowed, as if there is nothing that you are working for”.

This is in line with both Freire’s (1992) and Vella’s (1994) recommendation that people should be treated as subjects and not objects. Objects are not expected to think because those who are in charge see it as their role to think on their behalf. They are there to be manipulated in any way deemed fit by the manipulator. In contrast, subjects have minds of their own. They reason things out; they ask questions and come up with suggestions and solutions. They want explanations on why certain ambiguous issues like the rationalization policy, are being implemented without them having part in the discussions.

What also emerged from this study is that the worker community no longer has trust in the employer. They feel that the employer has been very evasive about this policy. They argue that the employer has not been open with them about this policy. Freire (1992:80) points out that “trust is contingent on the evidence which one party provides the other of his true, concrete intentions”. Workers claim that this has not happened with them. The employer did not provide them with reasons and intentions for rationalizing the college. They now lack commitment in their work, and they find it difficult to commit themselves to a relationship that has no trust in it.

4.3 THE EFFECTS THAT RATIONALIZATION WILL HAVE ON THE QUALITY OF THEIR LIVES.

The worker community also feels that the employer has denied them access to democratic dialogue. They argue that no official from the head office ever came to listen to their problems, fears, frustrations, or anxieties.

The feel left out at a very crucial time of their lives. Some of the has just acquired home ownership status. They worry as to what is going to happen to their houses, and how they are going to pay off the housing loans. This was endorsed by Mr C who said:

“How will I cope with the balance of the house”.

Besides the house loan problem, workers are worried about the education of their children. They don't want their children to be illiterate like themselves. Yet, if they are out of work they will not be able to educate them.

The worker community had viewed the employer, who is also they government as:

A community and society defined by the bonds that hold their Members together and not an organization that is defined by its tasks (Druker, 1992) as quoted by (Sergiovanni, 1994:13).

Workers feel let down by the government, which they put into power through their votes. They are concerned about the current vacancy lists that are circulated by their employers. They highlight some problem that these vacancy lists bring with them, as was explained in section three. Hence, they would appreciate it if the employer would directly transfer the available posts. The requirement that they should apply for these post, on their own, puts them in an unfavourable situation. They say that there are already people in these schools where there are posts, who have been doing voluntary work there for years. They feel that they have been put into an unfair competition with the volunteers, who in their minds would be the preferred candidates for these jobs. This situation leaves them bitterly unhappy, and with no hope whatsoever of ever getting another job elsewhere, as unemployment is the prevailing situation in our country. They feel that this state of affairs leads to the low morale that they have been experiencing since the beginning of the rationalization process. Though they are still in the employment of government and have

not yet lost their jobs, the worker communities at Soweto College of Education feel demoralized.

What also emerged from the study were the fears of employees, of them adding to the growing unemployment situation in South Africa. Workers are afraid that when they lose their present jobs they will never find employment again. They also feared that they would add to the alcohol and crime problems of the country. They were very concerned about the amount of money they would get when retrenched. They say this money is very little and would be finished in no time, and this would result in poverty for them and their families.

The worker community concluded by criticizing the manner in which information regarding rationalization has been restricted to management. They are of the view that workers at all levels, not just management, should have been consulted. They also criticized the late information session organized by the employers, which took place on the 22nd September 1998. They say this was very late. Their main question was by whom, was this policy made?

These arguments are supported by documentation. The Education Minister, Sibusiso Bhengu, (Bisseker, 1997:41) admits that it has been a shotgun approach. He also suggested that the government should rethink the policy. Ultimately, the budgetary constraints, which had led to the implementation of this policy, have more than doubled, because of the large numbers of applications for voluntary severance packages. This situation has created new and more problems for management. The effect is even worse for those workers in education institutions who do not have formal education, such as is the case of the participants in the study. All the above views show a common feeling that the rationalization policy has brought with it many problems, both for employer and employee.

In study it also emerged from the literature, that rationalisation pays no attention to workers' fears and expectations during the process of restructuring, (Marais, & Scheepers, 1996:5). The data collected from the worker community at Soweto College supports this view. They felt that employer did not care for them. For an example Mr B said "*akasihoyangatu*", which means the government does not care for us.

