

IMPLICATIONS OF ACCOUNTABILITY ON LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN BOTSWANA – AN INSPECTION CASE STUDY OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KGATLENG

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Abstract

Approaches to accountability such as school inspection and school self-evaluation are used to a limited extent in Botswana's education system. In this regard, our knowledge base regarding the impact of inspection is limited. By drawing on the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) framework, which is a British model of inspection (Park, 2013), this paper argues that instructional leaders and curriculum drivers should account for learner performance. Documented inspection reports for 2014 for fourteen (14) primary schools in Kgatleng were studied in as much as they provided baseline data for the study. Data was collected through interviews, lesson observations and documentary analysis. The results show that all the 14 schools inspected were ineffective in their instructional supervision and pedagogical approaches thus compromising on assessment and learner achievement standards. The paper concludes that holding schools responsible for their results has a positive impact on both the learner and overall school performance. Thus, every process needs to be audited; thereof school inspections need to be intensified to monitor, track and raise performance standards.

Keywords: *Accountability, School inspection, School Self-evaluation, Instructional Supervision, Pedagogy, Assessment*

Introduction

Botswana's education system is increasingly receiving criticism following declining school results. This continued decline in performance is often attributed to lack of instructional supervision, lack of resources, teacher centred pedagogies and ineffective formative assessment approaches. From the foregoing synopsis, it logically follows that efforts must be made to turn around the prevailing picture. This is particularly the case because in response, the public has lost confidence in the public education system which presents a reputational risk. To this end, attempts to restore public confidence to normalcy require some form of accountability, which in this context is school inspection.

Following its enactment in 2012, Botswana's Inspectorate Services Unit has since developed the School Inspection Framework to guide Inspectors on promoting high standards of education for the realisation of learners' potential, thus "**promoting quality learning for a better life**" (Inspectors Manual, 2012). For it must be highlighted that Botswana's inspection framework mirrors the British model (Ofsted) following training for Inspectors by Centre for British Teachers (CfBT, currently Education Development Trust in 2013. School inspection like elsewhere in the world has some legal basis in Botswana. As per Botswana's Inspectors Manual (2012), the School Inspection Framework should be implemented alongside the Inspectors Code of Conduct, Education Act, Public Service Act, The Revised National Policy on Education, Public Service Charter and other statutory documents that govern education in Botswana. School inspections are either partial, full scale or follow ups in nature and are usually informed by declining school performance as is the case with this particular study (Inspectors Manual, 2012).

By utilizing an inspection case study of primary schools in Kgatleng region, the paper demonstrates how accountability can improve performance in schools. The purpose of inspection, according to The OFSTED Handbook (1995), is to identify strengths and weaknesses so that schools may improve the quality of education they provide and raise the educational standards achieved by their pupils.

The inspection process is very systematic, evidence based and evaluative in nature. As outlined in The OFSTED Handbook (1995), School Inspection Handbook (2005) and Inspectors Manual (2012), there are three stages, namely before, during and after the inspection. The before inspection stage involves the initial visit to the school by the lead inspector to make prior arrangements of the required documents since documentation forms the basis of any audit. During inspection, the inspectors use tools such as checklists and evidence forms to collect evidence about the key performance areas. At the very outset, the purpose of the inspection is explained; inspectors then collect data by conducting lesson observations; making general physical observations; conducting interviews; studying documents and on the basis of triangulation method, making informed judgements and rating accordingly. An inspection framework with descriptors indicating the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of key performance areas judged is used. After the inspection, the team then consolidate their findings and give oral feedback to staff. A report is then produced with recommendations for implementation.

Conceptual framework

The concept of accountability, it must be acknowledged, is not only complex but is also contextual in theory and in praxis. Essentially, accountability must perhaps be construed to mean an approach to measurement of performance as prescribed by set standards. According to the Bridging Theory and Practice Research Dissemination Series: Working Paper 02 (2012), the concept of

accountability is twofold: answerability and enforcement. The former involves providing evidence based justification on performance or non-performance to those bestowed with oversight while the latter implies that those bestowed with oversight should take appropriate measures to correct non-conformities. School inspections are a typical example underpinning the foregoing assertion.

