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# AN INVESTIGATION ON THE CHALLENGES FACED BY SCHOOLS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESULT BASED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN MUTASA DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study is to investigate the way how schools are executing the Result Based Management (RBM) system in Mutasa District of Zimbabwe's Manicaland Province. The population comprised all the teachers in the district. The study employed the quantitative methodology and adopted the descriptive survey design. All the data was collected through a questionnaire which largely had close-ended questions and one open-ended question. The study revealed that teachers as one of the key stakeholders in the education system were not involved during the policy formulation of RBM. The study also reveals that heads of schools lacked the experience and expertise to guide teachers on this management system. There were very inadequate resources to implement the system. The study recommends that adequate resources should be provided in order to effectively implement RBM in schools. Heads of schools should be thoroughly trained so that they may better understand the system in order for them to effectively facilitate its full implementation.

**Key words:** Assessment, implementation, Results Based Management, teachers, district

## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Mavhiki et al. (2013), the Zimbabwean public service delivery has been under scrutiny and dominated headlines with the public complaining of embezzlement of funds, moonlighting, underhand dealings and corruption which have all weakened the efficiency of the government. There was therefore a need for an effective management tool to address these challenges and according to Bester (2007). RBM was seen as a panacea to improving accountability and transparency of government operations. The Zimbabwean government introduced RBM across the entire public service in 2005 (Madhekeni, 2012) which implied a change in the way the public institutions developed their strategies, designed their programmes, monitored implementation, evaluated and reported programme execution focusing on results rather than on activities. The Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture adopted the RBM system in 2010 (Madhekeni, 2012). All schools are currently expected to implement RBM. This study therefore sought to assess how schools were implementing RBM for quality education.



## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to UNESCO (2008) it is said that if you do not know where you are going, any road will take you there. This lack of direction is what results-based management (RBM) is supposed to avoid. Results-based management (RBM) is about choosing a direction and destination first, deciding on the route and intermediary stops required to get there, checking progress against a map and making course adjustments as required in order to realize the desired objectives (UNESCO, 2008). As Mavhiki et.al (2013) posit, for many years, the international organizations community has been working to deliver services and activities and to achieve results in the most effective way. Traditionally, the emphasis was on managing inputs and activities and it has always been possible to demonstrate these results in a credible way and to the full satisfaction of taxpayers, donors and other stakeholders (Mavhiki et. al, 2013). Their concerns are straightforward and legitimate: they want to know what use their resources are being put to and what difference these resources are making to the lives of people. In this line, RBM was especially highlighted in the “2005 Paris Declaration on AID Effectiveness” as part of the efforts to work together in a participatory approach to strengthen country capacities and to promote accountability of all major stakeholders in the pursuit of results (UNESCO, 2008).

It is usually argued that complex processes such as development are about social transformation, processes that are inherently uncertain, difficult, not totally controllable and-therefore- which one cannot be held responsible for (UNESCO, 2008). Nonetheless, these difficult questions require appropriate responses from the professional community and in particular, from multilateral organizations to be able to report properly to stakeholders, and to learn from experience, identify good practices and understand what the areas for improvements are. According to UNESCO (2008) the RBM system aims at responding to these concerns by setting out clear expected results expected for programme activities, by establishing performance indicators to monitor and assess progress towards achieving the expected results and by enhancing accountability of the organization as a whole and of persons in charge. RBM helps to answer the “so what” question, recognizing that we cannot assume that successful implementation of programmes is necessarily equivalent to actual improvements in the development situation (UNESCO, 2008).

Results-based management is a participatory and team-based approach to programme planning and focuses on achieving defined and measurable results and impact. It is designed to improve programme delivery and strengthen management effectiveness, efficiency and accountability (Siddique, 2010). According to Try and Radner (2007) RBM helps moving the focus of programming, managing and decision-making from inputs and processes to the objectives to be met. At the planning stage, it ensures that there is a necessary and sufficient sum of the interventions to achieve an expected result. Kusseck and Rist (2004) assert that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative, World Trade Organisation, Transparency International and the European Union are among the wide number of agencies and initiatives to push government to adopt results oriented management systems. The success of the RBM system in these developed nations led to growing pressures for developing countries to adapt the new system as a way of improving performance and upholding accountability (Kusseck and Rist, 2004).

