Implementation of the Performance Management System (PMS) in Senior Secondary Schools in Botswana: An Investigation of Senior Management Team's Expected Benefits of the PMS

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Different forms of the performance management system have been implemented in many countries for some years. As in other countries, in 1999 the government of Botswana took a decision to implement a performance management system (PMS) across the entire public service including schools. The government explained the purpose for which this reform was being implemented. Using grounded theory, school heads, deputy school heads and heads of houses in twenty-two of the twenty-seven schools were interviewed about senior management team's perceptions of the implementation process in senior secondary schools in Botswana. These members of the senior management team are responsible for the implementation process of the PMS in schools. This paper looks at participants' perceptions regarding the expected benefits of the PMS in senior secondary schools.

Key words: performance management system, senior management team, performance improvement, professional development, strategic planning, accountability

One of the major challenges facing many countries has been the need to improve the performance of employees. Therefore, the performance management system came into effect as a management reform to address and redress concerns, organisations had about performance (Sharif, 2002). In education, a wide range of reforms that focus on the performance of schools have also been implemented (Downs, Chadbourne, & Hogan, 2000; Gleeson & Husbands, 2001). Examples of countries with a long history of performance management reform initiatives are mainly those of the west, such as Australia (Downs, Chadbourne, & Hogan, 2000), the United Kingdom and New Zealand (Gordon & Whitty, 1997). Gentle (2001) advises that performance management should be seen as a process and not an event that should permeate the school culture on a daily basis and should therefore, not be taken simply as a routine annual form-fitting exercise aimed at gaining instant reward. In Gentle's (2001) viewpoint, advantage should be taken of this process to generate a more understanding of the organisation's intent of what it is trying to achieve and how this may be achieved. In other words, members of staff should have a shared picture of what success looks like and what they are supposed to achieve.

Like other management systems globally, in 1999 the government of Botswana, introduced the performance management system into the entire government system including the education sector to improve performance in the public service (Republic of Botswana, 2002; Hacker & Washington, 2004).The government's intention for introducing the PMS was to ensure that the public service would, among other things, deliver on set and agreed plans, improve and sustain productivity at all levels of the public service. Furthermore, it was aimed at inculcating a culture of performance and accountability in the public service. This was missing according to the PMS philosophy document. The government also envisaged that the PMS would facilitate and encourage team work at all levels of the public service in

order to achieve goals and objectives within their organisations. This was to be achieved by ensuring that public officers were provided with some skills. These include skills in team building and management, and problem solving techniques (Republic of Botswana, 2002).

It is important to explain that the performance management system was not the first reform ever implemented in schools in Botswana to improve performance. There had been other reforms implemented in the schools. These reforms include the annual confidential reports, the job evaluation for teachers, the teacher performance appraisal scheme (Monyatsi, Steyn, & Kamper, 2006b), the secondary schools management development project and the pastoral care system (Monyatsi, 2005).

Three reforms namely, the annual confidential reports, the job evaluation for teachers, and the teacher performance appraisal scheme, are teacher performance related reforms. The annual confidential reports linked teachers' promotion and annual increment to performance. The job evaluation for teachers emphasised the significance of an assessment of teachers on a continuous basis, and like the confidential reports also linked teachers' performance to pay and promotion (Monyatsi, Steyn, & Kamper, 2006a). A new reform, the teacher performance appraisal scheme, was introduced in schools in 1992. This scheme was intended to assess the performance of teachers objectively with the data contributing to the pay and promotion process. It also offered teachers the opportunity to learn from their own assessment (Monyatsi, 2002; Monyatsi, Steyn, & Kamper, 2006b).

The other two, the secondary schools management development project and the pastoral care system were introduced as school management performance reforms. The secondary schools management development project which was introduced in 1993 was financed by the Botswana and the British governments. One of the aims of the project was to raise the standards of management in secondary schools through the provision of training to school heads and other members of the school senior management team (Monyatsi, 2005).

The second reform as noted in the pastoral policy guidelines, was the pastoral care system which was introduced in schools towards the end of 2000. Key performance areas, namely, students' academic performance, improved school discipline, leadership and management (including the improvement of resource management), and stakeholder involvement, that is, the rate at which such stakeholders as students, staff, and parents were involved, were used to monitor the effectiveness of the pastoral system. This reform is currently operational in the schools and running with the PMS (Republic of Botswana, 2007).

While most of these reforms were a precursor to the PMS, one of them, the pastoral care system was implemented almost at the same time. All these reforms concerned improving practice in schools, and many of the participants in the study had experienced these reforms both as teachers and as members of the senior management team.

