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The Satisfaction of Stakeholders with Teachers and Principals in Lesotho Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT The Lesotho education system is generally ineffective as reflected by high failure rates, particularly in the COSC examinations. Unavoidably, this situation is demoralising to learners, teachers and principals alike. With a sample of 1085 from each of these constituent groups, the study used simple frequency counts to assess the satisfaction of learners with their teachers and principals. For comparison purposes, schools were classified into high, average and low effective schools, and urban, peri-urban and rural schools on certain variables. The results of the study show that learners in high effective schools were generally more satisfied with their teachers, followed by those in average schools, with those in low effective schools expressing the lowest satisfaction level. To improve the situation, the study recommends that professional commitment of teachers should be enhanced, and school principals should play a more meaningful role by supervising the teachers at all relevant times and providing necessary support.

INTRODUCTION

The Lesotho education system is often criticised as ineffective as reflected by high failure rate in the national examinations, particularly the school-leaving Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) or O-Level taken in Grade 12 (ECOL 2013), high repetition and drop-out rates, weak school management, and an excessive number of secondary schools, some of which are small and educationally unviable (MOET 2012; Lekhetho 2013). Parents often complain that the education system is wasting their hard-earned money since their children continue to perform dismally in COSC. The government is concerned about the poor standard of education and about value for the money spent on education (Ministry of Education 2000; Ketso 2013). Due to the frustration caused by the continuing poor performance of most students in COSC, the government is in the process of localising the O-Level by developing a new curriculum that seeks to align learning with student aptitude, and introducing the new examinations, the Lesotho General Certificate of Secondary Education (LGCSE) in November 2014 (Mosothoane 2012; Ketso 2013). This poor performance does not go down well with all the relevant stakeholders as it affects their morale and by so doing takes away any interest in education.

Due to the dismal performance in poor countries such as Lesotho, researchers have turned their attention on "failing" or "ineffective" schools, which are mostly found in disadvantaged areas (Muijs et al. 2004). However, Muijs et al. (2004) clarify that there are many schools in the deprived areas that are effective, and that some that are perceived to be failing in the high-stakes tests, are in fact adding value given their disadvantaged intake. As Gray (2001) aptly states, "we don't really know how much more difficult it is for schools serving disadvantaged communities to improve because much of the improvement research has ignored this dimension – that it is more difficult, however, seems unquestionable." This is a complex issue because underperforming schools face multiple disadvantages and are generally sensitive to critical scrutiny.

Even though social disadvantage is negatively correlated with school achievement, some schools still manage to "buck the trend" and add value to students' learning and achievement (Muijs et al. 2004). However, Muijs et al. (2004) note that "…teachers in schools facing challenging circumstances have to work much harder and be more committed than their peers in more favourable socioeconomic circumstances". This is because schools in disadvantaged areas suffer myriad challenges such as high levels of unemployment, poverty, migration of educated young people, low educational achievement, high staff turnover and poor physical environment.

Performance in the National School Certificate Examinations

The effectiveness of a school is often linked to its learners' results in the national examinations. Over the past five years, the COSC performance has been nothing but poor, with the overall pass rate that has been oscillating between 56% and 57%, and has never reached the 60% level to date (ECOL 2013). For instance, of the 13,739 candidates who sat for the examinations in 2012, only 7,616 (55.4%) passed, representing a drop of 1.4% as compared to the pass rate of the previous year, 658 (4.8%) in first class, 2420 (17.6%) second class and 4538 (33.0%) third class (ECOL 2013). Altogether 5998 (43.7%) obtained GCE and 125 (0.9%) failed. GCE designates those candidates who have passed at least one subject or those who have passed other subjects but failed the English language. Even though third class is a pass, candidates in this category are generally inadmissible in institutions of higher learning. This leaves the total of first and second class candidates at a paltry 3078 (22.4%) who might be admissible in institutions of higher learning. However, in reality many second class candidates are not admitted in institutions of higher learning on account of failing to obtain a credit or a minimum of symbol C (60%) in English language, and very poor performance in mathematics and science.

This high failure rate demotivates learners, teachers, principals and school board members especially in low-performing schools, which are mostly situated in high-poverty areas. Hence this study probed their satisfaction levels. For purposes of comparison, schools were classified into three categories of high-, average- and low-performing schools based on their performance record over the past five years, and urban, peri-urban and rural schools on some variables.

