

Exploring the Causes of Teachers' Indiscipline in Public Secondary Schools Gairo District in Morogoro Region, Tanzania

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Abstract

Teachers during the past time were greatly honored, dignified and highly respected by parents in particular and the society at large. The teacher was as a custodian of knowledge and influential and inspiring person in the society. Indiscipline among teachers in public secondary schools is a major dilemma in the achievement of quality education since students' academic achievement depends on ethical, committed and qualified teachers in consolidating school performance and accomplishment of educational goals. The purpose of the study is to explore the causes of teachers' indiscipline in Public Secondary Schools in in Gairo district in Morogoro region, Tanzania. This study was conducted using a qualitative research approach because it provides the information which has a deeper insight into the phenomenon under study and relies on the interpretation of the view of the respondents. The target population of this study includes District Teacher Service Department, District Chief School Inspector, Heads of school; Teachers as well as Students who were justifiably provide significant information related to teacher indiscipline in public schools in Gairo district. The research findings revealed teachers' that teachers' indiscipline was a major problem towards realization of quality education in public schools. The study found that teacher unethical practices has negative impact towards teachers' work performance as teachers who engage in various misconducts fail to commit themselves to their duties and responsibilities. It was disclosed that effects included inconsistency in teaching, ineffective supervision of students' discipline, and misleading students when teaching. it was disclosed that teachers' unethical practices has detrimental effects to students' academic achievement such as students' poor academic performance, students' drop out and truancy, decline of students' moral standard, hostility and enmity between teachers and students, and denial of students' basic rights to quality education. On the basis of the research findings, the causes of teacher indiscipline were mainly attributed to social, economical, managerial and educational related factors including inadequate salaries and remuneration, lack of professional knowledge, poor living and working environment, influence of science and technology, infrequent visit by educational officials, poor school management by school heads, and poor home and family background.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Teachers during the past time were greatly honored, dignified and highly respected by parents in particular and the society at large. The teacher was as a custodian of knowledge and influential and inspiring person in the society. He/She was rated and respected over and above other professionals such that some parents would want their children to become teachers (Mosha, 2004). Teachers are for this reason, the most essential people in producing perfect and excellence learners, and quality education, as a result, they are expected to stand for the professional code of ethics. There is no single established reason for indiscipline among teachers in public schools. But some of the established reasons include poor school management, poor economic background, poor school environment, poor teachers training, personal character, and cultural practices among other reasons.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Indiscipline among teachers in public secondary schools is a major dilemma in the achievement of quality education since students' academic achievement depends on ethical, committed and qualified teachers in consolidating school performance and accomplishment of educational goals. According to Betweli (2013), there have been persistent increase of teachers unethical practices particularly in public secondary schools in Tanzania which has been to a great extent an obstacle towards achievement of educational goals especially Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG)

In spite of various strategies taken to curb and reduce the problem of teachers' indiscipline by educational officials and the Teachers' Service Department (TSD) including warning, reprimands, and dismissing teachers from service on the basis of indiscipline in public secondary schools in the country, the problem is still extensive (TSD, 2008). Hence, there is a need to carry out a study to reveal causes of indiscipline among public secondary school teachers' and their effect on school performance.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to explore the causes of teachers' indiscipline in Public Secondary Schools in Gairo

district in Morogoro region, Tanzania.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Ng'oma & Simwata (2013) study maintained that teachers' misconduct was influenced by various factors like work environment, home background, teacher character, and school leadership. Betweli (2013) study observed that the variation of teacher misconduct in schools was greatly influenced by teacher sex, work experience, and level of education.

Furthermore, Ndibalema (2013) study found out that poor management and poor living environment were the most dominant causative of professional misconducts among teachers in public primary schools. Studies show that candidates join teaching cadre after missing placement in other popular professions. For example, a study by HakiElimu (2005) shows that many secondary teachers would want to become either doctors or engineers, but their poor academic grades enabled them to become teachers. Hence this leads to low morale and commitment among teachers which in turn lead to indiscipline.

Low salaries and remuneration paid to teachers contribute greatly to violation of professional ethics (Sumra, 2005). Teachers are seriously underpaid and this, more than anything else, is the key factor undermining teacher morale and motivation hence encourage them to engage into corruption, selling of teaching and learning materials, engaging in petty trade, private tutoring and others as a way of providing them and their families with an extra income (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Anangisye, 2011). Poor management among supervisors and officials contribute greatly to the increase malpractice among teachers. The quality of management and supervision at school level in particular is of paramount important to ensure teachers are adhering to code of professional ethics. However, in most developing countries like Tanzania, there is ineffective management of teachers as the majority of education managers are not provided with managerial training, some are also involved in malpractices like corruption, nepotism as well as absenteeism. Thus, effectively fail to manage their subordinates (Benell & Mukyanuzi, 2005; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007).

