Influence of Community and Communication Proficiencies on Learner Academic Achievement: The Case of Rural Primary Schools of Kweneng Region in Botswana

Kaone Bakokonyane[1]
kbakokonyane@idmbls.ac.bw
[1]Institute of Management Development-Botswana Campus, Botswana

Abstract

The objective In two high-performing and two low-performing primary schools in the Kweneng region of Botswana, the study looked at how leadership community and communication skills affected the academic achievement of the learners. A multi-cross analysis of case studies was employed in a qualitative manner. Document analysis, in-depth, semi-structured focus groups, observations, and observations were used to gather data. The study collected data from fifty-six (56) people using purposive sampling techniques. There were eight senior teachers, twelve teachers, four department leaders, four deputy school heads, twenty-four students, and four heads of school. The Hargreaves Capital Theory of School Performance and Development was used in this study. The goal of this research was to investigate how the principals of high- and low-performing rural primary schools carried out their leadership community and interpersonal competencies, as well as how these competencies affected the academic accomplishment of their students. The results of the cross-analysis case study showed that high-achieving rural primary schools were proficient in both community and communication. They were able to provide parents and students with timely and useful feedback thanks to this strategy. By talking to parents and other relevant parties, they were empowered to make wise choices. They worked together and established connections with local community stakeholders, including parents. Conversely, underperforming schools merely made token references to the "involvement" method. Thus, the study comes to the conclusion that the school heads' ability to build a headship community and communicate effectively helped them win over collaborators' trust and raise student academic accomplishment.

Keywords: Community, headship proficiencies, School effectiveness, School improvement, academic performance, communication, collaborators, positive attitudes

Introduction

Bush (2018) asserts that a key factor impacting students' academic success is their school headship competencies. The competencies, skills, aptitude, talents, knowledge, and abilities of school leaders are referred to as their "headship proficiencies." (Amakyi & Ampah-Mensah, 2020). These headship proficiencies are critical factors that determine academic growth and performance of learners (Hompashe, 2018). Improving education systems are characterised by greater attention to school headship proficiencies to combat challenges of learner poor academic achievement of learners (Meyers & Murphy, 2017).

In the Kweneng Region of Botswana, two high-performing and two low-performing rural primary schools were

compared for headship society and communication leadership proficiencies. With guidance from the Revised National Policy on Education of 1994 (RNPE) and the Education Training Sector Strategy of 2015–2020 (ETSSP), Botswana's Ministry of Basic Education aims to improve the delivery of education.

Yet, it appears that students' academic performance in rural schools is lower. Consequently, the goal of this research is to identify leadership and communication skills that could improve students' academic performance in Kweneng Region elementary schools.

Background of the Study

At Botswana, learners from disadvantaged social origins and poorer ethnic minorities receive formal education at primary schools located in rural areas. Low academic attainment among students is a problem for the majority of these schools (Pansiri, 2011; Republic of Botswana, 2015). The shortcomings of the school head are somewhat to blame for this low academic accomplishment (Moswela & Kgosidialwa, 2017).

School heads in rural areas of Botswana, therefore, need to possess relevant in community and communication proficiencies to improve learner academic achievement. The Botswana Government in 2002 partnership with a few international organisations embarked on several initiatives to try and address school leadership and management challenges to improve learners' academic achievement. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department for International Development (DfID) are two of these sponsors, namely the Primary School Management Development Project (PSMDP) and the Primary Education Improvement Project (PEIP). The goal of these courses was to provide primary school management (heads of departments, deputies, senior teachers, and school heads) with training activities related to school effectiveness and school improvement. (Pansiri & Majwabe, 2020). Pansiri (2011) cast doubt as to whether these projects achieved their mandates. In comparison with what was discovered in the study conducted by Pansiri (2011) and the current results from 2015 to 2019, shows that there is stagnancy of low learner academic achievement. Generally, this stagnancy of low learner academic achievement in PSLE is prevalent in rural and remote area schools. The study was conducted in the Kweneng region, which is rustic and remote district schools. The stagnancy indicates that there has been minimal academic improvement for learners in these locations. "Internal performance in tests has remained stagnant in recent years," according to the World Bank (2019). (p. 21), and the Kweneng region is one example of this. In 2015, the ETSSP, was launched as a strategy to guide improved implementation of the education policy. The plan is based on a number of studies that examined the main obstacles in both basic and higher

education (Republic of Botswana, 2015). The text highlights the importance of establishing a solid foundation in pre-primary education for teachers. It also advocates for increased parent involvement, the provision of high-quality data for planning strategies, and the overhaul of the education management system, which promises better administration and policy implementation.