Two important national frameworks inform the position of this paper and the rationale of accountability in Botswana's education system. Botswana's Vision 2036 explicitly spells out under pillar 4: Governance, Peace and Security that efficient public service delivery enhances accountability and that Botswana will have a transparent and accountable leadership across all sectors (Vision 2036, 2016). Equally important, the Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP, 2015-2020) reflect accountability as one of its four pillars and it emphasises on developing a management culture that embraces greater accountability. This national commitment requires implementation if the intentions espoused by the Vision and the Strategic Plan are to be fully actualised in the education sector. In fact, as correctly put by The National Academies Express (1999), accountability is an important mechanism in any education policy aimed at improving education systems. School inspection, as an approach to accountability, is arguably one of the most effective ways to improve school and learner performance.

Botswana's inspection model mirrors the British model of accountability, Ofsted, and as such this paper majorly draws on this international framework to demonstrate its contextual relevance to Botswana. Globally, the efficacy of the Ofsted's model of inspection has undoubtedly shaped research, policy and practice as demonstrated by substantial empirical evidence (Ryan et.al). According to Ryan et.al, despite criticism, several large-scale studies have consistently shown that educators generally have positive experiences with Ofsted's inspection processes, even pre-2005. Drawing from an empiricist approach, an independent evaluation study carried out in 2006 on Ofsted inspections, using survey and interview data from a random sampling of schools stratified by school level, geographic region and inspection results, showed that 90% out of 134 school leaders were satisfied with the inspection process; that is, they found inspectors' judgements accurate and fair and the reports helpful (Ryan et.al, 2013).

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to establish the effectiveness of instructional leadership, pedagogical approaches and assessment practices in low performing schools in Kgatleng. Furthermore, the study intended to appreciate and expand our knowledge base regarding the impact of school inspection (as a way of accountability) on learner performance.

The results of the study could be used by the Ministry of Basic Education authorities to shape the direction of instructional supervision, pedagogical and assessment approaches. The school leadership and curriculum implementers would equally appreciate the fact that their processes need to be audited either internally or externally for purposes of continual improvement. On the one hand, the paper provides an alternative trajectory for further research on the impact of school inspection elsewhere in Botswana to broaden the scope of its relevance. Thus, this would call for the strengthening of the Inspectorate by the Ministry to raise educational standards. Whether Botswana's education system need to continue going the pathway of school inspection or school self evaluation or both is another topical area of interest for future research.

Literature Review

This section of the paper attempts to give an insight of the relevance or otherwise of accountability as perceived by different scholars. The focus is directed to school inspection as an approach to accountability. Frink and Klismoski (2004) argue that first, without understanding accountability; organizations are likely to fail. Zook (2013) echoes a similar thought that without clear accountability, organizations lack the commitment necessary to adapt processes, re-align strategies, and reassign resources to meet expectations. He concludes that, in both the private and public sector, one of the key tenets to performance management is ensuring accountability to achieve success.

In light of the above, research work by Moswela (2010) reveals that any education system that is committed to realizing improvement in the teaching and learning processes should always link curriculum to instructional supervision and, make head teachers and teachers accountable for its implementation. This research work by Moswela proves that in the context of Botswana's education system, accountability for learner performance should, in the main, be limited to school administrators and teachers. In his study, Moswela has observed that teachers resist instructional supervision as a teaching and learning improvement strategy in Botswana schools. Not only does this observation reaffirm the logic of accountability but it also resonates well with the position of this paper that the scope of accountability in the context of Botswana should be limited to the school leadership and classroom practitioners. Drawing on Chapman and Sammons (2013) notion of 'competing logics,' the accountability logic is founded on the rationale that the schools must provide proof to key stakeholders (parents and the local community) as well as to the Government that they are providing value for money. A similar thought is echoed by Ryan, et.al (2013) when he maintains that some form of accountability for publicly-funded education to safeguard school and teaching quality and equitable treatment of students is important for serving the public interest. According to Ryan, as long as education is publicly funded and mandatory, citizens have a right to expect that schools will be held accountable for effectively serving public interests, including ensuring that they use public funds efficiently and appropriately.

