



CONTRIBUTION OF THE TEACHING ENVIRONMENT ON THE PROVISION OF QUALITY EDUCATION IN THE GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF KARAGWE DISTRICT IN, KAGERA, TANZANIA

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to examine the contribution of the teaching environment on the provision of quality education in the government secondary schools of Karagwe district in, Kagera, Tanzania. The study was guided by Equity theory developed by Stacy Adams in 1960s. The theory guided the study to relate the working conditions and quality education by using both independent and dependent variables from the conceptual framework which was adopted from Tusiime (2014). The study used mixed approach and the research design used was cross section research design. The sample size was 10 heads of schools and 98 teachers from the government secondary schools in Karagwe district. The study used probability and non-probability sampling, structured interviews, questionnaires, focused group discussion, documentary views and observation to conduct the study. The findings portrayed that; poor working conditions for teachers, late payment of salaries, lack of enough teaching/learning facilities and lack of other motivational incentives have jeopardized the provision of quality education in Karagwe district. Thus it is highly recommended that the government and other education stakeholders should play the vital role to reverse the situation. The education budget should be increased so as to meet the dire demand for teaching/learning materials as well improving the working conditions for teachers so that the provision of secondary education may meet the required education goals.

Keyword: Teaching; Teaching Environment; Quality Education;

Introduction and Background

Providing quality education has become a concern of paramount importance in discussions on education worldwide and the concern is shared equally by all the stakeholders at all levels of education including the secondary Education. However, the poor working conditions in many countries including Tanzania have over time seriously eroded ability of many teachers from carrying out their role of providing quality education in acceptable manner.

Pannell (2019) argues that, there are key issues if not considered; the teacher is likely to fail to provide quality education to the learners. Such key issues include

salaries, teachers' housing, benefits, status and workload among others. On the same line of thought Bishay (2018) states that, when people work under inconvenient conditions they may end up with low performance and face occupational health problems like high blood pressure, unsettled interpersonal conflicts, stress which cause high absenteeism and turnover at the working station.

In order to identify quality education, a distinction is made between output, outcome and impact indicators. Output indicators are seen as more direct outcomes of schooling. It is most likely measured by means of a form of student assessment, like a standardized achievement



test. Attainment indicators, as for example the number of students that complete a certain period of schooling without delay, are of a more administrative nature. Competencies can be placed on a continuum of types of educational outcome that run from specifically content-oriented to personality traits (Riddell, 2017).

Quality education is likely to be achieved if the working conditions are supportive. Also quality education can also be achieved by promotion of independent learning, promotion of professional teachers, critical thinking and analytical skills, restoration of textbook culture and wide reading of different materials. Besides, it also involves improving the learning and teaching environment, time management for effective learning as well as improving science teaching in all levels, by introducing Information Communication Technology (ICT) as a tool for teaching and learning (MOEVT, 2014).

According to Mukuni (2017) incentives such as salaries, secondary benefits, and intangible rewards, recognition or sanctions, in developed countries, have traditionally been used to motivate teachers to increase performance in the government secondary schools. Some of the financial incentives are direct such as salary, pension, insurance, bonuses to mention few. Others are indirect such as subsidized meals, clothes or housing.

A study done in Uganda by Mukasa,(2018) indicate that although higher salaries would encourage better performance and improvements in working conditions of teachers' services, are also very important in promoting job satisfaction, motivating teachers, and promoting retention. Teachers in Uganda express a strong desire for more professional support in general, better teaching and learning resources, supportive supervision, and ongoing in service professional development. Nzabairwa & Nkiliye (2012) argue that, in Rwanda some teachers are not committed to teaching in government secondary schools. They are mostly committed to agriculture, livestock, farming, small trade, handcrafts and contractual

tutoring. They also claimed that poor working conditions instigated them to leave the teaching profession.

According to Nzabairwa and Nkiliye (2012), teachers in Rwanda get low salaries compared to other teachers in East African Countries (EAC). Thus they find it hard to satisfy their basic needs which force them to encourage in other business to earn extra income.

On the other hand, Njiru, (2016) observed that teachers in Kenya, experience the twinges of low salary, unfavorable conditions of service and stagnation in the same job. This has led them to form trade unions to fight for their rights.

Obagi (2015) also noted that, teachers in Kenya complain that, they are not respected as the professionals as it used to be in the colonial times. Teachers are now being disrespected, overloaded with work, paid lowly, living in poor houses or renting expensive houses which they find hard to maintain instead of being provided with such facilities by the government or other stakeholders.

