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Editorial

On behalf of the editorial and production team, I am humbled and privileged to introduce to you Issue Number 1, Volume 15 of the Journal of Issues and Practices in Education (JIPE), of the Faculty of Education – the Open University of Tanzania. I sincerely acknowledge the contribution of all authors and reviewers who dedicated their time to writing and reviewing the manuscripts that form the current Issue. I also appreciate the hard work of the Editorial Board of JIPE and the secretariat team for bringing out this issue of the Journal.

The Journal of Issues and Practice in Education (JIPE) is a refereed journal. The journal is published twice a year – June and December. JIPE is designed to inform both academics and the public on issues and practices in the field of education. The current issue comprises of seven (7) scholarly articles and one (1) book review. These articles delve into *Second Language Learning; Parent-Teacher Associations; Fire Outbreaks in Secondary Schools; Shortage of Science and Mathematics Teachers; and Management of Truancy in Public Primary Schools*. Others are *Civil Servants' Perception Towards the Open University of Tanzania; and Attitude of Grade III A Teachers Towards Joining the Ordinary Diploma in Primary Teacher Education of the Open University of Tanzania*. As stated earlier, the current Issue comprises a book review – *Reflections on the Birth of the University of Dodoma* – as well. The editorial team expects that you will benefit from reading the articles and a book review published in this issue. I look forward to receiving more manuscripts for the forthcoming JIPE issues.

Dr Mohamed Msoroka
CHIEF EDITOR

The Purpose of the Publication

The Journal of Issues and Practice in Education (JIPE) is a refereed journal produced by the Faculty of Education of the Open University of Tanzania. It is published twice a year that is June and December. The journal is designed to inform both academics and the public on issues and practice related to the field of education.

The journal provides academics with a forum to share experiences and knowledge. It also informs the public about issues pertinent to their day-to-day educational experiences. Sharing information related to education is important not only for academic, professional and career development but also for informed policy makers and community activity in matters pertaining to the field of education.

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Demographic Factors and Second Language Learning: What Motivates Children to Learn Another Language in the South of the Sahara?

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ABSTRACT

Research shows that attitude and motivation are the primary impetus towards second language (L2) learning. However, there are differences among learners regarding their attitude and motivation towards the target language as learners' backgrounds are diverse. This article explains how demographic factors affect children's attitudes and motivation towards English in the South of the Sahara, drawing from case study research conducted in Zanzibar-Tanzania. The Attitude-Motivation Battery tool by Gardner (2004) was used to generate data from 400 Grade Six pupils in Zanzibar. Data were analysed through SPSS, version 26, to develop correlations between variables; i.e., age, sex, parents' support, area of residence and parents' occupation. The study revealed that most pupils had an affirmative attitude towards English. There is a significant relationship between pupils' attitudes and parents' support (0.001), area of residence (0.001) and pupils' attitudes. Also, there is a significant relationship between pupils' motivation and area of residence (0.001) and parents' support (0.001). Children's motivation to learn English is more instrumentally triggered than intrinsic. Other factors like age and parents' occupation did not affect pupil's attitudes and motivation towards English. Therefore, language policies and the curriculum should be developed based on children's aspirations. Also, L2 scaffolds should be designed based on learners' diversities in resources and geographical backgrounds.

Keywords: Second language learning, South of the Sahara, demographic factors, attitude, motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, there has been intensive research on teaching and learning a second language (L2) in the South of Sahara (for example, see Sane, 2022; Rubagumya et al., 2021; Malekela, 2010; Qorro, 2006; Swila, 2009; Ismail, 2007; Block-Utne, 2003). However, most of the studies have focused on policies, pedagogy, and resources while extralinguistic factors, particularly attitude and motivation, have not undergone prolific research. This might have affected the policies, pedagogy, and resources to strengthen the teaching and learning a second language in the region. This article explains what motivates learners to learn a second language in the South of the Sahara using a case study of the Zanzibar Islands. The Government of Zanzibar¹ introduced a new system of Education in 2006 to introduce early immersion in upper primary education; i.e., Grade Five and Six. As such, the language of teaching and learning (LoLT) switched from Kiswahili to English for Mathematics, Science, Geography, and ICT in upper primary education (Swila, 2009 & MoEVTZ, 2006).

The current Education and Training Policy of Zanzibar states that “Kiswahili shall continue as the medium instruction in the public pre-primary and primary schools, except for Mathematics and science subjects beginning in Primary Five where English shall be used” (MoEVTZ, 2006, p. 36). This early immersion is meant to produce learners who can use English in different communicative contexts, including learning through English in secondary education. While the policymakers aspire to develop nationals who can communicate in English; English proficiency has been on thin ice (Maalim, 2015 & MoEVTZ, 2006; Ismail, 2007). The situation worsens even after introducing English as the LoLT in upper primary education. It requires research to explain whether the observed limited proficiency in English is propagated by attitudes and motivation toward the language. This is important to help the Government implement the education policy as it is understood; i.e., English is the medium of instruction for post-primary schools and required for commerce and tourism

¹ Zanzibar is an autonomous part of the United Republic of Tanzania. It comprises of two Islands, namely Pemba and Unguja.

in Zanzibar (MoEVTZ, 2006). The term attitude is generally a hypothetical psychological construct, which defines or promotes certain behaviour and explains their directions and persistence. It is a convenient and efficient way of explaining patterns in behaviour (Baker, 1992). On the other hand, motivation refers to a set of beliefs and expectations which trigger interest in learning a language, e.g., employment and academic excellence (Pawlak, 2012; Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011; Pourfeiz, 2016; Ushida, 2005). Therefore, research to understand learners' psychological construct and motivation towards a language would inform interventions on observed limited language proficiency. Learners with positive beliefs about a language tend to develop a positive attitude toward learning the language whereas negative beliefs would lead to class anxiety, low cognitive achievement, and negative attitude (Yang, 1999; Victoria & Lockhart, 1995). The research available shows that many language policies do not explore and develop from communities' interests in the planned languages (Rubagumya, 1990 & Qorro, 2006). This article partly addresses the gap by informing the learners' interest in learning a second language drawing from the experience of learning English in Zanzibar.

Methodology

This study used a case study design to generate quantitative data through a questionnaire survey that was distributed to 400 Standard Six pupils in Unguja and Pemba Islands of Zanzibar. Zanzibar was taken as a case study because English was introduced as the LoLT for some subjects in upper primary schools in 2006 with the intent to strengthen English proficiency among pupils. The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery by Gardner (2004) was used to assess pupils' attitudes and motivation in Zanzibar. The tool was translated into Kiswahili for learners to comprehend it easily. Thus, pupils responded to 116 questions on attitudes and motivation. The Attitude/Motivation Test Battery is a standardized tool that has been used in research conducted in various countries on attitudes and motivation toward language learning, including Brazil, Croatia, Japan, Poland, Romania and Spain (Gardner, 2004). Purposive sampling was used to select four districts from the Islands; two districts from each Island, as well as the schools to include in the study. As such, the study picked one good-

performing and one poor-performing district from each region. The four districts are Kati District, Mjini District, Micheweni District and Chake Chake District. Then, one poor-performing school and one better-performing school were selected from each district (the schools are anonymised as schools A to H). Where a school had more than one Grade Six stream, one stream was randomly selected from each school. Usually, primary school classrooms in Zanzibar have an average of 45-50 pupils in one stream. Having obtained signed consent from the head teacher, all pupils present in the selected stream on the day of the visit were asked to fill out the questionnaires. Data were analysed through SPSS, version 26, to develop correlations between variables; i.e., age, sex, parents' support, area of residence and occupation. Pearson's correlation analysis model was employed to establish a linear relationship of variables with pupils' attitudes and motivation.

Results

Pupils' Attitude towards English in Zanzibar Public Primary Schools

The findings revealed that the majority of the pupils in Zanzibar public primary schools (80.5%) had a positive attitude towards English while the rest (19.5%) had a negative attitude. Figure 1 summarizes the attitudes among the pupils.

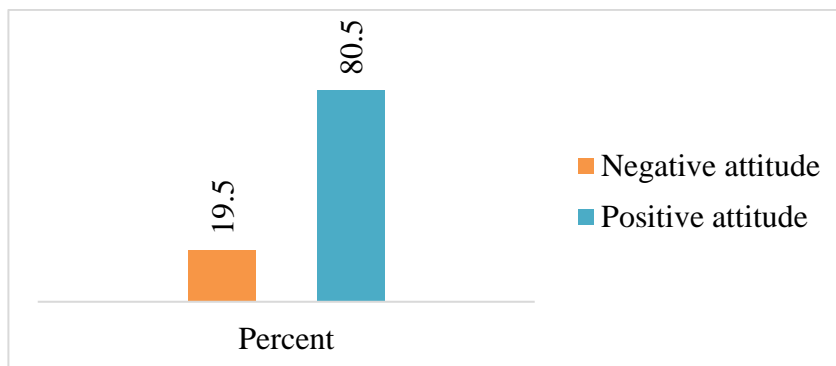


Figure 1: Pupils' Attitudes towards English in Zanzibar primary Schools (N=400)

Pupils' Attitudes and Area of Residence

The majority of pupils from Kusini Pemba (92.1%) and Mjini Magharibi (88.3%) had a positive attitude towards English while 11.7% and 7.9% respectively had a negative attitude towards the English language. Correlation analysis revealed that there are some differences among pupils regarding their attitude towards English based on the pupils' area of residence ($P > 0.001$) and parents' support ($P > 0.001$). On the other hand, there is no significant ($P > 0.80$) relationship between fathers' employment and mothers' employment ($P > 0.41$) and pupils' attitudes (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: Pupils' Attitudes and Area of Residence (N=400)

| | Pupils' attitudes | | Total | Chi-square | P-value |
|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|------------|---------|
| | Negative attitudes | Positive attitudes | | | |
| Region's name | | | | | |
| Kusini Unguja | 29(29.6%) | 69(70.4%) | 98 | 25.39 | <0.001 |
| Mjini Magharibi | 12(11.7%) | 91(88.3%) | 103 | | |
| Kaskazini Pemba | 29(29.6%) | 69(70.4%) | 98 | | |
| Kusini Pemba | 8(7.9%) | 93(92.1%) | 101 | | |

Table 2: Pupils' Attitudes and Parents' Occupation (N=400)

| | Pupils' attitudes | | Total | Chi-square | P-value |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------|------------|---------|
| | Negative attitude | Positive Attitude | | | |
| Father's occupation | | | | | |
| Employed | 48(19.9%) | 193(80.1%) | 241 | 0.07 | 0.80 |
| Unemployed | 30(18.9%) | 129(81.1%) | 159 | | |
| Mother's occupation | | | | | |
| Employed | 46(18.3%) | 206(81.7%) | 252 | 0.67 | 0.41 |
| Unemployed | 32(21.6%) | 116(78.4%) | 148 | | |

Pupils' Motivation towards Learning English in Zanzibar Public Primary Schools

In establishing pupils' motivation, the analysis was based on items 7, 8, 15, 17, 28, 35, 59 and 72, 79 of the Attitude and Motivation Battery Test. Variable principal component analysis was employed in the items from the checklist to measure pupils' motivation toward English. Likert scale questions were extracted into different components. The variables that had more representatives were rotated into the first component and the average mean was computed to establish pupils' motivation for the continuous variable. Then, the average of the motivation for the continuous variable was computed and used for the categorization of the mean below (Low motivation) and the mean above (High motivation). The analysis revealed that most pupils (59.0%) had high motivation towards learning English in Zanzibar public primary schools. Pupils believed, for example, English would be useful in getting a job, being more educated and career. For them, it would be a great loss to study English if Zanzibar had no contact with English-speaking countries.

Table 3: Pupils' Motivation towards Learning English in Zanzibar (N=400)

| Variable | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Pupils 'motivation | | |
| Low motivation | 164 | 41.0 |
| high motivation | 236 | 59.0 |

Further analysis revealed that pupils' motivation towards English also varied depending on the areas of residence. The areas which were revealed to have high motivation among the pupils are Mjini Magharibi 72 (30.5%) and Kusini Pemba 73 (30.9%). Pupils in other regions, Kusini Unguja 66(40.2%) and Kaskazini Pemba 39(23.8%), had low motivation compared to the former.

Table 4: Pupils' Area of Residence and their Motivation to Learn English (N=400)

| Pupils 'Motivation | Region Name | | | | Total |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------|
| | Kusini Unguja | Mjini Magharibi | Kaskazini Pemba | Kusini Pemba | |
| Low motivation | 66(40.2%) | 31(18.9%) | 39(23.8%) | 28(17.1%) | 164 |
| High motivation | 32(13.6%) | 72(30.5%) | 59(25.0%) | 73(30.9%) | 236 |

Correlation analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between pupils' motivation and area of residence ($P < 0.001$) and parents' support ($P < 0.001$).

Table 5: Pupils' Demographic Characteristics against their Motivation (N=400)

| Variables | Pupils' motivation |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| School | $r = 0.48, P < 0.001$ |
| Region | $r = 0.30, P < 0.001$ |
| Age | $r = -0.123, P = 0.014$ |
| Parents' support | $r = 0.732, P < 0.001$ |

With regards to the parents' support, most pupils pointed out that their parents find that it is important for them to learn English and are very interested in everything they do in English.

Discussions

The analysis revealed that most of the pupils in Zanzibar have an affirmative attitude towards English. What may count as a difference between learners 'positive attitude in Zanzibar and the learners from developed countries is the motivation to learn English. While the learners in developed countries learn a second (i.e., English and French) for enhanced skills and networking (Doyé & Hurrell, 1997), learners in Zanzibar primary schools have a high level of instrumental motivation goals. For the learners in Zanzibar, English is a strategic instrument to excel with further studies and get employment for personal and family development. However, this situation in Zanzibar is not exceptional, a high

level of instrumental motivational goals is also demonstrated by second language learners in other developing countries (Hashwani, 2008; Sengkey & Galag, 2018). Pupils' attitudes towards English language in Zanzibar revealed a lot of diversities depending on the areas of residence and parents' support for the pupils. There were more pupils from Mjini Magharibi and Kusini Pemba who had an affirmative attitude towards English compared to the rest of the regions. This could be because the two regions, i.e., Mjini Unguja and Chake Chake Pemba are urbanised than their counterparts. The affirmative influence comes from contacts with English language speakers (mostly tourists) and exposure to opportunities that English offer. For example, there are hotels, tourism activities, and other places where English is used. Only a minority of pupils had a negative attitude towards English language.

This, however, should not be ignored. Their negative attitude could be attributed to unfavourable conditions like poor pedagogy, resources, support, and exposure that those pupils in urban are favoured by. Other factors like the structure of the language and orthography could also explain the reason for their negative attitude. For example, the pupils who speak Kimakunduchi – the Southern dialect, and Kitumbatu – the Northern dialect, have more burden in learning the English language compared to others. Thus, some of them may have a negative attitude towards the language because they are already struggling to learn the 'standard Kiswahili' which has some features which are distinct from their dialects (Furumoto & Gibson, 2022; Miyazaki & Takemura, 2019). Thus, pupils in primary school have a dual task; i.e., to learn 'standard Kiswahili' and English simultaneously. This case is similar to the challenge faced by the Maasai students in Tanzania where pupils' learning of English is thwarted by the dual task to learners; i.e., learning Kiswahili which has features different from the Maa language and English language simultaneously (Sane, 2022).

Conclusion

With respect to the results obtained in this study, it is concluded that pupils have a positive attitude towards English in Zanzibar primary schools.

Pupils' instrumental motivation; i.e., hope to get job opportunities and excel in higher education, influenced pupils' affirmative attitudes towards English. However, there were variations observed based on pupils' demographic factors. There were more pupils with a positive attitude toward English in urbanised areas than those who resided in up-country. Those who received support from parents tended to have a positive attitude and motivation toward English than their counterparts. These findings inform that the prevailing socio-economic conditions of families in under-resourced areas influence the learning of a second language. On the other hand, the results may be encouraging the policymakers about their decision and objectives to officialize English in Zanzibar as stipulated in the Education and Training Policy (2006).

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The Effect of Parent-Teacher Associations Reviewed Policy Guidelines on the Status of Infrastructure in Ghana's Rural basic Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at the adequacy of basic school infrastructure in the milieu of reviewed parent-teacher association policy guidelines in managing and administrating basic schools in Ghana. The study focused on nine deprived community basic schools in the Upper West region of Ghana. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select the schools. The study adopted a qualitative approach, which encompassed the implementation of interviews, focus group discussions and observation. Findings from the study revealed that the review of the Parents-Teacher Association policy has decreased the rate at which parents assisted in the provision of infrastructure in many rural schools; pupils and teachers adopted their own ways of coping with the available limited infrastructure and most parents were no more willingly determined to support the schools with infrastructure. These were caused mainly by the following four components of the reviewed policy guidelines. Firstly, no student should be sent home, given any punishment or prevented from school activity for non-payment of PA levies or dues. Again, the school system should not be used for the purpose of collecting PA levies or dues. More so, PAs should liaise with Boards of Governors and Heads of Schools to determine projects to be undertaken in the schools based on the priority needs of the schools. Lastly, heads/teachers of schools are not required to be signatories and front liners to PA activities and accounts unless so decided by PAs themselves. The study suggests that PTA members should be given much education on educational policies. They should be consulted in the formulation of educational policies. Finally, there should be existence of clear public regulations and measures that will motivate and explicitly indicate the roles of PA's in the provision of basic school infrastructure. These will further prompt their willingness to assist basic schools with infrastructure.

Keywords: Infrastructure, basic Schools, Parents Teacher Association (PTA)

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary times, policies on parents' participation in schools seek to accord them with the need to assist in provision of school infrastructure (Ackah-Jnr, 2022), as infrastructure in schools has been noticed to be a key base for effective teaching and learning. In Ghana, the establishment of school infrastructure is the prime responsibility of the central government through its Ministry of Education, departments and agencies (Ghana Education Service, 2021). The eagerness of previous central governments to improve school infrastructure and acquire effective teaching and learning in schools enabled them to embrace all-encompassing educational policies and programmes (Osei-Owusu & Sam, 2012). That is expected to create a sound avenue for the formation of alliances such as the School Management Committee and Parents Teacher Associations in Ghana (Ackah-Jnr, 2022).

The 1996 Educational reforms in Ghana further consolidated the operations of these educational stakeholders. These stakeholders consciously come together to mobilize resources either actively or inactively to enhance the achievement of goals and objectives in schools (Jnr et al., 2022). Many scholars agree that parent-teacher associations in the educational sector contribute in diverse ways to the entire development and growth of basic schools in the country (Mekonnen, 2017). As maintained by some scholars, in most African countries the School Management Committee (SMC) and Parents Teachers Association (PTA) immeasurably contribute to the provision of basic school infrastructure like mud-school blocks, mud-teachers' bungalows, school furniture, school kitchen and schools' places of convenience (Osei-Owusu & Sam, 2012; Mekonnen, 2017; Ballang, 2021). In essence, the availability of adequate school infrastructure spontaneously predicts the standards of performance in schools. The scholars further suggest that the general performance of schools with well-endowed infrastructure was far better than schools without adequate school infrastructure (Li et al., 2022). The government of Ghana through the

Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service in its recent educational policies has reviewed the ways that Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and School Management Committees (SMC) are expected to operate in basic schools (Ghana Education Service, 2020). As such, the Ghana Education Service has changed the name of this association to Parents Association (P.A). This has consequently lowered the routine activities of the various stakeholders especially teachers and headmasters in basic schools management and administration in the country (Tudagbe-Obour, 2022).

This is due to the fact that teachers and heads of basic schools have been directly exempted from active participation in the activities of the Parents Association (PA) by the new policy reform guidelines. Unlike the previous Parents Teacher Association (PTA) where teachers were guaranteed by the policy to spear-head the activities of parents and teacher associations. This has generated a very serious infrastructural slit and further, detracting the overall performance of schools in deprived communities (Amoako et al., 2023). This in perpetuation have compelled teachers and other school authorities to compromise quality teaching and learning due to limited availability of school infrastructure, utmost in rural communities (Ackah-Jnr et al., 2022). Coincidentally, exacerbating the already existing unequal infrastructural gap among urban and rural schools and its corresponding cascading consequences on school management and pupils' academic performance. It is based on this shortfall that this study sought to establish the state of basic schools' infrastructure in rural communities after the implementation of the new Parents-Teacher Association Reviewed Policy Guidelines.

Educational Value of School Infrastructure

Infrastructure in schools is the concrete observable equipment or structures found in any teaching and learning environment (UNICEF, 2005). This may include conducive classrooms, places of convenience, access to portable water, computer laboratories, kitchen, libraries and play grounds (Li et al., 2022). As held by the UNICEF (2002), the attainment of better performance in schools are informed by the persisting school infrastructure. The agency

further entreated that among the five general dimensions in enhancing effectiveness and efficiency in the performance of schools, adequate infrastructure is the most required key indicator (UNICEF, 2005). Similarly, many scholars have empirically affirmed that the relationship between infrastructural endowment and school performance is reciprocally inclusive (Nzoka & Orodho, 2014; Muthoni 2015; Msila & Netshitangani 2015; Mekonnen, 2017; Ackah-Jnr, 2022). The availability of adequate school infrastructure put much ease on teaching and learning, as it makes the school environment involving for realization of educational objectives and goals (Barret et al., 2019; Byrne et al., 2020).

