

# **THE IMPACT OF THE 2011 PUBLIC SERVICE INDUSTRIAL ACTION IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROGRAMS AT SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BOTSWANA**

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## **Abstract**

The inclusion of the teaching profession in the Public Service Act No. 30 of 2008, contributed to the strike episodes that impacted negatively on the teaching and learning programs in the education system of Botswana. Interviews and participatory observations were used in this study that sought to investigate the impact of the 2011 industrial action by public servants in Botswana schools. The sample was made up of the Ministry of Education officers, school managers, and teachers. Teachers at the selected schools were observed on their participation during general cleaning programs; the effectiveness of the clocking system; the attendance of class teachers during registration in their assigned classes; the participation of teachers during meal times; the participation of teachers during extra-curricular activities, and the participation of teachers during extra-curricular activities. The empirical investigations reveal that the effects of the strike are still being felt in the education system today. It has been found that teachers' morale and commitment have significantly lowered due to issues relating to pay and working conditions. This research recommends the School Research Evaluation Vanguard Availability Monitoring and Performance (R.E.V.A.M.P.) Model to improve education at secondary schools and in the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD).

**Key words:** Teaching, learning, strike, extra-curricular activities

## Introduction

This study set out to evaluate the impact of the 2011 national strike on the education system of Botswana. Not much is said by literature about strikes that took place before the 2011 national strike as Patle (2015) highlights that strikes were uncommon in Botswana because the working relationships between the workers and state were cordial. Patle (2015) further reports about dissatisfaction that was experienced by the primary school teachers following the outcome of the Presidential Commission Report of the Job Evaluation Exercise of 1987/1988. The dissatisfaction led primary school teachers to break away from the Botswana Teachers Union (BTU) to form what was known as Job Evaluation Unsatisfied Teachers (JEUT) in order to address their discontent.

Further, in 1991, the Manual Workers Union became the only recognised trade union which represented manual workers employed by the central and local government as well as parastatal entities. The union engaged in unfruitful negotiations with the employer for wage increase and this resulted in a national strike from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> of November in 1991. Concerning the 1991 strike, in an interview with two women who chose to remain anonymous, it was further explained that the workers wanted a 154% salary increase. After the strike, the employer agreed to increase the manual workers' salaries by 154%. This was spread across months until the percentage was covered. However, the interviewees could not recall the exact number of months the stipulated salary increase percentage was spread over. The interviewees verified that teachers were not part of the 1991 strike.

Fourthly, there was a protest action from September, 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> in 2002 which was initiated by the Botswana Federation of Secondary Teachers (BOFESETE), the now Botswana Sectors of Trade Unions (BOSETU). The low salary structures and teachers' work conditions led to this protest action.

### The 2011 national strike

The strikes and protest actions indicated above were followed by the 2011 "public strike over a pay dispute" (Shabani, 5 May 2011:1). This strike is attributed to the introduction of the new Public Service Act No. 30 of 2008 which introduced a negotiation process and granted unions the right to strike (Public Administration News, 2011). The 2011 national strike was the first "mass public sector strike in the country's history" (Public Administration News, 2011). The leadership within public schools had a hard time during this strike as teachers took part in the strike. This means that no actual teaching and learning took place in public schools for the duration of the strike. Importantly, it was not easy for the educational leaders to calm the situation (Mosikare, 11-17 May 2011:9).

From the writings of different writers (Hunyepa 2012; Shabani, 5 May 2011; Sepora, 20 May 2012; Rari, 2012b) and many others, it is shown that the phenomenon of conflict in the education sector in Botswana is real as conflict emanated over several issues.

### Background

According to Shabani (2011:1), teachers were also involved in the 2011 national strike since they are part of the public sector. In an interview with the Human Resource Manager (HRM) at the Teaching Service Administration (TSA), it was explained that the MoESD had not compiled the total number of teachers who participated in the national strike (Dirakano, personal communication, 17 October 2012). The participation of teachers in the national strike negatively impacted school-going children both in the primary and secondary schools as the strike ran for two months (Hunyepa, 2012:1). Makumboenyoka (2013:9) expresses his observation of the national strike as follows:

There has never been peace since the public sector strike. After the strike the government started devising strategies of neutralizing teachers' militancy. One of the strategies was to transfer and/or send teachers for 'further studies'.

As indicated above, the strike affected pupils, the operations of the MoESD, schools and parents. The educational leaders failed to manage the conflict situations. The effect of the strike evoked conflict between the government and teachers, the government and teachers' Union, and teachers and the learners at large as these mentioned groups of people were not happy with each other (Sepora, 20 May 2012:1).

i) *The impact of the strike on the learners*

In a local newspaper, *The Botswana Gazette*, a parent of a grade one pupil who requested that she remains anonymous, was shocked to find her daughter being taught by two senior students at one of the primary schools in Francistown. When she raised her complaints with the school management, she was told that the majority of the teachers had withdrawn their labour. Furthermore, when the school management called a Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meeting, it proved unsuccessful because the majority of the parents were also part of the national strike (Mosikare, 11-17 May 2011:9).

