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Impediments to senior management team's (SMT) role of implementing the performance management system (PMS) in senior secondary schools in Botswana

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A B S T R A C T

This study is part of a bigger study about the implementation of the performance management system (PMS) in Botswana. The country has been implementing this reform in all public schools since 1999. As in other public sectors, the main purpose of the introduction of the PMS in the education sector, was to improve service delivery. Therefore, this grounded theory study sought the views of the school management teams regarding the implementation process in senior secondary schools. The senior management team which comprises school heads, deputy school heads and heads of houses are primarily responsible for the implementation process of the PMS in schools. This study has revealed that, there were some factors that impeded school managers from successfully implementing this reform.

Introduction

Some countries especially those in the west such as the United Kingdom and New Zealand, have implemented some reforms intended to improve performance in schools (Boston and Pallot, 1997; Gleeson and Husbands, 2001) as part of a new managerial approach in the public sector that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s (Mahony and Hextall, 2000; Hughes, 2003). The performance management system came into effect as a management

reform to address concerns, organisations have about performance (Sharif, 2002).

Similar to other countries globally, in 1999 the government of Botswana also introduced the performance management system into the entire public service including the education sector (Bulawa, 2013). One of the main purposes for the introduction of the reform in Botswana, was to ensure effective and efficient public

service delivery (Republic of Botswana, 2002; Hacker and Washington, 2004). In the context of a study conducted by Down et al (1999) amongst teachers, performance management has been defined as an attempt by the state at making teachers “more efficient and more accountable”.

Purpose of the study

This study seeks to draw on the day to day experiences of the senior management team, to try to understand impediments to their role as implementers of the performance management system in senior secondary schools in Botswana. The following research questions guide this study:

What are the perceptions of the senior management team about the implementation process of the PMS?

What are the perceptions of the senior management team regarding impediments to their capacity to implement the PMS?

Literature review

There are divergent views regarding performance management in organisations. One such view is that it is a key factor in the effective and efficient management of public sector organisations, and as cautioned by Brumback (2003), if performance is not managed the situation in organisations would be chaotic. Hence for Graham (2004), the performance management would be the answer to help avoid performance chaos that is prevalent in organisations. According to Graham (2004) chaos exists in many organisations where employees are working hard, but their efforts do not combine to move the organisation in its desired direction. Brumback (2003) suggests that expectations for both behaviours and

results should be set to ensure that people would be held accountable for their performances. On performance in education, Down et al (1999) emphasise the significance of directly linking performance management to goals and ensuring that the appraisal review of teachers demonstrates among other things, accountability. A study carried out in Botswana, by Bulawa (2012, p.328) revealed that school managers of senior secondary schools perceived the performance management “as a reform that would promote accountability amongst members of staff in the school, as well as accountability of the school to the regional office”.

Further emphasised as critical for a reform to stand any chance of success, is commitment of those affected by the change process. According to Goodson (2001) for people to commit themselves to change, it is imperative that before attempting to get them to change in organisations, priority should be on how they are changed internally and how their “personal change then plays out, as and through institutional change” (p. 57). Goodson (2001) stresses the need to provide support for teachers to the point where they wish to take ‘ownership’ of the reform. Gentle (2001) argues that if staff are to commit themselves they together with management should have a shared understanding of what success looks like and what they are aiming to achieve in an organisation.

One way in which reform ownership could be promoted is through the provision of professional development. So professional development is key component of the performance management system each organisation should have to develop its staff. For instance, Mahony et al (2004) point to the need to provide appropriate and

sufficient training to those involved in the implementation of the performance management system. Professional development is also mentioned by Graham (2004) who makes reference to the significance of employees' competencies such as knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that would help them successfully perform their job. She argues that if the right people who have the right competencies are not available or managed well, it would be difficult to effectively and efficiently achieve the strategic goals and objectives of the organisation.

Despite the fact that it is documented in many performance reforms that professional development is a key component in their implementation, and its recognition by teachers as a key factor in the change effort, it would appear that in practice, professional development has not been adequately carried out. For instance, in some cases teachers reported that the professional development component was neglected or where attempts were made to implement it, it was not quite what teachers had anticipated (Bartlett, 1998; Brown, 2005, p.472).

In the United Kingdom, there are reports of performance reforms which did not give priority to the component of professional development in spite of the fact that on paper it may have been indicated that it would be a priority. A study carried out by Brown (2005) among primary school heads, deputy heads, and teachers show that the majority of school heads, were dissatisfied with the training they were given about a performance management system they were supposed to implement in their schools. They described the poor professional development they had received using such expressions as "inadequate, ineffective, shambolic and shocking".