The ETSSP found a number of important problems at various educational levels. The strategy outlines the following areas at the primary level: reducing the gaps in learner performance and quality education between urban and rural schools; reducing primary school dropout rates; improving the upkeep of school facilities, including hostels; reducing the need for kids to take public transportation to school; providing electricity; improving teaching and curriculum execution in remote areas; improving hostel conditions for young students who struggle to adjust and drop out; and providing inadequate amenities and supplies for students with particular needs in school and lacking ICT resources. (Page 57, Republic of Botswana, 2015)

The World Bank (2019) observed that a deficiency in funds was preventing the implementation of certain ETSSP recommendations. It goes on to say that the ETSSP's lack of funding forced it to prioritise the areas that follow: enhance data gathering and the planning and decision-making process; prioritise

spending on basic education to boost the effectiveness and calibre of basic education; and make sure the budget process is set up so that all education spending can be prioritised. Enhancing instruction and curriculum provision in remote locations with an emphasis on learner accomplishment, learner advancement, decreasing performance gaps, and preparation for postsecondary education was not one of the topics given priority. Therefore, the study's pupose is to investigate the headship, community, and interpersonal leadership proficiencies that explain why students in elementary schools in rural areas in Kweneng achieve academically.

Problem Statement

Rural area's Primary schools in in Botswana are not performing well academically as compared to their counterparts in towns and cities. The average ABC pass from 2015 to 2019 was as follows: in Town schools it was around 80 % and in Districts which have many schools in rural areas, it was around 60 % (BEC, 2015; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; Republic of Botswana, 2015; World Bank, 2019). According to World Bank (2019), there is a great deal of regional diversity in accessibility and performance, which begs important concerns regarding fair access to high-quality education. The report from the Botswana Examination Council (BEC) makes this clear. Therefore, this study is essential to comprehending and appreciating the factors that influence academic

accomplishment in high-performing schools relative to those in low-performing ones. These drivers would then be applied to practice, policy, and additional study.

Purpose of the study

Examining community and communication skills as a means of explaining students' academic success is the goal of the project. This research looked at headship communities and communication skills between the top and worst performing schools in order to apply and adjust these techniques to raise the educational achievement of low-performing primary schools in Botswana's rural Kweneng Region.

In conclusion, the study aimed to determine the community and communication competencies of school heads in order to enhance the academic accomplishment of learners in rural primary schools located in the Kweneng Region.

Research Questions

This study focused on two research questions

1.   Which headship community and communication proficiencies account for good learners' academic achievement in rural primary schools of the Kweneng Region?

2.   How do headship community and communication proficiencies influence learner academic achievement in rural primary schools of Kweneng Region?

Literature Review

Community and communication in a school means having effective communication between the school and the community which is more focused on the learning and well-being of learners (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2009). Harmon and Chaff (2009) argue that school community and communication is a foundation of developing and maintaining partnership. Hargreaves and Fullan (2009) stress that community and communication in schools is a foundation of developing and maintaining partnerships. The authors further assert that community and communication needs to focus on learners' learning and their well-being (Hargreaves & Fink, 2009). Therefore, the study's pupos was to determine whether school heads at the chosen primary schools in rural areas in Botswana were using these proficiencies to affect academic achievement. Academic success of well-performing students in rural primary institutions is attributed to leadership, community, and communication skills. In public primary schools in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, Joan (2008) found that proficient decision-making and communication are among the community and interpersonal abilities that impact learners' academic progress.

