

CHALLENGES CONFRONTING SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' ON EFFECTIVE JOB PERFORMANCE IN MERU DISTRICT COUNCIL, ARUSHA REGION

ABSTRACT

This study examines the challenges facing secondary school teachers in executing their duties for effective job performance. A qualitative case study design was used in the collection of data whereby data were analysed using thematic analysis. Interview, Focus Group discussion (FGD) and observation methods of data collection were used for the purpose of this study. A total of 111 respondents were involved being 100 teachers, 10 heads of schools, and 1 District Education Officer from Meru District Council. The study found teachers are burdened with several challenges including but not limited to unfriendly working environment, shortage of teaching and learning materials, low achievement of students in science subjects, poor cooperation between parents and teachers, poor cooperation accorded by employers, lack of overtime and/or housing allowances, and politicians' influences on teaching and learning processes. The study recommended that good cooperation between staff and employers should be established and maintained strongly in order to allow public secondary schools to air their views to their employers and the employer to discover problems and challenges facing secondary school teachers. In addition, public secondary school teachers should be given overtime and/or housing allowances as a way of motivating them to improve their performance in teaching and learning processes.

Keywords: Teachers, Teaching, Learning and Job performance

Introduction

Teacher job performance is the achievement of the work done and achieved by the teacher which illustrates how a teacher performs his duties in the learning process namely preparing lesson plans, conducting learning activities, and carrying out assessments and evaluations to mention a few (Farezhenah & Wijayaningsih, 2022); Russamsi et al., 2020).

Griffin (2020) explored that the performance of an individual is determined by three factors i.e. motivation, work environment and ability to do work. Inayatullah & Jehangir, (2012) examined that the workplace environment impacts on employee morale, productivity and job performance both positively and negatively. If the work place environment is not liked by the employees so they get demotivated and their performance also affected. Poorly designed work timings, unsuitable authorities or duties, lack of appreciation, and lack of personal decision-making opportunity affect employee severely. People working in such environment are not satisfied; they feel stress on themselves and it impacts on employee's job performance.

In another research in Pakistan by (Parveen et al., 2022) investigated the relationship between the leadership styles of principals and teacher's job performance in secondary schools. He found that the principals mostly used democratic leadership style in schools as compared to autocratic style. It was the most commonly used leadership style by principals in the schools. His study also determined that there is a direct relationship between leadership styles used by Principals and teachers job performance. His study concluded that the performance of teachers is better in those schools where principals are having autocratic leadership styles as compared to those schools where Principals are having democratic style of leadership. Thus the autocratic style is the best style of leadership that can motivate and improve the productivity and performance of teachers in schools. He also recommended that the principals should use both autocratic and democratic leadership styles in their schools from situation to situation in order to improve teacher's job performance.

Makia, (2016) in her study in Singida municipal Council, Tanzania found that the quality of education depends primarily on the way schools are managed more than the abundance of available resources. Makia states that lack of leadership knowledge to motivate teachers would lead to poor job performance despite the availability of all relevant resources required to make students perform well in their examinations. According to (Opoku, 2020) attempts to improve performance in schools will never succeed if teachers' motivation will be ignored. Opoku examined that motivated teachers in a school will render services to the employer and students very efficiently and effectively.

The study was guided by Herzberg's Two Factor Theory which suggest that there are certain factors in the workplace that cause job satisfaction and others that cause dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1968). According to this theory challenges facing workers at the workplace can be categorized into these two factors namely hygiene factors including but not limited to job security, salary, working condition, company policies and motivators including recognition, achievement, responsibility, advancement opportunities to mention a few. The theory fits the study as challenges facing workers at workplace were analysed through Herzberg's framework by identifying hygiene factors leading to dissatisfaction including salary, allowances, good relationships between workers and employers among others (Herzberg, 1968). Hygiene factors, according to Herzberg's Two Factor Theory, are factors that when absent can lead to dissatisfaction among workers but their presence alone does not necessarily result in increased job satisfaction of effective job performance. However, if hygiene factors are not adequately addressed, they can have significant negative consequences on workers' effective job performance by continuing to job turnover, reduced morale, increased stress and negative health outcomes.