The strike had a negative effect on the quality of teaching and learning. As reported in a local newspaper, *The Botswana Gazette* (Selemogwe, 2012:27), the Botswana Examinations Council's (BEC) Executive Secretary during a press briefing mentioned that "...the results reflect the quality of teaching in schools and call for an urgent review with all stakeholders to map the way forward in bettering the next results...". Mongwa (2015:2) mentions that one of the senior secondary school's results have not been satisfactory since 2011. The school had a 21% pass rate in 2012, 27.5% in 2013 and 18.9% in 2014. The downward trend in results at this school represented a general trend in most schools around the country. When talking about the decline in the students' performance at senior secondary schools, the Minister of Education (Baputaki, 15 September 2010:1) expressed that the results bear evidence of the low quality of education.

ii) *The impact of the strike on the MoESD and education quality IN GENERAL*

The 2011 national strike escalated the occurrence of conflict between the MoESD and teachers. The involvement of the Ministry of Education & Skills Development employees in the strike greatly affected the operations of the Ministry from the onset. Hence, the Human Resource Manager in the MoESD, in an interview (Dirakano, personal communication, 17 October 2012), admitted that the Ministry was forced to hire private companies to dispose of garbage bins because the drivers and janitors responsible for the work were on strike. In a local newspaper, *The Voice*, (Sepora, 20 May 2012:1) it was indicated that the impact of the strike was intense in the education sector because students were not attended to. About another incident, the same reporter states that students from a certain senior secondary school raided Choppies (a supermarket) and harassed the workers. These events forced the MoESD to close down schools for a period of two weeks (Sepora, 20 May 2012:1). This was done to manage the turbulent situation.

As a result of the strike, the MoESD states that;

This I must say is a clear indication that drastic measures need to be put in place in order to reform and revive the education sector. The Ministry has identified various areas that need immediate attention. This includes among other things, the conditions of service for teachers, housing accommodation, office space, poor provision of teaching equipment and training of new teachers and of those already in the job. We intend to immediately find ways of addressing these issues.

The above quotation indicates that the MoESD was aware of the fact that the Ministry's services need to be improved.

iii) *The impact of the strike on teachers*

Teachers who participated in the strike have been badly affected in that their salaries were withheld for the period of two months for which they were absent from duty. This has caused interpersonal conflicts among teachers themselves because those whose salaries were withheld revealed the names of colleagues whose salaries were not affected, to the school managers. Moreover, in an interview conducted with the Human Resource Manager (Dirakano, personal communication, 17 October 2012), it was indicated that there were eight hundred (800) teachers who had not recovered from their financial constraints because their loan interests had accumulated and each time their salaries were deposited the banks claimed the whole salary. The Human Resource Manager said that these teachers basically went on a “zero salary” each month. This has been confirmed by correspondence from the BOSETU (Hunyepa, 2012:1) which was directed to the managing directors of different banks and reads as follows:

BOSETU would like to inform you that its members, who are your clients, were in a legal and protected strike in 2011. This correspondence seeks to inform you and ultimately make a request to your financial institution that the government of Botswana, which is the employer of our members, has unexpectedly recovered some funds from teachers for the last year’s legal and protected strike. This effectively means that our members were not paid in the month of September 2012. We, therefore, humbly request your bank to assist them by freezing interests or extending monthly repayments as we do not know when government is going to stop deductions. We further request that you should not repossess any of their items due to failure to pay monthly installments...The situation we are in is really challenging though temporary.

The above information shows the adverse effects the national strike has had on teachers. It seems the government did not have clarity on what the implications of its measures to withhold salaries would be for teachers. Baputaki (2011) reports that the Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs was adamant in quoting from the Public Service Act No. 30 of 2008 (Republic of Botswana, 2008:A.203) that “an employer is not obliged to remunerate an employee for services that an employee does not render during a strike or protected lock out”. In response to the Ministry’s position, the Secretary General of Botswana Federation of Public Sector Unions (BOFEPUSU) commented that the said section does not say the employer is expected to pay in any case. “Not being obliged to pay does not mean that the government will not pay. However, if the government chooses to withhold monthly salaries, we will make it part of our deal as settlement to go back to work” (Baputaki, 2011).

Furthermore, Modikwa (2013:2) indicated that the MoESD used threatening strategies in dealing with teachers. An example is given of the Minister of Education who “threatened to sack teachers who link the improvement of their welfare to good examination results” (Modikwa, 2013: 2). The national strike rekindled the “No work, no pay” principle. The “no work, no pay” arrangement is a legal principle enacted in Section 80 of the Employment Act (Republic of Botswana 2002:49). The principle states that deductions may be made from the wages and any other payments which may be due to the employee in respect of unauthorised absence from work. However, various stakeholders have expressed their concerns regarding this legal stipulation. For example, the president of Botswana Sectors of Educators Trade Union (BOSETU) as reported in a local newspaper, *The Botswana Gazette* (Makgapha, 11-17 May 2011:2), commented as follows on the “no work, no pay” principle as stated above:

The “no work, no pay” principle adopted by the government would have a negative impact on service delivery....teachers will skip the syllabus content they would have covered had there been no strike. This means that some of the lessons that the students should have learnt will be left out.

