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A critical study of the implementation of the education decentralisation process and its effect on secondary schools in Botswana: a case of the South Central region

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2008-04-09T08:27:27Z
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of the education decentralisation process and its effect on secondary schools in Botswana in the case of the South Central Region. This topic was chosen against the wide-scale adoption by African countries of the international policy of educational decentralization, which takes different forms in different purposes. Literature on decentralization and school monitoring and support was consulted as well as evidence from different African countries.

The study uses a qualitative approach and case study of a region to collect data through interviews and document analysis. Purposive sampling was used to select participants from the Ministry of Education headquarters, national Secondary Education Department and the South Central Region Office. Six Secondary Schools were sampled for the purpose of illustrating the impact of the regional administrative decentralization on different kinds of schools.

The research findings reveal that Botswana has adopted the particular form of regional administrative decentralization for the purpose of administrative efficiency and the improvement of its school monitoring and support functions. The study revealed that some benefits, such as speedier response to teachers' welfare matters, facilitation of distribution of resources in particular, learner- support materials and teachers, did occur. However, contrary to expectations, it surfaced that the process was ridden with more problems than solutions, mainly because many of the preconditions necessary for effective administrative decentralization were not present. For example, there was a lack of common understanding of the form and extent of decentralisation, human and other resources, role clarity and proper accountability lines, resulting in duplication of effort and tension between the regional and national offices as well as misaligned decentralization functions within the education bureaucracy.

The main recommendations of the study are that the Ministry of Education should revisit the strategy to take on board and empower the regions to effectively execute their mandate of monitoring and supporting secondary schools in their jurisdiction. This will require increased capacity and resources as well as strategic leadership on behalf of the region.

Key Words: Education decentralization and delegation, Administrative decentralization, Evaluation, School monitoring and support, Decentralization pre-conditions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was made possible by the invaluable support I got from many people. It would not be possible to name each one of them. I would, however, like to offer my sincere gratitude to Ms Francine De Clercq whose stimulating and thought- provoking ideas, comments and suggestions inspired and encouraged me to work hard. I would also like to thank my employer, Ministry of Education for according me the opportunity to participate in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Educational Policy Support Initiatives (EPSI) project in 2003, which led to my enrolment for the masters programme.

Special thanks are also due to my family, Tabalu, Doe, Chanda and Chabo for the support they gave me throughout the entire project.

I am also grateful to all the people who accorded me the opportunity to interview them. Finally, I thank all those who offered assistance to see the successful completion of my research project.

DECLARATION

I declare that this report is my own original work except where otherwise acknowledged. The report is being submitted for the degree of Master of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. This report has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

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Matlhoatsie Eunice Masendu Date

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background to the study, rationale, statement of the problem and the research questions.

1.0 Background to the study

1.1 Overall Aim of Education Decentralisation in Botswana

Decentralisation of education in Botswana dates back to the colonial days, during which time, education provision was managed by the missionaries and tribal administrations. At Independence in 1966, the task of managing education was assigned to the Ministry of Education through the Education Act of 1966. At the time, there were very few schools and therefore the system was managed from the centre (Sephuma: 1991). However, the rapid expansion that followed warranted some form of decentralisation. According to National Development Plan 7 (1991- 1997:339)

> The increasing scale of the education system makes it unwieldy to manage in the centralised way that was practical for a much smaller number of students and institutions. This has implications both for educational administration and for manpower planning. For educational planning it creates a need to decentralise, so that the managers of the system are closer to the institutions and the communities they serve (Republic of Botswana, 1991).

The 1976 Commission on Education that was appointed to review the education system had previously recommended that some functions of the Ministry of Education be decentralised to improve service delivery (Republic of Botswana, 1977). This was followed by a decentralisation of the administrative functions of some departments of the Ministry of Education, such as primary and non-formal education where a major expansion had been realised. Secondary Education lagged behind because at the time

there were fewer secondary schools. The late 1980s and 1990s saw the construction of more secondary schools through World Bank sponsorship and other means.

The second Commission on Education (1993) advocated for a more comprehensive system of decentralisation. Thus, according to Recommendation 117 of the subsequent education policy, the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) of 1994

a). The Ministry of Education should establish offices at the level of the local authority administrative areas.
b). The district offices should include personnel from all relevant departments and be supervised by an officer of the rank of Chief Education Officer.
c). The programme of decentralisation should be implemented under the management of the Deputy Permanent Secretary (Republic of Botswana, 1994).

To address this recommendation, the Ministry of Education developed a regional unitary structure in January 2001, for implementation in April of the same year to six regions initially. It was envisaged that ultimately the education regions would align with the local authority administrative areas in accordance with part (a) of the recommendation. This would bring all education functions in a region under one Chief Education Officer. The implementation did not take place as planned. To date the five departments in the regions, namely, Vocational Education and Training, Teacher Training and Development, Primary Education, Secondary Education and Non-Formal Education operate as separate entities.

The main reason for decentralising some of the functions of the said departments was to improve management of education in Botswana. Because the implementation of the decentralisation process was not coordinated, each department had its own implementation plan and worked with different geographical boundaries and were headed at different levels. For instance, while Secondary Education is supervised at the level of a Chief Education Officer, other departments are headed at the lower levels of Principal Education Officer 1 and Principal Education Officer II. Primary and Non- Formal

Education regions have subdivided their regions into smaller districts while Vocational and Secondary Education each operate from a central office in the region.

The table 1 gives a picture of the situation in the various regions and decentralisation powers of each department.

Table 1: Departmental Decentralisation

Department	**Number of regions**	**Date to region**	**Level of Regional Head**	**Decentralised Function**
Primary	6	1980s	Principal Education Officer I	Support and monitoring of primary schools
Secondary	5	1991	Chief Education Officer	Support and monitoring of secondary schools
Teacher Training and Development	12	1980s	Principal Education Officer II	Support schools through in-service teacher training
Non-Formal	6	1980s	Principal Education Officer I	Support to adult learner groups
Vocational and Technical Education	2	2002	Principal Education Officer I	Support and monitoring of vocational and technical institutions

Source: Report on Ministerial Organisation and Methods Review (1992); Report on Launch of Unitary Structure (2001)

The functions that remained centralised are curriculum development and evaluation, teacher recruitment and training, administration of budgetary allocation and policy formulation. (Report on Launch of Regional Unitary Structure (2001) and Financial Instructions and Regulations 1993) Thus, it never was government's intention to devolve

all powers to the regions but rather to deconcentrate and delegate some administrative functions for efficiency purposes (Reports of Commissions of Education, 1976 and 1992).

Although there is clarity on the type of decentralisation at a policy level, the reality points to another picture. There appears to be differences in understanding of the decentralisation concept and its implementation process. This lack of role clarity has led to various problems.

1.2 Relationship between National Department and Regional Office

The idea behind decentralisation of secondary education is to take the services closer to the customers with a view to achieving better support and monitoring for school improvement. The region serves as an important link between the national office and the schools. It is accountable to the centre for implementation of policies and programmes as dictated by the centre and must attend to the needs and demands of the schools, thereby supporting them through capacity building and resource distribution.

The national Department of Secondary Education headed by a director, is responsible for the management of secondary education through its five regions across the country. It ensures formulation of policies and programmes for secondary education through its four divisions: Inspectorate for school monitoring; Management and Training for inservice support to school management teams; Development Services for monitoring construction and renovation of buildings in schools and provision of equipment; and Administration and Finance for allocation of financial resources and recruitment and deployment of non teaching staff for the national and regional offices as well as schools (Organisation and Methods Review, 1992).

In carrying out its mandate of policy formulation, the National Department of Secondary Education (DSE) liaises with other departments as shown in table 2 below. The regional offices are then expected to implement the policies and programmes.

Table 2: DSE liaison with other departments

Department	Area of collaboration
Curriculum Development	Curriculum implementation
Teacher Training and Development	Staff development workshops for teachers
Teaching Service Management	Teacher recruitment and long- term teacher in-service training
Primary Education	Admissions of primary school leavers into secondary schools
Examinations, Research and Testing Division	Administration of national examinations
Planning Unit	Planning of new secondary schools
Accounting/Finance section of the Ministry of Education	Budgeting and allocation of funds

Source: Report on Ministerial Organisation and Methods Review (1992)

The South Central Regional Office is responsible for sixty- three secondary schools and close to three thousand teachers. Its mandate is to monitor and support schools in the region, and it consists of the following divisions: Inspectorate; Management and Training divisions; Finance and Administration; and Teacher Welfare. This divisional structure is not directly aligned with the national secondary education office, as the latter has a division responsible for school infrastructural development and maintenance. At national level, the Teacher Welfare Division is situated in the Department of Teaching Service Management, whose mandate is to recruit teachers for primary, secondary and colleges of education.

The role of the regional Inspectorate Division is two- fold. It monitors schools through school inspections and provides support by advising on content, delivery and evaluation in various curriculum areas. (Job Description for Principal Education Officer II, Organisation and Methods Review 1992). For the past five years, the number of officers in this division in the South Central has been around four (Establishment Registers 2001/2002- 2004/2005), covering four subject areas although around fifteen subjects are

offered in the schools. This situation has resulted in officers being assigned to cater administratively for subjects in which they lack expertise.

The Management and Training Division provides in-service support to the management teams of the sixty- three schools in the region. Ideally, the one-person division plans and implements regional, cluster and school- based workshops to address gaps identified during inspections. However, the division has experienced a constraint in that, in the last three years, it has had to focus on the organisation of strategic development planning workshops for the regional office and for schools as directed by the national office.

Short- term inservice training for teachers is located at the national Department of Teacher Training and Development (TT&D) and its regional offices. The inspection findings are supposed to be shared with the responsible unit in that department in order for it to act on inadequacies in curriculum delivery identified during inspections carried out by the Secondary Department. However, the constraint experienced with this arrangement over the past years is that in-service teacher training has been irregular and inadequate. This was attributed to lack of capacity and the fact that, as a separate department reporting to a different supervisor, its priorities were different from those of Secondary Education Department. This left the Department of Secondary Education, under which schools fall, with no option but to attempt to do in-service training through workshops and consultative meetings with teachers, despite its own manpower constraints.

For the last two years, two officers staffed the Finance section, tasked with the role of monitoring the use of funds in schools. Through audit inspections, the section identifies financial management needs of schools in the region and, in liaison with the Management and Training Division, provides support through workshops and school visits to work with school management teams and staff in the finance section.

The Teacher Welfare section, which for the past five years, has been staffed by two officers, attends to teacher welfare issues. It should be noted that, at national level, this is

a function of the Department of Teaching Service Management. The section processes among others, all types of leave for teachers, and their progression between salary grades, confirmation of teachers, salary advances and terminal benefits.

The Development Services Division, which facilitates renovation of buildings and supervision of construction of new buildings in the schools and provision of equipment, has not yet been established in the South Central Region. Consequently, the national office performs the function of the division at South Central Region.

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the regional administrative decentralisation of secondary education and the operations of the different divisions of the Secondary Education Regional office. It will also look at the effects of the decentralisation process on the monitoring and supporting of secondary schools.

In this study, I will argue that, for a regional decentralised office to be effective, certain conditions must be met and the functions of the different divisions coordinated to complement one another. I will look at how accountability lines and practices are established between the national office and the regional office; and between the region and the schools; and how the different key players understand the form, purpose and function of the regional decentralisation process.

1.4 Rationale

Very little research has been done on the effect of regional education decentralisation in Botswana. Therefore, I intend to contribute to the ongoing debate on education decentralisation by improving an understanding of factors that aided or impeded implementation of regional decentralisation in Botswana. This is important because the policy on an integrated approach to decentralisation has been in place since 1994, yet

there appears to be some reluctance to implement it. The findings of the study may contribute to unravelling problems associated with implementing decentralisation.

The situation described above shows that Botswana has a reasonably long history of intention to decentralise the education system, albeit unsystematically. The Department of Secondary Education has established five regions to improve support and monitoring of secondary schools across the country but it appears that, despite good intentions, impediments to the implementation process are experienced.

1.5 Research questions

The study addresses the following key questions:

a). What were the origin, purpose and form of education decentralisation in Botswana?

b). What problems and political dynamics between national office and the regions were encountered around the implementation process?

c). How does the Secondary Education South Central Regional Office operate and how is it organised?

d). How has the regional office's work of monitoring and supporting secondary schools changed?

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The chapter reviews literature relevant to the study. The literature covers international decentralisation debates and experiences as well as experiences specific to Botswana.

Literature review has several advantages in research. It helps to frame the research topic, identify gaps on what has already been done, avoid replicating topics that have been explored, select relevant methods, identify areas suggested for further research and find justification for research hypothesis (McMillan and Schumacher 2001: 109-110).

The literature reviewed in this study focuses on how decentralisation of education has an effect on the operations of the education system and the schools in particular. The following themes will be explored: education governance; decentralisation; and school support and improvement.

2.1 Decentralisation and Education Governance

Educational governance refers to the allocation of power and authority throughout the educational system and refers to the exercise of control or authority by those who act over those who are accountable to others (Elmore 1993; De Clercq 2001). This comprises control, direction, administration and accountability. In a decentralised system, the mentioned components vary at each level and this is influenced by the extent of decentralisation decided by the organisation. While the centre might want to be relieved of some workload, with a view to improving efficiency in the system, it has a national obligation to ensure provision of quality education to all. This might explain why total devolution of authority seems uncommon in education systems. It has been realised that generally, policy making, finance and budget resource allocation remain with the centre while administrative and managerial powers are decentralised to the lower administrative levels. (De Clercq 2001; McGinn and Welsh 1999). Therefore, tension appears to be inevitable in any governance arrangements.

