

## Relevance of performance indicators to schools' academic improvement

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### **Abstract**

*The performance of grade ten learners in the Zambezi Region of Namibia has been seen to be below standard. This came to light when performance indicators (PIs) were used as yardstick by which internal and external school evaluators assessed whole school performance in Namibia. This led to focus this case study on grade ten school performance of the mentioned region. To mitigate this, an exploration of teachers' perception(s) of the relevance of performance indicators were sought to understand the academic improvement and development in two selected secondary schools. The case study dealt with two purposefully selected schools where one principal, two heads of departments and five teachers were selected from each participating school. Interviews and reflections were used to generate data. Analysis of data generated was framed by interpretive paradigm since the study was exploratory. The study found that teachers acknowledged the importance of PIs in improving teaching and learning and believed that they can help in improving the provision of quality education if fully implemented. Further, school principals experienced many challenges in the implementation of these PIs. Basing from the facts obtained in the study that PIs are vital for improving some parameters in schooling, we therefore recommend that some continuous professional development must be put in place to sensitize the implementers.*

**Keywords:** *relevance, performance indicators, school improvement, development, perceptions*

### **Introduction**

The increase in the number of schools in Zambezi region shows government's commitment towards the realisation of its goal of education access and provision for all children (Adkisson, 1995). This idea of access and provision of schooling is referred to in the Education Management Information System report (2005). However, this goal of access and provision, even though almost realised, it has emerged that poor academic performance in some schools still persist and this is prevalent in all grades in Namibia (Education Management Information System, 2005). For instance, in Namibia, in the Katima Mulilo circuit, in which two secondary schools were selected purposefully for this study, some discrepancies in performance were observed (Wikan, & Mostert, 2011). Despite this, the upgrading of schools to ensure quality and access to education has been ongoing for the past thirty years (Shikalepo, 2020).

### **Background**

Although black Namibians were deprived of achieving better education by the colonial masters as Leu (1979) argues, a different pattern began to emerge gradually soon after Namibia's independence in the provision of

education for the different ethnic groupings (Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, 1993) soon after independence. Namibians began to receive some form of quality education within their different homelands when the new dispensation ejected the old curriculum and brought in a new one to suit Namibians' needs (Cohen, 1994). The old curriculum was only suitable for preparing Namibians for their future role as labourers (Leu, 1979; Ministry of Basic Education and Culture, 1993).

Namibia's new government brought some changes to ensure that education is equal and accessible to all. These changes were an effort geared towards improving the learning environment for the historically disadvantaged population. This new dispensation brought construction of new infrastructure and strengthening of the staff, supply of library facilities, textbooks and administrative and supervisory services (Meyer, 1998). These play an important role in ensuring quality and access to schooling for all (Angula, 1990).

Despite the effort to level the education terrain through addressing access and quality, performance of learners became compromised. To mitigate against this, implementation of

performance indicators (PIs) was recommended. This signalled a period of fundamental change to school principals. As stakeholders in education, principals, heads of department and teachers in this new 'era of change' required the ability to envision an improved school and the spark to energise and lead staff to bring it about. The PIs were introduced to address the fragmented standards that existed in schools in the different regions of Namibia. However, these standards were not specifically defined (Ministry of Education, 2005). They aimed to enhance common standards across the country and to improve the quality of education at a national level (Ministry of Education, 2005).

### **Statement of the problem**

When new infrastructures emerge in a schooling system, the expectation is it should not compromise the efficiency and performance of the activities of teaching and learning. Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall (2009) acknowledge that new changes aimed at addressing quality, equity, access and democracy must not compromise teaching and learning activities. When new changes come into effect they come with some suggestions on how performance can be regulated (Darling-Hammond, Fook, Cook-Harvey, Barron, & Osher, 2020). This might explain why in Namibia, the new dispensation introduced performance indicators to be used as a barometer to check on progress and development being done. Likewise, expansion of secondary schools needs effective leadership. Leaders needed are those who are professional and experienced. Professional leaders are needed in order to lead schools to cope with development and improvement for the progress of teachers' job performance. This brings about good learning and teaching outcomes (Heffernan, 2020)

