

An evaluation of the impact of the PSMDP on the management performance areas from the perspectives of the SMT's[†]

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Abstract

The Government of Botswana has made concerted efforts since attaining independence in 1966 to improve the quality of its primary education sector through a number of reforms. One such reform was the introduction of the Primary Schools Management Development Project in 1999 which was a joint venture with the British Department for International Development (DFID) whose main purpose was to develop the management and instructional leadership skills in primary school heads in order to make them more effective in their jobs. This paper reports the findings of a study that was carried out to evaluate whether the PSMDP achieved its intended mandate of improving the management of primary schools in Botswana. The study adopted the survey research design with questionnaires for different categories of teachers being the main instrument used. The study targeted three out of the six primary education regions, namely Central North, Southern and South Central. A total of forty Government primary schools were used with a total sample of 560 teachers in all.

Keywords: Evaluation, management, performance, perspective

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Primary education in Botswana has, before and immediately after independence, not been treated as an important foundation as it deserved to be and this is manifested from the poor resources which

characterised it. More importance was centred on secondary education as it was the thinking that as a new nation, graduates of this level were more trainable to meet the required manpower needs (Monyatsi, 2003). One illustration of this neglect is the fact that at independence the country had many of its primary

teaching staff offering their services without any professional training. Over the years, the teachers training colleges have awarded four different kinds of teaching certificates: the Elementary Teachers Certificate (ETC), Primary Lower (PL), Primary Higher (PH), and Primary Teacher Certificate (PTC) (http://www.unesco.org/education/wef/countryreports/botswana/rapport_2_1.html).

At independence in 1966, the dominant qualifications for primary school teachers' professional qualifications offered at these colleges were the Primary Lower Certificate and the Primary Higher Certificate. Those with the Primary Lower Certificate would have entered the teacher training colleges after successfully passing Old Standard Four and/or Six Examinations; and those who would have failed Junior Certificate Examinations (done after the first three years of secondary education). For the Primary Higher qualifications, they would have entered the teachers' training colleges after successfully passing the Junior Certificate Examinations. The Elementary Teachers' Certificate was introduced in 1968 as a way of upgrading those untrained teachers who did not qualify to enter the teachers' training colleges (Dodds, 1994). The situation as reflected in the report of the National Commission of Education of 1977 shows that even a decade subsequent to independence, as high as 81% of the untrained teachers had only completed standard seven, while 56% of the trained teachers had completed standard seven to qualify for training in Teacher Training Colleges (Republic of Botswana, 1977).

The Government of Botswana has, however, since the first Commission on Education made some efforts to improve the quality of primary education. For instance, during National Development 5, in line with the recommendations of the National Commission on Education, 1975, Primary Education was given the highest priority within the education sector (Republic of Botswana, 1985:126). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was engaged in projects such as the Primary Education Improvement Project (PEIP) from 1980 – 1990 with the aim of improving primary education by training education officers and inspectors, including lecturers for the colleges of education. It was also engaged in the Botswana Junior Secondary Education Improvement Project (JSEIP) from 1985–1991 whose aim was to help the government of Botswana to expand its 7-years

basic education program (primary) to 9 years (primary and junior secondary). These projects also popularized the learner-centered pedagogy which Tabulawa (2003) posits that it is a type of teaching practice that reflects Western neo-liberal ideology and is intended to promote the liberal democratic societies and, concomitantly, capital-ism. According to Tabulawa (2003:9), like all aspects of education, learner-centered pedagogy is not value neutral, and has quite apparent "social, epistemol-ogical and philosophical foundations and the dominant technicist view of this pedagogy marks its ideological/political nature". The learner-centered approach inculcated into the students critical thinking skills, debating skills and questioning skills that produced citizens who were democratically compliant.