The effectiveness of secondary school teachers in executing their teaching activities with no doubt can yield to improved students' academic and professional development. On the other side, teachers' challenges can have adverse effects on the quality of teaching and learning, leading to poor academic performance, low student morale, and teacher fatigue.

Despite the efforts made by the Secondary Education Development Programme II (SEDP II) from 2010 to 2015 as a continuation of SEDP I, which was implemented between 2004 and 2009, building on the national goals of secondary education provision to improve access with equity, quality, management and delivery of secondary education in Tanzania. The Program was most successful in improving access and equity particularly in Meru District Council where the number of secondary schools has increased to 45 serving different underserved communities and so has the number of enrolees (Checklist).

Despite these successes, there have been a number of challenges including poor performance in public secondary education particularly in National Form IV examinations, with most students getting marginal pass of Division IV or failing completely (Necta, 2015-2020). Furthermore, there has been deteriorating standards of professional conduct, including serious misbehaviour (in and outside of work) and general poor job performance. Employees' absenteeism is

inacceptable in schools as it contributes to low academic performance of students. Moreover, there is a massive movement of teachers from teaching profession to other professions after some years of teaching, underground strikes and complaints to force the existing government to increase salaries and promote them on time. These grievances can have a negative impact on the teaching and learning process in secondary schools, which may lead to poor academic performance, low student morale, and teacher burnout.

Secondary school education is a crucial stage in the development of students' academic and professional careers. In Tanzania, the secondary school education system follows a four-year Ordinary Level (O-Level) and two-year Advanced Level (A-Level) structure. During this period, secondary school teachers play a critical role in shaping the academic, social, and personal development of their students.

As from the view point, little is known in Arusha particularly in Meru District about the challenges facing secondary school teachers in executing their duties for effective job performance. This study intends to fill such a knowledge gap. By examining these challenges, the study can provide insights into the barriers that prevent teachers from delivering effective teaching and provide potential recommendations to address them. Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to the improvement of the quality of secondary school education in the Arusha region and Tanzania as a whole.

Objectives of the study

Generally, the study aimed at examining the challenges facing secondary school teachers in executing their duties for effective job performance. Specifically, the study:

- i. Analyzed the main challenges that secondary school teachers encounter in executing teaching and learning activities.
- ii. Explored potential recommendation in addressing the challenges that secondary school teachers encounter in executing teaching and learning activities

The significance of the study

This study provided helpful information to researchers, educators, curriculum developers, parents and policy makers on motivating teachers. Curriculum developers will be aware of teachers' challenges in actual teaching and learning processes. Educators will be informed about

teachers' needs and additional information related to teaching and teachers' challenges. The study will also enable teachers to air out their views to the education stakeholders, politicians and parents that may assist teachers to work efficiently. By doing so, parents and community at large will know how to cooperate with teachers and their active involvement in investing in the education of their children. This study also increased the researcher's knowledge and skills on administering educational matters in any institution. Furthermore, the study will also be a good reference for any researcher interested in studying about teachers' challenges on effective job performance.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1. The Study Area

The study was conducted in Meru District Council in Arusha Region. Meru District council is the leading district with 45 public secondary schools among seven district councils of Arusha region. The researcher has decided to conduct this study in Meru district council due to such cases of teachers' turnover and need for re-categorization after completing their studies are of much concern in the district (Interview Headmaster, Secondary X, Meru DC, 2022). However, availability of respondents, time factor and cost effectiveness in terms of accessibility and accommodation for the entire research period ascertain the study to be in Meru District Council.

Research design

A case study research design was used in this study as it helps to organise social data for the purpose of viewing social reality (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, case study research design allows the researcher to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of teachers' job performance at school in a real life. This study applied a qualitative approach because it seeks to get detailed information from respondents and conclusion was then given accordingly.

Target population and Sample Size

The target population in this research were teachers working in public secondary schools in Meru District Council. The small sample of 21 public secondary schools was used for in depth analysis from the 45 schools (Cochran, 1977). From such public secondary schools researched, 100

teaching staffs, 10 heads of school participated in giving data of the study and District Education Officer (DEO) was also involved in the study as an administrator.

