

Teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of teacher appraisal in Botswana

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The major aim of teacher appraisal is to develop teachers in order to improve their delivery in schools. The effectiveness of the process of teacher appraisal is, however, dependent on the perceptions of the teachers themselves. Since the expansion of the education system of Botswana in the 1970s and 1980s, as a result of the cardinal reforms, there has been concern about quality. One of the quality assurance measures introduced was teacher appraisal. The current teacher appraisal scheme in Botswana was introduced in 1992 as a non-threatening, valid, and extensive system to develop the individual and the school. In this article we address the following question: What are teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the current system of teacher appraisal as practised in Botswana secondary schools? Both quantitative and qualitative methods of research were employed to address the question. The teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of their appraisal are categorised according to the following key terms: teacher performance; motivation of teachers; working relationships; teacher training on appraisal; "an axe ready to chop teachers"; and "no purpose".

Introduction

The importance of appraisal in any organisation cannot be overemphasised. The literature on staff appraisal, covering a wide spectrum of fields such as commerce and industry as well as the private and the public sectors including schools, identifies three main purposes of appraisal: to serve as a basis for modifying behaviour to realise more effective working habits; to provide adequate feedback to each employee on his/her performance; and to provide managers with data with which to evaluate future assignments and determine compensation (Kermally, 1997: 90; Mullins, 1996:640).

Although there are many similarities in the purposes of appraisal across organisations, the nature of the organisation dictates the type of system of appraisal to be followed. The literature on teacher appraisal shows that it can be very complex, involving a number of factors than can either impede or support teacher effectiveness (Malongwa, 1995:153; Bartlett, 2000:26; Campbell, Kyriakides, Muijs, & Robinson, 2003:356). Teacher appraisal is receiving attention worldwide as governments become aware of the need to examine educational provision critically to ensure that it is relevant and appropriate to the needs of the youth (Motswakae 1990:6). Therefore, teacher appraisal is of great importance since its main objective is to improve individual performance and motivation (Bartlett, 2000:25; Danielson, 2001:12; Donaldson & Stobbe, 2000; Lam, 2001:161; Painter, 2001:61; Wanzare, 2002:213). Poster and Poster (1992:1) maintain that if employees are to perform effectively they must be well motivated, understand what is expected of them and have the ability and skills to fulfil their responsibility.

Since the introduction of the current teacher appraisal scheme in Botswana in 1992, very little research has been carried out to determine whether it serves the purposes for which it was introduced. Evaluating the effectiveness of the system encompasses a wide scope, including the perceptions of those appraised. The question that comes to the fore is: What are teachers' perceptions of the current system of teacher appraisal as practised in Botswana secondary schools? To address the research question it was imperative to answer the following questions:

What is appraisal? What is the history of education in Botswana?

Appraisal in educational institutions

Studies on the appraisal process predominantly identify two models of appraisal, namely, the accountability model and the professional development model (Keitseng, 1999:25). Research shows the distinctiveness of the two routes of appraisal and this is reflected in the number of studies that employed these models (Poster & Poster, 1992:1; Goddard & Emerson, 1995:10; Manlongwa, 1995:154; Habagaan, 1998:21). The accountability model is managerial, control-oriented, judgemental and hierarchical (Monyatsi 2003:66). Goddard and Emerson (1995:15) summarise the essence of the accountability model of appraisal when they state that, in its purest form, it identifies incompetent teachers, identifies weaknesses in teachers' performance, assesses performance for the purposes of pay and promotion and provides evidence for disciplinary procedures.

The accountability model has been unpopular with teachers and their unions (Duke, 1995: 5) because of the following: first, its key characteristic has been seen as imposition since the philosophy is the checking of competence; second, it is designed to bring about a better relationship between pay, responsibilities and performance (Monyatsi 2003:208); third, it is judgemental, and teachers have questioned the capabilities of those making judgements, and the validity and reliability of the instruments used; fourth, the model fosters defensiveness because teachers fight to serve their interests and not those of the clients — students; and fifth, it provides evidence for disciplinary procedures.