2.2 Decentralisation

2.2.1 Meaning of decentralisation

Education decentralisation is becoming widely or internationally recognised as a reform policy (Narowski and Nores, 2002; Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe, 2004). However, it means different things to different people (Cheema and Rondinneli: 1983). The extent and dimensions of decentralisation are influenced by among others, its motives, objectives and implementation contexts.

Overall, decentralisation involves the transfer of decision-making authority from a central point to lower levels of an organisation (Oyangu, 2003; Bierlein, 1993). Hanson (1972, cited in Tselaesele 1997) categorises decentralisation into administrative and structural arrangements. In the former, decision-making authority is only delegated from the top to lower levels while, in the latter, new hierarchies that can take decisions independently of the centre are created.

The three common forms of decentralisation are delegation, deconcentration and devolution. In delegation, managers pass on work to their subordinates, thus relieving themselves of the workload in order for them to carry out other functions (Campbell 1997). In deconcentration, authority to make administrative decisions on behalf of central authority is delegated to lower levels such as regions or districts (Smith in Oyangu, 2000). Shifting of authority is meant ‘for implementation of rules, but not for making them’ (McGinn and Welsh 1999:18). In the third form of decentralisation, authority is devolved by law to sub-national territorial assemblies thus; the lower levels enjoy autonomy (Smith 2000) and this is where new hierarchies, as observed by Hanson (1972), are established.

2.2.2 Origin, form and purpose of education decentralisation

Some of the reasons normally espoused for decentralisation are redistribution of power to relieve the centre of some functions, promotion of local and democratic participation, improved decision-making, access, efficiency and the quality of the education system (de Clercq 2001). The extent or the form adopted depends on the motive decided by management to decentralise.

However, it has been observed that decentralisation may never become a reality in instances where there are resource limitations and lack of political commitment. In such instances, implementation becomes slow, making decentralisation more a lip service or rhetoric. In that case, the situation has been likened to a *pendulum swing* between the centre and the periphery (Elmore 1993: Steiner-Khamsi & Stolpe 2004), because the reversal from decentralisation to centralisation of functions is often observed. Apparently this situation is common to developing and poor countries. Such are known to rely on foreign aid, which attaches conditions that normally do not match the local context, resulting in failure to implement or reversal to centralisation.

In order to execute its core business of providing education and ensuring standardisation of provision, the Botswana Government has opted for deconcentration and delegation of authority to regions and districts rather than devolution (Sephuma, 1991; Republic of Botswana, 1993 and 1994). Thus, only certain administrative responsibilities have been decentralised with a view to improving efficiency (Sephuma 1991: Education Commission's report 1993: National Development Plan 7:1994 – 1997). This was done with the belief that, services will be closer to the people who need them, and that informed decisions are better taken by those conversant with the local context. In such a situation, there is sharing of power as several entities, independent of each other, are involved, unlike where authority is totally devolved and the region acts independently (Fauster 1995:251). Often there is a power struggle in the decentralisation process, as some people feel threatened by the change process and there is reluctance by the centre and some individuals to relinquish certain responsibilities. This study will investigate the

form that this contestation took in the case of administrative decentralisation in Botswana.

Literature on decentralisation shows that generally, policy making, finance and budget resource allocation normally remain with the centre while administrative and managerial powers are often decentralised to lower administrative levels such as provinces and districts (de Clercq 2001; McGinn and Welsh 1999; Fauster 1995). In this way, there is central bureaucratic control and standardisation of provision, a view supported by proponents of centralisation, who purport that government has a political obligation to its constituents to provide quality education for all. Indeed devolving power to lower levels might lead to variations in standards and poor quality (McGinn and Welsh 1999; Elmore 1993).

In Botswana, it has been decided that the following functions must remain centralised: curriculum development and evaluation, teacher recruitment and training, administration of budgetary allocation and policy formulation. This is done to ensure control and accountability in a system of standardised and equitable provision of education to satisfy the mandate of government to its constituents (McGinn and Welsh 1999; Elmore 1993). Many have argued that administrative functions should be with the regions to ensure implementation of programmes and policies as determined by the centre and in order to promote greater efficiency within the system, as the regions are best placed to support and closely monitor implementation. Whether or not Botswana's choice of administrative rather than structural and political decentralisation of the education system is influenced by this consideration is an important question, which this study will investigate.

2.2.3 Advantages and limitations of decentralisation

Administrative deconcentration and delegation are said to have some efficiency, effectiveness and/or quality advantages. Apart from cutting down lines of accountability and administrative bottlenecks, regions or districts can best influence improvements in

schools because they are closer to and are familiar with the context and are best positioned to support needs of schools (de Clercq 2001:6). Districts serve as a link between the school and the centre, can tailor national policy mandates to local context and even mobilise 'local energy and resources for school support' (Elmore, 1993).

In Botswana, the declared aim of an efficiently run region (NDP 7; RNPE, 1994) is to impact positively on school management, a factor that could in turn effect and improve school performance. This is intended to be achieved through some of the following functions being carried out by the regional offices: school inspections, short-term staff development, monitoring construction of new school facilities and maintenance of existing ones; deployment of teachers; and attending to teacher welfare. However, this should not be construed to mean that regional or district offices will have a direct impact on the outcome of education. Research on district decentralisation and school improvement (Hannay et al: 2002, 2003; Harris 2002) has shown that the district office can only indirectly influence school improvement. With capacity and strategic leadership, the regional or district office can strengthen and empower school management to ensure efficiency and improvement within the school.

Contrary to the above assertion, cynics of decentralisation, such as Weiler (1990) and Elmore (1993), doubt its intentions and impact. Their view is that the concept is not premised on quality improvement but rather on the need by the state to abscond from its responsibility and share the burden with other lower level units, including local communities. Thus, decentralisation, they contend, can exacerbate disparities between schools in rich and poor communities because those in affluent areas will benefit more. They regard decentralisation as merely a displacement of the problem to lower levels of the bureaucracy or as the outcome of a struggle between bureaucrats located at different levels of the hierarchy. Naidoo and Kong (2003) argue that decentralisation in Africa has not led to 'better quality education, improved governance, or greater efficiency in resource allocation or service delivery' as expected.

It can accordingly be argued that it is useful to remember the perspectives of the proponents and sceptics of decentralisation when analysing regional education decentralisation and its implementation in Botswana. This is important to ensure that an open-minded practical approach to decentralisation with realisable objectives is adopted.

2.2.4 Decentralisation: Implementation problems

As pointed out earlier on, decentralisation is complex and can be accompanied by tensions and trade-offs. For that reason, its implementation is in itself challenging. De Clercq (2001) asserts that there is often a mismatch between policy text and policy in action. Maclure (1994) observed that, despite the principles and good intentions of the decentralisation programme of Burkina Faso, success was not assured because of underlying principles. He attributed implementation failures to the country's weak economy, restricted labour force and lack of clear implementation steps. McGinn and Welsh (1999), who also add that unclear objectives and lack of resources can thwart efforts of effective implementation of decentralisation, support Maclure's observation.

In Mongolia, a former socialist state, the World Bank initiated decentralisation. Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe (2004) attributed implementation problems in that country to cultural misunderstandings. The people's participation was hampered by the socialist legacy that schools belonged to the state. Government believed that the centralist structure was best because there would be strict control of donor funds and implementation.

In his comparative studies of Latin American countries, Fauster (1995) observed conflicts in decentralisation, which caused delays in implementation. However, he also observed that, in some cases, decentralisation exacerbated conflicts, as, on the one hand, the general public wanted a bigger stake in education provision while, on the other, government regarded that as its responsibility.

It should however be noted that, in Botswana, the burden of education financing is solely with the state and is not shared with stakeholders. However, prior to January 2004, the

governance structures of community junior secondary schools allowed communities to contribute towards junior secondary education expenditure. The government has, since, taken over total control of these schools (Government Gazette Vol. XLI. No. 71 of 10th October 2003). This study will therefore investigate the various implementation problems experienced with decentralisation.

2.2.5 Preconditions for effective decentralisation

The literature shows that certain conditions must be met for effective implementation of a decentralisation strategy. These include, inter alia, legal and financial arrangements, district or regional infrastructure, business systems and procedures, quality staff and human resource development strategies (de Clercq: 2001). McGinn and Welsh (1999) divide the conditions necessary for effective implementation into political support, that is, political will and involvement/commitment of stakeholders in education provision; and capability of implementers, that is, their capacity in terms of numbers, expertise and experience.

Coleman (1988 in Spillane and Thompson, 1998) lists prerequisites of effective decentralisation as follows: physical, human and social capital. Physical capital refers to accumulated assets while human capital is the knowledge and skills that administrators and teachers have. Social capital refers to 'a resource for action' or willingness and commitment of members of an organisation. Therefore, availability of physical capital, adequacy of the human resource and the cordial relations that exist among individuals would lead to effective management of the region, which would impact positively on the schools.

The form and reason for decentralising administrative responsibilities is determined by national policies and principles. Clarity of policy objectives on key players such as planners and policy implementers is therefore crucial. In order to avoid role conflict and duplication of effort, a scheme of delegation outlining responsibilities of the national and regional offices, clear demarcations and powers of the different tiers of management must

be developed (Halliday, 1996). This ensures that there are clear lines and practices of accountability from the school to the region, and from the region to national office. This is important because 'local authorities with delegated responsibilities have to account to the higher level on the way they execute their delegated responsibilities (De Clercq: 2001).

Professional development and capacity building have proved to be very difficult to achieve (de Clercq, 2001). Bloomer (1991) asserts that officers in regions should be conversant with what goes on in the schools and be of reasonable authority to exercise initiative and take decisions and demand compliance with national standards and policies. They must be trained and supported by an administrative structure. De Clercq (2001) maintains that in South Africa the provincial governance system lacks experience, resources and capacity at many levels.

The problem of lack of capacity mentioned above has affected the Botswana education system, which is characterised by inadequate resources, staff shortages and high staff turnover, resulting in lack of continuity as people come and go. Therefore it is always best to start the reform process no matter how small and build capacity over time (De Clercq 2001). In Botswana, it was planned that initially the regions would be fewer and would be increased over time to align them with the local authority district councils (Sephuma: 1991). In his consultancy on education decentralisation in Botswana, Halliday (1996:7) recommends the establishment of six integrated regions initially and gradually increase them in number to match the local district authorities.

Thus, the preconditions of effective decentralisation essentially consist of: legal arrangements to determine the form of decentralisation adopted, political will, clarity of objectives of decentralisation, physical capacity or infrastructure, business systems, financial capacity, human resource capacity and social capacity.

The existing literature has revealed that there are tensions and trade-offs in decentralisation, which makes it a complex and contradictory concept and practice. Further, what is normally intended through well-articulated policies does not always

translate into practice. This could be due to several reasons such as misaligned functions and accountabilities between different authority levels, scarcity of resources, lack of political commitment, lack of clarity on the envisaged change and what Fullan (1996) calls ‘change phobia’.

2.3 School support for improvement

Literature on the role of the district or region in school change indicates that the district or region is indirectly responsible for the performance of schools. In their research on secondary school restructuring in the United States (US), Hannay et al (2002: 2, 3) note what they call paradigmatic tensions in large-scale organisations. They purport that ‘school effectiveness is usually shaped by external forces’ while ‘school improvement is usually shaped by internal forces’. That is, it is the school’s internal processes and the level of commitment of its members that will directly influence performance while the external, that is, the district or regional office can play a mediating role in ensuring that any external intervention leads to internal school commitment and ownership.

The concept of school improvement has been described as a system or strategy that aims to enhance students’ outcomes as well as strengthen the school’s capacity to manage change (Miles et. al, 1987:3; Hopkins, (1996:32 in Harris, 2000). In their longitudinal studies on the role of the school district in the US, Hannay et al (2003:10) found that ‘… the school district role was powerful because it was deliberate and intentional’, therefore tightly coupled to the schools rather than loosely coupled (Weick 1976) and this tended to improve performance. The district was purposeful and there was clarity on the expectations of schools and the region or district. This improved communication and transparency. Although the studies had not been completed at the time of compiling their report, the researchers reported on the following findings on effective school district (Hannay et al (2003)

a) Coherence within the district needs to be achieved.

b) The authorities must go beyond just managerial functions as evidenced by the fact that district officials were becoming reflective in their questioning and thinking of school support
c) Continuous learning and creation of new knowledge occurred at district level because of the coherence and reflective thinking rather than just procedural thinking.

If the region's role is to support the schools' endeavour to improve, it is important for districts or regions to learn from the school improvement literature. It is further argued that, any strategy that disregards the school context or the school's organisational culture and targets learners' performance only will not bring about the desired results.

Hopkins (2000, in Harris, 2002) argues that 'there is no one blueprint for action' but several options, which must be made known to the schools. Equally important is that an option strategy adopted by the region must match the school type, context or need in order for meaningful change to occur. This idea of matching strategy to an individual school context or need disputes the long held assumption of the 'one-size-fits-all approach to improving schools. Therefore, the district or region must have knowledge and understanding of individual school contexts and capacities, in order to accurately address the appropriate school need(s) in its monitoring and support work with the different schools. This will enable the region to systematically work with schools to identify their (school) priorities and devise appropriate remedial strategies.

It is apparent from the literature that school improvement is also about change and change management. Thus, in addition to the idea of matching strategy to context, Harris (2002) highlights the following points of research findings on change management and school improvement: teacher development should be an integral part of school development (Hopkins et.al 1994); leadership within the school as well as at the regional office must be visionary, directive and participatory in order to ensure ownership of the reform process (Harris et al 2001); and that the school culture must promote collegiality, trust and collaborative working relationships as well as teaching and learning (Harris

2000). According to another group of researchers (Bryk and Driscoll 1985; Purkey and Smith 1985, in Spillane and Thompson, 2001) collegiality and a sense of community among staff impact on school performance. To sustain a school culture of good performance, the change management strategy must have an in-built regular review system to help the school do a formative evaluation rather than wait to do a summative evaluation at the end.

