



## Interrogating Educators Conceptualisation/Understanding of the Results Based Management System (RBM): A Case of Two Schools in Zimbabwe.

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### ARTICLE HISTORY

Published online, 2023

### ABSTRACT

This study sought to interrogate educators understanding of the Results Based Management System as a performance management tool in the schools' sector in Seke district of Zimbabwe's Mashonaland East Province. This was a qualitative case study of two schools, one primary and the other secondary. The case under study was the Results Based Management System. Participants were selected through purposive sampling on the basis of their relevance to the study given their active role in the implementation of the RBM in schools. Underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm, a case study design was adopted wherein data were generated through in-depth interviews with thirty –three educators, two focus groups of eight members each, observation of educators' attitudes and behavior towards RBM, and document analysis of educators' work plans. Thus, to enhance trustworthiness of findings, method triangulation was employed. In line with the qualitative approach employed in this study, data analysis entailed a thematic approach where emerging data were coded and grouped around recurring themes. Analysis proceeded with data generation. The results of the study revealed that educators had diverse understanding of the results-based management system. They also did not understand the Results Based Personnel Performance System as the basis of their performance assessment. This was a potential threat to the effective implementation of the RBM System. The study recommends that continuous training be done to help educators conceptualise the RBM System.

**KEYWORDS:** Results Based Management, RBM models, performance appraisal, implementation of RBM, understanding RBM.



## **Introduction**

The Zimbabwe government introduced results-based management system (RBMS) in 2005 as a performance management tool that would assist the civil service to improve service delivery. This was after increased concerns from the general public that civil servants were not performing their duties as expected. The RBM succeeded the performance appraisal system that had been introduced earlier that was found to have the following limitations among others: short term planning, emphasis on resource usage than results; lack of proper coordination; lack of performance data and unreliable and inaccurate information for decision making (Ministry of Public Service, 2009). It was this poor work climate in the civil service that led to the introduction of the RBM System as a performance management tool in the civil service in Zimbabwe. The study sought to examine how the educators in Seke district conceptualised the RBM System.

According to Radnor and Barnes (2007), the tenets of the RBM System hinge around the principles of management by objectives. Management by objectives underscores that there be consensus on organisational goals and individual goals, suggesting that in an organisation there has to be participative decision-making, performance evaluation and feedback. Meier (2003) asserts that the RBM System was adopted in many countries to address issues of good governance and quality service delivery.

RBM was successfully used by the international donor community in project planning, design, monitoring and evaluation in Europe, America, Canada, Germany, Australia and Asian countries (Perrin, 2002). Among the Asian countries that adopted the RBM System to address issues of poor governance were Korea and Malaysia (Madhekeni, 2012). Mulikita (2007) indicated that African countries also adopted the RBM to improve public sector performance. In the past decades, Uganda was the first African country to employ RBM in its public sector, followed by Kenya. Zimbabwe is among the African countries that ushered in the RBM System to improve its public sector performance in 2005 (Madhekeni, 2012). The need for the government to integrate all efforts and resources towards the efficient and effective achievement of focused results led to Zimbabwe's adoption of the RBM. The Government of Zimbabwe Document on RBM (2005) highlights a number of factors that led to the introduction of RBM in Zimbabwe. The factors included, among others, the challenge in

allocating resources equitably, the need for quality service delivery, the problem of resource constraints as well as growing challenges internationally.

**K**usek and Rist (2004) observed that though the RBM System was successfully implemented in Uganda, it had problems of measurement and evaluation of the system that were influenced by the political climate in the country. It is not only Uganda that experienced challenges in implementing the RBM System. Perrin (2002) concurs with Mayne (2007) and Bester (2012) that the implementation of RBM in any country has challenges peculiar to that country.

**P**ublic sector concerns in the face of escalating national deficits, a declining confidence in political leadership, and the need for a more transparent and accountable governance have all been factors contributing to the emergence of the Results Based Management System in the Public Sector (Meier, 2003). Gwata (2017) supports Meier's (2003) observation suggesting that if the system is proficiently implemented in the civil service, including education, there could be accountability, activity, efficiency and effectiveness amongst the civil servants. Saldanha (2002) and Dandira et al. (2020) affirm that the RBM System is becoming popular in developed countries because it clarifies customers and the mandate of the organization, specifies results and clients' performance expectations, links budget allocation to output delivery, requires performance reporting and continuous improvement, and assumes meritocracy in managing human resources.

