Original Research Article

Teachers' Motivation toward Teaching and its' Relation to Their Classroom Practices: A Self-Determination Analysis on Public Secondary School Teachers in Ulanga Tanzania

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Abstract

Based on self-determination theory, this study explored how much secondary school teachers in public schools are motivated to work in their careers and how their motivation relates to their classroom practices. A sample of 70 (N=70, ~~,~~:M=36~~,~~ and F=34) teachers from different public schools participated in the study. The result indicates that, to a large extent, secondary school teachers are autonomously motivated to work in their careers. It also revealed that teachers' autonomy motivation correlated significantly with structure (need-supportive) and control (need-depriving) classroom practices. While controlling motivation and motivation correlated significantly with control and chaos (need-depriving) classroom practices.

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Key terms:*autonomy motivation; classroom practices; structure; control; autonomy support; chaos*

1. Introduction

Ryan and Deci (2000) explain that motivation means moving to do something. A Self-determination theory (SDT), according to Ryan & Deci (2000), distinguishes human motivation into three groups: autonomous (self-determined) motivation (i.e., reflecting enjoyment and personal value), controlled (non-autonomous) motivation (i.e., reflecting internal or external pressures and contingencies) and motivation (i.e., lack of intention and willingness to engage in a behavior). According to SDT, a person becomes self-determined and motivated when they meet three basic psychological needs of competence, Relatedness, and autonomy; lacking these basic needs, they either feel controlled or motivated.

Autonomy refers to learners' need to be the creator of their actions of psychological freedom in involving a learning matter. Competence relates to learners' emotional state of success and their requirement to experience confidence in achieving chosen outcomes. Relatedness refers to

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students' involvement in positive and mutually satisfying associations characterized by a sense of nearness and trust. Satisfaction of these three basic psychological needs, according to SDT, leads a person to be autonomous and motivated to engage in a particular activity. However, if a person lacks these basic psychological needs, they are left controlled or encouraged to engage in an activity.

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1.1 ***Objectives of the study***

To explore how much secondary school teachers in public schools are motivated to work in their careers,

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To see how much their motivation relates to their classroom practices.

It has been hypotheses that there is a significant correlation between teachers' autonomy motivation and needs supportive (autonomy support and structure) classroom practices.

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On the other hand, it has been hypothesized that teachers' need to thwart (control and chaos) classroom practices are unrelated to their motivation to teach.

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2. Literature review

According to Aelterman, A., Vansteenkiste, M., Haerens, L., Soenens, B., Fontaine, J. R. J. & Reeve, J. (2019), teachers provide four central (de)motivating classroom practices (autonomy support, structure, control, and chaos). According to Aelterman A. et al., these four classroom practices can be regarded as need support (autonomy support and structure) and need thwarting (control and chaos) classroom practices.

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Aelterman A. et al. (2019) defined *autonomy support* as the teacher's instructional goal and interpersonal understanding tone. The educator seeks to maximally identify and nurture learners' interests, preferences, and feelings so that students can engage in classroom learning activities (Baceviciene M. et al., (2021). When autonomy-supportive, teachers adopt a curious, receptive, and open attitude, allowing them to better empathize with and nurture learners' emerging interests, values, and preferences. Several components of autonomy-supportive teaching have been identified, including taking students' perspective and welcoming their input (Jang et al., 2016), offering choices (e.g., Patall, Cooper, & Wynn, 2010), providing a meaningful rationale (e.g., Assor, Kaplan, & Roth, 2002; Vansteenkiste et al., 2018), following students' pace (Reeve & Jang, 2006), using invitational language (e.g., Vansteenkiste, Simons, Lens, Sheldon, & Deci, 2004), nurturing inner motivational resources such as task interest (e.g., Tsai, Kunter, Lüdtke, Trautwein, & Ryan, 2008) and accepting expressions of negative affect (Reeve, 2009).