Another strategy used to improve primary education was in-service education which dated as far back as 1968 when it was based at one of the teacher training colleges, and was mainly aimed at equipping teachers with specific pedagogic skills including child-centred approaches which encouraged learning through activity or discovery or experimenting (http://www.gla.ac.uk/centres/cradall/docs/Botswanapers/Kamaupaper_39.pdf)

Furthermore, in 1981, the Department of Primary Education was established in the Faculty of Education of the University of Botswana with the help of the United States Agency for International Development with the objectives of *inter alia*, to:

- (a) provide leadership in the improvement of basic education, in collaboration with other departments and the Ministry of Education.
- (b) strive toward becoming a centre of excellence dedicated to improving the quality of teacher education and teaching in the primary schools.
- (c) prepare personnel for higher posts of responsibility in the field of primary education who are capable of being agents for the improvement of primary/basic education.
- (d) contribute to the body of knowledge about the educational enterprise in Botswana through research and evaluation undertakings.
- (e) strive toward becoming agents of innovation and changes in the field of

primary/basic education (University of Botswana, 1997).

There was not much in-service training to assist those who had been elevated to such critical positions of leadership until the 1990s, except externally resourced workshops organized by the education officers who were mainly interested in pedagogical issues.

It has to be noted however that, with the passage of time, in-service education became more diversified as was illustrated by the introduction of Primary Education Improvement Project (PEIP) and the establishment of Education Centres all over the country. Teacher support for professional development is provided through a network of 12 Education Centres, which are located at strategic points in the country so that in-service activities could be done near to where the teachers are. 11 of these 12 Education Centres have custom build facilities.

The Centres have the capacity to provide residential courses. Each Centre is staffed with In-service Education officers whose responsibility is to provide teachers with the necessary professional support for effective implementation of the school curriculum. The programmes run at the Education Centres are designed to meet the needs of schools. Staff Development Committees were established in the schools to act as liaison organs for the professional development of teachers. In most instances In-service Education Officers conduct school based workshops whereby they work with teachers in their regular environment. The functions of the Education Centres include:

- To provide an effective and coherent in-service education programme and to support the implementation of government policies and recommendations by liaising with all stakeholders.
- To identify the needs of schools and to be responsive and sensitive to their requirements and difficulties through provision of support services.
- To develop training programmes which will foster the professional development of all teachers in order to make them more effective classroom practitioners.

- To promote autonomous school based staff development.
- To sensitise schools to new developments in education and to systematically monitor and support them.
- To provide opportunities for in-service officers to update and upgrade their professional skills and qualifications (<http://www.moe.gov.bw/ttd/index.html>; Republic of Botswana, 1991).

Schools did not engage in any school-based staff development, but relied mostly on education centre-based workshops conducted by officers based in these education centres, as well as resource persons from Colleges of Education and the University of Botswana.

The Government of Botswana also took the initiative to invest heavily in the training of classroom teachers as a way of improving the education at that level. One strategy of meeting this was that the minimum entry qualification for training as a primary school teacher was raised initially to Junior Certificate (JC) and later to Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC). This is clearly stated in Recommendation 100 [para. 10.5.9] (a) which reads: With respect to primary teachers, the Commission *recommends* that:

The entry qualifications into primary teacher training should be raised to a minimum COSC "O" level and the period of training should be three years. The pilot Diploma programme should be extended to all primary teacher training institutions so that future primary teachers will be trained for the Diploma in primary Education qualification (Republic of Botswana, 1994: 45).

Much as the Government of Botswana intensified the training of classroom teachers, for over thirty years of independence not much relevant training was provided to prepare teachers for positions of leadership, if at all there was any. This was despite the fact that it had been emphasized *inter alia* in the National Development 6 to raise the quality of primary education through the training of education officers and head-teachers in the professional supervision of teachers.

Many school heads and other members of the school management teams (SMTs) were thrown into the deep end with none or very minimal management skills and experience. The turning point came in the early 1990s with a shift from the centralised model of training to a more school-based in-service training with accountability of programmes left in the hands of school staff (Republic of Botswana, 1994). This shift was a response to Recommendation 105c of the RNPE which stipulated that:

The head as an instructional leader, together with the deputy and senior teachers, should take major responsibility for in-service training for teachers within the schools, through regular observation of teachers and organisation of workshops, to foster communication between teachers on professional matters and to address weaknesses (Republic of Botswana, 1994: 47).