Furthermore, Hargreaves and Fullan's (2009) study attest that timely and effective feedback is one of the community and communication proficiency that influence learner academic achievement. Moreover, Locke, Budge and Lunnay (2012) argue that collaboration and networking with parents and stakeholders in the local

community is one of the communication and community proficiency. Collaboration, according to Halsey (2011), is the process of working with someone to create something. According to Preston (2012), networking is the act or procedure of engaging with others in order to share information and create social and professional connections. The impact of leadership, community, and communication skills on students' academic performance in rural elementary schools

International Literature

Joan (2008) states that effective decision making and communication influence learners' academic achievement in public primary schools because the school heads who involved the community in supervising what occurs in classrooms had good learner academic achievement. This study showed that the tripartite cooperation of the school, parents and the community was critical in influencing the learner academic achievement. Moreover, Hargreaves and Fullan (2009) posit that the school heads who had timely and effective feedback proficiency were able to make good relationships with the community and were also able to communicate well with stakeholders and these helped in improving learner achievement because weaknesses on teaching and learning were identified and rectified. Furthermore, Lock, Budge and Lunnay (2012) argue that collaboration and networking with parents and stakeholders in the local

community influence academic performance because school heads in rural areas in Australia are treated as pubic properties as their jobs become lifestyles than jobs because someone work extra hours in a day lobbing with the community on how learner acacdemic achievement can improve. In the meantime, Harmon and Chafft (2009) and Lock, Budge, and Lunnay (2012) agree that school leaders in Australia should be able to relate to the rural way of life of the students at their institution, join local organisations, take part in local events, and set a good example for behaviour, professionalism, social skills, culture, and spirituality.

On a related point, Budge (2006) in a study of a rural school in the United States of America observed that school heads in rural areas spend extra time outside school hours attending to outside school needs of parents and community. It is, therefore, agreed that the school heads in rural areas care for the well-being of teachers, learners, and even of the school community (Halsey, 2011). Thus, their role often accounts for parental involvement and participation through the use of the school council to improve academic performance (Preston, 2012).
In rural schools in developed countries, for one to occupy a school head position, they need to have an affiliation with the school community (Riley, 2013). This means that the school head must be engaged in community activities and must also be

in committees that run the community. The school head must get involved with the community since that will make him or her conversant with the political & social context of the localty (Cruizeiro & Boone, 2009). According to Stronge (2011), there exist various community and communication materials, including agendas for departmental meetings, PTA meetings, newsletters, voluntary parent and community surveys, website links, the completion of the annual school safety audit, agendas and meeting minutes for safe school committees, agendas and meeting minutes for the school health advisory board, media releases, and presentations to civic and community organisations aimed at enhancing academic performance.

Stronge (2011) further argues that the above documents were very important as they validated whether the school heads had the right community and communication proficiencies which can influence, learner achievement (Goodhall, 2017).

Regional Literature

Hite, et.al (2006) argue that school head who encourage collaboration and networking among the parents and stakeholders in the local community encourage network relationships among teachers and the parents which then enforce learner academic achievement. A similar finding was reported by Sailor et al. (2007) in a South African study that examined the characteristics of six high-achieving schools located in low-income neighbourhoods. It was discovered that schools with excellent learning environments, safety, and order were led by capable school administrators who possessed great interpersonal and communication abilities.

Additionally, Yu and Thomas (2008) proposed in a Tanzanian study that a contextualised strategy for school leaders' effective communication and decision-making skills aided in incorporating stakeholders' viewpoints and these enhanced comprehension of the efficacy of schools in low-income nations.

Furthermore, one teacher in du Plessis's (2017) study in South Africa documented that "Our school has achieved the highest academic results because our head teacher, who is well-liked in our community, listens to us and shows us respect."

"(P. 7). However, McEwan (2013) made a similar observation in the initial study on creating linkages between school committees and local governments in the Gambia, Indonesia, and Madagascar.