Further suggested by Brown (2005), is that lack of professional development manifested itself in the lack of direction in schools as evidenced by a variation he found in the schools regarding how they were implementing the performance management. This he argues, suggested that school heads, teachers, and others were confused and uncertain about what performance management involved and the purposes of introducing the initiative into schools. He further points to the confusion and uncertainty within and between schools which suggests "that levels and kinds of education and training in performance management can vary considerably within and among various stakeholder groups who are responsible for implementing the initiative".

Another study in the UK by Bartlett (1998) which explored the views of 38 school staff concerning teacher appraisal, shows that professional development, though presented as one of the essential components of the performance appraisal, was never given the priority it deserved. According to Bartlett (1998) teachers reported that the use of appraisal for professional development was minimal. This situation in Bartlett's (1998, p.480) view bore testimony to the history of education that appeared to follow a pattern "whereby a potentially controlling mechanism maybe introduced under the guise of professional development", and that once it was in place its nature could change radically.

Furthermore, time and resources are significant requirements in the implementation of performance management systems. It is reported in the literature that, where they are found to be lacking effective implementation cannot take place and the morale of implementers

would be affected (Desimone, 2002; Brown, 2005). Senior secondary school managers in Botswana have expressed concern about the gross inadequate resources in their schools, revealing that they have little or no resources to allocate to the implementation process of the PMS, which makes the management of this reform very difficult (Bulawa, 2013). In the United Kingdom, Brown (2005) indicates that when a performance management was introduced in schools, one of its aims was to help the professional development of teachers. He however, states that when school heads and teachers were asked about the extent to which this aim was being realised, some “reported that even though an appropriate plan had been formulated, it had not subsequently been implemented because of a shortage of either time or resources” (p. 476). He indicates that due to the failure to implement the professional development plan, some teachers stated that they were increasingly becoming sceptical about the purported benefits of performance management. Smith et al (1997), also note implementers’ concern about lack of resources which was common among schools which were implementing comprehensive school reform models. They maintain that, in general where materials were not provided or were supplied late, implementation progressed slower.

Without adequate training and sufficient resources one would have anticipated that the Ministry would treat these as urgent matters that need immediate attention and therefore, provide some on-going support to senior managers to enable them to successfully implement the PMS. School managers considered professional development to be key in the improvement of performance. They expected professional development to result mainly

from in-service training provided through workshops and coaching (Bulawa, 2012). This does not appear to be, and without the support senior management desperately needs, the difficulty to successfully implement the PMS is inevitable. Southworth (1999) also talks about school heads who are dissatisfied with reforms that have not been given sufficient preparation, leaving the inadequately prepared school heads to struggle to make the reforms work (Southworth, 1999). My participants have also expressed similar sentiments to these school heads in the United Kingdom.

As noted by Dixon et al (1998, p.168), public sector reforms such as the performance management system are based on the managerialist belief “that there is a body of sound management practice applicable to the private sector that is generic in its scope and thus, directly transferable to the public sector”. So the new public managerialism has become a major vehicle through which the old public service management style is being transformed (Hill, 2003; Simkins, 2000). Brignall and Modell (2000) refer to these reforms as neo-liberal market systems whose orientation is that of business.

The literature read suggests that, managerialism is an important neo-liberal mechanism that is deemed most suitable for the efficient and effective management of public sector organisations including schools (Simkins, 2000; Tabulawa, 2003). Cutler and Waine (2001, p.71) argue that performance management requirements are a form of managerialism in which school managers “operate as line managers with the ultimate carrots and sticks of the PRP [performance related pay] system”. In Botswana, Pansiri (2011) talks about “neoliberalism and globalisation driven policies and nation-state building strategies

that have introduced managerialism that gives implications on the efficiency, productivity, competition and performativity levels of school heads” (p. 762). Pansiri (2011) argues that in concentrating on efficiency, productivity, competition and performativity the policies have among other things, “negated the educational realities of learners’ needs...” (p. 763). In his view, such neoliberal policies have led to the behaviour of heads being more managerial than professional. In schools teachers have also expressed misgivings about these private sectors practices. In a study by O’Brien and Down (2002) in Western Australia, teachers are against the culture of managerialism and administrative priorities which they describe as having spread unchecked across the school such that teaching and learning had become of secondary importance. In Botswana, school managers in Bulawa’s (2013) study revealed that their teachers saw “PMS as intruding into their core business” (p. 64). Of particular concern to Down et al (1999, p.14) is what appears to be an increasing gap “between the official representation of teachers’ work, namely, that which is to be increasingly managed and the reality as experienced by classroom teachers”.