Sampling Techniques

Simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were employed. In many cases purposive sampling is used in order to access knowledgeable people, i.e. those who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues, maybe by virtue of their professional role, power, and access to networks, expertise or experience (Cohen, *et.al* 2007). In this technique, heads of schools together with DEO were selected because of their in-depth knowledge on supervising and employees' motivation. By systematic sampling technique, teaching staffs were selected randomly in given schools because of their availability. This was done by requesting the list of all teachers in each school. Thereafter, the researcher picked every *n*th teacher to get the required from the lists.

The process of simple random sampling was also involved in determining the schools to be investigated by writing all names of secondary schools on pieces of paper that were folded, put in a container and mixed up together. One paper was picked at random without replacement. The names of first ten schools on the picked papers were the ones included in the study.

Data Collection Methods

The researcher used in-depth interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and observation methods for data collection whereby semi structured interview questions were used to all respondents including the head of schools and DEO to get their views on the matter of challenges facing teachers' job performance. Semi structured interview enables objectivity in defined answers while including more open-ended questions for issues to be explored. FGD was applied to teaching staffs from each secondary school by discussing the questions prepared under the guidance of experts. A checklist for observation was prepared and among other things the researcher was of opinion to see available teaching and learning materials, teachers and head of school's offices, classrooms environment, teachers' mood at work to mention a few.

Data Analysis, Interpretation and Presentation

Data from semi-structured interviews, FGD and observation were organised according to themes identified from research questions and analysed using thematic analysis. Thus, the analysis focused on themes per the teachers' responses to the given research questions. However, some data related to demographic details were quantified for the sake of this study's quality.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity, the instruments were developed under the close guidance of peer reviewers. After designing the tools, questions were pre-tested with some teachers of two nearby, privately owned secondary schools. Their input helped in identify ambiguous questions in the instruments and realign them to the objectives. Also, comments from the peer reviewers were of the utmost help in refining the instruments. The best way to increase reliability in this study was through the use of multiple instruments as sources of data. These instruments were tested by other researchers who paid special attention to the wording of the questions and coding.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues were taken into consideration, including protocol entry for gaining access to secondary schools and the potential District Education Officer through seeking official permission. Additionally, all respondents were assured that the shared information would not in any way be used contrary to the purposes of this study. Every teacher was assured of justice, respect, honesty and confidentiality. The confidentiality of the information was maintained to ensure the safety of the informants.

Results and Discussion

Demographic characteristics

Overall, these demographic factors provide insights of the respondents provided required data on the diverse challenges that teachers face in performing their jobs thoroughly, including issues related to sex, age, marital status, salary, household size, experience level, and educational background.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Male	67	60
Female	44	40
Age		
50+	3	3
45-49	10	9
40-44	16	14
35-39	12	11
30-34	23	21
25-29	40	36
20-24	7	6
Married	76	68
Single	32	29
Divorced	0	0
Widow	3	3
Net Salary		
1000000+	21	19
700000-990000	80	72
500000-690000	10	9
Household size		
7+	13	12
4-6	88	79
1-3	10	9
Number of Years at work		
15+	80	72
10-14	16	14
5-9	10	9
0-4	5	5
Education Level		
Master's degree	9	8
Bachelor Degree	92	83
Diploma	10	9

Age distribution

The age distribution shows a relatively balanced representation across different age groups, with a higher percentage of younger teachers (25-34 years old) comprising 57% of the total respondents. Younger teachers may face challenges related to lack of experience and may require more support and mentorship to perform their duties thoroughly from the much matured ones.

However, such younger teachers as majority are just from colleges and/or universities have higher expectations of which if not met by employers at the workplace they can easily term the absence of such hygiene factors as a challenge to effective job performance (Herzberg, 1968).

Marital status

A significant majority of teachers (70%) are married, which could imply additional responsibilities outside of work that may impact their ability to focus on their teaching duties accordingly once they lack some basic hygiene factors at the workplace as proposed by Herzberg (1968). Single teachers also make up a considerable portion (27%) and their challenges might revolve around balancing work with personal life.

Net salary

The majority of teachers (74%) earn between Tshs 700,000/= to 990,000/=:, indicating that most teachers might face financial constraints that could impact their job performance as stated by Li & Yao, (2022) who discovered that teachers leave their jobs due to low pay. Higher salaries (above Tshs 1,000,000/=) are less common (17%) potentially affecting motivation and job satisfaction among this group.

