“An analysis of the Swaziland public educational environment and its role-players”

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SECTION 1. Macroeconomic processes and regional economies management

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An analysis of the Swaziland public educational environment and its role-players

Abstract

Swaziland is a former British colony located on the South-Eastern tip of Africa. Resultant of colonization, the Swaziland education is based on English colonial system. However, the colonial education system, as applied in Swaziland resulted in differentiated and segregated education standards and, depending on regional location, local inhabitants did not receive proper education. Since Swaziland's political independence and self-regulating of the education system, several efforts have been made to improve its quality of education to the population and to ascertain that all regions as well as rural remote locations, actually do receive quality education. This educational vision, however, did not come without challenges. This article focuses specifically on the environmental factors pertaining to Swaziland education. That includes a description of the Swaziland educational environment, the different factors in the macro-environment that play a role in Swaziland education and also the current profile of the educators employed in Swaziland. The results show that albeit the numerous environmental, political and logistical challenges, the Swaziland educators are making a difference and that they are productive, equally distributed gender wise, mainly Swaziland citizens and well educated to deliver quality education to people.

Keywords: Swaziland, educator challenges, demographic profile, educator macro-environment, sub-Saharan Africa.
JEL Classification: I21.

Introduction. An overview of Swaziland

Swaziland, a former British colony, is a small country situated in-between South Africa and Mozambique towards the southern tip of Africa. It has a surface area of roughly 17 000 square kilometers. Swaziland consists of four major regions with unique climatic conditions – namely Hhohho (Highveld), Manzini (Middleveld), Lubombo (low veld and plateau) and Shielweni (middle veld) (Worldatlas, 2014).

Fig. 1. Map of Swaziland

The country has a population of roughly one million citizens with a gender share of 53% females and 47% males. The majority of Swazis reside in rural areas, approximately 75.9% of its Swaziland's total population (Makhala, Mokaeane & Polaki, 2005, p. 2). Whilst this is the case, there is fast pace rural-urban migration, which in turn creates increased demand on social amenities like hospitals, schools, social services and security. This migration is largely due to the search of employment as cities are believed to offer better employment opportunities (Dube & Lubben, 2011, p. 3).

Swaziland has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world. It is recorded in Nordtveit (2010, p. 75) that 26.1% of the Swaziland population is affected by this pandemic. There exists one national language in Swaziland which is Siswati. Swaziland is governed by a monarchy form of government whereby the king is the ruler of the land.

Swaziland is largely bordered by South Africa. The country is largely reliant on South Africa for its imports and exports from which it receives more than 90% of its imports and to which it exports 60% of its exports.

The Swaziland economy is a small developing economy and heavily reliant on subsistence agriculture (engaging 70% of its population). Sugar is Swaziland's main export product. It has a weak manufacturing sector and a declining mining sector. Although the tourism industry is showing potential, it is underdeveloped and contributes limitedly to the

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Gross Domestic Product of $6.8 billion (Government services contribute more than 50% to the GDP) (Swaziland, 2015). The 2008 global economic meltdown had a impacted significantly negatively on the economy, slowing the projected 3.5% growth rate down to 0.21% (see Figure 1 – 2008; 2012) and to the 2014 rate of 0.3% (Swaziland, 2015). This dumped Swaziland in a fiscal crisis and with a 40% unemployment rate the government's income is under pressue which resulted in an increased dependency on other countries for assistance. The reduced revenues also negatively impacted on the educational budget with the result that Swaziland is falling short on achieving its government programs and Millennium Development Goals (MDG), in particular the goal of free and compulsory primary education to all (Indexmundi, 2014).

Fig. 2. Swaziland GDP annual growth rate

The figure above shows the continual decline in the Swaziland gross domestic percentage GDP since January 2008 (3.5%) to January 2012 (0.21%). The year 2013 realised a negative growth rate (-1.5%) (Indexmundi, 2014), while 2014 showed a growth rate of 0.30% (Swaziland, 2015).

1. Problem statement

Swaziland's education system evolved from a traditional cultural based education. The colonial education system, as employed by the British colonial reign, segregated education standards and the local inhabitants did not receive a proper education. However, political independence and self-regulating of the education system and its quality of education delivered, did not come without challenges. Managing education provision is becoming increasingly difficult and it seems that eradication of the injustices of the education system of the past, are not easily achieved. Adding to the complexity of the educational challenges are the population growth, low economic growth rate, lack of infrastructure and the geographic location of school that does not dovetail well with the population. Financial provisioning is at the forefront of management challenges, and unfortunately the lack of funding has now reached proportions where the salaries of the educators are under pressure. There has been a number of newspaper reports highlighting the strikes that teachers and principals have embarked on. Teachers and principals have been facing pay cuts. Swaziland's political landscape is also going through fluid times. The monarchy form of government is being pressured by those that want a more transparent democratic form of governance.

In essence, the education sector as a whole is facing trying times. There has been an influx of foreign teachers entering the Swazi education system, which, in turn, placed additional demands onto the remaining educators. However, before any attempt can be made to address and salvage the dire education situation, knowledge regarding the educational environment is needed. This knowledge currently exists in silos and the education environment, educators and the workplace of Swaziland needs to be researched and documented.

2. Objectives

The primary objective of this article is to understand the Swaziland school education environment, its stakeholders, role-players as well as its educational provisioning history. This includes an assessment of the current state of school education provisioning.