This recommendation suggested a shift of emphasis from school heads being managers or administrators to curriculum leaders, whose primary purpose is to assist other teachers to shape the purposes and meanings that they use to make sense of, and to justify their contribution to educational development (Day, Hall, Gammage and Coles, 1993 citing Duigman and MacPherson (1992). It was realized that although instructional leadership was critical, it was seldom practised and the reasons given included: lack of in depth training of heads in their role as instructional leader, lack of time to execute instructional activities, increased paper work and the community's expectation that the head should be a manager (Flath, 1989; Fullan 1991). The recommendation therefore implied changes in the way in which staff development was organized in schools as illustrated by Joyce and Showers (1995) that such policy means providing the opportunity for immediate and sustained practice, collaboration and peer coaching, and studying development and implementation. This idea is supported by Dunham (1995) when he contends that, the well-being of all the members of the school community and even the survival of the school itself are dependent on the decision-making skills of senior and middle managers. Teachers perform best when there is a collegial and supportive environment offered by a school manager that respects their autonomy and builds upon their experiences.

In 1999, the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Department for International Development (DFID) launched the Primary School Management Development Project (PSMDP). The Primary School Management Development Project (PSMDP) was a response to Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE, 1994) recommendation 115 which emphasized the need to focus on improving the quality of primary school management. The School Management Teams (SMTs), according to the policy, are viewed as critical forces that need professional skills to foster change and quality in schools.

The goal of the PSMDP was 'to improve the quality of primary education in Botswana by providing effective management training and support to school management teams' (Republic of Botswana, 2002). The overall aim of the project was therefore to establish a sustainable primary school management system, hence improve the quality of primary education in Botswana. This partnership between DFID and the Government of Botswana was to develop management and instructional leadership skills in primary school heads so as to make them more effective in their jobs (Ministry of Education, 1999).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The following skills areas which were used in both the baseline survey in 1999 and the impact evaluation of 2002 as indicators of effectiveness were also used in this study to evaluate whether there was sustained impact of the PSMDP on the management performance areas from the perspectives of the SMTs: *motivating, planning, staff development, monitoring, staff appraisal, developing community relations, delegation, teacher management, parental involvement and team building* (Ministry of Education, 2000).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a survey research design. As pointed out by McBurney (1990: 60) "the purpose of a survey is simply to determine how people feel about a particular issue"; a view also shared by Fink (1995) who believes that perceptions which influence how people ultimately feel about a particular issue and how they react towards it are also determined through a survey. Therefore, how the SMTs perceive the PSMD programme would influence how they feel about and

react towards it. These feelings and perceptions were established through a survey with a combination of questionnaires, observations, interviews and focus group interactions used in data collection.

Delimitation and Population of the study

The delimitation of the study comprised of three (3) out of six (6) primary education regions namely the Central North, Francistown, Southern and South Central. These three regions are each composed of rural, urban, and remote area schools. Since the study aimed at finding out how the impact is like, it is assumed that it might also be different from one type of settlement to the other. One inspectorial area was selected from each of the three regions making three inspectorial areas for the study. The population of the study comprised of school management team members (who are the focus of this paper), teachers, PSMDP coordinators, PSMA's from selected regions, PTA's and both policy and curriculum officers from the Ministry of Education.

Sampling

Though the research team had aimed at using forty schools selected through systematic sampling, this was made difficult by limited funding to reach some schools. A total of twenty four (24) government primary schools which are a focus of the PSMDP program were therefore used in the study. An unsolicited list of schools supplied by the MoE was used. This list was already presented alphabetically and without changing the order with which the Ministry provided it, every *n*th school was selected until the desired sample was reached. As Cresswell (2002) pointed out, a systematic random sample is where every *n*th subject in the population is chosen until a desired sample is reached. From the list chosen, convenience sampling was done because schools which were easily accessible were visited and respondents who were available at the time of visits were used to provide the information required.

From each conveniently chosen school, a simple random sampling procedure was used to pick two teachers from each stream (Stds 1-7) who responded to a questionnaire. A total of 29 PSMA's were engaged in a focus group interview.

