



Analysis of Modalities in Which Professional Training Are Executed at Workplace: A Case Study of Public Secondary Teachers at Morogoro Municipal

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Abstract

This study focused on a critical analysis of the modalities in which professional training are executed at workplace among public secondary school teachers in Morogoro Municipal. It explored the modalities used by public secondary school teachers in Morogoro Municipal to execute their professional training at workplace by educators and administrators. The study adopted a qualitative case study approach, and one-on-one semi-structured interviews. Although, respondents commented that professional training which are conducted at their workplace help them to attain new knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and dispositions still within such dispositions there are pride, self – esteem, team spirit, commitment, drive, adventure, creativity, and vision. These findings indicate that teachers must appreciate and accept the need to grow professionally. This study contributes significantly to the understanding of the various ways in which teachers' professional training are conducted at the workplace. Finally, the study recommends that teachers' intrinsic drive towards self-professional training at the workplace cannot be matched with any external pressure from the educational managers.

Key Words: Professional training, work place, secondary schools

Introduction

Many modern organisations and corporations support lifelong learning at the workplace to enhance the working process and innovation (Clow, 2013). Clow

adds that training at workplace develop some skills and abilities necessary for the effective exercise of duties or tasks with a high degree of complexity and diversity to those previously exercised, according to the job description. In an increasingly competitive and dynamic educational landscape, the quality of professional training received by educators plays a crucial role in shaping students' outcomes and overall institutional effectiveness (Neacsu, 2015). Moreover, effective teacher trainings are pivotal not only for enhancing pedagogical skills but also for fostering a culture of continuous improvement among educational staff. However, the effectiveness of these training modalities can vary significantly based on factors such as administrative support, resource allocation, and the specific needs of the teachers. For example, public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipal, Tanzania, face unique challenges and opportunities in delivering professional development programmes tailored to the needs of their educators. This study seeks to critically analyse the modalities through which professional training is implemented within these institutions, encompassing both formal and informal learning mechanisms. By exploring the nuanced modalities through which training initiatives are implemented, and their impact on individual and collective performance, this research bridges the gap between theory and practice in the real education profession. The study analysed the modalities in which professional training is executed at the workplace. The research aims to address understanding current training practices in order to identify successful training strategies that enhance teacher performance and student outcomes. Also, the study aims to evaluate effectiveness impact on teaching quality in order to explore how feedback from training sessions is utilized to improve future training initiatives. Moreover, the study may seek to uncover the challenges faced in implementing effective training modalities such as resource limitations, insufficient time for training, and lack of trained trainers. These will help in proposing solutions or improvements to the training process in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of how professional training is executed at the workplace, ultimately leading to improved training strategies, enhanced employee performance, and better organizational outcomes for public secondary school teachers. The study was guided by Victor's Vroom expectancy theory of motivation (ETM) in 1964 (Desimone, 2009). The theory falls under the group of process theories of motivation as opposed to needs theories of motivation. This theory has three major concepts; valence, expectancy, and instrumentality. Valence involves a person's emotional attitude towards the end result of a given action or behaviour. Expectancy involves a person's belief that they can successfully accomplish a particular action. While instrumentality

involves the belief that one will get something from an action, one will receive a reward (outcome) from a given action. This theory is relevant to this study because teachers' commitment to implementing the curriculum cannot be ignored, and students' commitment to learning is paramount to learners' academic achievement. Not only that, but also Vroom's Theory is valuable at the workplace through helping managers and leaders motivate their staff (Riggio, 2015). Alternatively, the theory will be applicable by managers and leaders as a valuable tool in understanding and potentially alleviating workplace bullying.

Methods

The study was conducted in Morogoro Municipality, located in the eastern part of Tanzania, approximately 196 kilometres west away from Dar es Salaam. The target population was public secondary school teachers who are the employees of Morogoro Municipal Council. The reason behind targeting only public schools is due to the use of various teacher retention strategies which include job security. The study involved a sample size of 20 female teachers and 20 male teachers based on their number at workplace, age, years of experience in teaching, and educational background. This was observed purposely to ensure gender diversity and balance in analysis of professional modalities. Selection criterion was based on the factors that allow a balanced perspective, contributing to a more equitable analysis of the training modalities. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. A thematic data analysis was used in this study. This type of data analysis involved three steps; transcribing the interview results and synthesising the data into themes. Thick description quotes, and presentation of participants' views and attitudes towards the modalities in which secondary teachers' professional training are executed at workplace in Morogoro Municipal.

Findings and Discussion

Facts from interviews on the ways in which professional training are executed at the workplace, and focus group discussion revealed several ways in which secondary school teachers can use professional training at the workplace. The ways observed in this study are based on staff academic gatherings. The next section provides details of the results.