To achieve the primary objective, the following secondary objectives are formulated, namely to:

- Provide a background to Swaziland education;
- Identify and describe the different factors that influence the macro environment of education in

Swaziland by means of a literature study of secondary sources;
- Identify and describe the factors that play a role in educational environment by means of a literature study of secondary sources; and to
- Profile the educators in the Swaziland education system by means of empirical study.

3. Research design

The research methodology consists of both literature and empirical study.

Literature study focuses on the history of Swaziland education provisioning, the Swaziland education system and its stakeholders as well as the current state of education in Swaziland (servicing the first three objectives). Literature study included textbooks, newspaper articles, government publications, conference proceedings as well as internet surveys. The university libraries of the North-West University and Regent Business School were used to source reference materials.

The empirical study profiled educators in this study. Data were collected through the means of a questionnaire that measured demographic and biographic variables of educators in schools. This questionnaire was distributed to Swaziland teachers, and the principal supervised the completion and collection thereof whereafter the researcher collected the completed questionnaires. The questionnaire was only administered to state schools. The study had the permission and blessing of the Swaziland Ministry of Education who assisted in facilitating and coordination of the distribution and retrieval of questionnaires. A total of 550 questionnaires were distributed, and 377 completed questionnaires were received. This signified a satisfactory response rate of 68.5%.

4. The education system in Swaziland

4.1. History of education in Swaziland. Swaziland gained political independence from the United Kingdom in 1968. Since then, the Ministry of Education is responsible for all regulation of education from primary to university education.

Similar to many countries who found political independence, one of the priorities of the independent government was to address the issues of education. Swaziland followed suit immediately after gaining independence, aiming to fulfil the country's attempt of nation building and citizen's personal aspirations to become educated (Magalula, 1990, p. 3).

However, during the implementation of the first *Post-Independence Development Plan* (1968-1973), 40% of the Swaziland's children between the ages of 7-13 years were not attending primary school. In addition, an estimated 66% of the primary school children were failing to complete their primary education (Magalula, 1990, p. 6). One of the major factors for this educational failure was that a large proportion of the primary school teachers were unqualified and subsequently unfit to teach. Especially a shortage of skilled mathematics and science teachers prevailed during this era. The tertiary sector was unable to fill the gap because not enough teachers were educated and delivered to the education sector. To make matters worse, the demand for qualified teachers further increased because more children started to attend schools. Research in 2013 showed that despite sustained interventions, this deficiency has not yet been eradicated (Education in crises, 2013). The Ministry of Education and Training Third Quarter Performance Report 2012/2013 cites that in 2012 a total of 7% of primary school going aged children still do not access primary education. In particular children from rural areas, the peri-urban poor, children with disabilities as well as children affected by HIV/AIDS are part of the 7% of children that do not participate in primary education. Primary education in Swaziland is at present much improved and widely available, but sadly, it is not yet compulsory by law.

Children are still challenged to travel far distances to attend schools due to the uneven geographical distribution and shortage of schools. The majority of the population is from rural and semi-rural locations where adequate schooling opportunities are not located within these areas. Hence the challenge of travelling far distances to get to school. In addition this increases the costs of accessing school education. The mountainous topographic layout of Swaziland also contributes to the infrastructural and accessibility challenges to provide facilities close to the rural population.

Table 1. Breakdown of schools per region as of 2013

Region	Primary	Secondary	High	Total
Hhohho region	162	11	59	232
Lubombo region	127	9	51	185
Manzini region	168	6	61	235
Shiselweni region	139	7	52	198
Total	596	33	223	852

According to Magalula (1990, p. 5), the serious challenge at the time at a tertiary education level was the lack of information and data concerning industry human resource requirements in the public and private sectors. At the time government was unable to decide as to how many skilled and semi-skilled were required for whatever jobs. This is problematic since the risk of mismatch between

skills development and skills requirements may result in the development of skills in a manner that does not align itself to government and business skills needs. As a result finding meaningful jobs and employment, in general, is scarce.

In this context of historical inequalities, poor access, opportunity, lack of skilled teachers together with the burning issue of the need to transform education to be relevant to the people of Swaziland, the Swazi government was not only tasked with addressing the education needs of society but to do so in the context of historical baggage because a colonial education system was not aligned to traditional Swazi life. Already as early as 1940, Marwick (cited in Booth, 1997, p. 440) states that historically Swazi education has been designed to prepare children not only for adulthood, but also for every stage of life by means of the traditional non-schooling education system whereby children are taught by their parents and elders in the villages on survival skills. This value-based approach by parents is central to parental interests and paradigms in educating and developing children. In this regard children received a practical, but non-academic, education according to Swazi tradition.

This view remained central to the Swazi social, traditional and cultural outlook on life according to Gay and Cole (1967) and Boateng and Read (1983) (as cited in Booth, 1997, p. 444), the traditional education at home in Swaziland is more immediately felt by the individual than school learning system because it does not limit itself to the acquisition of skills, but leads instead to the development of the whole person from childhood to adulthood. In essence, the traditional education system failed to produce the required educational results.