It was expected that a well implemented performance management system would benefit the organisation, its managers and employees. That is, the PMS would bring about some integration in the organisation, and that such integration would be 'characterised by a shared vision, common values, communicated strategy and a universal focus on outputs' (Republic of Botswana, 2002, p. 6). It was expected that everybody would know and understand where the organisation was going, why and how it was taking that direction, how they would fit into the picture, and what was expected of them. Further expectation was that in every public organisation, managers would play a leading role in the change process to ensure that there was improved performance and service delivery to the public. In this process the managers were going to be required to facilitate a culture of continuous improvement in the organisations they were leading. To be able to perform their obligations effectively and produce expected results, the managers together with their employees, were to learn new skills and techniques. (Republic of Botswana, 2002).

Purpose of Study

The government states in general how the PMS would benefit all public organisations in terms of public delivery. The purpose of this study was therefore, to investigate the perceptions of the senior management teams about how the PMS would benefit senior secondary schools.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research question:

> What are the senior management teams' expected benefits of the performance management system in senior secondary schools in Botswana?

Literature Review

The literature on reforms provides information about the purpose for which the performance management system has been implemented (Amaratunga & Baldry, 2002; Brumback, 2003). Of the different definitions of the performance management system, is one that is provided by Storey (2002). This definition indicates that it is a reform that "refers to those various attempts that are designed to ensure that organisations, units and individuals work effectively and efficiently" (p. 321). Storey notes that from this definition, it is clear that the target to be managed should range from individual employees through to the entire organisation. In addition, she suggests that the concern is not just with effort and efficiency but also with effectiveness, which means that the right things should be accomplished. Harrison (2005) and Ronsholt & Andrews (2005) reveal that Tanzania like Botswana, implemented a performance management system, with one of the main purposes for which it was introduced as being to improve efficiency in the public service. The Tanzanian reform, like that of Botswana, was also implemented as a "one size fits all" which targeted the entire public sector. The Kenyan appraisal system as reported by Odhiambo (2005) also had as one of its aims the improvement of performance in schools.

A further suggestion by Brumback (2003) is that performance management should be appraised, and the appraised performance should be sanctioned. Graham (2004) emphasises the need for clear performance expectations for each employee to be linked to the desired outcomes documented in the organisation's strategic plan. According to Graham these expectations have to 'be observable, measurable, or otherwise verifiable' (p. 7). According to Hughes (2003) governments, like the private sector, are insisting on the development of performance indicators as a way of measuring progress in public organisations. The understanding is that the performance of staff over a given period of time would be measured more systematically than it has ever been before. Down, Hogan, and Chadbourne (1999) make mention of a performance management that is linked directly to the department's goals and ensure that the appraisal review of teachers demonstrate accountability and opportunities for professional growth and development.

Further suggested as a function of the performance management by Amaratunga & Baldry (2002) is that of a tool organisations can use to 'track progress and direction towards strategic goals and objectives and should focus on whether the organisation has met its performance goals and targets' (p. 221). Amaratunga & Baldry (2002) emphasise that, 'there must be a goal-achievement analysis, in which the organisation draws conclusions about what it is doing well, what it is not doing well, and what can be improved' (p. 222). Similarly, Flapper, Fortuin, & Stoop (1996) point to the significance of performance indicators (PIs) for everyone in the organisation. They argue that these are essential because 'they tell what is to be measured and what are the control limits the actual performance should be within' (p. 27). Also mentioned by Flapper, Fortuin, & Stoop (1996) and Storey (2002), as important in the performance management is the setting of targets that should be negotiated between the employers and employees.

A similar reflection on the information organisations are providing about the components of the PMS that give an idea of what they are doing is provided by Graham (2004). She indicates that many organisations have implemented a performance management system that includes such components as mission, vision and values; goals and objectives focused on outcomes; performance measures and targets; as well as strategies aimed at achieving set targets. She argues among other things, for a well articulated mission and operating vision that is understood and accepted by employees.

The role of professional development is also reflected as key component of the performance management system each organisation should have to develop its staff. Professional development is mentioned by Graham (2004) who makes reference to the significance employees' competencies such as knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes would help them successfully perform their job. For Graham if the right people who have the right competencies are not available or managed well, it would be difficult to effectively and efficiently achieve the strategic goals and objectives of the organisation.

Methodology

This qualitative study was conducted using the grounded theory methodology as described by Strauss & Corbin (1990) with some modifications. Patton (2002) has argued that a qualitative research methodology can help researchers approach fieldwork without being constrained by any predetermined categories of analysis and this "contributes to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry" (p. 14). A further strength of qualitative research, as explained by Gay, Mills, & Airasian (2009), is the opportunity it provides researchers to interact with and gather data directly from their research participants to understand a phenomenon from their perspectives. Because relatively little research has been done on understanding the experience of school senior managers implementing performance management systems, a qualitative approach suited this study because it would permit an indepth exploration of their experience. As further maintained by Patton (2002), had I used a quantitative research approach, I would have been constrained by its requirement of standardised measures and predetermined response categories to which numbers would have already been assigned.