Rampape (2011:1) also commented that the “no work no pay” principle is “a clear battle of egos and it is the poor students who suffer”. The educational leaders insisted in applying the “no work, no pay” principle as a way of managing the conflicts that resulted from the national strike. School principals were called upon to supply the Ministry’s office with a list of teachers who participated in the strike.

In addition to the “no work, no pay” principle, Rampape (2011:1) also reflects on the remuneration for invigilation and marking of the 2010 Final Examinations (for Form 3s and form 5s). His main concern was that teachers were made to carry out these tasks, but when time came for them to receive their remuneration from the Botswana Examinations Council (BEC), a parastatal under the MoESD, they were not supported by the Minister as far as getting their remuneration was concerned. The secretary general of the BOSETU, Rari, indicated similar concerns regarding some outstanding payments on invigilation and course work (Rari, 2012b:3):

There were some outstanding payments in 2011 for both course work and invigilation and the union party wanted to know reasons for the delays. The Ministry of Education promised that they will bring the numbers of those who have not received their payments and map out a way forward in settling the dues. The union pointed out that they will not discuss the 2012 course and invigilation rates before the outstanding payments are settled.

Rari (2012b:3) reveals that “one Junior Secondary School refused to submit the marks to the external moderators because they were not remunerated for the 2011 work”. The issue was resolved when the Regional Education Office committed itself in writing that they would settle all payments. It is evident that there is conflict if workers have to withhold their services in order for the employer to act on their behalf.

The national strike also brought pandemonium in the teaching profession in relation to teachers’ participation in extra-curricular activities. Participation of teachers in extra-curricular activities has become a source of conflict between school managers and teachers at the selected senior secondary schools in Botswana. Barge (2015) defines extra-curricular activities as “anything that is not required for high school credit or paid employment”. The extra-curricular activities in general, include the athletics and ball sports, the supervision of meals, the attendance of school meetings, and the general cleaning of the classrooms and their surroundings. With regard to athletics and ball sports, the participation of teachers had ceased in schools because the Directorate of Public Service Management was not compensating teachers for working after the specified hours of the day as stated in the new PSA (Baputaki, 2010). The Deputy Permanent Secretary for Basic Education in the MoESD advised the school management teams that an hour be set aside during normal school hours for activities such as athletics and ball sports. However, the DPS’s decision was met with resistance both at the junior and senior secondary schools, as Ndlovu (personal communication, 25 June 2012), cites the scenario in his school as follows:

Even though they have agreed to have sports within working hours from 3:30 to 4:30 pm, teachers delay reaching the grounds, hardly spend the stipulated one hour or do anything to sabotage the Ministry’s decision in terms of sporting activities.

From an interview with a School Head, teachers are not keen to participate in ball sports because of the overtime issue. Only those who have the love for sports will show up regardless of the challenges senior secondary schools are faced with. But in general, teachers’ involvement in sporting activities is very minimal.

### **The Theoretical framework**

The participatory leadership theory has been adopted in this study. Jani (2008) sees the participatory theory as a theory that cherishes the engagement of many minds. The participatory leadership theory suggests that the ideal leadership style is one that is consultative in nature. Leaders

who embrace the participatory leadership theory make their followers feel they are part of the organisation by encouraging contributions from all the members of the organisation. Furukawa (1992:52) believes that employee participation in decision making is a strategy that leaders could use to increase workers' motivation to work and thus, promote job satisfaction. Power-sharing and consultation may enhance the professional growth of individuals in an organisation where leaders use the participatory leadership theory. In applying the participatory leadership theory in a school setting, Hoy and Miskel (2005:323) indicate that when teachers are allowed to participate in policy-making processes, they view their participation as important in boosting their morale. In this case, teachers should have been taken aboard in issues that escalated the strike occurrence.

### **Statement of the problem**

Since the 2011 strike, which erupted after the inclusion of the teaching profession in the Public Service Act No. 38 of 2008, the quality of education at senior secondary schools in Botswana, as evidenced by student performance, has declined. Despite the introduction of some reforms by the MoESD to restore quality teaching and learning, conflict continues to manifest itself in various scenarios, particularly among teachers at senior secondary schools. This study sought to unearth potential conflict areas and suggest suitable measures by both educators and educational leaders to alleviate the situation.