This clear paradox in education evolved as a result of inadequate change in the traditional views of the population. On the one hand a foreign colonial education system was implemented, and on the other hand, the Swazi nation was rooted in a unique social, cultural and traditional view of life, education and citizenship that was not aligned with the education system imposed on them. Booth (1997, p. 435) further argues that the type of education the Swazi were to acquire was left to the discretion of the missionaries and the government. The missionaries viewed that the education of native inhabitants of Swaziland should be treated differently than the education in Europe and also to Europeans in the British colonies. In essence, education for natives revolved around basic literary to Standard 4 (Grade 6) to gain regular habits and discipline. Further education would then be to educate children more practically in areas of agriculture or manual training. The impact of this view of missionary education for Swazi is seen today. Swaziland still lacks appropriately trained human capital that will allow its economy to thrive and become competitive in the global economy. Mr. Nthangase, the Minister of Education and Training in Swaziland, indicates in the report of the Ministry of Education and Training (Swaziland, 2013), that as the global economy rapidly changes with the introduction of new technologies, more appropriately educated/trained human resources are required. The ministry is looking to broaden the school curriculum to ensure skills development for economic success. The post-colonial Swazi monarchy government made three important policy decisions:

- Make primary education universal and free;
- Make secondary education free and available to all children who wanted it and were capable of profiting from it; and to
- Ensure that tertiary education level professional technicians and graduates were trained to meet the manpower requirements in both the private and public sectors.

Currently these policy decisions are still very relevant and central to the efforts of the Swaziland Education Ministry. Evidence of this is the philosophy found in the Swaziland Education and Training Sector Policy (EDSEC) Mission and Goals of 2011 (Swaziland, 2011) that speaks of equitable access for education to all Swazis, free and compulsory basic education and education that ensures personal development and contributes Swaziland's cultural, socioeconomic growth and global competitiveness.

In lieu of the unequal and inadequate education provisioning for Swazi's, the government began expanding access to education. This means that Universal Primary Education (UPE), which is access of every school going child to primary level, was initiated in 1985 (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 3). In order for the UPE to function properly, it meant that a drastic expansion of educational provisioning resources was required. However, an evaluation of the strategy to increase school accessibility in the period 1985 to 2000 against the expected achievement showed thata decline on primary school enrolment rates against the projections could not only be attributed to accessibility as a result of fiscal challenges, but that HIV/AIDS also played a role. As a result of the declining gross enrolment rates (GER), the Swazi government responded by subsidizing education for orphans and vulnerable children in 2003 (Khumalo, 2013).

The increasing population adds to the challenge of the ministries UPE vision because it increases pressure on issues such as overcrowding of classes,

understaffing, infrastructure and managerial inputs. Central to this is the challenge to ensure quality and relevance of education provisioning.

In 1971, the first real focus on the quality of education in the newly focused education was launched by the National Education Commission (NEC) with the review of quality and relevance of Swazi education provisioning. This was followed up by the National Review Commission (NRC) in 1985 which led to the "Education for All" agenda in 1990. Common in all of these initiatives was the central theme that "A nation's greatest asset is its human resources, human development and therefore the great aim of education" (Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 6). Naturally the influence of globalization impacts and will continue to impact education provisioning in Swaziland as every country becomes part of a global village. According to the report "Our Children First", UNESCO (2010/11, p. 23) describes the goals of Swaziland's Education Development Strategy (EDS) as:

- Develop the intellectual, moral, aesthetic, emotional and practical capacities of children;
- Equip citizens with the capabilities needed to shape and adapt to a fast changing, complex, and uncertain socio economic environment;
- Engender a civic sense and to foster the skills necessary to participate effectively in a democratic society that reflects the socio-cultural context of Swaziland; and
- Create a population of lifelong learners with creative minds.

These goals revolve centrally around the creation of a competitive and progressive society. The intention was to breed a society of proud Swazi citizens who are patriotic to the land and comfortable with the political dispensation.

Post-independence, the Swaziland Government took overall responsibility of all education, irrespective of being public or private, was to be controlled by government. In addition, the modern focus was adopted whereby the Swazi Government rid them from bias of the former colonial school system whereby children were only trained as clerks, teachers and nurses. Children were, according to the new focus, now being educated in other areas to be able to further study towards a wide range of occupations. Central to this paradigm shift was thinking that education should be about enlightenment and for the development of a participant society. This line of thought correlates with the view of the World Bank (2010, p. 36) on developing countries that states that Swaziland is not a mineral rich country; hence its growth and global competitiveness should in the main be knowledge and technology driven. The drive to create a competitive and knowledge rich nation is in many ways enshrined in the Swaziland Education Development Strategy (EDS). This paradigm is in keeping with the international thinking that transforming natural resource industries into knowledge and technology intensive natural resource industries are key drivers of a countrie's growth and competitiveness. If this was to occur in a sustainable and timely manner, it could allow Swaziland to integrate into the global economy. It is arguable that much of this is underpinned by the country's political stability.

Table 2. Summary of education policy development in Swaziland

Year	Policy ammendements or developments
1969-1973	♦ The first post-independence development plan to make primary education free ♦ Improve quality of education ♦ Improve teacher qualification (35% of teachers were unqualified) ♦ Reduce reliance on expatriate teachers
1973-1978	♦ More emphasis on the education development plan ♦ Improve quality of education ♦ Improve access to education ♦ Formulation of the Post-Independence National Education Commission to recommend second education development plan ♦ Establishment of the Education Advisory Board to advise government ♦ The Advisory Board dropped "free" from the education agenda. ♦ Free education was only reintroduced by the 2005 constitution of Swaziland ♦ Recommendation of formulation of new education Act that is the Education Act of 1973
1979-1983	♦ The 3rd Education Development Plan ♦ Continued challenge of improving access ♦ Poor enrolment and completion rates ♦ Expansion o f teacher training programs ♦ Strengthening of ministries administrative and support services ♦ Strong curriculum reform and development efforts
2005 and beyond	♦ Establishment of National Swazi constitution ♦ Re introduction of free primary education to begin in 2009 ♦ World Bank review of education system in Swaziland ♦ Publishing of the Ministry of Education Sector Strategic plan for 2010 to 2022 and the Swaziland Education and training sector policy 2011 ♦ Continued struggle to address access, increasing failure of learners, poor progression to higher grades, lack of curriculum reform to accommodate increased professional and technological specialization.