Schools, like all public organisations, are however being called upon to be accountable, and Whitaker (1998:106) maintains that “issues of accountability are never far from our minds these days and it is vital to be clear about our responsibilities to share information and explanations with those who are concerned with the school”. Darling-Hammond and Ascher (1992:2) emphasise this by pointing out that “performance indicators” are information for the accountability systems; they are not the system itself. Accountability (i.e. responsible practice and responsiveness to clients) occurs only when a useful set of processes exists for interpreting and acting on the information. Bell (1992:126-127) further argues that appraisal has a part to play in making educators accountable to parents for the education of their children. It also affords parents a further assurance of the quality of teaching their children receive.

Considering the above one should, however, realise that quality education can only be accomplished by means of an appraisal system that is based on the improvement of individual performance, which in turn leads to improved working relationships and development of the individual's career (Everard & Morris, 1996:79). Individual performance can be enhanced through the identification of one's strengths and weaknesses, a key purpose of appraisal. Goddard and Emerson (1995:11) further argue that the cornerstone of appraisal is the belief that educators wish to improve their performance in order to enhance the education of students.

Of late, appraisal for professional development has therefore gained a good deal of popularity from both teachers and their organisations, including school managers (Duke & Stiggins, 1990:116; Duke, 1995b:6). This may be a result of various factors. First, the staff development model is viewed as a genuine two-way process between appraiser and appraisee. Second, it takes place in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality. Reflection is the buzzword (Cosh, 1999:260). Murdock (2000:55) points out that a modern system of evaluation should encourage teachers to become reflective practitioners. Third, it is based on the belief that teachers wish to improve their performance in order to enhance the students' learning. Fourth, the

key characteristic of the model is negotiation and the philosophy is the supporting of teaching and managerial development. Teachers are involved and this is supported by Murdock (2000: 55) who maintains that participation by staff in initiating and contributing to the instruments and procedures used to evaluate their performance leads to motivation and empowerment as teachers develop a full understanding of the whole programme. Fifth, it identifies the teacher's potential for career development.

There are some lessons to be deduced from the ongoing debate on the effectiveness of the two models; first, the complexity of the teaching process should always be taken into account when deciding on what course to take; and second, as Sarros and Sarros (1991:5) point out, performance appraisal is as important in education as in business, but for different purposes. From the above discussion, it is apparent that an appraisal system can be more effective if it takes cognisance of the feelings, views, and perceptions of the people being appraised.

During the appraisal process data are gathered by systematic observations, not only to measure current performance, but also to reinforce strengths, identify deficiencies, give feedback and the necessary information for changes in future performance (Bartlett, 2000:28; Monyatsi, 2003:23; Haynes, Wragg, Wragg & Chamberlin, 2003:75; Wanzare, 2002:214). For appraisal to be effective, it should be treated as an ongoing co-operative intervention between the supervisor and subordinate, a shared responsibility and not a once-a-year "confrontation" (Howard & McColskey, 2001:49; Monyatsi, 2003:23). If it is treated as an event it may become judgmental, hence detrimental to individual growth and development (Habangaan, 1998:15). Therefore, the development of effective teacher appraisal systems requires attention "... not only to the issues surrounding definitions and measurements of effective teaching and the development of improved evaluation models but (also) to the organisational systems within which the models are implemented" (Darling-Hammond, Wise & Pease as cited by Painter, 2001:58).

Teacher appraisal as described above is an intervention which aims to benefit both the individual and the school in pursuit of quality education. According to Poster and Poster (1992:2), "appraisal is one of a number of techniques for integrating the individual into the organization". In other words, it helps harness the unique talents of individuals and coordinates their activities towards the achievement of the organisation's objectives by efficient and effective means. If structured, the process of appraisal ensures teachers' competence and conscientiousness and is therefore an aid to professional development and accountability (Bartlett, 2000:25; Danielson, 2001:12; Gunter, 2002:67; Howard & McColskey, 2001:48; Lam, 2001:161; Wanzare, 2002: 214; Whitaker, 1998:108; Wilson, 2002:4). Analoui and Fell (2002:2) in their description of appraisal in organisations state that "it constitutes a continual cyclical process of determining performance expectations, supporting performance, reviewing and appraising performance and, finally, managing performance standards". Sharing this sentiment is Fisher's (1995:11) definition that appraisal is "a process of management which entails improving the organization's performance through the enhanced performance of individuals". Furthermore, appraisal is viewed as an appropriate way to lead to an improved relationship between remuneration, responsibilities and performance (Bartlett, 2000:26; Haynes *et al.*, 2003:75).

