

A Comparative Analysis of SMTs (School Management Teams) and Teachers Perceived Preferred Leadership Style: A Case of Selected Primary Schools in Botswana

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The study compared the SMTs (School Management Teams) and teachers' perceptions of preferred leadership styles in some selected schools in Botswana. SMTs and teachers completed a questionnaire adopted from the leadership styles questionnaires. The findings of the study pointed to an overwhelming view that the preferred style of leadership is the collaborative type. It was also found that SMTs overrated themselves as displaying the collaborative behaviors than they were rated by teachers. It could be a result of superiority bias on the part of SMTs or could be a challenge of comparative research which attempts to compare objects of different contexts (SMTs and teachers). The recommendation made was that continuous comparisons of perceived leadership styles should be made from self-reflections by SMTs and evaluations of SMTs leadership behaviors by teachers who are the mirrors of the SMTs. The results could be used as a basis for school-based management interventions as well as input into the university-based management programmes reviews for fitness of purpose. It is also recommended that a study to assess whether or not there is a correlation between the preferred leadership and performance by these selected schools conducted.

Keywords: school management teams, teachers, preferred leadership style, illusory superiority, collaborative leadership, empowerment

Introduction

Leadership Styles in Education

School organizations are inundated with different types of leadership styles as their different leaders are influenced by varied contexts. According to Lewin, leadership styles can basically be divided into three main types which are the Hierarchical or the Autocratic, the Collaborative or Democratic or Transformational or Participative and the Laissez-faire or Delegative (Cherry, 2011). Each school organization may be characterized by experiencing any of the three types or even all of them to different extents. While each organization may experience all the three, there is normally a particular style that a given organization may be associated with, which is the most preferred style depending on the experiential learning, training and the personal traits of the leader. Hierarchical leadership is characterized by the facts, for example, a leader being responsible for everything from setting goals, securing resources to achieve such goals, liaising with the external environment as well as closely monitoring what the subordinates do. This leadership style assumes that

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other people are not good enough, therefore, cannot be entrusted with responsibilities. The leader in this case has no confidence and trust in the subordinates' decision-making abilities while he/she communicates less and motivates by threatening them. This leadership, if it is the preferred one in a school, may prove to be very ineffective as it may de-motivates those who have maturity in terms of willingness and ability to work, and therefore, as independent thinkers (Dadar, Faize, Niwaz, Hussain, & Zaman, 2010). This group may feel undermined while those immature may feel good about being given directives.

Another leadership style which can be observed in a school situation is the laissez-faire style which reflects abdication of responsibility and indecisiveness by the leader (Muenjohn, 2008). The leadership assumes that everyone can take charge of what they do and do as they see fit. It is, however, noted that if this leadership is dominant, it can be very destructive (Skogstad Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland, & Hetland, 2007), as not everyone in any organization can be able to work on their own. The unwilling and unable workers can take advantage, sit back and do nothing. It is, therefore, argued that lack of coordination of otherwise supposed to be related events may cause conflicts, and therefore, compromise achievement of institutional goals.

Yet, another style is the transformational or participative or collaborative leadership style. This style is premised on the idea that everyone in a school organization has a role to play and can add value to the decision-making processes one way or the other. While people may be at different levels of job maturity, their strengths may vary according to given tasks and involving such people, as per their strengths per task may assist in achieving institutional goals. According to Kulkarmi (2010), this style opens doors widely for intellectual excitement, motivation and creativity through shared vision mission and values, and in the process, empowers the participants in leadership. Howell and Avolio (1993) pointed out that transformational leadership helps followers collectively maximize performance. It is argued that this leadership style is more likely to improve performance if it is the most preferred in any school organization and should be the most used.