Data Collection Procedures

The focus group interaction was deliberately used to validate the questionnaire data, interview data and observational data because as pointed out by Miles and Huberman (1994) it is useful when one needs to explain and illuminate or interpret quantitative data. Qualitative interviews can also obtain in-depth information about a participant's thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations and feelings about the topic. It also allows the researcher to enter into the inner world of another person and to gain an understanding of that person's perspective (Johnson and Christensen, 2004). Fifty five SMTs filled in a semi structured questionnaire out of which 13 (27%) school heads/deputies were interviewed.

Negotiating access

As per Bell (2004)'s advice, permission was requested from and granted by the Director of Primary Education in the Ministry of Education to carry out this research. Letters were written to relevant officers to negotiate access into individual schools and about the detailed modalities of conducting the research such as the dates and times of visits to various sites. Data collection was done by the researchers.

Data Analysis

Questionnaire Data

To a large extent the questionnaires were pre-coded. The remaining questionnaire questions were coded after data collection. All data from questionnaires was scored. Data inputting into the computer was done followed by analysis through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences 15.0 (SPSS 15.0) program. Research assistants were engaged for this process.

Interview Data

After conducting the interviews with heads of schools and their deputies, the researchers immediately developed a case record per interview. The themes emerging from the data were then identified. The indicators of effectiveness and sustainability were used

as the major themes. Coding of the case records was then conducted. This involved “*identifying text segments, placing a bracket around them and assigning a code word or phrase that accurately describes the meaning of the text segment*” (Creswell, 2005:238). Content analysis was then done with data from both questionnaires and interviews. As alluded to by some authors (Cresswell 2005; Baker 1999), content analysis is often used where studies seek to understand values and social perspectives on issues. Content analysis was therefore appropriate in analyzing data from interviews and questionnaires as the study sought to establish perspectives of various subjects on a social programme. This involved establishing the frequency with which the established programme effectiveness indicators occur in various data codes from various sources (Bell, 2004) and establishing whether the content represents the concept of effectiveness of the programme as defined by the indicators of the PSMDP (Cresswell, 2005). All data from interviews and questionnaires was triangulated and interpreted.

Findings from School Management Teams

A questionnaire was distributed to 70 SMT members out of which only 40 responded. Of those who responded, the majority, twenty six (65%) were females, six (15%) were males while eight (20 %) did not identify their gender. Nineteen (73%) of the female SMTs had a junior certificate as their highest level of academic qualification while only three (11.5%) had ordinary level (O’ Level) academic qualification. Only three (04%) SMTs possessed a degree qualification while the majority had a Primary Teacher’s Certificate. None of the respondents indicated possessing a professional management qualification as would have been expected.

The subsequent sections of the questionnaire intended to establish from the SMTs if they had any performance difficulties in the given performance management areas which included: *motivating, planning, staff development, monitoring, staff appraisal, developing community relations, delegation, teacher management, parental involvement and team building*. First the SMTs were requested to assess as to whether or not they see themselves as having performance difficulties. The same respondents were again asked to assess their fellow SMTs in terms of

whether or not they think they are performing their administrative duties well. Following are responses regarding each management performance area (PMA) which serve as indicators of effectiveness in primary school management.

Administration

A total of nine (22.5%) respondents felt they were having difficulties performing their administrative duties. The remaining 31 (77.5%) indicated that they did not have any problems performing these duties. On being asked to give their perceptions of how they see their colleagues performing their administrative duties, a total of 34 (85%) respondents, 21 of which were females, 5 males while eight were not identified by gender, indicated that they perceived their colleagues to be performing their administrative duties without any difficulties. Only six thought their fellow SMTs had administrative performance problems.

That the majority of SMTs had no administrative performance problems is not surprising as literature abounds that oftentimes, more attention in schools is given to managerial and administrative and that of the instructional leader is relegated to others in the administrative hierarchy even though the core business of a school is teaching and learning (Stronge, 1988; Flath, 1989). This aspect of administration was also found to have improved in the Impact Evaluation Study of 2002 when the project came to an end and this was said to be a result of the PSMDP. This also shows that there was sustenance of issues from the termination of the project.