Similar cases in Tanzania were observed by Lyimo (2015) who observed that many teachers teaching in government secondary schools, are experiencing various problems in their work stations. He also noted that the situation was worsened by World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) through Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) both agencies imposed tough conditions on the government spending in Tanzania. Complying to the given conditions the government was forced to reduce expenditure on social services including education at all levels. Such reduction on public social services affected teachers' remunerations by abolishing all allowances and salary increase (Bishay, 2018).

However, Hargreaves (2015) and Singh *et al.* (2018) argue that, the majority of teachers in developing countries, are living in poor conditions due to low salary, denial of their rights to be given the house to live in and other benefits such as health care, the holiday travel allowance and overtime payments. Thus there was a need to conduct a study and find out to what extent it has



affected the provision of quality education in the government secondary schools in Tanzania too.

Commenting on the same issue, the Minister of Education Professor Ndalichako J. on 16th February 2016, stated that,

“Teachers are the backbone of education. There is no education without teachers, it pains when you look at the working conditions they work in. But there are teachers who are trying their level best to work in such hard conditions. I advise them not to give up. We have planned and started working on them, so that to improve their working conditions” (Dar es Salaam Independent Television (ITV),

Reflecting on Professor Ndalichako’s statement and the problems of education in other countries through experience and literature reviews, the researcher found out that there was a need to conduct the study to find out to what extent the working conditions are affecting the teachers in providing quality education in the government secondary schools of Karagwe district in, Kagera, region in Tanzania.

The Empirical Literature Review

A teacher in a classroom is the main instrument for bringing about qualitative improvement in learning. Such quality is maximized where there is an enabling and supportive environment. The learners, teachers and the school at large participate actively in the process through have opportunities for personal and institutional growth indicated by good performance among other indicators (Glenna, 2017).

Learning environment is made up of physical, psychosocial and service delivery elements. Physical learning environments or the places, in which formal learning occurs, range from relatively modern and well-equipped buildings to open-air gathering places. Psychosocial elements are peaceful and safe environments, especially for girls. Within schools and classrooms, a welcoming and non-discriminatory climate

is critical to creating a quality learning environment (Anders, 2015)

However, Rosenholtz, (2018) argues that, the employee disengagement is increasing and it becomes more important to make workplaces that positively influence workforce. According to him the working environment is perhaps a key root causing employee’s engagement or disengagement. Thus, improving the working environment reduces complaints and absenteeism while increasing productivity.

According Homey (2018) working place satisfaction has been associated with job satisfaction. In recent years, employees comfort on job is now determined by workplace condition and conducive environments. The working conditions have been recognized as an important factor for measuring the employee’s performance and productivity.

Commenting on similar situation Dowling (2017) in her study came across the teacher who stated that:

“I have come to the frightening conclusion that as a teacher I possess the tremendous power to make the learners life miserable or joyful as the result of my working conditions”.

Concurring with Dowling (2017) in his study found out that the workplace environment plays a crucial role for the employees. To date, employees have a large number of working alternatives, but the environment in workplace becomes a critical factor for accepting and or keeping the jobs. The quality of environment in workplace may simply determine the level of employee’s motivation, subsequent performance and productivity.

Besides, Beano (2015) insists that the nature of teaching and learning facilities affect the ability of teaching learners positively or negatively. Such teaching and learning facilities include laboratories, well equipped libraries, staff rooms, conditions of classrooms and class size.

Consequently, for the sake of enabling teachers to provide quality education in the secondary schools of Karagwe



district the government and other education stakeholders have to provide the required infrastructures including the improved working conditions. Hence this study intended to investigate the contribution of the teaching environment on the provision of quality education in the government secondary schools in Karagwe district.

Research Methodology

The research approach used to guide the study was mixed research approach (qualitative and quantitative approach). The cross sectional research design was used so as to collect the required information from larger population within a short period of time (Kothari, 2009). The targeted population was; 51 secondary schools, 51 heads and 653 teachers. However, the study used purposive and random sampling to get samples of 108 respondents whereby 10 were heads of schools and 98 teachers from government secondary schools. Structured interviews,

Table 1 Reasons for not being happy with teaching

Responses from the respondent	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inadequate Teaching Materials	98	100
Lack of staff houses	56	73
Lack of laboratories	60	78
Lack of meals for teachers	70	91
Large number of students in classrooms	67	87
Being overloaded by subjects and extra duties	75	97
Low motivation of teachers	98	100
Lack of rewards systems	68	88

Source: Field data, (2018)

In reference to the respondents' responses as indicated in Table 1 respondents indicated things which make them to hate teaching profession include inadequate of teaching materials 98 (100%), followed by lack of staff houses 56

questionnaires, focused group discussion, documentary views and observation were used in data collection from different targeted respondents. The researcher was also guided by the Code of Ethics and Conduct for the Public Service Tanzania of 1961 which demands the security of the respondents and maintaining confidentiality. All these were done to examine the contribution of the teaching environment and the provision of quality education in the government secondary schools in Karagwe district in Kagera region