Conversely, shifting perspectives have emerged denouncing the logic of accountability. The works of Lynch (2016), for example, has questioned the fairness of holding schools accountable for learner achievement. The big question that hangs over is, who should be held accountable for learner or school performance and for what reasons. Lynch (2016) defines accountability in education as holding school districts, school administrators, educators and students responsible for demonstrating specific academic performance results. Lynch's definition brings into perspective what one could describe as mutual type of accountability in which all the stakeholders are involved. Available literature also confirms that school accountability reforms create pressure for school leaders to improve the achievement in their schools (Figlio, and Loeb, 2011). If not well managed, however, accountability can be counter-productive (Figlio, and Loeb, 2011) hence the notion of detoxifying school accountability (Park, 2013). According to Park, (2013), the reason for describing the school accountability system in England as profoundly toxic is the way it impacts on school leaders and teachers. School leaders tend to focus their attention on achieving targets, rather than ensuring that the young people in their charge receive a fulfilling education (Park, 2013). Park further argues that teachers on the other hand undergo pressure to make professional compromises, as the challenge of stimulating powerful learning in children and young people has to be carried forward with one eye on the accountability process.

Park's argument of detoxifying school accountability is only correct when we consider the fact that accountability discourses in education are complex and contextual. What is toxic to one area may not necessarily apply to another area and thereof, we cannot conceive of objectivity without subjectivity in the foregoing proposition (Freire, 1993). Thus, suffice to call the accountability system in Botswana a fair practice given the contextual relevance. A more balanced perspective is perhaps provided by the work of Frink and Klimoski (2004) who argue that inasmuch as more accountability is better because it produces organizationally desired outcomes, there is a dark side to accountability where there are often undesirable effects. Two approaches of accountability emerge from the foregoing review; school inspection and school self evaluation. The former, which underpins the conceptual framework of this paper, is defined by Ryan, et.al (2013) as "a mandated, formal process of external evaluation with the aim of holding schools accountable". Inspection is concerned, in the main, with the improvement of standards and quality of education and should be an integral part of a school improvement program (Mbando and Hongoke, 2010). School self evaluation, on the one hand, is a collaborative, reflective and internally driven process of evaluating schools for continual improvement (School Inspectors Manual, 2012). In essence, schools and their stakeholders take full responsibility of the school processes.

From a global perspective, School Self Evaluation has emerged as the new movement of school improvement that arguably offers new direction in accountability (Chapman and Sammons, 2013). In the context of Botswana, Inspection Reports (2014) from Kgatleng have amply demonstrated that this model of evaluation lacks maturity simply because schools have limited knowledge and understanding of how it operates. Tabulawa (2009) maintains his view point that school inspection activities could best be described as fault-finding and oppressive by emphasising the expert-inexpert dichotomy thus perpetuating the teachers' dependency syndrome on the inspector. Notwithstanding this stance, Reading First Notebook (2005) highlight that principals must impart upon teachers the importance of aligning curriculum, instruction and assessment to the standards and follow the advice of the old adage, "Don't expect what you don't inspect". Thus, if instructional changes are not inspected, leaders should not expect improvements.

Methodology

School inspections follow all scientific research approaches and methodologies (Haule, 2012). In this way, the methodological framework for this paper captures the research design, the population sample and sampling techniques, data collection instruments and data analysis.

Research Design

This particular study used both the qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. As correctly put by Moswela (2015), research designs are mainly qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods by nature. The qualitative approach shall be more descriptive in nature while the quantitative method shall utilise some quantitative techniques by converting results into percentages. Both primary and secondary data was collected during the inspection of 14 primary schools in Kgatleng. This data acted as a baseline especially for learner performance in 2014. The other type of secondary data was collected in 2015 following the release of the 2015 Primary School Leaving Examinations. The two sets of data were analysed and compared to measure the impact of school inspection on learner performance.