The teachers in the case study of O’Brien and Down (2002) are also not confident about the performance reforms. They believe that these are corporate reforms that are inappropriate for education, and therefore make minimal difference to children’s learning. According to O’Brien and Down (2002, p.117) “teachers talked about hidden political and ideological agenda, the economic imperative and the unfamiliar values they saw being promoted and pursued by the reform process”. The PMS is further reflected in the literature as a foreign reform on two counts. On the one hand, the PMS has been described as

traditionally a private sector reform that has been transmitted into public sector organisations with the intention of making them function more like corporate entities. So as in other public sector organisations, over the years, the PMS migrated from the private sector into the public sector including the schooling systems. The implementation of these neo-liberal policies promoted private sector practices in schools to make them more efficient and accountable for their performance (Down et al., 2000). On the other hand, the perception about the PMS is that of a foreign reform that has been transplanted into an environment that is incompatible, especially transplanted from western countries to less developed countries (Gordon and Whitty, 1997).

Finally, is public sector organisations’ difficulty to cope with the massive changes they are being subjected to in the name of efficiency and accountability. The perceptions of management and staff regarding the need for change, including the manner it should be implemented have often been negative (O’Brien, 2002). As pointed out by Oplatka (2003) stress should be expected in the event of change “as new skills and behaviours are required, whereby an individual’s skills may become invalid” (p. 26). Down et al (1999) point to “fears expressed by some teachers that performance management would result in job losses” (p. 17). Faced with all these fears, teachers may be reluctant to welcome any new change, and as suggested by Levin (2000), when teachers are not committed to reforms, those reforms may not be successful.

Method

This qualitative study was conducted using grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), a qualitative research methodology

that provides researchers an opportunity to interact with and gather data directly from their research participants to understand a phenomenon from their perspectives (Gay et al, 2009). A qualitative approach was found suitable for this study since relatively little research has been conducted about the experience of senior managers implementing performance management systems in schools.

There is a wide range of methodologies from which researchers can choose and use for their studies. Different researchers would have different reasons for the applicability of the methodology chosen for their studies (Corbin and Strauss, 1990). For this qualitative study the grounded theory methodology was chosen for among others, its focus on inductive strategies of generating theory. This is in contrast to other theoretical perspectives which emphasise theory developed “by logical deduction from a priori assumptions” (Patton, 2002, p.125). Further considered significant about the application of grounded theory for the study, was the framework it offers in terms of the data generation and coding procedures that are supposed to guide the analytic process which would lead to generating theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). These grounded theory procedures “are designed to develop a well integrated set of concepts that provide a thorough theoretical explanation of social phenomena under study” (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p. 5). In this case the phenomenon under study is the comprehensive understanding of impediments to the role of school managers as implementers of the performance management system in their own schools.

Participants in the study

Members of the senior management team comprising 94 school heads, deputy school

heads and heads of houses, were interviewed about the perceptions regarding the implementation of the performance management in senior secondary schools. School heads were interviewed individually, while deputy school heads and heads of houses were interviewed together as small groups. These research participants were the entire management team in twenty-two senior secondary schools out of a total of twenty-seven public secondary schools. The study focused on this category of participants because they were responsible of the implementation of reforms in their respective schools, were therefore in a better position to express their understanding of the implementation process.

Interview data collection

The data for a grounded theory, as in other qualitative approaches, “can come from various sources. The data collection procedures involve interviews and observations as well as such other sources as government documents, video tapes, newspapers, letters, and books-anything that may shed light on questions under study” (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p. 5). While the primary source of data used were interview data (Rapley, 2004; Patton, 2002), some government documents were also read for information about the purpose of the PMS in Botswana.

Face-to-face interviews were selected over other forms of data collection such as questionnaires or mail survey, and as noted in the literature, such interviews are most common with grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1994; Goulding, 2002). One advantage of face-to-face interviews was that the interviewer would be assured that the people responding were the ones for which the interviews were intended (Allan,

2003; Berends, 2006). A general interview guide approach was used to outline a set of issues to be explored with the research participants. A guide is mainly essential when conducting focus group interviews as “it keeps the interactions focused while allowing individual perspectives and experiences to emerge” (Patton, 2002, p. 344). As further maintained by Patton (2002), the interview guide provided topic areas within which the interviewer could freely explore, probe and ask questions that clarified that particular topic or subject.