## **Conceptual Framework**

**I**n Zimbabwe, the RBM System is taken both as performance management and performance appraisal. Before discussing the RBM System, it is important to briefly unpack performance management and performance appraisal. According to McNamara (2008), it is prudent to define performance first before defining performance management. This is because the management of performance is preceded by the act of performing.

### *Performance*

**R**ao (2004) points out that the performance of an individual in an organisation is the output delivered by an individual in relation to a given role during a particular period of time under a set of circumstances operating at that point in time. Rao (2004) further clarifies that any individual's performance is a function of three sets of factors namely ability or competence to perform various tasks

that lead to performance; motivation to carry out each of these tasks or work effort to carry out the tasks; and the organisational support the individual gets to carry out these tasks.

### *Performance appraisal*

Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert (2009) view performance appraisal as being concerned with determining how well employees are doing their jobs, communicating that information to employees, agreeing on new objectives, and establishing a plan for performance improvement. Performance appraisal, therefore, is all about employee assessment and feedback for effective and efficient service delivery and development purposes.

### *Performance management*

According to Armstrong (2010), performance management is a continuous and flexible process that involves managers and those whom they manage, acting as partners within a framework that sets out how best they can work together to achieve the required results.

## **Results Based Management (RBM)**

Generally, RBM is viewed as a contemporary philosophy and approach that focuses on the appropriate and timely achievement of relevant goals and objectives at all levels through strategic planning, systematic implementation and resource usage, performance monitoring, measurement and reporting as well as systematic utilisation of performance information to improve policy decision-making (Rasappan, 2010). That the RBM System is viewed as both performance management and appraisal in Zimbabwe, it is important to have a comparative discussion of these two concepts.

### *Performance management and performance appraisal: A comparison*

Baxall and Wright (2007) assert that the distinguishing factor between performance management and performance appraisal is that performance management is an ongoing process whereas performance appraisal is at discreet time intervals. Explicit in the view above is that performance management is not substitute for performance appraisal or vice versa, but that performance appraisal is part of performance management. Baxall and Wright (2007) further

argue that performance management is more concerned with the attainment of institutional goals and improving service delivery.

It is a holistic approach to performance whereby other management tools are also utilised to ensure that the institution improves in delivering services, and that it has a competitive edge over its competitors. Performance appraisal on the other hand, is more concerned about the assessment of the individual's past and current performance with the purpose of evaluating his/her performance and determining development plans. The observations made by Baxall and Wright (2007) are consistent with those by Rao (2004) who posits that performance management is a continuous process while appraisals are episodic. Kreitner and Kinnick (2004) affirm that performance appraisal is concerned with the evaluation of the individual's performance while performance management has to do with the total process of directing, encouraging and controlling human resources as well as productivity in the organisation.

## **The Results Based Management System in Zimbabwe**

The implementation of the RBM in Zimbabwe was approached in an integrated fashion (Ministry of Public Service, 2009). Two models, namely the Integrated Results Based Management System (IRBM) and the Conceptual Models (CM) were adopted to facilitate the implementation process. A brief outline of each of the models is given below.

### *The Integrated Results- Based Management System Model*

Thomas (2005) asserts that the Integrated Results Based-Management System (IRBM) was first developed by Arunaselam Rasappan in the late 1990s. The IRBM model is the application of the RBM System's principles, approach and methodology to all levels of development in an integrated manner and systematically addressing all factors that contribute to development results (Rasappan, 2010). The IRBM incorporates all major performance components namely development planning, budgeting, personnel management, monitoring and evaluation, and decision-making.