For the purposes of this article teacher appraisal should be viewed as one of those interventions, including professional development, in-service training and career planning, which aim at developing the teacher's knowledge, skills and confidence for the sake of improved performance (Bartlett, 2000:28; Campbell *et al.*, 2003:356; Danielson, 2001:13; Gunter, 2002:

67). It is one of those processes in organisations that aim to enhance productivity through mutual interaction between the supervisor and the subordinate (Gunter, 2002:67; Wanzare, 2002:215). The feedback provided during the appraisal process is vital to informing all those involved in the organisation about what ought to be done in order to map the way forward. This will improve the effectiveness of teaching and students' learning and, ultimately, the quality of education (Abraham *et al.*, 2001:1; Donaldson & Stobbe, 2000:31; Goddard & Emerson, 1996:11; Lam, 2001:2). As such, appraisal is used as a technique to influence and control employee behaviour in order to increase productivity and effectiveness. But the question that arises is whether staff really view appraisal in this light.

Brief history of the appraisal system in Botswana

The history of western education in Botswana dates back to the colonial era. The Botswana government realised that colonial education did not adequately reflect the social, cultural and economic aspirations of the Botswana people. In a 1983 attempt to address the challenges, the Unified Teaching Service (UTS) in Botswana introduced annual confidential reports for teachers (Motswakae, 1990:4; Republic of Botswana, 1977:9). Regulations 110 and 111 of the Code of Regulations demanded that the Director of the UTS should be furnished with a confidential report on each teacher each year in the interest of the service, and this had to be prepared by the head teacher, supervisory officer, or any other authorised person (Republic of Botswana, 1977:9). The introduction of these reports was viewed as a strategy to make schools more accountable. The first National Commission on Education of 1976 also recommended the strengthening of supervisory roles by maintaining a close link between teachers and the Ministry of Education (Republic of Botswana, 1977:9).

In order to strengthen supervisory roles and performance, the Government White Paper on Job Evaluation for Teachers was implemented in 1988 (Republic of Botswana, 1991:47). It emphasised the need for continuous assessment of teachers. It also proposed reforms that called for massive expansion of education. Job evaluation linked performance appraisal to pay and promotion. The teachers spoke strongly against the annual confidential reports and the implementation of the White Paper on Job Evaluation for Teachers (Republic of Botswana, 1994). In 1991, as a response to the Job Evaluation exercise, the current system of teacher appraisal was born (Bartlett, 1999:30; Habagaan, 1998:9; Republic of Botswana, 1994:47). It recommended more regular assistance to and professional stimulation of classroom teachers (Republic of Botswana, 1994:47). As a result, an instrument titled Teacher Performance Appraisal (Form UTS3/4) was developed but, again, it was adapted. The instrument to be used by the new appraisal system is called Teaching Service Management 3/4 (TMS 3/4) (Monyatsi, 2003:147). It seeks to portray a non-threatening, valid and comprehensive system, which would offer teachers the opportunity to learn constructively from their own assessment (Monyatsi, 2003:10). Its purpose is primarily to assess objectively the performance of the teacher (Republic of Botswana, 1991:1). However, if appraisal records are used mainly to determine progression, pay and training opportunities teachers tend to become shy and defiant about exposing their weaknesses (Monyatsi, 2003:147). In order to identify the extent to which teachers have positive or negative perceptions about appraisal, a survey was done among secondary school teachers in Botswana. What follows is a presentation of the design and findings of the investigation.