Planning and Delegation,

Respondents were asked about their perception with regards their own ability to plan in their organisation as well as their ability to delegate duties appropriately. A total of 4 respondents indicated that they experienced problems in both planning and delegation of duties while two indicated they only had difficulties in delegation and not in planning. A total of 26 (65%) respondents on the other hand indicated that they did not experience any difficulties in executing both their delegation and planning duties. Eight (20%) of those who indicated that they had problems with planning intimated that they were comfortable with delegating duties.

Planning and delegation are both management and leadership functions and SMTs are duty bound to perform these functions in order to meet the goals of schools. As indicated in the literature, planning in schools begins with the clear identification of goals or vision to work towards as well as induce commitment and enthusiasm; and next is to assess what changes need to occur and which may be accomplished by asking the people involved, reading documents and observing what is going on (Phillips). As policy dictates that SMTs should play their roles as instructional leaders, they should involve themselves with setting clear goals, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, and evaluating teachers.

In the Impact Evaluation Study of 2002, the SMTs were found to be performing these functions very well as a result of the PSMDP. The results of this study also indicate the sustenance of the programme focus as SMTs are still doing their job very well as the majority of respondents indicated having no difficulties with both planning and delegation of duties.

Communication and Consultation

As the ability to communicate is one of the indicators of effective management, the respondents were asked to indicate their perception of how they communicate. Thirty (75%) respondents out of a total of 40 indicated that they perceive themselves as not having difficulties communicating with their co-workers and other stakeholders. Twenty six (65%) of these respondents also perceived other SMTs as not having any difficulties with communication. Whitaker (1997) identified as one of the skills essential for instructional leadership "the need to be good communicators". This is said to be essential as they have to communicate essential beliefs regarding learning such as conviction that all children can learn.

Consultation was another indicator of ability to lead and manage; and the respondents were asked whether or not they had any difficulties consulting others. They were also asked to indicate how they see their fellow SMTs engaging in consultations. Thirty seven (92.5%) respondents perceived themselves as people who have no problem consulting with others. With regards their assessment of their fellow SMTs on

the process of consultation, thirty three (82.5%) of the respondents felt their colleagues did not have any problems. On the issue of consultation, SMTs as instructional leaders should be able to make suggestions, give feedback, model effective instruction, solicit opinions, support collaboration, provide professional development opportunities and give praise if deserved. It might be concluded that the respondents are happy about the way they both communicate and consult others in issues relating to managing the schools.

Interpersonal Relations and Discipline.

Interpersonal skills and discipline are yet another set of components of effective school management which were used both in the Impact Evaluation Study of 2002 and the current one and it was found that they were all positive. The respondents were asked to assess themselves with regards their own perceptions of their interpersonal skills. They were also asked to indicate their own perception of other SMT as far as their interpersonal skills were concerned. A number of recent studies (Appleby, 2000; Johanson & Fried, 2002; Yancey, 2001) have found that the most critical job skill a new employee needs to possess is good interpersonal skills. Employees with good interpersonal skills have the following competencies:

- Effectively translating and conveying information.
- Being able to accurately interpret other people's emotions.
- Being sensitive to other people's feelings.
- Calmly arriving at resolutions to conflict.
- Avoiding gossip.
- Being polite.

Five respondents felt that they had difficulties regarding interpersonal skills, and they also felt that other SMTs had difficulties regarding their interpersonal skills. A total of 26 (65%) respondents however indicated that as far as they are concerned, they did not have any problems regarding the interpersonal skills. They also assessed other SMTs as not having any difficulties regarding interpersonal skills.

Related to the interpersonal skills was the question of discipline. Good interpersonal skills, or self-discipline and empathy, are more important in today's world of work than ever before because the nature of work is different today from what it was in our grandparents' day. Many writers (Bridges, 1994; Cascio, 1995; Howard, 1995; Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991) have pointed out that job requirements are expanding, becoming more fluid and less set in bureaucratic stone. Originating in the quality movement in the 1980s, there has been an increase in the use of self-managed work teams. Another outgrowth of the quality movement has been an increased focus on servicing customers, both internal and external customers. Subsequently, today's employees are expected to possess the personality traits and people skills that will enable them to work well in teams (McIntyre & Salas, 1995), engage in organizational citizenship behaviors that help coworkers accomplish organizational goals (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993), and develop a customer service orientation (Schneider & Bowen, 1995). In other words, developing and using your interpersonal skills will be vital to your future success.