Some scholars emphasized that the existence of school infrastructure like library and Information and Communication Technology centers improves the ability of students to do their own research and studies after the usual teacher-student interaction in the classroom (Lediga & Fombad, 2018; Memon & Tunio, 2023). Literature suggests that pupils' punctuality and academic performance in schools are informed by the adequacy of infrastructure in the schools. Also, the rate of pupil absenteeism, truancy, school dropout and high retention in schools are also influenced by the absence and poor state of school infrastructure (Barret et al., 2019). Similarly, Awortwe et al., (2022) advocate that schools with limited infrastructure, dilapidated structures and temporal buildings recorded lower student turnout than schools endowed with ample and well-conditioned school infrastructure. This suggests that teaching and learning are effectively carried out when the necessary infrastructure is available (Shibuya, 2022). Thus, all educational policies must keenly maintain and consolidate stakeholders or agencies that provide infrastructure to enhance the development of schools (Memon & Tunio, 2023).

PTA Reform Policy Guidelines

The government of Ghana in its current Free Senior High School Policy, reviewed the then-existing mode of operations of PTA in all schools. This involved all basic and senior high schools across the country. The policy guidelines emphasized that the name Parent Teacher Association (PTA) be changed to Parent Association (PA) to give parents the opportunity to deliberate on issues pertinent to schools and make contributions without the

interference of school authorities (teachers, head teachers and headmasters/mistresses). It further indicated that the management of Ghana Education Service recognizes and appreciates the roles and contributions of Parent Associations (PA) in the entire development and management of schools. Also, the policy guideline suggested that the Ghana Education Service must be very conscious of the significant contributions PTAs have over the years made towards the infrastructural development of several basic schools (Ackah-Jnr, 2022; Tudagbe-Obour, 2022). The policy was hugely premised on the notion that Ghana Education Service and the Ministry of Education were not convinced with situations, where students are barred from taking part in school programmes due to a parent's inability to pay any agreed PTA dues or levy (Tudagbe-Obour, 2022).

Hence, the management of the Ghana Education Service rebirthed some new policy guidelines for the operations of PTAs/SMCs in basic schools. These policy guidelines proclaimed that, PTA/SMC now Parents Association (P.A) should adopt more innovative and strategic ways of collecting levies and dues from their members without school authorities' involvement. Again, no student should be sent home or prevented from school activity for non-payment of PA levies or dues. Similarly, the director-general's approval is no longer required in the determination and imposition of PA levies and dues. Also, PAs should always liaise with boards of governors and heads of schools to determine projects to be undertaken in the schools based on the priority needs of the schools and apportioned PTA levy from the central government. Finally, the heads of schools are not required to be signatories to P.A accounts unless so decided by parents themselves (Ghana Education Service, 2021). These guidelines from the Ghana Education Service have been the locus for the operation of all the activities of PA in schools since its implementation (Tudagbe-Obour, 2022). Parents in adjusting to this newly reviewed policy guideline are embattled with some challenges in infrastructural provision and development in basic rural schools (Shibuya, 2022). As already held by scholars like Mutinda (2013) and Muthoni (2015), the desire of parents to willingly contribute any resources to the development of basic schools without any form of cohesion is usually faced by low commitment, as they

are not compelled by any reinforcement to do so (Ackah-Jnr, 2022). Jnr et al. (2022) noted that PTA dues were the main source of resources for PA activities in schools; teachers and head teachers have to put pressure on both parents and students before most parents willingly contribute. On a similar note, Ackah-Jnr (2022) argued that parental apathy and laxity towards the payments of PTA levies obliged the management of PTAs to adopt teacher-induced strategic measures, such as continuous reminding of students to alert parents and punishments. Such measures, especially the punitive measures on defaulters' wards in schools, served as a compelling instigator for them to pay (Jnr et al., 2022). In ascertaining resource assurances from parents, teachers must play vital roles in its collection (Byrne et al., 2020).

Context and Problem

The Upper West region is one of the mid-aged administrative regions in Ghana. It comprises of eleven (11) districts/municipals. The Regional Education Directorate supervise and control all the other eleven (11) Municipal/District Educational Directorates. The prime vision of the entire educational directorate is to deliver quality education that meets the needs and aspirations of all stakeholders, so as to promote accelerated socio-economic development of the region and the country as a whole. In achieving this, a holistic approach of all stakeholders of education in the administration and management of schools, need to serve as facilitators to the attainment of such vision. As a mid-aged region in Ghana, the Upper West region is suffering from infrastructural and developmental deficits (Amoako et al., 2023). This is due to the fact that the total internally generated Funds from the region is usually the second lowest, amongst the sixteen regions in the country (Ghana Revenue Authority, 2020). This generally deprives the region of undertaking infrastructural development with its Internally Generated Funds, though the region lacks basic infrastructure. This together with the already meagre central government allocated funds to the development of educational infrastructure, has put the state of infrastructure in the region at a midpoint (Awortwe et al., 2022). The general economic outlook of parents in this region pre-positions them to be economically vulnerable hence, their unwillingness to contribute funds to assist government programmes (Addo, 2020). Furthermore, the fact

that most of these parents engage in subsistence agriculture with less yield (Ministry of Food and Agriculture, 2019), it also subjects them to inability to contribute funds willingly. All these, coupled with their limited understanding of the reviewed PTA policy guidelines and the Free Education Policy, make it difficult for them to easily pay any levy to support schools in their wards (Ghana Education Service, 2021). This has put most schools and staff into dilemma, especially on the roles and responsibilities of P.A in the infrastructural development of basic schools, though the governments limited educational resources are not able to cater for all the infrastructural needs of basic schools (Amoako et al., 2023).

Methodology

The study adopted qualitative approach. This involved the collection of data through interviews, focus group discussions and observation. The participants included former PTA/SMC executives, head teachers, teachers and parents. PTA/SMC executives, head teachers and teachers were interviewed whereas, parents in groups of seven (7) went through a focus group discussion. Teachers were purposively selected based on number of years served in the school and parents were selected through the snow ball technique. These techniques were adopted to aid the researchers identify respondents who were well-informed about the issues the study sought to address. The observation was guided by a check list; note book and camera helped to record the data. Schools under study were purposively selected from seven circuits in the region based on how basic-school's deprivation was categorized by the Regional Directorate of Education in the region of study. Guided by anonymity and confidentiality of responses from respondents, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were organized.

Collection and Analysis Procedure for Data

Data Collection and Analysis

A structured interview guide, with prime focus on the availability and provision of infrastructure and, teaching and learning materials in basic schools by PTA were used to solicit responses from the interviewees (key informants) and focus group discussants. The interview guide contained

target and probing questions while the voice recorder was used to record the voices from interviews and discussions upon their consent. This process took place in two main languages/dialects. All the focus group discussions were conducted in Dagaare as was requested by participants whereas, the interview sessions were accomplished by both English and Dagaare depending on the interest of the interviewee. This enabled the acquiring of in-depth responses from both focus group discussions and interviews. Before analysis, the collected data were transcribed and those from Dagaare were translated into English. Data were analyzed manually by using thematic analysis. With the aid of the checklist and a camera, existing infrastructure was observed and captured upon consent from school authorities.

Results and Discussions

As noted in the introduction section, this study sought to establish the state of basic school infrastructure in rural communities after the implementation of the new Parents-Teacher Association Reviewed Policy Guidelines. This section discusses the findings of this study. The findings of this study suggest that before the review of the Parents-Teacher Association policy guidelines, parents contributed to the construction of school infrastructure and repairs and maintenance of deplorable and dilapidated schools' facilities. This finding is in consistent with existing studies (Barret et al., 2019; Ackah-Jnr, 2022; Shibuya, 2022). However, the contributions were very low and insufficient to take care of the growing population in the schools, this revelation is in agreement with the discovery of Amoako et al. (2023). In achieving these, parents made some payments after a budget was drawn by the PTA executives. This helped to sustain the little existing government infrastructure in basic schools. However, now parents cannot be obliged by any stringent and or motivational measures to contribute any funds to schools; most parents and PA executives are no longer willing to contribute any resources for the activities and operations of basic schools, which are in uniformity with the study of Tudagbe-Obour (2022). Consequently, most of the existing infrastructure facilities in schools become inadequate, old and deplorable in nature.

This was what a P.A executive had to say during an interview:

Hmmm..... you see!!! *my community members are not ready to contribute a penny to the development of infrastructure of our own school, unlike those days I was the assembly man. They have allowed the new policy guide line to sway them off from their own communal duty of providing infrastructural assistance to the school. This is so because you cannot penalize anybody for default of P.A dues. You just look at the nature of school roofing sheets and walls, yet my people are still waiting for intervention from the central government. In fact, this is a shame to the entire community and a disservice to our own children. (key informant, Chaassie, December, 2022)*

This quotation corroborates with the report of Ghana Education Service (2021) that, parents were not in any position to contribute any resource after the implementation of the Free Senior High School Policy in Ghana. It further suggests that until the issuance of the new PTA policy, the existence of compelling measures for contributions positioned parents to be willingly prepared to take part in any contributions for the maintenance and repairs of deplorable school infrastructure without any regret, which complements the findings of Jnr et al. (2022). It was also found that many teachers were not regular at school because they did not stay nearby the communities' schools where they are located, this is in support with the findings of Ballang (2020). This problem can be addressed if teachers' quarters are provided. During an interview session this is what one of the former PTA executives said:

There are insufficient teachers' accommodation facilities. This leads them to stay at distant places while coming to school. The teachers' accommodation we started is now deserted because parents are no longer contributing in any form to its completion. Consequently, many teachers transferred to this community pay exorbitant money as rent for rooms themselves. For example, a single room in Dorimon is between GHS600-GHS700 a year which makes it difficult for many teachers to stay in the community to work, especially those having abodes in Wa (Key informant, Dorimon, January, 2023).

Most of the focus group discussions established that the majority of the basic schools' teachers have neither an office nor teachers' staff common

room, this is in consistent with the findings of Awortwe et al. (2022). This exposed them to the usage of shades (under trees) as offices/staff common rooms as was earlier revealed in the study of Amoako et al. (2023). With this, majority of the participants were of the view that such a problem is not beyond the control of the P. A as its core mandate is to assist the central government to undertake better education for all citizens. Hence, PA executives should be proactive in seeking infrastructural support from NGOs and other developmental partners, which is consistent with findings of Ballang (2020). It was also discovered that the PA executives could solicit resources from parents through contributions with strict payment terms.

However, this was hampered by the government's policy of free education, which did not allow the association to operate effectively in terms of funds acquisition. This revelation consolidates the reports of Ghana Education Service (2021) that, parents were not in any position to contribute any resource after the implementation of the Free Senior High School Policy in Ghana. Also, the study affirmed from an interview that schools have problems in meeting maintenance cost of the schools due to limited available resources and funds at their disposal, leading to the poor states of some of the schools' infrastructure. This is in affirmation with the findings of Barrett et al. (2019) that, maintenance culture in schools were jeopardized by insufficient resources at school authorities' disposal. The head teacher elaborated that the shortage and deplorable nature of necessary facilities and resources in schools are due to inadequate funds at parents and school management's disposal posing critical challenges that further affect parents' involvement in the implementation of quality education in the country. This finding supplements the assertion of Shibuya (2022) that, quality teaching and learning were compromised by inadequate teaching and learning resources in schools.

In a similar dimension;

As you can see my son, all the tables and chairs are broken, they are not of good quality. The government is also adamant to provide us...you ask my secretary the number of times we have visited the District Education Office on pupils' chairs and

tables. Most of the P.A members are also farmers and are not ready to provide chairs and tables for their children as they claim is free education. So, we should all wait for the government to assist us. However sometimes back we the P.T.A paid dues and further collaborated with the school to farm and get funds to supplement other available funds in the running of the school but now because of the new P.A policy guidelines complementing the Free Education Policy of central government, parents are now resistant at contributing for basic schools (Key informant; Kojoperi, November,2022).

The quotes above suggest that the unavailability of teachers' houses in the communities compelled some teachers to commute from the regional capital to the community (school). This affected the punctuality and efficiency of teachers' output in the school, as teaching and learning were sometimes conceded to fatigue and or absenteeism of teachers in the basic schools. These are consistent with the results of previous studies (Nzoka & Orodho, 2014; Ballang, 2020; Li et al., 2022; Shibuya, 2022; Amoako et al., 2023). Similarly, during a focus group discussion, one participant commented:

The most common contribution from P.T.A in most basic schools' development was the donation of various resources to school infrastructural projects. Funds acquired by P.T.A through varied avenues were mostly channelled towards the development of infrastructure and other teaching and learning resources to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in the activities of basic schools. They provided support through the provision of technical support, volunteering, and donations among others during infrastructural development in basic schools. In-kind supports included free parents manual labour in the construction of school infrastructure, communal farming for the development of infrastructure and acquisition of other pertinent resources for teaching and learning, provision of land for construction, provision of building materials for school construction and foodstuffs for labourers during construction

activities in basic schools (Focus Group Discussant, Konwob, December 2022)

He further noted:

Such assistance from the P.T.A to basic schools in effect promoted accountability and a sense of ownership on the part of the parents however, this time our colleagues are no longer interested in contributing any resource towards infrastructural development in basic schools because they assert that everything is supposed to be provided by the central government, since the P.A has alienated school authorities from steering the affairs of P.As' (Focus Group Discussant, Konwob, December 2022).

In addition, the researchers' observation in some schools exposed that some of the schools actually lacked maintenance. A typical example was the deplorable state of a classroom block furnished with destroyed and inadequate pupils and teachers' tables, desks, and chairs at Ping Baazu and Tenganpare below;



Ping Baazu and Tenganpare D/A Primary School Block; 2023

From the picture above it is clear that the classroom block is in a deplorable condition and needs renovation. However, both the school authorities and parents have not put any effort or plans to deal with that. When the headmaster and the current P.A executives were interviewed they said that they were expecting the government or any benevolent person or agency to come to their aid. This finding is in agreement with the revelations of Shibuya (2022) that, the adamant of most parents towards school resources contribution is partly caused by central government's flagship policies and programs. Further, affirming that parents are not in any position to contribute in any form to renovate the structure irrespective of the dangers and health hazards (dust) it possesses to pupils, a teacher commented:

The dusty nature of the classroom coupled with insufficient

furniture has relegated some of the students to sit on the floor. This most of the time lead to conflict over desk, absenteeism and drop out with the excuse of no furniture if followed up. Parents themselves complain of regular dirty uniforms of their kids, costing them to wash every day. This a serious problem we have complained to the Circuit Supervisor but till now no intervention my brother. There are instances that the overcrowding nature of the class made group work difficult, absence of pupil's concentration in mobile classrooms with no air conditioners, pupils throwing things out of broken windows during lessons, high rate of theft of teaching and learning support materials and frequent pupils running to the village for drinking water during teaching and learning periods (key informant, Ping Baazu and Tenganpare, November 2022).

The participants in a focus group discussion revealed that schools lacked computer laboratories for ICT lessons. Most schools in the area have converted their classrooms for that purpose; though, the place posed many forms of inconveniences during lessons, this finding is in consistence with the results of Li et al. (2022). It was further confirmed that most of the schools lacked ICT equipment making it very difficult to teach the subject in the schools irrespective of how inclusively technological the world is at the moment, this corresponds the findings of (Muthoni, 2015; Msila & Netshitangani, 2015; Mekonnen, 2017; Ackah-Jnr, 2022; Li et al., 2022). Most of the communities did not have well-structured blocks for the nursery and kindergarten which is the foundation of learning, they had rather converted old classroom blocks as nurseries and Kindergartens. Similarly, most of the head teachers interviewed also emphasized that there were inadequate tables and chairs for the teachers, this revelation is in line with findings of studies by (Awortwe et al. 2022; Amoako et al. 2023). Making it very difficult to undertake classroom activities on the school premises. They have to sometimes carry exercise books home for marking. The researchers also observed that, in most cases, there were a few teachers' tables and chairs in the schools; most of them were not in good condition, this is in consistent with the findings of Amoako et al. (2023). In a focus group discussion, it was noted that most kitchens in the schools were in bad

condition, these findings are also consistent with existing studies (Nzoka & Orodho, 2014; Muthoni 2015; Msila & Netshitangani 2015; Mekonnen, 2017; Ackah-Jnr, 2022; Li et al., 2022). Parents were not willing to contribute anything towards the development of any school infrastructure. This could be solved by the P.A, through the provision of temporal structures from communal engagements. However, parents were of the opinion that the central government should establish a well-built structure (kitchen) to enable the preparation of hygienic food for pupils' consumption in basic schools. While on the field, the researchers observed the below deplorable school kitchen in a community at the Wa-East district as the image below indicates:



A School Kitchen at Chaasiee, (2022)

Conclusion

Generally, it can be concluded that the state of basic schools' infrastructure in rural communities are in terrible conditions. This observation is arguably contributed by limited PA resources as many parents were not willing to provide any form of resources to support school infrastructure. Owing to the absence of punitive measures to defaulters of P.A levies and activities,

limited knowledge on the new PA policy guidelines, school authorities' limited roles in the new policy guidelines and ineffectiveness of the existing PA executives in rural communities. This has distorted the initial enthusiasm and ability of PTA to support school infrastructure, which is usually manifested in the forms of physical labour, provision of teaching and learning resources, payment of maintenance costs, as well as dues/donations to support infrastructural projects in schools. The new PTA policy guideline has enormously distorted the collaborative working relationship that existed earlier between PTA executives and key rural folks. Currently, parents and teachers cannot work jointly to lob organizations and educational authorities for infrastructural projects for basic schools. Hence, compromising the quality of teaching and learning due to inadequate of school infrastructure. The study suggests that in order to manage these problems, parents who are members of P.A should be given much education on the need to enthusiastically assist basic schools with infrastructure resources.

Recommendation

Public Education

The Ministry of Education through its subordinate institutions should organize public education for parents to understand the rudiments and constraints of the Free Education Policy and the guidelines of the reviewed P.A policy. This will help reduce the perception of most parents that these policies have out rightly put all the burden of basic education on the central government. As this will position parents on the stance to continue contributing to the entire development and performance of basic schools when the need arises. As the present state of infrastructure in most rural communities requires aggressive holistic intervention.

Inclusive Educational Policies Formulation

The government through the Ministry of Education should formulate and implement policies that are all stakeholders inclusive, giving P.A enough power to freely and openly operate within the framework of the educational laws. Creating special desk at the various District Education Directorates to be coordinating activities of the P.A. The association should therefore be

part of decision-making process for basic schools at all levels. These will help eradicate or reduce, some schools' resistant to the full participation of P.A in school activities, re-consolidate the existing P.A participation in basic schools' policies, enhance cooperation and coordination among the agents of P.A as echoed by the findings of this study.

Establishment of Resources Regulatory Framework for Managing P.A

Here, the Ministry of Education should put in mechanisms to increase and have some level of control over the resources of the P.A. This should include the opening of standard accounts to aid auditing and accountability, frequent training of P.A executive on resources acquisition, budgeting and financial management. This should be done through the formation of a P.A mobilization and accountability unit in the various education offices under the Finance and Monitoring units to play this role. The availability of such a framework will solve problems like poor state of infrastructure, improper/lack of budget and lukewarm attitudes towards financial fulfilment amongst others, as envisaged in the findings of this study.

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Mitigating the Effects of Fire Outbreaks in Secondary Schools: Strategies for Safeguarding Children at Risk in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigated alternative strategies for safeguarding Tanzania children from school fire disasters. The study was guided by change management theory. Data were collected from four secondary schools from two regions of Tanzania Mainland. A qualitative approach was employed and data were collected through face-to-face interviews, Focused Group Discussions and physical observations. The study involved 101 participants – 61 students, 35 teachers, 3 Heads of Schools and 2 members of the School Board. The study revealed that improved school infrastructures, provision of education to people, building harmony with the community, improved school security, installation of firefighting facilities in schools and identification of sources of fire were the appropriate strategies to manage fire. Combined efforts of the school, community, government and education supporters are of paramount importance for mitigating regular fire outbreaks in secondary schools.

Keywords: Fire disaster, secondary school, Tanzania, policy, change management

INTRODUCTION

Disasters like fire outbreaks in schools can have devastating effects on both human life and infrastructure. Unfortunately, the frequency of school fire incidents is on the rise globally, affecting about 175 million children every year due to both natural and human-caused disasters (UNESCO, 2017; National Education Union, 2017; Fire Fighter Forum, 2009; UNICEF, 2015). Children in schools are particularly vulnerable to disasters like fires, earthquakes, tsunamis, and floods, which can cause significant harm and property damage. In India, for example, in 2004, 93 children died in a school fire; in Uganda, in 2006, 13 children lost their lives in a similar incident (Patel, 2008; ISDR, 2012). In the United States, more than 4,000 school fire events occur annually, resulting in injuries and property loss worth millions of dollars (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2014; Satterly, 2014). The United Kingdom also faces a significant risk of school arson attacks, with 32% of reported cases resulting in severe damage and death (Ruel, 2019; Salas, 2019; Atkinson et al., 2007). Developing countries in Africa and Asia are particularly at risk of severe school fires due to limited institutional capacity to respond adequately to such outbreaks. For example, in India, a school fire in 1995 claimed the lives of 400 students; in 2008, another school fire resulted in the death of 90 children (Nyagawa, 2017; CNN, 2004).