O'Grady (2000) agreed, stating that teachers and communities working together to provide timely and useful feedback improves learning in Ghanaian classrooms. In order to improve education in Ghana, educators and the community have partnered to implement the "Improving Learning through Partnership" (ILP) basic education programme. This study details these relationships. Ghana improved its educational system by

incorporating parents and other residents in the learning process and by utilising master instructors to assist in enhancing the teaching of fundamental skills.

ILP noted that a variety of actors both inside and outside the educational system affect students' ability to learn. During first workshops, partners are helped by ILP experts to identify their shared objectives. Teachers, local government representatives, PTA members, members of the school management committee, and traditional leaders collaborated to create plans for improving the school that were disseminated to the community at large. Their reports highlighted ILP's advantages and successful tactics while debating obstacles to IPL initiatives, successful schools, and factors that have affected learning in Ghana.

It explored the function and significance of master teacher visits, explained the use of reinforcement and follow-up activities in between visits, and explored appreciating inquiry as an approach and attitude for effective teaching. The report concluded with a discussion of community empowerment and an examination of strategies for community-school improvement and infrastructure upgrades in schools. According to the study, school results improved after the conclusion of the investigation.

Botswana Literature

Moswela and Kgosidialwa (2017) establish that the school heads are required to account for the underperformance of their schools while having not received effective training on managerial skills and practices. The head of the school is responsible for a number of administrative duties, including managing the staff, overseeing instruction, maintaining student welfare, and fostering positive relationships with the community. Their inability to complete duties quickly and effectively will have an impact on their academic performance and the atmosphere of the school (Ratsatsi, 2005).

Consequently, Moswela (2006) recommends that school heads need to be trained as teacher in-service trainers since this can cut costs and can also updated the teachers quality development in education.

Researchers in Botswana, including Pansiri (2008), conducted a study on leadership in educational institutions for high-quality learning. The Primary School Leadership Development Project in Botswana was also assessed by his research for effects. The research revealed that the social skills needed to supervise student behaviour in the classroom were lacking in school administration teams.

The investigation also proved that supervisors were unable to get parents involved in school-based instructional improvement initiatives, that instructors were using corporal punishment without permission, and that there was a dearth of originality and inventiveness

in the way they handled curriculum changes.

In conclusion, there is a gap that has to be filled because the three research did not concentrate on the effects of headship communities and communication skills on academic achievement in rural primary schools.

Theoretical Framework

The Capital Theory of School Effectiveness and Improvement, created by Hargreaves (2001), serves as the foundation for this investigation. The theory put forward by Hargreaves (2001) was selected because it suggests that in order for school leaders to be effective, they need to develop interpersonal relationships with stakeholders, coworkers, and students that enable them to communicate the mission, vision, and values.

In order to assist them in running and leading their schools, Hargreaves (2001) further states that the principal of the school must engage the community. In order to help school heads in rural Kweneng Region enhance their students' academic performance, the Hargreaves (2001) framework was selected as a crucial first step in identifying society and communication proficiencies. The Capital Theory of School Effectiveness and Improvement, according to Hargreaves (2001), is based on the core concepts of social capital, which are linked to the widely known idea of institutional output.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the social capital of the local primary school principals in the Kweneng region enabled them to form effective networks and cooperative connections with the people they serve (Hargreaves, 2001).

Social capital

According to Hargreaves (2001), cultural and structural elements are what define social capital. The degree of trust among two individuals and the development of reciprocity norms—such as cooperation and mutual favors—make up the cultural component. The relationships in which individuals are deeply embedded constitute the structural aspect. High levels of trust create strong networks and cooperative relationships among the members and stakeholders of a school that is rich in social capital.

This study set out to ascertain whether the heads of the rural primary schools in the Kweneng region possessed the social capital necessary to devote their time and efforts to fostering mutuality, comprehension, harmony, accord, trust, and respect between the school and the community (Cortez-Jiminez, 2012; Renihan & Noonan, 2012).

