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Exploring service delivery in the Botswana basic education sector: a case of one education district

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ABSTRACT

Botswana has been faced with service delivery challenges for the past two decades and consequently the public service has been perceived as failing to deliver services to the citizens. The purpose of this study was to explore the conceptualisation, practices and experiences of Principal Education Officers (PEOs), school heads and teachers regarding service delivery in the Botswana basic education sector and was located in one education district. The study's significance was to contribute to the literature on service delivery in the basic education sector. This study presents the findings of a multiple case study employing a constructivist paradigm to explore the subjective realities of participants. In-depth qualitative data was generated from semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and review of institutional documents. The contribution of this study comes from the use of Public Service Dominant Theory (PSDT) and Expectancy theory in the basic education sector. This theoretical framework shifts the paradigm towards new ways of looking at things. Thematic analysis together with the PSDT and Expectancy Theory were used to generate the following themes from the data: context-specific conceptualisations of service delivery, experiences and practices of participants as they implement service delivery, implementation challenges and how the participants navigate them. Findings are discussed in relation to the research questions, the relevant literature, PSDT and Expectancy Theory. Conclusions are drawn for improving service delivery in the basic education sector and future directions for research. Research limitations and implications for practice are based on one education district in Botswana and may limit its generalization to other districts in the country. Recommendations are discussed with respect to implementing policy reforms aimed at improving service delivery successfully. This included better interaction between policy makers and implementers, capacity building of employees to develop skills and competencies so that they understand their roles regarding policy implementation, continuous leadership development through coaching and mentoring and accounting for performance.

Keywords: Botswana basic education sector; conceptualisations, experiences and practices; education district; implementation challenges; Public Service Dominant Theory and Expectancy Theory; service delivery.