The Population and Sample

Inspection is a team effort exercise although the researcher was a team leader during these inspections. The population of this study comprised learners (5 per school) and teaching staff (an average of 15 teachers per school) across all the 14 primary schools inspected. On average, this made a total population of 70 learners and 210 teachers across the schools.

Sampling Procedure

The sampling procedure remained consistent and well spread in all the fourteen primary schools in the Kgatleng region. The sample size for teachers was adequate since 100% was covered due to the small numbers of teachers in primary schools. As for learners, a certain quota was sampled thus making the sample size too small to be representative of the majority. The sample, in terms of schools, purposively targeted only fourteen (14) out of a total of thirty seven (37) primary schools. This was simply because by inspection standards, the fourteen schools were classified as low performing schools in 2014 hence the need for a deliberate intervention to turn around the prevailing picture.

Data collection instruments

Data was methodically gathered in the fourteen primary schools by means of interviews, lesson observations during the inspection visits, and by analysis of documents produced by the school such as results of self-evaluations where applicable and other important school documents.

In an attempt to collect objective evidence, interviews were conducted by deliberately grouping respondents according to their positions. These groupings were categorized as follows; school head, deputy school head, heads of departments, senior teachers, teachers and learners. Grouping according to positions was also influenced by the fact that accountability was vertically structured than horizontally structured. Lesson observations were done in a manner that satisfied the inspection standard of 20 to 30 minutes so that at least 65% of the inspection time was spent on the key performance area of teaching and learning through classroom observations. Documentary analysis was also effectively used to corroborate facts. The data collected was finally validated through the triangulation method to ensure consistency on the effectiveness of the school leadership; the quality of planning, teaching and learning as well as the quality of assessment standards. The validity and reliability of the results collected was also assured by means of standard data collection instruments in the form of checklists and evidence forms used by inspection team members. The individual ratings of the above three key performance areas were summarised and translated into school ratings to show the level of the school's effectiveness. The judgements/ratings used in the inspection framework ranged from effective, highly effective, ineffective and highly ineffective.

Data analysis

In analyzing data, the study intended to achieve two goals. First, analysis of data was based on the effectiveness of three thematic areas, namely instructional leadership, pedagogy and assessment standards. Secondly, analysis focused on the impact made by the inspection exercise a year later. This was deliberately meant to establish the correlation between accountability and learner performance. This approach of analyzing data was informed by what Bush (2014) terms, "conceptually interconnected analyses" after a study he conducted had set two goals which were interrelated. Data

was analyzed by breaking it into thematic areas for discussion in a more descriptive manner using words. Raw statistical data was converted into percentages and analyzed.

Results/Findings

This section discusses findings of school inspections conducted in fourteen lowly performing primary schools in Kgatleng between July and November 2014. The key thematic areas guiding the discussion are instructional leadership, pedagogical approaches and assessment practices with reference to accountability. Since this study has two goals, an additional sub section will be included to analyze and measure the extent at which school results have improved in 2015 following the 2014 inspections. Such is an important move when considering the fact that the effectiveness and impact of Inspectorates within the global space continue to face resounding criticism in the wake of new orientations to school improvement such as school self evaluation.

Accountability and Instructional leadership

The essence of this thematic area is to establish whether the fourteen (14) primary schools in Kgatleng had an effective and accountable instructional leadership that could effectively drive learner performance at the time of inspection. Instructional supervision, it must be highlighted, is central to achieving learner standards since it shapes pedagogical approaches and formative assessment. According to Ryan et.al, (2013), instructional leadership involves setting clear goals, managing curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources and evaluating teachers regularly to promote student learning and growth.

This study revealed that, following an inspection exercise, 3 out of 14 (21.4%) Primary Schools were rated effective, 9 out of 14 primary schools (64.3%) were rated ineffective, and 2 out of 14 (14.3%) were rated highly ineffective in their overall instructional supervision. The conclusion drawn from these findings is that instructional supervision across the 14 schools was mainly skewed towards ineffective or highly ineffective. This was evidenced by limited and/or lack of class observations, low level of compliance to set standards, lack of robust monitoring systems and strategies aimed at closing individual teacher performance gaps. Drawing on these inspection findings from Kgatleng Region, a direct correlation was observed between declining results and limited instructional supervision. It is against this background that Pansiri (2014) holds the view that instructional leadership essentially aims at improving the teachers' quality of classroom work with an ultimate goal of raising learners' achievement as well as improving their attitude and behaviour towards school work and their personal life.