It thus becomes important for this study to look at how the South Central Region is organised, how it understands its schools and their context and priorities, what it targets and does in terms of school intervention, before considering the effect it has on schools. It will establish how the regional office, in playing its mediation role, categorises schools and works with different strategies for the different schools.

In the main, the region's mandate is the following:

a). Monitoring and evaluation, through inspections, targeting both organisational and instructional variables, such as overall school management, management and maintenance of the infrastructure, academic programme of the school curriculum delivery issues, and relationships within the school community.

b). Support and guidance to enable schools to strengthen themselves. The support could be on staff professional development for teachers and school management teams, maintenance of buildings, facilitation of acquisition, distribution and utilisation of resources, such as learner- support materials and finances for running costs; use of operational computerised personnel management Information systems.

As pointed out earlier, the level of support must differ with the type of schools. Hopkins (2000) categorises schools into ineffective, low achieving and effective schools and argues that the support levels for these schools should be different. The ineffective ones need more external intervention with a focus on basic organisational issues. The low achieving schools can improve themselves but need to redefine their development priorities while the effective schools should aim to maintain the good performance.

Another point stressed in the school improvement literature is that, even if a school is not performing, the district should not impose from above any change strategies, but rather should establish the exact need(s) of that institution and identify what works and build on it. An externally developed ready- made package will not fit into the school culture and system.

Effective schools are the envy of other schools and any district or regional office would want to be associated with them because they produce good results, thus providing customer or stakeholder satisfaction. According to Winkler and Gershberg (2003) effective schools are characterised by the following: strong leaders who have the capacity to drive the school vision; highly qualified and committed staff; a focus on student learning; and responsibility for the results.

Thus, the regional office must be clear of its mandate and provide monitoring and support to schools. In order to be effective in executing this mandate, certain conditions must exist. The region must be aware of the contextual needs of schools and their organisational conditions. The region must be coherent and well – coordinated to run its different interventions in schools. The divisions in the region must be accountable to one another as well as the centre and the schools. In order for regional support to be effective, both schools and the region should be clear of their mandate and each other's expectations. Therefore, the region must have a vision and strategies that schools can identify and align with. The region must also have a comprehensive plan and staff development programmes to cover regional staff, teachers and school heads. Operational personnel management information systems must also exist to ensure speedy and effective communication between different levels. All these will enable the region to maximise its impact on schools.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that underpins this study is conducted in the light of the arguments put by scholars on what, why, when and how to decentralise effectively an education system (McGinn and Welsh 1999). Decentralisation can have efficiency

advantages. Because of its proximity to the schools, the regional office can identify any imbalances in resource allocation and correct the situation. It can also serve as an important link between the schools and the national office.

But as a reform strategy, decentralisation requires that certain conditions and arrangements exist. It must be well designed, coherent and have leadership and well-managed change processes to be effectively implemented. A scheme of delegation, for instance, must be developed to clarify roles and the locus of authority to reduce duplication of effort that might cause conflict between national and regional offices as well as between the region and the schools. Key players and stakeholders must buy into the innovation; demonstrate commitment, cooperation and willingness to support the process. Implementation of the decentralisation process has implications for increased resources and a budget. According to Halliday (1996:12), 'experience gained in other countries shows that decentralisation cannot be undertaken without additional financial resources. Costs will be incurred in establishing offices in each district, redeploying, re-grading and even training or re-training staff to bring them to an accepted professional level'. The additional costs should therefore be viewed as an investment for long-term benefit as they are meant to achieve some of the important goals of education of improving efficiency, quality and standardisation in provision'.

Although these conditions can avoid many of the common pitfalls in the implementation, there are also political dimensions to any change in the governance process. While decentralisation can have advantages and open up new opportunities, it will also be contested and depend on how the various groups affected by this new dispensation respond. Senge (1990, in Fullan 1996:3) adds that change represents 'a fundamental shift of the mindset'. Without a change of the mindset, there will be continuous talk of change with a continuous conservative system, leading to implementation failure.

This study will assess the possible conflicts around administrative educational decentralisation and establish whether the necessary conditions exist in implementing a regional unitary structure for secondary education in Botswana. The literature as

mentioned earlier, points towards the following decentralisation preconditions; human capacity, financial capacity, social capacity, operational business systems as well as accountability lines and practices to align and show interdependence and collaboration between the regional and national offices. Thus, this study will assess the following in the case of the South Central Region:

a) Financial capacity- to establish whether the allocation is adequate to cater for the needs of the office, such as office space, transport, equipment such as computers and stationery.
b). Human resource capacity- to determine whether the staff is appropriate for their posts and function in terms of number, qualification and experience. The existence of an appropriate staff development programme will also be established.
c). Social capacity- to establish how the different divisions collaborate and complement one another; and whether the office has established networks/working relations with related offices in the region.
d). Business systems and procedures- to establish whether there are operational, computerised personnel management Information systems to guarantee access to information within the office and speedy flow of information to and from national office and/or schools, as well as between the secondary regional office and other departmental regional offices in the region.
e). Accountability between different units and headquarters- to establish whether there are lines and practices of accountability or reporting with the national office, other departments in the region and relevant divisions.

Literature on school improvement is also important since the study examines whether regional decentralisation influenced the work of school support and monitoring by the regional office on behalf of the centre. The region has the mandate of monitoring schools to ensure that policies, programmes, rules and regulations as determined by the centre are implemented. It is also meant to provide guidance and support to enable schools to strengthen themselves to effectively implement policies and improve their overall performance. Therefore, the study will also assess how the regional structures, procedures

and systems work, how they operate to support and monitor schools and whether the region has had an effect on the schools.

Lastly, specific variables have been identified to explore the regional office's school monitoring and support work. Monitoring targets both organisational and instructional variables, such as overall school management, the physical structures, curriculum delivery, staff performance, relationships with the school community and school results. Support will focus predominantly on staff professional development, maintenance of buildings and distribution of resources such as teachers and learner- support material.

This study does not disregard the views expressed by the sceptics of decentralisation that, due to resource limitations in developing countries, decentralisation is more often rhetoric than reality. The study focuses on what has worked and has not worked and explores the conditions necessary to achieve efficiency through regional decentralisation.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodology adopted in this study. Methodology has been described as a combination of all tools or methods used in a research to collect and give meaning to data. This includes 'research design, subjects, instruments and procedures used in a study' (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001: 52). The section addresses methodological approaches, research design, setting of the study, sampling and selection of participants, procedure of data collection, pilot testing of the data collection instrument, plan for data processing and analysis, reliability, validity and ethical considerations. Content analysis and descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data.

3.1 Research Design

Research design refers to 'the researcher's plan of how to proceed' (Bogdan and Biklen 1998:49). It is 'the plan a researcher follows in 'selecting subjects, research sites and data collection procedures to answer the research question(s) showing 'which individual will be studied, and when, where and under what circumstances' (McMillan and Schumacher, 2001:166). This study employed an exploratory qualitative approach for data collection and its analysis. The approach was found appropriate because this is a study of a sample of one region needs to get a holistic picture of the situation and the dynamics that exist. There was direct contact between the researcher and the subjects and this allowed for flexibility in the inquiry procedures and thus facilitated deeper understanding of the situations under study. The data collected were on perceptions and dynamics in the region and schools and as such were difficult to quantify.

There are a number of qualitative modes of enquiry and this study adopted the case study design and ensures that triangulation of data sources was possible. That is, it used multiple methods, strategies and sources to collect data so that certain facts or opinions could be verified and more importantly for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon studied. (Bogdan and Biklen**,** 1998; Gay and Airasian 2000; McMillan and Schumacher, 2001).

This study looks at the performance of the secondary education regional office and examines the factors which we believe influence its performance, namely 1) the way education governance works at present and in particular how the regional secondary education office works and relates to the head office and other relevant departments 2) capacities (including leadership) and resources existing at regional secondary level and 3) how this affects the regional school monitoring and support work.

This explains why, for data collection, a cross- section of people comprising regional office staff, officials of the Ministry of Education, secondary school teachers and school heads was interviewed; and documentary analysis was done. The researcher took notes and recorded the interviews on an audiotape. This enabled the researcher to verify data, thus making the study credible and reliable.

3.2 The Case Study

A case study is a detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents or one particular event (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1989; Stake, 1994 cited in Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). The study examined the case of one secondary regional education office in Botswana, the South Central Region, which was established in 1995. The Headquarters of the region is in the capital city, Gaborone. The study covered the period between 2001 and 2005. As mentioned in the background to this study, a regional education office in Botswana is strictly speaking not a single unit encompassing all education departments. For that reason and because of the time factor, the scope of the study is limited to the secondary education office and the impact of the decentralisation process in the South Central Region. Specifically, the study assessed how the South Central Regional Office functions and the extent to which it has developed to effectively monitor and support secondary schools.

3.3 Sampling and Sampling procedures

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for the study. This type of sampling is based on the judgment of the researcher in order to select the 'best' (Gay and Airasan 2000) participants who are believed to be informative, thoughtful and experienced with the research topic. This was made possible by the fact that the researcher, as an experienced departmental official, is aware of people who are informed about the decentralisation process in secondary education.

3.3.1 Regional operation and organisation

The population sample of the study includes national policy makers, managers in the regional office and its department and members of school communities from the six schools included in the sample. These people are believed to be knowledgeable in education decentralisation because they have extensive experience as educators or education managers in the country. First, the staff of the regional and national Secondary Education, Primary Education, and Teacher Training and Development in the region as well as ministry headquarters was interviewed. The interviews covered how the regional divisions function and how effective their internal work dynamics are and their relationships with other relevant divisions/units as far as their school monitoring and support was concerned. Then for the capacities of the regional secondary education office as well as its effect on school monitoring and support, schools and regional staff were sampled. Given our double focus on governance and on school improvement, the following twenty- four people were interviewed at national and regional offices:

Table 3: Population of the Study (Ministry including region)

a). Ministry of Education Headquarters

Officer	Justification for inclusion in the sample
Deputy Permanent Secretary	Four of the departments in the South Central Region, Secondary Primary and Non-Formal, Vocational and Technical Education fall under this office through their national offices.
Director of Ministry Management	He has worked as Deputy Director of Teaching Service Management when secondary functions were still centralised, Chief Education Officer (Region), Director of Secondary Education; and served on a committee that worked on the envisaged unitary regional structure

b). Department of Secondary Education national office

Officer	Justification for inclusion in sample
Director of Secondary Education	Manages secondary education through secondary regional offices
Head of Inspectorate Division	Manages inspectoral activities at national level and liaises with counterpart at regional level
Management and Training Division	Manages and coordinates activities and supervises officers in the division at regional level.
Head of Development Services Division	Coordinates activities of the division at national level and liaises with the departments responsible for construction and maintenance of infrastructure in schools.
Head of Administration Section	Facilitates recruitment and deployment of support staff across the department including regions.
Head of Finance section	Responsible for allocation of funds across departments and secondary schools.
Principal Education Officers (Inspectorate) (4 together)	They act as national inspectors of schools, subject specialists and advisors.

c). The larger South Central Regional office

Officer (s)	Justification for inclusion in sample
Heads of Primary and Teacher Training and Development (2)	The departments are in the larger South Central Region

d). Secondary Education South Central Regional office

Officer (s)	Justification for inclusion in sample
Chief Education Officer (CEO)	Head of South Central Region since April 2005. Until then was CEO for South Region for over 5 years. Through divisions in the region ensures policy implementation by schools and reports progress to the Director (Secondary)
Immediate past Chief Education Officer for the South Central Region	Until April 2005 when he transferred to South Region, he had been CEO for South Central for over 6 years
Principal Education Officers (Inspectorate)	They act as regional inspectors of schools, subject specialists and advisors.
Principal Education Officer (Management and Training)	Coordinates management and training support in the region and reports progress on implementation to Head of Division at national level.
Principal Personnel Officer (Teacher Welfare)	Coordinates teacher welfare and related issues in the region and reports to regional CEO and Head of Welfare Division at Teaching Service national office.
Principal Bursar	Monitors use of funds by schools and briefs CEO and secondary national office on developments.
Registry Supervisor	Facilitates dissemination of information to and from schools and national office

Total number interviewed: 24

3.3.2 Sampling of schools for the study

The South Central Region is the largest of the five regions, in terms of teacher and student population as well as sizes of schools. It has a total of fifty- three junior and eight senior secondary schools. Two of the senior schools are government-aided senior secondary mission schools. The region has diverse environments such as, rural, urban, peri-urban, remote, sparse and dense. Therefore care was taken to sample schools from all the different environments as indicated in the table below. Regional personnel and schools were sampled for this section.

In Botswana, schools are given standard facilities, learner- support materials and qualified teachers. However, as mentioned in the literature review, schools are different and require different strategies to address their context- specific environments and type. The choice of the schools in the sample was based on both their dynamics within individual schools and among schools in the region. The following variables were considered: geographical location or distance from regional headquarters, communication facilities, day or boarding, students' social backgrounds, performance, and resources. This calls for variations in the regional support and this study will assess how the support varies with each school and how the different needs of schools are identified. The school sample comprises the following:

Table 4: Population of the study (Schools)

School	Reason for inclusion in sample
A	a). Junior day and boarding secondary school located in a disadvantaged community 80 kilometres from regional headquarters in Gaborone b). Over-crowded hostels and classrooms c). Not well performing in terms of academic results.