In practice school leaders interpret and enact their role in various ways depending on their individual personalities, the culture of their schools and the environment of which PIs can characterize such environments (James, Barbara, & Leiyu, 2003). Performance indicators according to Pinkus (2008) are that measurement that helps one appreciate how an institution is performing. This permits one to find out whether s/he is moving in the right direction with his/her strategy. However, lack of understanding of PIs and how they should

be implemented seems to be a challenge and yet they play a role in improving performance. Nevertheless, the purposefully selected two schools performed better; therefore, this study focused on how these two purposefully selected schools achieved it; and explored perspectives of PIs to see their importance in order to make some informed recommendations so that other stakeholders should use them properly and value them for the sake of improving school performance.

### **Literature review**

#### ***An overview of the performance indicators***

The dictum of the National Standards and Performance Indicators (NSPIs) call for all schools to take quality assurance seriously, with particular emphasis on School self-evaluation (SSE), a process that encourages self-management (Ministry of Education, 2007b). The NSPIs are thus used by internal and external school evaluators to assess whole school performance. In order to familiarise staff members with the NSPIs, inspectors of education (IoEs) and advisory teachers (ATs) from Zambezi Region received training in 2005 before the NSPIs were to be implemented in schools in 2006 (Ministry of Education, 2005). Thereafter, the cascade model of training was adopted for the remaining IoEs, ATs and principals. The policy laid out by the NSPIs identifies seven key areas and 111 themes (aspects) of school life, and provides evaluators with 30 PIs (Ministry of Education, 2005). Taken together, the 111 themes are regarded as forming a holistic representation, and so the assumption is that everything traditionally associated with the concept of school life is covered by the NSPIs (Johannes, 2009). Therefore, the conclusion drawn was that if schools implement the prescriptions contained in the NSPIs, school performance is likely to improve, and Namibia will be able to provide quality education for her citizens, the ultimate goal of the Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education, 2005).

There are key areas for each indicator and these are also subdivided into a number of themes/aspects of school (Ministry of Education, 2005a:2). The NSPI policy requires both internal and external evaluators to use a four-point scale when assessing themes. As the policy explains, "in each PIs illustrations are given in words of excellent performance (Level 4) in that part of the work of a school,

and of a performance that shows more weaknesses than strengths” (Ministry of Education, 2005). According to the NSPIs, all schools in Namibia are required to conduct an annual self-evaluation, starting on the 15th October, and reaching completion before the middle of November (Ministry of Education, 2007b). The framework of this evaluation is given by a National Standards tool called School Self-Evaluation. The SSE was designed as an instrument to be used by all schools in Namibia, as the Ministry of Education (2007) states:

All schools in Namibia need to aim to become a level 4 school according to the standards set in the National Standards and Performance Indicators (NSPI). The SSE will assist management and the staff in evaluating the school’s overall performance improvement over a period of one year.

According to the NSPI policy, teachers are also required to conduct self-evaluations by using an instrument of similar design to the SSEs, known as Teacher Self-Evaluation, or TSE (Ministry of Education, 2007b). The TSE reveals what is expected of a teacher in Namibia and teachers are expected to conduct self-evaluations in an honest manner. Other tools available to schools include the School Development Plan (SDP), the Plan of Action

for Academic Improvement (PAAI), and Classroom Observation Instrument (COI) for promotional subjects, junior primary education and non-promotional subjects (Ministry of Education, 2007b).

Another apparatus worth mentioning at this point is that Namibian schools are required by the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) to set annual performance targets before the end of January each year (Ministry of Education, 2007a). All of these tools, designed to aid in improving the overall quality of learning in Namibian schools, are part of the implementation of the NSPIs. These tools will be referred to frequently during the course of this study. The policy structure of the PIs is comprehensive and complex, and it makes principals chiefly responsible for the success of its implementation. Therefore, the success of the PIs’ policy in schools, in our view, depends on whether Namibian principals had developed the requisite leadership and management skills while at university or in a continuous professional development program.