Research design

The use of multiple methods in a study secures in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question because it adds vigour, breadth and depth to the investigation (Cresswell, 1994:174; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998:163; Salomon, 1991:10). Most quantitative data gathering techniques condense data in order to see the bigger picture. Qualitative data-gathering techniques, by contrast, are best understood as data enhancers, because when data is enhanced, one can see key aspects of cases more clearly. In this study teacher perceptions of the appraisal system in secondary schools in Botswana were captured by applying both a quantitative and a qualitative approach.

The quantitative approach involved a questionnaire survey, because it gathers "... data at a particular time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions..." (Cohen & Manion, 1995:83). The questionnaire consisted mainly of closed questions and three open-ended questions. For the closed questions the Likert scale was used. The open-ended questions were included to capture perspectives that would verify qualitative data from the interviews (see below). A pilot study was carried out in a few selected secondary schools in Gaborone City.

Six categories of questions were covered in a semi-structured interview schedule in the collection of data for the quantitative approach: behaviour questions, feeling questions, opinion or value questions, knowledge questions, sensory questions, and demographic questions. This was deemed suitable for the study as it allowed the researcher to gain insight into the perceptions of teachers on the appraisal system.

Sample

The sample for the questionnaire was taken from two school clusters in the southern region of Botswana and consisted of 607 secondary school teachers of whom 413 returned their questionnaires. For the semi-structured interview purposive sampling was used to select information-rich participants, namely, two school principals, two deputy principals, two heads of departments, two senior teachers, two teachers, and two assistant teachers.

In the survey the majority of the 413 respondents were female (215, i.e. 52.1%). The fact that there were more women in the sample reflects teaching practice, in which female teachers form the majority in Botswana secondary schools. The majority (284, i.e. 68.8%) of the respondents were 34 years old or less, indicating that the teaching corps in secondary schools in Botswana was relatively young.

Half of the respondents (209, i.e. 50.6%) had a Diploma in Secondary Education (DSE), whilst 131 (31.7%) held a bachelor's degree. The minority (16, i.e. 3.9%) had only a teaching certificate. This indicated that the Botswana government had made significant progress in the training of teachers since the first Commission on Education in 1977 criticised the poor qualifications of teachers.

Regarding teaching experience, 214 respondents (51.8%) fell within the bracket of three to nine years' teaching experience whilst 123 (29.8%) had more than ten years in the field. Seventy-five respondents (18.2%) possessed very little experience, two years or less.

Data analysis

Analysis of the questionnaire data was computerised. As data were collected from all categories of teachers in the schools, variations in the responses to questions were examined. For the free-response questions a coding frame and verbatim reporting of responses were used

(Bell, 1993:107).

For the analysis of qualitative data, tape recordings of the interviews were transcribed. Data were then coded by reading through the field notes and making comments. From the themes identified initially, patterns and categories were identified and described.

Validity

Validity was ensured through triangulation whereby survey data were verified by interview data. Respondents were representative of different post levels. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Field notes made during the interviews were used to verify the data collected during interviews.

Findings

In the following sections, the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of their appraisal are discussed and linked with the literature according to the following categories: teacher performance; motivation of teachers; working relationships; teacher training on appraisal; "an axe ready to chop teachers"; and "no purpose".

Teacher performance

The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement that appraisal improves teacher performance. Table 1 shows that 155 respondents (37.6%) disagreed with the statement that the appraisal process improved their teaching skills, while 184 (44.5%) agreed with the statement. It is clear from this that a considerable number of the respondents (44.5%) agreed that the appraisal process had some positive impact on their teaching, compared to 37.6% who disagreed. Note, however, that this agreement was expressed with apparent reservation — only 7.5% expressed strong agreement.

Table 1 Appraisal improves teachers' performance

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	80	19.4
Disagree	75	18.2
No opinion	71	17.2
Agree	153	37.0
Strongly agree	31	7.5
Missing	3	0.7
Total	413	100

In the open-ended section of the questionnaire, 165 respondents (40%) expressed the view that the appraisal process in Botswana secondary schools is primarily intended to monitor the performance of the teachers in the schools. For instance, one principal believed that "*it monitors the processes of teaching and learning; it determines the teacher's strengths and weaknesses; and it also serves purposes of accountability, i.e. Is the teacher accountable?*". But the monitoring of performance can have positive consequences. A head of department suggested "*it makes teachers to know their professional progress; whether they are doing well or not, so*

that if they have any weaknesses they may improve for the better". A senior teacher concurred that "it equips teachers with skills and knowledge in order to cope with instructional issues in their schools. It further instils desired attitudes in teachers". It also acts as a motivating factor when it is seen as an appreciation by management for one's work.

