

Identity Crisis and Exclusion in Schools: A Challenge for School Leadership in Botswana

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ABSTRACT The existence of identity crisis and exclusion is a complex school leadership challenge particularly in post-colonial nation states. One's identity is constructed through societal interactions and determined by wider social, cultural, political and economic values and perceptions. The construction of learner identity is one critical aspect that school practices must manage. Through a comparative qualitative approach in two primary schools serving socio-culturally challenged communities, this study examines the way school leadership manages issues of identity crisis and exclusion. While in the multi-national school, issues are associated mainly with unfavourable policies, in the Tswana-medium school, they tend to arise mainly from cultural practices. Study participants were members of school leadership teams, teachers, learners, and parents. They participated in individual interviews and focus group discussions. The study confirms that issues of identity crisis and exclusion in socio-culturally challenged schools are rampant, and that school leaders need to be better trained in transformational leadership to be able to deal with them as context-based challenges.