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Structure is the teacher's instructional objectives and interpersonal tone of instruction. Starting from the capabilities and abilities of learners, the teacher provides techniques, help, and assistance so that learners feel competent to master classroom learning activities (Escriva-Boulley G. et al., 2022). In the provision of structure, teachers usually adopt a process-oriented attitude, trying to align activities and expectations with students' emerging skills while suggesting strategies and providing help so that students feel competent to master classroom learning activities (Vansteenkiste & Soenens, 2015). According to Aelterman, A. et al. (2019), structure involves several components, such as (a) communicating clear expectations and guidelines for desirable behavior (e.g., being cooperative) and undesirable behavior (e.g., not disturbing others while they are working), (b) providing step-by-step "how to" directions to attain those desired expectations (Jang et al., 2010; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012~~).).~~(c) offering "how to" guidance and desired help during activities (Jang et al., 2010), (d) adjusting tasks' difficulty levels by students' skills (Belmont et al., 1988), (e) providing positive informational feedback during and after task completion (Koka & Hein, 2005; Mouratidis et al., 2008), and (f) expressing confidence in students' capabilities (Reeve, 2006).

Control is the teacher's instructional goal and interpersonal tone of pressure. The teacher insists that learners think, feel, and behave in a prescribed way and imposes their agenda and requirements on students, irrespective of their thoughts (Escriva-Boulley, 2021). Teachers can practice controlling in various ways, including external control strategies, such as threatening with sanctions, yelling, intimidating, and offering behaviourally contingent rewards (Bartholomew et al., 2011). It may be more demanding because the teacher uses behavior-focused pressure to force students to comply or rectify their misbehavior. Sometimes, teachers involve more internal control, such as guilt induction or shaming (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010). This strategy may be more intrusive, manipulative, and domineering in nature because the student as a person is targeted.

Chaos is the teacher's instructional goal and interpersonal tone of laissez-faire. The teacher leaves students alone, making it confusing for learners to figure out what to do and how to develop their skills. When chaotic, according to Aelterman, A. et al. (2019), teachers fail to successfully adjust their instruction to the developmental pace and growth potential of learners and actively interfere with their students' competence development. Teachers are considered chaotic when they adopt an awaiting approach, needing to be more precise and consistent about

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their learner requirements and expectations. As a result, students may experience the learning environment needing clarification about how to proceed. Also, chaos takes the form of permissiveness (Baumrind, 2012), where teachers fail to stick to the guidelines and rules introduced, thereby creating a laissez-faire climate. Finally, teachers may leave students to their own devices, presumably because they feel they need more support or have given up on the instructional effort to provide the required assistance.

Relationship between teachers' motivation and classroom practices: In an educational context, SDT proposes that teachers' behavior in a classroom is highly influenced by how they are motivated to teach. Ryan and Deci (2020) explain that teachers, like their learners, have the paramount psychological necessity for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Therefore, for teachers to actively support students' needs, they must experience the need for support. When teachers are autonomously motivated, they become more autonomy-supportive and provide structure in the classroom.

Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon, and Kaplan (2007) and Klassen, Perry, and Frenzel (2012), as noted by Ryan & Deci (2020), in their researchers found that teachers who were reported as more autonomy-motivated reported their students to be more autonomy-supportive, more engaged and reported less emotional exhaustion in the classroom compared to those who have been reported as less autonomy motivated. On the contrary, when teachers feel controlled, they become more controlling of their students (Pelletier et al., 2002).

Impacts of Classroom Practices on Students' academic achievements Aelterman A. et al. (2019) have reported that "A teacher's highly structured, highly autonomy-supportive motivating style is associated with various positive and educationally important student outcomes, such as motivation, engagement, learning, and well-being (Jang et al., 2010; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012), whereas a teacher's highly controlling motivating style is related with a wide range of negative student outcomes (Assor et al., 2005; Haerens et al., 2016)".