The influence of superstitious beliefs is among the major reasons for teachers' misbehaving particularly in the developing countries. There is unquestionable evidence that some teachers consult witch-doctors in a vain to attempt to become rich, to get promotion or favours from their bosses overnight (Anangisye, 2011). However the conditions given to them by witch-doctors are ridiculous and unfavorable as they require them to engage in sexual practice, cheating and sometimes even killing occurs. Thus, teachers' malpractices become the major pediments towards development and attainment of education as they affect quality education delivery in number of ways. A variety of misbehaviors interfere with the positive implementation of planned interventions particularly the correct functioning of teaching and learning process. This includes the embezzlement of education finance, demand of unauthorized fees for admission to schools or examination, absence of teachers from schools, leakage of information before examination is done (Van Nuland, 2006). Teachers' unethical behaviour undermines effectiveness of good educational policies and programmes such as attainment of EFA and MDGs.

Teachers' malpractices in particular absenteeism, corruption and sexual abuse, leads to not only students' poor academic achievement but also the increase of students' drop out and pregnancies among female students. Students whose teachers are regularly absent are likely to perform poorly in their examination compared to their counter parts. Also, Anangisye (2006) contents that, some schools girls run away from school after being sexually harassed by teachers. While illegal payments leads to drop out since many parents fail to afford due to poverty. But only in some rare cases, legal action is taken upon the accused teachers like transfer, demotion and sometimes sentence to prison.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach

This study was conducted using a qualitative research approach because it provides the information which has a deeper insight into the phenomenon under study and relies on the interpretation of the view of the respondents. According to Creswell (2005) qualitative research is a type of research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants, asks broad general questions, collect data consisting largely of words or text from participants, describe and analyses these words for themes. Consequently, qualitative research approach was an appropriate approach used since the study involves dealing with individuals in public secondary schools in Gairo District Council in their natural settings. Omari (2011) observed that in qualitative research, the natural setting is direct and primary source of data and researcher is the key instrument and spends a lot of time eye-balling, probing, observing, and recording the phenomena being investigated.

3.2 Target Population and Sample

The target population of this study includes District Teacher Service Department, District Chief School Inspector, Heads of school; Teachers as well as Students who were justifiably provide significant information related to teacher indiscipline in public schools in Gairo district. A sample is a small portion of the population that is selected

for observation and analysis. A sample represents the actual characteristics of the whole population; its size depends upon the nature of the population of interest for study (Best and Khan, 2006). In respect to this study, the selection of the sample considered a number of factors such as the information required, purpose of the study and time. Under this ground, the study will involve a total number of forty eight (48) respondents selected among five (5) public secondary schools out of nine (9) schools in Gairo district council. The sample will consist of District Educational Officer (DEO), District Teacher Service Department (TSD) officer, District school Chief inspector, five heads of school, twenty teachers and twenty pupils. The issue of gender balance was considered in the selection of teacher and students where ten male and ten female teachers were selected, and ten male and female students were also selected among the sample schools. Two male and two female teachers in each sample schools, and two male and two female students were also selected from the sample schools.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Causes of teachers' indiscipline in Public Secondary Schools

The research objective investigated the causes of teachers' indiscipline in public school. Respondents through interview and focus group discussion were required to give out their perception on causes of teacher indiscipline in their respective working stations. The purpose was to provide a clear understanding of the causes of teacher indiscipline and ways in which such indiscipline can be admitted. The findings are presented in Table 4.6:

Table 4.1 Causes of teachers' indiscipline in Public Secondary Schools

Causes of Teachers' Indiscipline	Responses	
	N	%
Lack of professional knowledge	12	25
Poor living and working environment	36	75
Influence of science and technology	20	41.7
Inadequate salaries and remuneration	40	83.3
Infrequent visit by educational officials	16	33.3
Poor management of school heads	20	41.7
Poor home and family background	25	52

Table 4.1 shows the causes of teacher indiscipline was then classified and categorized into social, economic, managerial, science and technology and educational related factors as follows:

Economic associated factors: It was revealed by 83.3 % of the respondent that teachers' low income and unsatisfactory salaries and remuneration paid to teachers on monthly basis, was noted as a major causative factor that contributed to teacher indiscipline such as lateness, absenteeism, forgery of documents, theft and corruption. Teacher respondents indicated that since salaries and their income were inadequate and unsatisfactory, they were therefore forced to engage themselves in personal economical activities in order to earn their living. As a result, majority of teachers spent some of their working hours in conducting various private economical activities including small businesses and agricultural activities as well as private tuitions in order to supplement their income. Interviews with heads of school disclosed that due to unsatisfactory teachers' income and inadequate salaries, majority of teachers had big loans in various formal and informal financial institutions to enable them earn their living, start small businesses, assist some of their dependants and children to get socio-economic services that resulted to high monthly salary deduction to pay back their loans. This is a confirmation that teachers' engaged in petty businesses, agriculture, private tuitions as well as taking huge loans in various formal and informal financial institutions because of their miserable economic capabilities that exposed them to violation of their professional code ethics during their working hours after realizing that the remaining amount of salary after monthly loan deduction can no sustain their lives.

The above findings concurred with several studies conducted by Sumra (2005); Bennell & Akyeamong (2007); & Anangisye (2011) respectively which revealed that low salaries and remuneration paid to teachers contribute greatly to violation of professional ethics such as engagement into corruption, selling of teaching and learning materials, engaging in petty trade, private tutoring and others as a way of providing them and their families with an extra income particularly during working hours.

Managerial related factors: Failure to apply rules and regulations, lack of effective supervision, and minimal managerial skills and knowledge among some educational officials and leaders was reported as a major reason for teachers' indiscipline in their working stations. During interview held with DEO and District Chief Educational Inspector was an evidence to prove that the majority of remote schools were not frequently visited by educational officials due to minimal funds, poor infrastructure, and poor geographical location. One of the heads of school at remote school for example had also the following to comment:

"It is quite so long since I received a visit from educational officials from district council. I think

they don't frequently visit us because of remoteness and bad geographical location of our school. Lack of frequent visit of educational leaders enables our teachers to be less motivated and feel isolated some teachers engage in misconducts like lateness, absenteeism and love affairs with students because of feeling less motivated and isolated by educational officers, but it takes a long time for information to reach the authority responsible and even if the information reaches, no appropriate measure taken by the authority" [Interview with head of school, 3rd, March, 2016]

Furthermore, it was found that the TSD office was ineffective in promoting teachers on time and delay of salary arrears payment because of either poor management or insufficient budget by the government based on teachers' promotion and payment of arrears. Teachers also claimed that there was biasness, favoritism, corruption in promoting teachers and posting of teachers in their working stations by district education officials. This contributed to stress, frustration and psychological torture to the concerned teachers, hence become less committed and motivated to work effectively and start engaging in various unethical practices as they become unsatisfied with the ongoing situation, as confirmed by one of the teachers during FGD:

"Teachers are less motivated to work effectively because they stay for so long without being promoted. For instance, it is six years now since I was promoted to TGTS D but there are some teachers who have been promoted twice after my promotion. I think corruption and favoritism also play in a part because if nobody knows you in the district council, you become less prioritized to be promoted. Again the majority of teachers who are posted to good urban schools are either coming with memos from top government official or influential and famous people within and outside the district"

The implication of the above findings is that teachers' low salaries and remuneration, delay of teachers' promotion and payment of teachers' arrears, and lack of effective supervision of teachers by educational officials are the major determinant factors that lead to teachers' indiscipline in their working stations as they compensate their official time to do informal income generating activities. This concurred with Betweli (2010) findings which revealed that due to teachers' low salaries and income forced teachers to engage in private activities to supplement their income by spending their official hours in self-initiated activities.

Science and technological related factors: The research findings revealed that teachers were highly affected by westernized culture and fashions due to advancement and development in science and technologies through globalization for instance internet, watching televisions, listening to Radios, and reading newspapers and magazines. According to students, majority of teachers communicated with mobile phones while others listening to music during teaching and learning process resulting to lack of concentration and disturbances to students. Having been exposed to media, teachers in their respective schools claimed to adapt improper behaviours such as unethical wearing styles and irrelevant cultural norms and values different from theirs. As a result, majority of teachers blindly absorb cultures which are irrelevant to their teaching profession and the society at large (Mfaume, 2012). Students further argued that school television put in teachers' staff room consumes teachers' working hours as they concentrate in watching various programs like movies, news broadcast, and parliamentary discussions in school television rather than attending their lessons according to classes' time tables as was confirmed by one of the students during FGD:

"Here in our school there is a school television placed in the teachers' staff room, this television has been consuming some teachers' working hours in watching TV. For example there is an occasion where you find a teacher is having a lesson in a certain class but because he or she is busy watching television in the staff room, he or she either attend lessons late or completely not attend lessons"

The implication of the above findings is that, the introduction of televisions in various schools has been a serious cause of teachers' failure to attend their lessons effectively as they spent most of their working hours watching television rather than teaching and performing their duties in school. As a result, students perform poor in their examination due to poor coverage of syllabuses.