In Uganda, 13 children died in a dormitory fire caused by unextinguished candles used for lighting (Patel, 2008; CNN, 2004). To mitigate the negative effects of school fires, countries worldwide have implemented various strategies such as early warning systems, to reduce deaths and property damage. However, more needs to be done, particularly in developing countries where there is a high risk of school fires. In Tanzania, school fire is a major concern for student safety, affecting their peace of mind, trust, and the learning environment (Amuli, 2019; Nyagawa, 2017). These incidents disrupt normal school operations; they damage buildings and facilities and lead to injuries and deaths. The most affected group for these incidences is school children, especially those in boarding schools (Amuli, 2020; Mosenda, 2020, Nestory, 2017; Nyagawa, 2017). In Tanzania, the number of school fires has increased over the years, with more than twenty-

nine schools being affected between 2010 and the early 2020s. This results in loss of life, property damage, and injuries in different regions of Tanzania. Studies conducted in Tanzania discovered that many schools have little ability on disaster preparedness to protect children from fire outbreaks and other hazardous situations (Amuli, 2020; Nestory, 2017; Nyagawa, 2017). Table 1 shows a list of schools affected by fires between 2010 and 2020.

Table 1. 1: Schools gutted by fire in Tanzania Mainland from 2010-2020

| # | Name of the school | Year of fire outbreak |
|----|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | Ali-Hassani Mwinyi Secondary School | 2013 |
| 2 | Iyunga Secondary School | 2016 |
| 3 | Lindi secondary school. | 2016 |
| 4 | St. Joseph Rotuba Primary School | 2018 |
| 5 | Katunguru Secondary school. | 2018 |
| 6 | Kiwanja Secondary school | 2019 |
| 7 | Old Tanga Secondary School | 2019 |
| 8 | Ashira secondary school. | 2019 |
| 9 | Mkalani secondary school | 2019 |
| 10 | Islamic Byamungu English Medium | 2020 |
| 11 | Ilala Islamic seminary | 2020 |
| 12 | Mvumoni Islamic seminary | 2020 |
| 13 | Is-tiqama Islamic seminary | 2020 |
| 14 | Yustus secondary schools | 2020 |

Source: (Amuli, 2020; Nyagawa, 2017; MOEST, 2020)

Research shows that there are many causes of fire in schools and around communities in the world (UNESCO, 2017; Mutch, 2014; Tanaka, 2012). In Japan, New Zealand, Indonesia, and Australia reports indicate that earthquakes and tsunamis are responsible for 45.5% of school fire disaster fatalities, while gas piping or electric wiring damage causes 26.2% (Bird et

al., 2011; O'Connor & Takahashi, 2014; Kitagawa, 2014; Mutch, 2014; Tanaka, 2012). In other parts of the world, fire disasters in schools and communities are caused by cooking facilities, intentional actions, heating, earthquakes, tsunamis, arson attacks and damage to gas piping or electric wiring (Mutch, 2014; O'Connor & Takahashi, 2014; Tanaka, 2012; Sebela, 2012). According to Kirui, Mbugua, and Sang (2011) and Shibutse, China and Omuterema (2007; 2014), school fires can also be caused by waste burning, students' unrest, and lighting. In addition, poor school management and mishandling of child rights can contribute to safety and security issues, putting children at risk of fire disasters. Literature reveals that various countries have implemented different strategies to address the causes of fire outbreaks (Sayedin et al., 2020; FEMA, 2007; 2014; MoEST, 2017).

To mitigate school fire disasters, some governments have incorporated disaster issues into school curricula, re-evaluated disaster risk assessments, and implemented disaster management policies and frameworks. These frameworks direct schools to provide education, training, and public awareness to promote safety among students and the community. In Tanzania, the government has issued a circular recognizing the risks of school fire and clarifying the roles of the school management team in implementing measures to mitigate risks (MoEST, 2017). These measures include ensuring the availability of firefighting facilities, prohibiting the use of fire sources, and conducting regular fire safety training and drills. However, despite these efforts, fire outbreaks in secondary schools continue to occur, revealing a gap between government guidelines and actual practices on the ground. Therefore, this paper discusses alternative practices for mitigating fire incidents in secondary schools. The following research question guided the study: What should be done to mitigate the consequences of fire outbreaks in Tanzania's secondary schools?

Theoretical Framework

This study follows the Change Management Theory, which suggests that people are more likely to respond positively to changes that lead to positive outcomes, rather than punitive ones (Kreitner, 2009; Mullins & Christy,

2013). Kritsonis (2005) outlines a three-stage process for change, involving moving from the current situation (unfreezing), towards the desired change (moving), and then consolidating the change (freezing). It is argued here that to ensure successful change, school communities must be aware of the consequences, both positive and negative, and commit to a plan for change. The theory transitions individuals and resources using methods to achieve efficient and effective results. The focus of the theory is on the future and making accurate decisions at the moment. This theory is relevant to the issue of fire outbreaks in secondary schools as recurring incidents may prompt people to change their behaviours. Hussain et al. (2018) and Pryor et al. (2008) suggest that school leaders should guide school community members towards a safer future by taking measures to prevent fire disasters. In this study, school management is responsible for monitoring and addressing any potential risks of fire outbreaks in schools.

Methodology

The study used a qualitative approach to gather detailed data on the strategies employed to prevent fire outbreaks in secondary schools. This involved engaging in evidence-based research that encouraged communication between the researcher and the participants (Creswell, 2013). The participants assessed and discussed the strategies implemented by schools to prevent fire outbreaks, drawing on their first-hand knowledge. The data were collected across two regions in Tanzania's mainland namely Iringa and Kilimanjaro involving four purposively selected schools that had previously experienced fire outbreaks. A total of 101 participants were involved, including 61 students, 35 teachers, 3 Heads of Schools, and 2 members of the school board, each chosen based on their relevant responsibilities. The participation of students was particularly vital as they were often directly affected by fire outbreaks and sometimes even the cause. As such, they had valuable experience and in-depth knowledge to share on the topic. The study used several methods of data inquiry including face-to-face interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), and physical observations. A checklist was created based on their observations of fire safety equipment such as fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, first aid kits, and sand. Interviews were conducted with school leaders to gain insight into

their perspectives on the matter. Participants were encouraged to express their opinions freely and debate strategies for preventing and mitigating fires in schools. Before recording the interviews, participants were asked for their consent; the time and duration of interviews were agreed upon. The researchers also introduced themselves to the participants to create a comfortable environment. Participants were allowed to speak in their native language, Kiswahili, which was later transcribed into English. The researchers used probing strategies to help participants understand the questions and encouraged them to share information. Physical observations were also conducted by the researchers with the help of school staff to assess the availability of fire safety equipment in classrooms, teachers' offices, dormitories and previous photography of school fire incidents. Focus group discussion was conducted with students and teachers to gather their views on fire safety strategies in schools. In the process of data analysis, researchers began by transcribing the audio recordings. They familiarized themselves with the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts. The collected data were then entered into NVivo 11, a computer software, which helped to manage the extensive information and organize it into codes. The researchers identified themes that emerged from the codes and grouped similar codes. They also searched for categories and themes using NVivo. To present the data, they used thematic paraphrases and quotes.

Results

This section presents the study findings obtained through focus group discussions, face-to-face interviews, and observations. The findings are organized by themes.

The Need to Improve School Infrastructure

During data collection, the question of how to prevent fire outbreaks in secondary schools was raised. It was disclosed that improving infrastructure is key to tackling regular fire outbreaks in secondary schools. Heads of Schools stated that some buildings are old and require renovations. They also suggested that genuine building materials such as electrical wire cables and fire-resistant materials like gypsum and watercolours should be used. Additionally, they believe that dilapidated buildings should be rehabilitated;

regular inspections should be conducted, and dormitory wardens should be employed. A teacher from one school shared his views on the matter:

Both the government and the community need to consider using different materials for constructing various infrastructures. Many of our school buildings are old and have inadequate wiring. To prevent the risk of fire, the government should opt for the use of genuine materials such as gypsum and watercolours, which have proper insulation properties and do not easily ignite (Teacher 12).

This was supported by one of the heads of schools. He commented:

Our school infrastructures are old and have not been renovated for a long time. This puts schools at risk of disasters such as fire outbreaks, and the collapse of buildings because some have huge cracks. (Head of school 2).

During a focus group discussion with students, it was determined that to prevent future fire outbreaks, there is a need for the government to regularly conduct maintenance and renovation of school buildings. The dilapidated infrastructure was found to contribute to the occurrence of fire disasters in secondary schools. Renovating school buildings can help replace the old and expired materials that were previously used in construction and are now believed to be the cause of fires in secondary schools. Additionally, participants revealed that school buildings are not regularly inspected by School Quality Assurance Officers to identify areas that require immediate repair. A student from one secondary school commented:

Our school is too old and no repair has been done recently. The buildings were built during the colonial period, I think in the 1950s, and we still use until now. Likely, electric wires are rotten, or their strength lowered. In that case, the incidents of fire in our school, which took place almost three times, with two events in one week are contributed by the weakened electric wires which have not been repaired over a long time (Student 19).

Furthermore, a teacher from a different school expanded on the topic by adding:

Inspection of schools should be done physically rather than theoretically after the issuance of policies ... the policies should state that maybe every three to five years, institutions should inspect electrical installations in their buildings to ensure tight enforcement of fire regulations in secondary schools (Teacher 23).

The Need to Educate the School Community

During face-to-face interviews, it was found that neither teachers nor students were taught about firefighting techniques to manage emergencies. The participants agreed that training students, teachers, heads of schools and other staff is important as they should be able to identify the source of a fire and use appropriate techniques and facilities to overcome the problem when it arises. A school board member also advised:

Students should be empowered with fire prevention skills through training and practical exercises. Knowledgeable students will know how to operate fire extinguishers to extinguish fire in the gutted buildings. The school will be able to rescue life, properties and infrastructures if fires are managed earlier at the onset. Moreover, trained students would have a culture of controlling fire disaster events and ensure that school infrastructures are safe all the time (Member of School Board 1).

The school heads supported the idea of teaching disaster issues as a separate subject to students, making it more intensive. One head of school commented:

The basic issue I do see is educating students efficiently, I mean that, for instance, the issue of fire disasters should be taught as a component of General Studies (Head of School 1).

The Need to Build Good Relationships between the School and the Community

Participants in the study showed that management in some secondary schools had poor relationships with teachers, students, and the surrounding community. The study also found that some fire incidents were worsened by the strained relationships within the school, particularly between teachers and students, which led to the eruption of fires. The study revealed

that establishing a harmonious relationship between all parties involved was deemed a significant factor in preventing fire disasters in secondary schools. One teacher emphasized this point:

We should create a friendly environment in our boarding secondary schools. I mean building good relationships with the surrounding communities. If there is no good relationship between our schools and the surrounding community, the incidents of fire will never end, because if you collide on matters such as land, you have declared war. Therefore, there should be a friendly relationship between the school and the community to make the community feel it is part of the school while also educating them as beneficiaries of the school (Teacher 2).

Furthermore, a student from a different school expanded on the topic by adding:

Our security is in the hands of school management; I think there is a need for us to have a good relationship with our teachers and the community surrounding us. When teachers have good relationships with students and the community, they will be able to know what is taking place in and outside the school, including discontent leading to the burning of the school, and this the possibility of reducing the incidences (Student 45).

Use Mobile Phones and Boiling Water Equipment

During focused group discussions with students, it was discovered that certain fire incidents were caused by students who tampered with the wiring systems to unlawfully charge their mobile phones and use hitting facilities from the ceiling. To address this issue, participants advised that the government and school management should permit students to use mobile phones and boiling facilities in school, but with specific guidelines in place. One student justified this argument by linking the use of mobile phones with the challenge of books in their school. He commented:

Our school has an acute shortage of science books. I am here to learn so that I can perform well in my science subjects. When I use a mobile phone to search for materials, teachers are reluctant to see

it. Some students are, for instance, suspended for some days because were caught with mobile phones. In the dormitories and classrooms, the sockets are not installed. What should we do? The only alternative is to find electric wires from the roof and cut some wires to charge our mobile phones in hidden places (illegally). I think this is the source of fire in some schools and the only solution is for the government to allow us to use mobile phones. (Student 31).

Furthermore, another student from a different school expressed his view on the topic by adding:

We are now in the era of globalisation. Limiting students from using mobile phones in schools is outdated. As such, the government should lift the ban on using mobile phones. They should install switch sockets for charging phones and I think that such an arrangement may help to reduce disorderly connections of electricity carried out by students which sometimes cause fire disasters (Student 59).

The need to Improve School Security

The study discovered that many schools have weak security systems which exposed them to human-induced fires. Alternatively, participants suggested improved security systems including increasing the number of watchmen, the deployment of participatory security, installation of early warning systems and security cameras. One student recommended:

The government could also use the current technology for security purposes, for example, installing CCTV (Closed-circuit television) cameras in the dormitories and other strategic points in the school compound. Also, the government should improve school infrastructures to allow easy exits and for the Fire Brigade vehicles to access easily various parts of the school in case of fire outbreaks (Student 16).

Furthermore, one of the school board members provided a supporting view to the idea given by students. She noted:

The government must ensure that our schools and colleges have a strong security system which does not allow anyone from outside to

encroach upon the school and cause destruction. This has to go with the provision of sufficient education to all stakeholders around the school, including the School Board, parents and the whole community (School board member 2).

The Need to Install Firefighting Facilities

The findings suggest that managing fire disasters in secondary schools required the management to install firefighting facilities such as smoke detectors and fire extinguishers. Through physical observation, the study discovered that most of the visited secondary schools had an acute shortage of firefighting facilities such as active fire extinguishers, exit plans and a complete absence of smoke detectors. The study found low disbursements of funds from the government for purchasing facilities to manage fire outbreaks. This is arguably one of the causes of this shortage. One head of school noted:

The new classes should have facilities which detect fire or smoke, that will help trigger noise if there is a problem somewhere but none from the government wants to listen to us. As we ask them, they keep telling us what we want first classrooms or fire detectors obvious you will say classrooms because it is our priority (Teacher 10).

During the FGDs with the teacher it was found that most of the secondary schools had a shortage of fire extinguishers and sand buckets and those available were not serviced for a long time (hence with inactive gas cylinders). The facilities were unlikely to work when a fire erupted in a school compound. One teacher added:

Our school should have enough active portable gas cylinders. Students should be drilled to use these cylinders when fire erupts and there should be at least a sand bucket in each class, at the corner; water should be near, and children should know the types of fire to be able to fight them appropriately (Teacher 2).

The Need to Establish Community-Based Fire-Fighting Efforts

The study discovered that once schools are gutted by fire it is the only time various authorities visit to conduct the inspection. The study found that

schools are not provided with feedback on the sources and what should be done to prevent the problem in future. The participants claimed that failure to know the actual sources of fire and how to deal with the problem made it difficult for them to come up with appropriate measures to mitigate such incidents. A teacher in one secondary school argued:

The incidents of fire shall never end in our schools because all of us lack education in identifying the origin of the fire and specific action which should be taken. Usually, when a fire erupts, we run away to save our lives. Sometimes, facilities like fire extinguishers can be around water is also available but there is nothing we do because we have poor knowledge of managing fire outbreaks (Teacher 9).

Furthermore, it was revealed that the implementers at the secondary school level, for instance, heads of schools and students were not involved in formulating policies, directives and plans aimed at managing fire disaster incidents. One head of school added:

You cannot initiate something at the top and expect appropriate implementation at the lower levels. If teachers are involved, they will be aware that this is my daily responsibility; I should supervise (Head of School 1).

Discussion

Ensuring that schools have proper fire safety facilities is important for the safety of students and staff. However, this study found that the infrastructure in secondary schools, including classrooms, libraries, dormitories, offices, toilets, and entries/exits were not in good condition and required renovation to prevent fire outbreaks. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that regular renovation of school infrastructure is necessary for safety (Nyagawa, 2017; Amuli, 2019). The study found that many secondary schools lack crucial safety features, such as proper fire exits, clear windows, and outward-opening doors, indicating non-compliance with MoEST Education Circular Number 4 of 2011. In that regard, it is argued here that the failure of schools to adhere to the government's directive can increase the risk of recurrent fire disasters, potentially leading to the loss of life and property. To prevent this from happening, school authorities and the government must frequently rehabilitate school

buildings, install fire extinguishers and detectors, and allocate sufficient funds for school security. Besides, school quality assurance activities should also be conducted regularly to help improve the infrastructure of secondary schools to meet fire management guidelines to overcome this problem. The findings also revealed that to prevent fire breaks at school, staff, the community around the school and students should be educated as the key persons responsible for managing fire in secondary schools. Findings from most participants disclosed that fire management awareness was very low. In addition, most of the school community was not aware of the guidelines or directives issued by the government for managing fire disaster incidents. Lack of awareness about managing fire disaster events among the teachers and students to manage the problem is supported by Kirui, Mbugua and Sang (2011); and Shibutse, China and Omuterema (2007).

To overcome the problem of fire disasters in secondary schools, the participants recommended educating all people (community, staff and students) in secondary schools to build capacity for managing the problem. This suggestion is in line with the study by Pasipamire (2011) and Shibutse, Omuterema and China (2014) who found that school communities should be aware of fire disaster management frameworks issued by government entities. Education makes people change their mindset and perform according to the existing situation (Kritsonis, 2005; Kreitner, 2009). Supported by principles of change management theory, school administrators can establish and enforce measures to minimize the occurrence of fire disasters through awareness creation and preparedness among all school members whether positive or negative, which is important for preventing school disasters (Hassain et al., 2018). The theory of change management calls for regular training sessions on fire safety protocols, the establishment of comprehensive emergency response plans, and the enforcement of strict adherence to safety regulations for all school community members. The study discovered that dormitories are on security alert due to cell phone prohibitions that are associated with illegal phone charging. The study discovered that some of the students often use phones hiddenly for educational purposes like searching for materials and linking

with classmates through platforms like WhatsApp, while others use phones for negative aspects, including cyberbullying, antisocial behaviour, and academic dishonesty (Gajdics & Jagodics, 2022; Smale et al., 2021). However, it was revealed that charging phones hidden can pose a safety risk, as it sometimes leads to fires in schools. Therefore, frequent inspection in the dormitories by school leadership is suggested to be important to alleviate this problem and strict laws should be established for students who charge phones in the ceiling of their dormitories. This was supported by the theory of management change which requires school leaders to guide and monitor all school community members about a safer future school (Hassain et al., 2028).

Furthermore, the research discovered that many secondary schools lack adequate security measures, which can result in disasters like fires. For example, it was found that poor security systems such as a lack of face walls can allow outsiders to enter school premises easily, leading to incidents of arson and other indiscipline cases. This finding concurs with a study conducted by Nyagawa (2017) who found that fire disaster events emanate from poor security systems in secondary schools and are not specifically disclosed because of inefficient security systems. Additionally, Amuli (2019) cemented that reducing hostile relationships between the school and community will increase security and reduce the incidents of activated fire disasters in secondary schools.

This study found that most of the visited secondary schools had an acute shortage of active firefighting facilities such as fire extinguishers, water reels, and hydrants and a complete absence of smoke detectors. Further, it revealed that one of the dormitories that gutted fire and escalated to most of the dormitories was the absence of firefighting facilities. These observations are in line with the study conducted by Nyagawa (2017), Amuli (2019) and Mosenda (2020) who observed that secondary schools run short of fire extinguishers and smoke detectors. The study supported that failure to have the facilities in place and having a few inactive instruments might have been the root cause of the continued existence of fire disaster events in secondary schools. More importantly, the study found that almost all students, teachers

and other staff lack expertise in operating firefighting equipment such as fire extinguishers although they are available in some schools.

Conclusion

Despite the government's guidelines for school safety and the requirement for each school to have firefighting facilities, most schools have limited resources for fire prevention. Many school buildings are old and not renovated; staff and teachers lack knowledge of how to mitigate fire outbreaks. Additionally, students illegally charging their mobile phones and boiling water in the ceiling of rooms can cause fire outbreaks in schools. The directives issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to manage fire outbreaks in secondary schools have proven insufficient to overcome the problem, and other factors have affected their effectiveness. To address this issue, a recent study has proposed alternative methods for managing fire outbreaks in secondary schools. These methods include improving school infrastructure, educating staff and students, enhancing school security, installing firefighting facilities, and involving stakeholders in managing fire disasters.