Another view is that restructuring affects career aspirations. Employees are no longer overly concerned with their upward mobility, but are more concerned with their employability, (Ambrose, 1996:35). The participants shared the same opinion. They did not mind being deployed to other places of employment, as long as they were not dismissed from their jobs. Mr E said:

"One can't say I am not going there, as long as one is still offered the work he has been doing".

What emerged from literature is that most policy makers during the time of planning, do establish a framework of interaction. This is mostly done at National and Provincial levels. Another good practice from the private sector is that employees are provided with information and data relevant to their corporation's or unit's operations. I think that both education and public service managers should adopt this practice, and disseminate information to every worker in their employ.

4.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PRACTICE OF THE PEOPLE INVESTIGATED.

Workers should be made aware that during times of change where organizations are being restructured, they are bound to lose jobs. Furthermore, workers will be deployed anywhere within the organization, and times will be expected to perform jobs that are not in their job

description contracts. Workers in education and public service departments must understand that a job in government is no longer a life time job, but that they too must expect retrenchments like those experienced by workers in the private sector. Ultimately, workers should be aware of the value of being multi-skilled in order for the to survive in the workplace.

4.5 RECOMMENDATION TO POLICY MAKERS AND FURTHER RESEARCH.

Policy maker at a National level should not alienate themselves from the people they are making the policy for. If they do so, it would appear that they are following a top down approach, which brings problems not anticipated in the planning. The community will resent it, and they will not feel obliged to keep to the policy because they did not participate in its planning.

Union representation should not be the only source of communication and negotiations, rather, policy makers should include worker in the process to ensure that their voice can be heard. Dialogue within the employers' departments about the implications of the policy should be encouraged.

Information pertaining to these implications should be disseminated to everybody concerned, and should not be restricted to management only. When this is done problems of interpretation often occurs. This is because interpreting policy via a policy document results in a problematic procedure.

4.6 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into how rationalization affects the worker community at the Soweto College of Education. The first step in this process was to investigate the views of workers on rationalization in the workplace. It was also to identify the coping mechanisms that workers employ during this process. Evidence from the study suggests that this process brings with it problems for both employers and employees.

Employers face management problems due to poor planning, administration and implementation of the policy. Managers, who normally divorce and alienate themselves from the community for whom the policy is intended for, generally bring about this problem. Insufficient communication channels also create problems for management. Workers always complain that there is no consultation and communication between themselves and the employers. Information in most cases is restricted to management. This practice denies the workers a democratic dialogue with their employers.

The blanket approach of dismissals, employed by management, creates problems which lead to the brain drain where much needed expertise is lost. The rationalization policy brings with it a traumatic experience for the worker community. The workers are angry with the employer who has broken his promise that he will employ them until they reach the age at which they can receive a pension. On the contrary, they find themselves being retrenched at the prime of their careers. Feeling of distrust and disillusionment trouble them, as they feel hopeless to be co-dependent on an employer they can no longer trust.

These feelings of distrust and frustration lead to a low morale. Workers are demotivated and they lack enthusiasm. There is evidence of low employee commitment, and this results in diminished productivity. Maintaining *Gesellschaft within Gemeinschaft* becomes difficult for both parties. Nevertheless, though both parties have different characteristics and circumstances, they should strive for better communication channels.

The study was delimited to a segment of the worker population. The unwillingness of the academic personnel to participate in the study can be assumed to be due to their disillusionment with the system too. It was also not possible to investigate the views of the worker community at other rationalized colleges of education in the Gauteng Province. Recommendations for further research, is that, more research be done on the strategies that policy makers employ in the planning, administration, and implementation of the rationalization policy.



GLOSSARY

- 1. B.D. = BRAIN DRAIN**
- 2. COMPLT = COMPLAINANT**
- 3. DEM. DAT = DEMOGRAPHIC**
- 4. E.F. = EMOTIONAL FEELINGS**
- 5. I.R.M. = INFORMATION RESRICTED TO MANAGEMENT**
- 6. L. COMM = LATE COMMUNICATION**
- 7. L. CONS = LATE CONSULTAION**
- 8. L.M = LOW MORALE**
- 9. N. COMM = NO COMMUNICATION**
- 10. O.C = OTHER COMMITMENTS**
- 11. R.T.M. = RESTRICTED INFORMATION TO MANAGEMENT**
- 12. T.D. = TOP DOWN**
- 13. V.L. = VACANCY LIST**

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