Theoretical Framework

The words satisfaction and motivation represent two sides of the same coin and often go together. On one hand, Oxford Dictionaries (2013) defines *satisfaction* as "fulfilment of one's wishes, expectations, or needs, or the pleasure derived from this"; on the other hand, *motivation* is defined as a "desire" or drive that stimulates us to perform actions in order to achieve the desired result (Oxford Dictionaries 2013). This study uses a Herzberg's two-factor theory to frame the discussion. The theory holds that workers derive satisfaction about the work from the actual performance of the work itself, while feelings of dissatisfaction are linked to the prevailing circumstances at work (environment), and not the work itself (Herzberg 1987).

Herzberg distinguished two sets of factors responsible for the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of workers, namely the *hygiene factors* and the *motivator factors* which enhance worker motivation or sustain effort (Herzberg 1987). The hygiene factors also known as the maintenance factors or "dissatisfiers" are related to the work environment and are extrinsic to the job. They are basic environmental factors in the workplace needed to avoid unpleasantness, dissatisfaction or demotivation. In schools, these include: school policy, type of supervision and management style, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, salary and other financial benefits, status and security (Steyn and van Niekerk 2012). When these factors are favourable, they create a work environment that is worker-friendly and enhances teacher productivity.

The motivator factors or "satisfiers" relate to the actual execution of the work, and include: achievement, recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility and growth or advancement (Herzberg 1987). For instance, when teachers are recognised for the good job or achievement, they would continuously want to maintain a good reputation. This theory postulates that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not on a continuum such that when one increases the other diminishes, but they are independent phenomena, and that the opposite of "dissatisfaction" is not "satisfaction" as common sense tells us, but rather "no satisfaction" (Herzberg 1987). Hence to improve job attitudes and productivity, leaders should attend to both hygiene and motivator factors, and not to assume that an increase in satisfaction automatically leads to a decrease in dissatisfaction. For instance, increasing the salaries or benefits for teachers who are incompetent and unhappy about the work situation would not automatically improve their quality of teaching, motivation and the examination results.

Teacher Job Satisfaction

There is no common definition of teacher job satisfaction, although there is a notion that teachers are satisfied most by matters intrinsic to teaching which include: student achievement, helping students, positive relationships with students and others, self-growth and so on (Zembylas and Papanastasiou 2004). Nguni et al. (2006) add that job satisfaction stems from the perception that the job provides the values that an employee wants in the work situation. Cherniss (1995) contends that "people can make their lives better or worse but what they think, how they feel and what they do are strongly shaped by the social contexts in which they live". Thus, it is evident that the convivial work environment and social context where teachers live count a lot towards raising their satisfaction. Renchler (1992) submits that a school's culture has a powerful influence on learners' attitudes and academic achievement, and that school principals should create an environment that motivates learners to learn.

According to Shann (1998), teacher job satisfaction is a multifaceted construct that is central to teacher retention, a determinant of teacher commitment and school effectiveness. This is because job satisfaction cultivates strong loyalty to an organisation and enhances commitment because of a congenial work environment that meets the aspirations of teachers. It is argued that over and above the core business of teaching, teachers cherish a sense of community and belonging. Where this is lacking, teacher turnover and absenteeism rates tend to be high, particularly in remote secondary schools in Lesotho, which struggle to attract and retain adequately qualified mathematics and science teachers because of their scarcity and high demand in other better-paying jobs and neighbouring South Africa.

Reasons linked to teacher retention include satisfaction with the leadership and support of the school principal and mentors, and satisfaction in general (Shann 1998). Teacher job satisfaction is a determinant of teacher commitment and school principals should create conditions that would increase teacher job satisfaction so that teachers can show more dedication to their work (Shann 1998). Effective teachers cite teacher-learner relationships as a pivotal factor in creating teacher job satisfaction (Hardré et al. 2008). When asked what they liked most about teaching in their schools, most teachers responded, "the kids", and explained how crucial their productive relationships with learners were to their work (Shann 1998). When teachers are satisfied they show organisational commitment, which is discussed below.