It is clear from the responses that some of the respondents had divided opinions on the appraisal process as a means to improve the performance of the teachers in their daily duties of teaching and facilitating students' learning. Agreement with this function of appraisal attracted the most responses, but only marginally. Importantly Hodgetts and Kuratko (1991: 602), Kermally (1997:90) and Mullins (1996:640) maintain that one of the purposes of appraisal is to serve as a basis for modifying or changing behaviour towards more effective working habits. Goddard and Emerson (1996:87) are adamant that the cornerstone of appraisal is the belief that teachers wish to improve their performance in order to enhance the education of the students. This is also supported by the assertion made by Glover and Law (1996:31), Danielson (2001:12) and Donaldson and Stobbe (2000) that appraisal involves the teacher's professional knowledge, understanding and skills to improve the quality of teaching and student learning in the classroom.

Motivation of teachers

Another purpose of the appraisal process is the motivation of teachers so that they can do their work more effectively. From the empirical findings, a senior Grade 1 teacher declared that "I got motivated when I was told my strengths which I was not aware of". This sentiment was supported by a teacher who contended that "if you are told positive things about yourself, you gain morale, you get motivated". Though not appraised in their current positions as heads of schools, the two heads who were interviewed both believed that before they were promoted to their present positions they were appraised and it helped them in their duties as teachers. The sentiments are supported by the results of item 14 of the survey questionnaire which sought to establish how the appraisal process demotivated teachers. The results are shown in Table 2. From the results, it was clear that the majority (44.7%) of respondents did not agree with the statement that the appraisal process in Botswana secondary schools demotivates teachers; whilst 27.9% believed it did. What it therefore means is that the appraisal process can support or motivate teachers to improve their duties to facilitate students' learning.

Table 2 Appraisal and teacher motivation

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	68	16.5
Disagree	116	28.2
No opinion	109	26.5
Agree	65	15.8
Strongly agree	50	12.1
Missing	4	1.0
Total	412	100

There were some respondents who believed that the current system of teacher appraisal as carried out in Botswana secondary schools demoralised teachers because it was not carried

out properly. From item 2 of the semi-structured interview schedule, it was clear that some teachers believed that it demoralised them whilst others claimed that as a result of the appraisal process they were able to be motivated. One teacher interviewed painted a very bleak picture of the appraisal process when he/she declared that *“it has no effect as I am still a teacher after nine years, yet from the appraisal process I am doing a very good job. Nothing is done after the appraisal despite the recommendations made”*. Another interviewee echoed this sentiment by declaring that *“to me it is not effective, I am so demoralised. I am not as good as I used to be”*. These assertions may be manifestations of personal frustrations within their schools, based mainly on the nature of the management, and therefore not reflective of the teacher appraisal process. However, it can be argued that the assertions represented those instances when it was not properly done.

The role of teacher appraisal in motivating teachers is also emphasised by West and Ainscow (1991:33) when they claim that appraisal *“gives teachers a clearer view of the job, their aims and what is expected of them, and of the aims of the school”*. For instance, Poster and Poster (1992:1) and Everard and Morris (1996:79) concur with this by contending that the main objective of teacher appraisal is to improve individual performance and motivation in order to enhance the *“learning opportunities for all students”*. This view is supported by Mullins (1996:640) who maintains that *“one of the purposes of an appraisal system is to motivate employees so that they learn and achieve more”* in their duties such as teaching and facilitating students' learning.

