

An Assessment of the Causes of Persisting Teachers' Professional Malpractices in Kilwa District

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Abstract

This study assessed the causes of the persisting teacher's professional malpractices in Kilwa District Council. Specifically, the study aimed to identify the types of professional malpractices commonly practised by teachers in secondary schools, and to explore the causes of teachers' professional malpractices in secondary schools. The study employed descriptive design whereby qualitative and quantitative approaches were the means of data collection and analyses. The study sample comprised 5 secondary schools and a total of 60 respondents. Specifically, the respondents were 45 teachers who were randomly selected to respond to the questionnaires while 5 heads of schools, 5 discipline masters, 1 District Education Officer, 2 TSD Officials, 1 Ward Education Officer and 1 Human Resources Officer were purposively selected and interviewed. The findings showed that the most dominant malpractices in Kilwa District were absenteeism, the use of Swahili language in English language classes during teaching and negligence. Moreover, teachers' absenteeism seemed to be the common problem above all in urban and rural schools. Teachers' absenteeism and duty negligence were associated with teachers' low status that seemed associated with their low salaries. Teachers tended to neglect and skip classes, as they had to engage in extra-curricular activities to increase their purchasing power to meet human livelihood. The causes for professional teacher malpractices include bad working conditions, poor management and stress. This situation had managerial implications that if teachers' needs are not fulfilled, not provided with good working environment, welfare and wellbeing are not maintained per government regulations on teaching conditions, the malpractices would persist.

Keywords: Teachers' malpractice, Teachers' ethics

Introduction

In any nation, teachers have a great responsibility of assuring the attainment of major education goals (i.e., students learning). They are responsible for high standards in education, transmission of national values and norms to their pupils by teaching them and/or being good role models. Teachers are the transformer of knowledge who ensures that children learn. They are the role models to students, and in most rural communities, they are the most educated and respected personages (Patrinis & Kagia, 2008). They are at the front line of developing pupils' understanding, skills, learning and core values. Teachers are therefore the most important elements in producing quality education. However, towards this end, teachers are expected to abide by their profession code of conducts. Despite the values that given to teachers and their professional ethics sometimes they are faced by misconduct and lack of integrity which affect the goals of education provision. Teachers' malpractice occurs in various forms and ranges in severity from allegations of direct harm to students (example of malpractices are such as physical or sexual abuse) to an act detrimental to the teaching profession (such as falsifying documentation of continuing education courses or cheating on a professional examination).

For the most part, misconduct by educators occurs either on the school campus or with members of the school community, but can also be something that happens outside of the school environment and does not involve students. Teacher misconduct disturbs the implementation of the planned interventions, particularly the correct functioning of the teaching and learning process (Van Nuland & Khandelwal, 2006). Hence, this study intends to investigate the causes of professional teachers' malpractices in secondary schools, explore the types of professional malpractices commonly practised by teachers in secondary schools and establish strategies that would reduce teachers' malpractices in secondary schools.

Theoretical Review

Malpractice

Akaranga and Ongong (2013) have defined malpractice as a deliberate wrongdoing contrary to official rules that place a person at an unfair advantage or disadvantage. Behaviour results in, or may result in, the subject gaining an unfair advantage in one or more components. Malpractice results from unfair treatment of parties, and results into working inefficiency. This study therefore, adopts this definition in assessment of the causes of persisting teachers' professional malpractices in Kilwa district.

Types of Malpractices in Secondary Schools

Mlozi *et al.* (2013) have documented language as one of the malpractices in secondary schools. In their study, they found out that teachers are using both Kiswahili and English as a medium of instruction in secondary schools. According to the National Education and Training Policy (2014), the medium of instruction in secondary schools is English language. However, the Kiswahili–English malpractice has been taking place in most of the secondary schools in Tanzania.

Education malpractices include plagiarism, collusion and duplication of work (URT, 2009). Plagiarism is the representation of the ideas or work of another person as the candidates' own and collusion is supporting malpractice by another candidate, as in allowing ones' work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another whereas duplication of work: is the presentation of the same work for different assessment components. URT (2009) has also documented that invigilators assist students during examinations. Moreover, malpractices in the conduct of examinations generally take different forms. (i) Host teachers at the examination centre conspire with invigilators. (ii) Parents bribe head teachers or examination invigilators to release examination papers or help their children. (iii) Teachers smuggle their solutions to previously leaked papers into examination rooms for students to view. Rarely, (iv) teachers sat

examinations on behalf of their students (URT, 2005). These irregularities are categorized as malpractices in examinations.