B	a). Predominantly day junior secondary school located in a peri-urban area 45 kilometres from Gaborone b). Well- resourced c). Fluctuating academic performance d). Has a special education unit catering for 18 hearing impaired learners out of a total enrolment of 600. All 18 are boarders.
C	a). Day junior secondary school in Gaborone b). Well resourced c). Good academic performance.
D	a). Day and boarding junior secondary school located in a disadvantaged community 200 kilometres from Gaborone. b). Over-crowded hostels and classrooms c) average academic performance.
E	a). Boarding and day secondary school located in a peri –urban area 50 kilometres from Gaborone. b). Has a Special Education Unit for the visually impaired learners resourced b). Well- resourced c). Average academic performance
F	a). Government aided mission day secondary school located in the outskirts of Gaborone b). Well resourced c). Good academic performance

The sample of interviewees from each of the six schools includes the School Head, two members of the senior management team and two teachers. The heads of these schools and indeed the teachers were amongst those conversant with decentralisation of education and in particular, secondary education because they have been in the education system for many years. They were conversant with the activities done under the auspices of the

regional office in their schools, such as, inspections; management and curriculum support, and maintenance of infrastructure.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

3.4.1 Literature and document analysis

An extensive literature review and document analysis was done to increase the researcher's understanding of the departmental and government's concept of education decentralisation in Botswana. This provided information on the aims of decentralisation, the form adopted by Government and the envisaged implementation strategies. The following documents were consulted:

i) Reports of the Commissions on Education 1976 &1993
   The reports gave background information on the education policies of 1977 and 1994
ii) Education Policies viz: Government Paper No. 1 of 1977: National Policy on Education, and Government Paper No. 2 of 1994: The Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE), the first and current education policies respectively. The documents outline the decentralisation policy, its form and the extent to which to decentralise.
iii) Report on the Consultancy on Decentralisation by Professor Halliday (1996)
   The report recommends strategies for implementing Recommendation 117 of the RNPE on education decentralisation
iv) Report on the Launch of the Unitary Regional Structure (2001). The report contains strategies for implementing Recommendation 117 of the RNPE.
v) Circulars and directives on decentralised functions issued from time to time
vi) Establishment Registers for the Department of Secondary Education 2000-2005
   The registers indicate the number and type of posts in a region each year.
vii) Budgetary allocations to regions. This indicates the regional financial allocation and utilisation.
viii) Supplies Inventory

This indicates the available resources

ix) School Examination results to show performance of schools in the sample

x) Research Reports or dissertations on Education Decentralisation in Botswana showing research work on the subject

xi) Departmental and Regional Strategic Plans showing strategies developed using the Performance Management System

xii) Government Gazette showing legislative decisions taken such as government's take-over of community junior secondary schools

xiii). National Development Plans outlining government development strategies

xiv). Financial Instructions and Procedures showing regulations on allocation and utilisation of government revenue

xv). Education Act (Chapter 58.1 of 1966) explaining legislation on education

3.4.2 The Semi-structured Interview

A semi-structured interview schedule designed by the researcher was used as a data collection tool. A semi-structured interview is a tool used to collect data from participants in which the researcher follows a list of areas to be covered with each respondent (Polit and Hungler 1999).

The interview technique was found relevant because this research is an in-depth study of the region's dynamics and relationship and the face-to-face interview allows for flexibility, thus the researcher can probe to get clarification on some of the questions. The interviewee can also explain and elaborate on issues and also ask for clarification. Therefore engaging this method enabled the researcher to get in- depth data (Gay and Airasian 2000, McMillan and Schumacher 2001).

Individual interviews were held with the ministry management staff, Directors, Chief Education Officers, heads of department, heads of division, heads of schools and teachers. Group interviews were conducted with some of the interviewees in the national office and regional office as well as in schools to understand the dynamics in the

respective offices or schools. Varying data collection procedures enabled verification of information. The responses were recorded manually and by a recording device.

The interview schedule was divided into three sections. Section A looked at demographic data, which covered gender, age, professional background and profile data of the participants in the study.

Section B contained a set of questions, which collected information on the concepts of 'decentralisation' and 'regional office' from the staff of the region, national office and Ministry of Education headquarters. The themes of questions asked were on the following areas:

1. **The purpose and origin of education decentralisation in Botswana:** The rationale behind and opportunities of decentralisation as well as the problems and political dynamics encountered between the centre and the region.

2. **Organisation and operations in the regional office** focussing on how the work of the different divisions and sections is coordinated in executing the mandate of the office; and how the region links with national office as well as the schools. Questions were also asked around the preconditions of an effective region to determine the capacity of the region as follows:

i) Financial capacity- to establish whether the allocation of funds is adequate for the needs of the office, such as office space, transport, equipment such as computers and stationery.

ii). Human resource capacity- to determine whether the staff is appropriate for their posts and function in terms of number, qualification and experience. The existence of an appropriate staff development programme would also be established.

iii). Social capital- to establish how the different divisions collaborate and complement one another; and whether the office has established networks/working relations with related offices.

iv). Business systems and procedures- to establish whether there are operational, computerised personnel management Information systems to guarantee access to information within the office and speedy flow of information to and from national office and/or schools, as well as between the secondary regional office and other departmental regional offices.

v). Accountability- to establish whether there are lines and practice of accountability or reporting with the national office or equivalent departments.

Section C contained a set of questions meant to clarify the nature of regional support and monitoring, directed to regional staff and schools. The questions covered the first four conditions listed in section b) above.

3.5 Reliability and validity of data collection process

Schumacher and McMillan (2001) define reliability as 'the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection' (p244) and validity as 'a judgement of a measure for specific inferences or decisions that result from scores generated' (p239**).** Reliability therefore tests the stability of a data collection process over time and over different conditions while validity tests whether the process measures what it is intended to. In order to ensure reliability of the process, the researcher worked closely with the supervisor and colleagues who are conversant with ways to maximise reliability. To validate the process, the researcher collected data by using the interview schedule to probe and understand fully the decentralisation process. Rather than rely on one data collection mode, documents were also analysed to verify information collected. Officers of different levels, from the schools to senior officials of the Ministry of Education, were interviewed and their feedback recorded manually and on an audiotape.

3.6 Pilot testing

A pilot study was done to maximize the validity of the methodology instrument and data collection process by illuminating unanticipated problems and issues (Gay & Airasian 1987). Before the study was conducted and after permission was sought, the data collection tool was pilot tested at a setting with similar characteristics. The South Region where a total of ten people were interviewed was chosen because it has similar characteristics with the South Central where the study took place. This pilot was meant to test and refine the data collection tool before commencement of the study hence, was done to validate the instrument. The pilot also helped the researcher to approximate the length of time for each interview (Schumacher and McMillan, 2001).

3.7 Data Analysis

The purpose of data analysis is to impose some order on a large body of information so that some conclusions can be reached and communicated in a research report. (Polit & Hungler, 1999). Since this is inductive study, ‘categories and patterns emerged from the data rather than being imposed on data prior to data collection’ (Schumacher & McMillan 2001: 462). The researcher read the transcriptions several times and compared them with audiotapes in order to validate the correctness of the transcripts and identify the emerging patterns and themes.

There were no systematic rules used for analysing and presenting qualitative data. Data, including demographic and documentary data and as well as data from interviews, were collected. For demographic data, descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data, and it was aimed at finding out the percentages or frequencies the following three items of the demographic data: qualification, years of experience and position held by the respondent.

The aim of qualitative research is to search for patterns and groupings of the data (transcriptions) in an attempt to understand what other people think, feel, and experience. Content analysis of the transcribed interview data was then done to derive code,

subcategories, categories and themes. In content analysis, the content of narrative data or material is analysed in order to identify prominent patterns and themes (Polit and Hungler 1999). Data from transcriptions, interviews and notes was coded. Meaningful units, (codes) were derived from sentences, which were used as units of analysis. According to Polit and Hungler (1999), the development of a high quality categorization scheme for qualitative data involves a careful reading of the data, to identify underlying concepts and clusters of concepts. In the scenario, related concepts were grouped together to facilitate the coding process. In this study the data was analysed as follows:

(1) The data was gathered into a manageable format around specified themes (see literature review)
(2) Additional themes were derived from the research data

Since the interviews were semi-structured, they yielded "richer data" obtained in the form of opinions, explanations and personal accounts of respondents. The validity of analysis of data was checked by other researchers, colleagues, informants and against available literature. Such measure was taken to eliminate bias.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Educational research deals with human beings therefore the rights and welfare of subjects must be protected and also to avoid any legal action. To achieve that and also avoid any legal action against the researcher, apart from submitting the research proposal to the Wits ethics research committee, the following procedures were followed:

a). Permission to conduct the study was obtained from relevant authorities to ensure protection of participants and confidentiality of their responses. The proposal was discussed with the office of the Director, Secondary Education.

b). To ensure consent by the respondents to participate in the study, the nature and purpose of the study was explained before the interview and participants were made to sign a consent form for audio recording. They were also assured that only

the researcher would be responsible for processing the data. Confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained throughout the data collection and analysis. This was done through the use of code numbers instead of names.

c). All sources of information or data indicated throughout the report have been acknowledged to ensure rightful ownership and credibility.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The study is on the performance of the South Central Secondary Regional Education office in Botswana. This chapter presents analyses and discusses the findings of the study. It has three parts. First, it presents data on the concept of education decentralisation, its origin, form and purpose; second, it deals with how the regional office works and relates to other departments in the South Central Region and to the national office. Third, it deals with how the region manages school monitoring and support.

4.1 Origin, purpose and form of educational decentralisation

Data in this section came from interviews with twenty- one senior officers from the Ministry of Education headquarters, the national Secondary Education Department and the South Central Secondary Education Regional Office. Respondents were asked questions about their understanding and views of education decentralisation in Botswana, its origin, purpose and form. It is also based on documentary analysis. Advantages of decentralisation and the problems experienced during implementation are also presented and discussed.

4.1.1 Origin of decentralisation

Education decentralisation emanates from one of Botswana's national economic development strategies of spreading developments throughout the country rather than concentrating them in limited and select areas. Thus, more schools and other services such as health facilities were built in rural areas where the majority of the people live (NDP 1976- 1981; Organisation and Methods Review 1992). Hence, the two national education policies, Education for Kagisano (1977) and the Revised National Policy on Education (1994) which advocated decentralisation of some administrative functions of the Ministry of Education, were in part influenced by, inter alia, the said development

strategy as well as the views of the public collected by the two commissions on education (1976 and 1990) mentioned in chapter 1.

It seems also that the Revised National Policy on Education (1994) may have been influenced by the World Bank education reform studies, which influenced international trends in the 1990s. According to Samoff (1999, in Steiner- Khamsi and Stolpe, 2004), the studies recommended education reforms for Africa and other developing countries. One of their recommendations then in the mid-1990s was decentralisation of education systems.

Generally, the respondents could make links between the held government's development strategy and the resultant education policies.

4.1.2 Purpose of decentralisation

As mentioned in chapters 1 and 2, the purpose of education decentralization, as opposed to total devolvement of functions to the regional offices, was to bring about administrative efficiency. The idea was to ensure closer monitoring of fewer schools by one office; identification and addressing of school needs; as well as attending more quickly to teacher welfare issues. Each respondent gave his or her views on decentralisation. Generally, the interviewees described it as, "taking the services nearer to the customers (schools); shortening the distance between the schools and national office (headquarters); improvement of supervision and management of schools; reduction of the backlog of responsibilities piled at headquarters, which could not cope with the demands of schools."

The respondents overwhelmingly viewed decentralisation as a good move because the schools were distributed throughout the country and therefore they benefited more from being serviced from nearby offices rather than by headquarters. They cited the following as examples of the opportunities that schools could enjoy: i) close monitoring of schools done through the regional inspections and school visits, ii) speedy deployment of teachers

to schools iii) workshops and other forms of support targeting school management teams and, iv) teacher welfare services by the Teacher Welfare Division section of the region.

To illustrate a point observed prior to decentralisation of the 1990s, a director of education had this to say about his experiences at the time

> When I was an officer at the Department of Teaching Service Management, I came across a very sad case. A teacher posted to a village over 1000 kilometres from the headquarters in Gaborone had applied for leave travel concession from the department, which at the time was around P400.00 for a single teacher. After waiting for months without any response, the teacher decided to travel to Gaborone for the claim. She travelled the whole day. At the department, the following morning she was told that her file could not be found. At around 2 o'clock, she decided to appeal to my office for help. After listening to her story and considering the inconvenience we had caused her, I ordered officers to suspend their work for that afternoon and look for the file. By the time it was found, it was already late and so she could not get her claim until the next morning, after which she embarked on the long journey back to her duty station. When I considered the expenses she had incurred, I realised that it had cost her almost three times what she got in the end. (19/12/2005)

Thus, it was scenarios such as the one depicted above that formally motivated the ministry's decision to delegate some teacher welfare functions to the region.

The evidence in this section confirms the known reasons from literature (Elmore 1993; De Clercq 2001; Fleisch et al 2003) that in a decentralised system the regional office serves as a link between national office and schools, and that, due to its close proximity and familiarity with school contexts, it is best placed to serve them.

4.1.3 Form and extent of decentralisation

According to documentary evidence cited in chapter 1, education decentralisation in Botswana refers to delegation and deconcentration rather than devolution of functions to regions. Contrary to this description, the responses pointed to different interpretation of the form and extent of decentralisation to be adopted in Botswana. To some respondents, decentralisation meant giving autonomy to regions while to others it was delegation of some responsibilities. In some instances, inefficiency of service delivery was interpreted as lack of authority as shall be discussed in the next paragraphs.

To improve support to the schools, the Department of Teaching Service Management (TSM) has, through Circular Directives, (Ref: TSM 1/79 I: 183 dated 16th September 1999 and Ref: E17/4 I :19 of 21 November 2000) delegated the following functions to secondary regional offices effective from October 1999 and January 2001.