Recommendations

Firstly, school infrastructures should be improved using genuine and fire-resistant building materials such as gypsum and watercolours. Secondly, regular repair and inspection of school buildings should be conducted to prevent leakages and sparks of fire caused by exposed electrical wiring. Thirdly, government directives for managing school fires should be accompanied by awareness campaigns and educational programmes to mitigate fire sources and control the problem. Fourthly, School Management Teams (SMTs) should build harmonious relationships with the surrounding communities to enhance school security and ensure the safety of the students. Lastly, the researchers also recommend that directives for managing fire outbreaks in secondary schools should take into account contextual factors at the school level to ensure the safety of all children.

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Shortage of Science and Mathematics Teachers and its Impacts on Secondary Schools in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the shortage of science and mathematics teachers and its impacts on secondary schools in Tanzania. The study adopted a mixed-methods research approach. A total of eight (8) secondary schools were selected. The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. A total of 106 respondents (98 students and 8 Science Teachers) were involved in responding to the questionnaires and interviews respectively. Quantitative data were analysed using frequency count and percentage while qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. Poor performance in science subjects was revealed as the major causative of the shortage of science and mathematics teachers. Many students fail in science and mathematics; thus, the number of graduates declines. Considering that some of the science graduates join other careers, a few join teaching career. This trend of cause and effect creates a cyclic relationship between the factors and the impacts of the shortage of science and mathematics teachers. The study recommends that stakeholders should motivate students to like science, mathematics, and teaching career and ensure that they emphasize positive students' attitudes toward science and mathematics subjects.

Keywords: Science, Mathematics, Shortage of science teachers, Impacts, Tanzania.

INTRODUCTION

Science and mathematics are essential subjects in problem-solving in this changing world of science and technology (Ting-Sheng, 2017). The two (Science and Mathematics) are also considered fundamental in other academic subjects in schools. So many countries, worldwide, are growing economically, technologically, and scientifically due to development in science and mathematics (Li & Schoenfeld, 2019). All countries, including Tanzania, need scientists in many sectors, including agriculture, medical, communication, mining, transportation, construction, and education, just to mention a few (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). The shortage of science and mathematics teachers affects many of these sectors (Mremi, 2022). No one could deny that teachers are essential and responsible for educating all people in any country. Therefore, the shortage of science and mathematics teachers is a serious challenge in this changing world of science and technology.

The shortage of science and mathematics teachers in secondary schools in Tanzania, like in other countries, is a problem that needs to be addressed. The literature shows that the problem is worldwide (Projest, 2013; Ndalichako & Komba 2014; Dlamini, 2014; Kamagi, 2017; Garcia & Weiss, 2019; Mremi, 2022). Many studies, including the current one, have identified the factors behind poor performance in mathematics and science subjects and, among others, poor competence of teachers, insufficient and inadequate teaching and learning facilities, and student negative attitudes towards science and mathematics (Kihwele, 2014; Michael, 2015; Cheung, 2018; Mazana et al., 2020). The students' perceptions and methods of teaching science and mathematics have led to many students' dislike teaching careers (Saks et al., 2016). Studies have noted that mathematics is a crucial subject for understanding other science subjects such as engineering, computer science, and technology (Mazana et al., 2020). This suggests that if students are struggling to understand mathematics, then it is obvious that there is a struggle in studying the said subjects. Consequently, many of them fail their final examinations, leading to a low number of science and mathematics graduates in Tanzania (Mremi, 2022). For several decades, many governments, including Tanzania, have made some efforts

to minimize the shortage of science and mathematics teachers, but the problem still exists. The efforts include some policy-related reforms and education-related efforts such as funding the students who study science and mathematics at tertiary level, as well as school-related interventions like building science laboratories in each secondary school. For instance, in South Africa, two programmes, the Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme (FLBP) and the South African Mathematics and Teacher Intern Programme (SAMTIP) support the Science and Mathematics subjects. These two programmes have increased enrollment in Bachelor of Education and Postgraduate Education Courses (PGEC) in Science and Mathematics (Barrett et al., 2019). In Tanzania, some reforms and programmes include the establishment of School Mathematics Project (SMP), the School Science Project (SSP), and the Science Teacher Improvement Project (STIP) which aimed at improving science and mathematics teachers' knowledge and skills. Some of these reforms underwent the trial stage but were never implemented; others were implemented but with poor achievements (Osaki, 2007). Despite the efforts, the shortage of Science and Mathematics teachers is still an area of concern in many African countries; the student's performance in science and mathematics has remained consistently poor (Ndalichako & Komba, 2014).

According to Mnanka and Likwawa (2017), three essential components must be considered to increase the number of science students enrolled in secondary schools in Tanzania. These include appropriate science teaching strategies; professional and competent teachers; and availability of science educational materials, such as textbooks, laboratory equipment, as well as other necessary supplies of other curriculum materials. Studies suggest that there is a strong correlation between the number of science students enrolled in secondary schools and the availability of science teaching resources, such as laboratory equipment, science textbooks, and science teachers (Osaki, 2007). Literature indicates that Science and Mathematics teachers are scarce in Tanzanian secondary schools. This is due to the fact that many students' dislike entering a teaching career. Most students who choose to study science subjects tend to join other science-related careers, and not to teach. A study by Hizza, Komba and Jonathan (2012) reported that the four

selected schools in Moshi had more teachers in the social science subjects than the natural science subjects. This suggests that the government's efforts to raise the number of trained scientists in the country will hardly be achieved because science teachers are not sufficient in the country, particularly in secondary schools. The National Bureau of Statistics provided a study report on the topic, which showed that, for instance, the total number of primary and secondary school teachers in 2017 had decreased by 4.01 and 1.7 percent, respectively, by 2021 (Mremi, 2022). On the other hand, during that five-year period, the number of students attending primary and secondary schools increased dramatically by 19% and 52%, respectively (Anonymous, 2022). Also, the teacher-to-student ratio has increased significantly from the normal of 1/45 to 1/50 in 2017 and 1/62 in 2021; this is continually rising, regardless the countless numbers of unemployed college graduates (who could be teachers) (Anonymous, 2022). Arguably, this has great impact on science subjects. Thus, the current study investigated the shortage of science and mathematics teachers and its impacts in Tanzanian secondary schools.

The main objective of this study was to examine perceived shortage of science and mathematics teachers and its impacts on secondary schools in Tanzania. Specifically, the study examined:

1. Causes for the shortage of Science and Mathematics teachers in the selected schools in Tanzania
2. The impacts of the shortage of Science and Mathematics teachers in Tanzania
3. Relationship between the causes of the shortage of Science and Mathematics teachers and their impacts on Secondary Schools in Tanzania

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-method research approach. Pwani region – Tanzania (Kibaha and Bagamoyo districts) was involved in this study. The region was selected purposively based on the National Examination Council of Tanzania – NECTA performance. For more than five years, the region maintained its performance; it positioned itself among the top ten secondary

schools in the country (Said, 2018). A total of eight (8) secondary schools were selected. The Eight schools were tagged A-H for confidential and ethical reasons. The schools were randomly selected from the list of schools which were teaching science and mathematics subjects up to the Advanced level. The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. A total of 98 students were involved in responding to the questionnaires while 8 science teachers were involved in interviews. All ethical issues were taken into consideration including confidentiality, obtained consent, research permit, approval of the research tools, and avoidance of plagiarism. Interviews were used to collect qualitative data from selected science teachers, compiled, and analyzed using thematic analysis, which is a step-by-step data analysis method for qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Clarke & Braun, 2013; Thomas & Harden, 2008; Attride-Stirling, 2001). During thematic data analysis, the factors causing the shortage of science and mathematics teachers were obtained by putting together the main ideas into basic themes. Then, these were summarized into organized themes and later combined to form global themes, which are the main points in the data collected from the participants. The same steps were followed to analyze the data related to the impacts of the shortage of Science and Mathematics teachers in secondary schools. Quantitative data were analysed using frequency count and percentage.

Results

This section discusses the findings of this study. The discussion is divided into three sub-sections (themes) developed from the thematic analysis.

Causes of the Shortage of Science and Mathematics Teachers in the Selected Schools

Students' responses about the causes of the shortage of science and mathematics teachers were more or less similar to the science teachers' interview responses. Most of the students revealed that poor performance in Science and Mathematics is one of the factors leading to the shortage of science and mathematics teachers in secondary schools in Tanzania. Figure 1 summarizes students' responses to the causes of the shortage of science and mathematics teachers in secondary schools in Tanzania.

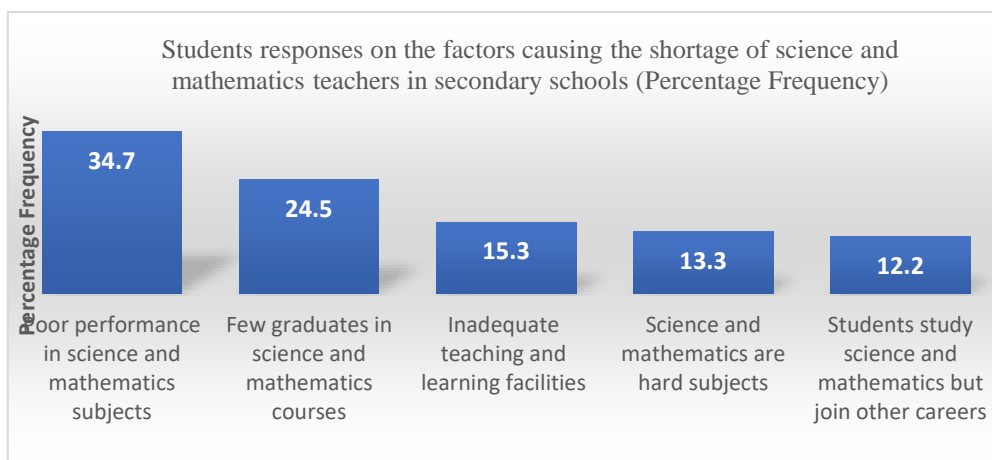


Figure 1: Causes of the Shortage of Science and Mathematics Teachers in Secondary Schools (98 students' responses)

Figure 1 revealed that the causes of the shortage of science and mathematics teachers are due to poor performance in Science and Mathematics subjects, few graduates in Science and Mathematics courses, inadequate teaching and learning facilities, Perceiving Science and Mathematics as hard subjects, and students studying science and mathematics join other careers eventually. All these and many others are responsible for the shortage of Science and Mathematics teachers in secondary schools. The current research discovered that students' dislike the teaching career is one of the causes of the shortage of science and mathematics teachers. When the students explained why they studied science and mathematics, most of them indicated that they wanted to become doctors, engineers, pilots, computer scientists, or nurses; very few wanted to become teachers. For instance, teacher "B" specifically said:

Most students are studying Economics, Geography, and Mathematics subjects because their ambition is to be teachers of economics and geography.

Teacher 'G' responded:

Otherwise, students would like to pursue science disciplines, including biology, chemistry, and physics, which will help pave the way to accomplish their ambition to become medical doctors.

Some of the students said that they did not like to become teachers because of the low salaries. Figure 1 summarizes the percentage frequency responses from the students about the causes for the shortage of science and mathematics teachers in the study area. Teacher ‘E’ commented that:

“Most students are studying science and mathematics because they want to be gas and petroleum engineers and not teachers.” Teacher ‘F’ said: *“students have passion to study science and mathematics because they want to become medical laboratory technician.”*

The Impacts of the Shortage of Science and Mathematics Teachers

When participants were responding to the questions on the impacts of the shortage of science and mathematics teachers in secondary schools, they mentioned low performance in science and mathematics subjects. Also, they mentioned students avoiding entering teaching careers; high teacher-student ratio; students looking for assistance from outside the school; high teaching load; unfinished syllabi; and low students’ interest in studying science and mathematics subjects. Results of the data about the impacts of the shortage of science and mathematics teachers are summarized in figure 2. The major impacts found in the current research included low performances in science and mathematics subjects. With the shortage of science and mathematics teachers, teaching and learning become ineffective leading to low performance in the same subjects. The research revealed that the shortage of science and mathematics teachers had an impact on students who were studying science and mathematics and were interested in science-related careers and mathematics-related careers. These careers include mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, gas and petroleum engineering, pilots, doctors, and others healthy related careers such as dentists, nursing, doctor of medicine, and pharmacy, just to mention a few. Some of them revealed that they were studying science and mathematics because they have a passion for those subjects. They viewed a teaching profession as a low-paying job when compared to other science-related careers such as engineering, medical doctor, and a pilot just to mention a few. Teacher “A” noted that:

Students are studying science subjects because they want to become pilot as prestigious job that can pay them better than other careers. They struggle to pass course combination to ensure they go for the career.

The current study revealed that among the impacts of the shortage of science and mathematics teachers include high teaching load and high teacher-student ratio as indicated in figure 2. The current research study discovers that when science and mathematics teachers are scarce then there is high teachers’ workload and syllabi remain unfinished resulting in lower performance. The trend moves on and on until the education stakeholders find a proper intervention. These impacts then cause the shortage of science and mathematics teachers. Students who like to study science and mathematics subjects in the future end up looking for substitute teachers outside the school, especially during the school holidays. These students might end up with unqualified teachers who have no teaching skills and thus affect their learning trend. In the end, the students fail their studies and create more low students’ interest in studying and teaching science and mathematics subjects.

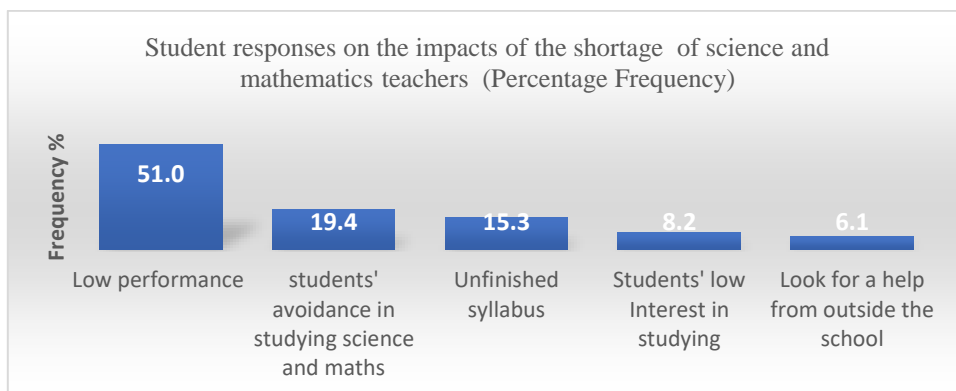


Figure 2: Impacts of the Shortage of Science and Mathematics Teachers in Secondary Schools in Tanzania (98 students frequency percentage)

Therefore, the factors that cause the shortage of science and mathematics subjects are almost the same as the impacts of the shortage. For instance, poor performance is a factor that causes the shortage of science and mathematics teachers and at the same time impacts science and mathematics

teachers. If the students are not performing well, it means we will not have sufficient teachers who will continue teaching science and mathematics subjects in future. Thus, there will be more poor performance in science and mathematics subjects, which is an impact of the shortage of the same.

Relationship between the Factors causing the Shortage of Science and Mathematics Teachers and their Impacts on Secondary Schools in Tanzania

The trend of phobia for science and mathematics continues in the country and it creates a circle whereby the factors causing the shortage of teachers will also appear to create direct impacts on Secondary Schools in Tanzania. The current research revealed that the trend of the factors causing the shortage of science and mathematics teachers and their impacts on secondary schools build the cyclic relationship between them. This relationship between the factors causing the shortage of science and mathematics teachers and their impacts is summarized in figure 3. Whenever there are a few graduates in science and mathematics subjects, many of them enter other science-related or mathematics-related careers, very few join the teaching career. If teachers are few, then they become scarce in secondary schools, and the trend intensifies the problem of the shortage of science and mathematics teachers. Thus, students will perform low if there is no strong intervention.

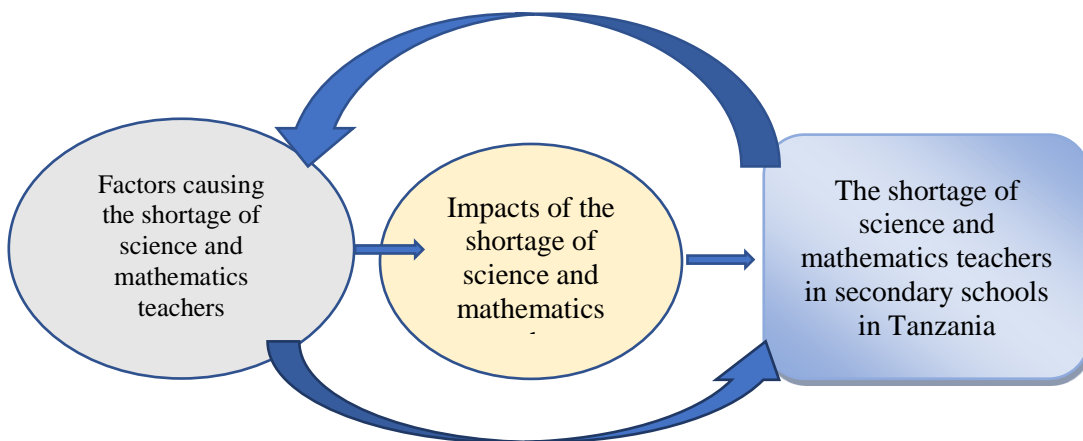


Figure 3: The Cyclic Relationship between the Factors causing the Shortage of Science and Mathematics Teachers and their Impacts on Secondary Schools in Tanzania

Discussion

The findings of the current study imply that, apart from several efforts that were undertaken to address the shortage of science and mathematics teachers in secondary schools in Tanzania, there is still a lot to be done to get away from the problem. This is not a task that can be resolved by a single individual, but by all stakeholders in education including students, parents, teachers, school management, and the government, should work together. The cyclic relationship between the factors causing the shortage of science and mathematics teachers and their impacts on secondary schools in Tanzania should be disconnected. The findings of the current study are in connection with Mazana, Montero, and Casmir’s (2020) study, who suggested that poor performance in science and mathematics subjects in secondary schools causes a few graduates in science and mathematics at higher or tertiary levels of education. It is argued that poor performance in secondary schools increases the shortage of science and mathematics graduates and it is the cause of the decline of graduates. As it is in the current study, Mazana, Montero, and Casmir suggest that among these few science and mathematics graduates, upon completion of their studies, many of them join other science and/or mathematics-related careers; only a few enter teaching career. The findings indicate that some students lose interest and

avoid studying science and mathematics subjects. These factors are related to the issue of poor performance, as suggested by Projest (2013). When there is poor performance, the students tend to lose interest in studying the subjects and avoid the subjects because of the feeling that they will not achieve their goals in the end. There are few graduates in science and mathematics subjects, which affects teaching, especially if these few graduates join other careers. Arguably, this contributes to the shortage of teachers. When students lose interest, they tend to dislike the subjects, and if they continue studying them, they fail at the end (Cheung, 2018). To avoid failing in the end, the current study suggest that such students tend to avoid studying science and mathematics subjects, while some decide to look for assistance from outside the school. It is clear in this study that students' avoidance to teaching career contributes to the shortage of science and mathematics teachers. If students avoid teaching career and, at the same time, very few are graduating in science and mathematics, it is obvious that the shortage of science and mathematics teachers in secondary schools intensifies.

This argument is in connection with Ndalichako and Komba (2014), Projest (2013) and Dlamini (2014). It is argued in the current study that the shortage of science and mathematics teachers in secondary schools and their impacts are maintained by the cyclic relationships between factors and the impacts of the shortage of science and mathematics teachers. This suggests the factors that cause the shortage of science and mathematics teachers create some impacts on students and schools; these impacts, in turn, become the cause of the shortage. This cyclic relationship embraces the problem at every stage in the education system for decades (Mremi, 2022). The factors that are causing the shortage of science and mathematics teachers and the impacts that have shown a cyclic relationship have serious effects on the country's science and mathematics subjects and further affect the economic and technological growth. They result in a low number of scientists in the country, thus Tanzania's growth in science and technology is also affected (Mremi, 2022). The shortage of science and mathematics teachers causes and sustains low performance in those subjects. The low performance causes other factors such as a low number of graduates in science and

mathematics as well as the low number of graduates who are interested in teaching career. Thus, the cyclic relationship between the factors for the shortage of science and mathematics teachers and their impacts remains unsolved and affects secondary school, as well as the tertiary levels.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, this study concludes that:

1. Poor performance in science and mathematics subjects, students' avoidance of science and mathematics subjects, and the shortage of graduate students in science and mathematics contribute to the shortage of science and mathematics teachers.
2. A high teacher-student ratio, uncompleted syllabi, a high teaching load, low interest in studying science and mathematics, students seeking outside help, and students' pursuit of other science and mathematics-related careers are some of the consequences of a shortage of science and mathematics teachers.
3. There is relationship between the factors causing the shortage of science and mathematics teachers and their impacts on secondary schools in Tanzania. The trend of the factors causing the shortage of science and mathematics teachers and their impacts on secondary schools build the cyclic relationship between them.