Training through practice

The interview data showed that the teachers learned from their daily routines and practices. This happened when teachers performed their teaching and learning tasks

such as administrative duties, preparation of schemes of work, lesson plans, and lesson notes. Their work duties developed their professions at their workplaces. When Teacher ‘A’ and Teacher ‘B’ began teaching, they were incapable of performing on-duty tasks (TOD). They were unconfident in what they were doing. Eventually, they became knowledgeable and confident about their work through their daily practices. This was captured when one teacher asserted the following excerpt:

At the beginning it was not easy, most of the things were new, I did not know how to conduct and prepare duties and activities when I was on duty, for example to give announcements during the school parade even to teach! But with time I managed... (*Data from the field:11/6/ 2023*).

Moreover, the current findings revealed that teachers learned by reflecting on their daily practices. For instance, novice teachers were not confident in teaching upper classes, such as form four. To support this, one teacher asserted,

...when I began my work, I was assigned to teach form four classes. I was afraid of teaching form four because it is an examination class. Therefore, when I taught and reflected on students to see whether they understood what I taught, and if they were motivated to learn or not. If I found that they were not motivated I had to find out what caused that situation to my students. Then I made sure that the problem solved. But nowadays, I thank God, I am a competent teacher teaching geography in form four (*Data from the field:14/6/2023*).

The findings from the field and experiences showed that through the training, and daily activities at their respective workplaces, teachers develop professionally. Moreover, dealing continuously and directly with student in the course of learning made teachers recognize the discrepancies between what they thought they taught and what students seemed to have learned. Additionally, examining students’ work gave teachers the opportunity to closely examine their work in collaboration with their colleagues. This is a very potential and powerful professional development activity. It was made clear that any type of assignment can be used, as long as it is detailed to offer insights to students’ thinking capacity.

In addition, this study revealed that appointed heads of departments and different committee chairs had learned by doing. There was no programme that helped them learn how to go about. They learned through experience as they solved the problems they encountered. This means that teachers learned to perform their duties in the course of work and enabled them to develop professionally in their school context. This current finding appears to relate to that of Fullan (2007) who noted that

teachers acquire a variety of skills and knowledge by performing their professional roles effectively. He added that teachers need to learn while working through which they can test out, refine, and receive feedback on their practice.

It was also observed that very little was going on in terms of teacher induction. This means that the school leaders did not understand the meaning and importance of induction. The interpretation from the interviewed teachers regarding induction at the selected secondary schools were very narrow. The new teachers were introduced to the school environment and students at the assembly for only one or two days, marking the end of their orientation stage. In reality, induction involves not only introducing new teachers to staff and students but also showing them the school library and classrooms. It should also include full lessons in teaching as a profession. Induction needs to be given more serious attention and time for teachers to familiarize themselves with the new job, position, and context. Anthony and Haigh (2012) state that in New Zealand, induction programmes are planned in schools as systematic programmes of sustained assistance to beginner or novice teachers for two years.

This finding supports the results of Blandford (2000) who investigated how professional development can be managed in London schools. He argues that effective induction ensures that newly qualified teachers or any new teacher in the school context feel supported, comfortable, and confident. The contrary was discovered in this research conducted at the Institute of Adult Education. The interview as revealed by one head of school who had this to say:

...we have no training system for the new teachers. What I do I send them to the heads of departments who introduce them to other teachers, students and the school complex... (*Field data:18/6/2023*).

This study revealed that teachers learned a variety of skills required for their work while participating in their daily routines. These skills included preparing schemes of work, lesson plans, lesson notes, writing logbooks, and setting tests and examinations.

Interaction with staff members

Interviews with teachers, heads of schools, and heads of departments from studied secondary schools indicated that teachers had learned through informal or formal interactions with other teachers. The interviewed new teachers said that through their good relationships with each other, they were able to learn different tasks, content knowledge, and good teaching approaches. This was done through

discussions with more experienced teachers, especially those teaching the same subjects. It was also revealed that interaction was one of the ways in which teachers developed professionally at their workplace. One teacher said:

...when I find something very difficult relating to teaching and learning, I talk to other teachers and hear from them. I discuss with them, and I learn something new from the discussions. (*Field data: 20/6/2023*).

Furthermore, the data from the interviews with secondary school leaders and teachers revealed that teachers in secondary schools learnt from formal discussion in staff meetings, as well as in departmental meetings. Among the things that teachers said to have learned in the academic meetings were the current challenges in the teaching of their subjects and how to go about them. To merit this, one teacher said,

...Our head of department has conducted several departmental meetings, and the last one was on 9/ 11/ 2012. We discussed different departmental problems. For example, what caused our students to perform very poorly? We took time to talk to each other about the causes of poor performance to our students. There were a lot of contributions. Finally, we produced some strategies on what to be done in order to attain our goals (*Data from the field:25/6/2023*).

Similarly, the analysis of documents from science stream (physics) departmental meeting supports this. It was noted that from the document that “We discussed several issues concerning our profession, and came up with strategies of teaching and learning such as group discussion that would hopefully improve our school academically.”