Many studies have proved that supportive classroom practices positively affect students' engagement in learning activities and academic outcomes. For instance, greater competence and perceived control (Skinner et al., 1998), better self-regulated learning (Sierens et al., 2009), less depressive feelings (Mouratidis et al., 2013), and greater engagement (Jang et al., 2010).

On the contrary, need-threatening classroom practices have been associated with various adverse outcomes. For instance, Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, and Ryan (1991) explain that Negative

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feedback, whether interpersonally administered or self-administered in the form of failure, has generally been found to decrease intrinsic motivation by decreasing perceived competence, and some studies indicate that lowered perceived competence can leave people feeling unmotivated and helpless. The study also shows that when children are denied the interpersonal involvement they desire, they can lose intrinsic motivation, leading to poor classroom engagement.

3. Methodology

Participants and Procedure

A total of 70 (N = 70) teachers from different public secondary schools, 36 males (51.4%) and 34 females (48.6%), participated in this study. Eighteen teachers (25.1%) had working experience between 1 and 5 years, 32 (45.7%) 6-10 years, 13 (18.6%) 11- 15 years, 4 (5.7%) 16-20 years, and 3 (4.3%) 20+ years.

The consent forms and questionnaires were physically distributed to all participants. Each participant was required to complete the questionnaire voluntarily and return it to the researcher. All 70 participants completed the questionnaire correctly to report their motivation to teach and classroom practices.

Teachers' motivation was measured using the modified Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST) (Fernet C. et al., 2008). The scale used the stem "you are teaching well because….." followed by 15 items representing five forms of motivations: intrinsic motivation (3 items, for example, "It is pleasant to carry out this task"), identified motivation (3 items, example, "You find this task important for the academic success of your students"), introjected motivation (3-items, example, "You would feel guilty not doing it"), external motivation (3-items example, "You are paid to do it") and motivation (3-items, example, "You do not know, sometimes you do not see its purpose"). The scale was measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "1= strongly disagree" to "5= strongly agree" (Megheirkouni M. et al., 2022). For this study, the score for autonomy motivation was computed by averaging the subscale of intrinsic and identified motivation, and the score for controlling motivation was calculated by averaging the subscale of introjected and external motivation.

Teachers' classroom practices were measured using an adapted vignette-based instrument, the Situations-in-School (SIS) Questionnaire (Aelterman A. et al., 2019), teachers' version. The SIS has 15-vignette that are based on different classroom situations before, during, and after the lesson (for example, "You are thinking about classroom rules. So, you . . ."). Each vignette was

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followed by four responses indicating four practices a teacher might adopt (autonomy support, structure, control, and chaos). The measurements range from "1= strongly disagree" to "5= strongly agree" (Tarigan et al. et al., 2019). The data analysis for each scale was done using IBM SPSS statistic 20.

4. Finding

a. To explore how much secondary school teachers in public schools are motivated to work in their careers.

Concerning aim 1, the descriptive was done to find the mean and standard deviation for the three types of motivation; the independent T-test was done to see the difference in motivation in gender, and the ANOVA was done for motivational differences between working groups. The result shows that autonomy motivation was high compared to other forms of motivation, with a mean of 4.12 and a standard deviation of 0.48. Controlling motivation had a mean of 3.17 and a standard deviation of 0.72, and motivation had a mean of 2.38 and a standard deviation of 0.97 (Table 1).

Table 1. Motivationmeans.

Motivations	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Autonomy	70	2.33	5.00	4.1214	.48977
Controlling	70	1.50	5.00	3.1714	.72730
A motivation	70	1.00	5.00	2.3810	.97849

In terms of motivation difference between males and females, The result shows that there is nosignificance difference in gender in all kinds of motivation (i.e.autonomy motivation: male – mean = 4.06 and t =1.07, df =68, p= 0.28 and female- mean= *4.19 and* t =1.09, df =56.08, p= 0.27; controlling motivation: male, mean = *3.04 and* t =1.55, df =68, p= 0.12 and female, mean = 3.30 and t =1.54, df =64.12, p= 0.12; and Amotivation: male, mean = 2.27 and t = -0.98, df =68, p= 0.32 and female mean = *2.50 and* t = -0.98, df =60.94, p= 0.33) (table 2 and table 3.)