Source: Khumalo (2013, pp. 21-22).

4.2. The current state of education. The UNESCO (2010/11) reports summarized the challenges faced by the Swaziland education across all of the sectors in education. The report also prioritized these challenges, and resultantly, the challenges are placed in order of importance for each level or education sub-sector. Table 3 below provides an overview of the challenges per sector as faced by education in Swaziland.

Table 3. Hierarchy of challenges by sub-sector

Sub-sector	Challenge 1	Challenge 2	Challenge 3	Challenge 4	Challenge 5	Challenge 6
ECCD	Weak strategic direction and delivery capacity	Poor access	Systematic inequalities	Poor quality	Low internal market and development relevance	Low resource efficiency and poor resource mobilization and utilization
Primary education	Poor quality	Low resource efficiency and poor resource mobilization and utilization	Systematic inequalities	Poor internal market and development relevance	Poor access	Weak strategic direction and delivery capacity
Junior secondary education	Weak strategic direction and delivery capacity	Poor access	Systematic inequalities	Poor quality	Low resource efficiency and poor resource mobilization and utilization	Low internal market and development relevance
Senior secondary education	Weak strategic direction and delivery capacity	Poor access	Systematic inequalities	Poor quality	Low internal market and development relevance	Low resource efficiency and poor resource mobilization and utilization

Source: adapted from UNESCO (2010/11, p. 48).

Table 3 depicts the state of Swaziland education across its different education levels. Evident from the table is that these challenges are all relevant and common to each sub-sector or level of education. Each of these challenges poses real managerial opportunities for improvement. Central to each challenge is the issue of strategic planning and subsequent management and administration. The issue of limited or inefficient capacity is also particularly obvious.

UNESCO (2010/11, p. 17) captures the state of education in Swaziland in a very real and scientific way. In essence it states that ETSDS is largely inadequately prepared to support the vision and aspirations of what size and shape education is expected to assume. The report also highlighted some other concerns to be addressed by the Swaziland Department of Education. These are:

- Limited opportunities which provide the correct mix of skills to ensure education provisioning in Swaziland will produce citizens who are able to meet national and regional labor market demands. This in turn will hamper growth and negatively influence the countries' competitiveness. There exists a general lack of access to all levels of education but particularly secondary levels upwards – the level which would develop knowledge workers which in turn will attract foreign direct investment (FDI), Swaziland intends to become a knowledge and technology rich country. If this is to prevail it will impede economic activity, lowering the opportunities of employment and certainly negatively influences the capacity to create employment opportunities for lower semi or non-skilled workers.
- What is of great concern is that according to (UNESCO, 2010/11, p. 26), an estimated 74% of children of eligible age are not enrolled in junior secondary education, and 88% are not enrolled in senior secondary education. The Higher education Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) is estimated at just 2.6%.
- The situation is somewhat better for primary education levels where just 16% of eligible children are not enrolled. Central to the above summary of access to education is the availability of opportunities to education at all levels. As a result of this status quo not changing the risk of not attaining Swaziland Millennium Development Goal (MDG) pertaining to access by 2015 will be realized.
- The attempt to reach the Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal access to primary education by 2015. Primary education enrolment rates have been increasing, however, repetition rates are very high and not improving. The average student takes 13 years to complete the 7 year primary education cycle. According to the European Commission 2007 Annual Operational Review this is reflective of the lack of quality and relevance of primary education and the inefficiency in the system (European Commission, 2007, p. 6).
- Booth (1997, p. 493) in the discussion on her research that a substantial amount of rural

Swazi people feel that some of the same concerns of the relevance of the education system found in colonial education still exists 28 years after independence. The main conflict which has persisted is the lack of correspondence between the amount of education desired by the public and the availability of space in the school education system. This suggests that the issue of access to education is still a challenge.

- Nordtveit (2010, p. 88) states that he has found that primary education is supposed to last seven years with the age range of six to thirteen years, however it is not abnormal to note teenagers of eighteen years and above in primary school due to high repetition and dropout rates. This is further complicated since birth certificates for many children are not provided upon birth but at a later stage, which results in calculation of age at a later stage. The point being made is that age is not a clear factor in determining the segment of school education a child is supposed to be at.

Khumalo (2013) in his discussion paper Effective Delivery of Public Education Services argues a similar sentiment that Swaziland is far from achieving its educational objectives. He argues that amongst many factors the following are responsible for the situation.

Swaziland ministry of education has not made primary education compulsory as per the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child which states that all governments must make primary education compulsory and free for all. As a result an average of a 10 year education program is neither free nor compulsory as the Swazi government has not gone beyond primary education in offering compulsory basic and free education. Khumalo (2013) cites a number of challenges in the education system. He indicates that grade 1 survival rate is very low at 60% lower than neighboring countries (Botswana 87%, Zimbabwe 81% and Zambia 72%). According to Khumalo (2013) an average Swazi receives 7.5 years of schooling of the 10 year requirement and that repetition rates (failing and repeating) are high. He goes on to argue that poorly paid teachers and poorly qualified teachers compound the problem.