Since its development by Glaser & Strauss (1967) in the 1960s, grounded theory has been used in many disciplines including health, social work, psychology and management (Goulding, 1998); nursing (Lomborg& Kirkevold, 2003); education (Patton, 2002); and information science (Mansourian, 2006). According to Strauss & Corbin (1990), grounded theory about a phenomenon "is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon" (p. 23). Punch (2001) emphasises that grounded theory is a research strategy aimed at generating theory from data. Mansourian (2006) notes that with the grounded theory approach, the theory emerges from the data inductively; he describes grounded theory as "inductive, contextual and processual" (p. 397).

Punch (2009) argues that grounded theory "represented a coordinated and systematic overall research strategy that was also flexible." (p. 134). This, he argues, is in contrast to the ad hoc and uncoordinated approaches that are sometimes discredited for lack of well-formulated methods for the analysis of data. In addition, Punch depicts grounded theory as very relevant to education which "has to do with the identification of research problems from professional practice, and from organisational and institutional contexts" (p. 134), situations in which a traditional hypothesis-testing approach would not be appropriate. The point Punch is making here is that, many problems confronting education research are new since they come from new developments in professional practice or from newly developing contexts. He argues that these areas require empirical research much of which is qualitative, for which theory verification approach would not be appropriate. He maintains that the grounded theory generation approach would be most appropriate for these new areas since there is a lack of grounded concepts that describe and explain what goes on.

One of the reasons for choosing the grounded theory approach for this qualitative research project is its focus on inductive strategies of generating theory in contrast to other theoretical perspectives which emphasise theory developed "by logical deduction from a priori assumptions" (Patton, 2002, p. 125). Gay, Mills, & Airasian (2009) also indicate that the analysis of data inductively is done without making assumptions about the findings prior to collecting evidence. Against this background, I found that developing theory inductively would be more suited for my study in that it would be based on the research participants' lived experience in secondary schools in Botswana, a topic that has not been studied indepth. I was further attracted to grounded theory because it offers a framework in terms of the data generation and coding procedures that guide the analytic process which would lead to generating theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The criteria used for evaluating a grounded theory study generally relate to the elements of grounded theory that it employs. Glaser (1992, p. 16) gives a summary of some important requirements in grounded theory. These are:

> (1) the significance of the researcher getting out into the field to understand what is going on, (2) the importance of theory which is grounded in reality, (3) the nature and significance of experience in the field for the participants and researcher as continually evolving, (4) the active role of persons in shaping the world they live in through the processes of symbolic interaction, (5) an emphasis on change and processes and the variability of and complexity of life, and (6) the interrelationship between meaning in the perception of the subjects and their action.

Grounded theorists since Glaser and Strauss have also presented criteria in terms of the elements of the process that I have described. The continuous process of collecting and analysing data to saturation using the constant comparative method of analysis, for example, is deemed as critical to grounded theory (Charmaz, 2003; Boychuk Duchscher & Morgan, 2004; Egan, 2002; Elliott & Lazenbatt, 2005; Mansourian, 2006; Rennie, 1998, 2000). Rennie (2000) argues that Glaser and Strauss developed the technique of constant comparative analysis to force the analyst to be close to the data in order to avoid coming up with subjective understanding of the data. Mansourian (2006) emphasises the significance of constant comparison by describing the process as "a pivotal point for success of GT in a research project" (p. 399).

Participants in the Study

My research participants were the whole management team. This team comprised of the 22 school heads, 18 deputy school heads and 54 heads of houses, a representation from twenty-two secondary schools out of a total of twenty-seven public secondary schools. I decided to include the whole management team in the study and not just the school heads because the SMTs work as a team, and school heads often delegate most of the implementation of reforms to the team members. These participants are considered key given their overarching leadership positions in their respective schools.

Interview Data Collection

In line with grounded theory my task as a researcher was to understand the perceptions of the participants (Graser & Strauss, 1967). I did this through in-depth interviews as the primary source of the data (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Rapley, 2004). This involved a lot of conversation with the participants. As we discussed, their perceptions about benefits of the PMS emerged. Other sources of data that were used to provide information about the purpose of the PMS in Botswana were publically available government documents, such the PMS Philosophy document (Republic of Botswana, 2002) and the pastoral policy guidelines (Republic of Botswana, 2007).

The interview was selected over other forms of data collection such as observations because face-to-face interviews have many advantages for gathering high-quality information for purposes similar to that of this study. As pointed out by Allan (2003) and Berends (2006), interviews provide an opportunity for researchers to clarify questions that may be confusing and to gather additional elaboration from respondents to help clarify answers. In addition, in face-to-face interviews researchers are assured that the people responding are the ones for which the interviews were intended, something that one would not be assured of when using a data collection instrument such as a mail survey.