Causes of Malpractice in Secondary Schools

Anangisye and Barrett (2005) have documented corruption as one of the causes of malpractices in secondary schools. Corruption is connected to leakage or cheating in examinations; securing or awarding a position for illegitimate reasons and mismanagement of school resources. They have also reported incidences of teachers cheating when they are alone with candidates. In Tanzania, corruption has not only crippled education system but also other financial and public service sectors. Abusive behaviours have also contributed to the existing secondary school malpractices (Anangisye, 2005 and Barrett, 2005). In Tanzania education system, corporal punishments are allowed within education institutions. These can have far-reaching consequences for the individuals affected and they affect the whole society. Precisely because schools and colleges are places where children and young people learn the norms of social behaviour they have the potential to perpetuate and escalate cycles of violence and corruption across generations.

Inappropriate behaviours in the teaching profession are other factors that contribute to the malpractices in secondary school (Anangisye, 2005 and Barrett, 2005). Behaviours such drunkenness, drug addiction and improper dressing put the whole profession into disgrace. It is hard to conduct any research in schools in Tanzania without encountering teachers, who suffer from alcoholism. This alcoholism is to the great extent affects their ability to do their job. This has escalated malpractices behaviours in secondary schools. Negligence of duty is also one of malpractices in Tanzania (Anangisye, 2005; Barrett, 2005). Teachers' absence to schools and the practice of repeatedly absence without leave for parts of or a whole working day or insubordination to managers is another sign of malpractice among teachers. This illegitimate absenteeism has significantly contributed to serious education quality issues that originate from malpractices.

Research Gap

Most studies (for example Mlozi *et al.*, 2013; URT, 2009) have addressed examination irregularities with less information on causes of teachers' malpractices in secondary schools. Moreover, the study that has addressed the causes of malpractices for example, Anangisye and Barrett (2005) provided only general information on malpractices in secondary schools. Other studies such as. Swart and Wachira (2010) addressed the objectives of SEDP, which were to ensure quality and relevant education, achieve better management and delivery of secondary education services through devolution of authority. This would also manage the problem of teachers' malpractices. REPOA (2003) have outlined strategies to reduce malpractices with no clue on the causes of teachers' malpractices in secondary schools. This exhibits that there is less detailed information on the causes of teachers' malpractices in secondary schools especially in Kilwa district and therefore there was a need for the current study to address that knowledge gap.

Methods

Research Design and Approaches

This research employed descriptive research design whereby quantitative and qualitative research approaches were employed in collecting and analysing data. A mixed methods research approach is a procedure of collecting, and analysing data while "mixing" both qualitative and quantitative research methods in a single study. This has been done in order to get in-depth understanding of a research problem (Christensen, 2004). Mixed approach is the research which uses qualitative or quantitative paradigm in one phase of the research and quantitative research paradigm in another phase or uses both paradigms concurrently (Creswell, 2009; Linchman, 2009). Qualitative research mostly uses words in data collection, analysis and interpretation, while quantitative researches mostly use numerals in data analysis and interpretation.

Sample and Sampling Procedures

It is difficult to study the whole population due to research challenges such as time limit, limited budget and human capital to supervise the task. Therefore, this research used purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques to get the sample. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the Educational Officer (N=1). Human Resources Officer (N=1). Ward Education Officer (N=1) and TSD Coordinators (N=2). These respondents were selected because they are the ones who can provide relevant information that other respondents would not give. For example, the TSD coordinators are the ones who deal with teachers' discipline. Thus, they have all the information concerning teachers' professional malpractices. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 5 schools from which 45 secondary school teachers were selected. From the schools, 5 discipline masters, 5 heads of schools were involved in the study due to their managerial positions. The study used simple random technique because of the targeted population (Secondary school teachers in Kilwa District Council) which consists of big number of teachers. The technique made it possible to avoid bias as it provides a room for teachers to have equal chances to be involved in the sample. The sample was surveyed at their workstations.

Table 1 Sample Size

S/N	Category of Respondents	Number of Respondents
1.	District Education Officer	1
2.	Human Resources Officer	1
3	Ward Education Officer	1
4.	Head of schools	5
5.	Discipline masters	5
6.	TSD Officials	2
7.	Teachers	45
	Total Number of Respondents	60

Methods of Data Collection

Research method is the tools you use to collect data (Dawson, 2002). In this study, the data was collected using both sources: primary and secondary sources. Primary data is that which is collected for the first time, and thus happen to be original in character (Kothari, 2004). Here, the data was collected directly from secondary school teachers (N= 45) through questionnaires which were given to them and head of schools. The data for this study were collected through interviews among the District Education Officers (n= 1). District Human Resources officer (n= 1). Ward Education Officer (n=1) and TSD officials (n=2). Moreover, in this study, there were secondary data that were collected through documentary analyses on the types of professional teacher's malpractices, and strategies to reduce professional teachers' malpractices from various offices such as teachers services department office, heads of schools, discipline masters, District Education Officers and other documentaries related to misconduct by teachers.

