

The Relationship between Leadership Lessons and Vegetable Importation Ban in Botswana

¹Baoki Ditau
Phd Candidate
University of Zambia

Abstract:- Botswana imposed a nationwide import ban on some vegetable or horticultural products into Botswana with effect from January 1, 2022. This ban according to the Minister of Agriculture, Fidelis Molao, as stated in Mmegi newspaper, www.mmegi.bw is meant to improve food security at national and household levels in Botswana. Molao, further states that this vegetable import ban is meant to support local farmers and to foster agricultural independence and will run for a period of 2 years, upon which it will be reviewed. The ban further serves to help grow the agricultural sector in Botswana. After 2 years the ban will then be reviewed to determine if it continues, or not. In some sectors of Botswana government leadership, this ban is also meant to reduce the country's high import bill. The vegetable products which are banned for import into the country includes, tomatoes, ginger, watermelons, butternuts, potatoes, carrots, beetroots, cabbage, lettuce, turmeric, peppers, green mealies and herbs. This study therefore was carried out to assess this relationship between leadership lessons (empowerment, strategic thinking, adaptability, self-awareness, and communications) and how they(lessons) relate to the vegetable importation ban in Bo

I. INTRODUCTION

The government of Botswana recently imposed a ban on the importation of some agricultural products, particularly on some horticultural products. The reasons advanced by the government leadership was that Botswana has a very high import bill and also to stimulate local agricultural sector by guaranteeing them a market. They (government) also stated that they will be studying the situation presented by this decision and would periodically review their decision. This research work fundamentally seeks to understand the relationship between the leadership lessons and the import ban of vegetable, and its impact to the key stakeholders in the country. In a nutshell this study seeks to establish those leadership lessons that the government would take from this import ban and how they will impact key stakeholders, namely the farmers, the business in Botswana and lastly the general population in Botswana.

➤ *Statement of the Problem*

How does the decision of the government of Botswana affect the provision of horticultural products to all key stakeholders in Botswana? This statement of the problem therefore seeks to establish the two variables that needs to

be investigated being the government's decision to ban the importation of agricultural products and the impact of that decision on key stakeholders, being farmers, retailers and the general population.

➤ *Aim / Purpose of Study*

The purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the lessons that Botswana government leadership learns from their decision to ban some agricultural products and how that decision has impacted on the stakeholders being the local farmers, retailers and general members of the public who live in Botswana. From this study it is evident that the purpose of this study will focus on two (2) key issues being to examine the lessons to government due to this decision and secondly the impact of that decision of key stakeholders mentioned above who are impacted by that decision.

➤ *General / Specific Objectives of the Study*

The objectives of this study are listed below;

- Are to describe the effects of the government decision to ban the importation of some agricultural products.
- Impact of the government decision on government policy that the government intended to rectify.
- Impact of the government policy on key stakeholders, farmers, retailers, economic bill and lastly general citizenry.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several key areas in this research work which are important to this study and are listed below;

Leadership lessons in decision making is a very critical tool, Salahuddin (2016) asserts that leadership and decision making play a central role in influencing policy and focusing leadership to attain among others, influencing others, goals setting and above all set goals. In this case with the decision made by the government of Botswana, the leadership of the country faced with the decisions to make emanating from the high import bill which according to Statistics Botswana, trade statistics which states that Botswana has an import bill of 1 billion US Dollars per month. From this statistics one can see that Botswana suffers from imbalances in trade and as a result, the government target some segments of the economy in which to reduce this high import bill. Among those sectors targeted was the agricultural industry, with the horticultural sector being the target in which some produces will be banned

from importing. This decision according to the ministry of Agriculture and Food Security website was subject to termly review and depending on the leadership lessons, then they (leadership lessons learnt) will determine a decision regarding this import ban.

International trade is another important aspect that is impacted on by the decision of the government of Botswana. According to the United Nations (UN) document on International trade manual for Latin America and the Caribbean, United Nations, International Trade and Inclusive Development (2014) states that international trade helps develop countries far better than the silo protectionist policies as international helps provide cheaper services due to economies of scale and scope which is the opposite of what trade protectionism does as it negatively impact the customer who has to bear the expensive costs that ultimately results as a results of lack to limited competition. This UN document further posits that as a results of this limited perspective industries in countries fail to build proper synergies needed to build home industries that to growing the competitive advantages of the synergistic industries in a country.