### **The research methods**

In this study, the qualitative research design was used. In order to achieve the purpose of the study, the interpretive-hermeneutics paradigm was employed (Snape & Spencer, 2003). This paradigm aims at drawing meaning from life experiences of mankind (Smith, 2007; McBurney, 1994; Smith (2007; Mertens, 1998; Willis, 2007; Crotty, 1998). Mertens (1998:11) indicates that the interpretive paradigm is guided by the fact that knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process. Hence, the respondents' views and perceptions were recorded verbatim.

In selecting respondents from the Ministry of Education & Skills Development, Botswana Sector for Teachers' Union, and the school managers, purposive sampling technique was used. This sampling technique was preferred because it is suitable for the interpretive paradigm because interpretivists' selection of a sample is centered on identifying information-rich cases that will allow them to study a case in-depth (Schwandt, 1994:261,264). Furthermore, Black (1999) affirms that purposive sampling ensures balance of group sizes when multiple groups are to be selected.

Teacher participants were selected through the use of convenience sampling. Hartas (2013:69) explains that convenience sampling is an easy way to select participants based on who would like to volunteer or who is available. The availability of participants is reiterated by Perry and Nicholis (2015:57) as they ascertain that in convenience sampling, "cases are selected because they are readily available".

A total number of 4 School Principals, 4 Deputy School Principals, 2 BOSETU officers, 3 Ministry's officers, and 115 teachers were sampled. The selection of the sample was influenced by virtue of all the participants being practitioners in the MoESD. The convenient sampling technique was also used to select the research sites. These were two schools in the northern part and two others in the southern part of Botswana. McBurney and White (2004:248) argue that this technique allows the researcher to select schools or respondents that are within his or her reach. Schools were selected from both urban and rural area settings for comparison purposes. The study aimed at finding out whether the impact of the 2011 national strike was experienced by participants in both urban and rural geographical areas of Botswana.

For data collection, interviews and observation strategies were used. Teachers at the selected schools were observed on the effectiveness of the clocking system; the attendance of class teachers during registration in their assigned classes; the participation of teachers during meal times; the participation of teachers during extra-curricular activities, and the participation of teachers during extra-

curricular activities. Participants were interviewed to determine the impact of the 2011 national strike at senior secondary schools. The thematic data analysis processes were used to analyse the collected data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:479). In this case, the respondents' views, opinions, and perceptions were reported verbatim (that is, participants' expressions were presented exactly as they were said). The acquisition of firsthand information from the participants in their natural settings was promoted (Carpenter & Speziale, 2007; Khumalo, 2009).

## **Research findings and Discussions**

### **The continuity of the 2011 National Strike**

It has been indicated by the study that the national strike is still on at senior secondary schools. However, the manifestations of the strike are hidden. The strike is in the form of sabotaging practices by teachers against the Ministry's efforts to improve schools' performance. To authenticate this finding, one participant's perception of the effect of the strike was recorded as follows:

The national strike has impacted the teaching and learning. The strike is still on – it is only that it has changed the format. It is very technical (meaning that, the strike is not demonstrated openly) and this makes it difficult to identify the strike" (meaning that, it is not easy to tell whether teachers are fully engaged in their work or not).

This finding is in agreement with Beech and Mckenna (2008: 347-348) who assert that the existence of conflict can lead to a high turnover rate or even sabotage. One participant had this to say, "The national strike still impacts on the education system. Teachers went in fully and there are some who come to work but not doing the work. The negative effects of the strike continue to be felt to this day mainly because the healing process is still on and it is a long process. In reality teachers have not come back to work". The other participant outlined a number of issues that emanated from the 2011 national strike. The participant mentioned that,

The national strike impacted negatively on the teaching and learning processes, paralyzed the work relations, affected delivery in the classroom, demoralized teachers, people still hold grudges, it created an I-don't-care kind of an attitude. There are court cases time and again. This is not the right way to solve situations. This has affected us in many ways".

This is in agreement with Makumboenyoka (2013:9) who observes that there has never been peace since the public sector strike. As reported in a local newspaper, *The Botswana Gazette* (Selemogwe, 22-28 February 2012:27), the Botswana Examinations Council's (BEC) executive secretary during a press briefing mentioned that "...the results reflect the quality of teaching in schools and call for an urgent review with all stakeholders to map the way forward in bettering the next results..." Yet another participant uttered the following sentiment, "When talking about the 2011 national strike, the ripples (effects) of the 2011 strike are still there in schools".

The effects of the strike are a manifestation of unresolved conflicts between teachers and the Ministry, and also conflict between teachers' Unions and the employer (DPSM). The comments given above are in line with Makumboenyoka's (2013: 9) observation of the national strike results that, "There has never been peace since the public sector strike..." The effects of the strike becomes a reason for Mongwa's (2015:2) statement that one of the senior secondary school's results have not been satisfactory since 2011.