In this study, four respondents who intimated that they had difficulties with interpersonal skills also indicated that other SMTs had discipline problems. The majority of respondents twenty seven (67.5%) indicated that others did not have any problems with discipline issues while thirteen (32.5%) indicated that others have difficulty with discipline issues. It can therefore be concluded that as a result of the PSMDP there has developed collaborative school cultures comprised of collaborative leadership, collegial support, learning partners, teacher collaboration, professional development and unity of purpose. School management has improved.

Monitoring and Motivation

Monitoring and motivation are part of the functions of management. For instance, Smit and Cronje (2003:11) contend that "managers monitor performance and action, ensuring that they conform to plans to attain the predetermined goals and this enables management to identify and rectify any deviations from the plans, and to take into account factors that might oblige them to revise their goals and plans." They further posit that "managers are responsible for getting things done

through other people—they collaborate with their superiors, peers, and subordinates, with individuals and groups, to attain the goals of the organization. Leading the organization means making use of influence and power to motivate employees to achieve organizational goals".

In this study, respondents were asked to assess themselves regarding their performance in monitoring and motivating their subordinates. Three respondents indicated having difficulties in both monitoring and assessing their staff whilst thirty four indicated that they did not have any problems motivating and monitoring their staff.

The same respondents were asked to assess their fellow SMT in terms of how they perceive their performance in monitoring and assessing their subordinates. Out of a total of 40 respondents, only two indicated that other SMTs have difficulty motivating and monitoring their staff. Nine were perceived to have difficulties with only motivating staff. The rest twenty seven (67.5%) were perceived as not having any difficulties with both monitoring as well as motivating their staff members. It is therefore clear that the PSMDP had positive impact on empowering the SMTs with skills and knowledge to monitor and motivate staff to carry out their duties well.

Developing Good School Community Relations

Partnership in education is one of the important considerations for effective management of education in Botswana. The report of the National Commission on Education of 1993 "the Commission wishes to see more community and parental involvement in education" (Republic of Botswana, 1993:xviii) while the RNPE of 1994, Recommendation 118 [para. 11.6.3] states that: With respect to Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs), the Commission *recommends* that:

The Government should intensify the efforts to encourage the establishment of PTAs. It is accepted that Parent Teachers Associations provide an effective forum for schools to keep in close contact with the communities that they serve, and therefore ensure that parents take an interest in, and contribute to the education of their children. Government will therefore

mobilize communities to form PTAs to assist schools (Republic of Botswana, 1994:52).

The importance of parental involvement in the education of their children is also highlighted by Salathe who declared that:

Parental involvement is vitally important for communities and children. When parents are involved in their children's schools in areas such as helping choose curriculum materials, they feel more connected with their children's education, more responsible for encouraging their children, and more supportive of the teaching staff.

Therefore effective managers of schools are expected to be able to develop and sustain school community relations and this was therefore one of the performance indicators that SMTs were asked to assess themselves and others on.

As far as self assessment and assessment of others of the ability to develop community relations was concerned, four SMTs felt that both themselves and others are having difficulties developing good school community relations while five assessed themselves as doing very well while others were having difficulties. A total of thirty (75%) respondents assessed themselves and others as doing well in the development of school community relations. As an indicator of effectiveness, it can be concluded that since the PSMDP, there has been increased participation of communities and parents in the management of schools in Botswana. In Botswana it was emphasized in the first policy of education that:

Education for the young is a joint responsibility of the school, community and the parents, that calls for a willingness to give time to school matters through PTA and to contribute to the physical upkeep and maintenance of the premises by labour and financial contributions (Republic of Botswana, 1977:57).

This is further emphasized by Mongale (2005:21) when she posits that:

It came to the realization that communities are moving beyond traditional notions of parental involvement to new ways of re-thinking about parent –school relationship. It is important that improving public schools depends not only on parents and educators working together but must include everyone else in the community.

Parental involvement in Botswana primary schools can be said to have been enhanced by the PSMDP as illustrated above.