According to Acemoglu and Robinson (2012), states that countries that subscribe to free trade and governments assumed regulatory posture are like to be more successful than the countries. In this case for Botswana, the decision to ban the import of some agricultural products provide an insightful example, as whether it will be a short or long term decisions and its impact on growing the agricultural sectors enough to compete regionally and globally. This is the question that this research work seeks to find an answer to. How does this decision by the government impact the consumer needs? Farmers and lastly the country.

➤ *Research Questions*

- What effect does the Botswana government leadership's decisions affect key stakeholders in the local economy?
- What lesson has the government of Botswana learnt as a result of this ban & how those lessons influence the government decision/s?
- What is the impact of the government decision on the local economy?
- Are there any other mitigating factors that accompanies this government decision to ban the import of some horticultural products?
- Effects of the government decision on the general citizenry?
- Has this decision been beneficial to the country ?
- Has there been a decrease in the Botswana government importation bill ?
- Has there been growth in the size of production to the Botswana to the retail industries by local producers?
- What measures have been put in place to ensure that local producers are able to compete with international producers, without government intervention ?
- Is this government policy sustainable ?

➤ *Research Methodology*

This research used the qualitative method as this was a requirement for this research work. The primarily research design for this research will be qualitative research which emanates from a question posed at the beginning of this research work which seeks to answer the question about the choices in International trade theories on trade restrictions, free trade or protectionism in trade. This research was entitled was The Relationship between Leadership Lessons & Vegetable Importation Ban in Botswana.

➤ *Significance of the Study*

This study is important as it examines the topical issue that is currently affecting Botswana and the African region at large. The decision by the government of Botswana presents an interesting perspective as it offers an insights on how government decisions can impact an industry. In this case the agriculture sector. Does a ban in agriculture presents an opportunity for the agricultural sector to grow in Botswana? Without this ban, can't the country's agricultural sector grow? How does this ban impact on farmers, on the general economic activities of the country? Botswana is a signatory to the common Southern African Customs Union (SACU) how does this ban affect SACU. There is also the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AFCFTA) which presents countries with access to market upon becoming a member? Isn't Botswana protectionist stance counter progress in the African region? This research work examines these significant factors mentioned above.

➤ *Result of the Study*

Structured interviews were conducted between November 2022 and January 2023. These interviews were structured to get a deeper understanding of how various stakeholders were affected by this decision to ban vegetables import into Botswana and 15 professionals working at the Ministry of Agriculture, Botswana Parliament, BURS, BUAN, BAMB, farmers, retail and wholesaler's representatives were targeted. These professionals were targeted because they each had a role to play in the agricultural sector and at the same time were directly affected by this government leadership decision.

The interviewees were asked for their point of view on the decision by government of Botswana leadership to Ban the importation of some vegetable products into Botswana. Of the five stakeholders who took part in the study only the farmers felt that this decision was good for their sector. These farmers felt that as a result of this government ban, they had been able to sell their produce to the market.

Retailer & wholesale representative stated that since this ban, the quality of the vegetable product has declined. This interviewee felt that the quality of the product though inferior had no bearing on the produce as they still paid a lot for the produce. There was also a complaint about inconsistency of supply by farmers, who mostly were subsistence in nature and couldn't do contract farming.

Student, the student for his part felt that BUAN was not really doing enough to graduate students who could fill this niche. This student felt that the student's intake at

BUAN was not skewed towards horticultural, agronomy like subjects which could produce students who are ready to produce vegetable produce that help fill the market need.

III. METHODOLOGY

Primarily the research methodology for this research will be qualitative research which emanates from a question posed at the beginning of this research work which seeks to answer the question about the choices in International trade theories on trade restrictions, free trade or protectionism in trade. Botswana in this case adopted to restrict international trade in the agriculture sector by targeting in particular trade restriction in the horticulture sector. There will be a mixture of methodologies that this study is going adopt, therefore, there will be primary and secondary mythologies used in this research.

Data gathering Instruments will be designed to ask key stakeholders about the impact of this government decision, key among the participants will be the employees of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Farmers, Retail stores personnel and lastly the general population who are the consumers of these agricultural products. Secondary sources of information will also be used to augment gaps.