During the interviews, I was able to probe and ask follow-up questions for further clarification as suggested by Patton (2002). While doing this, I was also conscious of Rapley's (2004) caution to researchers to be careful when probing as this needs skill or else it may easily lead to bias. The interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis with the school heads while deputy school heads and heads of houses were interviewed together as one small group in each school.

Data Analysis and Coding

Data analysis involved coding of field work data. During the analysis, I checked notes against the recorded interviews and against the codes generated. The coding process, which comprised several iterations and several revisions, was recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The use of the spreadsheet was useful since it was relatively easy to modify codes, introduce new coding at different times during the process, recode data, code data with multiple codes, and sort the spreadsheet by codes or participants. The coding began with one whole transcript at a time coding phrase by phrase or sentence by sentence (Strauss 1987; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) depending on the content.

In this paper, some conceptual categories from the data analysis are included to support the findings (see Tables 1, 2, 3 & 4). Where relevant, numbers are attached to the conceptual categories to show the number of participants whose interview data was allocated to a particular category. All these numbers, big or small, are useful because grounded theory attempts to account for the range of experiences that individuals have of a particular phenomenon.

Furthermore, abbreviations are used to distinguish the participants. Each participant is identified by three letters, for example AAA, AAB, ZZC and ZZD. The first two letters in the abbreviations represent a particular school. The third letter indicates the participant's position in the school. The letter 'A' is for the school head, 'B' is for the deputy school head and the letter 'C' and subsequent letters represent heads of houses. In the examples provided, AAA and AAB come from the same school with the first being the school head and the other the deputy. In the cases of ZZC and ZZD, both are heads of houses at the same school.

Limitations of the Study

One major limitation of this study was that it was based on only one stakeholder, namely the senior management team. Other equally important stakeholders such as teachers, the ministry and students whose perspective of the PMS may have been different and provided a balanced view of their expectations of the PMS at school level were not within the remit of this study.

Another limitation was the timeframe over which the data was collected. While the data was collected at one point of the implementation, it is likely that things have changed since the data was collected at that particular time. Owing to the fact that the data collection was confined to a limited timeframe, I never got to know what later happened regarding the expressed participants' perceptions at the time. For instance, whether or not the PMS benefitted the schools subsequent to the data collection remains unknown.

There was also the limitation specifically associated with the grounded methodology that I used to collect the data. One of the requirements using this approach is for researchers to spend longer periods of time in the field to allow an in-depth interaction with the participants with the aim to discover their main concern in the field and how they intend to deal with it. Emphasis is also on the significance of jointly collecting, coding and analysing data and in the process deciding what data to collect next and where to find them in order to develop theory as it emerges. This process was difficult to achieve given the limited timeframe within which the study had to be completed, and as such what is presented in the study is an adopted version of grounded theory.

Findings and Discussion

RQ: Senior Management Team's Expected Benefits of the PMS

The participants hold expectations about what the benefits of the PMS would be as well as what it should be. They perceive the purpose of the PMS to be a "reform for managing performance" and a "reform for improving performance" that would bring a range of benefits to their schools. The findings address the research question pertaining to the senior management team's perceptions about benefits of the performance management system in senior secondary schools in Botswana?

A Reform for Managing Performance

The PMS as a "reform for managing performance" captures what the participants believe to be the two key elements by which performance would be more effectively managed than it has been previously. These are the requirement for the school to have a strategic plan, and to use the PMS as a tool for staff to account for their performance. Central to these requirements is the need for all staff members to have personal development plans (PDPs).

A Tool for Strategic Planning

The participants' perceptions about the PMS, as also indicated by Amaratunga & Baldry (2002), and Graham (2004), is that of a tool for strategic planning and their expectation is that it would provide the direction desired in the schools. With the inception of this reform, the expectation is that schools would develop a strategic plan that would reflect all their prioritised activities for implementation over a set period of time. Many participants emphasise the significance of the setting of objectives, targets and timeline schedules, as well as the drawing up and the implementation of plans as important elements of the strategic planning process. Table 1 lists the conceptual categories that illustrate the participants' perceptions of the key aspects of the PMS as a tool for strategic planning.

Table 1. Conceptual categories portraying the PMS as a planning tool

Title of category	Number of participants
PMS promotes strategic planning	32
PMS promotes planning with objectives	25
PMS is about planning with targets in mind	24
PMS emphasises timeline schedules	19
PMS requires staff to implement the strategic plan	9

The data reveal that thirty-two participants talk in favour of the expected process of strategic planning to be introduced in schools. One of the participants, ABC, reflects on the anticipated devel-

opment of "a strategic plan for the whole school for the whole year or for three years." Another participant, WWC, states that it is essential for staff to engage in strategic planning to ensure "that there is an organised plan which shows clearly what is it that we want to do from January to December."