Efforts to Improve Education Management in Botswana Primary Schools

To improve the education standards in Botswana, the Ministry of Education and Skills Development has always made efforts to improve management of schools at all levels. Such effort at primary school level was the introduction of the PSMDP (Primary Schools Management Development Programme) which aimed at improving primary education through improved management. The PSMDP was in part a response to RNPE (Revised National Policy on Education) of 1994 by stating that:

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

The main goal of the PSMDP was to improve the quality of primary education in Botswana by providing effective management training and support to school management teams (Republic of Botswana, 2000). The overall aim of the project was, therefore, to empower leaders and establish a sustainable primary school management system. An evaluation study of the PSMDP (Monyatsi, 2006) and a program sustenance study of the PSMDP (Tsayang, Monyatsi, Bulawa, & Mhozya, 2010) both concluded that the programme was able to achieve its mandate.

Another attempt to improve management in primary education was the introduction of a Bachelors Degree in Primary Education Programme and later the introduction of the Bachelor of Education in Educational

Management Programme at the University of Botswana (University of Botswana, 2008). Both programmes intended preparing personnel for higher posts of responsibility in the field of primary education. Short term courses in school leadership continuously offered through school and cluster based workshops, IDM (Institute of Development Management) as well as head teachers' conferences were some of the ways in which school leaders were supported in order to improve their leadership behaviors to achieve improved school performance.

The training leaders in these various programmes sensitized leaders to various approaches to leadership (autocratic, the collaborative and the laissez-faire), their pros and cons, and how each of them had a place in the running of a school. The trainings also noted the importance of involving others in decision-making as a most preferred, whilst others styles could be used on a situational basis.

Statement of the Problem

With all the efforts outlined above, it is anticipated that there should be a significant positive change in the management practices at primary schools from the supposed to be dominant traditional autocratic styles which characterized school management yesterday. SMTs as beneficiaries of these interventions were asked to do a self-assessment of their own practices to find out if they were aware of their own leadership behaviors or styles. Teachers as subordinates, and therefore, recipients of the leadership behaviors must be able to tell their experiences of the leadership styles applied on them by the SMTs. They were, therefore, asked to say what they saw as the preferred leadership style by their SMTs. A comparison of the responses was done between the SMTs and the teachers to establish whether or not the two groups perceived any particular preferred leadership style and whether there were differences in their respective perceptions.

Methodology

The study adopted a comparative survey research design. A survey is a non-experimental descriptive research method intending to determine how people feel about a particular issue. According to Creswell (2005), a survey helps identify important beliefs, perceptions and attitudes of individuals. Baker (1999, p. 11) also described surveys as descriptive and focusing on attitudes, opinions and pieces of information about the conditions of life. SMTs and teachers' views have been surveyed and compared to determine what they see as the SMTs' preferred leadership styles. A comparative research design compares two or more groups on one variable.

However, it must be noted that comparative research methodology is not without challenges. As the name suggests, this type of research is about comparing different issues, cultures, education systems or even any practices for that matter. The entities of education being compared, SMTs and teachers' views in this case are developed under different role expectations of leadership for SMTs and the led who are the teachers. It was noted by Wirth and Kolb (2008) that:

The major problem in comparative research regardless of discipline is that all aspects of the analysis from theory to database may vary in definitions and categories. As the objects to compare usually belong to different systemic contexts, the establishment of equivalence and comparability is thus a major challenge of comparative research. (p. 10)

It is, therefore, acknowledged that this comparative study may also be prone to such challenges, as SMTs and teachers, albeit from the same schools, they may be coming from different orientations which may influence what they perceive to be the best leadership styles. Based on varied contexts and conceptual frameworks to meet unique school and individual needs which may differ from SMT to SMT, teacher to teacher and school to school, the comparisons may be difficult to achieve. The appropriateness of leadership

style may also be context based on per school, individual teacher or SMTs perception, thus, making it problematic to compare fairly.