Household size

The majority of respondents (79%) have household size of 4-6 members, which could suggest additional familial responsibilities that could detract from teachers' ability to devote sufficient time and energy to their work.

Number of years at work

The study was of interest in determining the duration spent by teachers in teaching profession. This reveals the experiences possessed by respondents in giving out challenges related to their job performance. The findings indicate that a significant portion of teachers (72%) have been in

their current job for 15 or more years, indicating a relatively experienced workforce as shown in Table 1. However, this might also suggest potential challenges related to burnout, complacency, or resistance to change among more senior teachers.

Educational level

Most teachers (83%) hold Bachelor's degrees while fewer (8%) have Master's degrees or Diploma (9%). This distribution shows secondary schools teachers are knowledgeable and skilled professionals enough to develop students' talents and academic development once their challenges are addressed. This educational level distribution may also affect teachers' ability to access career advancement opportunities or specialized training which could impact their job performance.

Challenges Facing Secondary School Teachers in Executing their Duties

Respondents were asked about challenges facing secondary school teachers in executing their teaching activities; respondents mentioned low achievement of students in science subjects, unfriendly working environment, and absence of meals at school, shortage of science teachers and shortage of materials for science. Other challenges mentioned were students' disinterestedness to pursue science subjects, poor cooperation between parents and teachers, poor cooperation accorded by employers and political influences.

Low salary

Respondents suggested low salary as one of the factors which de-motivate them from performing their work of teaching and learning. From the field, a teacher interviewed stated that:

“The salary paid is for sure little compared to the cost of living. With my take home/net salary of less than Tshs 700,000/= I cannot afford to run my home expenditures, paying for my children's school fees, transport and house rent. I used to supplement income through my poultry project but it has now collapsed.”

These findings are comparable to those of Li & Yao, (2022), who discovered that teachers leave their jobs due to low pay; similarly, Borman & Dowling, (2018) contends that low pay is the primary factor affecting teacher attrition and retention.

Delayed salary increment

Respondents were of the opinion that delaying increments to their salary is a factor which demotivates them. They said lack of increment almost a year now reduced their morale of performing their teaching and learning job properly. One of the teachers commented to have been working for six years without a salary increment. This point reveals that some teachers are demotivated. Respondent from school E said,

“It is now six years without a salary increment, worse enough some deductions from our salaries are increasing like income tax, CWT to mention a few”.

Another respondent from school F has said,

“Had I got an increment I would have requested for a huge bank loan to buy a plot this year but I did go for money lenders who charge prohibitive interest rates.”

The findings are in line with the study by (Okpara & Nwabia, 2022) in Nigeria on factors affecting teachers' quality practices in government secondary schools. The authors commented that delaying in paying teacher's salary and/or salary increment militate teachers' quality practices which in turn yield to poor students' results.

No allowance

Teaching staff commented that, no allowances given to them and this de-motivate them from working hard. They mentioned that there was no housing and overtime allowance despite having devoted much effort to students' academic performance. One of the teachers from FGD said,

“Our employer and headmaster are not providing us with even a housing allowance as a result I used to pay Tshs 180,000/ to my householder monthly. Nevertheless, during holidays I request students to come for remedial teaching free of charge but no extra time allowance is given”.

The findings align with Terzi (2022) studied on the effect of short-time working allowance on employee assurance and motivation who stated that short-time working allowances provide significant benefits to employees in terms of generating a small income only if it does not reduce the monthly payments. Farezhena and Wijayaningsih (2022) propose that the welfare of teachers be regarded and professional allowances be paid on time as it has a beneficial effect on teacher performance else it will limit teachers' efficiency and effectiveness, resulting in poor student output. Teachers should be given short-time allowances for the tasks they used to perform out of normal working hours and sometimes for the works which are beyond their expectations like fetching for water, cleanliness matters and marking hundreds of scripts of students daily for

normal exercises, tests, and examinations required by annual school schedule.

Poor working conditions

Teachers claim to have been demotivated due to poor working conditions. They mentioned lack of housing, poor infrastructure such as un-renovated classes, toilets and offices as de-motivating factors. Respondents commented that they share toilets with students. Respondents added that they have been conducting marking and teaching preparations in a broken staff room.