According to Madhekeni (2012) in Zimbabwe, the Result-Based Management System has been operational since the year 2005, and in (2010) the system was then introduced in the education sector. The RBM system focuses the public sector agencies (including the education sector) on tangible results to be delivered clarifies programme clients and their needs / problems, and promotes systematic performance analysis and benchmarking to drive programme and improvement (Hatron and Schroeder, 2007). This approach emphasizes value for money from usage of limited resources and move agencies towards results-driven performance budgets. The Result-Based Management programme comprises of a Result Based Budgeting (RBM) system, Result Based Personnel Performance System (RBPPS) and Result Based Monitoring and Evaluation System (RBMES).

Successful implementation of RBM is dependent on the organisation’s ability to create a culture focused on results (Poate, 2011). Changing the culture of an organistaion is not an easy task and also takes time. Such a change according to Poate (2011) is a long process of change must be consistent and requires continual refinement and improvements and institutions should cultivate a positive culture and climate that allows successful implementation of RBM. A major hurdle in the implementation of the Result Based Management System is the relative lack of experience and expertise among the implementers. According to Mayne (2007) successful implementation is dependent on managers and staff having the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to develop and use the RBM system in their institutions and a new management system like this requires some coherence so that all involved know the rationale for implementing the system how it operates and how they will benefit.

Another important aspect for successful implementation is availability of resources. As Mayne (2007) argues, high implementation costs of RBM have burdened many organizations and many policy reforms as a result are crippled by resource shortages. According



to Marriane and Glover (2010) empirical evidence show that the struggle to come up with performance indicators also affected implementation of RBM in nations particularly in the health and education sectors. In education for example, teaching involves such diffuse and tacit skills that it can not be subjected to the systematization implied by performance management models (Marriane and Glover, 2010). The education sector offers a wide variety of complex activities that need specialized data collecting instruments.

What further complicates the implementation of RBM in the education sector is the involvement of a large number of stakeholders, who include students, teachers, heads of school, Ministry of Education officials, Civil Service Commission, responsible authorities as well as Salary Service Bureau (Madhekeni, 2012). Coordinating this system among all these stakeholders might bring about some confusion since the introduction of the RBM system in Zimbabwe, the programme has been an area of controversy with regards to issues of applicability, benefits and drawbacks. As Madhekeni (2012) postulates, heads of schools and teachers have had different perceptions and views about this system being used in the education sector and there also different perceptions as to the intention of the system and who the beneficiaries of the system are.

Siddique (2010) writing about RBM in the public sector in Malaysia noted that the emphasis on measurable outputs has generated an obsession with performance indicators among senior managers and the growth of entire new layers of middle managers who are interfering in the daily work of executive professionals in ways that are seen by the professionals as bureaucratic, distortive and detrimental to service quality. Perverse incentive leads to manipulation of the data (artificially lowered targets in order to decrease the risk of underperformance, choice of output indicators that are easy to meet but have nothing to do with the outcomes politicians are interested in, sometimes outright fraud with the numbers) and gaming behavior (putting emphasis on activities that improve the data) (Siddique, 2010).

### **3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The introduction of Results Based Management in the education sector in Zimbabwe meant that accountability and audit of the performance of the personnel had to emphasise outputs rather than inputs. Every employee has to produce results or specific deliverables at the end of each RBM cycle in order to justify their presence and relevance in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The feasibility of this model of management in a service sector like the education sector is worth scrutinizing.

### **4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This research hopes to bring awareness to education authorities and policy planners the various anxieties experienced by teachers as they attempt to grapple with the expectations of RBM so that the designers of the system can address the highlighted challenges and improve on the strengths of the system as a management instrument in the education sector.

### **5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Are teachers aware of what Results Based Management entails?
2. What are teachers' attitudes towards RBM?
3. Do heads of schools provide adequate support for successful implementation of RBM?
4. How reliable as an instrument of measuring teachers' performance is RBM?
5. What are the challenges experienced by teachers during implementation of RBM?