The following table shows the 7 key areas and 30 PIs. The content covered by the policy of the PIs is comprehensive, so familiarity with its themes is essential for effective implementation and for the way its implementation is perceived and experienced by school principals in Namibia.

**Table 1: The 7 key areas and 30 PIs**

<b>7 Key areas of the PIs</b>	<b>30 Performance Indicators (PIs)</b>
Provision of resources for the school and hostel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provision of human resources</li> <li>● Provision of physical resources</li> <li>● Provision of finance</li> <li>● Provision of resources for hostel</li> </ul>
Curriculum and attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Implementation of the curriculum</li> <li>● extra-curricular activities</li> <li>● Intellectual attainment</li> <li>● Personal and social development</li> </ul>
Teaching and learning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Quality of the teaching process</li> <li>● Suitability to learners’ needs</li> <li>● Quality of the learning process</li> <li>● Assessment and evaluation</li> </ul>
The school as a social unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Morale of the school</li> <li>● Effective use of time</li> <li>● Values and norms</li> <li>● Pastoral care and guidance</li> <li>● Curricular and vocational guidance</li> <li>● School discipline</li> </ul>
Management and leadership of the school and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Policy, planning and implementation</li> </ul>

hostel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Curriculum and attainment</li> <li>● Administration</li> <li>● Leadership</li> <li>● Management of staff</li> <li>● Management of physical resources</li> <li>● Management of finance</li> </ul>
Links with parents and community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Links with parents</li> <li>● Links with the community</li> </ul>
Links with other schools and the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provision of resources for work with cluster</li> <li>● Effectiveness of cluster activities</li> <li>● Effectiveness of links with the region</li> </ul>

**Source:** (Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 8-10)

These themes are anchored on a particular schooling concepts related to PIs. The relationship of the schooling concepts with the idea of PIs are discussed in the section which follows.

***Theoretical conceptualisation of PIs and school improvement***

This section explains how different researchers conceptualise the concepts *performance indicators* and *school improvement*. The conceptualisation of a concept refers to how scholars understand and interpret a particular concept within a particular context hence the different conceptualisations by various writers in different places and under different circumstances.

***Performance indicators***

Although authors agree on some points about PIs, there are some points when they do not reach agreement. Hulpia and Valcke (2004) as well as Bertzeletou and Stavrou (1997) observe that performance indicators describe and analyse key aspects of schooling. PIs help to evaluate and monitor the quality of education. Furthermore, indicators provide at-a-glance results of current conditions and may augur future prospects. Cloete and Bunting (2004) define an indicator as a measure, usually in a qualitative form, of an aspect of an activity of a higher education institution or at any level. The measure may be ordinal or cardinal, absolute or comparative (Hulpia & Valcke, 2004). It thus includes the mechanical applications of formulae and can inform or can be derived from such informal subjective procedures as peer evaluations or reputational rankings. Indicators have a strong purpose in Namibian schools and the education system at large, as Akhavan (2004) states:

Indicators are a place to stand on, a solid foundation on which to build a successful curriculum and literacy program that teaches children in ways that ensure their academic success. Effective indicators are also goals for students to meet in order to be proficient in reading, writing and maths (p. 46).

Jeffrey (2002) shares similar sentiments when he contends that performance indicators act mainly as a form of accountability, particularly related to a systems approach that incorporates an input-output model. He feels that the performance management discourse prioritises the pursuit of excellence and accountability by focusing on the satisfaction to be gained from the achievement of goals and improvements in performance. Indicators for school improvement define the elements of whole school improvement which schools can put into effect at the elementary, middle and high school levels in order to produce the desired learning results. In the modern climate of high-stakes testing and educational accountability, the success of a school is measured by the school's achievement of set performance indicators. A performance indicator has to point to the intended or planned consequences of the functioning of a system (Cloete & Bunting, 2004). Schools are not just following goals from the central government, but regionally and locally, schools are allowed to set their own standards to measure themselves on. Though we are talking about national indicators, schools in the Zambezi region have set themselves performance indicators for things such as the pass rate, the level of discipline, achievements in extramural activities and others. It is not quite possible or fair to have one-size-fits-all PIs, as the size and developmental level of the region, as well as