Organisational Commitment

Porter et al. (1974:604) define organisational commitment as "an attachment to the organisation, characterised by an intention to remain in it; an identification with the values and goals of the organisation; and a willingness to exert extra effort on its behalf". Organisational commitment is cultivated by a firm belief in and identification with the purpose, goals and values of an organisation. This compatibility between the goals and values of an organisation and those of an employee motivates one to put in extra effort, because achieving organi-sational goals is, in effect, achieving one's aspirations.

Another perspective on organisational commitment is the "exchange-based definition" or "side-bet" theory (Mowday et al. in Manetje 2005). This theory postulates that employees are committed to the organisation as long as they hold their positions, regardless of how stressful conditions are (Manetje 2005). However, if they get another opportunity elsewhere, they will leave the organisation. O'Reilly (1989) defines organisational commitment as "an individual's psychological bond to the organisation including a sense of job involvement, loyalty and belief in the values of the organisation."

In their conceptualisation of organisational commitment, Meyer and Allen (1991) identify three dimensions: affective, continuance and normative commitment. *Affective* commitment creates emotional bonds that cause employees to develop a sense of responsibility (Van Dyk and Coetzee 2012). *Continuance* commitment refers to the perceptions of the benefits like investments employees could lose if they leave an organisation or if there are limited alternative employment prospects. *Normative* commitment refers to the employees' sense of indebtedness to their organisations, and a desire to stay because of the social norms (Meyer and Allen 1991). This can be enhanced through sociali-

sation of employees and benefits. In their research, Manetje and Martins (2009) conclude that employees who are affectively committed to their organisations are more likely to maintain their relationships with them than those who are normatively and continuance committed. Organisational commitment is related to organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) discussed below.

Organisational Citizenship Behavior

Teacher satisfaction is related to the concept of *organisational citizenship behaviour*, which has been studied since the late 1970s, notably by its chief pioneer Dennis Organ. According to Organ (1988), OCB "represents individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization". There are three distinct aspects to this construct. Firstly, discretionary behaviours, which are not part of the job description, but are performed by an individual employee out of choice (Organ 1988). Secondly, OCBs go beyond that which is required as part of job description. Thirdly, OCBs contribute meaningfully to the organisational effectiveness. The crux of OCB is offering help to others without the expectation of something in return, or immediate reciprocity from those who receive that aid (Nguni et al. 2006). When teachers are motivated and love their job, they readily go beyond the call of duty and assist learners outside the official teaching hours to optimise learning. According to Smith, Organ and Near (1983) these behaviours "lubricate the social machinery of the organization", and "provide the flexibility needed to work through unforeseen contingencies".

In recent years, the definition of OCB has been broadened to include not only its two basic dimensions, namely *altruism* and *generalised compliance*, but also issues of courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue (Organ 1988). *Altruism* involves helping behaviours aimed at particular persons, and *generalised compliance* relates to conscientious performance for the good of the organisation (Organ 1988). According to Nguni et al. (2008) leadership is one of the key factors that influence OCB. In an environment where leadership is inspiring and charismatic workers tend to feel the need to transcend their expected roles for the good of an organisation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study quantitative research methodology was used because of the multidimensional nature of the problem, namely probing the satisfaction levels of multiple stakeholders with their teachers and principals. Since schools in this study were spread across all the geographical areas of the Maseru district, questionnaires were used to collect data. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), quantitative research explains phenomenon by collecting numerical data and analyzing it using mathematically-based methods, particularly statistics. The quantitative method is regarded as scientific and objective in the sense that it uses the scientific principles from the design of questionnaires, the selection of the study samples, and the presentation of the results.

The qualitative method, on the other hand, provides a vivid picture of the life-world of the respondents, because respondents provide in-depth responses to open-ended questions in semi-structured or unstructured interviews. The primary distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is that the quantitative method uses statistics to present data, while the qualitative research provides narratives or thick descriptions (McMillan and Schumacher 2010).