Data analysis and coding

Data analysis was through a coding system. The coding process which began with one whole transcript at a time coding phrase by phrase or sentence by sentence (Strauss 1987, 1998) depending on the content, was recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. In this study, some conceptual categories from the data analysis are included to support the findings. Concepts that pertain to the same phenomenon were grouped to form categories, which are higher in level and more abstract than the concept they represent (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Where relevant, numbers are attached to the conceptual categories to show the number of participants whose interview data was allocated to a particular category. All these numbers, are useful because grounded theory attempts to account for the different experiences that individuals have of a particular phenomenon.

Letter abbreviations were used identify the different schools and participants. For example WWA, WWB, and WWC are from the same school as school head, deputy and head of house in that sequence.

The first two letters in the abbreviations represent a particular school, while the third letter indicates the participant's position in the school. The letter ‘A’ represents the school head, ‘B’ is for the deputy school head while the letter ‘C’ and subsequent letters are for the heads of houses.

Findings

Factors impeding senior management's role of implementing the PMS

School heads are overseers of the implementation of the PMS at the school level. Effective overseeing requires them to ensure that the staff to whom they have delegated PMS responsibilities are able to do their work of implementing the PMS in the entire school (Bulawa, 2011, 2012). Once implementation has started, school heads, deputy heads and heads of houses discover that their efforts are hindered by impediments that appear to be beyond their control (Bulawa, 2013). The impediments are clustered around the five adverse effects listed in the Table.1.

The PMS in constant flux

Participants in the study points out that right from the outset, there was confusion regarding the place of the PMS in the existing school context. There is concern about the frequent changes or modifications that the PMS is continuing to undergo long after it has been implemented. According to the participants, this is an indication that the Ministry could not easily find a reform that suits what is taking place in the schools. This, in their view, has resulted in

Table.1 Conceptual categories portraying constraints to the implementation

Title of category	Participants
The PMS appeared to be always in flux	43
Resources required to implement the PMS were not available in the schools	21
Priorities of the PMS were not all priorities of the schools	90
Senior management and staff had not been adequately trained about the PMS	44
There was a disconnect between schools and regional offices	57

a long drawn out and still incomplete implementation process.

Participants, for instance, cite the very early vacillation back and forth between the PMS and the performance based reward system (PBRs) as an indication of the challenge to identify a reform contextualised to the schools. At the time when the PMS was being introduced in the late 1990s, the government also had considered the idea of a PBRs. As it stands, the PMS was introduced almost simultaneously with the PBRs. Several years later, as the study reveals, senior management recall the adjustment that had to be made. MMB recalls that in their school they “were first introduced to PMS, changed to the PBRs, and then to PMS again.” According to DDE, the on-going change seems to suggest that “the Ministry is finding it difficult to contextualise either the PMS or the PBRs to teaching and learning.” The to-ing and fro-ing between the PMS and the PBRs which has been going on for a long time before the Ministry finally settled for the PMS is an indication of the Ministry’s “inability to find a reform most suitable to teaching” (MMA).

Further evidence cited to show that the reform is not wholly suitable, is the constant changes to the terminology and

procedures used in the PMS. For instance, VVA states that what they previously termed *initiatives* has now changed to “something else”. Another example VVA cites is the following: “Like last year, we thought we understood and had even set our objectives, and this year we are starting afresh because the terminology has changed.” Further concern about the changes to terminology which did not fit into the context is raised by GGB. He argues: “We learnt so many PMS terms which kept changing from time to time. This shows that we didn’t know what is suitable for schools.”

As well as changes in terminology, there are also on-going changes to the processes required. This has produced extra work and an on-going need for re-educating school staff. As AAB notes, senior managers are constantly invited to attend external workshops for such re-education. Further demonstrating the difficulty the Ministry is encountering in trying to adapt the PMS to what the schools are doing, EED explains: “The problem with the reform itself is that it does not come as a complete package. The Ministry keeps pasting and removing, cutting and pasting. It is so difficult to adapt it to teaching.”