Research Methodology

In the Kweneng region, the study was conducted in rural public schools. The qualitative method looked at the competencies of the school head that affect student achievement. Purposive sampling was used to gather as much data as possible from the 56

participants in the sample (school heads, deputy school heads, teachers, and students) from both the rural primary schools in the Kweneng region that have been performing poorly and those that have been performing well over the last five years. Respondents were asked to consider their own observations of the competencies of school heads, the factors they believed contributed to learners' academic achievement, the challenges and difficulties experienced by school heads in rural areas, and their suggestions for supporting school heads.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed where respondents consented, where respondents declined written notes were taken instead. Data analysis started as soon as the data was gathered. Decisions regarding the additional data source were impacted by emerging leads, which were in line with a theoretical sampling procedure (Hargreaves, 2001). Twenty-four students participated in focus groups, and thirty-two teachers were interviewed in all. The University of Botswana provided ethical approval after reviewing all relevant data regarding school head competencies. The data were analysed using thematic analysis. (Maree, 2019)

This required familiarising oneself with the data by transcribing and rereading it, doing analysis, and spotting patterns that clarified the elements supporting the community partnership process's early development. Meeting minutes, policy documents, and other documents were examined.

Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed with the cooperation of the respondents; in the event that participants objected, written notes were taken. Data analysis started as soon as the data was gathered. Decisions regarding the additional data source were impacted by emerging leads, which is in line with a theoretical sampling procedure (Hargreaves, 2001). Twenty-four students participated in focus groups, and thirty-two teachers were interviewed in all. The University of Botswana provided ethical approval after reviewing all relevant data regarding school head competencies. The data were analysed using thematic analysis (Maree, 2019).

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Despite the fact that the four schools that took part in the study at the time of the examination had different possibilities, circumstances, and problems, identical factors were found to be present in both cases (Sohn, 2017). The analysis showed a shared trajectory and arc of action, notwithstanding occasional engagements between teachers' and school heads' perspectives of the mission and the school's procedures

(Patton, 2002). A retroactive assessment of the "cumulative action and interaction that has taken place in attempts to shape the course of the phenomenon as perceived by the researcher" is what Yin (2003) described as an "arc of action."

The degree to which perception and interpretational concerns surfaced lends credence to the theoretical framework this study developed, which encourages linked and collaborative procedures for partnerships. Through data analysis, cross-case analysis, and narrative data reporting, an interpretative approach (Maree, 2019) was used. Key findings supported the creation of themes that ultimately became the core leadership expertise that explained the differences between the primary schools in rural areas in the Kweneng area that performed well and those that did not (KFs).

Eight claims were generated by further interpreting these topics in the context of the body of literature already in existence.

To confirm the instruments' dependability and make any necessary improvements, a pilot test of the interview questions was carried out (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Additionally, flexibility was taken into account to increase confidence by providing participants with a thorough explanation of the issue under examination (Sohn, 2017). The nature of the study, its purposes, duration, and reward were disclosed to the gatekeepers and participants with regard to ethical considerations.

Additionally, gatekeepers and participants were informed about the procedures for gathering data, risks, confidentiality, and the use of the data in addition to voluntary involvement. To maintain confidentiality, the study used pseudo name identities for the participating schools and their school heads: The representatives of Morula Primary School are Ms. Rula; Mokgalo Primary School is Ms. Kgalo; Moretlwa Primary School is Ms. Retlwa; and Morojwa Primary School is Ms. Rojwa.

Findings and Discussion

The three main topics that arose from school head communities and communication proficiency are explained and discussed in this study. After defining each theme, a brief development of it is provided, showing how the theme appeared in the data in relation to the main conclusions. To produce statements, each subject is further analysed in light of pertinent supporting material. After each instance was examined, a number of important conclusions were drawn. Three themes emerged from a cross-case study based on the main findings: the school head community, communication skills, and academic success.

The extent to which the school head demonstrated the proficiencies in relation to the themes influenced learner academic achievement of that school. The themes include timely and effective feedback, effective decision-making and communication and collaboration and network with parents

and stakeholders in the local community.