From all the above, it appears that many teachers did indeed believe that teacher appraisal can be beneficial in motivating them to improve their performance. However, most teachers appeared to be either doubtful or negative about this (see Table 2). This is indeed a disconcerting finding. The idea of teacher appraisal motivating teachers is also emphasised by West and Ainscow (1991:33) who believe that appraisal gives teachers a clearer view of the job, their aims and what is expected of them, and of the aims of the school. Many authors concur with this by averring that the main objective of teacher appraisal is to improve individual performance and motivation (Bartlett, 2000:33; Danielson, 2001; Donaldson & Stobbe, 2000; Lam, 2001:162; Wilson & Western 2001:94; Furlong 2000:39).

Working relationships

One hundred and ninety-five respondents (47.2%) indicated that the appraisal process effectively enhanced their working relations with colleagues (see Table 3). Note, however, that only 10.5% of the respondents expressed strong agreement. As with other items, the substantial percentage of no-opinion responses is intriguing. Once again, it seems that the respondent perceptions tended to be positive, but were not generally positive. Moreover, 47.2% of the respondents agreed that the appraisal process enhanced working relations with their superiors.

Improved relationships were also evident from the responses to the open-ended items. For example, an assistant teacher contended that the current system of appraisal was effective *“in that it opens up both the appraiser and appraisee to talk about the strong and weak points and see a way forward, and this is healthy in the teaching profession”*. Some respondents argued further that when the weaknesses were identified, they were addressed with the help of immediate supervisors. A head of school interviewed posited that *“at departmental level, the senior teachers have the responsibility of discussing certain aspects of the appraisal which are related to the teaching profession as this approach helps when one is new in the profession”*.

The relational improvements resulting from the appraisal process should develop some

Table 3 Enhanced working relations with colleagues

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	45	10.9
Disagree	86	20.8
No opinion	85	20.6
Agree	153	37.0
Strongly agree	42	10.2
Missing	2	0.5
Total	413	100

mutual interaction between the supervisor and the subordinate in order to enhance productivity. This is endorsed by Chow, Wong, Yueng and Mo (2002:87) and Wanzare (2002:223) who declare that the relationship between the teacher and appraisers is vital for the effectiveness of appraisal. Mullins (1996:639) claims that in addition to identifying the individual's strengths and weaknesses and the ways in which such strengths may best be utilised and weaknesses overcome, appraisal also helps to improve the quality of working life by increasing mutual understanding between managers and their staff.

An appraisal scenario which reflects collaboration and collegiality is succinctly explained by Murdock (2000:15) who argues that it is vital for a progressive system of evaluation to build on collaborative relations whereby the supervisor actively attempts to understand the teacher's frame of reference on classroom events and engages in continuing dialogue with teachers. In other words, the process of appraisal helps to establish congruence between the goals and expectations of teachers and of the School Management Team. If teachers are told and understand what they are expected to do and given the necessary support and development, their teaching performance will improve and the students will ultimately benefit by being taught by well-rounded teachers. In this survey, this was illustrated when the respondents claimed that the knowledge of their strengths and shortcomings, which they gained from the appraisal process, enabled them to improve their disposition and performance.

Teacher training on appraisal

A disconcerting finding was that 301 respondents (72.9%) indicated that they had not received any pre-service or in-service training on appraisal and its importance to their careers (see Table 4). Furthermore, responses to the open-ended items indicated inadequate understanding of the appraisal system and procedures.

Contributing to the lack of understanding is the finding that appraisal is not done regularly. One teacher's summary of the situation is illuminating: "*It is not effective in that some people are observed during lessons and appraised according to what was observed, while others are not observed but appraised at the same time. Some are observed on only one incident which is unpleasant and all the other good things are disregarded*".

It appeared conclusively from the survey and interview findings that the effectiveness of the current appraisal practice was undermined (sometimes seriously) by lack of understanding and inappropriate preparation and training.

Table 4 Training in appraisal

	Frequency	Percentage
No training	301	72.9
Some training	98	23.7
Adequate training	13	3.1
Missing	1	0.2
Total	413	100

“An axe ready to chop teachers?”