Identified in the data as two of the most important steps in the process of strategic planning, are the setting of objectives (Amaratunga & Baldry, 2002) and the setting of targets (Flapper, Fortuin & Stoop, 1996; Graham 2004). One of the participants who make mention of the significance of objectives is QQB who states: "The whole idea of strategic planning is to plan with objectives and to work towards achieving them." AAD indicates that the expectation is for the school to come up with a strategic plan and that it is from this plan that "individuals are going to come up with objectives looking at the strategic plan for the whole school."

With respect to the importance of target setting, participants emphasise how individual targets need to be consistent with school targets which in turn, have to dovetail with the objectives of the strategic plan. IIA points out that she likes the idea of "strategic planning and having targets since it gives direction. It is through setting and working toward targets according to a timeline that the strategic plan would be implemented."

In addition to the setting of objectives and targets, the setting of deadlines emerges in the data as an anticipated integral part of strategic planning process. By way of illustration, QQA explains: "We might ask teachers to do remedial teaching or any other school activity, and then indicate the deadline for completion." Further emphasising the significance of timeline schedules in the PMS, CCB states: "Basically you would be required to have your deadlines for everything, the tests and everything, and the completion of the syllabus. This is emphasised in PMS as part of planning." Setting and abiding by deadlines is not generally seen as a well-established practice in schools before the implementation of the PMS. More generally, the participants suggest that the practices of strategic planning, setting of objectives and targets would almost be entirely new for many staff members.

As pointed out in the literature, the need for all members of staff to be involved at the grass-roots level in the strategic planning (Amaratunga & Baldry, 2002) is emphasised by many of the participants. VVA, for example, indicates that the expected starting point in the process of strategic planning is for all members of staff to participate in some discussion that would lead to the development of the strategic plan of the school. He emphasises the need for the senior management team to take everybody on board and that collectively means "you should all agree on the plan based on the understanding of the mandate of the school." BBC also argues for the importance of the discussion stage and explains that teachers and supervisors are all to be involved at this level of the planning process in order "to agree on the objectives and critical activities they are going to carry out and how they will meet the objectives."

A Tool for Accountability

All the participants expect that the strategic plan has to be carried out; it is not a document to be left on the shelf. The data reveal that the participants perceive the PMS as a reform that would promote accountability amongst members of staff in the school, as well as accountability of the school to the regional office. The PMS as a tool that could be used to appraise teachers' work and hold them accountable for their performance is noted by Down, Hogan, & Chadbourne (1999). Table 2 summarises participant perceptions regarding the significance of the PMS as a tool for accountability.

Table 2. Conceptual categories concerning the PMS as a tool for accountability

Title of category	Number of participants
PMS is a tool used to hold people accountable for their performance	50
PMS has introduced a system of monitoring to hold people accountable for their performance	24
PMS is a tool for supervisors to hold supervisees accountable for their performance	24
PMS is a tool for supervisees to hold supervisors accountable for their performance	6
PMS will promote ownership through performance development plans by staff	10
PMS is a self-monitoring tool for people to account for their own performance	6

The need for accountability as suggested by Brumback (2003) is accepted as unavoidable but it is also welcomed. TTA expresses a commonly held sentiment: "We want accountability. The Ministry wants a completely accountable school. To some extent that is possible and we are trying to move in that direction. People must be held accountable for their performance."

The PMS is seen as introducing a level of accountability that has not been there in the past. One participant, DDA, states: "The performance management brings in the mind of the teachers that probably, they have to be more accountable for their actions in the schools than before." LLC notes that in the past, there has been little accountability of the kind that he hopes the PMS would be achieving: "You need to account for failure to achieve the objectives you set out to achieve. In the past, if the students' academic results were as low as 40% it didn't really matter. PMS demands accountability for such poor performance."

Some see the PMS as a much more constructive approach to accountability than previous attempts because it involves monitoring of performance as well as measuring performance. The PMS appears to place value not only on measures of accountability but also on actions that have been attempted to improve performance. QQA explains:

> Those who are above us demand that accountability. The problem initially was that people would not actually want to see the steps that you are taking in your work. They would be more interested in the end result without seeing whether you were encountering any problems. Now they have to monitor people's progress to be able to hold them accountable for performance.