Theme 1: Timely and effective feedback

In this study, all school heads made sure that timely and effective feedback were given to both parents and learners. Ms Rula was found to be good in giving feedback through meetings to parents and during school morning assembly to learners. This was confirmed by Participant 1 who said that "Suppose there was a meeting at the kgotla and some information is to be sent to parents and it is urgent she conveys the message during assembly time through learners." However, Ms Kgalo and Ms Rojwa were found to give feedback to teachers, learners and parents through end of term reports, class analysis, PTA meetings, circulars and academic performance record books. Participant 3 gave a personal narrative from Mokgalo Primary School and affirmed that, "the school head assesses the books, then she calls a meeting to give feedback on time. She also gives us an opportunity to give feedback during class analysis." Moreover, Ms Retlwa was found to meet deadlines and give feedback to teachers, learners and parents on time. Participant 4 confirmed that by asserting, "The school head encourages us to observe time and that we should not let the feedback overlap."

The findings above are supported by Hargreaves and Fullan (2009) who posit that the school heads who had timely and effective feedback proficiency were able to make good relationships with the community and were able to communicate well with stakeholders and these helped in improving learner achievement because weaknesses on teaching and learning were identified and rectified. O'Grady (2000) concurs with Hargreaves and Fullan (2009) who endorsed that timely and effective feedback makes a difference in Ghana's classrooms as it gives the teacher a chance to treat educators and communities as partners hence give them feedback from time to time which later improve learner academic achievement.

It was, therefore, evident that giving timely and effective feedback either improves or not improve academic performance. It has shown that it improves academic performance when the parents are supporting their children. This has been evidenced by parents of learners in Moretlwa and Morojwa primary schools. It does not improve academic performance when the parents are not supportive of their children's learning. This was evidenced by parents of learners in Morula and Mokgalo primary schools.

Theme 2: Effective decision-making and communication

This study also found that some school heads were able to maintain effective decision- making and communication with parents and stakeholders. Ms Rula was not sharing management decisions with staff and stakeholders in various planning processes. This inveterate by Participant 4 who declared, "The school head sometimes call us and

shares with us whatever she wants to share, instead of giving us an opportunity to say our views she will then, at that point tell us what she wants and how she wants it to be done, regardless of whether we can attempt to give our thoughts she simply turns out to be firm and hold on what she needs." Ms Rojwa was found to make sure that she planned with PTA, VDC and village leaders such as chiefs and assistant chiefs. This affirmed by Participant 5 who acknowledged that, "The school head holds meetings to discuss issues concerning the school and a consensus is reached." On the contrary, Ms Kgalo was found not involving the stakeholders in decision-making. She only made decisions with her SMT and had it adopted and shared it with parents, especially, the executive committee. This affirmed by Participant 6 who stated that, "mostly the stakeholders are not involved, the only person I have seen being involved is a councillor, and she possibly involves her when she wants her to use her speakers to invite parents for meetings, the meetings they never turn upon."

Hargreaves and Fullan (2009) provide evidence to support the idea that school administrators can enhance academic student accomplishment by interacting and making choices with parents and other stakeholders. Additionally, Hargreaves (2001) lends support to it, arguing in his theory that social capital is defined in terms of structural and cultural elements. The degree of trust between two individuals and the development of reciprocity norms—such as cooperation and mutual favors—make up the cultural component. The networks in which individuals are deeply embedded constitute the structural aspect. High levels of trust create strong networks and cooperative relationships among the school's members and stakeholders, which enhances academic achievement for students in a social capital-rich school.

Evidence from this study, however, shows that effective decision-making and communication proficiency alone is incapable of influencing learner academic achievement. It has been discovered that if the decision- making and communication is done to improve academic results, it then influences academic learner achievement and if the focus is not mainly on learners' academic achievement, it does not improve learners' academic achievement. This was proved by Ms Retlwa and Ms Rojwa whose learners' academic achievement improved since they made sure that decisions and communication made with parents and stakeholders were mainly geared towards improving academic performance. On the contrary, Ms Rula had the proficiency but she did not focus her communication and decision-making on improving learners' academic achievement. Ms Kgalo, who was not able to make decisions and communicate with parents and stakeholders had poor learner academic achievement.