The basis for the Integrated Results-Based Management System was the use of the Integrated Performance Management System (IPFM), which is mandated as the strategic planning framework under the IRBM (Thomas, 2007). Rasappan (2010) affirms that the IPFM resembles a strategic plan and

requires top management within the Ministry and departments to be actively involved in strategic performance planning. Thomas (2005) emphasizes that top management within the Ministry should be in active consultation and consensus building with all accountability levels. For Thomas (2005), the cornerstone of IRBM is its stress on performance measurement and resource management as key elements in facilitating the attainment of organizational goals. The IRBM has six components that operationalise it, each of which is briefly outlined below.

### *Integrated Development Planning (IDP)*

The Ministry of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion leads this component in Zimbabwe (OPC, 2012). It is responsible for planning and assumes a coordinated top-down planning approach that outlines national, sectorial, ministerial and departmental visions, key result areas, goals, objectives, outputs, outcomes and impact. Therefore, the planning done at this level filters down to the lowest levels in the departments.

### *Results Based Budgeting (RBB)*

The Results Based Budgeting is a budgetary process that seeks to align budget allocations with anticipated results. Through the RBB process, expected results would justify resource requirements which are derived from, and linked to, the outputs required to achieve such results (Radnor & Barnes, 2007). In Zimbabwe, this subset of RBM is managed by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development.

### *The Results-Based Personnel Performance System (RBPPS)*

This component of RBM is the human performance management tool that ensures the systematic and purposive usage of the human resource to achieve the desired results with the available resources (OPC, 2012). The RBPPS is the appraisal system for all the human resources, and the appraisals and ratings are based on results rather than workload completion. The Zimbabwe Public Service Commission, leads the RBPPS.

### *The Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation System (RBM&E)*

The Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBM&E) System is charged with systematic and focused-programme planning, performance monitoring, performance evaluation, performance reporting, and policy decision-making (OPC, 2016). The (RBM&E) system assists in forging tighter linkages between the use of resources and policy implementation (Steyn & Pazvakavambwa, 2014). The RBM&E is housed in the Office of the President and Cabinet.

### *The Results-Based Information System (RBMIS)*

The RBMIS is the information and communication system that facilitates decision-making at all levels of the organization. Williamson (2003, p. 63) affirms that:

...performance information collected is used in various ways to improve output while other performance information is being used to make operational decisions. Performance information is also used to allocate funds and is the basis for incentives and penalties for public servants across the departments [sic].

The RBMIS is in the Office of the President and Cabinet.

### *Electronic Government System (e-Government)*

The E-Government System refers to the digital intercourse between the government and its workforce, agencies and departments and even its citizenry (OPC, 2016). Jeong, (2007) in Steyn and Pazvakavambwa (2014) defines e-Government as the use of information technology (IT), information communication technologies (ICTs) and other web-based telecommunication technologies to promote and improve both the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery in a particular public sector. As such, e-Government is an enabler, and facilitates the overall implantation and implementation of the RBM System. The IRBM was complemented by the Conceptual model briefly outlined below.

## **Conceptual Model**

The African Development Bank Group (2002) contends that the conceptual model of RBM requires that the organisation starts by formulating its vision then objectives that would enhance organizational development. In line with the conceptual model, the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) has encouraged all Ministries and departments to develop visions, mission statements, client charters, values, goals and objectives. These became the benchmarks for the implementation of the R1BM across the ministries and departments.

The introduction of the Results Based Management System in Zimbabwe's education sector in 2005 aimed at improving service delivery in schools. The RBM System emphasises accountability and production of results in any organization including schools. Educators are expected to produce satisfactory results at the end of the performance management cycle. Arguably, production of satisfactory results is dependent on right conceptualization or understanding of RBM by the implementers. This study examined the educators understanding of the Results Based Management System at two schools in Seke district with the objective of identifying gaps that could be improved upon to enhance the qualitative utilisation and implementation of the Results Based Management System as a performance management tool in schools. Two research questions guided the study, thus:

- How do educators understand/conceptualise the Results Based Management System?
- How is the educators' appreciation of the Results Based Personnel Performance System?