Recommendations

Based on the current research findings, the researcher recommends that:

1. The school management, education officers, and the government, through its relevant ministries, should understand the cyclic relationship between the factors causing the shortage of science and mathematics teachers and their impacts so as to address the shortage of science and mathematics teachers.
2. Stakeholders should first motivate students to like science, mathematics, and teaching careers and ensure that they emphasize positive students' attitudes towards science and mathematics subjects.
3. The school management should be responsible for resolving the school-based factors such as inadequate teaching and learning facilities, lack of qualified teachers, insufficient textbooks, libraries, and housing facilities for teachers.

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Parents-Teachers' Collaborative Strategies and Challenges in Managing Truancy in Public Primary Schools in Tabora, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the collaborative strategies used by parents and teachers in managing pupils' truancy in government primary schools in Tanzania and the challenges they faced. The study was conducted in six primary schools in Kaliua district, Tabora region. A mixed-methods research approach with the convergent parallel design was employed. One hundred seventy-four (174) participants were involved, including the District Primary Educational Officer, Ward Educational Officer, parents, and teachers. Data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, and documentary reviews. Qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis, whereas the quantitative data were evaluated descriptively using SPSS version 26 to compute the frequency, mean, and percentages. The findings revealed that communication between parents and teachers, parents and teachers' meetings, classroom attendance, and local government involvement were being used in managing truancy. Besides, it was noted that challenges emerged when using the mentioned strategies. These challenges were mainly on the parents' side. Such challenges including parents' phone numbers being unavailable, parents' nonattendance to school meetings, and unchecked classroom attendance. This study concludes that collaboration between parents and teachers allows them to nurture pupils while they are at home and at school. The study recommends that the government needs to educate parents to ensure effective collaboration with teachers to reduce or eliminate truancy among pupils.

Keywords: collaborative, parent-teacher collaboration, truancy, strategies, challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Collaboration between parents and teachers plays a crucial role in actively managing and nurturing their children's education. It allows parents to work with teachers to accomplish various tasks for supporting children (Chiuri et al., 2020). The collaborative effort enables pupils to acquire knowledge at home, guided by parents, and at school, facilitated by teachers through policies and a designed curriculum (Makyara et al., 2019). The significance of collaboration between parents and teachers is widely acknowledged within global policies and frameworks, including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the UNESCO Framework for Action. These influential guidelines highlight the importance of fostering strong partnerships between parents and teachers to enhance the quality of education (United Nations, 2015; UNESCO, 2015). Specifically, the SDGs, with Goal 4 focusing on Quality Education, underscore the crucial role of parent-teacher collaboration in ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all children. Moreover, the UNESCO Framework for Action, developed to promote sustainable educational practices, emphasizes active involvement of parents and families in education, recognizing them as vital educational partners and advocates for their participation in decision-making processes.

Tanzania has demonstrated its commitment to parent-teacher collaboration by closely aligning with global policies. Both the country's Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 1995 and 2014 emphasise the importance of fostering active engagement between parents and teachers (United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 1995; 2014). These policies recognise the crucial role of parents and teachers in supporting and enhancing the quality of education. They acknowledge parents' need for active involvement and participation in their children's education. Furthermore, the ETP of 2014 also encourages parents to engage in their children's learning process, provide support at home, and collaborate with teachers and schools. In recognising the essential partnership between parents and teachers, this policy emphasizes creating a friendly learning environment and promotes students' success. The policy highlights the importance of teacher-parent communication and involving parents in decision-making processes related

to their children's education. In collaboration with the Educational Quality Improvement Programme-Tanzania (EQUIP-T), the Tanzanian government has placed considerable emphasis on parent-teacher collaboration (EQUIP-Tanzania, 2014; URT, 2014). Although the ETP in Tanzania has not explicitly mentioned managing truancy within the context of parent-teacher collaboration, it is essential to note that addressing truancy and promoting regular attendance is a significant concern in education systems worldwide, including Tanzania. Based on that, one of the critical objectives of EQUIP-T is to address truancy among pupils through a collaborative partnership. Extensive research has consistently demonstrated that collaboration between parents and teachers yields positive educational outcomes (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). When parents and teachers join forces, they can effectively address various student-related challenges, including truancy. This collaborative approach creates a supportive and conducive environment that empowers children to succeed academically and personally. However, despite the evident benefits, there remains a shortage of research that examines the specific collaborative strategies employed by parents and teachers in managing truancy in Tanzania and the challenges they encounter in implementing these strategies.

The practice of collaboration between parents and teachers in managing truancy in primary school has been adopted in many countries worldwide. Studies have found that parental involvement and engagement in their child's education are associated with reduced truancy rates (Benner et al., 2016; Dotterer & Wehrspann, 2016). Other studies reported that collaboration between parents and teachers showed promise in improving pupils' attendance and reducing truancy (Halilu, 2020; Childs & Grooms, 2018; Lundo, 2017). For instance, research conducted in Nigeria and North America showed that collaboration between parents and teachers effectively combats absenteeism and significantly enhances school attendance (Halilu, 2020; Childs & Grooms, 2018). Similarly, a study conducted in Tanzania revealed that collaboration between parents and teachers positively influenced school discipline and reduced truancy rates (Lundo, 2017). Despite the success of reducing truancy through collaborative efforts between parents and teachers in various countries, the specific strategies

employed in managing truancy in Tanzania, particularly in Tabora, and the challenges parents and teachers encounter in implementing these strategies remain largely unexplored. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the collaborative strategies employed and the challenges parents and teachers face in managing truancy among pupils in public primary schools. This study was guided by the following two research questions:

- i. What strategies do parents and teachers employ in managing pupils' truancy?
- ii. What challenges do parents and teachers encounter when addressing pupils' truancy?

Methodology

The present study was conducted in Kaliua district in Tabora region of Tanzania. Kaliua district is situated in the western part of Tanzania. The district was chosen due to the prevalence of truancy as indicated by educational data. In 2020, the number of truancy dropouts in Kaliua district was 5,238 cases, making it a notable area of focus (URT, 2020). The district ranks in the top position in the region regarding truancy and school dropouts. This study employed a mixed-methods research approach utilising the convergent parallel design to enhance the validity and comprehensiveness of the findings regarding parents' and teachers' collaboration in addressing pupils' truancy. The chosen convergent parallel design facilitated the simultaneous collection of quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), enabling the exploration of collaboration strategies employed by parents and teachers and the challenges they encountered. By analysing the two types of data independently and presenting the results collectively, a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions was achieved (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study involved 174 participants, consisting of educational administrators, various categories of teachers, and parents. The sample comprised of one district primary educational officer (DPEO), three ward educational officers (WEOs), six head teachers, six discipline teachers, and 76 class teachers. All the teachers involved in the study were chosen from six primary schools. The district primary educational officer, WEOs, and teachers were selected purposefully. Besides, the study also involved 82 parents who were selected

through proportionate quota sampling. Data were collected using three methods namely; semi-structured interviews, questionnaires (comprising closed and open-ended questions) and documentary review. Tools were prepared in English and translated into Swahili, a widely used language in Tanzania. Interviews were used to collect data from DPEO, DEOs, head teachers, and discipline teachers, while questionnaires collected data from class teachers and parents. The reviewed documents included PTC meetings reports/minutes, parent log book, admission book, attendance register/class attendance, student permission book and school calendar. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The Swahili interview transcriptions were then translated into English to support the findings. Besides, ethical issues adhered to protect participants' privacy, and anonymity was guaranteed.

The research tools were piloted to identify potential issues and made necessary improvements before data collection (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The questionnaire's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which indicated good consistency and reliability ($\alpha > 0.70$). Member checking was also employed, allowing participants to review and confirm interview data (Birt et al., 2016). Additionally, logical reporting and documentation were implemented to ensure transparency and trustworthiness. These measures aimed to establish the tools' validity, reliability, and trustworthiness, strengthening the credibility and integrity of the study's findings. Both qualitative and quantitative data were analysed in this study. Qualitative data were analysed through content analysis, explicitly employing a conventional qualitative content analysis approach and manifest analysis, following a four-stage process: de-contextualization, re-contextualization, categorization, and compilation (Elo et al., 2014). Quantitative data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The analysis encompassed descriptive statistics to calculate means, frequencies, and percentages.

Findings

This section explains the research findings regarding parents-teachers' collaborative strategies employed in managing pupils' truancy and the

challenges they encountered. The identified strategies and challenges have been presented as the primary themes corresponding to each research question.

Parents-Teachers' Collaborative Strategies Employed in Managing Pupils' Truancy

Overall, the findings of this study revealed that parents and teachers were utilising four main strategies through their collaborative efforts to manage truancy among pupils. These strategies included fostering communication between parents and teachers, conducting meetings between parents and teachers, implementing classroom attendance measures and involving local government leaders. Table 1 indicates rated responses from teachers, providing an overview of the collaborative strategies employed in managing truancy within schools.

Table 1: Collaborative Strategies used by Teachers in Managing Truancy (N=76)

| Statements | Agree (%) | Disagree (%) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| I use class attendance to find truant pupils and collaborate with their parents to control them | 76 (100.0%) | 0 (0.0%) |
| I share class attendance data with a parent through established channels to improve the ability of PTC to curb truancy | 58 (76.3%) | 18 (23.7%) |
| I communicate with parents of pupils through letters, phones, and school announcements to pupils. | 65 (85.5%) | 11 (14.5%) |
| I meet with parents through scheduled PTC meetings to discuss how to manage truancy of their children | 51 (67.1%) | 25 (32.9%) |
| I involve local government authorities in finding the whereabouts and assisting in returning the child to school | 48 (62.2%) | 28 (36.8%) |
| I involve local government to ensure parents comply with orders to monitor attendance of children at school | 43 (56.6%) | 33 (43.4%) |

Source: Field Data (June, 2022)

Based on the data presented in Table 1, the data indicate that more than 50% of the class teachers employed all four strategies for managing truancy. Classroom attendance was the most frequently used strategy, as all class teachers in the visited schools consistently utilised them. This widespread adoption of attendance records may be attributed to by their mandatory nature within the educational system. In contrast, sharing attendance reports with parents was the least collaborative strategy between teachers and parents in managing truancy among pupils in the studied schools. It was also found that over 85% of the class teachers communicated with parents to address truancy.

However, the involvement of the local government was the least utilised strategy of collaboration between teachers and parents. The local government being the least collaborative strategy used, had two implications. One other collaborative strategies were relatively effective because a few cases of truancy needed the involvement of local government leadership to deal with them. Two teachers sought collaboration with local government leadership for a few cases of pupils' truancy of which other strategies failed and become particularly critical. Similarly, the data in Table 2 indicate the ranking of parents' responses on the four strategies of teacher-parent collaboration in managing truancy among pupils in primary schools. The parents' responses indicate that most parents were communicating with teachers through letters and phone calls followed by face-to-face meetings to discuss and sort out things related to truancy of pupils. Furthermore, about three thirds of the parents' responses indicated that the local government involvement was seen as an effective strategy for addressing chronic or persistent cases of truancy among pupils in schools in their areas of jurisdiction.

Table 2: Collaborative Strategies used by Parents in Managing Truancy (N=82)

| Statements | Agree (%) | Disagree (%) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| I communicate with teachers through phones, and letters concerning the management of children's truancy | 68 (82.9%) | 14 (17.1%) |
| Meeting with teachers at different times and discussing different issues concerning child's progress led to easy truancy management. | 57 (69.5%) | 25 (30.5%) |
| I attend meetings organised by the school to discuss school-related issues, including truancy. | 48 (58.5%) | 34 (41.5%) |
| The local government is involved in managing truancy in school and it is one of the final steps taken for resolving chronic cases | 52 (63.4%) | 30 (36.6%) |
| The local government has been using its authority to curb truancy in school, including holding parents responsible | 51 (62.2%) | 31 (37.8%) |

Source: Field Data (June, 2022)

Detailed explanations of the strategies employed in managing truancy among pupils are provided in the subsequent sections.

Communication between Parents and Teachers

Communication between parents and teachers was found to have been facilitated through various channels, including mobile phones, school announcements, parental invitations sent through letters and school examination reports. The school examination reports included a designated section where parents could sign and give explanations to indicate their receipt of the report and satisfaction with the results. Once completed, the signed section was returned to the respective class teacher through the child. The study revealed that communication between parents and teachers was vital in sharing valuable information about pupils. With technological advancements, such as smartphones, cooperation between parents and teachers significantly improved. One example was an establishment of a

WhatsApp group where information on truancy was shared. Through this platform, parents received updates on their children's attendance, including specific names of pupils and days missed. This direct and instant communication allowed parents to address truancy actively. During the interview session, a head teacher from School A acknowledged the importance of communication between parents and teachers in managing truancy. This head teacher had these to say:

With smartphones, the cooperation between parents and teachers has improved. Parents and teachers have established a WhatsApp group where information about truancy is also posted; it is where parents get information and know the number of days or how irregularly some pupils attend school. Even the actual names of pupils and days missed are shown through WhatsApp messages. Parents of truant pupils and others respond; some give more details or give advice or share their experiences or tactics to best deal with the situation.

The quote above indicates how advancement in technology and communication (smart phones and WhatsApp) has enhanced collaboration between parents and teachers, hence helps in addressing truancy among pupils. The insights given by a discipline teacher from School D during the interview session are worth noting. This discipline teacher shed further light on the topic, offering his perspective and experiences:

Teachers communicate with parents in fulfilling their custodial responsibilities in preventing pupils' truancy. Teachers immediately contact parents through phone calls, letters, or physical visits when they notice that some pupils are absent from classes. In such cases, teachers request that respective parents come to school for discussions concerning their children's attendance.

The above quote specifies that teachers immediately reported and asked parents to meet and discuss with them about pupils' truancy. Teachers physically visited some pupils' homes for unreachable parents or those who did not show up after receiving calls.

Parents-Teachers' Meetings

Parents and teachers employed scheduled meetings as another effective strategy for managing truancy. During parent-teacher meetings, WEO and local government leaders were invited. The study found that in most schools, parents and teachers used quarterly meetings to address truancy-related issues. However, there were no timetables for quarterly meetings in other schools, but the truancy issue was discussed in other meetings as one of the agenda. These meetings were typically conducted at the school premises, often in the afternoon. During these gatherings, teachers would share crucial information regarding the truancy situation within the school and engage in discussions with parents on how to address it. This finding was also noted during interviews with a discipline teacher from School C. The discipline teacher commented:

Parents and teachers hold meetings to discuss truancy among pupils. These meetings allow both parties to educate one another on the importance of collaboration in addressing truancy issues. During the meetings, teachers explain the importance of the parents' participation in preventing truancy, while most parents insist on sharing information if their children miss school.

The above quote suggests that meetings between parents and teachers help to deal with pupils' truancy. The meetings create a platform where parents and teachers can exchange knowledge and insights, emphasise the significance of working together to address truancy-related challenges. Similarly, during the interview session, the head teacher of School F gave valuable insights on the parent-teacher meeting. The head teacher noted:

Parents are invited to attend school meetings where they discuss with teachers the impact of truancy on pupils' academic performance. During discussions, we collectively agree on effective measures to control truancy and subsequently, put the agreed-upon strategies into action. Examples of the things that teachers discuss and agree with parents to deal with pupils who miss classes include making conversations with children to identify the underlying reasons for their absence and advising them on

the importance of attending school. Besides, pupils may be assigned specific tasks, such as cleaning the school grounds by cutting grass. Furthermore, if a child continuously fails to attend school for five consecutive days without information, teachers may report the case to the parent(s) who in turn may report it to the local government leaders' office for further intervention and support.

The above quote infers that in parent-teacher meetings for managing truancy, the conversation usually involves two main aspects. One, reasons or circumstances that lead to the respective pupils' truancy and two, the learning/academic and legal implications for truancy.

Classroom Attendances

Based on the findings, classroom attendance record was mentioned as the third strategy used by parents and teachers in the management of truancy in schools. Teachers collected daily attendance data of pupils in the classroom. Discipline teachers shared the names of absentees with parents through WhatsApp groups after collecting all the names from class teachers. Teachers then tracked pupils individually and collaborate with their parents to ensure that they attend school regularly. The review of the thirty-six (36) class attendance sheets (out of 65 class attendances) in the studied schools revealed that teachers noted present and absent pupils on the daily basis. On this aspect, the WEO from ward B noted:

Other strategies that teachers use include keeping accurate records of the pupils by calling their names out daily using the attendance book. Parents are aware that if a child is absent from school for more than five days is considered an offense. parents are encouraged to check their children's exercise books on the daily basis (upon their return home). It is emphasized that parents should check the date for each exercise and ensure that it is marked. If a child's exercises remain unmarked for more than three consecutive days, parents are advised to call the teacher via phone.

The quote shows that teachers and parents collaborate in managing truancy through attendance sheets.

Involvement of Local Government Leaders

This study found that local government leaders (ward executive officer, village executive officer, village chairperson and councillors) were involved in addressing chronic truancy cases. The local government leaders enforced bylaws set by parents and teachers in managing truancy. During meeting, the local government leaders observed what the parents and teachers were discussing. On this aspect, a discipline teacher from school C commented:

The local government leaders usually attend all the meetings held in schools. When parents and teachers have their meetings, they involve the ward executive officer, village executive officer, village chairman, and councillors. During the meeting, the local leaders are observant and they do so to oversee if the bylaws that were enacted to prevent truancy are effective.

The statement suggests that local government leaders usually attend meetings in schools. The purpose of involving these government leaders is to ensure accountability in the implementation of the bylaws that have been enacted to prevent truancy. The presence of local government leaders at the meetings indicate that truancy prevention is considered significant within the community, and the involvement of these leaders underscores the commitment to address the issue effectively.

Challenges facing Parents and Teachers in Managing Pupils Truancy

The findings in this aspect revealed that challenges faced parents and teachers in managing truancy among pupils are mainly a result of the strategies they used in their collaboration. The main challenges that this study found were unavailability of the parents' phone numbers, parents' reluctance to attend scheduled meetings and unchecked classroom attendance.

Unavailability of the Phone Numbers

It was found that some of the parents were not available on the phone number they provide to the school for communication purposes. This

affected the parent–teacher efforts in addressing pupils' truancy. Regarding this situation, the discipline teacher of school C had this to say:

Sometimes teachers try to call parents whose children miss school, but they are either unavailable or do not pick calls. Sometimes they don't call back, even if they find a missed calls, for hours or even for a day. Other parents completely don't call back or not reachable even through WhatsApp. So, it becomes a challenge to cooperate with such parents in dealing with their children's truancy.

The quote above indicates a potential communication barrier between teachers and parents, thus hindering collaborative efforts to tackle truancy effectively. The delayed response from parents may result in a prolonged absence of communication and delay in addressing the underlying issues contributing to their children's truancy. It also emphasizes the need for alternative means of communication or strategies to find unreachable parents through phone calls, such as using emails, text messages, or giving letters through their children to ensure effective collaboration in dealing with truancy.

Parents' Reluctance to Attend Scheduled Meetings

This study found that parents' reluctance to participate in scheduled meetings was another significant challenge. The analysis of eight (8) reviewed meeting reports/minutes documents revealed that not all parents actively attended meeting sessions. This observation is based on the data presented in Table 2. The data indicate that only 48 out of 82 parents (58.5%) were present during the parent-teacher meetings. Although the attendance rate of parents exceeded a half, a considerable portion (34 parents, 41.5%) remained absent. Consequently, this situation hindered effective implementation of the discussed strategy. Parents who did not attend these meetings were unaware of the discussed issues, thus resulted in limited involvement in addressing pupils' truancy issues.

Unchecked Classroom Attendances

Despite the positive intention behind utilising classroom attendance to address truancy, this approach had its limitations. A review of thirty-six (36)

school attendances revealed that some teachers neglected to monitor pupils' attendance for consecutive periods of two to three days. When interviewed about this matter, these class teachers justified their actions by explaining that the heads of the schools occasionally assigned additional responsibilities, which resulted in their inability to track pupils' attendance effectively. Unfortunately, the unchecked classroom attendance undermined the significance of maintaining accurate attendance records for truancy control; thus, hindered identification of absentees on those days. In support of the teachers' responses of not monitoring pupils' attendances, one of the class teachers from school B had this to say:

I didn't take attendance in my class for two consecutive days, because the head teacher assigned me the responsibility of assessing the reading skills of Standard I pupils. Given the task's tight deadline, I concentrated my efforts to ensure I met it as per the head teacher's instructions. Unfortunately, this assignment caused me to overlook taking attendance for the pupils.

Likewise, another teacher from school D informed that:

Sometime, there are situations where taking attendance of the pupils is not possible due to other responsibilities that have been assigned to you. For instance, two weeks ago, I was unable to mark the attendance of my pupils because the head of the school assigned me the responsibility of collecting examination papers from a neighboring school. When I left, I anticipated returning on time to mark the attendance of the pupils in my class. However, the head teacher of that school was absent, which necessitated me to wait until he returns. Consequently, I couldn't return on time, resulting in my inability to take attendance.