Theme 3: Collaboration and network with stakeholders & parents in the rural society.

This study shows that all the school heads were able to collaborate and network with parents and stakeholders in the rural society. Ms Rula was found to collaborate with parents and stakeholders through meetings, letters, and WhatsApp groups. This was affirmed by Participant 1 by saying, "The school head collaborates with business people, village elders, Village Extension Team, Village Development Team, alumni, and the community at large". Furthermore, Ms Kgalo was found to collaborate through PTA meetings, VET meetings, attending community celebrations and she also uses the WhatsApp group and letter writing. Moreover, Ms Retlwa was found to collaborate and network with parents and stakeholders in the local community. Participant 6 affirmed this by saying that, "She is part of the VET committee and goes to community celebrations. She uses text messages, telephones, letters and PTA meetings to also communicate. She has also opened the school WhatsApp group." Meanwhile, Ms Rojwa was found to collaborate and network with parents and stakeholders in the community through meetings. This confirmed by Participant 2 who articulated that, "the school head calls the meeting together with the parents and some stakeholders in education and when she calls meetings, she makes sure that there is an agenda where she addresses children's education issues."

This is supported by Lock, Budge and Lunnay (2012) who argue that collaboration and networking with parents and stakeholders in the local community influence academic performance because school heads in rural areas in Australia are treated as pubic properties as their jobs become lifestyles than jobs because someone work extra hours in a day lobbing with the community on how learner academic achievement can improve. Furthermore, Harmon and Chafft (2009) and Lock, Budge, and Lunnay (2012) agree that school leaders in Australia able to relate to the rural way of life of the community at school, join local organisations, take part in local events, and set a good example for behaviour, professionalism, social skills, and cultural and spiritual awareness.

Evidence from the study shows that no matter how much energy the school head puts in by collaborating and networking with parents and stakeholders in the local community, if she is not focusing the network and collaboration on improving the learner academic achievement, her school would not improve academically. The evidence by Ms Rula and Ms Kgalo who had collaboration and networking proficiency but still their schools performed below average. School heads, therefore, must recognize that the essence of networking and collaborating is for the improvement of academic results. Ms Retlwa and Ms Rojwa managed to improve their results through networking and

collaborating with parents and stakeholders in the community since they focused them on improving academic performance.

Conclusions

Which leadership communities and communication skills support students' academic success in Kweneng Region primary schools located in rural areas? was the initial of the two research topics posed by the study. and 2. To what extent do communication and leadership skills influence students' academic achievement in Kweneng Region's rural primary schools?

Following data interpretations and the development of three themes in light of previously published literature discussed in the debate, an agreement to these inquiries is presented as an assertion. The study discovered that learners' academic achievement in primary schools in rural areas in the Kweneng Region is dependent on headship, society as a whole and communication proficiencies. These include promptly implementing recommendations, effective decision-making, interpersonal interaction, and collaboration, as well as socialising with parents and various community stakeholders.

The study found that primary rural schools in the Kweneng Region, these proficiencies might be applied to improve student academic attainment. Due to their community and communication skills, the principals of rural primary schools were able to provide parents and students with timely and useful feedback. By talking to parents and other relevant parties, they were able to make wise choices.

They collaborated and networked with parents and stakeholders in the local community. They were able to gain trust of collaborators which then brought positive attitudes towards improving learner academic achievement than those who had no community and communication proficiencies. These proficiencies should not be ignored as they can help Botswana in establishing relevant and quality education that is outcome-based by 2036.

Implications of the study

This study's primary limitation—which applies to all cases—is its context-boundity, which restricts its applicability in different circumstances. Therefore, in order to determine whether the results of this study are reliable and to pinpoint any variations between both urban and rural contexts, replication studies across both both urban and rural regions of Botswana are required.

The study's findings also demonstrate that effective school administrators are essential to turning a rural primary school with low performance into a school with excellent results. Expanding or building upon the findings of this study could be possible in any future research on learner attainment in Botswana's secondary schools in the countryside.

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