It was also observed that failure by schools to objectively account for their performance internally was primarily a function of the absence of a fully fledged School Self Evaluation (SSE) Programme. The study revealed that all the fourteen schools were not implementing the SSE mainly because they lacked understanding of the whole concept (Inspection Reports, 2014). It is for this particular reason that this paper cannot go into the details of SSE as a model of accountability in Botswana. Otherwise studies have shown that if teachers and students work together, and schools hold themselves accountable, great strides can be made (Lynch, 2106).

Moswela, (2010) has observed that instructional supervision is perceived as a witch-hunting exercise. In his study, Moswela established that teachers at Secondary School, for example, were of the

view that instructional supervision as a teaching and learning improvement strategy has an ulterior motive behind. It is used by school heads to punish those who oppose the way they run schools, supervisors use it to settle scores between them and the teacher (Moswela, 2010). This study did not confirm this view point to establish if the same perceptions were held by primary school teachers since it was not part of the goal. Inspectors, according to a study by Isaiah and Isaiah, (2014) assisted school heads since they were feared by majority of teachers, hence teachers wanted to keep their work up to date and the School Heads were involved in all activities of instruction. Accountability; either through inspection or instructional supervision, should however not be misconstrued to mean punishment but a developmental move. Isaiah and Isaiah (2014) in their study on Perceptions of Teachers on the Instructional Roles of School Heads in the Secondary Schools in Botswana found out that School Heads were bound to office work than to instructional leadership. This is another area which was not explored at primary schools since the focus of this study was on the effectiveness of instructional supervision than on the reasons for ineffectiveness. It must also be borne in mind that instructional leadership requires the school principal to wear many hats, that is, administrators, managers, diplomats, teachers and curriculum leaders (Four Instructional Leadership Skills Principals Need, 2015). This is in spite of the fact that some School Heads may find this as an overwhelming and too daunting a task. It is definitely a balancing act, and principals must be proficient in all of these areas, as well as be able to fluidly move from one role to another (Four Instructional Leadership Skills Principals Need, 2015).

Based on his findings from both the teachers' role and Head teachers, Moswela, (2010, 2015) argues that the heads' multiple responsibilities do not allow them to supervise classroom activities regularly and effectively. Inspection findings from this study have on the contrary revealed that the school leadership was as ineffective in instructional supervision as it was in other areas of operations. As the overseer of the school, the School head is responsible for accounting for all areas under his or her jurisdiction hence the need to balance the scale. While leaders cannot neglect other duties, teaching and learning should be the area where most of the leaders' scheduled time is allocated (Reading First Notebook, 2005). This argument follows the reasoning that schools are judged on the basis of their academic performance and if anything, evidence should have shown that Kgatleng school heads efforts were skewed towards instructional supervision.

Research work has often attributed the existing instructional supervision gap and limited and/or lack of accountability to lack of training. The work of Moswela and Mphale (2015), for example, has shown that many School Heads and other members of the School Management Team (SMT) were thrown into the deep end with none or very minimal management skills and experience. Pansiri, Isaiah and Isaiah (2014) similarly argue that formal training on instructional leadership is lacking and that if any training took place it possibly may have been devoid of the pedagogical emphasis. This scenario presents a paradox in the accountability discourse since the message it relays is that failure to fully engage in instructional supervision is not a product of contributory negligence as otherwise envisaged. It was observed during inspection that the leadership of the fourteen schools could not confidently offer the needed direction as evidenced by limited and/ or lack of knowledge on what instructional supervision entailed. The concept seemed new to them all, unless unpacked by the inspectors.

Accountability and the Pedagogical continuum – Where are we?