These quotes from the teachers indicate that each class teacher has the responsibility of monitoring pupils' attendance in their respective assigned classes. If a class teacher is assigned other duties, it is their responsibility to ensure that attendance is either checked by themselves or delegated to another teacher.

Discussions

This section of the paper discusses the study's findings aligned with the study questions. The study examined collaborative strategies employed by parents and teachers and the challenges faced them in managing truancy among pupils in public primary schools. The study highlighted four key strategies: classroom attendance, parent-teacher communication, meetings, and involvement of local government leaders. The findings also shed light on the challenges faced by parents and teachers during their collaboration, such as unavailability of parents' phone numbers, parents' reluctance to attend scheduled meetings and unchecked classroom attendance. The importance of classroom attendance records as a critical strategy aligns with previous research. Sekiwu et al. (2020) conducted a similar study in Uganda and found that maintaining accurate attendance records was vital for identifying patterns of truancy. The findings are also in connection with Mills et al. (2019), who conducted a study in Australia and found that monitoring student attendance data was thought to be crucial for raising attendance.

This consistency in findings suggests that classroom attendance records are a foundational tool for managing truancy across different educational contexts. Moreover, parent-teacher communication emerged as another critical strategy in addressing truancy. Parents and teachers were communicating through letters, phone calls and WhatsApp groups to address the truancy issue. The WhatsApp group was helpful as information about truancy was shared with parents quickly. This finding is consistent with research conducted by Doğan (2019), who underlined WhatsApp group's importance in helping teachers solve students' problems more quickly. However, the same study also found that WhatsApp groups had a negative impact because, among other issues, parents were trying to solve every problem via WhatsApp; as a result, they were reluctant to have face-to-face communication with teachers. Scheduled meetings involving parents, teachers, and local government leaders were identified as a valuable strategy. In Tanzania, leaders and community members who have authority in wards and villages have the task to monitor and collaborate with schools and parents to ensure that pupils attend school instead of roaming about in

the streets or being in activities that are not related to studies (URT, 2016). This is in connection with Ada et al. (2019), who revealed that local leaders in Nigeria were involved in meetings where school administrators spelled out bylaws and procedures which could be communicative to all and serve as references when dealing with truants. In the same line, Halilu (2020) (in Nigeria) pointed out that court alternatives and law enforcement are among the strategies for reducing truancy among secondary school students. However, it is essential to note that the challenges identified in the present study are not unique and have been observed in previous researches. For instance, a study by Islam et al. (2016) from remote communities highlighted a gradual decline in parental presence in meetings. In the current study, parents were reluctant to attend scheduled meetings. Also, this study found that parents were not reachable through phones. These challenges can hinder effective collaboration between parents and teachers in addressing truancy.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that communication between parents and teachers, meetings between parents and teachers, classroom attendance and the engagement of local government leaders have all been valuable strategies in managing truancy. Nevertheless, unavailable parent's phone number, low attendance rates at school meetings among parents and unchecked classroom attendance were the challenges in managing pupils' truancy. Despite the identified challenges, the collaborative strategies between parents and teachers remain significant in addressing truancy among the pupils. Recognizing the used strategies and addressing the challenges to their implementation is crucial in reducing truancy rates and improving pupils' attendance. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the government, in collaboration with other stakeholders, prioritise providing education to parents and teachers. Raising awareness about the importance of collaboration and equipping them with the necessary skills may effectively reduce or even eliminate truancy among pupils. Additionally, efforts should be made to address the specific challenges identified such as unavailability of parents' phone numbers registered at school and low attendance in school meetings, by exploring alternative communication methods and facilitating convenient scheduling options.

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Conflict of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest that the authors can identify with this particular paper.

Civil Servants' Perception Towards The Open University of Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the civil servants' perceptions towards the Open University of Tanzania (OUT). The study employed a qualitative research approach, guided by distance learning theory, self-perception theory and mathematical theory of communication, involving 81 sampled civil servants. A case study research design with interviews and focused group discussion (FGD) were employed in the study. The collected data were analyzed through thematic and discourse analysis. The findings revealed that there is both positive perception and negative perception from civil servants about OUT. The findings also revealed that civil servants had a good understanding of the term OUT although some of them used OUT and ODL interchangeably. It was further revealed that the number of civil servants enrolled in the ODL programmes offered by OUT was notably lower as a result of limited experiences and insufficient details about the OUT programmes and its mode of delivery. The nature, availability, and formats of information about OUT raised concerns among civil servants. The study recommended that OUT as the ODL flag bearer, should continue packaging, showcasing, sharing, and updating information on ODL in the society. This will improve understanding and eventually the participation of the community, particularly the civil servants, in ODL programmes at OUT.

Keywords: Open University of Tanzania, Open and Distance Learning, Civil Servants, Distance Learning, Open Learning.

INTRODUCTION

The establishment of the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) in 1992 followed the serious shortage of access to higher education experienced in Tanzania in the 1980s, and the need to develop a population capable of improving the economic and social development of the country (Mmari, 2002). The higher education is highly needed in Tanzania to achieve socioeconomic development. For instance, at the global level, it is shown that to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the subsequent plan of Education for All (EFA), the United Nations Organization (UNO) urged all countries to adopt and use ODL (Aderinoye et al., 2009). Thus, the introduction of ODL in Tanzania and other countries was a response to a call by the UN (Godrick, 2017). OUT, the higher learning institution that supports Open and Distance Learning (ODL), was established in 1992 by a parliamentary act number 17. It is a single-mode institution that offers remote learning for certificate, diploma, and degree programmes at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The OUT Charter went into force in 2007 following reaccreditation in 2006. The university, which is based in Dar es Salaam, has established a total of 27 regional centers across the nation (including Zanzibar).

The university has also established coordination centres and or exam centres particularly in towns near Tanzania's international borders. The decision was after realizing that important markets for its educational programmes are to be found in neighboring African nations as well as in Tanzania itself (Mushi & Maharaj, 2013). ODL is an approach to teaching and learning that offers open and flexible access to learning opportunities to anyone, anywhere, and at any time. ODL is especially useful for potential students who are unable to access learning opportunities where they are provided. For these students, learning opportunities need to be offered where they are located, and provided at a time that best suits them and their circumstances (Simpson, 2018). ODL also provides students with options for entry and exit points, as well as course selection, making it particularly suitable for lifelong learners who want to continue their education while working or doing

domestic work. ODL methods use a wide variety of technologies to bridge the divide that is created by the physical separation of learners from the teachers and the educational institution. These include printed as well as digital learning resources; audio and video conferencing; online learning management systems; mobile devices; as well as a growing list of social media tools. Delivering content via a distance learning approach may be done via satellite, computer, television, video, smartphones, and other sorts of technology (Letseka, 2016). The term "Open University" refers to a type of institution that offer learning through ODL; it allows candidates to enroll at any time, regardless of their age or prior knowledge of the subject matter. Candidates are admitted based on their level of education. An open university has only study centers and institutions; there are no connected colleges. Candidates can select the location of their exams and study sessions (Sharples et al., 2016). Candidates can enroll themselves in the courses of their choice at an open university; those who have stopped their education can finish it upon their convenience. So, it can be argued that an open university offers students a second chance to learning.

The worth of a degree earned through an open university is frequently questioned, but one must keep in mind that degrees from open colleges are only valued when the individual possesses the necessary set of abilities (Musungafi et al., 2015). Worldwide, various studies related to ODL have been conducted to reflect the challenges as well as parameters such as administrative procedures, registration procedures, access to teachers, teaching methods, course materials, clarity of the syllabus, exam protocols, and other things of the sort. The studies found that ODL has been facing various challenges such as trouble of accessing and using ICT facilities, insufficient facilitation approaches, strategies and methodologies as well as inadequate study materials (Afiyan et al., 2021; Godrick, 2017; Messo, 2014; Musungafi et al. 2015). On the other hand, Kabage and Sanga (2022) identified the key conceptions that online instruction through ODL can enhance teaching and learning and that sometimes it can be ineffective compared to traditional distance learning. Tanzania, like many other nations, is under constant pressure to increase

access to higher education despite a perception that the quality of education is diminishing and a lack of viable funding options. Due to its importance, ODL is currently gaining importance as a contemporary educational development and rapidly expanding. Many higher education institutions, apart from OUT, are beginning and continuing to offer some of their programmes through ODL (Allen & Seaman, 2017; do Nascimento & ValdÃŠs-Cotera, 2018). It is argued here that ODL, and thus OUT, increases educational access as well raises socioeconomic status in the country, particularly among people who choose to continue working while pursuing their studies (Mkwizu & Ngaruko, 2020). By providing opportunities to educational access at a significantly affordable cost, OUT complements conventional education. The fact that ODL has gained prominence in Tanzania and other parts of the world as a substitute method to meet unmet demand for education (Godrick, 2017), it is expected that the civil servants should be aware of ODL. Thus, they should be putting efforts to undertake education through OUT while going on with their day-to-day employers' obligations. However, the number of civil servants enrolled in ODL programmes offered by OUT is still not to its expectation (Ghilay, 2017). This study, therefore, is expected to fill the gap by focusing on the perceptions of civil servants about OUT.

Theoretical Frameworks: Distance Learning Theory, Self-Perception Theory and Mathematical Theory of Communication

This study was guided by three theoretical perspectives – distance learning theory, self-perception theory as well as mathematical theory of communication. The three theories were selected because they complement each other towards addressing the purpose of the study under investigation. The theories are discussed in the following sub sections:

Distance Learning Theory

Distance learning is a theory that explains “the openness of education and discusses the possibility of giving people an opportunity to learn wherever they are” (Msoroka, 2019 p. 4). This theoretical perspective is

a subset of educational programmes in which the separation of a teacher and a learner is so significant that it affects the behaviour of learners in different ways. Distance learning requires the usage of special techniques that leads to special conceptualization (Moore, 1991). Distance learning is one of the disciplines that now expand fast and has a significant impact on all education delivery systems (Ghosh, 2012). Due to advancement of internet-based information technologies, particularly the World Wide Web, the new ODL system is expanding quickly. The goal behind ODL is to make the entire educational system flexible by separating students and teachers physically (Jegathesan et al., 2018). This study assumes that, given the nature of civil servants' busy schedule, it may be difficult for them to attend conventional face to face education. Since distance learning intends to give everyone access to education regardless of their location and time, thus, distance learning mode can be the best learning option to the civil servants of Tanzania who do not have time to attend conventional education.

Self-Perception Theory

Self-perception theory was first put forth by Daryl Bem in 1967 as a substitute explanation for cognitive dissonance, wherein specific situations cause an individual to develop attitudes that are a result of their observations of their own conduct (Bem, 1967). The relationship between attitudes and behaviours is frequently seen as a causal chain that moves linearly from attitude to behaviour. According to this view, people become aware of particular attitudes through their own actions. Bem (1972) indicates two foundations of self-perception theory. First, understanding one's own action and the events that led to it can be achieved by looking at one's own ideas, attitudes, and perceptions. Second, a person can behave as an outsider who watches other people's activities and attempts to study them in order to determine their own underlying characteristics if they do not fully comprehend them. A person uses his own behaviour as a source of proof for his thoughts and attitudes. The two foundations are relevant to this study based on the following. One, it is assumed here that the experiences gained by learners involved in OUT's may lead them to develop either positive or negative

attitudes towards OUT. This depends on the treatment they may have received during their studies. Second, others (who are not studying with OUT) may develop a negative or positive attitude towards OUT based on the experience they learn from those undertaking their studies with OUT. It is noted that knowing how students perception using technology to learn can help to improve educational initiatives (Chai et al., 2012). It is obvious that having a positive self-perception is a success factor that has a favourable impact on academic accomplishment. ODL is an example of an education innovations where if one's self-perception is inadequate, then this may result in fear of participation in the ODL. Therefore, civil servants have to be aware of the OUT and its operations in order to participate in its education system.

Mathematical Theory of Communication

Mathematician Claude E. Shannon wrote an article titled "A Mathematical Theory of Communication" that was printed in the Bell System Technical Journal in 1948 (Shannon, 1948). The theory established the maximum quantity of information that could be transmitted in a system with a finite amount of transmission power (Shannon, 2001). Perception and information work best together. Etymologically, the verb informs means "to install a form within," hence perception is thought to include implanting external materials into the perceiver's mind. People tend to focus on salient information. Saliency is the strength with which something catches our attention in a given situation (Kenyon et al., 2015). Figure one below summarises this theory.

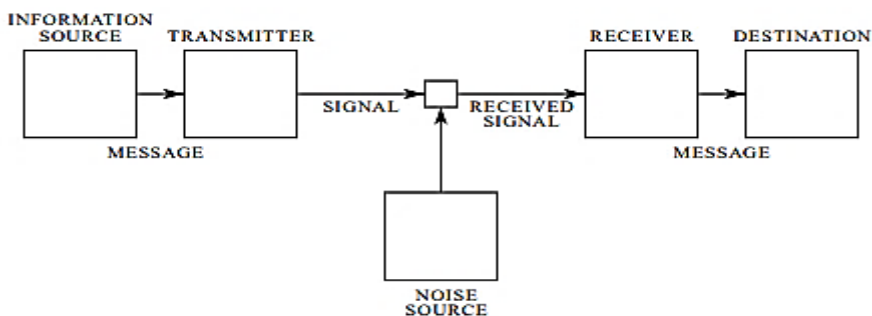


Figure 2: Five Parts of Communication System

Source: Shanon (1948)

The communication system as it is illustrated by Shannon (1948) in figure 1 consists of five parts, including:

First, a source of information that generates a message or series of messages for transmission to the receiving terminal. There are several possible message formats ranging from a series of letters, as in a telegraph or teletype system; one function of time, as in radio or telephone. Numerous combinations also exist, such as television with an accompanying audio channel.

Second, a transmitter that modifies the message in some ways creates a signal appropriate for channel broadcast. Simply converting sound pressure into a corresponding electrical current is all that is required to perform this function in telephony. Other examples of sophisticated processes done to the message to obtain the signal include television, vocoder systems, and frequency modulation. *Third*, the channel is the medium through which the signal is sent from the transmitter to the receiver. Fourth, when reconstructing the message from the signal, the receiver typically conducts the opposite process to that of the transmitter. Fifth, the target of a message is the individual (or object) for whom it is intended.

This theory is relevant to the current study because OUT is required to provide relevant information to society about ODL. The assumption here is that if message about OUT is carried through relevant media and reached the audience perfectly, it is possible that the number of people enrolled with OUT will increase tremendously; their understanding about OUT will be improved. This is because individuals tend to pay attention to things that they believe can somehow suit their needs, interests, and expectations.

Methodology

This study used qualitative research approach influenced by distance learning theory, perception theory and the mathematical theory of communication. The study employed qualitative research approach because it gathered and analysed unique and in-depth data that helped in understanding of individual social reality, including their perceptions and attitudes. In this qualitative research, respondents were able to freely disclose their experiences, thoughts and feelings without constraint

(Kothari, 2020). With a case study research design, the researcher allocated the existing limited resources to the most area of needs. The case study design was selected in order to explore and understand individuals or groups attributed to social or human problems in a more detailed manner (Cresswell, 2014). The study was conducted in Mpanda District in Katavi region which is one of the regional centres of the OUT. The study involved 81 sampled civil servants from all the programmes offered by OUT. The study used a purposive sampling technique to select civil servants involved in this study; two (2) students represented each programme that had students in OUT Katavi. The data were collected through interviews, focus group discussion (FGD) and documentary review. The study involved 5 focus group discussions with 10 participants each. This makes 50 participants (civil servants) to be involved in FGD. Other 31 participants were interviewed to complement the data from the FGD. The data were analyzed through thematic and discourse analysis. The researcher first transcribed all the qualitative data in a rich format, arranged them, and coded them accordingly to generate important content. The researcher familiarized, coded, generated the themes, reviewed them, defined and named the themes and wrote up.

Findings

Understanding about OUT

In this section, the researcher discusses the participants' understanding about OUT. The participants provided different opinions that describe their understandings about OUT. Some of the participants had good understanding, thus making "well understanding individuals" theme; others indicated poor understanding, thus making "poor understanding individuals".

(a) Well Understanding Individuals

In this study, some participants indicated that they had good understanding of the OUT with a positive inclined perception. In this aspect one participant had this to comment:

OUT is an institution where candidates can enroll themselves in the courses of their choice where as those who have stopped their education

can finish it upon their convenience (Respondent 29). In addition, the respondents seemed to have a good understanding about how the OUT operates especially with regard to communication with its customers. Due to the fact that students are studying independently of their instructors and the educational institution, communication is a crucial component of ODL. Many participants reported having easy access to most of the course instructors, and good interactions with them.

One respondent reported that:

Most of the course instructors are easily accessible. However, insufficient academic staff at my center especially for science courses has a significant impact on students' academic progress. Sufficient academic staff, therefore, should be posted even in remote areas. (Respondent 21)

Other participants noted the following:

The admission procedures were well facilitated in filling out and returning application forms, there after course registration as well as examination registrations after being facilitated with the course materials in MOODLE account (Respondent 07).

I was motivated to enroll in OUT programmes because of its flexibility in the mode of the study, where most of the time I was studying on my own with the assistance of learning materials from MOODLE platform (Respondent 30).

The findings in this part therefore revealed that the respondents had a good understanding of OUT as well as how it operates.

(b) Poor Understanding Respondents

On the other hand, other participants indicated poor understanding of the OUT; they indicated some confusion in distinguishing between OUT and ODL. They used the two terms interchangeably. One of the participants commented:

Sometimes I cannot comprehend the differences between OUT and ODL because they are almost the same. I do not want to bother myself because at the end of the day I come to the same conclusion (Respondent 04).

Another participant said:

OUT and ODL are two terms that are similar, and even if there are differences, they are very small because, at the end of the day, they describe the whole concept of providing open education (Respondent 10).

The quotations above suggest the presence of civil servants who confuse between OUT and ODL. Arguably, it is an indication of poorly understanding individuals about OUT.

Perceptions Towards OUT

This study was interested to find the perceptions of civil servants towards OUT. The opinions of the participants were mainly divided into two parts – some had positive while others had negative perceptions.

(a) Positive Perceptions

This study found that some participants had positive perceptions towards the Open University of Tanzania. For instance, during interviews, one participant provided his feelings towards OUT. He commented:

I was motivated to enroll OUT programmes because of its flexibility in the mode of the study, where most of the time I was studying on my own with the assistance of learning materials from MOODLE platform (Respondent 30).

This finding is similar to Sanga (2013) who found that many students in poor nations prefer to complete their degree of studies via distance mode due to its flexibility and ability to earn money while learning.

In the same line, majority of participants felt at ease with the initial admissions processes for ODL programmes. One of the enrolled civil servants who participated in FGD had this to say:

The admission procedures were well organized, from the filling out of the application forms and returning them. Thereafter, course registration as well as examination registrations (after learning through the course materials in MOODLE account) are all well-organized (Respondent 07).

Another participant noted:

Today's method is quite straight forward because we may register for courses and exams from any location. There is no need to travel several kilometers to the center for registration because everything is done online. In the past, we occasionally had trouble filling out registration forms because they frequently got misplaced on the way to head office (Respondent 01).

Some participants were also positive with the current methods of communication in place. For instance, one participant commented:

Life has been incredibly simple ever since the development of mobile phones. When circumstances prevent us from speaking with our instructors in person, we simply call them and ask any academic questions we may have (Respondent 17).

Communication between lecturers and students is one of the psychosocial supports needed by the learners. Kabage (2014) identified various factors contributing towards positive perception among the students, including psychosocial support that they received from their instructors. Thus, it is argued here that the positive perceptions towards OUT indicated by the learners is partly contributed by the available modes of communication between lecturers and learners. Examination processes are important since academic study at the institution results in a certification. In this study, the participants had positive perceptions towards the examination procedures. One of the participants had the following to say:

Three years ago, when I enrolled at OUT, I was informed that the OUT exams frequently leaked and anyone can obtain all the papers. However, this year marks my third year, and I have never seen any paper leaking. I'm happy with the exam registration, invigilation, and release of results. The handling of examinations is strictly regulated and secured by security personnel (Respondent 03).

From the quote above, one may argue that strengthening of the examinations' procedures has made OUT to be an exemplary university.

The examination registration process has also been improved to ensure smooth running of exams in examination centres.

(b) Negative Perceptions

On the other hand, the study found that other participants had negative perceptions about OUT. These participants had some concerns with several issues including but not limited to availability of academic staff and quality of study materials among others. For instance, one participant commented:

Although it is acknowledged that our university is found in almost all regions, this does not mean that other locations should be ignored. Insufficient academic staff for some programmes at my center has a significant impact on academic progress (Respondent 14).

In addition, the participants provided their concerns about the quality and quantity of study materials. Majority of participants agreed that the study materials were of high quality, however, some participants complained that they were not enough. They recommended that course materials be more elaborative and more entertaining for distance learners. One civil servant who participated in FGD had this to say:

The materials are fine, of course, but there are a few small errors. We are aware that the authors are human beings, not angels, and that errors are common in human beings. The only thing I want to mention is that the materials, whether they be in physical copy or digital form, should be delivered to us as soon as we sign up for classes (Respondent 02).