Sample and Sampling Techniques

In this study, 25 high schools in the district of Maseru were selected by means of stratified random sampling to ensure that they were representative of the proprietors, the location (in terms of rural, urban and peri-urban areas), and the level of school effectiveness (in terms of high-, average- and low-performing schools), determined by using COSC pass lists of the past five years. Having selected the schools by stratified sampling, the subjects were selected by *random sampling,* since this guaranteed every member of the population an equal chance or probability of being selected (Welman and Kruger 1999, Creswell 2009). An additional 45 high schools were purposively selected in the districts of Leribe, Berea, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek and Qacha's Nek exclusively for the principal, deputy principal and school board member samples in order to obtain a wider perspective

on their perceptions and levels of satisfaction with their teachers and principals. The number of questionnaire copies distributed to each respondent group and those that were actually returned are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Research participants

Respondent group	*Planned*	*Returned*	*%*
Form E students	625	575	92
Teachers	250	110	44
Deputy principals	70	40	57.1
Principals	70	43	61.4
School board members	70	17	24.3
Total	1085	791	72.9

Owing to time constraints, a pre-test could not be conducted to check validity and reliability of the research instrument. However, this was partially remedied by the careful construction of questionnaires. This involved eliminating ambiguity and repetition, and passing the instruments to the language editor and three experienced researchers for editing and expert advice. After implementing their suggestions, the instruments were used to obtain data from the abovementioned respondent groups.

Principles and Ethics Guiding Research

When undertaking the empirical research, the researcher adhered to the ethical principles and standards guiding research by being open to and honest with the research subjects, and disclosing fully the purpose of the research. Moreover, where research subjects asked questions that sought clarification regarding the questionnaire questions, the researcher answered these questions to ensure that there was clarity with the requirements of the questions. Before administering the instruments, the researcher sought informed consent from the respondents, and assured them that the information they provided would be treated confidentially and anonymously (Cohen et al. 2004).

Data Analysis

Data were "cleaned" by identifying and eliminating all the errors coming from the questions that respondents misinterpreted; other associated inaccuracies were also eliminated. This was followed by data coding and data reduction, which refers to translating both closed and open-ended answers into numbers or segments in order to develop the meaning of each segment (Creswell 2009). Data were captured using Microsoft Access 2007, which facilitated the sorting, filtering and manipulation of grouped records. In turn, this facilitated the process of preparing frequency distributions. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise, organise and reduce large numbers of observations (McMillan and Schumacher 2010). Open-ended responses or textual data were coded to facilitate the identification of recurring themes and the translation of data into frequency counts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results reported here assessed the satisfaction levels of the learner, principal, deputy principal and school board member respondents with their teachers and school principals, with reference to the performance of their duties. The respondents were also asked to rate their feelings as to about their teachers and school principals whether they felt they were doing their jobs well.

Overall, Table 2 shows that a substantial number of respondents felt that their teachers were not doing their jobs well. For instance, even though the researcher had framed the question in a twofold style of Yes or No, 46% of the school principals who indicated that their teachers were doing their jobs well represent a low satisfaction level. Similarly, 38% of the learners who ticked a *No,* highlights that there was generally low satisfaction with the way teachers were doing their jobs.

Table 2: Do you think that your teachers are doing their jobs well?

Response	*Learners*		*Principals*		*Deputy principals*		*School boards*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
No response	39	-	2	-	1	-	1	-
Yes	318	59	19	46	19	50	9	53.3
No	203	38	9	22	13	34	5	33.3
Some	15	3	13	32	6	16	2	13.3
Total	575	100	43	100	39	100	17	100

Table 3: Do you find your teachers to be doing their jobs well?

Response	*High No.*	*%*	*Average No.*	*%*	*Low No.*	*%*
No response	4	-	22	-	15	-
Yes	51	82	178	63	89	47.6
No	7	11	101	35	95	50.8
Some	4	7	6	2	3	1.6
Total	66	100	307	100	202	100

A Comparison of Learners' Satisfaction with Teachers by School Category

Table 3 reflects that there were some differences between learner respondents in these three categories of schools. Learners in high effective schools expressed the highest satisfaction at 82%, followed by those in average effective schools at 63%, with those in low effective schools showing the lowest satisfaction at 47.6%. Thus, it could be concluded that, in general, learners in high effective schools were satisfied with their teachers. In contrast, a large proportion of learner respondents in average effective schools (35%) and in low effective schools (51%) expressed high dissatisfaction with their teachers. This could be connected to weak school leadership and supervision of teachers by the school principal, a wrong perception by teachers in these schools that their learners are academically less able, and possibly low cognitive abilities of learners, which added to the low teacher morale.