Findings and Discussions

Types of Professional Malpractices Commonly Practiced by Teachers

To achieve this objective teachers (N= 45) were provided with a questionnaire with different types of professional teachers' malpractices. The findings are provided in Table 2 hereunder.

Table 2 Distribution of Respondents on the Types of Teachers' Professional Malpractices

Types of malpractice	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total Respondents' View (%)
Alcoholism	2.21	3.68	5.88
Sexual abuse	0.74	2.21	2.94
Absenteeism	8.82	9.56	18.38
Theft	1.47	1.47	2.94
Examination malpractice	0.74	1.47	2.21

Swahili use in non-Swahili classes	8.82	9.56	18.38
Dressing	6.62	6.62	13.24
Conflict	5.15	5.88	11.03
Negligence	7.35	8.09	15.44
Insults	1.47	0.00	1.47
Corporal punishments	4.41	3.68	8.09
Total	47.79	52.21	100.00

Source: Field Work (2015).

The findings show that there are four dominant malpractices by teachers in secondary schools namely Swahili use (18.38%), absenteeism (18.38%), duty negligence (15.44%) and improper dressing (13.24%) (Table 2) The secondary school curriculum in Tanzania has stipulated the use of English language as an official medium of instruction. The use of Swahili in non-Swahili classes in secondary schools is the result of poor English-speaking skills by teachers. This was also the argument by Nyirenda (2003) that supported the usage of English language in teaching as the problem in secondary school teaching. The key information gained during interviews schedules with teachers is that they acknowledge that the use of English in schools does not make students understand subjects. The case seemed more complicated as some of the teachers also admitted to have low English language speaking skills that often mislead students. For example, a teacher from school A explained:

I have found out that when I use Swahili in teaching, students understand me better; this is because they do not have good English background. Some of teachers are not good in English and this may lead to confusion in teaching-learning process.

Absenteeism has also been ranked high in teachers' malpractices. Absenteeism is the result of poor education auditing control. This is from both the school and zone offices. There has been poor education supervision from zones and this has accelerated absenteeism in

secondary schools. Teachers' negligence to duty is also another teaching malpractice that respondents have documented high (15.44%) see Table 2.

Teachers' absenteeism is a result of low patriotic teaching spirits that teachers have. Since the early 1990s the government was not recommending secondary school graduates to attend basic military training which helped to inculcate the spirits of patriotism among others. Although currently, few students have been selected to attend "military-national service", this study argue that the positive impact could hardly be on education institutions since most of the few who attended military service, few go for further studies where they would attend teacher training courses. This situation might substantially degrade national patriotic spirit and it would lead to workers' absenteeism in working places. Thus, the government should restore the national service programme at least for all form six leavers. However, in 1995, a World Bank survey found that 38% of school teachers were reported to have been absent for a minimum of two days in the past week (Schleicher *et al.* 1995). The TSD coordinator in Kilwa explained:

Most of the teachers in Kilwa do not stay at their working stations. Some of them engage in their own commercial business like "bodaboda" Others breach contract without notice and join the private sectors which pays more while others sometimes are absent with legitimate reason such as illness, and maternity but because they do not notify my office I consider them as truant.

Moreover, improper dressing has ranked the last (13.24%) (Table 2) though it seemed to be the dominant teachers' malpractices. This translates into unofficial dressing at school premises. This includes the dressing of clothes like min skirts, tight skirts, coastal "madera", and t-shirts. Not all these are allowed according to the government official dressing code. Unofficial dressing has resulted into students mimicking teachers. Unofficial dressing leads to moral decay.

Teachers were expected to dress in a manner that is appropriate to their status as civil servants (Anangisy, 2005). One teacher argues:

In our school it is normal to see teachers going to the classes, wearing long-traditional dresses in local language commonly called: "dera" which is not professionally acceptable as per dressing code. Teachers tend to wear slippers ("ndala") while they are expected to wear shoes. They just come to teach during their lessons then they go home or do their own business.

