ABSTRACT

This study primarily aimed to find out how university degrees influence career paths and workplace practices of the graduates. A tracer survey was carried out using the 1997 Bachelor (primary) of education graduates of the University of Botswana. Data was collected qualitatively using unstructured interviews and analysis of documents. A bachelor (primary) of education degree programme was introduced at university level to enhance professional practice in the workplace. However the degree seemed not to have achieved this. Instead it seemed to have led the pull out of teachers from their initial work setting in the primary department to other departments. This is due to the fact that degrees do different things that do not fall into university programme design. This is also due largely to the fact that when degrees are designed they do not take into account the complexity of the challenges and experiences that teachers are faced with in the workplace. In fact, some of the challenges and experiences have nothing to do with the qualifications conferred by the degree like salaries, personal interrelations, lack of promotion prospects and professional roles devalued. All these things push teachers to leave. Though some of the teachers may be competent enough in their jobs, they still need degrees to authenticate their profession. The study concludes that the BEd (primary) degree programme is not necessarily job related. Therefore the study strongly recommends that the BEd (primary) programme be reviewed thoroughly to ensure that it leads to professional development of teachers in primary schools.

Key words: Higher education qualifications, Higher education degree, Degrees and labour market, Professional development, Teacher upgrade, Education careers, Graduates and employment