The Annual Education Census Statistics report (as summarized in Table 4 below) provides an overview of the size and shape of Swaziland education in respect of number of schools, educators in the education labor force as well as the student teacher ratio.

Table 4. Education statistics 2010 and 2011

Description	2010	2013
Number of schools (primary)	529	603
Number of schools (secondary)	189	250
Number of teachers primary	6,094	7885
Number of teachers secondary	2,954	3882
Student-teacher ratio: primary:	34:1	unavailable
Student-teacher ratio secondary:	19:1	unavailable

Source: Swaziland (2011b, p. 19)

5. The macro environment

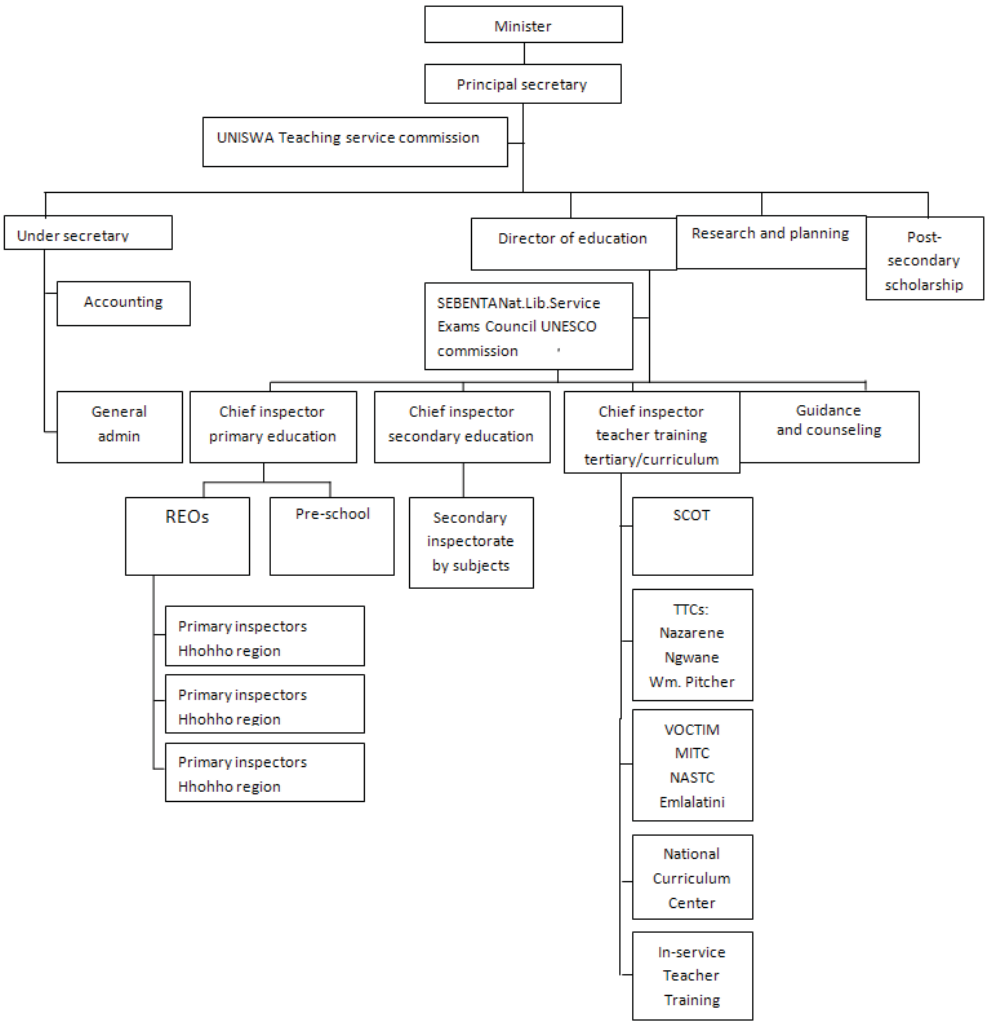
5.1. Management structure of Ministry of Education. The Swaziland Ministry of Education (Ministry of Education) is divided into four divisions of professional, planning, finance and administration. The Director of Education heads up the professional division and focuses on all professional matters and issues of service delivery. This directorate consists of three Chief Inspectors responsible for primary, secondary and teacher education that forms the professional support unit for guidance and counselling.

The planning division is managed by a senior education planner. This planning division is responsible for incremental budgeting and works with statistical data provided by the Central Statistics office.

Regional Education Officers (REO) together with senior inspectors is located in the Ministry of Education's regional offices. They report to the Chief inspector for primary and secondary education. REO's are tasked with ensuring direct support for education services and quality assurance thereof. They work in tandem with communities through the school committees and regional education boards. This serves as a communication medium between the Ministry of Education and regions and schools.

The Ministry of Education (1999, p. 38) provides the following guideline on management of the school education system.

1. Schools are supervised by an inspector.
2. The ministry will manage standard of performance of private sector education whilst de regularization of services to private sector education.
3. The Education Act, Teaching Service Act and Regulations and the schools accounting regulations are mechanisms to manage and legislate education.



Source: adapted from World Bank, 2006.

Fig. 2. Management structure of Ministry of Education

Education provisioning, control and regulation are vested with the central Ministry of Education. The table below provides an oversight of the function of the Ministry particularly on school education.