Table 5: TSM Decentralised Functions

October 1999	January 2001
-Conformations of teachers -Education Allowance for expatriates' children -Medical Aid Forms -Workman's compensation -Bank Credit forms -Acting appointments -Postings -Extensions of Exemption Certificates -Granting of study leave -Terminal Benefits	-Promotions of teachers up to Senior Teacher Grade 1 -Regional and inter- regional transfers up to Senior Teacher Grade 1 -Assessment of teacher appraisal forms -Retirement processing -Transport on first appointment and transfers -Budget for leave travel concessions, transport and travel allowances, Teachers Day and subsistence allowance -Release of teachers for sporting, educational and union activities inside and outside the country -Permission for teachers to engage in part-time employment -Data entry

Source: TSM Directives (1999 and 2000)

The 2000 circular noted that delegation of responsibilities had implications for additional personnel with the necessary expertise and experience. However, only one senior officer, an administrative officer and a temporary assistant were deployed in the welfare section to carry out the functions listed above and others added from time to time. It should also be noted that another division at national level handles functions such as procurement and promotion of teachers, while at the region, all Teaching Service Management (TSM) functions including deployment of teachers and appointment of temporary teachers are done by the three officers. The majority of the interviewees from the regional office complained that the staffing situation impacted negatively on regional performance, as there were often backlogs. This point was corroborated by school heads who said it normally took long for the region to respond to their requests for temporary teachers or recommendations for acting appointments. Teachers added that they often queued for their allowances at the office. Indeed available documentary evidence at the office revealed that on a number of cases acting appointments were not effected immediately.

However, it could also be argued that the number of schools in the region did not warrant more staff than was provided at the time and that there was no need to replicate national structures in the region. A possibility is for a more strategic approach that would bring about regional efficiency, such as an annual plan with specific activities, timelines and accountable persons.

Close scrutiny also revealed that some of the functions, such as promotion of senior teachers, transport of teachers on first appointment, budget for welfare issues and data entry were still with the TSM national office. There were contradictory explanations to this situation. Respondents from TSM national office said that TSM was clearing the backlog of senior teacher vacancies, while the regional respondents and secondary national respondents saw this as a ploy by TSM to cling to the function. There was no evidence of intentions to transfer this function to the region.

It emerged during the investigation that it often took long for senior teacher positions to be filled. Respondents from national and regional offices gave an example of senior

teacher posts that were advertised in March 2004 and only filled in January 2005. They blamed the situation on lack of clarity of roles. A situation of this nature would make planning and control difficult as one interviewee remarked, ‘we are never sure when positions are going to be filled and how much disruption that will cause’.

Although respondents, from the region mainly, saw benefits in decentralisation, they decried another problematic aspect in the form it took; the seemingly lack of authority that the regional offices had. This lack of authority contradicted the very aim of decentralisation to quicken service delivery. For example, disciplinary cases were referred to the national office and, as a result, teachers’ and students’ disciplinary cases took months to resolve with such bureaucratic arrangement. According to the Education Act (1966), the School Head can only suspend a student from school while the Minister of Education is the only person with exclusive authority to expel a student from school. The recommendation by the School Head for expulsion is channelled through the offices of the Chief Education Officer (Region) and Director of Secondary Education to ensure appropriate disciplinary procedures were followed. A study of school files at the regional office revealed that the decision often took weeks or even months to resolve. Therefore, if the recommendation is not approved, the student would have lost out on his or her education by the time he or she is told to return to school. This is because, although a School Head has the authority to suspend a student for twenty school days, the student is not allowed back into school until after a response is received from the Minister.

Some respondents argued for greater delegation of decisions regarding the expulsion of the students saying that dispensation of justice would be speeded up. Others supported the status quo saying that discipline was sensitive and needed to be handled with care to avoid any inconsistencies. Perhaps the problem is not whether the region has the power to expel or not but rather, that of how to address inefficient processes. Therefore, it would appear that it is the throughput time that should be addressed with a view to improving response time to schools.

The Director, Teaching Service Management, as the employer, has the ultimate authority to dismiss a teacher from service. The Chief Education Officer can only suspend a teacher for thirty working days. One officer from the regional office who conducted preliminary investigations against a teacher, who was alleged to have had a love relationship with a female student, said this about the time the case took to conclude:

> I investigated the case to establish whether or not the teacher had a prima facie case. My conclusion was that indeed the teacher had a case to answer. Accordingly, the case was referred to Director, Teaching Service Management. At the time, the girl was in her final year. It was the following year after the girl had completed at the school, that a committee of enquiry was appointed by Director, Teaching Service Management to probe the case further. The girl refused to give evidence saying that, because she was no longer a student, she was not obliged to do so. Consequently, the matter was closed thus the teacher evaded disciplinary action. (8/12/2005)

Indeed records available at the regional office indicated that perpetrators of such acts evaded punishment because of delayed action.

It can be argued that, like in the case of the students discussed above, the problem does not lie with authority or the lack of it but inefficiency of the system in as far as throughput time is concerned. From the legal point, it is the employer and no other person, who can take stern disciplinary measures against a teacher (Education Act 1966, Teaching Service Code of Regulations 1976). Therefore, what should occur is a strategy to make the whole process more efficient to avoid delays in dispensing justice.

The majority of the respondents in the regional office and some in the national office viewed the centralisation of disciplinary action as reluctance by the centre to let go, which, in their view, demonstrated lack of trust towards the regional office. This attitude was believed to have caused the non- implementation of the long planned regional unitary structure mentioned in chapter 1. One respondent, a senior officer of the Ministry

of Education, attributed this state of affairs to lack of political will and what he termed 'management will', hinting at power issues within the Ministry. To him, the Ministry of Education, as an organisation responsible for the management of education, must devise strategies for implementing the overall policy of education decentralisation. Or better, the government must demand that the Ministry of Education implements this policy.

Following from the above arguments, it is clear that there was contestation and resistance around education decentralisation. While in the cases of Burkina Faso and Mongolia cited in the literature review, the contestation was caused by weak economies, it would appear in Botswana, contestation was more around what authority should remain with the centre, what powers should go to the periphery, the extent of decentralisation and the reasons for the decision. This situation contradicted the literature (Halliday 1996; Fleisch et al (2003) that, a scheme of delegation must be developed to avoid contestations and tensions between hierarchies, thus promote efficiency.

The section also shows that, contrary to the view of change management strategists, such as Fullan (1992, 1996), all stakeholders must be taken on board for successful implementation of change to occur. In the case of Botswana, it appears that key players lacked a common understanding and/or commitment to the form and extent of education decentralisation governance.

4.2 The South Central Regional Office and its links with other offices

First, this section describes how the work of the divisions and sections is organised, then how the office relates and works with national office and finally, how it links with related departments in the region and schools. For this section, data was collected from policy documents, staff of the South Central Region, Secondary Education national office and the six schools in the sample.

4.2.1 Work and Operations at the South Central Region Office

As earlier indicated, the regional office comprises the following four functional divisions: Inspectorate, Management and Training, Teacher Welfare and Administration and Finance. The Chief Education Officer, assisted by Principal Education Officer 1, directs and coordinates the activities of the different divisions of the office to ensure that they complement one another in executing their regional mandate of monitoring and supporting schools.

The reality on the ground pointed to a different picture to the rhetoric. Contrary to expectations, all respondents from the regional office observed that the interdependence of the divisions was minimal. There was evidence of collaboration and consultation between the Inspectorate and Teacher Welfare divisions on schools' and teachers' needs. Teacher Welfare approves recommendations by the inspectorate for the appointment of temporary teachers.

The Inspectorate and Management and Training divisions have most contact with the schools. Surprisingly they collaborated mainly in as far as occasional development workshops for regional staff and facilitation of Performance Management System (PMS) workshops for schools were concerned. PMS was introduced in 1999 to improve productivity in the public service (PMS Philosophy Document, 1999). The idea resulted from two studies conducted between 1991 and 1994 to establish the root cause(s) of unsatisfactory performance by the public service. The studies revealed that, although since 1966, the country has had 5-year National Development Plans (NDPs), those were long-term and at the macro level, while ministries and departments lacked operational plans with targets and completion dates to implement NDPs. PMS had reportedly worked in countries such as New Zealand and the United Kingdom and Botswana decided to adopt it to ensure ministries and departments execute their mandates.

Other than that, there was no evidence of collaboration between the Inspectorate and Management and Training Divisions on schools' monitoring and professional support

work. The officers of the two divisions acknowledged that their work was key to school support and monitoring. However, they attributed their 'haphazard' operations to staff shortages. The situation compelled the four subject officers to couple as inspectors of schools and 'baby-sit' three or more subjects, in addition to their own specialised subject areas. Furthermore, in the last three years, the Management and Training office has had to focus on Performance Management System workshops for the office and the schools as instructed by national office. This affected inservice support to school management teams because planned activities such as, workshops, school visits and inspections for the divisions were cancelled or fewer. Both school respondents and regional staff said they saw benefits in PMS but complained that its implementation was not forthcoming.

One regional respondent described the work of the region as simply 'fire-fighting' because officers reacted to incidents as they were reported and rarely had an opportunity to adhere to whatever plans they had. Therefore, the respondent said this situation made it difficult to assess the contribution the region was making to school performance.

A senior officer in the regional office commented that a circular or letter was not adequate to give guidance and support to the schools. He called for a regional development planning process as advocated by PMS and the Balanced Score-Card, whereby an audit, target setting, support, monitoring and evaluation are continuously done to improve the region's performance. He also blamed the current problem of non-implementation of plans on insufficient resources in the regions, hinting that the plans were not realistic in the first place.

The literature reviewed indicated that decentralisation has implications for additional resources (Halliday 1996). However, this important point appears to have been disregarded, when plans to decentralise to the regions were implemented. Two senior officers said that, except for the Chief Education Officer post in the region, the rest of the positions were the ones previously used for the centralised structure. Requests for additional regional posts were treated the same way as the ones for the national offices which were more established and reasonably staffed. An officer in the Ministry

Management Department explained that the ministry had reached human resources ceilings but it still had a high vacancy rate, a factor that prevented the creation of additional posts. One officer remarked, ‘it is strange that these ceilings are placed on an un-established structure in the region’.

This slow pace to fill and create professional posts could also be attributed to inefficient planning at national level because vacant positions range from support staff cadre to professional cadres. It is therefore surprising that the support staff posts are not converted into professional ones and transferred to the regions where the need for such posts is higher. This problem could also be attributed to the government’s intention to ‘down or right size’ the public service which is believed to be bloated. Thus, decentralisation is pushed at the same time as the other planned agenda of downsizing the public service, thereby creating a serious paradox or tension for the region.

Transport, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment and finance were reported to be inadequate. In particular, the Information and Communication Technology procedures were not widely used in the office and the necessary ICT skills too were not developed. Only about half the staff was competent in ICT. The office was not networked for easy communication within the office nor was it connected to the schools to ensure effective communication. Communication was by letter, telephone and facsimile. This affected the performance of the region and the schools, as issues were not addressed timeously.

The school respondents corroborated evidence from regional respondents and documentary analysis on this issue. In the main, they said that problems often occurred, whether over requests by schools or payments of allowances for teachers, that there were incidences of missing files and poor record keeping, unavailability of professional officers at the time of need, irregular school visits and inservice support, delays in resolving disciplinary cases and delayed responses to transport requests. This shows clearly that the region needs to step up its ICT knowledge, system and usage.

The region has a strategic development plan, which was initially developed for the national department in 2000/2001. Its priorities were as follows: management of resources, improving academic performance and discipline in schools. However, this plan changed several times at the instruction of national office and was never fully implemented. This could possibly have contributed to the problems experienced by the region because small as the staff may be, implementation strategies of the plan could have helped the office to prioritise its activities and remain focussed. The other cause could have been that, while at headquarters appointed officers headed divisions, the arrangement was different at regional level as officers in the various divisions reported directly to the head of region or the deputy and therefore confusion over lines of accountability became a problem.

It is apparent from this section that the Botswana evidence validated the literature on districts/regions (Hannay et al, 2003) according to which a region must be systematically organised for it to impact on school improvement. The system lacked corresponding resources that is vital to accompany any governance change process. It lacked cohesion, showed overlaps between divisions and units so that clear accountability lines and practices did not sufficiently develop to ensure maximum utilisation of resources and positive influence on schools. This situation meant that leadership was needed to be strategic to reckon with the difficult set up in the region.

4.2.2 The South Central Region and its links with the National Office

According to policy documents (Republic of Botswana 1977 and 1994, Organisation and Methods Review 1992, Government Paper No. 2 of 1993), the mandate of the national office is policy formulation and direction while the regional office implements the formulated policies and programmes. Therefore, there must be collaboration and clear accountability between the levels. The respondents from the regional office and the departmental national office overwhelmingly demonstrated familiarity with policy documents by indicating the expected roles of both national and regional offices.

This section examines how the different divisions of the regional office relate and work with similar divisions at national office.

a). The Inspectorate Division

The national and regional offices each have an inspectorate division. This arrangement emanated from the departmental scheme of service (Government Paper No 2 of 1993), which established two tiers of inspectorate, one at national level and another at regional. The former supposedly formulate policies for the latter to implement and also have authority over the regional structure. However, the reality on the ground is different, as the national and regional officers are at par in terms of level of operation and remuneration. Further, the national office also conducts inspections, samples schools across regions and uses the same approaches and tools as the regional level does for inspection and reporting purposes.

A regional inspector remarked:

> The national inspectorate complements our effort. It covers some of the schools, which we would otherwise not have covered because of manpower constraints. The only concern is that there are no clear reporting lines. It's not clear who between us (region or national) should do follow-ups on schools inspected by headquarters. (8/12/2005)

And a national inspector added:

> To me, this arrangement is duplication of effort. We don't add value to regional inspections. We do exactly what they do. We target the schools that are not on their inspection schedule and sharing of information is not good. (23/03/2006)

Some respondents from the national and regional offices wondered what would happen if the region was to be adequately staffed to inspect all their schools.