The participants recognise that the performance agreement between the school head and the regional Chief Education Officer, and the performance development plans (PDPs) within the school between supervisees and their supervisors, are two of the key elements by which accountability is built into the PMS. A performance agreement contains the overall objectives a school intends to achieve over a given period of time. These objectives are documented in the school strategic plan. School heads sign the performance agreement with the regional Chief Education Officer to whom they are accountable, on behalf of their respective schools. A performance development plan (PDP) is drawn by individual staff members to indicate a set of objectives derived from the school strategic plan each individual intends to achieve over a period of time. Individuals also have to write in their PDPs, the professional needs in

which they would like to be developed. An insight of how the monitoring process is expected to work in order to ultimately hold people to account for their performance is provided by one of the deputies, MMB. He explains:

> At least you are not going to stop and start checking what the person has really achieved. You will monitor the person's progress and there will be a reference point to show what the teacher would have planned to achieve. The individual will be held accountable for what he would have or have not achieved.

Participants understand that the existing top-down hierarchical structure within the schooling system would also structure the accountability "flow". The school's ultimate accountability is to the regional office. KKA points out: "The responsibility of school heads is to sign performance agreements with Chief Education Officers on behalf of their schools. At the end of the year, the school heads are held accountable for the achievement of the overall school objectives."

While the perception that the PMS would hold supervisees accountable to supervisors is strong, another perception, albeit much less common (see Table 3), is that of the PMS as a tool supervisees could use to hold their supervisors accountable to them. AAB provides a scenario in which the supervisee may use the PMS to appeal a decision not to grant promotion:

> If somebody has been performing, there will be evidence based on continuous measurement. And if he is denied progression on the basis of non-performance, the person can take you, the supervisor, to task and say, 'But let's go back to our reviews and let's see where you actually identify some weaknesses in me and what it is that you have actually done.'

A similar example regarding the use of the PMS as a tool to hold supervisors accountable is provided by ABA. She argues: "In PMS there is no surprise. When you decide not to recommend teachers for promotion, you should have all the data to back you, or else they challenge your decision because you don't have evidence of lack of performance."

The research participants believe that the PMS is not only a top-down tool but also a tool that staff could own and therefore commit themselves to this reform. The need for staff ownership of and commitment to a reform is further reiterated by Gentle (2001). The requirement to produce a PDP is seen as the mechanism by which a sense of ownership could be generated. One such participant, EEA, points out: "PMS is assuring accountability of each staff member in the sense that once you have a PDP, you are saying, 'This is what I am going to do.' It is forcing you to come up with a plan." Related remarks by FFA also reflect the expectation of the people to have ownership of the plan. He explains: "Junior members of staff are supposed to account for their plans and put on paper what they are going to do. And they have to do that to account for their performance."

The PDPs are also identified as a means by which self-monitoring can be promoted and, where possible, corrective measures taken. QQA shows that it is not just about supervisors monitoring the work of their supervisees and holding them accountable for their performance. The expectation is that individuals would also be able to monitor themselves and move forward in terms of how they could do better knowing that they have to account for their own performance. The participant indicates:

> You have to know how to plan, monitor your own plan and be committed to that plan to see to it that it goes through so that at the end of the day, you see whether you have achieved the results through those plans that you did.

In summary, from the perspective of increasing accountability, the PMS appears to serve several purposes. There is the clear and relatively strong view that the PMS is supposed to be a top-down tool that supervisors would use to hold their supervisees accountable for their performance. There is the less articulated view that the PMS would be a means by which supervisees could hold supervisors accountable in their judgements of their performance. There is also a third perception that the PMS through the PDPs would offer a self-monitoring tool that people would own and use to measure their own performance and therefore decide how best to improve their work.

A Reform for Improving Performance

The data show that the participants across the twenty-two senior secondary schools further perceive the PMS in schools as a reform aimed at improving performance. Participants also see professional development as core to the reform for improvement.

A Reform for Improving Performance in the Workplace

Participants understand the purpose of the PMS to be a reform that is to improve performance in various ways, the view also held by Graham (2004)) that performance management should concern itself with the improvement of performance in an organisation. Similarly, Hacker & Washington (2004) and Harrison (2005) reveal that the purpose of the implementation of the PMS in Botswana and Tanzania respectively, was to improve performance in the workplace. Most interpretations of performance improvement from the participants' views are couched in the language of education. Some, however, reveal the discourse of business.

In the main, performance improvement is talked about in the language normally associated with teaching and learning. Many speak of improvement in performance in general terms, while others are more specific and refer to improvement of particular professional practices such as discipline or the improvement of particular outcomes such as students' academic results. The conceptual categories representing participants' views are illustrated in Table 3.

These conceptual categories show that the participants believe that the PMS would improve different aspects of the school. However, two conceptual categories about teaching and learning, and students' academic results signify that the dominant participants' perception about the PMS is of a reform that should focus mainly on the improvement of classroom instruction.