### **Teachers' work conditions**

The dissatisfaction of teachers with the employer on salaries and general welfare at senior secondary schools emerged distinctively as some of the key reasons that led to the national strike in this

study. The issue about teachers' remuneration is in agreement with Shabani (5 May 2011:1) who states that the 2011 public strike was over a pay dispute. Failure to resolve teachers' concerns has led to a high rate of teachers leaving the teaching profession or remaining as part of the profession while manipulating it as highlighted by some of the participants. The finding showed that some of the teachers have opted for early retirement or further studies in a different field while others are in search for new job opportunities since the 2011 national strike experiences. One of the teacher participants commented that "schools must be teacher friendly to reduce high turnover of teachers". This comment shows that the level of teacher retention in the teaching profession is declining. Arnott and Holmgren-Hoeller (2010: 2) comment that "issues create a pressure-cooker-like environment that strains to the brink the capacity and patience of faculty and staff members. The crushing pressure experienced today by faculty and staff members, administrators pushes talented professionals away from a career in the field of education". Unlike the participants who were engaged in the 1991 strike (Anonymous interviewees, personal communication, 24 May 2017) teachers did not benefit from their 2011 national strike demonstrations as far as salary adjustment is concerned.

### **The Ministry's promptness**

The study has revealed that there is unexpected delay in responding to teachers' concerns within the MoESD due to ministerial protocol observance. The delay is caused by internal meetings, seminars, workshops and telephone calls that the ministerial personnel attend to. These high amounts of meetings and calls have the potential to hinder effective school visits by the officers. The observance of protocol by the MoESD should be aligned with the demands of the teaching profession. Buchner and Horth (2009: 6) caution that, "As problems and circumstances become more complex, they do not fit previous patterns". Therefore, it will be rewarding for school principals and the MoESD officials to do away with the routine way of carrying out their official activities. The routine way of carrying out their official activities indicates a serious condition that needs to be addressed by both school managers and educational leaders. When prompt actions are taken, then issues of strikes would be curbed.

### **Teachers' remuneration package**

Quality performance in schools calls for commitment from the employer to ensure that the teaching teams' salaries are realistic in terms of socio-economic demands. Campbell (2006) declares that, good education is found in a system that pays salaries that will attract good, qualified teachers. Participants shared a feeling that teachers' matters pertaining to their social welfare are not given the attention they deserve. This contributes greatly to teachers' dissatisfaction about progression, poor work conditions, the low pay structure, a narrow promotion pyramid, lack of salary increment upon completion of Graduate and Masters or Doctoral degrees. These factors affect teachers economically as they do not have incentives to cushion themselves against the effects of the global recession. Ultimately, teachers get demoralized, their commitment is hampered, their interest for the job is reduced, students' education suffers and the work relations become strained both in schools and in the Ministry. The concern about teachers' social welfare suggests that promotion of teachers should be based on the merits of their performance in the classroom and the acquisition of higher qualifications rather than depending on posts of managerial responsibilities.

### **Being a good listener to curb conflicts**

According to DeCenzo and Robbins (2007:430), in order for the listening skills of school managers and teachers to be fruitful, the listening should; 1) be void of presumptive motives, 2) welcome criticisms, 3) acknowledge loopholes in the operational system, 4) accept corrections and 5) get ready to do things in a better way. The outlined elements are in line with Miall's (2001) conviction that behaviour, communications, perceptions and cognitions of individuals, leaders and groups are to be guarded because they are the "warp and weft of conflict". One of the participants indicated that, "Conflicts are present in the teaching profession. In the past teaching was somehow enjoyable.

Conflicts resulted from labour issues between teachers' Unions and the Ministry". Another participant had this to say:

Conflicts are present in the teaching cadre. The Ministry should learn to consult people on the ground. People are full of anger because there is lack of fairness and generally teachers are unhappy. There are double standard practices in the Ministry and teachers are pushed to carry out their duties. The Ministry will not do well until issues of concern are worked out, for instance, LOO (Levels of Operations) - teachers who are Diploma holders at junior secondary schools with lesser work experience have been elevated as far as salaries are concerned; progression takes long; further training does not help us in anyway as far as salary structure is concerned.

One member of the teaching staff indicated that, "Teachers like teaching" but the only problem is that they are "frustrated by the employer". To reiterate on the LOO issue, participants at one of the schools talked about an official correspondence whose contents addressed the 'Levels of Operation Deduction and Reversal Scales' (Kelefhile, 2014: 1).

It read:

The union has been inundated with grievances in relation to Senior School teachers whose salaries were elevated through Levels of Operation adjustments. Note that the said teachers were transferred to senior secondary schools a few months before the implementation of Levels of Operation. The affected teachers are now in receipt of letters of alleged salary overpayment due to LOO & the Employer has proceeded to recover said overpayment and reverse their salary scales.

The above quotation shows the level of dissatisfaction among senior secondary school teachers in regard to salary adjustments. These concerns call for productive talk conferences between teachers and their supervisors as aired by one of the participants:

Communication is top-down. Teaching has become boring, teachers' demands are not met and their voices are not heard. Students have become powerful than teachers in that information is from the management, students and then teachers. Teachers' ideas are not taken into consideration. There is a big gap between schools, teachers and the Ministry. The 'us and them' perspective becomes the rule of the day. This is contributed by the fact that communication pattern is a one-way style. Teachers are hoping for better services. The Ministry should give teachers a platform to air their grievances. One other thing is that teachers never get feedback. If proposals cannot be carried out it is appropriate for the Ministry to get to the natural settings to share information and update teachers.