It is worth noting that Primary and Secondary Education are somewhat similar as they both manage provision of 'formal/basic' education. However, the arrangement of a two-tier system of inspectorate is peculiar to secondary education only. The Primary Education region does not have national inspectors. Instead, their region is further divided into sub- regions, which are staffed by inspectors who closely monitor and support a circuit of schools. Some of the national and regional inspectors opined that a similar arrangement be adopted for the secondary region to increase monitoring and support of schools.

In addition to conducting inspections, officers at the national level of the secondary education sector formulate and coordinate curriculum-related policies and programmes, focussing on subject content, delivery and assessment for the region to implement. Besides the subjects (Agriculture, Religious Education, Science and Setswana) that were represented in the region, the school support for the other subjects was done directly by officers at national office. Contrary to expectation, the officers at the two levels were neither in constant consultation nor shared programmes in view of staff shortages. The other constraint was that the region had no control over national officers.

The interviewees at national and regional levels gave several explanations for this. Some blamed this on staff shortages, which, they said, complicated alignment between the two levels. Others attributed it to officers at national and regional levels being at the same level of operation. Ineffective planning in the regional and national offices was also mentioned in this regard.

It is evident from this section that there is lack of clear and effective accountability lines and practices, resulting in unnecessary duplication of effort causing tensions and wasting limited resources. It was not even clear as to who, between national and regional, should make follow up visits to ensure implementation of inspection recommendations. Thus, it is not surprising that teachers and heads interviewed felt that the feedback from authorities was sometimes confusing. It was also not clear as to whom, between national

and regional, schools had to address their issues. School A in the sample reported that, within a period of three months in 2005, they were visited separately by national and regional teams and were given contradictory feedback on record keeping. The former gave positive feedback while the latter's was negative. The Head said they agreed with the latter but wondered what to expect in future. This shows that decentralisation will not be effective without a proper scheme of delegation and accountability, as advocated in the literature.

b). Management and Training

The Management and Training division provides management support to the schools. It is structured such that, at national level, there is a coordinator who sees to the formulation of short- term staff development policies and direction of their implementation through an officer at regional level. Unlike the inspectorate, the position of the national coordinator is higher than that of the regional officer and is therefore supposed to direct the operations of the regional structure. There was, however, no evidence of a plan shared by the national and regional offices. The officers said that, two years ago, they planned their activities together. The national coordinator justified the change as follows:

> Since the idea of Unitary Structure was incepted, Heads of Division at Headquarters have lost coordination of their respective units at Regional level. The underlying problem is that the Chief Education Officer (CEO) at Regional level supposedly supervises a number of departments and reports directly to the Deputy Permanent Secretary. As such, Management and Training Coordinator at Headquarters no longer meets with the regional training officer for purposes of planning as their plans might collide with the Regional Plan. The other factor that has substantially influenced that state of affairs is the Performance Management System (PMS) cascading training model. In line with the Unitary Structure, PMS cascading at Regional level is the precinct of the CEO with the help of the Performance Improvement Unit of the Ministry of Education, which falls directly under the supervision

> of the Permanent Secretary. The regional Management and Training officer has thus been drawn into running PMS workshops. (15/12/2005)

School Heads and members in the sample said that management training activities were fewer because of the PMS training. A head of Department said, 'since I became a HoD, I have attended only one induction workshop, there has been no follow-up and I am not yet grounded on the expectations of the post.'

As pointed out earlier, long-term in-service teacher training is the responsibility of another department, Teaching Service Management. The Management and Training officer in the region submits recommendations to the officer at the national secondary education office for further processing and submission to Teaching Service Management for approval for further training. This arrangement does not seem satisfactory as far as communicating and working together in a complementary way.

c). Teacher Welfare

At national level, teacher welfare falls under the Department of Teaching Service Management (TSM). At regional level, the division performs all functions that belong to other divisions at the national office of that department, for example, calculation of teachers' salaries and procurement, which, at national level are functions of the Salaries Division and Procurement Division respectively. At regional level, it is this division that appoints temporary teachers, processes progression of teachers between salary grades and appoints teachers to acting positions.

The view of teachers and regional staff interviewed was that, although decentralisation had eased congestion at national office, the two officers in the Welfare Division were not coping with the workload because the officers do all the Teaching Service Management work in the region. This happened despite the emphasis placed on provision of corresponding human and other resources to decentralised functions by the Halliday (1996) consultancy and TSM directives on decentralisation (1999, 2000).

Although based at the regional office, it is TSM national office, which deployed and re-designated the officers and often without input from the regional office. This happened despite the contents of the officers' letters of transfer, which read in part, "While you remain and be responsible for services of the department of TSM, you will be under the Chief Education Officer, for supervision purposes" (2nd February 1998). The officers take instructions from the Chief Education Officer as well as from their national office. The regional staff interviewed observed that this practice tends to confuse the officers, as they have to refer to the centre from time to time. This lack of clarity on accountability created tension and power contestations as well as unnecessary delays in providing service. However, the national office saw nothing wrong with the arrangement. This exemplifies lack of commitment to delegate genuinely their authorities to the region.

d). Administration and Finance

According to the Financial Instructions and Procedures (1993), financial budget and allocation is a centralised function while monitoring of its use and management is done at regional level. Officials at national level explained that financial allocation to a regional office was based on the staff size of a region and consideration was also given to peculiarities of a region such as its distance from the national offices or services. Allocation of funds to schools was also determined at national level. For learner support resources and welfare, the allocation was done per student and for teacher travel and subsistence allowance, it was based on the staff size and locality of the school in respect of its regional office. The region feeds national office with information on management and use of finance.

Senior regional staff members complained that allocations were often inadequate and some votes were sometimes not allocated funds such as stationery for the 2005/2006 financial year. Payments for these would have to be made from national office thus, inconveniencing the region as requests had to be made whenever orders were made.

The allocation of funds to the region for teacher welfare issues came from the Department of Teaching Service Management. The region, in consultation with the Welfare Division in the Teaching Service Management Department monitors utilisation of those funds. Again here, funds were said to be insufficient, resulting in backlogs in payments of various claims such as transport, travel and leave travel concession.

Heads of schools said that they were normally not adequately funded in the areas of transport, feeding and essential services or utilities. The head of School D said that she had been constantly threatened by Water Utilities Department with water disconnections and her request for assistance from secondary national office was not timeously respond to. This problem was compounded by the fact that the region did not control financial allocations to schools. Schools also insisted that the allocations were not in accordance with the financial estimates they submitted to the department.

It can be deduced from this section that some overlaps exist between the national and the regional office, and insufficient collaboration between the two led to inadequate performance and/or delivery. For instance, the personnel section, as mentioned above, get instructions from the Chief Education Officer (Region) as well as from the heads of different divisions at national level, leading to tension. It can also be concluded therefore that lack of clarity of functions, unclear lines of accountability, limited financial and human resources as well as insufficient planning in national or regional offices caused unnecessary conflict and tensions between these two levels. This validates what is argued in the literature (Mc Ginn & Welsh, 1999; Halliday 1996; Fleisch et al (2003) that clear definition of roles and accountability lines and practice are needed for effective decentralisation to work effectively.

4.2.3 Relations with other departments

The interviews with heads of Primary Education and Teacher Training in the region confirmed the view that the departments in the region do not have an optimum functional relationship with one another but were rather working independently. They occasionally

invited the other to its activities but mentioned that it was not mandatory for such an invitation to be honoured. But, the Secondary Education regional office needs to have strong links with the regional offices of Primary Education and Teacher Training and Development. The former produces students for secondary schools while the latter is mandated to provide short-term professional development for teachers.

Interviews with regional heads of departments revealed that the primary and secondary offices only link over students' progression but do not collaborate on professional matters, such as the improvement of students' performance at both levels. They suggested that, since the two departments basically deal with similar clientele, it would be enriching to share information on how to improve students' performance through regular meetings or workshops rather than operate independently. This would also assist in facilitating provision of comprehensive information on students' profiles to the second level.

The interviews revealed that Teacher Training and Development (TT&D) does not provide in-service teacher training in the region, mainly due to manpower constraints. It was surprising that virtually none of the interviewed teachers linked in-service teacher training to Teacher Training and Development. Instead, they blamed the Secondary Department for neglecting that function, indicating that teachers did not understand the in-service training mandate of the Department of Teacher Training and Development. This was also a clear sign that the training department is not reaching them. This situation validates the literature that calls for commonality of purpose, clarity on and collective commitment to the change process.

The study also revealed that, aside manpower constraints, there was poor communication and lack of collaboration between Teacher Training and Secondary Education in the region. The inspection findings are supposed to be shared with the responsible TT&D regional office for action on areas of improvement in issues of curriculum delivery, as identified during inspections by the Secondary Education Department. According to the regional heads of department, this did not happen, thus making one wonder on what data TT &D based their activities since they did not use inspection findings to do their support

work in schools. This is another sign of inefficiency and lack of coordination between department levels. The view of some respondents was that, if the two departments collaborated, they could put the meagre resources they have together and organise staff development activities. They could also empower schools to strengthen their own school-based staff development programmes and activities, as mentioned in the literature. This would also lead to the achievement of Recommendation 105 of the RNPE, which calls for reinforcement of school- based staff development by education officers.

4.2.4 Capacity and conditions in the regional office

The literature review purports that certain conditions must exist in order for a regional office to effectively execute its mandate of monitoring and supporting the schools. This section analyses the capacity of the Secondary Education South Central Regional Office in terms of financial, physical, social and human resource capacity, including staff development strategies; as well as business systems and procedures. Documentary analysis and interviews with staff from the regional and national offices were used for this section.

a) Financial capacity

The South Central Region relies on an allocation from government through the Secondary Education national office and the Teaching Service Management. Except for some votes, such as the one for external travel, the regional office has similar votes to the ones at headquarters. However, vote ledgers available at the regional office indicate that, while some votes are never allocated funds, there are some that are not consistently allocated. For example, in the financial year 2005/2006, no funds were allocated for stationery, fairs and exhibitions. This situation compelled the region to keep making requisitions to headquarters. Interviews revealed that this resulted in delayed payments.

The view of the regional staff interviewed is that sometimes the votes' allocation appears adequate because, at the end of the financial year, there are balances in some votes, which

are then returned to the central vote. For example, according to the vote ledgers shown in table 4 below, substantial amounts were returned under the following votes:

Table 6: Financial Allocation to South Central Region

Year	Vote	Allocation	Balance
2001/2002	a). Transport and Travel	P130000. 00	P73312.35
	b). Seminars, workshops and conferences	P200000.00	P115413.05
2004/2005	a). Transport and Travel	P161550.00	P115305.50
	b). Seminars, workshops and conferences	P130000.00	P73270.00

Source: DSE South Central Regional Sub- Warrant for 2001/2002 & 2004/2005

The management of the region explained that the balances were mainly caused by the fact that some planned activities, such as inspections and workshops, were not carried out. They said this was due to, inter alia, manpower constraints, national programmes such as PMS, and that funds were not transferable between votes without approval of the Ministry of Finance, a request not easily acceded to, and another indication of the limited financial management power of the regional office.

Although manpower constraints could admittedly be the cause of many problems, ineffective planning seems to be another contributory factor. It is puzzling that large amounts are allocated despite the manpower constraint. A finance officer at national office explained that an incremental system of budgeting was used where a 5 or 10% is added to the previous year's budget. The PMS Unit has expressed concern that planned activities are not tied to cost, but instead incremental budgeting is practised. This calls for the use of a Balanced Scorecard where activities are properly linked to the budget and tracking systems are in place. Also, what was lacking was collaboration with other

departments and corresponding divisions at national office, which could have ensured maximum utilisation of resources.

The regional TSM staff complained that funding from their national office for teacher welfare matters such as transfers and leave concessions, was inadequate. Votes quickly got depleted because of high teacher turnover in the region. A senior officer at the region explained that the problem was caused by the fact that transfers of teachers were in part still centralised. Teaching Service headquarters transfers school heads, deputies and heads of department while the region transfers senior teachers and junior teachers. The region did not have input on funds allocated for TSM activities, a situation that created tension, as the region claimed ignorance on the criterion TSM used to allocate funds to the region. Perhaps this partly explains inaccurate allocations.

b). Physical capacity

This refers to accumulated assets. The regional office is accommodated in rented premises with few physical resources. There were four vehicles - a saloon, twin cam, bus and a mini-bus. Only the first two were fully used by the office staff and often were not available. National office controlled the mini-bus and the bus and this created tension between the two offices. Perhaps this was caused by the regional office's proximity with headquarters, yet another indication of the limited administrative powers of the regional office.

c). Human resource and leadership capacity

This refers to the staff adequacy in terms of number, training levels or expertise and experience. These are attributes essential for officers to take appropriate decisions and play fully their role of school monitoring and support.

According to the departmental establishment register, there has been one officer in the Management and Training Division since the inception of the region in 1995. The officer

is responsible for in-servicing the management teams of the sixty- three schools on management issues as well as the regional staff in areas of performance improvement. The Inspectorate division had five officers, who act as inspectors of schools and subject officers. In addition to looking after their specialist areas, they have to take care of other subjects in which they have no or little expertise. The problem of staff shortages is prevalent and continues to affect the performance of the region. As a result, the annual inspection schedules indicate that regional inspectors covered annually around ten or so schools of the sixty- three. One of the inspectors remarked that their work had been reduced to 'fire- fighting' and another said that it would be better for them to focus on short school visits and forget about full inspections because large schools were not adequately covered.