Table 6. Functional assignments for education services in Swaziland

Function	Assignment
Policy and sector coordination, including quality and standards	♦ Ministry of Education Headquarters ♦ Teaching Service Commission (TCS) ♦ Examination Council of Swaziland (ECOS)
Planning at local level	♦ Ministry of Education Regional Education Office
Financing	♦ GoS budget for teacher salaries, training, school supplies ♦ School fees paid by parents at primary and secondary level ♦ Ministry of Education bursaries for the OVC students ♦ Some local government designates funding ♦ Donor designated funding
Monitoring and evaluation	♦ Ministry of Education headquarters ♦ Ministry of Education regional Education Office

Source: adapted from World Bank (2006, p. 67).

5.2. School supervision and monitoring and management. The Ministry of Education is tasked with the supervision and monitoring of school education provisioning. Chief Inspectors as well as Regional Education Officers (REO's) serve this function. The REO represents the Ministry of Education at a regional level. REO's at a Regional Education board level are responsible for education issues such as pre approval of new public and private schools. They also work in tandem with teacher training colleges to ensure planning for teacher in service training.

5.3. Education budgeting and financing. At the turn of the millennium education financing has been

primarily through the GoS. This included budgeting for teacher remuneration, training, and school text and work books. The rest of the needs are budgeted for by the school fees paid by parents both at primary and secondary schools. The Ministry of Education makes a small budget for bursaries for poor and vulnerable children. The bulk of schools (80%) is grant aided community schools and is managed through school elected committees. State schools are governed by Ministry of Education appointed Board of Governors. All schools financial audits are vested with the Accountant Generals office. Private schools are independently funded but are governed by the Regional Education Board in terms of quality.

Government spending on education has been gradually decreasing over the years. The declining fiscal condition of the region has in recent years been the primary reason for the reduction on available budgets. Policy makers are grappling with the challenge of restructuring of government spending whilst trying to ensure service quality is not compromised.

Public resources that are channelled to the education sector as a percentage of GDP are much lower that in many other countries in SADC. The expenditure on the Education has enjoyed the largest share an average of 6% of GDP but allocations have been declining over the years.

Swaziland has invested a significant amount of public resources in the pursuit of education provisioning, however the public expenditure on education has declined in years. This is a result of fiscal deterioration, high poverty rate, a stagnant economy. Households are constrained in their abilities to expand contribution to education.

Overall Education and training have received the largest proportion of the national budget. At the time of the Fiscal crises during 2010-2013, Swaziland cut all its budgets except on education. The table below provides an overview of the Swaziland declining educational expenditure in percentage of national budget. In real monetary terms the currency value of the budget has increased.

Table 7. Swaziland educational expenditure

Budget	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
National	e 703 mil	e 759 mil	e 1.2 bil	e 1.5 bil	e 1.8 bil	e 2.12 bil	e 2.1 bil
Education	23.7%	23.89%	21.6%	18%	22.5%	19%	18.5%

Source: Swaziland: effective delivery of public education services (2013).

6. Educational environment

6.1. Managerial challenges in Swazi education. As highlighted above the issue of management across the education spectrum has proven to be challenging and largely problematic. Noted are the issues of lack of management capacity, poor procedures and mechanisms and generally poor rate of success. The issue of lack of capacity to appraise teachers, manage performance, ineffective mechanism to manage indiscipline, poor pass rates, high drop rates in essence paints an overall picture of the management of education context in Swaziland.

According to the report (World Bank, 2006, p. 86), the government of Swaziland has been working on improving its performance management systems since the mid 1990's. The report indicates that the Ministry of Education is facing a shortage of school inspectors and school auditors which is resulting in poor quality assurance of education delivery. At the time of report there were no internal auditors for school financial audits. This means that there was little or no scientific management of school finances nor was there proper teacher management. In addition, the report highlighted the lack of training of education managers and professionals as well as a lack of staff development for such professionals. Limited funding for attracting and training such professionals compound the challenge of being unable to ensure adequate management capacity.

Throughout the research in this article it is evident that the Ministry of Education has been unable to meaningfully provide the management and leadership to effectively respond to the demand of education and its supply. The reasons for the poor performance are limited financial resources, inadequate training opportunities for teacher and professional development, supply of skilled teachers, management of performance, quality assurance capacity, inability to manage conflict and indiscipline as well as truly transform the education system from its former colonial education system. The treasury department manages teacher salaries and issues of procurement. The lengthy bureaucratic chain between submission and approval delays disbursement of teacher's salaries by more than 2 months, and points to the inability to successfully administer the operations required to ensure harmonious interaction between teachers and the Ministry of Education.

According to the Ministry of Education and Training 3rd quarter Performance Report (2012/2013, pp. 33-34) there are a number of challenges with regards to administration of

managing teacher allocation to schools. The report mentions the following challenges.

1. There is no file management system for teacher's employment files. Many get lost and there are no backups. There exists a need for a teacher management information system.
2. Teachers are unhappy to be deployed to rural schools because of lack of accommodation, water, electricity, schools being in forests and without any transport. This means that teachers have to walk in excess of 7 km to get to school. As a result teachers reject these deployments and this ends in school children without teachers in their classrooms.
3. The Ministry of Education has seen a sharp rise in forged qualification certificates and academic records. The report further makes reference to the need for a formal qualifications framework to ensure standards for the teaching profession.
4. It has been reported that retiring teachers are often not paid their benefits on time as a result of a number of factors including the government/ ministry's poor systems and procedures.