Success or failure of reform programmes is largely determined by implementers conceptualisation or understanding of the programme or policy at issue. Amid the concerns over poor service delivery in Zimbabwe's civil service, this study adds to international academic discourse by adding literature on RBM implementation that is Zimbabwe-specific. It also addresses a key factor in the successful implementation of RBM, which is how implementers conceptualise RBM, thus, informing practice and policy. Arguably, the study is of benefit to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education as it might unearth educator capacity and attitudes in the implementation of the Results Based Management System. Information gleaned from this study should assist Ministry of Primary

and Secondary Education to re-engage and strengthen the implementation of the Results Based Management System in schools.

## **Methodology**

All scientific research is conducted from a specific paradigm or philosophical lens through which to view the research material (de Vos, 2005). This study was guided by the interpretivist paradigm, which is humanistic and seeks to understand human beings by learning to “stand in their shoes,” looking through their eyes “and feeling both their pleasure and pain” (Taylor & Medina, 2010, p. 47). In order to examine the educators’ understanding of the Results Based Management System, the researchers had to be fully and deeply situated inside these people’s world. In line with the interpretivist paradigm, we employed the qualitative research approach focused on discovering and understanding the experiences, perspectives and thoughts of participants (Walliman, 2005), thus gaining an insider perspective. Understanding the Results Based Management System was experiential, which made the qualitative approach suitable for the study.

To navigate the study, a case study design was employed, which is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a programme, event, process or one or more individuals (Stake, 1995). The population for this study was 68 primary and secondary schools, with a total teacher population of 949. Through purposeful sampling, a sample of 29 teachers, two school heads, one District Schools Inspector, and one Education Inspector were selected. In studying educators’ understanding of the Results Based Management System, qualitative data were generated through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and document analysis of individual work plans of teachers. Participants’ Informed consent was sought, identities protected and rights to participation were ensured in keeping with ethical practices in research.

Analysis of data proceeded with data generation wherein thematic analysis involved grouping recurring data that patterned around themes emanating from research questions.

## Results

### *Conceptualisation of RBM: Educators' Multiple, Blurred Understanding*

When asked to explain the Results Based Management System, educators had mixed notions about the RBM System. The excerpts below reflect the varied notions about the RBM System from the participants;

*T2: It is a tool used to measure how teachers perform their duties. The school head closely monitors if I would have produced my teaching records such as schemes of work, test records and progress review records. The school head checks the records every Friday as to whether I complete the records as expected. It is the same information about class records, number of charts I prepare for the lessons, the weekly tests that I give and lessons that I conduct that I transfer onto my RBM form. So to me RBM is all about putting my work activities on a form. Then at the end of every quarter the school head counts how many of those activities will have been completed, then I get advised accordingly.*

For T2, RBM was understood to be a mechanism with which to ensure teachers kept records up to date and delineating a teacher's work activities. However, T3 provided a somewhat vague conceptualisation of RBM as seen in the excerpt below:

*It is a job requirement whose purpose is not really clear. What it is for in the teaching and learning of pupils remains an unanswered question to me as a classroom practitioner. My understanding of RBM just remains that it is a job requirement, period. And it is a form-filling ritual.*

Evidence from interviews indicated also that educators had no clue what RBM was, and thus viewed it as part of the job but vaguely understood. On the other hand, it was also viewed in relation to Examination pass rate as a measure of teacher performance. Evidently, T10 alluded to the broad functional purpose of RBM, and said, "RBM is an assessment tool that helps the government to make an evaluation of the results produced by individuals during service delivery." Similarly, and though lacking confidence, T15 retorted thus:

*I am not very clear about what RBM is but it seems to be a resource-based management tool that is used to evaluate the performance of individual teachers.*

Responses from focus group discussions also expressed variations in resource-based educators' conceptualisation of the RBM System. The variations included viewing RBM as some kind of teacher assessment. Below is an extract from one focus group member.