Moreover, insults (1.47%), examination malpractices (2.21%), theft (2.94%) and sex abuse (2.94%) have been ranked the least (in terms of percentage) malpractices by secondary school teachers (Table 4.1). These malpractices were reported to be critical in the early 2000s. However, currently due to the government and non-governmental efforts, these malpractices are being less observed. The government and other education stakeholders have played a key role in bringing these malpractices at a minimum level. Conclusively, concerning the types of malpractice commonly practised by teachers, it can be said that absenteeism and Swahili usage in non-Swahili classes were the major types of professional teachers' malpractices that were found in the field. Other malpractices were also observed. These were duty negligence and unprofessional dressing. The results have implication on the teaching practice. It is imperative now that teachers should use Kiswahili as the medium of instruction and be trained on the use of English language due to incompetence noted on the part of teachers in the district. Absenteeism is the result of teacher's extra work to counteract the effect of low salaries in teaching arena. Theft, sex abuse and examination malpractices are low due to increased emphasis on teachers' moral values. Sex abuse is also low due to judicial punishment if one is found guilty of sex abuse. Examination malpractice is almost impossible due to regulations and procedures set by the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA) on conducting national examinations.

Causes of Teachers Professional Malpractices

In this study, the second research objective aimed to explore the causes of professional teachers’ malpractices in secondary schools. In achieving this objective, teachers (N= 35), discipline teachers (N= 05), human resources officer (N=1). District Education Officer (N= 1). TSD coordinators (N= 2) and heads of schools (N= 05) participated in filling in questionnaires and in interview sessions. To achieve this objective teachers (N= 45) were provided with a questionnaire which needed them to state the causes of professional teachers’ malpractices in Kilwa District. Findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Distribution of Respondents on the Causes of Teachers’ Professional Malpractices

Causes	Male (%)	Female (%\$)	Total Respondents’ View (%)
Inadequate education	5.56	2.78	8.33
Experience	4.17	6.25	10.42
Salaries	5.56	4.86	10.42
Working condition	6.94	9.03	15.97
Poor management	5.56	6.94	12.50
Low dedication	3.47	2.78	6.25
Naughty students	4.86	4.86	9.72
Overload	2.78	2.78	5.56
Stress	7.64	4.17	11.81
Moral decay	4.86	4.17	9.03
Total	51.39	48.61	100.00

Source: Field Survey (2015)

Note: In analysing the data (Table 3), the respondents agreed that poor working conditions are the leading reason on professional teachers’ malpractices in Kilwa District.

Results from the field have established the trend in the causes for teachers' malpractices in secondary schools. These causes were established as working conditions (15.97%), working stress (11.81%), and unsatisfactory salaries (10.42%). see (Table 3). Working condition is translated into housing, water access, availability, and access to electricity and health services. These have posed threats to employment of several teachers in different schools. The conditions have led to working demoralization and have resulted into professional malpractices by secondary teachers.

Moreover, working stress has also been remarked as a cause of professional teachers' malpractices in secondary schools. Stress can cause one to act irresponsible and causes inconveniences to codes of conduct established. Teachers working stress is derived from unsatisfied working conditions and a large number of students that are deemed to be taught by one teacher. Unfortunately, there is no any government agency that deals with teachers' stress. This poses a danger since stress may escalate. In the interview, the DEO explained:

Most of the teachers' complaints and cases I get from head teachers, involve teachers' bad working environment. In this District, there are no important social services like hospitals, markets, electricity and clean water near the schools. This forces teachers to travel far away for social services which in most cases make most of them to be absent from schools.

Moreover, low salaries have been the major complaints of teacher for decades in Tanzania. The government argues that, it cannot pay well teachers due to the ever-increasing number. This has demoralized teachers. It is one of the causes for malpractices in secondary schools. Salary reviews conducted by the government do not match with the annual inflation rate the government is supposed to cover. This cause of malpractice will continue to exist unless the government vests itself in the matter. This is in line with the previous study by Betwel (2013) who argues that the majority of the teachers regardless

of location of their schools believed that inadequate salaries and low income influenced teachers to engage in misconduct. Respondents indicated that since salaries and their income were not satisfactory, teachers were forced to engage in private activities to supplement their income. A teacher from Dodomezi secondary school lamented:

The teaching profession has no allowances than depending only on salaries. However, the salary itself is very low and there is no other means such as over time and parental allowances to increase the earnings of teachers. Thus, if teachers do not engage in other commercial they can die of hunger.