Table 2. Motivationmeansdifferencesin gender

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	GENDER	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Autonomy	Male	36	4.0602	.59382	.09897
	Female	34	4.1863	.34516	.05919
Controlling	Male	36	3.0417	.65024	.10837
	Female	34	3.3088	.78724	.13501
Amotivation	Male	36	2.2685	.83121	.13854
	Female	34	2.5000	1.11389	.19103

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Table 3. T-test for motivation difference between male and female

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Autonomy	male	2.945	.091	-1.078	68	.285	-.12609	.11699	-.35953	.10736
	female			-1.093	56.809	.279	-.12609	.11532	-.35703	.10485
Controlling	male	2.287	.135	-1.552	68	.125	-.26716	.17218	-.61074	.07643
	female			-1.543	64.125	.128	-.26716	.17313	-.61300	.07869
A motivation	male	2.529	.116	-.989	68	.326	-.23148	.23404	-.69849	.23553
	female			-.981	60.945	.330	-.23148	.23598	-.70335	.24039

In terms of working experience, there is no significant difference between all working groups in autonomous motivation ($f(4, 65) = 0.49$, $p = 0.73$) and controlled motivation ($f(4, 65) = 0.35$, $p = 0.84$) (table 4 and table 5.).However, there is a significant difference in motivation, in which teachers with working experience of more than 20 years (20+) ($f(4,65) = 0.83$, $p = 1.44$)seemed to be less motivated compared to other groups (with significance level ranging between $f(4,65) = 0.83$, $p = 2.34$ to $f(4,65) = 0.83$, $p = 2.53$) (table 6).

Table 4. Motivational difference among working experience group

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		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Autonomy	Between Groups	.493	4	.123	.499	.737
	Within Groups	16.058	65	.247		
	Total	16.551	69			
Controlling	Between Groups	.777	4	.194	.354	.841
	Within Groups	35.721	65	.550		
	Total	36.498	69			
Amotivation	Between Groups	3.234	4	.809	.837	.507
	Within Groups	62.829	65	.967		
	Total	66.063	69			

Table 5. post hoc for a motivational level between working experience

Dependent Variable		(I) working experience	(J) working experience	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
auto	Autonomy	6-10	1-5	.11053	.14644	.889	-.2608	.4818
		11-15	1-5	.18305	.18091	.743	-.2757	.6418
		16-20	1-5	.24074	.27475	.827	-.4559	.9374
		20+	1-5	.32407	.30996	.721	-.4618	1.1100
Contr	Controlling	6-10	1-5	.15104	.21841	.916	-.4028	.7048
		11-15	1-5	.14744	.26982	.962	-.5367	.8316
		16-20	1-5	.08333	.40978	.999	-.9557	1.1223
		20+	1-5	-.30556	.46229	.927	-1.4777	.8666
emotive	A motivation	6-10	1-5	-.10069	.28967	.993	-.8352	.6338
		11-15	1-5	.09402	.35785	.998	-.8133	1.0013
		16-20	1-5	.13889	.54346	.998	-1.2391	1.5169
		20+	1-5	-1.00000	.61311	.335	-2.5545	.5545

a. Dunnett t-tests treat one group as a control and compare all other groups against it.

Table 6. A motivational difference between working experience group

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	working experience	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05
			1
Tukey B[a,b]	20+	3	1.4444
	6-10	32	2.3438
	1-5	18	2.4444
	11-15	13	2.5385
	16-20	4	2.5833

b. To see how much teacher motivation relates to classroom practices.