The professional staff possessed the right qualifications as they all had at least the minimum requirement of a junior degree. In addition, they had a minimum of at least twelve years experience in education and held management positions in both schools and the public service. However, only half of the regional respondents said they were ICT literate. This inadequacy affected communication and caused delays in production of reports and other important documents.

Shortages were also experienced in the support staff responsible for teacher welfare and finance. The heads of Teacher Welfare and Administration and Finance divisions had relevant training but the size of the region, both in terms of the office and the schools to cover, militated against their performance.

There were also problems of staff shortages and lack of expertise in the registry. The supervisor who is assisted by two messengers did not have training in records management. Neither of them had basic ICT literacy. Computerisation of records is therefore poor and lagging behind.

Even though there has been an increase of delegated functions since 2000/1, there has been no significant increase in the staff of the region, as shown in the table 7.

Table 7: Regional Staffing

Year	Chief Ed Officer	PEO I	PEO II Insp.	PEO II M&T	Support Staff	Bursar	Personnel	Total
2000/2001	1	0	4	1	2	1	2+ 1 temporary	11 perm
2001/2002	1	1	4	1	2	2	2+1 temporary	13 perm
2002/2003	1	1	4	1	4	2	2+1 temporary	15 perm
2005/2006	-	1	4	1	4	2	2+1 temporary	19 perm

Source: Establishment Registers 2000/2001 to 2005/2006

In 2003/2004, the post of Chief Education Officer was transferred to the Ministry of Management to head the larger regional structure. This happened on paper; otherwise the post is still based at, and is in charge of, the Secondary Education region. This indicates resistance and lack of commitment to change by the authorities.

The section confirms the argument in the literature (de Clercq, 2001; Halliday, 1996) that decentralisation has implications for additional funding and resources. Resource capacity is crucial for the successful implementation of any innovation. Therefore, the lack of capacity of the region or the delegation of duties to regions with insufficient resourcing shows lack of commitment to the whole process and resulted in poor school monitoring and support, thus making one question the form that regional decentralisation took.

School respondents corroborated this observation. They said the region was not planning their staff development activities with the schools nor were they being inspected regularly. A HoD confirmed that the authorities attributed this problem to lack of resources and insufficient manpower but he wondered what was being done to redress the situation.

d). Social capacity

This refers to the region's collaboration and networks with other stakeholders such as departments, non- governmental and other organisations in monitoring and supporting schools. Interviews with regional staff as well as available records (office files and reports) revealed that such collaboration was lacking and that networks with other stakeholders were not focused on.

e). Business systems and structures

These refer mainly to personnel information system. Information business systems are very important to the functioning of large organisations. At the time of the study, information on the three thousand teachers in the region and office personnel was kept in 'hard copy' files and there was no file tracking system. This tended to affect through put time and caused unnecessary delays, as a physical rather than an electronic search for files took a lot of manpower time. School heads stated that the authorities attributed delayed action on requests for temporary teachers or recommendations for acting appointments to 'missing files'. They argued that this took most of their valuable time, as they have to keep making follow-ups with the region.

As mentioned earlier, there is no effective Information Management system and the regional office is not networked to enhance intra communication. Thus, despite the availability of a data capturing 'Infinium' system for teachers, which was developed by Teaching Service Management more than five years ago, the teacher information is still handled manually. This is partly because computers for the teacher Infinium system, supplied three years ago, lacked would-be-users skills. The situation is exacerbated by the unavailability of an Information and Communication Technology officer at the regional office.

Although some officers in the region have access to Internet facilities, the sixty-three schools do not enjoy such access, despite the fact that they all have computers and

Internet modems. National office attributed this problem to insufficient funding. Thus, the telephone, letter and facsimile continue to be the principal means of communication between schools and the regional office.

However, schools remain disadvantaged as communication is slow and students and teachers miss out on Internet opportunities. This seemingly slow pace towards computerising operations in the region and schools is affecting service delivery, as ICT is one of the basic tenets of today's world because it connects individuals, communities and nations and enhances communication. This trend negates national development strategies, as the promotion of the use of ICT is also an important driver of one of the pillars of Botswana's Vision 2016, according to which an educated, informed nation must exist by the year 2016. It also remains a top priority in the strategic plan of the Ministry of Education, since lack of information and use of outdated data continue to affect efficiency and good planning.

It can be concluded from this section that, in Botswana, many conditions necessary for an effective region have not been adequately addressed, thus rendering the whole decentralisation exercise ineffective.

4.3 Effect of Regional Office on Schools

The rationale for delegation of some functions to regions was to improve efficiency in the management of education provision and in school monitoring and support. It was assumed that, since the regional office would be responsible for a manageable group of schools, it could support them better. Thus, the mandate of the South Central Region is to manage the sixty- three secondary schools on behalf of the national office.

This section examines the links that exist between the regional office and the schools as well as whether the new dispensation improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the bureaucracy. This will be done under the following headings: Regional Management of school provision and resources; Regional monitoring and support of schools and teachers;

and School performance. Data were collected from schools and regional staff in particular, as well as from relevant documents, such as files at the regional office and schools, circulars, job descriptions and policy guidelines.

a). Regional management of school provision and resources

The role of the region is to facilitate provision of resources to schools. Many teachers in the sampled schools appreciated the role the region played in facilitating provision of resources, such as learner- support materials and teachers, as well as in timeously responding to their welfare issues. These factors sometimes boosted teacher morale and improved teachers' commitment. Nonetheless, some teachers complained that other areas, such as staff development workshops, were not satisfactory. School heads also complained of inadequate provisioning in funding for feeding, transport and utilities.

As far as maintenance of buildings is concerned, the four junior secondary schools (A,B,C &D) in the sample said that they reported long ago their structural and electrical problems to the region, to the national secondary education department and to the Boipelego Education Project, a unit responsible for infrastructural development. However, help was still not forthcoming. Schools A and C in rural areas were worse off as their telephones were often out of order. The situation was aggravated by the fact that there was no Development Services Division in the region and schools reported their problems to their preferred office. The response to queries tended to be slow, as we have seen above, because of lack of clarity of responsibility and accountability lines between national and regional offices over maintenance issues, but also because the region did not have control over the service departments.

The senior schools (E&F) got assistance from a different government department, Department of Buildings and Engineering Services.

As pointed out earlier, the regional business systems have not been computerised to improve and speed up processes. This has affected links between the region and the

schools. According to regional and national senior staff, this problem emanated from insufficient funding to provide schools with Internet services. Ineffective planning could also be one cause, because computers were available in the regional offices and in the schools. Having spent large amounts of money on acquiring computers and building computer laboratories in the schools, it made economic sense to complete the process by availing Internet services to the schools and equipping personnel in schools and the regional office with ICT skills. While this can be accompanied by high maintenance requests or service, it would yield better results from such investment.

Thus, service delivery was uneven with some areas, particularly urban ones being more effectively serviced while others were still being undermined by lack of financial and human resources. This validates Weiler (1990) and Elmore (1993) view that decentralisation can exacerbate disparities between schools as those in affluent communities which have easier access to their authorities tend to benefit more.

b). Regional monitoring and support of schools and teachers

The Inspectorate and Management and Training divisions have most contact with schools. As mentioned earlier, the former inspects and monitors schools to ensure proper implementation of overall education policy and to recommend strategies for school improvement and curriculum delivery in various subject areas. Inspectors also deploy teachers to schools. The Management and Training division supports school management teams through school-based and regional training activities or consultations with individual schools.

According to the Education Act (1966), schools must be inspected every two years. However, evidence, from interviews with schools and regional inspectors and that obtained from official documents, suggests that this has not been the norm in the last five years. According to a summary document of inspection findings (Department of Secondary Education, 2003), the following criteria were used to sample schools for inspection:

- schools not inspected for more than two years
- schools that continuously do not perform well in examinations
- schools that are experiencing problems
- schools regarded as good schools

The head of national inspectorate explained that good schools were inspected to learn best practices or strategies they employed to share them with other schools. The monitoring and support work of the inspectorate and the Management and Training divisions has been irregular and inadequate. Most schools in the sample were not inspected according to schedule in the last three years, neither had they been visited by the training officer. Notwithstanding this, there was no evidence of a plan to prioritise school monitoring and support according to the needs of schools. In addition to monitoring schools through inspections, the region must support schools in several ways.

i). Pastoral and short visits to ensure compliance with and implementation of policy. However, the only available schedule of such visits mentioned only the inspectors while other officers, such as the regional management and management and training section, gave priority to other things such as PMS.

ii). Management support workshops have also not been scheduled in the last three years. Support was given by letter or phone. The management and training officer said that this was unlike before, where she would devise a support plan with the head in order to address inadequacies. Both the regional and school personnel interviewed complained about the absence of a plan to address management inadequacies of school administrators, especially as the heads of schools attributed poor performance of their schools to this problem.

iii). Human resource distribution. The region distributes teachers recruited by Teaching Service Management as well as recruits temporary teachers. School respondents appreciated the speedy response by the region to the requests for teachers.

iv). Acquisition and distribution of other resources. School respondents appreciated the role the region in facilitating acquisition and distribution of learner- support material and equipment.

v). Teacher welfare issues. As mentioned earlier, the school respondents appreciated the assistance they got from the region regarding their welfare matters such as transport, travel and leave concession claims.

vi). Monitoring of school building and their maintenance. Although this is a regional function, no one has been posted to the region in the last three years resulting in schools not being assisted on time.

Although the school respondents appreciated the support they got in the areas of teacher welfare, teacher supply and acquisition of learner- support materials, they decried the lack of support in professional and management areas. Most teachers and school administrators complained that they were not getting regular in-service support.

The regional staff interviewed was divided on the cause (s) of the problems. Some attributed the problem to shortages of manpower and financial resources. Another group attributed the problem to the region's concentration on strategic development planning linked to the Performance Management System (PMS). Indeed, the bulk of 2003/4/5 was spent on re-formulating the national strategic development plan of 2000/2001, which was unfortunately not implemented. Instead there were continuous changes made to improve the plan itself. For instance, in 2003, training suddenly concentrated on the Performance Based Reward System and 2004 saw a further revamp of the plan to focus on the consolidation and reduction of the Key Performance Areas from nine to three. There was also training on the Balanced Score-Card. All these developments were meant to improve the implementation of the development plan but were met with criticisms on the ground that they were time- consuming managerialist tools intended to control more than assist the productivity of regional officers.

These changes diverted the work of the Management and Training officer from supporting school management teams. They had to organise PMS workshops for regional staff and schools. The inspectors also facilitated these training sessions and had to cut down on their other work with schools. In 2005, the Ministry headquarters ordered inspectors to suspend their schedule to accommodate the PMS workshops. This prevented them from answering requests from schools and instead made them focus on a new national programme or policy implementation.

The school heads and the regional staff interviewed overwhelmingly supported the need to have development plans, but complained of the lack of implementation. One officer from the region remarked:

> We don't seem to understand what we are doing. PMS was meant to make our work simpler. Our problem is that we treat PMS as something separate or additional to our job. We should bring 'PMS and the work' together, because PMS is meant to create focus and make us work strategically and better. (8/12/2005)

A teacher asked:

> When are we going to implement PMS? We have been planning all these years and it doesn't look like we will ever implement our plan as it keeps on changing but without being tested. (15/12/2005)

In response to specific professional development needs of schools, teachers indicated that there were no activities planned in the region and indeed there was no evidence of the existence of a plan. This imposition of a strategy from the top confirms Weiler (1993) and Elmore's (1990) claim that decentralisation becomes a struggle between the bureaucrats and the different levels of the hierarchy. Thus it calls for strategic and visionary leadership (Harris et al 2001 in Harris 2000) in the region to diffuse the tension.

The conclusion drawn from the above is that policy implementation, whether through a plan or not, is often beyond the capacity on the ground. Capacity can be built in the process but often it also requires that improvements be made to the policy. Then, plans have to be developed that are flexible to accommodate changing priorities or emerging issues.

It has been mentioned that the region's relationship with its national office is not that effective since administrative decentralisation to the region. Managerialist tools, such as balanced scorecard and performance assessment, are increasingly being introduced to control and monitor people and office rather than to concentrate rather on school support. Those tools put pressure on the regional office to prioritize over support the tighter monitoring of schools and educators but this does rarely produce better school performance. This substantiates Naidoo and Kong's (2003) finding that decentralisation in Africa has not improved the quality of education governance or the efficiency in resource allocation or service delivery.

c). School Performance

Interviews with teachers revealed that school priority areas are about academic performance and students' discipline. Schools A, B and D said that, although academic performance was on their top priority list, they lacked support from the region and other similar organisations. They said that their physical distance from the centre also disadvantaged them as they are located in the rural areas, which lacked facilities such as libraries. They mentioned that inspections, pastoral visits and management support were irregular. Some other heads of sampled schools opined that, although they had been informed of shortages in the regional office, they believed that the region could devise a systematic way of increasing contact with schools, such as assigning a group of schools to a specific officer to arrange regular meetings or contact sessions with them.

With the introduction of PMS a few years ago, schools were now required to align their development plans with the regional plan, as well as reflect their needs and priorities.

However, as indicated earlier, the regional plans were not implemented nor were the school plans. Besides this, there was no documented evidence of activities that the region had planned with the schools, as was mentioned by school respondents.

There were other forms of school support such as pastoral and short visits to advice on policy matters and procedure but management support workshops were unfortunately difficult to find as there were none scheduled.