However, it must be noted that despite the challenges, the overall best leadership style must be appreciated necessarily by all education systems and the preferred style per context must be established hence a survey of SMTs and teachers' views and comparisons of their perceived preferred leadership style by SMTs. Therefore, descriptive survey data was collected from SMTs using a self-assessment questionnaire adopted from the leadership style questionnaires (Clark, 2010). The same leadership style questionnaire was adapted and administered to teachers who assessed SMT's leadership styles. The questionnaire asked similar questions, and therefore, acted as one variable to the two groups (SMTs and teachers). In other words, for purposes of comparison and minimizations of challenges of comparative methodologies, both groups responded to similar questions. It was argued that where there were serious variations in the perceived leadership styles, it then would be a cause for serious concern. SMTs have completed the questionnaire comprised of school heads (26), deputy school heads (39), heads of departments (52) and senior teachers grade one (47), while the teachers were 523 in all. The questionnaires were comprised of statements about leadership styles beliefs which served as indicators of particular styles. SMTs and teachers were either to agree or disagree with the statements. For manageability of the data, "Strongly agree" and "Agree" were aggregated to represent "Agreement" to a statement, while "Strongly disagree" and "Disagree" were aggregated to represent "Disagreement" with any given statement. Frequencies, with which any particular statement was agreed to or not agreed to, were noted to give a general picture of the preferred or the frequently used leadership style.

Results of the Study

Findings From SMTs

With regards decision-making processes, SMTs were asked to say whether they always retained the final authority within their department or whether they involved others in making decisions. In response, ninety-five (54%) pointed out that they always retained the final decision-making in their departments, while 39.1% did not agree with the statement. However, 73% of the SMTs noted that while they did include one or more teachers in determining the type of decision to make, where necessary they would resort to voting to break any impasse in making decisions. This was alluded to by 66.7% of the respondents. By implication, SMTs did pay attention to suggestions made by their subordinates, as this was pointed out by 87.4% of them. While they allow participative decision-making, they still retained the final decision-making authority (54.1%), because as leaders, they must still remain accountable.

SMTs clearly stated that they paid attention to suggestions made by teachers as they allowed for their ideas and input on upcoming plans as well as any projects in their schools. It was indicated by 96% of the respondents. The majority of SMTs further noted that in the event of having to take major decision in the school or a given department, the views of the majority had to prevail. They disagreed (67.8%) with the statement which pointed to the fact that as managers, they told their subordinates what to do and how to do it.

Whilst they would create a strategy to keep any project or process on schedule when things went wrong, they would still call a meeting to get advice from the teachers as a way to share ownership. The idea behind was that teachers as professional had a lot to offer. This view was shared by 95.4% of the SMTs respondents. On the way SMTs communicated information to their staff members, 60% of them did not agree with a statement to the fact that they got information through email or memos or voice mail. With regards to discipline

issues, there was a near tie between those who believed in telling someone who made a mistake never to do it again and making note to such worry and those who did not. For instance, 42% of the SMTs agreed with the statement, while 42% did not. The majority (93.7%) instead, agreed with the fact that they created an environment in their schools where teachers took ownership of projects, related decisions and mistakes by allowing them to participate in the decision-making processes. They noted that they allowed them to determine what needed to be done (94%) and how to do it, and also allowed new teachers to be involved in decision-making as they were believed to be respected professional who must also grow through participation.

With regards to the future of the schools, 77% of the SMTs agreed with the statement that they asked their teachers for their vision of where they saw their jobs going, and then used the teachers' visionary ideas where appropriated. On being asked whether their teachers knew more about their jobs than themselves, and therefore, allowed teachers to carry out decisions on the jobs, 45.4% of the SMTs did not believe that their teachers knew more than themselves. Thirty four percent believed that teachers knew more about their jobs, and therefore, SMTs allowed them to carry out the decisions regarding these jobs. A significant percent of SMTs remained neutral on this issue. However, 88.5% of the SMTs agreed with the statement that they delegated tasks in order to implement new procedures. While delegating that they did not do close monitoring of the teachers, as they believed that they were capable of performing correctly.