Diversity and Inclusion (2014) hypothesise that when people do not possess good communication and work relations skills, conflict may be harmful. This may cause the followers to be ineffective or to militate against the employer. By becoming a good listener, conflict situations would be minimised, the go-slow and strike occurrences in the Botswana education system would also be curbed. For issues that lead to strikes to be managed, the collaboration of many minds as promoted in this study's theoretical framework (Jani, 2008; Furukawa, 1992) should be upheld within the Ministry of Education in Botswana.

### **Teachers' conduct**

The study has revealed that senior secondary school teachers' conduct after the 2011 national strike has drastically changed from 'good' to 'worse'. For instance, one of the participants indicated that,

Teachers are disgruntled and unhappy about the employer because interaction with the employer and work relations are soured. This affects the quality of their work. When we visit schools, teachers always vent out their anger on us. All these have brought some practices such

as: Lack of student management which leads to a high rate of indiscipline among students; Lack of accountability among teachers which is manifested in going late to class and also lack of diligence in carrying out their core business; Unprofessional attitudes among teachers which is shown by lack of interest in the profession.

This is a clear indication that there are unresolved issues between teachers and the Ministry regarding problems that led to the national strike. Furthermore, another participant observed that, “The teachers have no passion for the profession because in the past when the results were out, teachers would look forward to know how their students performed. But this is no longer the case. Teachers are now busy with their private businesses”.

This study also used the observation technique in which teachers were observed at their natural settings. The technique sought to determine teachers’ participation during general cleaning programs; attendance during class registration period; teachers’ participation during meal times; teachers’ participation during extra-curricular activities; the response and attitudes of teachers during staff meetings and briefings; and the effectiveness of the clocking system initiative.

### *General cleaning*

The general cleaning program is an exercise that is meant to ensure that the school environment is kept clean and conducive for the teaching and learning processes. The areas of concern are the classrooms and their surroundings. This program is done in the afternoon by the students under the supervision of the assigned teacher. This is a noble exercise because it does not only make the school environment healthy and habitable, but also teaches the student the value of work. All classrooms are to be swept on a daily basis while the major cleaning is to be done on a specified day of the week. The school managers related that “teachers do not perform as expected;” “The school programs suffer because the teachers are reluctant to participate;” “There is “late coming” that was reported and “teachers’ being absent in the afternoon”. The school management also noted that, “Very few teachers would turn up for the general cleaning program”. In one of the staff meetings that the researcher attended, one of the school principals aired her concerns pertaining to “teachers’ lack of interest in keeping the learning environment clean”.

The pictures below show the state of the schools both within and outside the classroom environments. The pictures represent the appearance of two of the schools during the data collection period. The places where the garbage was not collected remained un-cleared for the entire period the researcher was engaged as a participant observer at the schools. A closer look showed that the rubbish has long accumulated many weeks prior to the researcher’s visitation. There was also accumulation of sand on the pathways and school assembly points. This may be evidence that teachers who are expected to supervise the students are not keen to do so.

**PICTURE A: Corner (1) of a corridor at School Z**



**PICTURE B: Corner (2) of a corridor at School Z**



**PICTURE C: Outside the Administration Block at School Y**



It is argued that the general appearance of the visited schools showed that the cleaning is either not done at all or it is done once in a while. This includes the sweeping of classrooms, corridors, verandas, and pathways. This could mean that even the teachers who are said to be turning up for general cleaning leave it upon the students. Furthermore, the photographs do tell a story that, it could be due to bad management of the human resources by the school management teams or teachers' and learners' negligence and attitudes. This indicates a bad school climate and atmosphere that lacks discipline.

#### *Meal supervision*

There are two reasons why teachers' participation during lunch hour has declined: 1) they are free to use the lunch hour according to their own discretion, 2) although they are entitled to overtime claims, they are denied to get the monetary benefits, instead they are given a meal. When some of the teachers were interviewed during observation sessions over lunch hour, one of them remarked that, "We do meal supervision only because we want to keep our files clean - making a good name for ourselves". The other participant said, "They want us to supervise students during lunch hour and to pay us with a plate of the students' meal. I prefer buying myself decent food or even rest during this hour".

A conclusion could be made that for those who supervise students during meal times, the motive behind the exercise is to gain school leaders' favour. This is in support of Hill (2008: 115) who believes that, "by offering more service than that for which one is paid for, one turns the sport light of favorable attention upon himself or herself". The element of keeping one's file clean suggests that teachers who volunteer to supervise during meal times may be favoured over those who do not volunteer their services. However, this may cause intra-group or personal conflict (*cf.* 3.2.1.1) between school managers and teachers and among teachers themselves.