Results and Discussion

1. *Reasons for not being happy with teaching profession.*

Teachers were asked if they enjoy their work as professional teachers and they responded by stating that they were not happy with teaching because of various reasons as indicated in Table 1

(73%), lack of laboratories 60 (78%), lack of meals for teachers 70 (91%), large number of students in classrooms 67 (87%), being overloaded by extra duties and subjects 75 (97%), low motivation of teachers 98 (100%), and Lack of rewards systems 68 (88%). From



these presentations it is clear that working related conditions are the major reasons of why provision of quality education in government secondary schools in Karagwe district is deteriorating. This finding concurs with Dowling (2017) who also found that poor working conditions can affect workers morale.

Table 2. Present and missing infrastructures

Infrastructure	Yes	Percentage (%)	No	Percentage (%)
Well-equipped Library	1	10	9	90
Well-constructed laboratories	3	30	7	70
Staff houses	2	20	8	80
Well-constructed staffrooms	6	60	4	40

Source: Field Data, (2018)

From Table 2, only one school had well equipped library and only 2 schools had staff houses and only 3 schools had well-constructed laboratories with the percentage of 30%. Such situation cannot promote the desired provision of quality education.

Commenting on the same issue during the discussion one of the teachers said that

“The problem of not having libraries does not affect the students only. It affects even us teachers. We do not have elsewhere to go for private studies before teaching. We also need to make preparations of lessons, by referring to different current references but we have nowhere to go to do all these preparations before teaching”.

Through observation the researcher noted that in same school, school’s library had a lot of text books that are outdated, subject syllabuses were not there to guide both teachers in preparing to teach and learners in self-studies.

Even one of the respondent stated that:

“Although we have the school library, it is full of textbooks which are outdated. They are irrelevant to the school syllabuses and school curriculum while the books which are relevant are shared one text book per six

2. Status of infrastructures and other teaching learning facilities.

The study requested the heads of schools to explain about the Status of infrastructures and other teaching learning facilities in their given schools. Their responses as indicated on table 2

students or more. This affects provision of quality education so much”.

On the issue of the staff rooms, 60 % of secondary schools had well-constructed staffrooms. Those schools which have no staffrooms, the school committee had to choose one of the classrooms and change it into a staffroom. The rooms were too small to accommodate teachers and to give room for consultation. Such situation could not motivate teachers to come to schools neither to teach nor assist their students per teaching requirements.

Commenting on lack of staff houses one of the heads of school said that some teachers report to school very late because they travel long distance and the problem of public transport since the majority have no private cars to use. Despite of coming late to school, there are some challenges which are attributed to nature of classrooms whereby some classrooms are so small to the extent that learning is by shift which means that students are divided into streams and teachers had to repeat unnecessarily the same topic several times to learners in divided streams. These observations are supported by Homey (2018) who is of the view that when working environment is not good workers suffer.



3. *Extra duties and responsibilities assigned to teachers*

The researchers also wanted to know the other duties and responsibilities professional teachers do apart from

Table 4. Extra curriculum duties and responsibilities

Duties and responsibilities	Frequency	Percentage
Class teacher	40	40.8
Head of department	30	30.6
Guidance and Counselling of student	98	100
Discipline Master/Mistress	10	10.2
Sport Master/Mistress	20	20.4
Subject club leader	35	35.7
Income generating project in charge	15	15.7

Source: Field Data, (2018)

The table 4 shows that guidance and counselling of students was the most dominant activity carried out by teachers (100%). That is all the teachers carried out this responsibility. This was followed by one serving as a class teacher, other responsibilities which were held by teachers include being in charge of clubs, head of department and being in charge of discipline among others. These responsibilities carried out by teachers fully over and above teaching duties over whelmed them.

Conclusion

Conclusively teaching environment for teachers in government secondary schools in Karagwe District is not conducive to promote provision of quality education. Problems such as inadequate teaching/learning materials, poor infrastructures and lack of motivation among others were pointed clearly by participants. Such situation if not considered and resolved with immediate effect, secondary education given will not achieve the desired goals.

Recommendation

Thus it is highly recommended that the government and other education stakeholders should play the vital role to

teaching. Table 4 below summaries different duties and responsibilities carried out by professional teachers in addition to teaching.

reverse the situation. The education budget should be increased so as to meet the dire demand for teaching/learning materials as well improving the working conditions for teachers so that the provision of secondary education may meet the required education goals.

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