Findings From Teachers

Teachers were asked whether or not their supervisors always retained final decision-making authority within their departments. Two hundred and sixty six (50.8%) said that their supervisors always retained the final decision-making authority, while 33% thought their supervisors did not. Instead, 363 (69.4%) pointed out that their supervisors always involved teachers in coming up with a decision. They also indicated that their supervisors, however, maintained the final decision-making authority. When a major decision is to be taken, 319 (61%) teachers indicated that both the supervisor and teachers would vote to see where the majority lies because they must have the approval of the majority for such major decisions to pass. It was pointed out, therefore, by 295 (54.4%) teachers that their supervisors did consider suggestions made by teachers. Thirty six percent of the teachers thought supervisors did not consider teacher's suggestions. Three hundred and eighty (72.7%) teachers said that their supervisors solicited for teachers' ideas and input on any upcoming plans and projects. Whilst teachers were involved, there was still a feeling by 55.3% of them that their supervisors still told them what to do and how to do it, yet, 303 (57.9%) teachers believed that their supervisors allowed them to determine what needed to be done and how to do it.

Teachers were further asked what their experiences were with regards when things went wrong. Three hundred and ten (59.2%) of the teachers thought that when things went wrong and the supervisors needed to create a strategy to resolve them, they would call meetings to get teachers' advice. Sixty one percent believed this was done to create an environment where employees took ownership by being made to participate. Yet, as another way to solicit teachers' views with regarding their supervisors' leadership styles, they were asked about the mode of communication used. To get information out, 278 (53.2%) agreed with the statement that their supervisors sent emails, memos or voice mail and they would rarely call meetings. They also pointed out that teachers would be expected to act on such information. Two hundred and sixty three teachers (50.2%) agreed with the statement that when someone made a mistake, the supervisors would tell them never to repeat it and they would make a note of it. Thirty three disagreed with the statement, while 14.5% were not sure.

When it came to new teachers, 235 (44.9%) agreed with the statement that they were not allowed to make any decisions unless that were approved by the supervisors. Those who did not agree with the statement were 216 (41.3%), while 12.4% did not respond. Teachers were further asked whether or not they agreed with the statement to the effect that their supervisors asked them for their visions of where they saw their jobs going and then used such visions. Two hundred and seventy three (52.2%) of the teachers agreed with the statement, while 169 (32.2) did not agree.

With regards to teachers' knowledge of their jobs, 258 (49.3%) pointed out that they knew more about their jobs than their supervisors who, therefore, should allow them to carry out the decisions to do such jobs. This was against with 193 (36.9%) teachers who did not believe that their supervisors thought they knew more than them when it came to the teachers' own jobs. Three hundred and eleven (59.5%) teachers said that each individual was responsible for defining their jobs.

To further establish the teacher's perceptions of the supervisors' leadership tendency, 262 (50.1%) pointed out that when something went wrong, the supervisors would tell them and then establish a new procedure to address the issue. It was against with those who did not agree but felt that they would not be told instead of being consulted for their input. Three hundred and twenty (61.2%) teachers pointed out that their supervisors allowed them to set priorities with the supervisors' guidance. They delegated tasks when implementing new procedures or processes (318 or 60.8% of the teachers).

It was, however, pointed out by 242 (46.3%) teachers that supervisors closely monitored teachers to ensure they were performing correctly. The teachers (58.6%) indicated that when there were differences in role expectations, their supervisors worked with them to resolve such differences. Two hundred and seventy-five (52.6%) of the teachers believed that their supervisors liked the power that their leadership positions held over their subordinates, while 53.2% also thought that their supervisors liked to use their leadership power to help subordinates grow by sharing such power with them.

With regards to threatening teachers with punishment in order to get them achieve the school's objectives, 270 (51.6%) of the teachers agreed with the statement, while 36.7% did not. Whilst the majority believed that teachers must be threatened in order to achieve objectives, 320 (61.2%) believed that teachers could exercise self-direction, if they were committed to objectives. A good number of teachers (378) indicated that their supervisors believed they could lead themselves as well as their supervisors, therefore, could be delegated duties.