This section intends to assess the extent at which primary schools in Kgatleng had embraced the learner centred pedagogy by the year 2014. In essence, the quality of planning and teaching should promote learner centeredness for one to say learning has taken place. In terms of the quality of planning, teaching, learning and learner achievement standards, 1 Primary School (7.1%) was rated effective, 11

out of 14 (78.6%) were rated ineffective and 2 out of 14 (14.3%) were rated highly ineffective. Thus, inspection findings reflect that all the 14 Primary Schools inspected in 2014 were predominantly teacher centred in their curriculum delivery and planning approaches. The lesson plans had deficiencies since they did not differentiate tasks according to learner ability, they were text book oriented and reflected limited or no use of teaching aids. In the process, learners became listeners. It is clear from the results that learner achievement standards were compromised as a result of ineffective learning coupled with lack of accountability.

These inspection findings present a similar picture to the works of Tabulawa. According to Tabulawa, (1997), studies carried out in Botswana classroom support the findings of the Report of the 1977 National Commission on Education which indicated that, as ever before, teaching in schools remains simple, involves fewer instructional tools, and is teacher centred in approach, with students largely passive in class. Paradoxically, virtually four decades down the line we still observed similar classroom practices as evidenced by the Kgatleng case study. Undoubtedly, this reaffirms the centrality of knowledge at classroom level. This is in spite of the fact that curriculum and assessment reforms in Botswana continue to emphasise a new shift in thinking geared towards producing an independent learner who by standards is globally competitive. Such a move resonates well with the intensions espoused by the Ministry of Basic Education's Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP) which through the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) aims at transforming education from an 'input' based approach (teaching) to an 'output' based approach (learning). In the wake of this paradigm shift, as evidenced by our case study, schools still appear to be less committed and less accountable in embracing new reforms due to ineffective pedagogical approaches.

Failure to adopt the learner centred pedagogy can be linked to what Freire (1993) described as the 'banking concept' of education. The 'banking concept' of education according to Freire is a situation in which knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. In Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, education is suffering from a 'narration sickness' since praxis and learning from diverse discourses is limited. Our case study confirms that the notion of praxis which involves a cycle of theory, application, evaluation, reflection and then back to theory was compromised as evidenced by lesson observations conducted. Thus, the content driven approach to learning, it must be observed, perpetuates the notion of self-fulfilling prophecy as a result of learner dependency syndrome (ETSSP, 2015-2020).

The Ten Year Basic Education Curriculum Blue Print also stipulates as a strategy that a learner-centred approach where curricular materials and learning and teaching strategies are responsive to the needs and interests of the child rather than those of the teacher and where the teacher is viewed as a facilitator rather than a reservoir of knowledge is imperative (National Report of Botswana by Ministry of Education, 2001). The classroom practices observed by the case study equally contravene Duffy, et.al, (1998) argument that there is a strong movement in pedagogical landscape today away from a predominantly didactic model of instruction and towards a learner centred model where the learning activities involve students in inquiry and problem solving, typically in a collaborative framework. I argue that the Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (ETSSP, 2015-2020) as a new paradigm shift perhaps offers a new dimension through the competency based approach to learning. This is simply because the strategy emphasises the need to rethink our approaches and refocus on learning than teaching but this time around with a clearer direction on how to implement the former following training.

Inspection findings from the Kgatleng case study have also revealed that the learner centred approach was not fully applied at school level under the pretext of lack of resources and large class sizes. All the fourteen schools (100%) indicated during interviews and briefings that resources were a contributory factor in facilitating teaching and learning. According to Lynch, (2016), historically, school system reform was guided by “inputs” into the system. Schools were given more resources, more funding, more staffing, and in some cases had added more days to the school year, in an attempt to improve learning outcomes (Lynch, 2016). Lynch firmly maintains that the focus on inputs does not necessarily lead to noticeable improvements in student achievement and that school reform can no longer rely mostly on giving schools more resources since time has shown that inputs have no real impact on student performance.

