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Internal accountability and school performance in private secondary schools in Botswana : A case study of Legae Academy and Al-Nur Schools

Patel, Farzeen

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how accountability affects school performance in Legae Academy and Al-Nur School. It scrutinizes the main approaches to accountability held by managers, teachers and students and the assumptions underpinning these. It explores all the formal and informal practices and policies of accountability institutionalized in the schools, by looking at who is accountable to whom, how they are accountable and for what are they accountable. Another issue that is addressed is the lines of accountability within the organizational hierarchy of the schools (schools board, school managers, teachers, students, and where applicable other relevant stakeholders), and the possible relationships that can be established between the accountability system and practice and overall school performance. A sample of 6 administrators, 15 teachers and 16 students was selected in total at both Legae Academy and Al-Nur, to be interviewed using purposeful sampling. While the study has an open-ended approach, the following key propositions are considered as a guiding framework: (i) variables of accountability such as responsibilities and expectations influence an accountability system; (ii) accountability of managers, teachers and students improves their practice and performance; and (iii) effective accountability systems play a central role in overall school performance. The main argument of this study is that, where minimum resources both material and human are available, internal accountability with clearly defined lines of accountability – upward to the relevant governance and management structures within the school hierarchy and downward to the main stakeholders, namely parents and students – plays a critical role in enhancing school performance.