A Comparison of Learners' Satisfaction with Teachers by Location

As Table 4 indicates a comparison between the learner respondents in the urban, peri-urban and rural schools reveals that those in the rural schools expressed the lowest satisfaction with their teachers at 56%, while 32% in the urban schools and 25% in the peri-urban schools expressed this. In their responses to a follow-up question, learners in the rural schools reported that the incidence of teacher absenteeism and tardiness was rife in their schools, and that some teachers took several days without coming to school. They linked this to a high rate of teacher turnover in the rural schools, which they said hampered their learning. In a follow-up question that asked learner respondents why they were satisfied or unsatisfied with their teachers they gave the reasons stated below.

(a) Reasons for Satisfaction with Teachers

Some 246 (50%) learners, in one hand, indicated that they were satisfied with their teachers because *they attended classes regularly, hardly missed their lessons and taught effectively*. On the other hand, this reason was given by 26 (67%) school principals, 26 (68%) deputy principals, 12 (75%) school board members. It is evident from these results that teachers who are admired are those who are committed to their professional work, attend classes regularly, and are efficient in their teaching. The second reason provided by 143 (29%) learners was that their teachers *treated them well and encouraged them to work hard and respected their human rights*. By implication, the concept of humaneness or respect for the rights of learners in the teacher-learner interactions is fundamental to creating an enabling academic environment that allows qualitative teaching and productive learning to occur.

(b) Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Teachers

Some 137 (28%) learners, 25 (64%) school principals, 22 (58%) deputy principals, 5 (33%)

Table 4: Do you find your teachers to be doing their jobs well?

Response	*Urban No.*	*%*	*Peri-urban No.*	*%*	*Rural No.*	*%*
No response	25	-	4	-	12	-
Yes	214	65	47	65	57	42
No	103	32	25	35	75	56
Some	10	3	0	0	3	2
Total	352	100	76	100	147	100

school board members reported that they were not satisfied with their teachers, because *they did not attend classes regularly*. Some learners reported that the incidence of teacher absenteeism is more common at the end of the month when teachers have received their salaries and in winter when it is cold. As one learner reported, some teachers "*bunk lessons and give phoney excuses*." The problem of teacher absenteeism rests entirely with the school principals, in the sense that it can persist only if they fail to address it by inspiring a sense of duty in teachers. Some school principals attested to the fact that the problem of teacher absenteeism was common in their schools and reported that some teachers had a bad tendency of just being absent from work without valid reasons or permission from them. Some principals reported that there was no teamwork among their teachers, and decried that they operated individually, a situation which caused some teachers to lack enough subject content that they should teach to learners.

The second reason given by most learner respondents, 119 (24%), unsatisfied with their teachers was that "*teachers lacked professional ethics"*. They indicated that some teachers yell at the learners, whipped them badly, and failed to teach effectively in class. They reported that some teachers were inefficient, and lacked a sense of commitment, and a sense of urgency, as seen in the following statement: "*Some of our teachers do not teach well, and they take a long time teaching one topic*." They further indicated that some teachers became angry in class when learners did not understand some concepts, and failed to create a non-threatening classroom atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Some indicated that during classroom instruction, some teachers digressed a lot and talked about the social issues that were outside the scope of teaching, and spent less time on teaching. Some reported that some teachers were unapproachable, a condition which they found bizarre for a teacher.

Perceptions about the Principals' Effectiveness

As Table 5 reflects, a large proportion of respondents across all the groups indicated that their school principals were doing their jobs well. The general feeling among all the respondent groups was that their principals were performing their duties as expected. However, it should be acknowledged that making a judgement about the effectiveness of principals is problematic because their duties are wide-ranging.

(a) Reasons Associated with Principal Effectiveness

Some 191 (41%) learners, 61 (68%) teachers, 20 (54%) deputy principal and 12 (85.7%) school boards stated that their principals were doing their jobs well because *they oversaw that the rules and regulations of schools were kept, motivated learners and performed their general duties as expected*. These included playing the custodian and supportive roles of advising learners, maintaining order and discipline, and addressing the social, academic and personal problems of learners. Some stated that their principals looked after the welfare of learners and teachers, and ensured that everybody was comfortable at school, by seeing to it that healthy relations between learners and teachers were maintained. Some learner respondents reported that their principals were open and welcoming, and listened to learners' concerns and addressed them, and treated all learners equally. Some learners spoke highly of their principals because they were strict in instilling discipline.