There is also a perception that the frequent changes to the PMS appears to have had a role in the resistance to the PMS that is being experienced in the schools from some staff members, a response that is impacting negatively on the implementation process. XXC, a head of house, shares her experience in attempting to implement the reform amongst the teachers in her house: “The many changes to PMS make teachers resist because there is confusion regarding what people are supposed to implement. To show they resist and disown PMS, teachers use such phrases as ‘*your PMS*’, or ‘*your thing*’” [XXC’s emphasis]. Similar sentiments are expressed by LLC who also notes teachers are perhaps feeling some resentment toward the PMS: “[There’s] resistance from teachers because they feel PMS is changing all the time and sort of takes them away from their core business of teaching to address these changes.”

Schools inadequately resourced to implement the PMS

Studies show that the availability or unavailability of resources play a significant role in the extent to which implementation of reforms such as the PMS would succeed. Some participants also indicate that the implementation of the PMS has increased the demand on existing resources and such resources are in short supply in the schools. The two main codes that contribute to the category, Resources required to implement the PMS were not available in the schools were: Funds to purchase resources needed for the PMS activities in schools are insufficient (9) and The PMS puts pressure on the limited resources available in the schools (8). The participants are mainly concerned about such resources as finance, photocopiers and computers which they consider vital to the

implementation of the PMS. Lack of funding is a major impediment to the implementation process. PPC observes:

There is the issue of finance. They should provide adequate resources. PMS needs a lot of money to buy such things as paper to photocopy training material for our school-based workshops, but there is no money specifically allocated to schools to use for PMS activities. So we can’t run these workshops because of limited resources.

Another concern about the insufficient resources is noted by BBA. He stresses that while it is clear that for the PMS to be successfully implemented, there has to be sufficient resources in the schools, the reality is, that most of the time, such resources are not readily available. He concurs with PPC about lack of financial support to purchase the required resources but he also noted lack of maintenance. He maintains:

PMS is paper dominated but there is no money to buy paper to be able to photocopy material about the reform for teachers to learn more. And after all, many schools don’t even have photocopiers. The old machines that are there lack spare parts to fix them or there is nobody to fix them. It’s a big problem.

The lack of resources to meet the expectation of the PMS for schools to train their own staff is further highlighted by RRA. He points out:

The current resources or the present resources we have in schools such as computers are seriously lacking. People are forced to crowd around one computer which has to service the entire school population of 1990 students. When you have to do something you have to wait for

someone to finish his or her bit. That is a drawback given the paperwork involved and the need to develop material for teachers.

The sentiments expressed by FFD summarise the participant concerns regarding limited resources: “For us to successfully implement PMS, we need resources. We need paper, computers and photocopiers but most of these don’t exist in schools. With this situation, you don’t expect schools to succeed in the implementation of PMS.” In addition to concerns about frequent changes to the PMS and the problem of lack of resources, the participants express discomfort about the introduced priorities of the PMS. They indicate that while the PMS consider these priorities central to the implementation process, to the schools, they are of less priority.

Priorities of the PMS not a priority of the schools

There are some participants who have expressed some doubt about the PMS as a reform they need for their schools. They believe that the difficulties in implementing the PMS are at least partly due to the belief that some of the priorities of the PMS are not considered a priority of the schools. For example, the emphasis the PMS places on finance management skills is not shared by all school managers. In their view, the priorities that drive schools are developing the skills that would lead to the improvement of teaching and learning and other traditional school activities that would directly lead to the improvement of students’ academic results. There are four examples of codes that contribute to the category, Priorities of the PMS not a priority of the schools. These are PMS is a reform for industry and the corporate world

(28); PMS was transplanted from developed foreign countries (38); and Some PMS activities are of no significance to the business of the schools (14).

PMS skills not a priority for school personnel

There is observation that senior management’s efforts to implement the PMS are impeded by lack of some skills amongst school personnel, which are required by the PMS. For instance, the participants reveal that the PMS emphasises the need for schools, among other things, to be rated on the basis of their financial management performance. The concern is that school personnel do not possess the skills required for such PMS priority areas, but more importantly, they are not even considered a priority of the schools.

In the participants’ views, possessing these PMS skills is not a priority to them since they do not directly address the core business of teaching and learning to improve students’ academic results. AAB for example, refers to new priority areas such as “financial management” and “customer service” which require skills staff members do not possess. He indicates that the schools do not have the personnel well trained to effectively deal with such issues. He indicates: “We don’t have the right skills. What we have are teaching skills to produce good students’ academic results. That is our speciality.” NNB also argues that as school personnel they lack the PMS skills needed for the management of finance, human resource and others. As importantly, he feels that they are not “teachers’ work”. He states: “We don’t even think we need them. They take too much of our time ... all we need is knowledge and skills about how to help our

students pass their examinations to have a good future.” Further concern about the PMS concepts and skills which to the participants are alien to the schools is noted by JJA. A typical business oriented example that he gives is the concept of the “balanced scorecard”, a concept that is foreign to the school context. He maintains: “To implement most of these new things has been difficult because we don’t have the right training to do that. And maybe we don’t even have time to acquire new skills about new things that have little to do with teaching.”