how well resourced schools in the urban areas are compared to those in townships, should be taken into consideration. The idea of PI is originally a business concept, but has been infused into education because of the restructuring and international pressures endured over the years from capitalists and compliant governments (Hill, 2003).

School improvement on which PIs are anchored on, according to Hulpia and Valcke (2004) is a dynamic, planned and rational change process with structural and cultural aspects. It is a process that is planned along three stages, namely initiation, implementation and institutionalisation. Archer, Scherman, Coe, and Howie (2010) feel that monitoring school and learner achievement is an essential part of establishing practice for school improvement. Performance Indicators are very important and are necessary for any organisation or school to identify its Key Performance Indicators (KPI). A school for example, might consider the failure rate of its learners, this is when stakeholders need to revisit the PIs and see what is lacking. Identification of a performance indicator in anomaly might help the school understand its position in the performance discrepancy. Research on the role of vision in academic school performance that was conducted in the UK indicates that the individual marks of a nation-wide standard examination in grade 4 were used as the outcomes measurement for academic school performance (Diran, Zhang, KeGoh, Young, Lee, & Saw, 2010). Nick and Kevin (2009) attest that national drive towards excellence and equity is directly related to standards and performance. Such standards are determined through the assessments that furnish the ground for comparative evaluations of performance and potential.

### **Research questions**

The following were the guiding questions in relation to the main purpose of this study.

#### ***Main research question:***

The main research question in this study was:

1. What are teachers' perception(s) of the relevance of performance indicators for schools' academic improvement and development in two secondary schools in the Zambezi region of Namibia?

#### ***Sub-research questions:***

To support the main question, the following sub-questions were also posed:

1. Are the indicators realistic according to the teachers' perceptions?
2. Do the indicators really motivate teachers to improve the academic performance of their learners?

#### **Significance of the study**

The main purpose of this study was to find out teachers' perception(s) of the relevance of performance indicators (PIs) for schools' academic improvement in two schools in the Zambezi region. The understandings of PIs have the potential to motivate teachers to work hard. Also, the significance of this study might be to find out if those involved in implementing performance indicators understand how to go about doing it. In the case that they do not understand, some professional development programs can be recommended.

#### **Research design and methodology**

The approach to this paper was qualitative in nature. The choice of this research approach was to obtain data that would answer the research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). This was conducted by means of a multiple case study method. The case study method provides an opportunity to develop an in-depth understanding about the PIs and their potential to improve the academic performance of learners as well as motivating teachers to work hard.

For proximity and financial reasons, this study was carried out in **two** secondary schools only. This was so, because they were few and would thus give an accurate and correct description of the situation occurring in the two schools in the Zambezi educational region.

#### ***Population***

A population is defined as a group of individuals or items that share similar features from which data can be generated and analysed (Gouverneur, 2015). The study population was used to come up with a sample. The schools and participants were purposefully selected.

#### ***Sample and sampling procedures***

Five teachers, one principal and two Heads of Departments (HODs) per each sample school

totalling to sixteen participants were interviewed. These were chosen on the basis that they had been at the school for a period of more than five years and were more experienced. To ensure that participants were experienced, the researchers went into the records of these two schools. To align the study to the objective, performance of learners was checked in those classes in which better performance was witnessed. Teachers' experiences were aligned to these performances and this explains why these teachers were selected.

Data were generated from schools' principals and teachers in the sampled secondary schools in the region by means of semi-structured interviews and reflections.

Participants were interviewed using interview tools and the data generated from these tools are tabulated in Table 2 below.