*RBM focuses on how many pupils will have passed the examination at the end of the year. So it is a tool that is used to measure the effectiveness of a teacher by way of the class's pass rate.*

Two school heads, Mr. Smith and Mr. Jack, (not their real names) who were participants in the study were asked what they understood RBM to be. Data revealed the instrumental role of RBM in teacher supervision and improving service delivery as seen in production of results, even though attesting to the difficulty in its implementation. The following were expressions from the two-school head:

Mr. Smith: *RBM is an instrument for the management of subordinates' performance. It [RBM] is difficult to implement.*

Mr. Jack: *The Results Based Management System is a performance management tool that is supposed to assist school heads in monitoring and supervising teachers for the sake of promoting service delivery and hence production of results in each class.*

### ***RBM Goals setting and availability of operational frameworks***

Another important aspect to an understanding of the RBM System relates to the setting of goals. In the interviews held with both Mr. Smith and Mr. Jack (heads of both schools studied) we probed the aspect of goals as to who crafts them and the availability of requisite documents that form the frame of reference in understanding RBM. Evidence indicated that goals were 'a given' passed on from head office, and that all educators did was duplication in the absence of a framework to guide implementation. Below are excerpts of the heads' responses.

Mr. Smith: *Goals are cascaded from head office in the Departmental Integrated Agreement (DIPA) so our task is to copy and paste the goals onto the RBM form. The RBM policy document and procedure manual have not been availed to me.*

Mr. Jack: *Goals are as stated in the DIPA that is cascaded from head office. The school has no policy and procedure manual to facilitate the implementation of RBM. These documents were not availed to the school.*

Also of particular interest to this study was District Education officials' understanding of RBM. During interviews, the District Schools' Inspector and the Education Inspector were also asked to explain their understanding of the RBM. The following are extracts of their responses:

D1: *The RBM System is a management approach that involves setting up goals at all levels of the organization, for example, a school. Each teacher has to have clearly defined goals that will guide his/*

her daily operations so that at the end results will be realised. The RBM emphasises that there be a dialogue between the supervisor and supervisee at all levels in the implementation of RBM. So, at the beginning of the year there have to be plans that are prepared by the supervisee and a discussion has to be done on the plans and then an agreement signed. In the course of the year, there are quarterly performance reviews that are conducted as a way of finding out if the teacher is still on course as planned. Then at the end of the year the ratings are done. The only challenge we face is that plans have to be drawn from the DIPA that is handed down to us from the Ministry. This document usually delays. We receive it mid-way in the year and this derails the implementation process of the RBM System.

E1: RBM is a performance management tool that was adopted by the Government of Zimbabwe to help improve performance in all government departments. Its thrust is in getting better results from individual operatives through setting up goals and objectives that will then influence the attainment of results. Its implementation process calls for dialogue between the supervisor and supervisee through quarterly reviews up until ratings are done at the end of the year.

The responses from teachers and school heads who were participants in this study indicated that both teachers and school heads did not fully understand the Results Based Management System. Views from teachers about the RBM System were that RBM was some kind of teacher assessment or a measure introduced by government to improve results. Others explicitly declared that they did not understand the RBM System at all. School heads who happened to be the custodians of this system at implementation (school) level were not confident enough to explain what RBM was, hence, such a response from Mr. Jack that RBM was supposed to assist school heads in monitoring and supervising teachers for the sake of promoting service delivery and hence good results in each class. Mr. Smith viewed RBM as an instrument to manage subordinates' performance but went on to say that RBM was difficult to implement. This situation of educators' lack of understanding of the RBM System could have been worsened by the absence of policy documents and procedure manuals that form the operational frame for RBM. These diverse conceptualisations of the RBM System by teachers were an indication that educators did not understand the RBM System. Arguably, lack of confident understanding, coupled with the absence of operational frameworks surely posed a threat to the implementation of RBM in the two schools studied. Mahapa, Dzimbiri and Maposa (2015) argued that it is quite difficult to implement performance management if people in the organisation do not understand it fully. This affirms what Berg (2006), Hatton and Schroeder (2007), and Brunetto and Wharton (2008) argued that varied perceptions of employees on the RBM System affect the effectiveness of RBM. The responses from the two school heads and teachers evidenced that they

lacked the requisite knowledge and skills about RBM. It can be argued that this inadequacy in knowledge and skills adversely affected their understanding, and ultimately implementation of the RBM System.