The works of Tabulawa (1998) echoes the same when he argues that failure to institutionalise a learner-centred pedagogy in Botswana schools has largely been explained in terms of technical problems associated with the shortage of resources. Tabulawa argues to the contrary that this “technicist approach to the problem of pedagogical change is simplistic and inadequate since it disregards fundamental questions relating to the value assumptions inherent in the two pedagogical paradigms – teacher-centeredness and learner-centeredness,” (Tabulawa, 1998). Pedagogical change according to Tabulawa involves more than just the injection of resources into a system that is otherwise perceived as deficient. To this end, I concur with Lynch and Tabulawa that resources are not a panacea to change in methodology. Rather, instructional supervision coupled with accountability, not resources, are the key determinants in changing teaching methodologies. This is further demonstrated by the fact that the same schools in Kgatleng that decried lack of resources improved significantly after inspection in 2015 without any prior injection of resources.

Assessment for Learning OR Assessment of Learning – where are we?

The pinnacle of assessment undoubtedly hinges on accountability and enhancing the quality of learning. Findings from inspection revealed that learner assessment profiles across the fourteen schools did not provide a traceable track record to inform the teacher to plan for instruction in response for continual quality improvement (Inspection Reports, 2014). The amount of work given was as per the inspection findings inadequate, of low order thinking and accompanied by inconsistent marking with no purposeful feedback in all the fourteen schools. Similarly, class work and other forms of formative evaluation such as quizzes, homework, assignments and monthly tests did not reflect achievement of basic competencies in numeracy, writing and reading skills and readiness to the next stage. The study also revealed that there were no assessment standards and quality control measures put in place to guide the quality of assessment in the fourteen schools. Duke, (1982) however, argues that quality control is one of the six functions of instructional leadership related to teacher and school effectiveness.

On the whole, formative evaluation, which in the new thinking is the locus of learning, was less accounted for than summative evaluation in the fourteen inspected schools. The study concluded that formative assessment standards were ineffective thus compromising learner achievement standards in all the 14 schools. The Education and Training Sector Strategic Plan (2015 - 2020) echoes the same by highlighting that, school-based assessment is not well developed. According to ETSSP, schools merely provide tests that mimic the examinations; they do not provide additional types of assessment focusing on measuring the development of skills. The works of Harris (2006), point to the same reasoning as it posits that assessment of academic achievement outcomes by most teachers has, most often, been used in a summative rather than formative way or both (Eze, 2009). This tendency to account and overly focus on assessment after instruction than assessment during instruction has compromised school based

accountability hence creating a supervision gap leading to declining results. According to the National Academies Express (1999), the external accountability structures can set ground rules and design incentives, but these processes will have the desired effect only if the *internal* accountability matches that from the outside. This implies that, a synergy between the two forms of accountability practices needs to be created. If there is a mismatch between the internal and external accountability, when accountability knocks, no one may be home (The National Academies Express, 1999).

The impact of accountability – Reality OR Rhetoric

Prior to the inspection exercise in 2014, the quality/credit pass (% AB) baseline for the fourteen (14) Primary schools in Kgatleng region ranged between 0% and 46% while the quantity pass (% ABC) ranged between 28.6% and 84%. From this data, thirteen (13) Schools out of 14 had scored below 40% AB while nine (9) Schools out of fourteen (14) scored below 60% ABC. Following the inspection exercise, this trend scenario turned around during the 2015 Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE). This was evidenced by ten (10) schools improving their credit pass with significant figures while only 4 showed a decrease. The majority of schools showed value additions ranging between 15% and 38.5% AB. In fact, the school that had 0% AB in 2014 scored a value addition of 38.5% in 2015 and likewise its %ABC improved from 28.6% in 2014 to 84.6% in 2015 with a value addition of 56.0%. During the 2015 PSLE results, 11 Schools out of 14 showed an increase in their pass rates (% ABC) with majority falling within the value addition range between 14% and 56%. From these findings, it logically suffices to argue that the concept of value addition needs serious attention given the fact that it is sometimes overlooked or its significance is overshadowed by schools that beat the national benchmark. The logic here is that a school may for example score 90% and be termed a good school as per the rank order principle yet it had possibly devalued.