Tasks not relevant to the core business of the schools

Participants indicate that some of the tasks associated with the PMS are in their view not a priority for the schools. They are concerned that imposing these new responsibilities on their staff means that schools are being compelled to spend time on tasks that are not considered significant to what the schools are doing. As it stands, participants feel that it is inappropriate for schools to be expected to focus on activities, which in their view, have very little to do with students’ academic work. GGB for instance, indicates that the responsibility of senior management and their staff has always been “to make students pass their examinations and have a bright future.” He regrets that this is in contrast to what the PMS requires them to do. He indicates: “The PMS wants us to spend time on activities that do not add value to the academic results.” Further examples of activities that are not considered a priority for the schools are given by GGA. He argues:

What matters to us in the schools is to ensure that students are taught and they pass their examinations. Any other factors

outside the curriculum we don’t see it as a priority to us in the schools. All these things such as PDPs, balance scorecards, performance agreements and so on introduced to us by PMS are not part of the school culture, so for a lot of our time we are trying to understand their relevance to our core business.

Justification for giving priority to students’ academic work is provided by WWA. He argues that the focus of schools is mainly on helping the students obtain good grades in their examinations since this is the expectation of both parents and the Ministry which always reprimands schools with poor students’ academic results. He indicates that the activities to which the PMS wants the school to pay attention, such as management of finance and human resources should have been a responsibility of administrative officers and not senior management since they are not even well trained to effectively deal with such issues. He further indicates: “As school management we should focus on teaching and learning to help teachers improve students’ results. Instead, we take a lot of time on these other things which demand a lot of time.”

Some participants feel that they are not in a position to explain to their staff how implementing the PMS would positively transform the core business of the schools. The heads of houses as the hands-on implementers of the PMS in particular are confronted with the difficulty of linking the PMS priorities with those of the teachers. For example, DDC states: “Unfortunately it was not clearly explained how the PMS ways of improving performance would enhance students’ performance in their examinations. We have found ourselves spending a lot of time completing forms which have adversely affected our

teaching.” MMD sums up the general view of the participants when she states: “They [the teachers] see PMS as intruding into their core business.”

PMS does not belong in schools

In reflecting on the difficulties that the senior managers are experiencing in implementing the PMS, it appears they have a strong sense that the reform does not belong in the school. The participants express concern that the PMS is a reform transplanted from industry and from the corporate world. They indicate that this makes it difficult for senior management to make it work in the schools. As indicated by Down, Hogan and Chadbourne (1999), the PMS is seen by some participants as a reform that is driven by non-educational interests. Some scholars such as Simkins (2000), Tabulawa (2003) and Pansiri (2011) caution against private sectors belief that managerialism is an important neo-liberal mechanism that is most suitable for the efficient and effective management of public sector organisations including schools. They express misgivings about such neoliberal policies which tend to promote in schools the culture of managerialism as priority for school managers at the expense of teaching and learning.

One of the participants who associate the performance management system with industry is EEB. He indicates that when the PMS was introduced, the Ministry’s mistake was to believe that “if it could apply in industry or in the mines, it could also apply in schools the same way.” He believes that it is only now that it has “dawned on the Ministry that it should have been first adapted.” EEB’s view is shared by QQD who indicates that the senior

management are being compelled to implement a reform which is not “applicable to a school set up.” He expresses concern that their efforts to fit it into their context “proved difficult because it is a model which is more appropriate for industries.” MMA indicates that “people were asking themselves, how PMS was related to what they were supposed to do as they believed this was from industries and not relevant to teaching.” MMB points out that there is a perception that the PMS has nothing to do with teaching, but belongs “to industries or organisations that are supposed to talk in terms of numbers and quantities, or the employee in the factory.”

There are participants who believe that the PMS was transplanted from the corporate world. As noted by VVC, the different examples given about the PMS during workshops “were not relevant to schools but applicable to the corporate world.” The information given during PMS workshops, with examples from the corporate world not contextualised to teaching and learning are further cited by DDE. CCB’s understanding of the PMS is that it better suites a factory. He sees no relationship between the hypothetical clothing manufacturing company cited in the training workshop and the school setting.