Table 4.2 has also exhibited that teachers' overload (5.56%). low dedication (6.25%). inadequate education (8.33%). and naughty students (9.72%) are minor causes of teachers' malpractices at schools. The overload is decreasing as the government has made initiatives to increase number of teachers. However, it seems that teachers' low dedication was given low emphasis despite the fact that there are different non-governmental organizations such as TWaweza and HakiElimu addressing teachers' concerns. Moreover, Anangisye (2005) suggests that the main reason for teachers' involvement in misconduct was the low status of their roles given by their own students and communities in which they live. Respondents also lowly prioritized inadequate education as the government has programmes to engage teachers on education upgrading while working. These are education evening programmes and study leaves provided for teachers. The issues of naughty students are also being taken care of by some of the NGO's stressing father and mother to engage in children parenting for better education. In interview, the DEO commented:

I think lack of promotion of professional standards among most of teachers in Kilwa district results into documentation of teacher's malpractices. This is because they have low knowledge on how should behave at school

and out of classrooms albeit this has been among the contents of teacher training.

Overall, working conditions, poor management and stress are the main causative agent of professional teachers' malpractices at schools. Poor working condition translates into poor or inadequate basic needs, lack of and inaccessibility of important infrastructure and inadequate teaching materials in schools. Poor management translates results into demoralization of teachers and therefore triggers teachers' malpractices. Stress can cause one to behave inappropriately unintentionally. Teachers stress is caused by a combination of problems and results into teaching malpractices.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary of the Findings

The major aim of this study was to assess the causes of the persisting teachers' professional malpractices in Kilwa District Council. The specific objectives were: to identify the types of professional malpractices commonly practiced by teachers in secondary schools, to explore the causes of teachers' professional malpractices in secondary schools, and to establish strategies that would reduce teacher's malpractices. The study was conducted in 5 schools in Kilwa District Council. Generally, the findings of the study were as follows:

- Absenteeism and Swahili usage were the major types of professional teachers' malpractices that are leading in Kilwa district. It is therefore, imperative that teachers use Kiswahili as the medium of teaching due to language barriers and incompetence during teaching.
- Absenteeism seemed to be the result of teachers' extra work to counteract the effect of low salaries in teaching arena. Theft, sex abuse and examination malpractices were low due to increased emphasis on teachers' moral values in teachers' training. Sex abuse was also low due to judicial punishment if one was found guilty of sexual abuse. Examination malpractice

was almost impossible due to the regulation and procedures set by the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA) on conducting national examinations.

- Working conditions, poor management and stress were the main causative agents of professional teachers' malpractices at schools. Poor working condition translates itself to poor or inadequate basic needs, lack and inaccessibility of important infrastructures and inadequate teaching materials in schools. Poor management translates results into demoralization to teachers and therefore triggers teachers' malpractices. Stress can cause one to behave inappropriately unintentionally. Teachers' stress is caused by a combination of problems and results into teaching malpractices.

General Conclusion

Based on the major findings of this study, the following conclusions can be made:

- The study revealed that the most dominant malpractices in Kilwa District are absenteeism, the use of Swahili in classes and the negligence of duty. Absenteeism is the common problem in urban and rural schools in Kilwa district. Absenteeism and duty negligence were associated with teachers' low purchasing power that arises from low salaries. Teachers neglect and skip classes, as they have to engage in extracurricular activities to meet human basic livelihood.
- The study shows that the causes for professional teachers' malpractices include poor working conditions, poor management and stress. This means that if teachers are not cared for to appropriate standards of life as per government regulations on teaching conditions, there is a great possibility of persisting of teachers' malpractice in secondary schools. Political will is needed to deal with teachers' welfare. Better management and transparency are generally suggested strategies that can reduce malpractices in Kilwa District council. It is proved that lack of good relationship and

transparency between education managers and teachers were the main reasons for teachers' misbehaviours. This is mainly due to inadequate management system that stresses on transparency. Therefore, better management and transparency are dependent to bringing about education good governance.

Recommendations for Actions

This study was conducted in Kilwa district. From the study, the following recommendations can be made:

- Many types of teachers' professional malpractice can be addressed by financial support to the education sector. The education sector needs more financial inputs to address teaching and practising of teaching ethics. This can be done through media that reach the largest population of teachers in the country. However, some of non-governmental organizations like HakiElimu and TWaweza have started some initiatives on this, more and support is needed to cover all ethics aspects in education.
- The causes of malpractices have their origin in political will to value education. Moreover, political will in education would mean a change in working conditions, teachers' remuneration and promotions in education sector. Political leaders can achieve this through political forums. For example, education stakeholders may use Education Parliamentary Committee to pressurise for changes in the education sector. This can result into parliamentary discussions that can lead the executive to act upon proposed changes.
- Generally, good governance is at the centre of strategies to reduce malpractices in secondary schools. Good governance caters for all strategies to work efficiently in reducing or /and eliminating teachers' malpractices in secondary schools. Addressing good governance means addressing for change in management practices in schools. This can be attained through leadership, and frequent training to heads of schools. Such

trainings may involve training aid in changing paradigm and change in management regimes.

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