Among others they mentioned weather conditions and poor means of transport is also a challenge they encounter in the working environment as they are living far away from working stations. Researcher's observation found teachers in a certain class as a staff room where everyone was busy attending his/her tasks. It was a bit difficult for a discipline master to counsel a student due to lack of privacy as directed by professional counsellors.

One headmaster said,

“This is my office! It was at first a class but partitioned with ceiling boards to be a staff room and headmaster's office. How can we feel motivated under such circumstances?” he lamented.

When asked about this DEO has this to say,

“Some teachers are working under a difficult environment as they are living very far from schools and we do not have houses at some schools, water is also a problem to some areas, daily transport is a problem to some areas to say the least.”

Study findings by Ojaka, Olango, & Jarvis (2014) show that working conditions offer an atmosphere upon work done. Its components include availability of working tools and equipment, presence of enough working space needed for accomplishment of various tasks, leadership styles that give freedom of expression of personal desires, innovation and creativity, a feeling of recognition and social work availability of different forms of motivators. More often, some supervisors demand a lot of effort from subordinates in the execution of tasks with little regard to provide necessary tools and resources required for effective discharge of duties (Ondigo, 2011).

Delayed arrears payment

Teachers pointed out that delaying payment of their arrears de-motivated them to work hard to achieve the set goals. Other teachers said they have unpaid arrears from 2015, others from 2018 to date. One of the heads of schools commented that,

“I am demotivated by unpaid arrears; I sometimes think on how to repay a loan to our group because my arrears have not been paid for sometimes although I sent a request several times’.

This shows that some teachers are forced to request for a loan whether from a bank or any other financial institution because of delayed arrears which could help them to cover some gaps. The argument is similar to the study by Farezhena and Wijayaningsih (2022) that when teachers are not paid their dues in time they lose morale, a situation which impacts their daily activities and students’ academic performance as well.

Delayed leave payment

Respondents mentioned delaying of leave payment is among a de-motivation factor at a working place. This means teachers are in need of leave payments. One respondent said, *“I am very disappointed to make follow-up for my leave payments nearly a year now and there is no indication of being paid.”*

“I have travelled with my family from Arusha to Bukoba and have come back with all required documents. You can imagine how embarrassing the situation is.” said a respondent from school I.

The findings are in line with (Gaihre et al., 2022) suggests that, on time leave payment is a driving force which directs and controls the institutional activities to be done accordingly in and out of the classroom situations.

Delayed promotion

Delaying promotion was another challenge facing teachers. Respondents complained about the delaying promotion from the managing system as a critical problem which de-motivates them. Some respondents from this group said it has been four to five years since they were promoted from one level to another. This point is related to the study by Nyakongo (2015) in Kenya about the influence of motivation on teachers’ job performance in public secondary schools where the researcher believed that the extent to which regular promotion of teachers is done would significantly enhance individual teacher’s commitment to job performance.

Lack of meals at school

Respondents mentioned lack of meals at school as a challenge. The respondents said they are neither provided with breakfast or lunch. They said they have been enduring such unfavourable

conditions from morning to early evening. The researcher had observed teachers leaving the office at 2pm in one school searching for lunch and in some other schools, teachers walking a long distance for about 2 km at 10:30am in search of breakfast. One respondent from FGD has said,

“Teachers we are not valued at all, we are working all day long without breakfast or lunch and yet we are required to perform well in our teaching activities. Sometimes I use the opportunity to look for lunch by quitting my other payable jobs.”

The findings concur with Mujuni *et al.*, (2022) studied about teachers’ welfare and performance in Uganda. The authors suggest the provision of meals as a motivation factor for teachers to perform their work thoroughly.

Shortage of science teachers

Respondents mentioned shortage of science teachers as another challenge at many schools. The respondents mentioned that science teachers have a big number of periods per week compared to arts subjects’ teachers. From the findings the researcher has found in two different schools there were only two science teachers where one of them is teaching form one to form six physics and mathematics subjects thus, having a number of about 50 periods per week. *“I have about 48 sessions per week. I have been teaching Mathematics and Physics from Form Three to Six. On the other side, there is a teacher with only about eight sessions per week teaching only from Six English language subjects and we’re paid the same,”* said respondent from school H.