Social related factors: Research findings revealed that inadequate teachers' houses to the great extent were a determinant factor that influenced teachers' behaviours such as lateness, absenteeism, sexual abuse, and alcoholism as they rent houses far away from school surroundings. Majority of teachers disclosed that due to shortage of quality houses within and around school compound, they are force to rent houses situated far distance from their working stations and sometimes rent the same houses with their students which influence them to engage into sexual relationship with their female students and risk their professional behaviours.

Betweli (2010) studies had earlier observed that due to scarcity of houses, teachers had rented houses close to bars and night clubs which tempted them into drunkenness and prostitution. Interviews with head of schools confirmed that teacher lateness and absenteeism to the great extend was due to lack of quality houses for teachers and inadequate social services around schools forcing teachers to rent houses situated far away from schools and the situation was even worse during rainy seasons. In regard to this finding, one of the teachers had to say during FGD:

“Just imagine researcher, I always ride a bicycle eight (8) kilometers away from school and back home because of scarcity of good houses to rent around here. I sometimes become late or absent to school because of exhaustion and extreme tiredness caused by frequent riding of a bicycle far distance away from where I live and during rainy season, I use to decide to stay home without going to work”

The implication of the above statement is that lack of quality houses and social services around school, results to teacher professional misconducts such as lateness and absenteeism as they travel far distance away from school and the situation become even terrible during rainy seasons. This finding alarms the government to construct quality houses within or around school to prohibit unnecessary teachers' involvement into professional misconducts.

Professional knowledge related factors: Insufficient professional knowledge and skills among teachers was pointed out as a major factor for teachers' unethical practices. Most of the interviews with head of schools disclosed that some teachers were not well trained to meet teaching profession ethics, graduate teachers in particular lack of enough time to be trained ethically and rendered excessive freedom in their colleges and universities that was considered as the main reason for bachelor degree teachers' engagement into malpractices and misconducts in their working stations. It was noted that a lot of emphasis in most of the colleges and universities is on passing test and examination but less emphasis is put on ethical issues such as attending classes, dressing styles, alcoholism as well as sexual misconducts. Teachers disclosed that lack of effective seminars and workshops plus in-service training based on promoting professional ethics made teachers to blindly implicate professional ethics in their daily today duties and responsibilities. In line with this finding, Campbell (2003) asserted that teachers primarily performed their professional activities without awareness of the moral and ethical implication of their actions. This indicates that in order for teachers to principally work effectively and efficiently accordance to professional values, they need to be professionally knowledgeable and well trained.

Family and poor home background: Parents and family plays significance role in infants and children development and shaping of their behaviours. Research findings revealed family and home background of teachers had a big influence on teachers' behaviours. It was confirmed by respondents that teachers' involvement in various professional misconducts were attributed by the way they are raised morally and spiritually from their families and homes.

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Study

The following is the summary of findings of the study.

The effects of teachers' indiscipline on the school organization performance

The research findings revealed teachers' that teachers' indiscipline was a major problem towards realization of quality education in public schools. Furthermore, it was indicated that teachers' indiscipline has direct and indirect effects on students' academic achievement, teachers' work performance, and school administration in general as follows:

Firstly, it was disclosed that teachers' unethical practices has detrimental effects to students' academic achievement such as students' poor academic performance, students' drop out and truancy, decline of students' moral standard, hostility and enmity between teachers and students, and denial of students' basic rights to quality education.

Secondly, the study found that teacher unethical practices has negative impact towards teachers' work performance as teachers who engage in various misconducts fail to commit themselves to their duties and responsibilities. It was disclosed that effects included inconsistency in teaching, ineffective supervision of students' discipline, and misleading students when teaching.

In addition, the study revealed that teacher malpractices have detrimental consequences towards school administrations such as frustration and stress, and insecurity and violence as school heads were taking various actions against unethical teachers.

5.2 Conclusions

Some of the causes of teachers' indiscipline were mainly influenced by social, economical, managerial, science and technology, and other educational factors including lack of professional knowledge, poor living and working environment, influence of science and technology, inadequate salaries and remuneration, infrequent visit by educational officials, poor management of school heads, and poor home and family background.

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