### *Extra-curricular activities*

No observations were carried out because there was no sport training during the observation period due to the fact that both local and external examinations were being administered in schools. Therefore, the researcher relied on the supervisors to gather the information about teachers' participation in sporting activities. From the sporting activities' coordinators at the selected schools, when asked to talk about teachers' participation in sports, one of them mentioned that,

Teachers are not keen to participate in ball sports because of the overtime issue. Only those who have the love for sports will show up regardless of the challenges we are faced with. But in general, teachers are reluctant and their involvement in sporting activities is very minimal.

The educational managers worked hard to find ways of reintroducing sporting activities in schools in general, and particularly at the selected senior secondary schools (Mooko, 2012). The above finding is in line with (Baputaki, 2010) who echoes that teachers' participation in schools had long ceased because they were not paid for working extra hours.

### *Staff meetings*

Teachers' activities were also observed during the staff meetings. This observation was intended to know the attitudes of teachers during staff meetings at the selected schools and a participant from the management teams in a friendly talk commented that,

Teachers are frustrated and demoralized. Meeting sessions are short and we are always rushing. This results in unproductive discussions. The management always asks for permission to go beyond the set time. *Ga go a nna sentle* (things are not alright).

The researcher observed during staff meetings that teachers at the selected schools were withdrawn. This contributed to the cold responses that were given when the attendants were greeted either by the chairperson or those who presented items at the meeting. They seemed not to be free to express themselves or keen to participate. Most of them were using their cellphones during the meetings. Quite a number of them were chewing gums while others were overcome by sleep. The number that attended did not represent the total number of teachers at the selected schools. None of the management teams talked about the teachers who did not attend the meetings. Late coming was also noticed. The contributions made were very minimal and others looked bored and just waited for the meeting to be adjourned.

### *The clocking system initiative*

The clocking system was implemented after the 2011 national strike as a way of monitoring punctuality and adherence to work hours by teachers. This aspect is one of the elements the empirical research explored to determine its effectiveness in schools. When participants at the selected schools shared their views regarding the clocking system, a participant commented that,

The clocking system was not agreed upon by the teaching staff. It was imposed on us. We raised our views but were never listened to. There has been no good strategy of implementing it. When one comes late no one recognizes. Also different forms are used and this does not promote uniformity within the school. This breeds conflicts. Keeping teachers within the school premises does not promote productivity.

One participant said that, "insufficient furniture in the workrooms prevents teachers from being in their offices all at the same time. And also for a teacher to deliver well his or her work environment must be appealing" (that is, it must be conducive). Most of the participants believe that, "the clocking system cannot be a tool to monitor performance". The teachers and immediate supervisors mentioned that most teachers would sign-out immediately after they have signed-in in the morning. This means

that the clocking system initiative does not serve its purpose of monitoring teachers' adherence to the knock-off time. An interviewee at one of the schools commented that, "although the clocking system is used and it may seem effective in one way or the other", It can be a mere tangible way of ascertaining teachers' physical presence at work while it does not guarantee that effective teaching and learning in the classrooms are taking place".

In comparing flexible and rigid office hours, Clark (2010) argues that when workers have flexible hours in their workplaces, they become more satisfied with their jobs and work harder than their counterparts with more rigid office hours. Work and other issues such as leave days, off days and hours spent at work, have been issues that have evoked debates over many generations, and even at senior secondary schools in Botswana (Lee, McCann & Messenger, 2007).

### Conclusions and recommendations

The public strike sought to force authorities to increase the salaries of public servants but it was unsuccessful as the employer used the "No work, no pay" principle (Republic of Botswana 2002:49) in trying to administer order in the teaching profession. This provoked anger among teachers especially those whose salaries were withdrawn. These experiences call for leaders in the education system of Botswana to be vigilant and skillful in dealing with a national strike and the after effects. Leadership is so important that some scholars see it as the sole factor in success (Light, 1998; Arnott & Holmgren-Hoeller, 2010). Hoy and Miskel (2005: 374) confirm that leaders are important because they serve as anchors, provide guidance in times of change and are responsible for the effectiveness of organisations. Betts (2000:12) considers "good" leaders as members of the group that are outstanding, who have the ability to get along easily with people, who ascertain that the followers understand the purpose of initiating change in their workplaces. These leaders also welcome changes, new ideas from their followers and demonstrate great concern for every member of their groups.