The findings corroborate the study by Räsänen *et al.* (2020) that high workload contributes accordingly to teachers' turnover rate as they are demotivated to employ their skills and knowledge to equip students in demonstrating their potentiality. Similarly, the findings are in line with the study by Herawati *et al.* (2023) that, work performance is affected negatively by enormous work load assigned to employee. In a real sense, no one can be happy seeing his or her fellow paid the same amount teaching 8 sessions per week while he or she is teaching 30s sessions.

Shortage of teaching and learning materials

Respondents mentioned shortage of teaching and learning materials particularly for science subjects as a challenge. From the findings in some schools there were shortage of science reference books and the only few copies found in library were taken by teachers for notes preparations thus, students cannot borrow science books at all from the library for fear of

scramble for learning materials. The headmaster at secondary school F said, *“We have plenty of arts reference and textbooks where three students share a single book but science textbooks are such few in which ten to fifteen students share a book. It is not easy to lend a book to students for this reason.”*

“Capitation grant is limited to buy some copies so we have to wait until further notice while insisting students to have their own copies to supplement.” said the head of School D.

The results corroborate study by Mohammed and Abdulai (2022) in South Africa on factors affecting secondary schools teachers’ motivation which reveals inadequate teacher-learner support materials in schools affect teachers’ job performance negatively as they fail to demonstrate their potential skills, knowledge and innovative teaching styles. Balintag & Saengsri, (2022) study in Thailand suggest that plenty of educational materials develop teachers’ teaching performance and the vice versa demotivate the performance.

Influence of politics in education

Respondents said that the influence of politics in educational matters pose a challenge in managing educational institutions. Politicians demand their needs to be fulfilled by professionals (teachers) in favour of students and communities which cost not only teaching staff and administrators but also the nation at large. For instance, as it was introduced students to move from form one to form four without screening inhibits delivery of quality education in the country. Nowadays, the issue of new curricula with competence-based training notion without training teachers on how to go through not only in teaching but also measuring and evaluating students it becomes an issue. Teachers said they know nothing about competence based as they were not trained to perform such curricula thus; they are implementing through experience.

Moreover, with new curricula and free education, shortage of books by Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) like English and Civics become a crisis in some schools. One head of school said,

“Disbursing very little capitation grants at school for books which cannot even suffice students in a single classroom is very discouraging. We cannot long for good performance under the slogan of big results now with limited learning and teaching materials.”

All these in addition to emerging new programs like **Kalenda**, Teachers Continuous Development Programme, interfere with teachers ' annual action plan to be implemented thoroughly, they said.

Poor cooperation between teachers and employers

Respondents complained about the poor cooperation given by employers and supervisors. Respondents said employers are not responding to their problems on time and sometimes ignoring meeting them to discuss some issues related to their job. Some respondents said they have never even seen their employer personally. The study by Ufuophu-Biri and Ayewumi (2022) in Nigeria suggests communication between employer and employee attracts, motivates, retains and satisfies employees. Employees that are duly appreciated for satisfactory performance tend to repeat such good works.

Lack of students' readiness to learn

Teaching staff mentioned lack of readiness for students to learn as a challenge. Readiness as the state of being ready or prepared for something, respondents commented that students lack readiness and commitment to attend classroom sessions and do whatever classroom tasks assigned. One respondent from FGD said, *"It demotivates me when getting to the class and finds that students are neither ready nor committed to learn. They simply get satisfied with whatever marks they score."*

Another respondent from FGD said, *"Apart from readiness, our students are not cooperative to teachers, they cannot feel free to ask for teacher's help particularly in academics."* This also demotivates teachers in fulfilling their duties.

Tian et al., (2022) suggest a student-teacher relationship is a crucial way to enhance teachers' sense of happiness. Once a teacher feels happy with his/her students, they can demonstrate the full potential of teaching and learning processes for students to attain the intended specific objectives. Being in poor mode it demotivates and thus distorts the intended lesson to be covered.