Team Building

Managers should work as a team among themselves as well as with their subordinates if they have to successfully achieve their results. This has been illustrated above that today's jobs emphasize teamwork (McIntyre and Salas, 1995; Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Therefore, team building was seen as yet another pertinent management performance indicator. Five respondents out of 40 thought they had difficulties building teams themselves and also thought other SMTs also had similar difficulties. Yet another five thought they did not have any difficulties building teams but thought others had difficulties. The rest of the respondents, twenty eight (70%) pointed out that neither themselves or other SMTs had any difficulties in building management teams as well as staff teams. That the SMTs which came into effect as a result of the PSMDP in 1999 were still operating effectively in 2007 is testimony to the sustenance of the programme.

Staff Appraisal

Mullins (1996:639) captures the essence of appraisal in managerial context when he declares:

A comprehensive appraisal system can provide the basis for key managerial decisions such as those related to the allocation of duties and responsibilities, pay, delegation, levels of supervision, promotions, training and development needs, and terminations.

On their part, Goddard and Emerson (1995:11) refer to teacher appraisal as:

...a continuous and systematic process intended to help individual teachers with their professional development and career planning, and to help ensure that the in-service training, and development of teachers matches the complementary needs of individual teachers and the schools.

Monyatsi (2003:25) contends that that appraisal is used as a technique to influence and control employee behaviour in order to increase productivity and effectiveness. It also serves to provide accountability for better services to the public. Furthermore, literature on teacher appraisal shows that it can be very complex as it involves a number of factors that can either impede or support educator effectiveness (Malongwa, 1995:153).

The ability to appraise staff is important for a manager to be able to assist as appropriate or to make managerial decisions related to the demands of duty. Therefore the SMTs' ability to appraise their staff was used yet as another indicator of effective management. Six SMTs assessed themselves and others as having difficulties in appraising their staff while two assessed themselves as doing well and other s as having difficulties. The rest, twenty nine (72.5%) assessed themselves and other SMTs as doing well in appraising staff.

CONCLUSIONS

It is succinctly clear from this study that the Government of Botswana since gaining independence gave a lot of priority to the development of the education system despite the neglect suffered during the colonial era. Education was catered for well as opportunities for teacher training and development were explored to the extent of working in partnership with international organizations such as the USAID in an endeavor to improve the performance of students in schools.

This study illustrates that since Botswana attained independence, the Government has recognized the vital role that can be played by teachers in the ultimate goal of students learning; but was concerned with the caliber and supply of teachers. Firstly, teachers are the most significant instrument for effecting student learning and this role has even been perceived to be higher in developing countries where

the culture of the school and that of the home are mostly at variance. The situation is further exacerbated by such hardships as the acute shortage of curriculum and instructional materials, and poor professional support materials (Monyatsi, 2003).

Second, teachers remain the most significant implementers of interventions and reforms intended to improve the quality of education and ultimately student learning. They are, therefore, the gatekeepers between policy reforms, interventions, and students' actual learning experiences. Thirdly, as one of the largest cadres of the civil service, and due to the proportionate expenditure involved, it is proper for the stakeholders to question whether the observed quality of teaching warrants the expenditure on teachers.

The findings of this study also illustrate that the Government of Botswana has never tired to look elsewhere for assistance in her attempts to improve the education its citizens enjoyed. Apart from the local interventions such as well-thought policies on education and their pronouncements, the Government entered into many agreements with foreign donors and also sent its teachers for training abroad. The Government of Botswana also realized that for schools to be effective there was a dire need for the improvement of their management. It was therefore one of the purposes of the Primary Schools Management Development Project of 1999 – 2002 to "improve the management of primary schools"; and this study is an evaluation of the impact of this joint partnership between the Government of Botswana and the British Government.

Overall, the findings point to the fact that there is a positive perception of self by most SMT respondents with regards their performance in the various management areas of motivating, planning, staff development, monitoring, staff appraisal, developing community relations, delegation, teacher management, parental involvement and team building. They feel there has been a general improvement in the areas of management and this is attributed to the Primary Development Management Programme (PSMDP). For instance they feel there has been an overall improvement in both standard four and Primary School Leaving Examinations results as the project which had empowered the SMT with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to effectively supervise members of their teams.

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