The PMS is described as a reform borrowed from the corporate world which is “proving difficult to contextualise to teaching” (QQC). DDA also calls the PMS “a corporate world reform” and wondered how people expected “it to work in teaching and learning in its current form.” Although attendees at workshops are encouraged to contextualise the material presented to the school context, it is a difficult task because the examples and cases in the training material are from the corporate world. BBA recalls a workshop

at which most examples given about the PMS had to do with improving profitability. He recalls that although they have been “given an opportunity to contextualise the training material to education it proved a difficult task to accomplish due to the mismatch between the corporate world and the schools.”

In addition to the problem of the PMS being a reform transplanted from industry and from the corporate world, participants notes that it is also transplanted in Botswana from other countries. From the participants’ perspective, transplanting the PMS from other countries makes it difficult to implement in the schools. GGB calls the PMS “a foreign reform irrelevant to the things that are done in schools.” DDD describes it as a reform that “came from other countries and was never adapted to the school context in Botswana.”

There are participants who associate implementation problems with the view that the countries from which the PMS was transplanted are more developed. The participants interpret this to suggest that, they have very little in common with a less developed country such as Botswana. One of the participants, AAD, argues that borrowing a reform from such industrialised countries as the USA, Britain or Australia posed “a problem for a developing country such as Botswana because of the different contexts.” He argues that reforms such as the PMS may have worked for the developed countries most probably “because they are based on their contexts.” LLD argues that transplanting reforms from developed countries was a bad decision since the “contexts are very different from those of less developed countries such as Botswana.” ABA points out that, in adopting a performance reform from

developed countries, the government failed to appreciate that it could be that “these industrialised countries have been implementing the performance management systems for years and are now well established.”

There is concern about the tendency by the Ministry to continuously change from one transplanted version of the PMS to another, which VVA describes as “jumping from one foreign version to another.” She argues that “the Ministry changed from the American version of PMS, to the Australian one and vice-versa because both of them were difficult to contextualise to teaching.” A similar view by AAA is that “changing from the American version of the PMS to that of the Australian was an indication that the Ministry could not find a version that matched the school context.”

Reflecting on the change from the American version of the PMS to the Australian one, MMD indicates that “this prompted people to wonder when a decision would be taken on the most suitable reform for implementation.” Furthermore, YYA alludes to efforts to implement the different transplanted versions of the PMS none of which was “found relevant to schools in Botswana.”

In summary KKC, states that changing from one developed country’s version to another “proved difficult to implement because these versions are not suitable for the schools.” The different versions being implemented in schools are in ABB’s perspective not working for the schools because they were “implemented without adopting them to the school situation.” Against this background, AAA urges the Ministry to “contextualise the reform to what is taking place in schools focusing mainly on classroom instruction.” This

endorses Down's, Hogan's and Chadbourne's (1999) findings regarding some teachers' perceptions that performance management did not improve their teaching or benefit the children in their classrooms.

Discussion and Recommendations

In general senior managers believe that they are not able to successfully implement the PMS in their senior secondary schools. The discussion on Botswana's PMS in comparison to other countries shows that any performance management system requires change when it enters into an organisation such as the case of schools in Botswana. As pointed out by Goodson (2001) such change requires the commitment of people in their organisations and that will depend on the extent to which they have been prepared for the change. O'Brien (2002) cautions that public sector organisations have found it difficult to cope with the massive changes they are required to implement. The perceptions of management and staff regarding the need for change, including the manner it should be implemented have often been negative as it is the case with research participants in this study.

The resources have emerged as a significant factor in the successful implementation of a reform such as the PMS. In this study the resources do not seem to be sufficient enough to enable senior management and their staff to lead the change process with confidence. It appears the government does not have the capacity to provide the required resources to help senior managers implement the PMS, more so that it also has to provide such resources to both junior secondary and primary schools. These resources include photocopiers, paper and computers needed

for the implementation process. The fact that PMS is described by the research participants as paper dominated means that such resources are needed to multiply copies for all members of staff or to produce training material about the PMS.

Even though Desimone (2002) stresses the significance of time and resources for the effective implementation of the PMS, there are reports of concerns about ineffective implementation of reforms as a result of insufficient time and resources (Brown, 2005). This shows that it is not only the participants in this study who are affected by resource constraints, but that it seems to be a problem that has been experienced elsewhere including in developed countries. It must however be noted, that even with all the resources that senior managers require, successful implementation cannot be assured, but at least there is a likelihood that some of the PMS activities would be achieved.