Teachers interviewed rarely mentioned the Department of Teacher Training and Development on in-service training. Instead they blamed the Secondary Education Department, and in particular the regional office, for having discontinued subject-specific training workshops. Two reasons could explain this: the in-service function was situated at Secondary Education Department prior to 1992 and schools are in constant contact mainly with the Secondary Education staff in the region. A senior officer at the Teacher Training and Development regional office attributed his department's inactivity to shortage of manpower and expertise. He said that his officers lacked necessary expertise to run workshops for secondary school teachers. In addition, Teacher Training and Development did not involve or consult secondary school teachers in their plans. Because the planning was more top down than based on consultation with schools, the division tended to run workshops on emerging and general issues which they felt were important, such as Environmental Education, HIV and AIDS or Population and Family Education.

It would also appear that communication between the Secondary Education and Teacher Training regional offices remained inadequate. There was no evidence in the findings of communication from the inspectorate to Teacher Training and Development so the latter could take appropriate action. It is clear that communication between the two departments at regional level is vital and calls for better coordination of activities between these departments. A close assessment of these two departments shows that collaboration could yield a workable strategy for the two, despite the shortages alluded

to. Indeed, a regional department becomes effective if it establishes links and networks with other departments or other organisations with a similar goal (Colemann, 1988).

Finally, in assessing regional support and monitoring through inspections, it is worth examining the academic performance of the sampled schools for the period 2001-2005 (even though it is difficult to establish a tight correlation between school performance and regional office's work).

Table 8: Junior Secondary Schools: Quality pass (Merit to Grade B)

		2001	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**When inspected**
A	% Pass (quantitative)	55.9	60.6	60.5	56.2	54.5	1996, 2002, 2006
	Quality pass	11.7	8.2	12.3	12.39	11.5	
B	% Pass (quantitative)	68	65.5	66.5	68.5	67.9	1997, 2002 no report produced
	Quality pass	17.1	14.5	15.2	15.64	9.5	
C	% Pass (quantitative)	91.9	92.6	91	97.2	95.4	None in the period
	Quality pass	48.3	52.5	54.2	69.68	50.7	
D	% Pass (quantitative)	74.3	78	68.1	77.8	78.1	None in the period
	Quality pass	39.9	42.8	20	24.5	17.5	

Source: Analysis of Junior Certificate Results South Central Region (2001- 2005)

Table 9: Senior Secondary Schools

Percentage with 5 C grades or better

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	When inspected
E	29.87	32.41	28.85	33.75	30.48	1995, 2003
F	52.83	51.44	48.51	57.36	60.21	1995, 2004 and follow-up by headquarters in 2005.

Source: Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education Results (2001- 2005)

The percentage and quality passes for the schools fluctuated over the years. There were no correlation emerging between the planned support and monitoring work of the region and the school performance. Even for the poor performing schools such as A, B and D, there was nothing in place to show an intention to work more with them to assist them to devise strategies for improvement. School E, which is not doing well, is not really being visited by the regional office.

School F appears to be consistently improving its quality performance. The school head and teachers said that they had a comprehensive strategy for improvement, which they strictly followed. The teachers described their head as an instructional leader who was a visionary and purposeful in leading others to achieve. School C also appears to be doing well and, like those from School F, the respondents said that they had their own strategy for improving the results, which was shared by the staff. In fact there was no evidence of regional support to C through inspections or any other ways. School C and F said that the region had not made much input to their improvement initiatives. Therefore, they were not convinced that the region had an impact on their work.

Literature (Hopkins, 2000) on school improvement purports that the level of support to schools varies according to the level of performance and effectiveness of schools. The regional officers said they gave priority to the schools doing badly, especially in view of their manpower constraints. Yet, no evidence of a plan of interventions was found at

regional office indicating that the region was to assist low performing schools to devise improvement strategies (as evidenced by the record of inspections shown on tables 8 and 9).

On the contrary, the region called all school heads to discuss an analysis of school results, asking them to justify their performance and advising them on working out strategies for improvement with their staff. However, there were no plans found from the region to work with them and devise strategies for improvement

In conclusion, regional support and monitoring was haphazard and irregular. There was no strategic or systematic way of working with different schools to ensure some targeted school improvement. Rather, it appears that the region saw their work more as monitoring through inspections than about support for school improvement strategies. Despite the resource constraints and the unclear situation, the regional leadership could have developed a strategic vision of how to drive the regional activities in schools (PMS Philosophy Document 1999, Harris et. al 2001)

It is apparent, from the interviews with teachers and regional officers, that the regional office, as explained in previous chapters, satisfactorily addressed teachers' welfare issues, something that boosted teachers' morale. Whether this could in turn improve teacher performance cannot be proved**,** but it is important for the professional officers of the regional office to improve their capacity and strategy to support and empower school teachers and managers with better skills, resources and capacity.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes on the findings of the study and makes recommendations for consideration.

The Ministry of Education has implemented an administrative decentralisation process, as evidenced by the establishment of the South Central Region and other regions to manage secondary education. This decentralisation, like most around the world, was contested from the beginning in 1977, then again in 1993, all the way to its implementation in 2001. To start with, it was a change process and change is not always easy and smooth. Its success depends on negotiation, leadership and persuasion. Thus, as Elmore (1993) mentions, the struggle between the national office and the new regional offices was inevitable. A lack of a common understanding of the type, scope, purpose and extent of decentralisation decided by the ministry was obvious from the evidence collected from the many respondents in the bureaucracy. According to them, the administrative decentralisation was described as ranging from delegation to devolution of authority and its extent was understood differently, hence it became easier for its implementation to meet with problems and contestation on the ground.

Although the broad policy for decentralisation was promulgated, the planning for its implementation since 2001 remained problematic. The conditions necessary for effective implementation of decentralisation, as advocated in the literature, were not adequately addressed. More specifically, the human, social and financial resources were limited or inadequate; accountability lines and functions of each division were not clearly specified; communication within the region and between the region and national office, between schools and other departments in the region, was not adequate and smooth on the whole. In addition, the region lacked capacity in terms of staff numbers, expertise in some areas as well as capacity development.

Apart from some of these important constraints and obstacles, this administrative decentralisation had some advantages. Generally, services were brought closer to the

schools and the regional office was responsible for a smaller number of schools. Response time to some administrative queries or questions from schools improved. Teacher welfare in particular improved and the distribution of teachers and learner-support materials became more efficient. However, as evidenced in the case of schools C and F in the sample, greater efficiency could also be attributable to other factors such as strategic leadership by the school heads. In addition, being based in the capital city enabled the two schools easy access to the regional office and other places where they could obtain additional service.

Decentralisation was meant to bring about efficiency in the education system. However, it is surprising that the region was not given greater administrative responsibilities. Furthermore, there were no clear lines of accountability to avoid role conflict, duplication of effort, and wastage of resources, at a time skilled managerial personnel was a scarcity. This is why decentralisation involved trade- offs and confusions as to whom was responsible for follow ups, etc.

The lack of regional administrative empowerment by the centre resulted in some inefficiency in the region, as functions were delegated without the additional authority and support necessary. Thus, if the intended aim of administrative decentralization is efficiency and better monitoring and support for schools in the region (Elmore, 1993), certain preconditions in Botswana need to be developed to avoid that the policy of decentralisation becomes lip service or a rhetoric than a genuine process leading to the more effective school support and monitoring.

It can thus be concluded that the envisaged results will only be realised if the following are to be reconsidered:

a). Clearer lines of accountability and devolved powers to the region.

b). Political will and commitment to decentralisation and its implementation process by the centre by ensuring the development of human and other resources as well as leadership and capacity necessary to make the regions effective.

c). Improved implementation strategy to ensure there is commonality of purpose and understanding to ensure smooth implementation that is not heavily ridden with conflicts and contestations

d). The region should work with the national office and other related departments to devise realistic development plans, strategies and activities to maximize scarce resource utilisation for the good of the whole schooling system and not their own departments/units. This would go a long way in improving the region's school monitoring and support systems.

e). The region must ensure that their strategic development plan and activities are informed as much by the centre's mandates than by the schools' needs and demands to improve their performance.

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APPENDICES

SCHOOL/OFFICE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Preamble

I am pursuing a Masters in Educational Policy, Planning and Management with the University of the Witwatersrand. My research is on regional educational decentralization, with specific reference to the department dealing with secondary schools and I have chosen your schools as part of my case study

I am therefore requesting permission to interview your school.

The Ministry of Education has embarked on a decentralisation process of education. To this end, the Department of Secondary Education established offices in the regions in 1991. Before we talk about your work, I will ask a few questions about your organisation and yourself.

SECTION A

1. How long have you been in this job? And what are your responsibilities?
2. What work experience in last 10 years?
3. What do you enjoy and find difficult in your present job?
4. Your professional and academic qualifications?
5. What would you say had been the performance of your school/office, what criteria do you use to assess it?
6. Has it changed in the past 5 years and what are the causes of such change?
7. What are the major strengths and weaknesses of your school or office?

SECTION B

Now, let us start the discussion on decentralisation of secondary education in Botswana.

1. Origin and purpose and form of decentralisation

(a) What do you understand the rationale for educational decentralisation of authority to the regions to be in Botswana?
(b) Do you think decentralisation is a correct move and why?
(c) Do you know what functions have and have not been decentralised to regional level?
(d) How would you characterise the powers that regions have over schools? Is it too little or too much? And why?
(e) Why do you think there are different numbers of regions for different functions as opposed to the same number of regions for all education functions? Is it a problem and why?
(f) Why do you think it is better to have regions in charge of secondary schooling support and monitoring?
(g) What opportunities do you think regional decentralisation of secondary schools has concretely offered to schools?

2. Relationship between the Regional Education Office and the national office

a). What do you understand the mandate of head office to be? If it is different from your own, mention the differences. How is its mandate carried out?

b). Are there any differences between the structure of the national and regional secondary education offices? Explain the differences and what is causing the differences? If there are differences, do you think such differences should exist?

c). Briefly explain your working relationship to each other? How you work together on similar issues (inspectorate, management support to school management teams etc..), how complementary or overlapping

d). Describe whether you have a way in which you are reporting to national office.

e). In what activities do you engage with national office? Who initiates the activities- national or yourselves?

f). Has the similar division/dept at the national office got a strategic development plan? How does it relate to the regional one? If it is not, then say where the differences are

g). What other departments does your office mostly work with and in which areas?

h). How does your division/department work with the schools? On what issues do you collaborate?

i). Does your relationship with national office affect the work you do on school monitoring and support? How does it help? In what ways can it be improved?

3. Relationship between Secondary Education Regional Office and other departments in the region as well as departments not found in the region (For heads of department in the region)

a). What do you understand to be the mandate of your regional office? Is it different from the others? How is the mandate carried out?

b). Briefly describe how you relate with other departments in the region?

c). Specifically, how do you relate with the Secondary Education regional office? On what issues or activities do you engage? Who initiates the activities- secondary or yourselves?

d). Does your department have a regional strategic development plan? How different or similar is it to overall regional one or national ones? How different or similar is it to that of Secondary Department (Regional)

e). Do you think your relationship with Secondary Office (Regional) affect the work Secondary does on school monitoring and support? How does it help? In what ways can it be improved?

4. Relationship between the schools and the Regional Education Office

(for Regional Office only)

Mission and Priority

a) What do you understand to be the mandate of your regional office?
b) What do you understand the mandate of the division to be? Is it different from that of Secondary Education Office?
c) Does your office respond to demands from the ministries? From the schools? Are there very different demands or conflicts coming from the national dept and the schools? Give examples and how do you reconcile them?
d) Have you got a strategic development plan?
e) What drives/influences the priorities of the regional office and have they changed over the past 5 years?
f) How would you measure the performance of your office/unit?

Understanding of schools

g) What is your understanding of what most secondary schools need from your office? Describe the different kinds of schools and their needs from the regions?
h) Do you work differently with these different schools? Explain the difference. Which schools do you work most with? And why?
i) Describe the most significant support functions given to schools (and its frequency)?
j) Who else does support schools and on what?
k) Does your region have partnership with other institutions to support schools?
l) Do you think schools feel they benefit from your support and how would that be measured?
m) How do you monitor schools, over what aspects of schooling and for what purpose?
n) Who else monitor schools? Does this complement or contradict your monitoring?

o) How does the relationship between regional support and monitoring of schools work in your view? Is it happening in practice?

Regional systems and structures

p) What are the structures of your office and are they separate structures for school support and school monitoring? How do they work together?
q) Who in the office has most contact with schools and for what?
r) Has the office got access to an effective information management systems which captures your schools? Elaborate
s) What communication system exists between your office and the schools?

(for Schools only)

a) Does your school have development priorities and what are they?
b) What are the main problems faced by your school for its smooth running?
c) List the three most important areas where you need most external support?
d) Explain over what issues and activities you engage most with the region?
   Is it influenced by the region's agenda? Your school's needs? Both?
e) How do you communicate with the region and what are the most important issues?
f) What is the best support given by the region?
g) How and how often is this support provided? How could it be improved and in what areas?
   What is the worst kind of support given by the region? Explain why
h) What do you think has improved in your school because of the support given by the region? Can you measure this improvement?

5. Problems and challenges

(a) List the three main problems you have been experiencing with the decentralisation process of secondary education?

(b) What has been their cause?

(c) How have these been addressed?

6. Preconditions of a Regional Office

(a) What does the regional office need most to be effective in its operations?

(b) What are the most important assets that your regional office has to work effectively with schools?

(c) What are the most important gaps/lacks that your regional office has to work effectively with schools?

(d) How important is the leadership of the region to work effectively with schools?

(e) How important are the structures, the systems, the culture and resources of the regional office? Elaborate on each

(f) What networks/partnership has the region got to improve its performance?

(g) What can the region do to improve its performance with schools?

(h) What can your unit do to improve its performance with schools?

(i) What can the national dept do to improve regional performance?

7. Way forward

How do you think the process of decentralization to the regions of secondary education and other schooling functions can be improved in order to benefit schools?