Table 3. Conceptual categories representing views about improvement of teaching and learning

Title of category	Number of participants
PMS should help members of staff to improve performance	20
PMS should focus on improvement of the core business of teaching and learning	30
PMS should focus on performance in dealing with school discipline	6
PMS should focus on excellence in co-curricular activities	2
PMS should be about improvement of performance to produce good students' academic results	35

Participants who allude in general terms to the expectation that the PMS would lead to the improvement of performance include VVC who states: "Here, we look at PMS as a tool or mechanism that enhances performance." Likewise, AAA indicates: "We are accepting it as an intervention that is going to improve or help us improve performance."

When improvement in performance is described in more specific terms, two perspectives are evident, and this is also emphasised in the pastoral policy guidelines (Republic of Botswana, 2007). One centres on the improvement of teaching and learning generally. Some of these participants take a more holistic approach than others and include co-curricular activities (e.g., sports, traditional music activities, debating) as well as student welfare and discipline in their understanding of teaching and learning. The other perspective focuses squarely on the improvement of outcomes specifically in terms of student academic outcomes.

For some participants, the focus of the PMS should be on teaching and learning which they consider to be the core business of the school. DDA for example, points out: "I think, probably, if a reform has to be introduced in a school, you ought to sit down first and look at how it can be aligned to teaching and learning." Another school head, ZZA, also believes: "In the schools, both us in management and our teachers think PMS must focus more on teaching and learning because it is our core business. Other things we must do to support teaching and learning."

Instead of conceptualising the improvement of performance in terms of processes to do with teaching and learning, many participants view performance in terms of output. For example, ABD equates the two when she says that the PMS intends "to improve performance or the output." Output is defined as the end of year student academic results attained from sitting the public examinations. For these participants, the attainment of good academic results should be the dominant aim of the PMS. This view point is illustrated by MMA's observation:

> PMS is about monitoring how you have improved the performance, improved the grades that you got from junior certificate. You could spend hours and hours mounting workshops on objectives but your objectives will only be meaningful at the end of the day if the results of the school are good.

From MMA's perspective, improvement of students' academic grades is the priority for the school and should be the priority of the PMS. The belief is that spending time on workshops would be a futile exercise if it does not yield good students' academic results.

The participants who subscribe to the view that the PMS should be about the improvement of the students' academic grades suggest that while this reform may, in theory, encompass a wide range of school activities, what counts most is the attainment of good academic results. In other words, as much as a school may excel in other school processes or activities such as improving pastoral care or financial management, should students' academic results be deemed poor, then all the other good work would count for nothing.

As indicated, a small number of the total participant group of 94 used the discourse of business and industry to express the purpose of the PMS. The two main concepts used are that of improving "productivity" and improving "customer service". Three codes that denote the use of language of business in schools are *PMS is a reform intended to improve productivity* (5); *PMS is about improvement of productivity (3)* and *PMS emphasises good customer service* (4).
Of the participants who speak of productivity, WWA addresses it in general terms and explains:

> The main aim of the PMS is to improve productivity. Basically, it is all about improving productivity. When it was introduced, it was one of the initiatives by the Ministry which was again borrowed from elsewhere to try and improve productivity.

In contrast, YYA and BBA offer more detail concerning what they mean by improvement in productivity. YYA believes the aim of the PMS is to improve productivity in terms of "anything that has to do with efficiency and effectiveness." In summary, he claims that "the PMS is all about the prudent use of resources." The third participant BBC makes particular mention of time as a resource when he says, "I think PMS has made people be time conscious and more productive."

Participant reference to the second business concept of "customer service" shows different interpretations of the term. For some participants there is still awareness that this language is coming from another field, while for a few, the language appears to have been absorbed and has become part of their talk. Furthermore, for some participants the customer is the student while for others it is the parent.

However, MMA shows a departure from this usage of the term in two respects. Firstly, he unlike the others, refers to the parent as well as the student as the customer. Secondly, he demonstrates that this language and its newly acquired use in schools have become part of his talk as indicated in this quote: "And when you talk of customer satisfaction, parents are also included. You can only satisfy them if they know what you're doing in school. You have to invite them to come for parents' day."

Similarly, EEA also refers to parents as the customer. He recognises the improvement of customer service as an essential but sometimes challenging task for the school management. He cites an example illustrating the multiple demands made on management: "While you are still attending to other school activities some customers are coming in and these customers are not happy. But PMS is supposed to be improving customer service, so there is a clash."

Professional Development Perceived as Key to Improving Performance

Participants consider professional development as the central element to improving performance. They expect that professional development would result mainly from in-service training provided through workshops and coaching. The participants' views regarding professional development are shared by Graham (2004) and Mahony, Hextall, & Menter (2004), who also see the central role of professional development as paramount to the improvement of performance. The three conceptual categories representing the participants' understanding of the professional development component of the PMS are listed in Table 4.