**Research findings**

***Data generated from interviews***

Table 2 presents data generated from the participants who were interviewed. Some 10 participants agreed and the remainder 6 did not agree that performance indicators had improved the academic performance of learners in their schools and motivated teachers to work hard. This data was then used to come up with two themes from data generated using interviews. These themes helped to answer the research question.

**Table 2: Data generated from interviews**

<b>Participants and schools categories (PIs helpful)</b>	<b>Participants and schools categories (PIs not helpful)</b>
For me I think the PIs are an important move by the government and I welcome them because these are like guidelines to me that show you the way to go as a teacher because one must have a target in life to know where you are going and how to reach there.	Well, the documents about the national standard are available at schools but we cannot interpret them fully and this seemed to have confused us even more because teachers are complaining that we are being overburdened with things we do not understand.
So for me these PIs directs me unlike in the previous days where we as teachers used just to plan lessons and using our schemes of work differently from what other colleagues in other schools or other regions are doing but now you will find that what we are doing here in Katima is what teachers in Omusati or Erongo regions are doing, and this is due to these national standards. This I can say has made us improve on learners' performance to a certain extent.	Some felt that PIs were not beneficial to them at their school. They felt PIs are a burden as they came with too much paper work. Teachers are just busy with files that need to be covered to look neat, but are not paying much attention to what the syllabus requires them to do.
Planning for the success of the schools requires the team ensure that the necessary resources are at school and these are what is recommended in the PIs which the teachers, HODs and principals need to know.	This one also feel PIs were so destructive citing that: Like now as you were coming to interview me, I was just coming from class to offer a test this is because I am so afraid that if I don't come back in the afternoon I might not complete my syllabus and my colleagues will surpass me.

Table 2 provides helpful and non-helpful PIs but to further check whether these responses are not biased we found it necessary to engage reflections. This allowed us to have data in which the participants gave their opinions without any interference from the researchers. It should be noted that participants had varied opinions regarding whether the PIs had improved the academic performance of learners in their schools.

***Data generated from reflections***

The participants were asked to reflect on whether performance indicators can improve the academic achievement of learners as well as helping teachers to work hard. Data generated from these reflections is displayed in Table 3. To present data from reflections concisely, it was found necessary to analyse the theme the data portrayed and then present all those ideas reflecting the same using one theme. On account of this it is made up of four

themes all coming from the sixteen participants.

**Table 3: Data generated from reflections from participants**

Excerpt	Theme
PIs are a good initiative from the government as far as I am concerned as they brought uniformity among schools in terms of the nitty gritty of assessments etc. PIs also aim at guiding schools on what is expected of them as far as teaching and learning is concerned.	Conforms to standards on uniformity
PIs and national standards help me to evaluate my work in the classroom, as well as what I do test my learners. More so, these standards also add value and quality to my work as this puts my work at par with other teachers in the whole country.	Value addition
One other advantage of the PIs is that if this year you scored 45% as we did last year, you will be forced to work hard the following year to get even the average of 50% and this is because you are being forced by your indicator. Every year you will not be comfortable operating under or below your set target so the PIs will remind you.	Encourages hard work
I think what is important for me as a teacher is just to focus on teaching the subject matter to my learners and not necessarily with the aid of the PIs. For me I feel PIs are not helpful	Focus on teaching only and without PIs

Table 3 shows data generated from reflections and interviews in themes from teachers in sampled schools on how they felt about these PIs. They explained what PIs do and how beneficial they are to their work as teachers.

Four themes in Table 3 were generated using interviews and also merged with those generated using reflections. For instance, PIs are helpful was found to be in agreement with the theme of conforming to the standards on uniformity. On the other hand the theme of PIs not helpful is aligned with teachers whose perception was they only concentrate on teaching. These themes were: (a) PIs conforms to standards on uniformity (b) PIs add value to a teachers work (c) PIs encourages teachers to work hard and (d) PIs can disturb the teaching process. So, these themes are discussed in relation to the stated research question.