With the advent of neo-liberalism and its ideology of managerialism in the public sector (O'Brien and Down, 2002), teachers are not confident about performance reforms, which they believe are corporate reforms that are inappropriate for education, and therefore have made minimal difference to children's learning. In the case of participants in this study it would appear that they do not think that they have the capacity to lead implementation of the PMS since it is a foreign reform that has been transplanted into an environment that is incompatible, especially transplanted from western countries to less developed countries (Gordon and Whitty, 1997).

The participants seem to suggest that school managers do not feel empowered by managerialism. They are of the view that at

least the government should have in one way or another adequately prepared them for the implementation process. Adequate preparedness in their view is in terms of training, resources, and regular support by the Ministry during the implementation process. Although such preparedness would not necessarily be a guarantee that implementation would work perfectly, they at least expect that this would go a long way into enhancing their chances of making some degree of improvement. Their wish is supported by Mahony et al (2004). They emphasise the significance of adequate training of managers to lead the change process which would involve, among other things, explanation to staff about what is involved in the reform. They are further supported by Desimone (2002) who stresses the need to ensure that the resources are provided in sufficient amounts to support schools in the implementation of reforms.

However, as it stands, senior management in the study are not adequately trained about the PMS. Like school heads in a study by Southworth (1999) who are critical of the inadequate training they were provided with to lead the implementation of a school reform, the research participants' preparedness in terms of training also appears grossly inadequate.

Without adequate training and sufficient resources one would have anticipated that the Ministry would treat these as urgent matters that need immediate attention and therefore, provide some on-going support to senior managers to enable them to successfully implement the PMS. This has not been the case, and without the support senior management desperately need, the difficulty to successfully implement the PMS is inevitable. Southworth (1999) also talks about school heads who are

dissatisfied with reforms that have not been given sufficient preparation, leaving the inadequately prepared school heads to struggle to make the reforms work. The participants in Botswana have also expressed similar sentiments to these school heads in the United Kingdom.

It is important to explain that the adequate preparedness of senior managers is critical because the PMS requires change. This means that school personnel have to change to accept the new culture that is being introduced in the schools. It is therefore essential that senior managers have to be the first to change their mindset to accept the new change so that they in turn could prepare their own staff for the change.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of the senior management team in senior secondary schools in Botswana concerning the implementation of the performance management system. To answer this aim, there was one research question that guided this study. This question was about the senior management team's perception regarding impediments to their role as implementers. The findings as presented show that this objective has been answered. The participants indicate that while the purpose for which performance management reforms are implemented is to improve performance (Sharif, 2002), the implementation of the PMS in senior secondary schools, has proved a major challenge to the senior management team.

The participants highlight five adverse factors as having constrained senior management's capacity to implement the PMS, which is reflective of a reform that does not fit in the school context. These factors contribute to senior management's

lack of capacity to implement the PMS. First, is that the participants' viewpoint that the PMS is in constant flux. That is, participants are from time to time faced with the challenge of having to deal with constant changes to the PMS. These changes in their view are not helpful since senior management find themselves having to spend a lot of time dealing with them when they should be directing their efforts on the improvement of performance. Second, is that schools are inadequately resourced to enable senior management to effectively implement the PMS. The third adverse factor is the belief that priorities of the PMS are not a priority of the schools. Some examples of such mismatch between the priorities include emphasis that the PMS places on finance management skills which is not shared by all school managers. What is clear from the findings is that management value skills that would lead to improvement of students' academic results, and in their view skills in finance management would not add such value.

Fourth, is the perception about extra tasks imposed on teachers and senior management that are not relevant to the core business of the school. One such task is the completion of the PMS forms, which in their view has no relevance to the improvement of students' academic work. These tasks are not only considered irrelevant, but also overwhelming and time consuming since they take away management from their core business. Lastly, is the held view that PMS does not belong in schools as it is construed a borrowed private sector reform transplanted from other countries, in particular western countries, as well as from industry or the corporate world. In this regard, the PMS is therefore so removed from what goes on in the schools such that even attempts at trying to contextualise it to the school

situation have proved complex to both senior management and teachers. The findings show that the efficiency and productivity (Pansiri, 2011) that are supposed to be associated with the PMS are not a foregone conclusion for as long as there are constraints which are by and large beyond the control of implementers, who in this case are the senior management working in collaboration with their teachers. In other words much as the senior management maybe positive about the PMS, there are impediments to their capacity to implement this reform.

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