While teachers and school heads did not quite understand what RBM was, data indicated that the District Education officials were aware of what RBM was, and the process of implementing it. In as much as D1 highlighted some challenges in the implementation process, E1 did not indicate any challenges. However, despite the knowledge they had about RBM, the District officials seemed not to have staff developed both teachers and school heads, and neither did they provide schools with documents that formed the operational framework of RBM so that educators as implementers could understand what RBM was all about. As senior managers at district level, it was their obligation to ensure that personnel in the district were empowered enough to understand and operationalise the RBM – a responsibility they did not carry out. This was contrary to Mayne’s (2007) emphasis on the need for senior management at all levels to support the implementation of RBM at all levels through their actions and words.

### *Educators’ Appreciation of the Results Based Personnel Performance System*

A key component to the RBM System is the Results Based Personnel Performance System (RBPPS), which involves putting down one’s plan on the RBPPS form on which an educator’s assessment is based. Educators were asked whether they were familiar with the RBPPS Soliman (2009); Saman, (2020); Sitopu, Sijinjak and Marpaung, (2021). Evidence from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observations and document analysis of the educators’ RBPPS forms indicated that teachers and school heads in the study were not familiar with this component of RBM. The following excerpts from interviews with teachers affirm that they were not acquainted with the RBPPS:

- T4: *RBPPS has not been explained to me in terms of why I have to do it and how I am to do the planning. If you check on my form there are columns that I left blank because I do not know what to fill in those columns.*
- T14: *I am not acquainted with the RBPPS. I feel so uneasy just by looking at the volume of the form. To me it makes no sense as it is not a realistic measure of my performance.*
- T15: *I am unfamiliar with the RBPPS. To me it is just a form filling exercise to fulfil the requirements of the job. I see no benefit from it in the teaching and learning situation.*

Similar sentiments were shared in focus group discussions, where it emerged that teachers were not adequately prepared to understand and implement the RBPPS. As such, the form completion exercise was performed ritually to meet requirements. The excerpt below attests.

*Fgm: RBPPS was not properly and meaningfully introduced at this school. A series of workshops should have been conducted to prepare us for the implementation. The RBPPS forms were brought before us and we were told that this was the new appraisal form. The head took us through the form but could not link the form to the DIPA because it [DIPA] was not available. The head was asked to explain the terms on the form and he could not. He was honest to say he too did not know the terms. We were surprised when he then asked us to quickly complete the forms one morning in September because ratings were now needed at the district office. That is when he then advised us to copy plans from each other.*

School heads who participated in the study were asked to respond to the same question. The following are dialogues that ensued between one of the researchers (RJ) and the school heads:

*Mr. Smith: We implement the RBPPS here at school. This component helps me to monitor teacher performance quarterly up to the end of the year. RBPPS starts with a performance agreement that the teacher and I sign at the beginning of each year. This performance agreement is based on a work plan that the teacher will have drawn from the DIPA and it's actually a commitment to service delivery that the teacher engages in. So, at the end of each quarter, I am supposed to carry out performance reviews with each teacher providing the necessary guidance and counselling.*

RJ: Do you undertake the performance agreements at the beginning of the year?

Mr. Smith: *This is not possible since the DIPA is not cascaded on time.*

RJ: How have been the performance reviews that you have carried out so far?"

Mr. Smith: *I have not conducted any reviews as the teachers do not draw up their plans on time."*

RJ: How did you come up with ratings as these are mandatory?

Mr. Smith: *It has been difficult, yea, it really has been.*

RJ: What other comments do you have about the RBPPS?