6.2. Educator management. As pointed out earlier, Swaziland has been challenged with the issues of unqualified and general shortage of skilled teachers. This created a reliance on expatriate expertise. Teacher management is largely governed by the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) which covers teacher recruitment, deployment, promotion and discipline in accordance to the teaching (World Bank, 2006, p. 77). Teacher deployment to rural areas is plagued with a number of negative issues. Some of these issues are:

- Many teachers are not keen to be assigned to far out rural schools; thus vacancies remain for a long period.
- There exists no a working program for substitute teachers for teachers who are on prolonged sick leave. The rate of HIV and AIDS infection has compounded this weakness.

These issues have resulted in poor distribution of teachers causing some schools to have higher teacher student ratios whilst others have much lower teacher student ratios. Arising out of this situation is the issue of poor personnel data management. The World Bank (2006, p. 69) points out that the Ministry of Education has been working on establishing new staffing rules to address these deployment issues and how to normalize needs and distribution. According to the Effective Delivery of Public Education Services report, there are enough teachers in Swaziland to achieve the teacher learner ration of 1:40, the challenge though is that most of these teachers are unqualified (Swaziland, 2013, p. 69).

However, the report is in stark contrast against the empirical findings of the research undertaken for this article. The figure below provides a breakdown of the qualification levels of teachers in Swaziland. It is evident that the lowest percentage of 12% is made up of teachers with a senior certificate and a 3 year education qualification. The majority of educators of 36% have a senior certificate and a 4 year education qualification. 52% of teachers have a senior certificate and a minimum of an honours degree.

6.3. Educator compensation and incentives. Teachers in Swaziland are remunerated by a grade system which is in the main determined by their qualifications. A premium grade is afforded for to head teachers, deputy head teachers and heads of departments at a secondary school level. The Ministry of Education has ensured that the remuneration scale used for teachers are aligned to similar qualified civil servants. Teachers benefit from a housing subsidy that regular civil servants do not. There are two negative implications highlighted in the system as found in the report from the World Bank (2006, p. 93). The implications are:

- Firstly, the system remunerates according to qualification which results in an incentive for teachers to upgrade their qualifications but not necessarily improve their teaching performance.
- Secondly, it pressurizes the system to create more 'high qualification, positions for teachers who have upgraded'.

6.4. The quality of educator performance and discipline. The World Bank (2006, p. 62) mentions that lack of management staff, poor procedures and standards have impeded the ability to review performance of teachers. Teachers are placed on probation and are meant to be confirmed after a positive performance review. The policy requires teachers to be appraised annually. Both these responsibilities have been compromised as indicated above.

The rate of indiscipline among teachers and in particular student abuse cases has been rising and the TSC mechanisms to deal with such issues are ineffective. Swazi teachers are stressed as a result of a number of factors including teachers being appointed on short term contracts without security of knowing their future employment status (Okeke, and Dlamini, 2013, p. 10). Considering the World Bank reporting in 2006 and these findings of Okeke and Dlamini in 2013, it is evident that the situation has not (or not significantly) improved over the period 2006 to 2013.

6.5. Policy and planning. The Ministry of Education is responsible for developing sector plans, regulation and oversight over all education

provisioning. The TSC, the ECOS and the Ministry of Education control the curriculum design and content and administration of public examinations. These parties also look at training of teachers, deployment of teachers and remuneration of teachers.

6.6. Legal framework influencing Swaziland education. Swaziland education legal framework was in the main influenced by the vision of the party that won the first election (Imbokodvo National Movement). Much of this vision exists to date. Its manifesto revolves around:

- Education is an inalienable right to every child and citizen to reach the limit of his or her capabilities;
- The purpose of education is to produce an enlightened and participant citizenry;
- Content must work oriented from primary to the highest level.

It is noteworthy that tertiary education apart from teacher and agricultural training is not considered by the manifesto.

The primary legal framework that governs Swazi education is the Education Act No. 9 of 1981. This Act superseded the Education Act of 1964, the Medical Inspection of Schools Act of 1928 and the Inspection of Schools Act of 1934 (Swaziland, 1981; 1964; 1934 & 1928).

The Teaching Service Act was instituted in 1982 as a result of the establishment of the teaching Service commission. The powers of the minister and the Director of Education were enshrined in this Act. As part of the Teaching Service Act the Teacher Service Regulations were promulgated in 1983. This regulated teacher registration, issues of service, performance and monitoring and teacher benefits (UNESCO, 2010/11, p. 57).

All teachers are required by the Teaching Service Regulations to sign a schedule that outlines a minimum standard of professional conduct for teachers in Swaziland. This schedule contains the responsibilities of teachers in the care of learners, the community in which the teacher lives, the teachers' profession and the employer.

From a policy perspective the education quality has been affected by the lack of standards and clear operational definitions of key outputs and competencies as well as skills required such that even if Swazi children do well in examinations, the lack of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) results in this education not being transformed into lifelong learning that could see the country rising to greater heights (Swaziland: Effective delivery of public education Services, 2013, p. 31).

6.7. Learners. The criteria for accessing state education in Swaziland are based primarily on age. The entry requirement for primary education is six years. It is often found that learners are above the normal minimum age for respective grades. This is as a result of repetition as well as late starting of school education. A survey by SACMEQ, as cited in Achieving Education for All (2006), indicates that learners mostly in rural areas travel approximately nine kilometres to reach a school. In some regions learners travel in excess of 25 kilometres to a school. This is often by foot or taxi. This is still prevalent more recently, as reported by UNICEF (2010) that school children often have to walk up to several hours to get to schools. This study also indicates that Swaziland children often start school at inappropriate ages as a result because many of them are not physically developed to walk these distances daily to attend schools and that there is also higher dropout rates.