***Theme 1: PIs conforms to standards on uniformity***

The study revealed that the information provided by schools' target settings, School Self-evaluation (SSEs), Teacher self-evaluation (TSEs), and School Development Plan (SDPs) is not adhered to when PIs are not in use. This is some of the revelations from some teachers in both schools. This is true since PIs were not thoroughly implemented. So, the bringing in of PIs enforced the teachers to conform to the standards which they are supposed to adhere to. This comes as a result of listening to the teachers' perception(s) of the

relevance of performance indicators for schools' academic improvement and development in two secondary schools in the Zambezi region of Namibia. It should be noted that the above-mentioned four policies are not general policies, but are part of the PI policies. They are important in that they help every teacher to evaluate him- or herself in terms of academic performance. In case of TSE, it helps every teacher with regard to how he teaches, assesses learners and grades them. Target setting also assists a teacher and learners to anticipate how much he intends to achieve at the end of each semester in terms of performance. So, bringing in PIs helped teachers conform to the policies which they are supposed to observe in their practices. Finally, observing regulations emphasised in PIs helped teachers abandon negative views so that they engage in PIs to better performance. The SDP and the SSE mainly focus on evaluating the school(s) in terms of both physical and curriculum development.

***Theme 2 and 3: PIs add value to a teachers' work and encourages teachers to work hard respectively***

Theme 2 and 3 revealed the same idea; therefore, these two themes are combined and discussed. Theme 2 and 3 are revealed in the interviews with teachers as shown in Table 2 column one that the introduction of the PIs has to some extent improved the performance of learners in terms of results at both schools.

This is one of the teachers' perception(s) of the relevance of performance indicators for schools' academic improvement and development in two secondary schools in the Zambezi region. This already existing evidence that the results of both school 1 and 2 for the past three years have been improving and this is attributed to the serious monitoring and implementation of these PIs. Therefore, the conclusion that must be drawn from this study is that the implementation of the PIs has gradually succeeded in improving the two schools' performance in terms of learners' pass rates and motivating teachers to work hard. There is also a high degree of achievement in both schools in terms of improvement in the administration and leadership roles of principals and HODs, despite the fact that principals and teachers complained about too much administrative work being given to them.

***Theme 4: Teachers need to focus on teaching only disregarding PIs***

The study also found that some implementers (teachers) at both schools resisted the PIs, saying that they were not consulted during the development stage of the policy hence they do not have understanding of PIs. We see this negative perception from some of the teachers as attributed to lack of skills to implement PIs. As a result, we found it necessary to bring the continuous professional development programs. Its presence will help some of the teachers' negative perception(s) of the relevance of performance indicators for schools' academic improvement and development in two secondary schools in the Zambezi region. This resistance was caused by a number of factors. For example, teachers saw the lack of support from the Ministry of Education, in terms of both physical and human resources, as an incapacitating burden placed on them. This is evident when some teachers in the purposefully selected schools complained that they are without enough resources such as textbooks and writing materials for learners, furniture for learners and teachers which appear in Table 1

**Discussion**

The discussions in this study are organised around the four themes which emerged. The themes served as a guide in our interpretation of how the data generated made us understand teachers' perception(s) of the relevance of

performance indicators for schools' academic improvement and development in two secondary schools in the Zambezi Region of Namibia.

***PIs and their potential to improve the academic performance of schools***

The factors responsible for the two schools' academic improvement as revealed in Table 2. In Table 2, the first column and last row are nothing else but the need to constantly check practice against PIs give in Table 1. This is the view held in the two schools where participants were interviewed and this motivated them to work hard. To our view, it seems as if these participants were constantly asking themselves in their practices "what do we need to do to bring about better performance at our schools?" As a result, these two schools were purposefully selected to see what made them perform better than other schools.