Implications of the Findings

Implications for comparative methodological challenges. The study intended to establish and compare the teachers' and SMTs perceptions of the leadership styles preferred by the SMTs. The findings of the study indicated that both SMTs and teachers perceived the predominant leadership style in the Southern Region Primary Schools as transformational, participative and collaborative. Besides variations in terms of percentages per given indicator of leadership style by SMTs and teachers, predominant leadership, an overwhelming perception of collaborative leadership style, was indicated by the results. This could be translated as indicating a positive change of primary school management for the better in these selected primary schools as according to Kulkarni (2010), and this style opens doors wide for intellectual excitement, motivation and creativity through shared vision mission and values and in the process empowers the participants in leadership. Howell and Avolio (1993) also pointed out that transformational leadership helps followers collectively maximize performance.

Whilst both SMTs and teachers have agreed on the collaborative approach to management as a preferred leadership style, a further comparative analysis of the results point to SMTs having a tendency to rate themselves higher than they have been rated by teachers. It is a tendency that has been established elsewhere where people always over rated themselves as compared to when they were rated by others (Sulliman, 2003; Thornton, 2006). A study by Thornton (2006), for example, found out that executives tended to overrate themselves higher than they were rated by their subordinates who were the supervisors, and he indicated that normally, those who over rated themselves were less likely to meet the promotional criteria. The tendency of overrating oneself was referred by Bellows (2006) as illusory superiority or superiority bias. According to him, it is a cognitive bias which causes people to overestimate their positive qualities and abilities and underestimate their negative ones. Bellows (2006) asserted that such people have a deficit in the capacity to distinguish accuracy from error.

When this is applied to the self-overrating by SMTs of their capabilities and abilities as compared to rating by teachers, it may be concluded that, they could also be suffering from a similar deficit. For instance, in paying attention to and using teachers' ideas, teachers rated the SMTs 54.4% while SMTs rated themselves 96%. In believing in teachers' professionalism by SMTs, where teachers rated SMTs 49.3% while SMTs rated themselves 95.4%. These differences in perceptions of the leadership styles by the executioners (SMTs) and the recipients (teachers) of the leadership practices may tell a lot in terms of probable lack of the actual abilities and capabilities by these SMTs in the identified leadership areas. On the other hand, a possible lack of understanding by the teachers on what is expected of leaders in executing the behaviors in the identified leadership areas could be having an influence on their low rating of SMTs. The teachers may also have an illusory superiority or may be an illusory inferiority of underestimating how they were treated by their SMTs. According to Wirth and Kolb (2008), these divergent perceptions by SMTs and teachers can be a reflection of the challenges of comparative education research, regardless of discipline, analysis from theory to database which may vary in definitions or categories, as the objects to be compared belong to different systemic contexts. The SMTs and teachers are different objects coming with varied backgrounds and their understanding of the leadership processes may be at variance, and therefore, not easily comparable. Because of their differences in training some as teachers and others as managers, it may pose differences in terms of the understanding of the leadership definitions, expecting leadership behaviors as well as the necessary processes. What can be acceptable for teachers, for instance, may not necessarily be acceptable for SMTs hence variance in leadership behavior ratings.

Implications for educational management interventions. The limitation of comparative education research methodology must be appreciated, and therefore, treated as a cause for concern, as it could lead to less cooperation, less trust, and therefore, fail to foster the most needed communication between the teachers and SMTs as well as amongst the teachers themselves on professional matters. The ultimate could be negative consequences for the schools. In this respect, continuous reflections by the SMTs of their own leadership behaviors, as well as using teachers as their mirror to reflect the perceived styles of leadership could be adopted as a common practice. Results from such continuous self-reflections and reflections by others could be used as a basis for cluster as well as school based in-service intervention leadership programmes. The same results could also be used to inform university based on short- and long- term management programmes reviews to achieve their fitness for purpose.

Yet, another implication that can be drawn from the findings is that the Ministry of Education and Skills

Development 's interventions manifested through short-term cluster and school based in-service courses could have had an impact in changing the leadership outlook of SMTs in working with others from an assumed predominant autocratic to a participative one. The PSMD (Primary School Management Development Programme) as well as the University of Botswana's programmes could be assumed to have had a positive impact on the leadership styles, as most teachers and SMTs would have gone through these training programmes.