For purposes of accountability, I thereto argue that every school succeeds in its own right and as such must be treated uniquely than comparatively. It is for this reason that Figlio and Loeb (2011) argue that when incentives are given to schools that do well, the message relayed here is the creation of 'league tables' which rate and rank schools in a more competitive manner. This according to Figlio and Loeb has made schools appear to pay attention to the subject matter on which the tests are based and less accountable to other areas, thus the notion of teaching for examinations stems from here. What matters most is therefore value addition inasmuch as it shows improvement. Figlio and Loeb (2011) hold to the view that "Growth" measures, often called "gain scores" or "value-added" measures, evaluate schools on the degree to which their students improve in their test performance from one year to the next. They however acknowledge that implications of measurement error are strong for small schools because the smaller the number of students in the school, the larger the school-wide average measurement error, and hence the less consistent the school's ranking is likely to be from one year to the next.

On the basis of the foregoing evidence, it can be concluded that holding schools accountable improves learner and School performance. Most important still, the results have shown that School based accountability makes little or no impact unless it is complemented with externally driven accountability through inspections. It is against this background that Ryan et.al, (2013) argues that, 'if schools are being held accountable for improving teaching and student learning, policy makers should also be expected to support the capacity required to produce improved teaching and learning'. Thus, though perceived as putting pressure on the leadership of the school to produce results, accountability proves to be a useful support mechanism aimed at continually driving results than being counter-productive. A similar thought is echoed by Moswela, (2010) as he argues that "if instructional

supervision is a teaching and learning improvement strategy, then it should be a continuous assessment tool that involves and provides the opportunity for teachers to continuously expand their capacity to learn and to help others”.

Conclusions and recommendations

This study has achieved two goals. First, the results of this study have shown that instructional leadership; the quality of planning, teaching and learning; assessment practices and learner achievement standards were all ineffective in the fourteen primary schools inspected in Kgatleng. From the findings, it was deduced that the school self-evaluation programme was not internalised since it was not understood by the school leadership. This oversight led to low or declining results in the selected schools. The study appreciates that this gap is perhaps work in progress. Inspection as an externally driven form of accountability made a radical but fit for purpose intervention to turn around the situation. The second goal which was also successfully fulfilled was coming up with a tracer study to track the impact made by the inspection exercise. This was done by making a comparative analysis of the 2014 PSLE results and 2015 PSLE results. From the two results, it came out clearly that the fourteen primary schools had improved significantly. In terms of % AB schools had value additions ranging between 15% to 38.55 thus making an average of 26.75% AB. This trend was also observed in % ABC where value additions ranged between 14% ABC and 56% ABC hence making an average value addition of 35% ABC. By achieving these two goals, it is quite apparent that the logic of accountability is critical in improving learner performance. It is upon this background that Moswela (2010) argues that instructional supervision as a teaching and learning improvement strategy has a direct bearing on pedagogy and assessment practices as evidenced by the study.

The results of the study could be used by the Ministry of Basic Education authorities to shape the direction of instructional supervision, pedagogical and assessment approaches. The school leadership and curriculum implementers would equally appreciate the fact that their processes need to be audited either internally or externally for purposes of continual improvement. On the one hand, the paper provides an alternative trajectory for further research on school inspection elsewhere in Botswana to measure consistency of impact. Thus, this would call for the strengthening of the Inspectorate by the Ministry to raise educational standards.

This study, though touching base with a number of issues pertaining to school improvement, epitomizes what could otherwise immensely influence policy, research and practice. It is recommended that the Ministry of Basic Education should effectively roll out the school self-evaluation programme to foster school based accountability hence complimenting school inspection. Whether Botswana’s education system need to continue going the pathway of school inspection or school self-evaluation or both is another topical area of interest for future research. Secondly, the Inspectorate as a quality assurance arm for the ministry should be revamped to discharge of its functions more effectively and efficiently. There are still gaps relating to instructional leadership, thus the school leadership require training in this area. Finally, a school based assessment that affords schools and learners the opportunity to profile their progress is needed to promote assessment for learning than assessment of learning.

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