Another participant complained about the delay of provision of learning materials. He commented that:

Delay of study materials causes a lot of hassles and interferes with our examinations' preparations. I suggest that study materials should be in place on time (Respondent 05).

On the other hand, the findings show that most civil servants complained

about the employed instructional approaches. One participant commented:

Many participants find it difficult to utilize email because internet access is still only available in certain parts of the nation. Face-to-face sessions serve as the secondary method of communication due to challenges of internet access (Respondent 20).

Also, another participant claimed:

MOODLE, an established computer-assisted learning platform, is currently used in all OUT centers to provide students with online access to learning materials as well as quizzes, assignments, and discussions. However, this new educational approach is insufficient because majority of students have insufficient computer skills and do not own personal computers for use in the classroom (Respondent 27).

It is argued here that the complaints above may be attributed to that fact that a substantial portion the Tanzanian community is accustomed to traditional delivery techniques; ODL delivery mode is recently adopted in Tanzania. Thus, there is a need to strengthen internet connectivity and educate people about the benefits of ODL so as to address the issue of negative perceptions.

Challenges that Face Learners at OUT

In this study, participants also had the opportunity to present the challenges that they face while pursuing their studies at OUT. The following part presents the findings that reflect the existing challenges facing OUT learners.

Network Resources and Technical Support

The OUT experience is an evidence that it is vital to support the teaching and learning processes with appropriate delivery and support systems in order to manage huge numbers of students who come from a wide range of backgrounds. Most participants in the FGD argued for the reliable network resources. Their concern was about the unavailability of connectivity that sometimes hampered the progress of their studies. For

instance, one participant had this to comment:

Sometimes we are facing serious network challenge that hinder our progress in the studies. I suggest the connectivity to be improved in order to facilitate the smooth progress of our studies (Respondent 02).

The availability of network resources and technical assistance were only lightly mentioned by the participants. However, it is important to note that institutions that offer top-notch learner support systems through efficient student-teacher contact produce good remote learning courses.

Clarity of Curriculum and Course Objectives

Curriculum design is no exception to any educational institution. Most participants during the FGD reported that the curricula were considered clear. However, there were suggestions that the design of an ODL curriculum needs to be relevant to cross-national cultural experiences. The participants suggested the review of the courses often to reflect the social and economic needs of the country. The needs, experiences, and the context of the people must also be considered in the curriculum design. For instance, one participant argued that:

The demands and experiences of variety of people including urban, rural residents, employed, self-employed, unemployed, those whom English is the first or second language, and other subgroups, must be accommodated by the curriculum (Respondent 25).

Availability and Formats of Information on OUT

Some participants claimed that information about OUT is available in various formats; however, they also claimed that the available information is insufficient to meet the needs of students and those who wish to participate in the study. One participant had this to comment:

I am surprised that there are limited advertisements that explain OUT through media such as television, radio and newspapers. Inadequate information on these important media leads to insufficient information related to OUT. I personally got to know OUT through a colleague after he graduated from his master's

studies (Respondent 11).

However, despite the mentioned challenges, some of the participants in the FGD ranked the overall quality of OUT programmes in Tanzania as high; participants noted that they were very likely to recommend others to join OUT programmes. The findings are similar to Sharples et al (2016) who commented that ODL programmes are flexible for every learner particularly when it comes to the selection of the location of their exams as well as study sessions. One can, therefore, argue that OUT as ODL flag bearer has to work on the raised issues in order to improve its enrolment as well as the quality of education it is delivering.

Discussion of the Findings

This study determined the civil servants' perception towards OUT. The participants reflected both good understanding as well as poor understanding of OUT. The participants who had a good understanding described OUT as institution that candidates can enroll themselves in the courses of their choice and at their own study pace where as those with poor understanding had difficult in differentiating between OUT and ODL. Arguably, this is a reflection of self-perception theory, whose proponents suggest the existence of relationship between attitudes and behaviours (Bem, 1972).

It is clear in this study that one's decision to enroll OUT's programme is affected by one's attitudes. Having an understanding that a person can register with OUT in the courses of their choice and at their own study pace is a reflection of distance learning theory, whose foundation is openness and flexibility to allow individuals to undertake studies wherever they are, whenever they feel to and at their own pace (Msoroka, 2019). This study also found that there are some civil servants who cannot properly distinguish between OUT and ODL due to among other reasons lack of sufficient information about OUT. For the mentioned individuals, the two terms seemed to be used interchangeably. This suggests that some of the civil servants are not aware of the OUT as an ODL institution and therefore they are undecided to enroll with OUT.

The findings are in line with Afiyah et al. (2021) who analyzed the implementation of ODL and found that the entire ODL implementation style received positive participant comments as well as negative comments. Also, the study was interested in understanding the perception of civil servants towards OUT. In this theme, there were two sub themes depending on the responses from the participants. In sub theme one, participants seemed to have positive perception towards OUT having flexible learning schedule and delivery modes which do not conflict learners' other life commitment. This suggests that OUT learners have high degree of autonomy in learning – they choose what, when, and how to learn. This is in connection with Komba (2009), who indicated that many students enrolled in ODL programmes due to its nature of flexibility. However, as observed in the data, other participants were found to have a negative perception towards OUT.

Most of the participants had issues on poor communication and study materials. This suggests that more efforts need to be done by OUT in order to improve its operations from admission to exit point. In this study, many participants reported having easy access to most of the courses – this is key to distance learning. This finding is in line with Zirkin and Sumler (1995) who investigated the relationship between learning and interaction. Their research indicated that there is a relationship between student learning, satisfaction, and the degree of course interaction. It is argued here that such communication channel between instructors and learners is commendable. However, as seen in the data, some participants were not happy with poor communication they face with their instructors. This suggests that OUT instructors are divided into two categories – those who easily communicate with their learners and those who hardly communicate with their learners. It should be noted that teachers play a crucial role in motivating students to learn through interaction. learning opportunities. Thus, for OUT to operate smoothly, communication between the instructors and the learners should be enhanced (Messo, 2014). The findings revealed that the improvement of OUT operations – admission, communication as well as examinations' procedures – have made OUT to be more visible to the

public. However, it is argued here that more efforts need to be committed in showcasing the OUT programmes so that they are well understood by the majority, particularly the civil servants who have qualifications to enroll at OUT. It is clear in this study that students are provided with study materials through online learning management system (MOODLE) to enable interactive learning. The majority of participants agreed that the study materials were useful, though some complained about their sufficiency. The conveniency of study materials at any place any time has necessitated the smooth learning of students at OUT. This is different from Musingafi et al. (2015) and Messo (2014) who discovered that students' withdrawal from remote teacher-training programmes was primarily attributed to a perceived shortage of course materials. This study also highlighted some challenges which faced learners at the Open University of Tanzania. Based on the challenges presented, the findings imply that OUT needs to improve its services. The learners' needs should always be the priority in whatever service provided by the institution. However, despite the challenge that has been raised by the respondents, one can argue that OUT as ODL flag bearer has been putting a lot of efforts to reduce the challenges of students in order to reduce the drop out and improve graduation rates.

Conclusion

The quality of higher education provided through ODL has come under scrutiny, despite the excellent role and rising popularity of this method. Varied people have different perspectives on the benefits of ODL, and those perspectives have influenced opinions about whether and how ODL should be used in the education system in Tanzania and elsewhere. This study investigated the civil servants' perception towards the ODL in Tanzania. This study notes that the way ODL system is perceived by those involved in it may have an impact on its success. Thus, the civil servants' perception about OUT is one of the key factors that might influence the success of ODL. Based on the findings, this study concludes that the chosen employees had mixed feelings; some of them had positive perception while others had a negative perception towards OUT.

Recommendations

The following are recommended in the light of the findings obtained in this study:

- (i) This study noted that some faculties did not have members of academic staff in some regional centres. Arguably, this limited provision of correct and relevant information to learners. Thus, it is recommended that there should be representatives of academic staff from each faculty and institute in each regional center.
- (ii) The study also recommends that OUT should continue packaging, showcasing, sharing and updating its information into the society. This may improve understanding and eventually participation of the community including civil servants in ODL programmes at OUT.

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Attitude of Grade III A Teachers towards joining the Ordinary Diploma in Primary Teacher Education of the Open University of Tanzania: Empirical Evidence from Katavi Region

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the public attitude towards the Ordinary Diploma in Primary Teachers Education (ODPTE) of the Open University of Tanzania in Katavi region. The study employed a case study design and applied a qualitative approach. With a sample of 113, the study involved participants ranging from the OUT-Staff, Regional Administrative Secretary, Region Education Officer, District Executive Directors, District Education Officers, Ward Education Officers, Head Teachers, Other Teachers, Students and Graduates. Interview method was used for data collection and themes were used as a base for data analysis. The findings revealed that many Grade (III) A teachers had information about the ODPTE programme as compared to the rest of the community. Student-teachers knew about ODPTE from the fellow teachers. The findings indicated that Grade III A teachers were motivated to join the programme to improve knowledge, attract salary increments, pedagogical development and strengthen their CVs. Others reasons, were further study, family care and affordable cost. The findings also revealed that there was a shortage of learning materials, library, difficult to secure permit for face-to-face sessions conducted at zona level, long distance from the regional Centre and ICT issues. It was concluded that public attitude on ODPTE is mixed because of limited information about OUT, ODL and the ODPTE programme. Limitations of information is attributed to media, content and language use on the issues related to ODL, OUT and ODPTE. The study recommended that the OUT should prepare the learning materials to communicate with employers for awareness of the programme, to open sub-centres in councils and the improvement of the regional Centre library.

Keywords: Tanzania, Attitude, Distance Education, Distance learning

INTRODUCTION

This paper is based on a study on challenges facing primary education in Tanzania and its dynamics in teachers' capacity building efforts. The paradigm shifts in teacher training in the medium and long-term demand for teachers have created a need for new approaches to ensure that efficiency gains are maximized. Low teacher quality is one of the causes of poor performance in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) (URT, 2006/2007). The government through the current reforms aimed at improving in-service training by establishing the 'Teachers Resource Centre' (URT 2006). The Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) 2002-2006 articulated the vision of Universal Primary Education within the wider Tanzania Policy frameworks of the Education and Training Policy, the Education Sector Development Program, the Local Government Reform Programme, the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Vision 2025. Building capacity within the education system was one of the four components of PEDP.

Others included expanding enrolment, improving the quality of teaching and learning processes and strengthening the institutional arrangements that support the planning and delivery of education services. Improvement in educational quality was to be expected by strengthening the following: first, human resources in primary schools – the focus was on in-service professional development of the teachers (URT, 2006). Second, pre-service teacher training. The purpose was to rationalize and improve the quality and relevance of the training that new teachers undergo. Other areas were quality teaching and learning materials – the emphasis was on the next books and materials, the quality and relevance of the curriculum and the school environment. Also, capacity building amongst all education stakeholders such as the school's committee and communities. The Institute of Continuing Education (ICE) was established under the Government Notice No. 159, published on 26th July 1996. Currently, it is operating under the Universities Act No. 7 of 2005 and The Open University of Tanzania (OUT) Charter of 2007. ICE is the arm of the (OUT) for developing, promoting and provision of

continuing lifelong learning through the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode. Ordinary Diploma in Primary Teacher Education was introduced by the Open University of Tanzania in 2009 (OUT, 2010). The Ordinary Diploma in Primary Teacher Education (ODPTE) was adopted in a response to the urgent need for quality primary school teachers in Tanzania. It integrates theory with practice, with the aim of developing teachers professionally to enhance the capability to provide quality primary education (OUT, 2011). The programme trains and re-train teachers to improve the quality of teaching in primary schools and bridges teachers to higher learning (OUT, 2015). This programme enrolls primary school teachers with a minimum of Grade IIIA teachers' certificate.

It is noted that teacher's professional development constitutes an important element for quality and efficiency gains in education. Teachers are expected to be exposed to new pedagogies, methodologies and class management approaches. Therefore, the in-service training and re-training in this cadre cannot be overemphasized. The Open University of Tanzania by providing Ordinary Diploma in Primary Teachers Education is expected to expand the chance for teacher professional development through the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode (OUT, 2014; 2015). Babyegeya (2002), Sutra (2006) and Mkumbo (2011) have highlighted the fact that in-service teacher training in Tanzania is organized in ad-hoc with limited access to many teachers. In 2014 for example, Tanzania mainland had 204,987 teachers where by 190,832 were Grade IIIA teachers (PMO-RALG, 2015). The number of grade IIIA and other certificates in education in public schools has grown to reach 221,306 teachers out of 306,302 (BEST, 2022). Up to year 2022, OUT has 7851 graduates through DPTE programme with only 2760 of the graduates from Tanzania, at that time. This proportional represents 1.25 % of the group in focus (OUT, 2022). Despite the fact that this is the only programme, cheap and convenient for primary teachers for the last fourteen years, the number of enrolled teachers is very low. This poses a concern as to why the enrolment rate among

teachers in primary education is still low in Tanzania given the extended network of the Open University of Tanzania across the country. Is this low rate of enrolment affected by the public attitude on the programme? Where is this attitude emerging from? Is it from the media or experiences with the programme? The purpose of this study was to examine the attitude of Grade III A teachers towards joining the Ordinary Diploma in Primary Teacher Education of the Open University of Tanzania in Katavi region. To understand better, the objective was divided into four sub questions listed as follows: What information is displayed to teachers about ODPTE programme; what is the motive of the learners to join the programme; how useful is the programme to graduates and employers; and what is the future orientation and potentials of ODPTE programme.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, a theoretical framework was built on two dimensions. One dimension focuses on elements of learners' decision to and not to join the programme under study. This dimension is explained by the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). The second dimension aims at capturing the public extent of the acceptability of the programme under investigation. There are two theories building this dimension are the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and the Attitude and Perception Theory. The two theories aimed at capturing the extent of public acceptance towards the programme under investigation. The attitude theory covers elements of attraction between the programme and the members of the community, key to this theory is making potentials for programme especially the justification to join (reason to fall for it) while the perception theory focused on addressing elements of interaction between the programme and members of the community. Elements of the interaction explored included experiences and information available for public consumption. Details on these theories and their related components under this study are briefly presented in the following sections starting with Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and then the Attitude and Perception Theory.

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) was developed by Martin Fishbein and Iceck Ajzen, as a model for the prediction of behavioural intention, spanning prediction of attitude and prediction of behaviour. The subsequent separation of behavioural intention from behaviour allows for explanation of limiting factors on attitudinal influence (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2004; Alhamad & Donyai, 2021; Fishbein, 2009). TRA is used to predict how individual are likely behave based on their pre-existing attitudes and behavioural intentions. It is said that an individual's decision to engage in a particular behaviour is based on outcomes the individual expects will come as a result of performing the behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2004; Alhamad & Donyai, 2021). According to Oslon and Zanna (1993), this is a theory of attitude evaluation of an attitude object, ranging from extremely negative to extremely positive.

The TRA is well explained by the MODE model. The MODE Model has Motivation and Opportunity as Determinant (MODE) of the attitude behaviour relation. It is explained that when both motivation and opportunity are present, behaviour will be deliberate (i.e. positive or favorable with decisions in a direction of phenomenon. When one is absent, impact on behaviour will be spontaneous (unpredictable) (Alhamad & Donyai, 2021; Fishbein, 2009). It is further argued that, in the contemporary perspectives of an attitude, people could also have mixed feelings towards an object by simultaneously holding both positive and negative attitude towards the same object (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2004; Alhamad & Donyai, 2021; Fishbein, 2009). The extreme point based on the MODE can raise from the fact that both motivation and opportunities are absent or have a negative implication making it difficult for the public to logically follow/accept the proposal. An attitude can be positive or negative in orientations towards a phenomenon when an evaluation of people, object, events, activities and ideas looked at (Oslon & Zanna, 1993). The Theory of Reasoned Action is useful in explaining and predicting reasons behind behaviour based on attitudes, norms and intentions. In the context of this, usefulness of this

theory includes gauging an orientation of the public towards a market product and/or service like ODPTE. The construct of TRA are behavioural beliefs, evaluations of outcomes based behaviour which leads to attitude, then normative beliefs, motivation to comply which leads to subjective norms. Both the attitude and subjective norm lead to intention to perform the behaviour, which results in the behaviour. TRA, however, does not account for people's perception of the power they have over their behaviour.

Attitude and Perception Theory

The second part of the theoretical framework is built by an Attitude and perception theory. Attitude and Perception theory posits that people determine their attitudes and preferences by interpreting the meaning of their own environment and experience. Key argument in this theory is that people perceive simply by using the information they receive through their senses and this is enough information for them to make sense of the world around them (Goldstein & Cialdini, 2007). Sensory evaluation in the context of this theory, determines what the public understands about the phenomenon and is based on what is seen, how it is felt, what is the flavor/favor and what is contained in. The feelings, on the other hand, captures touches and personality match of the item as one of the reasons to choose. Flavor and smell are other element influencing public choice of the product. In the context of this study, public rhetoric on the product determines what people are likely to know about the product. Information contained in the daily conversation reflects how much people know about the matter and hence influencing the direction of choice in relation to the product or service. Conversation in the context of this study includes content about the product, organization of contents, language carrying the message and avenues of presentation. In the context of this study, an attitude and perception of the public on the ODPTE is evaluated based on the sensory connection the programme had with the public in terms of information display and the content therein.

Methodology

The study utilized the qualitative research approach and employed a case study design. The study sample comprised of 113 participants. They included six (6) OUT-staff, one (1) Regional Administrative Secretary, one (1) Region Education Officer, District Executive Directors (3), District Education Officers (8), 24 Ward Education Officers, 30 Head Teachers, 10 other teachers, and 30 ODPTE students and graduates. Participants were obtained through purposive sampling for OUT staff and supervisors at regional, district and ward levels; simple random sampling was used to select potential students in a group of teachers and ODPTE students. Graduates were selected using snowball procedures. Data were obtained through interviews. Interviews sessions were conducted over a period of ten months taking advantages of the social events, formal meetings, marketing sessions and academic interactions involving OUT in Katavi.

Data collected were analyzed using content, thematic and discourse analysis as applied in qualitative research approach. What is content, thematic and discourse analysis? With thematic analysis, I read through the transcripts to find the patterns in the meaning of data and developed themes. This was complimented by content analysis, which I used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data (i.e. text). Further to these, discourse analysis was applied on the way in which participants draw on differing interpretive information depending on their interpretation of the context in which my interviews took place. Discourse analysis focused on the ways language was used in the given settings in order to capture an understanding and point of view from the participants (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019; Lindgren, Lundman & Graneheim, 2020).

Findings and Discussion

This section presents analyses and discusses the research findings on attitude of Grade III A Teachers towards joining the Ordinary Diploma in Primary Teacher Education of the Open University of Tanzania. The data are presented in the four sections, which follow the established

themes based on the objectives of the study and research questions. The focus is on information displayed to teachers about ODPTE programme, the motives of the learners to join the programme, the usefulness of the programme for both graduates and employers and the future of the programme.

Information Displayed to the Public about ODPTE Programme

The study wanted to examine how much information was displayed to the public about the ODPTE programme; language used and if they were clear enough. One of the OUT staff while explaining marketing avenues, pointed out how the public is informed about the ODPTE programme by saying:

...[I]nformation on academic programmes, including ODPTE, is shared to the public through different outlets. Mainstream media (i.e. TV, Radio and Newspapers), social media – Instagram, facebook and in some cases X-spaces are used in addition to presentation in public meetings which are commonly used to share details about our programmes. There are programme displays in national events across the country (OS-4).

This statement was complemented by another participant who argued on issues of forms of messages and languages used to inform the public on the programmes offered at the Open University of Tanzania. The participant had this to say:

Messages are in the forms of Oral, posters and leaflets. Except for oral messages availed to mainstream media which mostly in Swahili, posters and leaflets shared as print as well as softcopies on social media are carrying English messages (OS-2)

This response on the form and languages as shared by members of staff, matched with the concern raised by the public on the difficulties they face in decoding the message on ODPTE.

I have some friends who have heard about ODPTE for the first time from me. Others seem to have wrong information about it as

result, partly because of English language used and limited details on program (TE-3).

In this study, the majority of people were found to have information about the ODPTE programme while a few pointed out that they did not have the information. For those with information, the majority of them pointed that they heard this information from their fellow teachers while a few mentioned that they heard it from OUT Staffs, televisions, radios, newspapers and graduations ceremony. Very few mentioned OUT website as source of the information they have. However, most of those with information declared that the information was not clear enough. For this reason, one would argue that the language and media of advertisement employed by OUT was not suitable for the Tanzanian community.