Table 4. Conceptual categories representing views about professional development as key to improving performance

Title of category	Number of participants
PMS should promote staff development	26
PMS should promote in-service training	20
PMS is about coaching of staff	25

Participants' expectation of the PMS is of a reform designed to improve teacher performance through support. It is expected that identified areas of weakness in staff members' practice would lead to targeted staff development. The role of the supervisor includes the responsibility of developing their staff as YYB indicates: "The expectation is that supervisors will assess the teachers' work and then develop them to improve their performance." JJC emphasises the need for the PMS to develop staff and to not just find weaknesses, suggesting that "this will help them improve performance and teach better to improve students' results."

In-service training through workshops—initiated by Ministry or the individual school—and coaching are envisaged as the main means by which the PMS would lead to improved performance. For

BBC, it is essential that "the school head … actually be at the driver's seat of all the teachers' in-service training."

Many participants envisage that the implementation of the PMS would encourage the practice of coaching understood to be a one-on-one process between the supervisor and the supervisee aimed at helping improve personal practice. EEA indicates that "the expectation is that teachers would be coached, supported and assessed."

A particular area that some participants expect staff development is in the PMS itself with first priority given to the senior management team. DDA's expectation of the PMS is that the first to be thoroughly trained should be the senior management team, and that such training should include sending them "for courses even if it is short courses for a month or two." WWD also points out that the "PMS is intended to train us so that we can explain PMS related issues to our staff with confidence."

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has shed light on the perceptions of the senior managers regarding their expectations of the performance management system in senior secondary schools. The study provides evidence to suggest that the senior management have high expectations of the purpose for which the PMS was introduced. In accordance with the Ministry's intent, they see the PMS as a reform intended to improve performance. They note four major purposes of the PMS at the school level. First, is that the PMS would be a tool that could help schools to improve planning at all levels of the school. The expectation is that all the schools would have a strategic plan to provide the direction desired in the schools. This means that the schools would develop a strategic plan that reflects all their priorities for implementation over a specified period of time. Secondly, is the expectation that that the PMS would be used as a tool for staff to account for their performance. In other words, the reform would be used as a tool to objectively measure teachers' performance in order to hold them accountable for their performance.

The third expectation is that of the use of the PMS as a reform that would lead to improvement of performance in the workplace, that is, performance management should give priority to the improvement of performance in an organisation. Finally, is the expectation that the PMS would be a means to introduce more professional development at the school level. This suggests that while the senior management appreciate the existence of some professional development in the schools, they are of the view that performance management would increase the extent to which this is provided. For instance, senior management expect that professional development activities initiated by the Ministry or the individual schools would increase as some of the main means by which the PMS would lead to improved performance.

As it stands senior management's expectations of the PMS match the purpose for which the government decided to introduce this reform. In both cases the PMS is perceived as a reform that would ensure effectiveness and efficiency in terms of employees' performance in the organisation. Highlighted as significant in ensuring efficiency in the organisation is the role of management. Furthermore, strategic planning is emphasised as a requirement that should show among other things, some achievable goals and objectives, key performance and results areas as well as measures of performance.

While there is evidence to suggest that the senior management expectations of the PMS are positive, what needs to be also explored is the extent to which the implementation of the performance management system has in practice benefitted the schools. Furthermore, the views of the senior management regarding the challenges they were likely to encounter in the implementation of the PMS have not been sought in this study. Two recommendations are suggested. These are:

1) Further research should be conducted to understand the factors that make the senior management to be positive about the PMS.

2) Schools should be assisted to contextualise the PMS to their local environment for effective implementation of this reform.

Implications for Research and Practice

This study contributes to the body of research on performance management in schools in Botswana. It adds to our understanding of the implementers' perceptions about a performance management system in schools and it contributes to the research in this field conducted in less developed countries.

The empirical studies that have been undertaken about performance management systems have, in the main, been evaluative in nature. They have tended to evaluate the implementation process or they have evaluated the effectiveness of performance management systems in improving performance. Studies about reforms in less developed countries, and especially Africa, also have tended to be evaluations. Hacker & Washington's (2004) evaluation of the impact of the performance management system in the public service in Botswana is one such example.

In contrast with most empirical studies in the field of performance management, this study is not an evaluation. The focus of this grounded theory study is on the senior management teams' perceptions about the benefits of implementing the PMS in their schools. In this study, the senior managers have the opportunity to express their own views regarding what they are supposed to be implementing without being judged or evaluated. The substantive theory inductively developed from this study is based on the participants' perspectives of the reform they are supposed to implement in their own schools. As Glaser (2002) points out, grounded theory is a perspective based methodology in which the researchers have a responsibility to discover people's multiple perspectives in the data.

While there is an extensive body of research on performance management systems in schools, these studies have mainly taken place in western countries. According to Bulawa (2011), very few studies have been conducted about the implementation of this reform in schools in African countries. This study contributes to a small but developing research literature on the performance management system in African countries.

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