In addition to the physical challenges of distance, HIV and AIDS also impact significantly on learners' education success rates. As a result of a parent or guardian passing away, children are left to manage households and to earn an income for younger siblings (and themselves) to afford essential living needs. According to the SACMEC 2006 report (as cited in Achieving Education for All, 2006), these orphans bear higher risks of not being enrolled in school, dropping out of school and falling victim to child labor practices. The majority of learners are nurtured in communal living arrangements. SiSwati is the main home language for learners with exposure to English the medium of instruction in schools only once learners enter the formal schooling system.

7. Profiling of respondents

7.1. Teacher profile. Teachers play a significant role in ensuring the objectives of education is being successfully implemented. Educators themselves are the life blood of an education system. In this study a Teacher profile was established by means of empirical research. The profile appears is Table 8 below.

Table 8. Biographical profile educators in Swaziland

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Commentary
Gender	Male	185	49.3	Male and female educators are evenly employed (49.3% of the respondents were female and 50.7% were male).
	Female	190	50.7	

Table 8 (cont.). Biographical profile educators in Swaziland

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Commentary
Home language	English	8	2.2	The majority of the respondents (93.4%) use SiSwati as their home language. Hence it is the main mother tongue of educators
	Sepedi	1	0.3	
	Sesotho	1	0.3	
	Setswana	2	0.5	
	SiSwati	342	93.4	
	Tshivenda	2	0.5	
	IsiNdebele	3	0.8	
	IsiXhosa	2	0.5	
	IsiZulu	2	0.5	
	isiTonga	3	0.8	
Qualification level	M + 3 - Diploma	43	11.7	Regarding education, the majority of educators (36.5%) have a highest qualification of a higher diploma or a degree. However, it is interesting to note that 25.1% of them have an honors degree while 26.7% have a master of doctoral qualification. Also noteworthy is the fact that more than half of the educators (51.8%) have a qualification at an honours degree level or higher. The qualification levels of Swaziland educators corresponds closely to that of South African educators where Naidoo (2011) found that the average percentage of teachers in the South Africa (KZN, Free State and North West Province) have a minimum of a diploma or degree is 43.5% across the three provinces as opposed to 48.2% of teachers in Swaziland. Furthermore, on averages 30.4% of South African educators have a minimum of an honors degree or higher, which is much lower than their Swaziland counterparts (51.8%). This is a clear indication that Swaziland educators are well qualified to undertake the responsibility of teaching in the school environment.
	M + 4 - Degree	134	36.5	
	M + 5 - Honours Degree	92	25.1	
	M = 6 - Masters or PhD	98	26.7	
Relationship status	Single	72	19.5	
	Engaged or in relationship	38	10.3	
	Married	161	43.6	
	Divorced	51	13.8	
	Separated	17	4.6	
	Remarried	22	6.0	
	Widowed	8	2.2	
Personal perception of productivity over last 3 months	100% productive	56	15.0	
	90-99% productive	123	32.9	
	80-89% productive	129	34.5	
	70-79% productive	48	12.8	
	less than 70% productive	18	4.8	
Stressful experience in the last 6 months that was a negative influence	YES	280	74.9	
	NO	94	25.1	
Illness in the last 6 months	YES	187	50.1	
	NO	186	49.9	
Overall health within the last 3 months	Good	147	39.7	
	Satisfactory	177	47.8	
	Poor	46	12.4	

Note: $n = 375$.

7.2. Relationship status.

- Regarding the relationship status of educators, it is noted that 43% of respondents are married at the time of the survey, 19.5% are single and 13.8% are divorced.
- From Table 8 it becomes clear that productivity was generally high. Some 15% of the educators felt that they were 100% productive while 67.4% of the respondents felt that their personal productivity ranged between 80 and 99%.
- Cumbersome is the statistic that 75% of the respondents felt that they experienced negative stressful events in last 6 months. Whilst the specific reasons for the stress have not been explored, such a high stress indicator shows that the majority of teachers have experienced negative stress in a relative short timeframe (6 months).

7.3. Illness in last six months. The educator profile on health shows that 50% of the respondents fell ill in the last 6 months. Some 48% of respondents indicated that their overall health is good, while 40% indicated satisfactory health. Only 12% indicated that they have poor health.

Summary

This article provides an overview of the Swaziland education environment and its role players. A review of the history of Swaziland education from colonial education to currently state managed education is provided. It has been found that the Ministry of education in Swaziland is still being challenged in ensuring the attainment of its MDG for education. Whilst there has been some success, the challenge of resources and management expertise still impedes the overall success of education provisioning. The current state of education and its crises is explored together with a review of the management and governance structures that preside of state provided education. Swaziland education is at a point of crises that has resulted in closure of schools, lost classroom time and a show of no confidence in the policies and government decisions influencing school education. In particular an overview of the managerial challenges faced in the Swaziland education sector is explored as well as the issues of policy and planning in the education system. The subsequent article focuses on diversity in the education system and how this may influence the overall mission of education provisioning in Swaziland.

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Appendix: abbreviations used

UPE – Universal primary education

EDS – Education development strategy

NEC – National education commission

NRC – National review commission

UNESCO – United Nations education, scientific and cultural organization

MDG – Millennium development goals

REO – Regional education officers

ETSDS – Education, training and skills development sector

GER – Gross enrolment ratio

GOS – Government of Swaziland

EDSEC – Swaziland education and training sector policy