Implications for teacher motivation. The impact alluded to above on the leadership style could also be expected to send a ripple effect to the led, who are the teachers. This is particularly so especially if the teachers themselves are the ones who vouch to the positive in their SMTs leadership styles. According to Somech and Wenderow (2006), positive perceptions of leadership by teachers can be a source of their motivation to perform, trigger in their team spirit as well as be a pre-cursor of empowerment. The findings of the study connote leadership practice which has a personal and humane orientation, and it is not necessary to enslave to rules and regulations (Harber, 1991; Dambe, 1996; Ballantine, 2001; Monyatsi, 2005), because humane and personal orientation are characteristics of the collaborative style of leadership. A turn of events of leadership to a more collaborative approach is a realization by SMTs that schools as people intensive organizations must appreciate the feelings of those being led as professionals in their own right. The findings assumed a realization by SMTs that they are there to facilitate the different expertise, capabilities and abilities by others. The results also spoke to a believe by Lewin that participative leadership is generally the most effective as leaders offer guidance to group members, participate in group deliberations and allow input from other group members while retaining the final say over decisions (Cherry, 2011).

Like Somech and Widerow, Lewin pointed out that where such groups get engaged positively, the tendency is for more motivation and creativity (Cherry, 2011). By implication, teachers as participants in leadership in the Southern Schools in Botswana should also portray some motivational and creative tendencies.

Collaborative or participative leadership with teachers, especially as perceived by teachers themselves could, therefore, be an empowerment tool which can be a means to improve educational attainment for students (Gomez, 1998). Mbokazi and Bhenghu (2008, p. 52) noted that partnership in leadership involves both engagement and exchange with collaborative activities aimed at mutually derived and independent benefits for all participants, which participants in this case referred to SMTs and teachers.

This realization of collaborative leadership style by SMTs in Botswana primary schools and as also endorsed by the teachers is an important psychological empowerment tool (Huang, Iun, Liu, & Gong, 2010) for both teachers and students. Teachers who feel empowered by being treated as collaborators in leadership are most likely to pass that on to their learners directly or indirectly. When teachers feel empowered, they are likely to show a sense of trust and mutual respect with their supervisors. Empowerment reduces a sense of fear and insecurity, the latter is usually associated with destructive conflicts. A sense of empowerment can also instill in teachers' good interpersonal relations, enriched decision-making and the sharing of responsibilities amongst the rest of the staff (Zakunzima, 2009) which is also a key ingredient of working together, and therefore, achieving the educational goals. A warm school climate brought about by collaborative leadership which reflects respect and appreciation of others can lead to good school academic results. Botho, a Botswana word for a process of earning respect by first giving it and gaining empowerment by empowering others, is what is reflected in the results of the SMTs and teachers' perceptions of the predominant leadership style. It encourages people to applaud rather than resent those who succeed. It disapproves of anti-social disgraceful, inhuman and criminal behavior and encourages social justice for all (Wikimedia, 2011).

The Botswana historical and cultural governance and implications for the findings. Another implication of the preferred leadership styles, which point to collaboration, albeit rated differently between the SMT and teachers, is that the social milieu of Botswana as a cultural society could have had an influence on the leadership behaviors. Contrary to a generalized assertion by Harber (1997) that African systems of governance were characterized by autocracy and authoritarianism which in turn influenced school leadership, one wanted to argue that the Botswana set up of governance has historically been characterized by participative decision-making manifested through a traditional court setting known as a Kgotla. In this setting, Botswana (nationals of Botswana) have used and still use a slogan “Mafoko a Kgotla a mantle otlhe”, of which literally meaning is that all words in the Kgotla are beautiful. The slogan means that everyone has a right to say what they want to say without fear at a Kgotla. Botswana has always embraced democratic ideals in managing the societies. The Chief (Kgosi) has always worked with his/her advisors who are deputy chiefs and a Kgotla has always been an open place where everyone (man and woman) was free to attend and contribute their views as they see fit.