Performance indicators helped as an external drive or motivator to help each employee in the work place to use as a measurement of his performance as Pinkus (2008) suggests what PIS are. Also PIs were used to regulate practices at the two schools as Darling-Hammond, Fook, Cook-Harvey, Barron, and Osher (2020) view and not necessarily as a control mechanism. Darling – Hammond et al (2020) acted mainly as a form of accountability, particularly related to a system approach that incorporates an input-output model. Indicators for school improvement define the elements of whole school improvement that schools can put into effect at any level in order to produce desired learning results (Jeffrey, 2002; Cloete & Bunting, 2004). The measure we have mentioned above may be ordinal or cardinal, absolute or comparative.

Fullan (1992, p. 173) felt that "It is only when bottom-up and top-down forces interact and are mediated in purposeful directions that improvement occurs". From the view of the HODs, principals and teachers they all supported the idea that PIs had really improved the academic performance of both schools and motivated the participants to work hard. On account of what was generated from the interviews and reflections we found that teachers' perceptions on the relevance of performance indicators for schools' academic improvement and development are more on the positive side. The participants valued what PIs



can play if it is used correctly at workplaces. Based on the findings of this study, we made some recommendations as presented in the following section.

### Recommendations

The recommendations below are put forward to suggest possible improvements in our educational change in the Katima Mulilo circuit where the study was carried out. Teachers play an important role in facilitating learning in schools and are expected to support learners in their learning process as well. This is only possible when they are provided with the necessary skills to improve the quality of their input (Arcaro, 1995; Wedell, 2009). Policy implementers such as school principals should be made aware and understand the PIs as they are the ones tasked with the responsibility of mediating them. Therefore, we recommend that intensive continuous professional development programs should be in place for all principals, heads of department, teachers, and school board members. Such an approach will help bring those with negative views about PIs to take positive view about PIs. Fullan (1991) argues that no matter how intensive the continuous professional development programs are, they may prove to be futile and their lessons may be discarded during the implementation stage if they are not supplemented by continuous in-service training. There is consequently a need for the education directorate in the region to provide continuous training to principals and teachers.

In addition, principals should conduct monitoring as prescribed in the guidelines for subject management in schools, and should solicit assistance from the inspectors of education (IoEs) and the advisory teachers (ATs) when the need arises. This is because the principals in the two schools studied frequently monitored teachers' and learners' work, and this is why their schools improved as revealed in Table 2 column 1. Therefore, this recommendation is there to encourage similar actions from some principals in other schools.

This study also revealed that both schools were under-resourced with regard to teaching-learning materials such as textbooks which is a requisite for the success of implementing PIs as recommended in Table 1 which shows the indicators which can act as a barometer for performance. Absence of such resources as emphasized by the 7 key areas and

30 PIs makes it difficult for the PIs to be successfully implemented unless if well planned as Hulpia and Valcke (2004) suggest. For example, principals and HODs in both schools found it difficult to observe their teachers in the classroom before the use of the PIs but later become easier when they started implementing them. This was evident since before PIs implementation, most learners shared textbooks and this made it hard for a teacher to present a lesson in a learner-centred way. However, with understanding of PIs, mechanisms, leadership in the two schools made effort to bring the necessary resources. Learner-centred before understanding PIs lacked since learners remained listening to the one reading for them instead of them reading on their own and this makes them active. Since it was found that lack of resources was attributed to lack of funds, we found it necessary to recommend that the Zambezi educational directorate should make more funds available for textbook purchases. Finally, teachers should also become more professional and innovative enough to supplement where the ministry cannot afford to fund.

### Conclusion

The study revealed that there is a fundamental understanding of the relevance of the National Standards and Performance Indicators (NSPIs) in the two schools in Namibia situated in Zambezi Region. However, we cannot generalize that all the school stakeholders in Zambezi Region or Namibia understand the relevance of PIs

The fact that the two principals saw the importance of the introduction of the PIs as a positive sign is because only when leadership is in support of an innovation can its objectives be realised (Johannes, 2009). Thus, the introduction of any educational initiative must be supported by the principal. This is in line with Westraad (2005, p. 49) who claims that "Projects having the active support of the principal were likely to fare-well".

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