### **6. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The researchers delimited the study to the assessment of the implementation of Results Based Management system by teachers in Mutasa District in Western Zimbabwe using a sample of 120 teachers made up of 70 females and 50 males. Views from other stakeholders, notably like heads, education inspectors, school development committee / association members and the civil service commission were outside the purview of this study.



## 7. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In view of the small size of the sample the findings of this study therefore, will have limited generalisability. It has also to be pointed out that perceptions about an issue are essentially subjective and cannot be measured accurately. Moreover, since feelings may vary in intensity, what may be interpreted differently by another. In other words, attitudes have no universally recognized and accepted scales of measurement and measures used in this study cannot be considered to be very accurate.

## 8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed the quantitative methodology. The quantitative methodology was chosen for its ability to enable this study's findings to be generalized to other districts in Zimbabwe (Blumberg, 2008). The study settled for the survey research design. The population comprised all the 2000 teachers from the 100 schools in Mutasa District. The simple random sampling was used to come up with a sample of 30 schools and 4 teachers from each school to arrive at a total sample of 120 respondents. The simple random sampling technique was used because as Kumar (2008) argues, it permits every teacher to have an equal chance of participatory in the study. The researchers used a questionnaire which largely had close-ended questions and two open-ended questions. The questionnaire was chosen as Lawrence (2005) posits, because it has the ability to reach many respondents who live at widely dispersed addresses and preserves anonymity which encourages greater honesty. The researchers personally distributed the questionnaires to the schools where the respondents worked after getting permission from the Ministry of Education. Respondents participated voluntarily and they were assured of anonymity. The questionnaires were collected after two weeks by the researchers to compute the data for presentations.

## 9. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study set out to assess the implementation of the Results Based Management in Mutasa District in Zimbabwe. This section is presented in two parts; namely, presentation and discussion of data thereof.

### Presentation of data

**Table 1: Composition of sample by sex (N=120).**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	50	42
Female	70	58
<b>Totals</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 above reveals that the sample for this study had more females than males (females: 58%; males: 42% respectively). The datum was considered statistically significant to the extent that it confirmed that most schools in Zimbabwean urban and peri-urban districts had more female teachers than male ones (Makoni, 2011).

**Table 2: Composition of respondents by teaching experience (N=120).**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 10	38	32
11 – 20	58	48
21 – 30	14	12
31 and above	10	8
<b>Totals</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of respondents (68%) have been with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education for more than ten years.



**Figure 1: Responses to the question: “Do you think it is correct for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to use RBM for assessing the performance of teachers? (N=120).**

