



International Journal of Philosophical Research (DOI:10.28933/IJOPR)



Shared Leadership Practices: Do Secondary School Heads in Botswana Matter?

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ABSTRACT

This is an article critique entitled “Shared Leadership Practices: Do Secondary School Heads in Botswana Matter?” by Luke Moloko Mphale as cited in the heading above. The author aims to investigate the perceptions of secondary school heads in Botswana on shared leadership. He raised three research questions for address his purpose. The author of this article raised one of the contemporary issues of leadership “shared leadership” which makes the article timely and important. In line with addressing his purpose the author used 62 school heads used structured questionnaires to collect data from the samples after he has been testing the reliability of the instrument. He found out that leadership is no longer a one man’s show but, a professional work of everyone in the school based on this recommended that for schools to be successful, they should practice a shared leadership model. The reviewer of this article wants to remind that raising the issue as an agenda of discussion and research is most important regardless of some pitfalls to be considered such as issue of generalizability, trustworthiness of findings and instrumentation.

Keywords: Leadership, Shared leadership, Professional, Development

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How to cite this article:

Dibekulu Alem Asegu. Shared Leadership Practices: Do Secondary School Heads in Botswana Matter?. International Journal of Philosophical Research, 2019; 1:5.



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Website: <https://escipub.com/>

Critique Focused Description

The article, **“Shared Leadership Practices: Do Secondary School Heads in Botswana Matter?”** by Luke Moloko Mphale seeks to address the practices of shared leadership as perceived by secondary school heads in Botswana. The research problem being addressed is whether secondary school heads perceived the benefit of shared leadership positively and act as per the expected characteristics or not. While the article produced significant results showing that the perception of school heads towards shared leadership and their practice could be identified with limitations of, replicability sample, and generalizations.

Mphale (2015) used a sample of 62 school heads to investigate their perceptions towards shared leadership. The researcher collected demographic information of the respondents but not analyzed well and also collected data on perception of heads and benefits of shared leadership. He used SPSS version 22 to calculate the reliability of the questionnaire (but wrongly reported as 0.7 and 0.81 in the abstract and method sections respectively). Percentage was used to calculate the responses of sampled heads in the main questionnaire. Mphale found that school heads value shared leadership and also as they have enough awareness except few.

The researcher raised an important issue as shared leadership is one of the contemporary leadership which is needed to be practiced everywhere in organizations including schools despite the fact that the researcher didn't convince why he has been chosen shared leadership from other leadership styles. In the abstract section, the purpose of the study is expressed as it was to investigate Botswana secondary school heads' perceptions on shared leadership practices which is not clearly stated in the title. In addition to this, the study design is described as survey but in the method section the researcher explained as quantitative approach and adopted a survey research

design which lacks consistency. The problem here is the researcher didn't use only quantitative but also qualitative that he failed to describe as he has used mixed approach (p 216). In the same section, the researcher tried to explain as he has designed three research questions. Moreover, he wrote about the data collection instrument, its preparation and revision but the reported reliability values are not the same as mentioned above. This critically affects the whole research and it makes difficult to believe the findings.

In the introduction section, the researcher tried to inform about shared leadership. He described as shared leadership is important in Botswana and also the country gave due attention in its national policy for its practicality in schools. But the researcher didn't explain to what extent shared leadership is important over the other leadership styles. Because, nowadays it is believed that leadership should be situational rather than being fixed on one type of leadership. For example, Hersey and Blanchard (1972), proposed that managers possess a range of styles and can vary their style in response to the environmental variables they encounter. In addition to this, the researcher didn't explain the other contemporary leadership approaches and why he has chosen shared leadership over the other and to practice it all over the country.

The researcher listed poor governance, low quality management, intolerance of shared leadership among the school administrators and lack of parental involvement were problems (Republic of Botswana, 2008). But he didn't justify the problem he selected for his purpose and also the gap he wanted to fill. In relation to the significance of the study, the researcher explained as shared school leadership has become an alternative to the top-down, command and control leadership and thus the study envisages to assist the policy makers, school heads, teachers and other stakeholders in the field of education to realize the importance of shared leadership. But here the

researcher should compare shared leadership against other contemporary leadership styles like transformational, ethical and collegial leadership. The purpose of the study is stated as to investigate Botswana secondary school heads' perception on shared leadership. The researcher seems to use purpose instead of objective because he didn't state the objective of his study.

The researcher wanted to answer three leading questions however he didn't come up with proper and clear answers for each of them. Example, he wanted to answer the question, How do school heads respond to shared leadership practices? But no instrument is used to get data about the practice throughout his study. The same is true for the third stated question. That is, how can the problem of lack of shared leadership (if any) be alleviated in schools? In addition to this, the literatures reviewed by the researcher explain about shared leadership. It is good to discuss the main idea in detail but adding some more important related points about other leadership styles might make it more complete. Thus, the literature is shallow and didn't address the necessary issues.

Regarding the method used the researcher explained as he has employed quantitative approach and adopted a survey research design which is not clear. The samples taken from 258 heads were 62 which means 24.03%. Sampling should be representative, accessible and low cost. But taking 62 samples from 258 is not representative. In addition to this, the researcher also distributed 62 questionnaires and he reported as all of them were returned back which is unbelievable. Moreover, the researcher described as he has distributed 56 in the nearby schools and the rest 6 to the remotest. This shows as the data collected were biased and non-representative. Thus it is impossible to take the advantage of the study and stated recommendations. The researcher also reported as he has used SPSS software but in most of his analysis it seems no need of

using this software as far as he used simple arithmetic like percentage.

The reported results obtained in the study explained as school heads are aware of shared leadership model and majority always practice it. But the recommendations stated are not in line with the results obtained. Example, he recommended as school heads should lead in practicing shared leadership activities without enough justification. Even other recommendations are not based on the data collected. The recommendation stated as parents' involvement in the education of their children should be a priority has no any data reference in the study; it seems the researchers own belief. Thus, recommendations should be implementable; data based and clear to address them.

To sum up, the title of the study was researchable and timely however the researcher fails to address important points. For example, the sampling error, data collection instruments problems as well as the collection procedure should be improved unless it is not possible to believe the findings and the reported ideas. Moreover, errors are also observed in language usage like "data was" (p. 216), the analysis was numerical (p.217). Thus, this should be revised to make the study acceptable. In general the effort made by the researcher is good as he tried to bring the issue of contemporary leadership to the front however it is not possible to make sound conclusions and to learn from the study. Further studies shall be conducted on the benefits of other contemporary leadership styles and their practice.

References

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