➤ *Sample Size and Participants Selection*

Sample size is expected to be eighty (80) participants from the target group of government officials at the ministry of Agriculture, Retailers, Farmer and general consumer population groups.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has established that the ban played an integral part in the life of the entire country and not just on the farmers. The impact of this ban is indeed far reaching. This research work has concluded that this ban although imposed on the country by the leadership of the country has resulted in households losing so much money. The general consumer was at the mercy of both the farmers and the retailers. The price of vegetables even though they are home grown has tripled. The fact that there was always inconsistent supply of vegetables thorough out this ban means that there was always scarcity. As a result of that scarcity with the demand exceeding the supply the prices of the produce were always high. A case in point being the potatoes which almost out of all the vegetables were the scarcest. There were times running into weeks when there was a huge shortage of the potatoes. There was also a shortage of peppers and there was inconsistency of supply of almost all vegetables. This in a way had a negative bearing on food security. The import bill is still significantly higher and there is need to investigate why this ban has not been effective in bringing down the food import bill.

Farmers benefitted he most during this ban because they had a captive market which was receptive of all the farm produce. Quality was not important as there was such scarcity that anything could be sold. Out of all the stakeholders it is probably the horticultural farming that had

the best opportunity to grow. Government financier for farmers the Citizen Entrepreneurial Development Agency (CEDA) which developed a package to assist farmers. This was a welcome development as some farmers were able to access finance and develop their farming operations. Another government training arm the Local Enterprise Authority (LEA) also assisted farmers to build capacity. For this ban to succeed and reach its goal there was need for it to be prolonged as with any development issue, it takes time.

The retailers and wholesalers also made profits by profiteering during this ban. The consumers had no option but to pay whatever the stores were charging. The issue of scarcity also made it difficult for consumers to try and buy from the competing stores as it meant that one must buy vegetable produce such as potatoes because if one does not buy, he or she may find that they have run out. There is no doubt that due to profiteering many households were negatively affected by the ban. To compound this problem, the government also increased the value added tax (vat) on the already heavily priced good. The purchasing power parity of show that prices of vegetables were steep in Botswana for vegetables than in some neighboring states as a result some of the Botswana nationals would go but these vegetables and hen illegally sell them in the country. The status quo with exception of the farmers' situation has remained the same with foreign owned retailers controlling the market. This research concludes that he building of the local value chain in the agricultural sector has not happened.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Abraham D (2019). How Israel Became a World Leader in Agriculture and Water. Insight for Today's Developing Countries. Tony Blair Institute.
- [2]. Acemoglu D and Robinson J (2012), Why Nations Fail: Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty. Crown Publishers.
- [3]. Ashley A (2012). Self-Awareness and the Evolution of Leaders: A Need for A Better Measure of Self Awareness. Research Gate.
- [4]. Collins J (2001). Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't. Harper Collins Publishing.
- [5]. Covey S. (2006). The speed of Trust: One thing that changes everything. Free press.
- [6]. Dingake O.K (2011). Unearthing The Hidden Treasure: The Untold Story of Gobe Matenge. Medi Publishing.
- [7]. Dungy T (2001). The Mentor Leader: Secrets to Building People and Teams that win consistently. Tyndale House Publishers.
- [8]. Edoke E (2012). Effective and Organizational Performance: A case of National Youth Service Corps - Kogi State. University of Nigeria.
- [9]. Goldsmith M (2009). Mojo: How to Get it, how to Keep it, how to Get It Back If you lose it. Marshall Goldsmith Inc.
- [10]. Good Kenneth (2008). Diamonds, Dispossession and Democracy in Botswana. Jacana Media.

- [11]. Green H (2014). Use of Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks in a qualitative Research. Nurse Researchers. 21,6, 34-38
- [12]. www.sustainabledevelopment.un.org/Botswana
- [13]. www.mmegi.bw
- [14]. www.sundaystandard.info
- [15]. www.statibots.org/bw/mechandise-trade-statistics-monthly-digest-2020
- [16]. www.gov.bw/ministry-of-agriculture-and-food-security
- [17]. www.unitednations.org/international-trade-and-inclusivedevelopment/building-synergieswww.farmersreviewafrica.com
- [18]. www.hortidaily.com/Botswana/ban