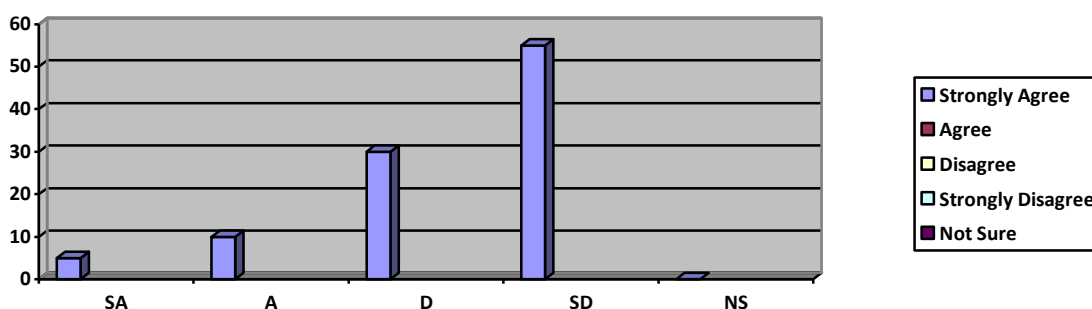


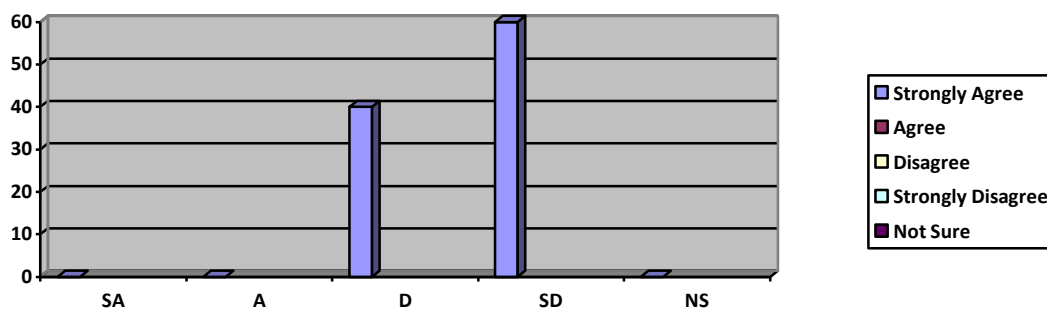
Figure 1 above shows that 85% of the respondents indicated that they were against the use of Results Based Management as an assessment instrument of teachers’ performance.

**Table 3: Responses to the question: “What do you think is the purpose of RBM?” (N=120).**

Response Category	Frequency	Percentage
To promote outcomes / results oriented culture in schools	42	35
To experiment with a new management system as usual by the employer	14	12
To keep teachers busy with paper work	64	53
<b>Totals</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100</b>

A significant number of respondents (53%) thought that the purpose of RBM was to keep teachers busy with paper work; those who indicated that RBM was meant to promote outcomes results based culture were 35% and 12% thought that RBM was just another experiment that their employer is in the habit of introducing and then abandoning.

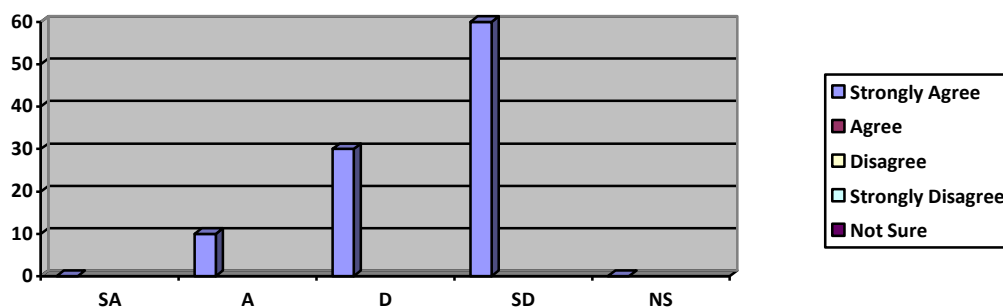
**Figure 2: Responses to the question: “Does the head of your school provide all the support you need to implement RBM?” (N=120).**



All the respondents (100%) indicated that they did not get all the necessary support from their heads that they needed to implement RBM.



**Figure 3: Responses to the question: “RBM system is a reliable system to accurately measure your performance as a teacher?” (N=120).**



The bulk of the respondents (90%) indicated that RBM could not accurately measure their performance. Only 10% thought that it could measure their performance accurately.

The questionnaire had one open-ended question which bolstered responses from the close-ended questions. The question wanted to find out from the respondents the challenges they came across during the implementation of RBM. A number of challenges were highlighted and the most common ones are listed below in order of their popularity.

- To much paper work added on their work – 97%.
- RBM cannot measure production of services – 93%.
- Schools have no resources for RBM – 90%.
- No training for teachers on RBM – 86%.
- Teachers not involved during policy formulation – 81%.
- Heads too busy to support teachers on RBM – 76%.

## 10. DISCUSSION

Most of the teachers in the study have been with the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education for more than ten years and yet RBM was introduced in 2010 just five years ago. This information means that this is a relatively new way of doing things for most teachers. According to Madhekeni (2012) RBM focuses on tangible results to be delivered and promotes systematic performance analysis and benchmarking to drive programme and improvement and yet all these processes are alien to the practices of Zimbabwean teachers.

It therefore comes as no surprise that the majority of teachers in this study were against RBM. This finding tallies with observations by Madhekeni (2012) who argues that since the introduction of RBM system in Zimbabwe, the programme has been an area of controversy with regards to issues of applicability, benefits and drawbacks. Heads of schools and teachers have had different perceptions and views about this system being used in the education sector and there are also different perceptions about the intentions of the system.