Concerningobjective 2, a correlation was made between all motivation types and the four classroom practices. The results show that autonomy motivation correlated significantly with structured classroom practice with $r = 0.01$ and $p = 0.52$, but it does not correlate with autonomy support, as previously hypothesized. However,it correlatedsignificantly with control classroom practice with$r = 0.01$ and $p = 0.35$.

On the other hand, controlling motivation has significantly correlated with both control ($r = 0.01$, $p = 0.59$) and chaos ($r = 0.01$, $p = 0.60$). While amotivation correlated significantly with control($r = 0.01$, $p = 0.51$), chaos ($r = 0.01$, $p = 0.52$) as well as autonomy support ($r = 0.05$, $p = 0.24$) classroom practices (table 7).

Table 7. Correlation between motivations and classroom practices

	Autonomy support	Structure	Control	Chaos
Autonomy	.165	.518**	.349**	.032
	.173	.000	.003	.790
	70	70	70	70
Controlling	.095	.078	.585**	.601**
	.432	.519	.000	.000
	70	70	70	70
A motivation	.236*	.129	.509**	.522**
	.050	.286	.000	.000
	70	70	70	70

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

5. Discussion of the finding

The study explored the extent secondary school teachers are motivated to work in their careers and how much their motivations relate to classroom practices. It was hypothesized that need-

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supportive classroom practices (autonomy support and structure) would significantly correlate with teachers' autonomy motivation, while need-depriving classroom practices (control and chaos) would have no significant correlation with teachers' autonomy motivation.

The result reveals that, to a large extent, secondary school teachers in public schools are autonomously motivated. However, some are controlled and motivated, and some are even motivated to work in their careers. The result also revealed no significant difference in motivation between males and females and between teachers with different working experiences. However, teachers with more than twenty years (20+) of working experience showed less motivation than other groups.

Regarding the relationship between teachers' motivation and their classroom practices, the results show that only structured classroom practice correlated significantly with autonomy motivation, as previously expected, but not autonomy support. It implies that autonomy-motivated teachers in public schools are highly implementing a structure to help their students achieve good results. However, most of them fear providing autonomy support in the classroom. Alterman et al.,(2019), reported, "Even though teachers generally believe that an autonomy-supportive teaching style is beneficial for students' sustainable motivation, engagement, and learning, they also fear that too much autonomy support might undermine the structure and lead to demotivating chaos(Jang, H, et al, 2016)."

On the other hand, contrary to what has been expected, teachers' autonomy motivation correlated significantly with the control classroom practices(Baceviciene, M., et al, 2021). It implies that, despite being autonomy-motivated, teachers can still be controlling of their students for various reasons. According to previous research, teachers may sometimes be controlling their students due to pressure exerted on them from above (like from their superintendents, administrators, school principals, and parents) to make sure the students perform well, as well as from below (that is from the students themselves) (Pelletier, L et al. l, 2002). Moreover, Deci et al.,(1991), mentioned that teachers' perception of students' motivation could influence their classroom practices. If teachers perceive students as more motivated to learn, they become more supportive, but when they are less motivated, they become more controlling.

Moreover, teachers' controlling motivation and motivation correlated significantly with both control and chaos (need-thwarting/depriving) classroom practices, as previous research and SDT explain.

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6. Conclusion

Teachers' classroom practice is crucial in learning activities that benefit students and teachers (Reeve, 2016). Therefore, teachers must diversify teaching styles to support their students for more successful learning(Di Y et al 2024). To achieve this, it is not essential to focus on teachers' motivation toward their teaching only, but it is also necessary to take into consideration another factor that undermines teachers' classroom practices, like students' motivation and a school system that pressures teachers—also, informing teachers about the sequence of events that lead them to adopt an autonomy-supportive or controlling style with their students (Pelletier et al., 2002).

Declaration

The authors *declare no conflict of interest among them. Also, we would like to declare that the paper is original; there is no assistance from artificial intelligence (AI) or any cop-and-paste ideas.*

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