As noted by the Botswana Embassy (2009), the people of Botswana believe in consultation and democratic practices. In Botswana, there is a saying which goes thus, “Ntwa kgolo ke ya molomo” and its literally meaning is “The best and most important way of fighting is to engage one another in discussions”. This means that, it is better to discuss issues rather than fight in order to find solutions. Yet, another Botswana saying that denoting democracy and collaboration in decision-making is “Mafoko a matlhong” and its literally meaning is “Words are in the face or eyes”. This means that it is important to discuss issues face to face. These different phrases imply participative decision-making and conflict resolution where the lead also gets engaged in discussions and decision-making in a face-to-face dialogue. The democratic ideals of the Botswana societal governance have in them entrenched tolerance of opposing views and openness to such views as an important ingredient of effective leadership. Whilst not documented because Botswana is generally an oral traditional society, democratic ideals have existed even before the advent of colonialism, Western education and training. Since democracy has always been lived in Botswana and that schools are miniature societies within this bigger Botswana society, it should be expected that they emulate its ideals and practices. This is probably the reason why both teachers and SMTs perceive participation and collaboration as a predominant leadership style in the selected schools. It is at a Kgotla where social issues are discussed and important decisions are taken collectively with, of course, the chief being the officer to account, who must be answerable to everything at the end. In the same token, whilst allowing for participation, both the SMTs and teachers point to the fact that at the end, the SMTs always retained the final decision-making authority as the accountable officers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

There are different leadership styles which may be used by school leaders. Whilst multiple styles may be used according to contexts, organization, such as schools, may be identified with anyone as preferred. From the study of Southern Primary Schools in Botswana, it becomes clear that the collaborative style seems to be the most preferred. By implication, there are other styles that are sparingly used whilst the collaborative and or the participative or transformational is the preferred as perceived by both teachers and SMTs.

The comparisons of the results from SMTs and teachers may be implying that there is some coherence in terms of the understanding of what leadership style is preferred. This coherence may also imply mutual relationships and trust between SMTs and teachers, as the collaborative style is characterized by attributes, such

as trust, mutual respect, team spirit and empowerment. The presence of these attributes in an organization may lead to achievement of goals by a school hence the assumed good performance by these selected schools.

Whilst both SMTs and teachers believe the dominant style is the collaborative one, the self-overrating by SMTs as compared to their rating by teachers could imply a number of assumptions, such as difficulties in comparing objects which have different contexts or background. It is emphasized as a challenge of comparative research designs. For instance, the SMTs contexts with regards to training may be different from that of teachers who may be more conversant with pedagogy than with management. Therefore, comparing their perceptions of similar activity, which is leadership behavior, may pose differential outlooks by either party. The issue of overrating of selves by SMTs could also be a function of the illusory superiority where SMTs and even teachers may have a deficit in their abilities to differentiate the right from the wrong, accuracy from error as alluded to by Bellows.

Whilst there is variance in rating the extent of collaborative leadership between SMTs and teachers, the agreement of the collaborative style as the predominant is a good sign, as this style is mainly transformational, and therefore, more empowering. The Botswana historical and cultural context of governance could also have had an influence on the school leadership as perceived by SMTs and teachers where Botswana is well known for its traditional democracy of Kgotla. Yet, other influencing factors on the preferred style could be the school-based and cluster-based management interventions as well as the fulltime training at the universities where most of the SMTs get trained in different leadership orientations, their pros and cons.

It is, therefore, recommended that:

(1) As there are some discrepancies between SMTs and teachers with regards to the extent of rating SMTs use of the collaborative and or participative or transformational leadership, self-evaluations by SMTs as well as evaluation of SMTs by their subordinates (teachers and ancillary staff) are adopted as continuous practice so that SMTs know how they are fairing in terms of their leadership as perceived by them and these subordinates. It would help provide the necessary constructive feedback;

(2) Findings of the continuous evaluations will be used as a basis for short term management interventions as well as some input into the long term university based on programme reviews for achievement of quality and relevance of these programmes;

(3) As collaborative leadership implies attributes, such as trust empowerment, team work and mutual respect which are assumed to create a warm school climate leading to good achievement, a follow-up study could be conducted in these schools to check if there is a correlation between this preferred leadership style and school performance.

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