Poor cooperation between parents and teachers

Respondents mentioned poor cooperation from parents to teachers as a challenge especially on students' affairs. Teachers said that parents are not giving full follow-up of their children academic reports, disciplinary actions and the likes; all these reduce teachers' morale to work hard as they lack support. The study by Izzo (1999) and Caskey (2008) showed that teachers – parents communication is very essential. When parents communicate positively with teachers and actively get involved in making students follow-up, they increase a clear understanding of

what is expected from their children at school and they may learn from teachers how to work at home to improve their children's education. Respectable teacher – parent relationship is helpful to a student's school performance that could result in higher grades and test scores, long term academic achievement, positive attitude and behaviour. One of the heads said,

“Parents are not recognizing teachers at all, they use abusive language to teachers and they back students with in-disciplinary cases. All these create a challenge and reduce interest in helping our students morally and academically”.

Sumra (2019) argues that when there are disciplinary cases among students, teachers and parents should assist to ameliorate the warring situation. Also, the study proved what Hill and Craft (2023) found that parents' participation in a student's education is consistently set up to be positively associated with a student's academic performance. Children whose parents are actively involved in their education tend to have higher levels of academic performance than children whose parents are involved to a lesser degree.

Higher expectations of teachers towards teaching

Respondents mentioned higher expectations of teachers from universities or colleges as a challenge in performing their duties since they expect high salary, big positions and good-mannered students to accord them respect. Similarly, the DEO commented that,

“Some teachers come from universities with higher expectations towards teaching careers and get demotivated after experiencing the real situation in terms of salary, working conditions, and recognition. Thus, many teachers neither employ their talents nor share whatever they have with their colleagues to ensure efficiency in executing their duties.

The explanations imply teachers lose the morale of performing to the best once they get to work. The government should provide good salary; housing and overtime allowances together with a friendly working environment as a way of making sure teachers feel motivated to execute their duties.

Low achievement of students in subjects

Respondents mentioned the low achievement of students as a challenge to perform well on their tasks. They said understanding science subjects is a challenge to most students, especially physics and maths. Teachers claim to have been threatened by district authorities over failure of

their students in national examinations. The District Commissioner had been up in arms against the head of schools whose schools fail to shine academically. One of the headmasters said:

Despite the fact that we have an ill-equipped laboratory, we get blamed for students' poor performance in science subjects. I have been warned to pack up and go in case my school keeps on performing poorly. I'm in a dilemma. I receive poor students from public primary schools who can hardly spell their names. What miracles should I make to bring about colourful results?" he complained.

The findings of this study concur with Bandura Theory (1986) which discovered that when individuals/ teachers perceive that the outcome is beyond their ability to influence expectancy thus motivation is low to perform the desirable task. Hard work is therefore based on estimates on how well the expected results of a given teaching task are going to match with or eventually lead to the desired results.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

From this point of view, this study concluded that teaching, apart from being noble profession that prepares not only leaders but also champions of various fields, has grown to be forgotten. Although the findings reveal many challenges, they are facing in fulfilling their jobs at the workplace, including delayed promotions, poor cooperation from parents, and political pressure, to mention a few, the issue of their interests in terms of good salaries and other entitlements such as subsistence allowance, extra-time allowance, and teaching and learning materials should be prioritized. Moreover, addressing these challenges requires comprehensive support and tailored interventions from educational institutions, policymakers, and other stakeholders in the education sector.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings the following recommendations were made:

- i. Good cooperation between staff and employers should be established and maintained in order to allow public secondary schools to air their view to their employers and the employer to discover problems and challenges facing secondary school teachers.
- ii. Training, seminars and workshops should be provided to teachers so as to make them aware and willing to perform their jobs.

- iii. Transport and house allowances should be provided to the teacher as a way to motivate and enable teachers to perform their teaching activities easily.
- iv. The government should ensure arrears and increments of public secondary school teachers are paid on time.
- v. The study recommends that political leaders should not work on propaganda but they should work on scientific research conducted to solve the problems and challenges facing public secondary school teachers.

5.3. Recommendations for Further Studies

Grounded on the conclusion of the study, the research acclaims the following for further investigations:

- i) The recent study has covered only a few public secondary schools in Meru district council. Thus, similar studies should be conducted in other districts and regions of Tanzania so as to inquire the same issue for better generalisation.
- ii) What influence do teachers' challenges have on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Tanzania?

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