The appraisal process serves purposes of accountability, a view supported by one interviewee who declared that *“it helps teachers to maintain a positive attitude; helps teachers to be prepared all the time knowing that somebody is watching; monitors the behaviour of teachers; and helps supervisors with information on each teacher with regard to communication and relationships”*. The main duty of the Senior Management Team (SMT) in schools is to make sure that the teachers do their work effectively. As the appraisal process in Botswana secondary schools follows a line management approach, and the SMTs are appraisers by virtue of their positions in the schools, the appraisal process is one way that helps the SMTs to effectively and constructively monitor the teachers. However, the perception can easily arise that SMTs simply use the appraisal process for control and retrenchment purposes.

The view that the appraisal process is exploited to serve the interests of the Senior Management teams (SMT) in Botswana secondary schools was supported by 182 (44.1%) respondents, with the item ‘strongly agree’ attracting a response of 29%. Interestingly, 99 (24%) did not express an opinion (see Table 5).

Table 5 Abuse of appraisal by SMT

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	50	12.1
Disagree	78	18.9
No opinion	99	24.0
Agree	63	15.3
Strongly agree	119	28.8
Missing	4	1.0
Total	413	100

The abuse of the appraisal system was also alluded to in the open-ended section of the questionnaire where 154 (37.2%) respondents mentioned that it was misused by SMTs and Teaching Service Managements (TSM) to intimidate junior teachers in particular. Painting a bleak picture of the appraisal process, a head of department claimed that *“it is used by school heads as an axe ready to chop teachers”*. This perception was expanded by another head of department who declared that it was used to maintain law and order in the schools.

Teacher suspicions about the motives for their appraisal was also evident from the

following responses in the questionnaires:

One of the purposes of teacher appraisal is favouritism. Instead of progression of the teachers' teaching techniques, tactics, etc, the 'Yes Sirs' see the brighter side. The hard-workers do not progress (Senior Teacher Grade 1).

It is a tool used to oppress and suppress teachers. It promotes tendencies of boot-licking and 'Yes, Baas' which frustrates teachers (Assistant teacher).

It serves as an intimidation tool to boss around teachers with the threat of not qualifying for that funny 5% increment (Assistant teacher).

It is used to oppress teachers, reprimand teachers and punish teachers (Assistant teacher).

It acts as a blockage for teachers' progress. Instead of developing teachers by showing them their weaknesses and strengths, it destroys them as the SMT will always give false information about someone who is not their favourite.

Appraisal is a source of quarrels, punishment, ridicule, and victimisation rather than developing individuals.

It is used by the Senior Management Team to oppress and intimidate the juniors.

It is threatening to teachers in order to make them loyal subordinates of the management system, that is, TSM, SMT, and it is a fault-finding mission on teachers' performance.

The view that the appraisal process was abused by those in authority was also expressed in the interviews. One teacher claimed that *"it is a witch-hunting exercise because the appraiser concentrates much in the areas where one is weak rather than comparing one's weaknesses to the strengths"*. A senior teacher interviewed was convinced that the process served to down-grade teachers. The top-down method of appraisal is also criticised by Wanzare (2002: 220) and Painter (2001:59).

The empirical findings showed that, according to some educators, teacher appraisal as done by those in authority was perceived as oppressive and very threatening, causing considerable emotion amongst teachers. Some called it an *"axe"* ready to chop those who are not favoured. Such a view is certainly not conducive to constructive teaching and learning.

"No purpose"

A number of participants in the interviews expressed the view that the current teacher appraisal as practised in Botswana secondary schools served no purpose at all. A senior Grade 1 teacher claimed that *"it is a routine that seeks information that is never used thereafter for any purpose whatsoever"*. This view was echoed by an assistant teacher who contended that *"it is not serving any purpose at all. If it were properly used, SMT would be using it as equipment that could tell them to recommend people for promotion, further studies, et cetera. But it is not the case. It is just one for formality"*. These assertions were also supported by a principal who declared during the interview that *"the system is there just maybe for SMT to say we have something in place"*.