Kannan and Tyagi (2013) discussed about the importance of advertising the brands available in the market, the variety of products and their useful. They believe that advertising is the best way to communicate to the customers. They proposed that it has to be conducted through various media types, with different techniques and ways most suited. They emphasized that it needs a lot of imagination and creativity. Advertisement usually informs the potential consumer about the products, services, their benefits and utilities. It should also persuade the consumers to purchase such products and services. According to Kannan and Tyagi (2013), the media (web-based site) for ODPTE advertisement was not enough for publicity. The rural areas where internet connectivity is poor obviously the advertisement cannot reach them. The idea was supported by Maritim (2011) who explained that ICT is power driven and that African countries have low power connectivity. He pointed out that, except for South Africa and North Africa, the urban-rural grid power connectivity was about 27% and 5% respectively. He revealed that there was low level of ICT literacy at all levels. Therefore, ICT illiteracy frustrates the potential use of web site to the community in urban and rural. In this context, there is need to have a team that is well equipped with the ODL mode of delivery systems. The best way is to

promote ODL and its advantages to both learners and employers and then promote the programmes that are found in different faculties that are provided by the Open University of Tanzania. The team should use the education stakeholders' gatherings, visit teachers at ward level, and equip them with the ODL knowledge and skills to be passed on to other teachers (potential ODPTE students). It is expected that these people can implicitly take it to the community. Consequently, the awareness about OUT and its programmes will reach the whole community. Kannan and Tyagi (2013) concluded by saying that, "advertising aimed at promoting and selling not only the tangible and physical goods, but also ideas and services".

Based on this argument, the study sells the idea of having a competent team to promote ODL and its advantages to the beneficiaries and as a task force to promote OUT. In this study, the majority of participants indicated that they got the information from Kiswahili sources, while a small part of participants got the information from both English and Kiswahili sources. Most of the participants got the information from their fellows who used much Kiswahili in their conversation. On the other hand, very few participants got the information from English sources. One participant commented:

Language is a powerful tool for a human being to communicate with others effectively. Language has a powerful influence over people and their behaviour. This is especially true in the fields of marketing and advertisement. Therefore, the use of right and effective language both spoken and written brings success (OSt-7).

This suggests the importance and power of Kiswahili in publicity to the Tanzanian's communities. Therefore, it can be argued that the language need to be used in the advertisement of the programmes provided by the Open University of Tanzania. This argument is in connection with Kannan and Tyagi (2013) who explained the power of language and its influence over people in communication.

Motives of the Learners to Join the ODPTE Programme

The data collected from the field indicate that the majority were motivated to attend ODPTE for improvement of knowledge, salary increase, convenience (study while they were at home or handling the family) and further study or higher learning. For instance, one graduate participant commented:

We need higher training to grow academically, the choice for ODPTE is mainly because of its lower fees at its level compared to residential programmes, we have seen fast salary raise for those holding a diploma. For ODPTE at the Open University of Tanzania, it is easy to study, work and take care of your family while pursuing this course. Good performance on this course gives you a chance to proceed into higher education at the Open University of Tanzania or any other university (OG-11).

Other motives mentioned by participants include affordable costs, improve professional skills and self-confidence. Arguably, this is in line with the Attitude theory that guided the study. The theory assumes that an individual's decision to engage in a particular behaviour is based on outcomes the individual expects to come as a result of performing the behaviour. It is noted here that improved knowledge, skills and salary are the outcomes attached to ODL, which motivate teachers to undertake ODPTE. These elements are the attracting components to the programme hence a reason to join ODPTE giving it a competitive advantage over other programmes in education. The inclination reasoning is supported by Ajzan and Fishbein, (1975) and Oslon and Zanna (1993) who explained that an attitude is an evaluation of an attitude object ranging from extremely negative to extremely positive. Kyando (2011) also highlighted aspects of Open and Distance Learning in the context of life long learning. He argued "*All the learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a person civic social and/or employment-related perspective*" (page 11). Therefore, the study agrees with the scholars'

ideas and the respondents' argument on the motivation of individuals to engage in learning, in the context of ODPTE.

Usefulness of the ODPTE Programme to Both Graduates and Employer

The findings of this study revealed that the programme has several usefulness to both graduates and employers. The majority of participants mentioned the improvement of knowledge, salary, pedagogy, job profession and upgrade for further study as the main benefits of ODPTE. Others were improvement in ICT, PSLE results, and school administration and management. This is reflected in responses like this:

ODPTE has helped teachers, schools, pupils as well as supervisors of educational system in many ways. For examples, teachers have improved their pedagogy, improved content mastery, gained promotion and better salaries. Schools have improved performance as a result of better teachers; graduates of ODPTE can handle ICT issues at school level with easy; and even better, ODPTE graduate fit better in the new leadership guideline, where diploma is minimum qualification to head a school (EL-5)

A similar observation was noted from one of ODPTE graduate teacher. She noted:

ODPTE is not just an upgrade in teachers training; it imparts skills that are not part of many teachers training. Going through this programme, you will strengthen ICT skills and Mathematical skills through ODC 055 which is a must attend course. Inclusive and special education is another area that is emphasized to all students in addition to a leadership and management skills (OG-3)

The findings of this study are in line with Bernard (1998) arguments as cited by Tweve (2011). The message in Benard (1998) is that despite the preparation, a professional educator has the opportunity to access preparative innovation/techniques to teach rather than recycling materials and approaches. Bernard (1998) adds that, a professional

teacher who has a defined pedagogy has already journeyed through several trials to discover which pedagogical techniques are most effective. He also explained that a professional teacher once acquiring a defined pedagogy creates autonomy for himself/herself and allowing for a partial release from the constraints constructed by either administration and school committee or parents. In this study, it is noted that one of the ODPTE potentials is that it enables, through its trainings, to handle pupils with special needs in schools. This argument was supported by Nziga (2011) who evaluated the programme performance.

As noted earlier, the possibility that learners can study while caring their families and engage in economic activities was mentioned as another benefit of ODPTE. It is argued here that by attending ODPTE at OUT, learners do not affect significantly work schedules like those who attend to conventional studies. This study notes that learners put the new knowledge in practice during the study process; teachers pursuing ODPTE can handle students with special needs. It is argued here that the two are considered as among the benefits of ODPTE. With regards to work-life integration, the finding in this study is in line with Kyando (2011). Kyando argues that learning activity undertaken through ODL, including ODPTE, is set to use work forums as a platform to harness theoretical-practical work relation and hence an aim to improve knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal civic social and/or employment-related perspective. This suggests that improvement in knowledge, skills and competences for employment-related tasks should be throughout life as far as career and professional development is concerned. Programmes such as ODPTE in the ODL setting are perfect platform for the work-learning integration. Babyegeya (2002) argued that students under teachers with long initial pedagogical training perform better than students taught by teachers who went through a crash programme. This suggests that in-service teachers should be provided with training in order to cover the gap created by low education. It is noted that teachers, as the subject of the learning process, are key to quality of performance; their professional improvement is the improvement of schools' results. Thus, it is argued here that ODPTE

programme is useful to the community and that it addresses the gap from grade IIIA training and that of technological changes; it improves school's administration and management, hence good performance at school level. As said earlier, the programme (ODPTE) gives an opportunity to Grade IIIA teachers to further their studies. This is beneficial to teachers who may use learning as a strategy to keep their positions and or elevate their entry point to employment – the higher the education the better the chance to secure employment (Kyando, 2020). Literature suggests that, following the global trend, higher education became a necessity, and a tool that everyone want to ensure it is well placed in a survival kit; OUT started to avail this tool for adult learners in an ODL mode. Therefore, it is argued here that ODPTE programme is there, as a stepping-stone to higher learning for Grade IIIA teachers who want to pursue further education.

The Future of ODPTE Programme

This section addresses issues sorted as feedback from ODPTE stakeholders on the programme for future development. These issues are extracted from student teachers pursuing ODPTE and those who graduated. One of them pointed out that:

ODPTE as an ODL programme has potentials to grow and accommodate good number of teachers and connect them to higher education. To achieve this, ODPTE need to address issues that limit its potentials. Issues noted and experienced include, for example, some courses do not have learning materials which are needed to support learning. There are some cases where learning materials come at delayed time; another issue compounds ICT matters ranging from limited technical knowhow in using gadgets to support learning, matters of costs to acquire ICT gadgets and unstable connectivity for internet to access learning platform (OG- 2).

This study notes that the complaints about the lack of learning materials is not new. A similar observation was noted by Maritim, Mushi, Ng'umbi, Malingumu and Reuben (2011). They suggested that the

compendia ²should be prepared to support learning. Based on the findings, it is suggested that learning materials should be available on time. Arguably, this will improve teachers' interests to undertake the programme. In this study, while there was an appreciation for conveniently delivered online materials via MOODLE learning platform, a call for print media was underlined for easy use, given the cost aspect attached to ICT gadgets. It is clear in this study that many people did not know how to use ICT. So, participants in the study, had an opinion that face to face sessions were important. This is in connection with Maritim (2011) who observed that there is a slow growth of ICT in Africa and mentioned some barriers including low ICT infrastructure.

Globally, African's share of world computers was 1.5% and about 2% of the world's internet users. He recalls that of this 2%, South Africa takes 75% of the internet use and North Africa had 12%. The rest of 48 countries in the continent shared the remaining 13%. He added that the situation puts limitations on the use of modern learning technologies and there is low level of ICT literacy at all levels. Limited interactions between learners and facilitators was listed as another challenge. The study findings highlighted opinion that the study manual should include active contact details such as mobile phones and emails as well as social media packages, as support to interaction. An evolution of ODPTE delivery at OUT, in the context of ODL, its potentials and limitations inclined to ICT is supported by other scholars like Mushi (2011) and Kyando (2021) among others. They argue that learning materials through mobile technologies goes hand in hand with the Hypertext and the internet. Mobile technologies can be used anywhere and anytime; this is emphasized as its core advantage. Their portability and small size of existing gadgets, efficiency and effectiveness in use and user friendly such as cell phones and iPods, are marked as favoring features.

One student had this opinion:

² Compiled publications/ references to complement study materials and/or teaching notes.

Media of information sharing accounts for limited knowledge. On this aspect, two issues are the concern of the public. The first one is the language use; most of details on this programme is in English. The public understand Swahili presentations better. The second aspect on media is related to premise of information sharing where websites and social media are used. These media are only used by a small segment of the public. Another area that needs to be looked upon is marketing of the programme by a direct engagement with people so that hard points are explained to improve understanding on issues related to ODPTE and other programmes (OSt- 11).

It was suggested in this study that OUT staff should meet with employers in order to have common understanding about the programme. Such meeting will enable an arrangement of how to handle teachers during examinations, microteaching and Teaching Practice. It was added that OUT should open sub-centres in the district councils for face to face and examination purposes. This proposal is based on the fact that it is difficult for teachers to get permission from their employers to attend ODPTE face to face sessions which are usually conducted at zonal level. There is also a complaint that attending these sessions in the zones add extra cost for those living and working away from zonal points. Another issue in the list of limitation is mentioned to be the ever-changing policy issues between and within programmes. One of the participants said: *“there are changes on admission conditions over time, and at time specific to ODPTE. The changes need to be communicated as wide as possible (EL- 1).* This complaint is based on the understanding that earlier on the entry qualifications were marked to be five passes of ‘O’ Level plus Grade IIIA certificate. The current changes on entry qualifications (Grade IIIA certificate with a teaching experience of not less than 2 years) have not reached the community and teachers; the public still largely has the old entry qualifications. Even some of the OUT staff did not know about the changes. Therefore, the team recommended for promotion of ODL; as discussed earlier, this is very important for the success of ODPTE as a programme and OUT as a delivering institution.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussion, this study concludes that the Grade III A teachers had a mixed feeling towards ODPTE because of limited information about OUT, ODL and the ODPTE programme. Limitations of information are attributed to media, content and language use on the issues related to ODL, OUT and ODPTE. For a few, who have better awareness level on the programme, acknowledged that the cost to undertake ODPTE was seen lower compared to other mode of delivery; however, it is still expensive for an ordinary teacher. Once admitted for the programme, learners have experience access issue when it comes to online based interface. ICT challenges adds to limitation based on costs and technical know-how. On the other hand, graduates have experienced positives related to carrier growth in terms of salary increase and promotion into administrative position as well securing access to higher education. Other advantages are noted to be its flexibility and possibility to combine studies, work and family life.

Recommendations

- OUT, through its staff, should prepare a comprehensive information package on its programme and mode of teaching for the public to have a better understanding about the programmes, including ODPTE.
- Given the ODPTE potentials to accommodate a large number of learners, OUT needs to have a stable system of learners' support. This is due to the fact that learners, in an ODL setting, need support especially on ICT based system.
- For ODPTE purpose, OUT should open sub-centre in district councils that can be used for face-to-face sessions and examinations because of the long distance from the regional centre.
- OUT should prepare the softcopy of learning materials and its folder to be available through a mobile phone for learning

anywhere and anytime. This could be supportive to those who lack computers and those experience poor electricity connectivity in both urban and rural areas.

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Book Review

Reflections on the Birth of the University of Dodoma, by Idris S.

Kikula

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A historical book on the "Birth of the University of Dodoma" reflects a political decision by the fourth-reign President, H.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, and his predecessor, the third-reign President, H.E. the Late Dr. Benjamin William Mkapa, the first University Chancellor. The book has two parts: Part One, with 12 short chapters, and Part Two, with only one chapter. Every chapter has its ideas; Chapter One is the general book introduction. Chapter Two focuses on the etymology of the idea of the giant University by the former fourth president of Tanzania, HE. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, through his party election manifesto (Chama cha Mapinduzi - CCM) of 2005–2010. The rationale for a new university and statistics for student enrolment trend from 2007/2008 to 2014/2015 and historical development of higher education in Tanzania. Chapter Three focuses on the establishment of the University of Dodoma from a political angle, baptizing the University, and modeling the University by appointing a task force of twelve (12) members. Chapter Four focuses on establishing legal documentation and management through chartering, appointing top executives, and establishing rules. Chapter Five illuminates the essential staff and facilities of UDOM, the Chimwaga complex, and its location. Chapter Six narrates the master planning of UDOM and the team of twelve (12) experts who developed the master plan.

Chapter Seven narrates the onset of the bumpy of UDOM. The University started in a horrible state, for example shortage of resources, including human resource and a lack of financial support. There was also criticism for the appointment of the management based on religious backgrounds; disqualification of the University by being equated with a ward-level university; political interference, and bumpy seasons of decisive directives by the former Prime Minister, Hon. Edward Lowassa without immediate unfolding. Chapter Eight presents the narration on the construction of infrastructure like roads, colleges, libraries, student hostels, and other infrastructure. Chapter Nine shows the turbulences during the early days of the University. The author believes that the University's early years were turbulent due to the employment of a sizable pool of tutorial assistants with still-student mentalities. Also, he associates the turbulences with a sizable number of young administrative staff without experience in university management, a sizable number of young students, and the delusion that the University was wealthy.

In chapter Ten, the author explains the failure of university stakeholders to use available instructional management and thenceforth wanted to get the Vice Chancellor in every matter. He has earlier cited on page 71 examples of the Vice President of the students' organisation requesting a release on paying university fees as an immature attempt and ignorance of the university management structures. Chapter Eleven covers the rumor-mongering of some members of university staff, students, and other university stakeholders. The author has cited the deadly car accident with a white truck at midnight on July 14th, 2014. The last chapter in this part is the author's lesson learnt in his administration. Several management lessons from creating teamwork unilateral decisions made by some officers; the tendency for neutral gear syndrome; information sharing culture and resource mobilisation are critical; and one can lead with followers. Bad leaders are not inspirational, and typically, bad leaders have false confidence.

Only one lengthy chapter makes up part two of this book. Narrations in this chapter are in the form of a diary of events and dates of their occurrence. The whole chapter depicts a narration of participatory observation studies. This chapter narrates the crises from 2007 to 2018 at the University of Dodoma. The chapter condemns the students' boycotts, unrest, and staff strikes. The author has consistently identified the struggle for economic well-being among the students and staff, over

expectations of young employed staff on their welfare, government interference, political interventions, and struggle for power. The author indicates the government's regular intervention and scrutiny of university unrest, as the University of Dodoma was a president's baby. This chapter earnestly presents some university staff's gossiping behaviours and the author's fearless readiness to step down as a Vice Chancellor of the University of Dodoma at any time when the authority would ask him to do so.

This book has established a foundation for the birth of the University of Dodoma after 16 years of its existence. It has revamped the academic and administrative discussion on establishing, managing, and developing academic institutions that live beyond average human ages. The book has unfolded the step-by-step process of employing and developing human resources in a newly developed university. Since the University of Dodoma exists, the author has challenged other universities and organisations founders to develop their ideas regarding the birth of their institutions. The author has managed to speak it openly (open-minded leadership) by acknowledging his leadership challenges on his 12-year journey as Chief Executive Officer of the University.

However, the book has severe shortfalls, which warrant academic sanctions and discussion. The author has consistently attributed all failures to other people: the University of Dodoma academic staff; students; the trade unions; the University of Dodoma Academic Association (UDOMASA); and partly the government and the Chama cha Mapinduzi, the ruling party in Tanzania. One can argue that the author needs to balance his id and ego by not acknowledging the support from his colleagues (staff) or admitting his failure as the University's Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Similarly, the author expected to narrate his success and ability to mentor other staff as part of a successful succession plan. In this book, there is neither a single sentence on how the author planned for future success during his tenure nor a narration of a successful academic staff he could admire for leading this grand institution. Documenting his efforts on the succession plan of the University before his retirement is one of the fatal mistakes in this historical book.

Bewilderingly, the author dared to blame and disclose some information and secrets entrusted to him despite his experience in leadership and

seniority on the academic ladder. For instance, on page 98, blaming the visit of two ministers at the University during the unrest, one being the minister of education, raises questions about the author's loyalty and respect for bureaucratic leadership. The author has cited this visit as an unprecedented high-level political intervention in university affairs. In the same way, narrating that the government had an insufficient budget to build the University of Dodoma was far from leadership attributes and code of ethics. Moreover, on page 48, the author narrates that some senior governmental officials did not support the idea of the immediate establishment and start of the University of Dodoma. He cites one senior Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office who stood up with a high-pitched voice and said: "The University of Dodoma cannot start this year; it is impossible." It is unethical to disclose the status and opinion of any member in all official meetings. It is now effortless to identify the accused senior permanent secretary in the prime minister's office who was an in-charge of the office during the establishment of the University. Although the book is about the birth of the University of Dodoma, the author, as the former chief executive officer, wrote all the chapters. Academically, books present researched ideas and facts rather than personal speculations, opinions, and autographs.

As long as the book is about the birth of an institution, it could sound academic and administrative to involve various academic staff, legislators, the private sector, government, alumni, students, the community, and other research communities to write chapters in this historical book. The current book is more of an autograph, a familiar paradigm in Tanzania today. Many leaders in public offices had authored books after their office as part of their leadership journey and did not represent their institutions as authorities. For example, the third President of Tanzania and the Chancellor of the University of Dodoma, the late H.E. Dr. Benjamini William Mkapa, after his office tenure, wrote a book on his life and leadership experience in public offices (Mkapa, 2019). Similarly, the Second President of Tanzania, H.E. Ali Hassani Mwinyi wrote a book after his tenure as a leader in various government offices (Mwinyi, 2020). The former chairperson of the University of Dodoma Academic Association (UDOMASA) critiqued this book (Loisulie, 2023). After his leadership tenure, he published a paper on his leadership journey, not about the University of Dodoma (Loisulie, 2019). Neither Mwinyi nor Mkapa wrote a book on the institution's or government's behalf, despite their high leadership profiles and ranks.

Lastly, this book has severe allegations and unfounded claims without evidence, which require justifications of refute. Some of the allegations may directly affect the University as the premier respected academic gastronomy, academic staff, or graduates. On page 65, the author intentionally condemned the large pool of tutorial assistants as too young to make the University ungovernable by changing young minds politically. Similarly, on page 72, it is portrayed that one student who was also the Vice Chairperson of students' union needed to be more focused and mature and could not distinguish between the university leadership organogram and that of secondary school. For instance, on page 137, the author declares that he bought two beers and some roast chickens for one leader of the staff assembly, who was then very open and mentioned that the staff were not after him but rather his two deputies. One might be caught in a quagmire since he did not mention the names of such leaders. In the same thinking, on page 47, the author admits that some professors from old universities were referring to the University of Dodoma as a ward-level institution. It is the reality that such students and others portrayed as stubborn and uncivilised who studied at the "ward university" are the employees of various work organizations, and others manage large private and public institutions within and outside Tanzania. Quoting street jokes and nasty sayings about the University of Dodoma in formal and academic writing may have justified those silly sayings and lousy names. More importantly, such claims may revamp and escalate unfounded grievances among the university community.

Documenting unfounded claims and unrated opinions in a book like this by the pioneering leader may be considered truth. Such unverified allegations may harm the current and future growth and sustainability of the University of Dodoma just for the benefit of its history. As a learning institution, universities may live for centuries and beyond the human age. Therefore, proper documentation of the history of the University of Dodoma should consider novelty, integrity, and professionalism. There is a need for the University to document its history to keep proper records. Furthermore, the author has indicated strengths and weaknesses of the University that can be a starting point to improve its core functions while working on the plans to improve areas of the identified weaknesses.

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About the Journal

Scope

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Introduction: Should describe the objective of the reported work and provide relevant background information.

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