Mr. Smith: *It has a time management component where teachers check-in as they report for work and check-out when they either go out on an errand or dismiss from work at the end of the day. This has helped teachers to be punctual and at the same time remain at school throughout the school day.*

Mr. Jack: *At school level we carry out RBPPS. This is supposed to help me, as the school head, to monitor teacher performance. Despite being in charge of the implementation process, I am not very informed about the system. We are just grappling together with the teachers to somehow have the system going on.*

**A** somewhat different view representing what would be the ideal situation is portrayed in evidence from interviews with District Officers. Excerpts below testify:

D1: *As schools, we are implementing the RBPPS successfully. Every teacher in every school has a work plan. Reviews are done quarterly and ratings are submitted at the end of the last quarter for onward submission to Head Office. The time management of RBPPS has assisted in maintaining teacher presence at work.*

E1: *Both the district personnel and schools do implement RBPPS. School heads rate teachers while the heads are rated by senior personnel in the district, that is, the District Schools Inspector and the Education Inspector. Most school heads still have problems in drawing their work plans from the DIPA. So, as they come for their first review, I start to help them interpret the DIPA so that they can then make meaningful work plans.*

**T**he responses from teachers, school heads and education personnel at the district office indicated that they were aware that they had to implement RBPPS. Teachers, school heads and personnel at the district had been trained on how to implement RBPPS, and they were indeed implementing it. It appears though that teachers and school heads had not been adequately prepared on how to draw work plans from the DIPA. Both school heads and personnel at the district appreciated the component of RBPPS that enhanced time management in schools. While one officer at the district, (E1), seemed to agree with school heads, and teachers, that there were challenges in implementing RBPPS, D1 appeared to give the impression that there were no challenges at all, and that RBPPS was being implemented successfully in schools. However, evidence from teachers as well as school heads indicates that implementing RBPPS at school level had been haunted by a plethora of handicaps, emanating from lack of understanding of the system resulting in a 'ritual' form filling exercise to meet demand by district education officials.

**T**he main issue implied in the teachers' and school heads' responses is that they lacked clear understanding of the RBM System's jargon. Bester (2012) points to the complex terminology in RBM that needed explanation. This is affirmed by the RBM Training Manual (20.10.13) which posits that RBM terms were hard to interpret and implement in the real world. The same states that there are so

many RBM terms used in different ways by as many of the institutions that use them. To illustrate this, an RBM lexicon has been prepared.

**I**n the Zimbabwean context, Guidelines to the RBM Form (2006) attempts to define 15 of the terms but the educators indicated that they still did not understand. Educators' failure to understand is explained, in part, by the unavailability of policy documents and operation manuals at school level. This could be the reason why teachers were not able to construct independent workplans resulting in them copying from each other. This suggests that the workplans prepared by the teachers had numerous gaps and the information therein could not be relied on to make substantive decisions. This, therefore, is a problem inherent in the RBPPS, which could be a barrier to the effective implementation of the RBM system. Zvavahera (2013) alleges that if a system is not understood by its implementers, it is an indication that it cannot help produce the intended results, hence weakening its application. It, thus, remains questionable as to whether implementing RBPPS in schools can help improve service delivery.

## **Conclusion**

**C**onsidering the findings above, it is evident that much more work has to be done to infuse the RBM System into the schools. Findings indicated that teachers have not yet been grounded into the operational principles of the RBM System, and thus, distance themselves from ownership of the programme hence, teachers viewed it as just another job requirement and form-completion. Observably, teachers at the two schools studied were not ready to implement the RBM System. What makes the situation much more unpleasant is that school heads who should be guiding and directing the implementation process equally profess that they are not familiar with the RBM System as well. If findings from the schools studied is anything to go by, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Seke district must devise remedial action to improve the situation lest the RBM System will remain a programme yet to be implemented.

## **Recommendations**

**B**ased on the findings, a number of recommendations are proffered in efforts to improve educators understanding and implementation of the RBM. Importantly, more training workshops must be conducted to equip educators

with the requisite knowledge and skills to effectively implement the RBM System. This should be coupled with provision of operational frameworks and manuals that guide implementation of RBM. Furthermore, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should bid for a separate budget allocation that would fund capacity building and materials to do with implementation of RBM System in schools.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This was a case study of two schools (one primary and the other secondary). The case was that of educators understanding of the Results Based Management System in the two schools. Being a case study of two schools, findings of this study may not be generalised to the whole district or province, and neither the whole country. However, in keeping with case study methodology as espoused by Stake (1995), this study can result in analytic generalisation where a reader may relate findings to their own experiences, or apply lessons learnt from the case elsewhere.

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