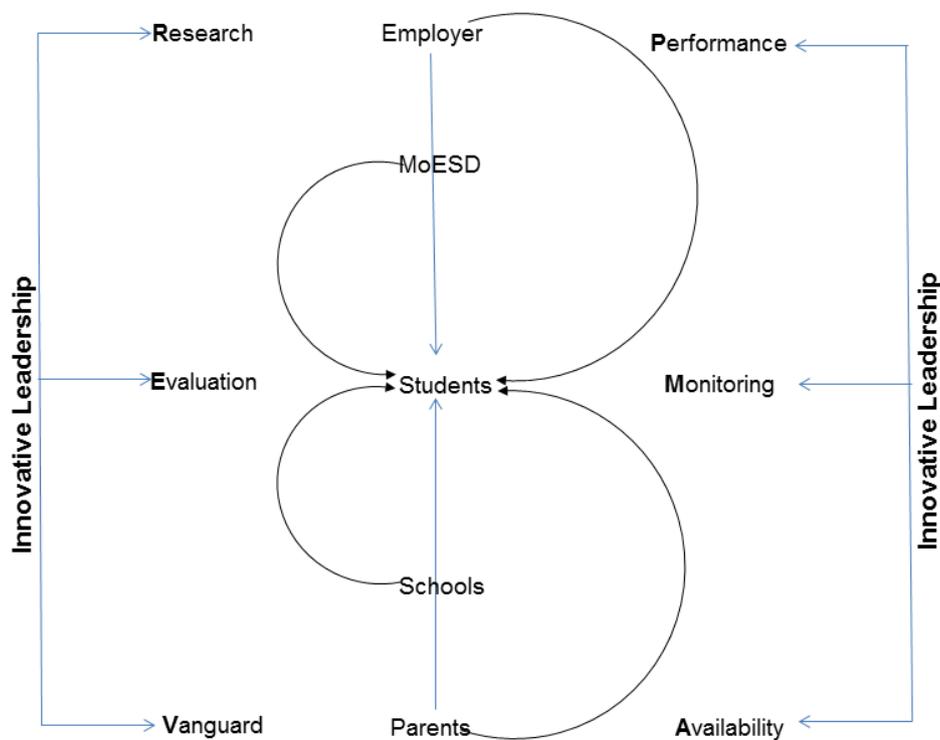
Educational leaders in the Botswana education system need to be transformational. According to Lunenburg and Ornstein (2008:150), transformational leadership focuses on leaders who have incomparable impact on their organisations. These leaders have the ability to motivate their followers to go beyond the usual routine of their duties. Cordeiro & Cunningham, (2003:167) states that leaders in this model "acquire supporters, facilitate new procedures, organise resources, assist individuals and act in response to organisational challenges". A transformational leader believes in three objectives which are seen as pillars for organisational success. The first objective aims at helping individuals to develop and preserve a professional school environment. This objective centers on assisting teachers to resolve problems more successfully. In the second objective, the idea is to set goals that enhance the freedom given to members. Members should be involved in the running of the organisation. Leaders should also work hard to handle inconsistencies effectively. In the final objective, the intention is to attain the set goals through vision, communication, and trust. According to Sergiovanni (1984:8), vision refers to the "capacity to create and communicate a view of a desired state of affairs that induces commitment among those working in the organisation". Collins and Porras (1998:49) believe that "building a visionary company requires 1% vision and 99% alignment". In order for schools to be successful, Drucker (1992:33) has the following to say,

The alignment of the organisation is centered on people since they are the key resource and what counts is a leader's ability to organise the people to achieve an end result. Therefore, transformative leaders communicate the value of their vision by words and example. And if the human resource alignment is excellent, anyone who visits the organisation can infer its vision from the activities and operations of the organisation without reading it on paper or consultation with one of the senior managers.

Based on this research work, it is imperative to pay attention to Robbins (1996: 18) who affirms that "victory will go to those organisations that maintain their flexibility, continually improve their quality and beat their competitors..." From the findings, it is evident that there is lack of flexibility

when applying correction measures. The leaders in the education system should consider changing their leadership styles from being rigid to being flexible (Spahr, 2015).

I have developed a School R.E.V.A.M.P. [**R**esearch; **E**valuation; **V**anguard; **A**vailability; **M**onitoring; **P**erformance] Model. The school R.E.V.A.M.P. model is centered on the six critical elements that prominently emerged from the findings of the study. These elements are a summary of the innovative strategies that could be employed by leaders to curb the undesirable condition emanating from the national strike and leadership conditions to improve the education system. The model is cyclic. At the core it has the learners, as was revealed in the findings, as the most affected by the ripples of the strike. This model proposes that if the employer, the MoESD, the parents and schools are fully committed to innovatively support the learners, they, in turn, will reap the benefits of a quality education to the advantage of the country as a whole. As a result, the country would have dedicated teachers in the future, responsible citizens, and competent individuals. This can be achieved through the employment of these elements: R- **R**esearch; E- **E**valuation; V- **V**anguard; A- **A**vailability; M- **M**onitoring; P- **P**erformance.



Furthermore, the concept of being flexible carries much weight in the school R.E.V.A.M.P model because it has the potential to make teachers and learners become appreciative rather than resistant to the E.M.P.S' efforts in improving performance. The involvement of the different parties in this model promotes the participation of all groups of people that play a significant role in educating the learner. This is the gist of the Participatory Leadership Theory.

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