Teachers also believed that the purpose of RBM was generally to keep them busy with paper work rather than to improve results as they indicated that the system involved a lot of writing at the expense of teaching which is the teachers core business. One of the



challenges highlighted by teachers in the open-ended question about RBM has to do with lack of involvement by teachers during the formulation of the RBM policy. If teachers were engaged earlier before implementation this would help to explain the main objectives of the system. As Siddique (2010) asserts, RBM is a participatory and team-based approach to programme planning and focuses on achieving defined and measurable results and impact. This implies that all those concerned with its implementation should work together throughout the process rather than for other key stakeholders to be introduced at the finishing line, this is bound to meet resistance and negative perceptions of the system.

Most heads of schools in this study did not provide the fundamental implementation support to teachers on RBM. Heads were busy engaged in other chores associated with their offices at the total exclusion of issues to do with RBM. They only reminded teachers about filling the RBM forms at the end of the cycle. This contradicts observations by Poate (2011) who postulates that successful implementation of RBM is dependent on the organisation's ability to create a culture focused on results and that changing culture is not an easy task and also takes time. A major hurdle in the implementation of RBM according to Mayne (2012) is the relative lack of experience and expertise among the implementers. Mayne (2012) further explains that successful implementation of RBM is dependent on managers and staff having the necessary knowledge skills and abilities to develop and use the RBM system in their institutions and a new management system like this requires some coherence so that all involved know the rationale for implementing the system, how it operates and how they will benefit.

The Results Based Management is viewed by teachers as an unreliable system for accurately measuring the productivity of teachers. Teachers argued that it could not be used to measure the performance of workers in a service sector like teachers where diffuse and tacit skills could not be simply accorded arbitrary judgements as is the case with production of goods in industry. This is corroborated by findings by Siddique (2010) who states that the emphasis on measurable outputs has generated an obsession with performance indicators among senior managers and the growth of middle managers who are interfering in the daily work of executive professionals in ways that are seen by professionals as bureaucratic, distortive and detrimental to service quality.

Schools did not have adequate resources to effectively implement RBM. Resources play a critical role in any policy implementation more so for RBM which aims to improve the quality of service that teachers render to their clients. Where resources are not available policy implementers tend to revert to their old ways and abandon the newly introduced system. As Mayne (2007) aptly put it, high implementation costs of RBM have burdened many organizations and policy reforms as a result are crippled by resource shortages.

## 11. CONCLUSION

Given the background of the above findings, it becomes evident that there is a lot of work that needs to be done to ingrain RBM in the operational culture of teachers in Umguza District. The teachers have not yet fully comprehended the aims and objectives of the system and they still view it as something for the authorities and not theirs. They are against RBM. What further worsens the situation is that heads of schools have not shown the zeal and zest needed to implement the system as they are alienated from the implementation process of the RBM system only emerging to demand the forms at the end of the cycle. RBM is difficult to use in a service sector like the education system where skills are tacit and difficult to subject to systematization implied by RBM. The education sector offers a very wide variety of complex activities that need specialized data collecting instruments. Schools do not have adequate resources to implement RBM. These include financial resources to procure learning materials all subject areas including equipment for practical subjects, sports and also apparatus for science oriented subjects. This therefore means that unless the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education improves the situation, RBM will be a theory awaiting implementation.

## 12. RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings of this study, the researchers would like to make some recommendations:

- The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in conjunction with the Civil Service Commission (which is the employer of all civil servants) ought to increase workshops not just about implementation and monitoring of RBM; but also to explain in full the major merits of the system so as to attempt to change the negative attitudes of attitudes towards the system.
- Heads of schools should be staff developed on the proper ways of using RBM for supervision purposes in their schools so that they can also guide teachers adequately as they implement RBM.



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- The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's budget allocation by the Ministry of Finance should have a separate vote for RBM which should include incentives for motivating teachers to implement RBM.
- More research should be conducted to come up with a more user-friendly model version of RBM for a service sector like education.

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