Furthermore, some 91 (20%) learners, 32 (36%) teachers and 10 (27%) deputy principals

Table 5: Do you think the principal of your school is doing his/her job well?

Response	*Learners*		*Teachers*		*Deputies*		*Boards*		*Overall*	
	No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
No response	60	-	8	-	2	-	0	-	70	-
Yes	356	69	86	84	33	89.2	12	68.8	486	72.5
No	151	29	16	16	2	5.4	3	18.8	172	25.7
Sometimes/not sure	8	2	0	0	2	5.4	2	12.5	12	1.8
Total	575	100	110	100	39	100	17	100	740	100

stated that their *principals supervised teachers, and ensured that they attended classes regularly*. It would seem that to learners and teachers, the supervision of staff by the principal, particularly ensuring that teachers attend classes regularly and that learners learn effectively are the prime factors that define an effective principal. Another reason reported by a significant number of learners, 87 (19%), was that their *principals were firm and did not allow mischief*. In this regard, an ideal school principal was equated to being a tough disciplinarian, firm, resolute and a no-nonsense type.

Some 23 (62%) deputy principals and 4 (28.6%) school board members appreciated the fact that *principals exercised collaborative leadership* and involved everyone in the management of the schools. Thus, for deputy principals, teacher involvement in decision making or collaborative leadership is a critical factor that defines an effective principal, while school board members considered their involvement or a closer cooperation with the principal as important.

(b) Reasons Associated with Principals' Ineffectiveness

Seventy (15%) learners who felt that their principals were not doing their jobs well, reported that they *delayed taking action in sorting out issues that did not work well at school*, while some reported that their principals used a laissez-faire style of leadership and were generally averse to taking action even when things had to be brought under control like dealing with teachers who habitually avoided attending classes. One respondent reported that his principal was "*not strict like other principals*." Some reported that their principals did not look after the welfare of learners and did not care even when they were served bad food. Hence, one learner concluded that his principal "*loves money more than students*".

Forty- three (9%) learners reported that their principals were not performing their duties well because they were *too strict, "cruel", "insensitive" and hard on learners*, citing severe beating of learners by principals. Some reported that their principals sometimes sent learners back home to collect school fees, even when their parents had reported their financial problems. A few learner respondents reported that their principals were intrusive in the learners' lives and accused some female learners of having love affairs with boys and older men.

CONCLUSION

Lesotho education system is largely ineffective as indicated by high failure rate particularly at COSC level, weak school management and supervision of teachers by principals, and weak school cultures that lack strong academic orientation. As a result, the satisfaction of many teachers, learners, principals and school board members with their teachers and principals in secondary schools is at an all time low. The satisfaction is particularly low among the learners of average and low effective schools, while those in high effective schools were generally satisfied with their teachers. The study found that teacher tardiness and absenteeism were particularly rife in the rural and low-performing schools. Learners in these schools felt that academic performance could improve if their teachers could attend classes more regularly, work harder and if the principals could become more decisive in their management, especially in dealing with teacher absences. Finally, it is apparent that if teacher commitment could be increased, the standard of learning and academic performance would improve, and subsequently the motivation of teachers and satisfaction levels of learners, principals, parents and other stakeholders would increase.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has demonstrated that there is a direct relationship between teacher commitment and learner satisfaction in the sense that teachers who show high level of professional commitment are viewed favourably by learners. It is, therefore, imperative that principals should develop an open, convivial and collaborative school culture that would enhance teacher commitment and student success. There is also need to create effective subject clusters within and across schools in the same area in order to improve the competencies of teachers, which could, in turn, enhance their job satisfaction. Some of the functions of subject clusters could be to run school- and area-based workshops focused on improving the teachers' content knowledge and pedagogical practices. The Ministry of Education could come on board in this regard by pro-

viding support to teachers through in-service training workshops, especially in critical subjects such as science, mathematics and English. Since teacher motivation is tied to learner performance, schools should continually strive to improve the standard of teaching and learning through study enrichment programmes, strategic allocation of classes and subjects, and team-teaching. Finally, the Ministry of Education, school principals and school boards should collaboratively develop and institute mechanisms that can uproot teacher absenteeism and tardiness that is reported to be rampant in some schools.

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