In any organisation, it is important to understand the purposes of an appraisal scheme if the process is to be effective. Stronge (1991) in Mo, Corners and McComick (1998:23) states that, if an appraisal system does not have a clear purpose, it will just be a meaningless exercise. Furthermore, if teachers are not aware of the purposes of teacher appraisal, they become anxious and suspicious of the whole process (Monyatsi, 2003:221). Goddard and Emerson (1996:94) suggest that it is important for both the appraisee and appraiser to be clear about the purpose of the process; including the role of the appraiser and the criteria that will be used. Supporting this view, Horne and Pierce (1996:3) contend that the purpose, nature and focus of

the observation should have been decided upon and agreed to by both parties, that is, appraisee and appraiser.

Discussion

From the analysis and interpretation of the empirical findings of this study, it was clear that teacher perceptions about the current teacher appraisal process as practised in Botswana secondary schools were varied with a tendency towards positive views, but only marginally so. Many respondents seemed to be ill-informed about the gist of the appraisal process, as was evident from the unexpectedly substantial percentages which the option 'no opinion' attracted in most of the questionnaire items. It is evident, therefore, that major tasks still lie ahead in establishing the general professional commitment of teachers to the appraisal process, with due acknowledgment of the good work already done. However, as indicated below, particular aspects of the appraisal process should be addressed.

Firstly, the findings have indicated that clarity of purpose plays a crucial role in making the process more effective. However, in the current system, there is a need to enhance the clarity through training and collaboration. This study shows that all those involved in the appraisal process should possess the knowledge and understanding of its purposes if the whole process is to be effective. The purposes inform the individual teacher of why and how the process is carried out. This understanding helps to make the teacher aware of personal benefits as well as those benefits that accrue to the school as an organisation. The importance of purpose to the effectiveness of the process was illustrated by Kermally (1997:89), Taylor (1998:10), Mullins (1996:639) and Mo *et al.* (1998:23). If the teachers know and understand the purposes of teacher appraisal, they are bound to be committed and this may improve their performance of day-to-day duties.

The improvement of performance was identified by the majority of respondents as the main purpose of the current teacher appraisal system in Botswana secondary schools. In other words, an effective teacher appraisal system should enable teachers to gain more knowledge and skills so that they may be empowered and thus confident in their delivery. A cursory look at the definitions of teacher appraisal offered by Everard and Morris (1996:79), Goddard and Emerson (1996:11), Poster and Poster (1992:2) and Trethowan (1991:181) support this human relations approach whose major aim is to develop the teachers in order to improve their delivery in the schools. Appraisal effectiveness is dependent on how it addresses the feelings and attitudes of the teachers in the schools. It is also based on the assumption that, owing to the interaction that is an integral part of teaching as an activity, some bond and understanding will ensue, which in the end benefits both the individual teacher and the learners.

The survey and interview findings clearly suggested that there is a need to improve the mechanisms and procedures for the management and implementation of the teacher appraisal process in Botswana by training both the appraisees and appraisers; making the whole process transparent by providing feedback to all stakeholders, especially the appraisees; and reviewing the appraisal system. It is evident that this matter urgently requires major steps being taken. The findings revealed that many teachers viewed the current teacher appraisal system as ineffective and threatening since it is neither undertaken regularly nor carried out by competent appraisers. Although the current system of teacher appraisal combines the accountability and developmental models of appraisal, many teachers viewed the components of the former as threatening, and therefore unacceptable.

Finally, due to the amount of public funds involved in funding education and the account-

ability placed on the teachers to mould future citizens, there will always be a need for measures to determine whether or not teachers are doing their job well. Importantly, these measures should reflect and respect the professional status of teachers.

Conclusion

The following are the conclusions derived from the study:

- Through the appraisal process as practised in Botswana secondary schools, teachers can gain increased knowledge and skills, which ultimately enhance their performance in their daily duties in the schools. Most importantly, the appraisal process plays a crucial role in moulding the disposition of the teachers positively towards the teaching profession.
- Many teachers do not understand the purposes or practices of the current teacher appraisal process due to lack of orientation and training. This constitutes an important and urgent avenue for in-service teacher training.
- In sum, the current teacher appraisal system as practised in Botswana secondary schools is acceptable, but managerial and training aspects should be improved. The teacher appraisal system should be periodically reviewed to keep it in line with changes that may have taken place in the education system.

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