This is similar to a study by Bezzina and Calleja (2018) who revealed that teachers learn when they come together and talk about classroom practices. Similarly, Eraut (2002) discovered that teachers grow professionally by asking questions, seeking feedback from colleagues and students, and generating knowledge for their practice by working in teams. Participants from different backgrounds share information that help to solve problems, and help each other gain knowledge. This enables teachers within the school or their departments to work collaboratively, and share information (Elseveier, (2010).

This study also supports the findings of Russell et al. (2009) in Malaysia whereby in their article on initial and subsequent trials, they examined the need for support and interaction in distance professional development. Koda (2014) adds that

opportunities should be designed to enable teachers to share knowledge and develop professionally.

In this study, it was discovered that teachers learned by working with others, sharing knowledge and skills, and seeking help or solutions. This indicates that interpersonal relationships within the schools were good to the extent that brought them to informal discussions. The interactions between and among teachers were good and emphasized in departmental and staff meetings. As Moller et al. (2009) adds that teachers develop professionally when there is meaningful interaction between them.

Furthermore, the current findings of the study show that there were structured departmental, and staff meetings in the school calendar where teachers shared their experiences and learned teaching skills and strategies. This indicates that perhaps the leadership recognized meetings as important structures for teachers to gain knowledge, improve their practices, and develop professionally. This finding concurs with Komba et al., (2006) who clarified the practices of in-service teachers' training in Tanzania. The trainings include formal mentoring programmes developed in situations such as advice that new teachers receive from head teachers and ward education officers. Other forms of practices were meetings held at the school and cluster levels to review and reflect on a regular basis practice. Again, Komba et al., (2006) emphasize that the establishment and effective utilization of teachers' resource centres (TRC) is an important element in TPD. Informal practices include team teaching and the sharing of experiences and educational resources among teachers, which greatly contributes to self-improvement. The teachers also developed professionally through reading books as discussed in the following section.

Reading Books

Field data revealed that most teachers learned as they read books. They learned by reading books available at their workplaces before going to teach in the classroom. Although books were not enough, every subject had reference books kept by the heads of the departments. The availability of reading materials encouraged most teachers to read. The studied secondary school teachers liked reading several books and texts. Incidental observation revealed that some teachers who were busy in the staff room prepared lessons by reading books before going to classes.

Ancheta (2022) conducted a study on teachers' knowledge level of reading, content areas, and reading instruction admitted that teachers acquire knowledge and skills

by reading books and educational journals. This also corroborated the developmental plan document analysis of one of the studied schools which indicated that “in July next year-2024, we will increase the number of books for teachers to improve lesson preparation and to promote a reading culture in the school that will help teachers to develop their skills and knowledge” (Minutes of school development plan, 2012-2015).

Teachers, as a group of adult learners are self-directed, ready to learn, experienced, task-centred, and intrinsically motivated (Knowles, 1983). Typically, they prefer open-ended learning opportunities and voice in the direction and pace of their learning. They approach learning with clear goals in mind and use their life experiences to make sense of new information. Additionally, adult learners tend to be intrinsically motivated by opportunities to address problems and create solutions that directly relate to their lives (ibid).

This study also revealed that both the studied secondary schools had no libraries. Books were kept in the heads of school or academic offices. This was verified when the head of the geography department at one school said:

.... Books for at least every teacher is there in the head of the school’s office..., but books are not enough for all students... (20/6/2023).

In addition, one head of school had this to add:

... here we have a number of books of different subjects as you see these four big boxes...I purchased them a few days ago and I received them yesterday...but the problem is that we have no library to keep them... (*Field data:14/6/2023*).

This implies that both school leaders understand the importance of the availability of books for teaching and learning processes and TPD. This is related to Caspersen (2015) who argued that teachers learn in their workplace by reading books because they are available. According to Caspersen (2015), writing a research paper about teachers’ learning activities at workplace and found that reading is one of the important ways in which teachers can develop professionally in the school.

Networking

Through networking, teachers can learn and develop their teaching professions. This was evident during interviews with school leaders, heads of departments, and teachers. They revealed that the schools had networks with other schools in the zones and districts. This network provided teachers with opportunities to learn with other teachers from other schools. Networking involved setting, moderating,

marking mock, zonal, ward, and regional examinations. During the interview, one teacher said,

We have subject panels where we set tests and examinations, moderate marking schemes... also we participate in marking regional, ward, zonal and mock examinations. There we gain experience in marking papers so when we come back we tell other teachers how we have experienced from the whole process. *(Data from the field:14/6/2023).*

This was supported by staff meetings minutes which expressed that “we have organized marking panels for form two and form four; teachers should make sure they mark the examinations together”. Additionally, the study found that there were subject clubs whereby teachers who teach the same subjects from different schools meet and discuss classroom practices. In subject clubs, teachers solve problems related to teaching and learning. This was revealed when one head of the school said,

...teachers have to attend subject associations for each subject, and this helps teachers from different schools to learn from each other...each school raise funds so as to facilitate this activity. *(Data from the field:18/6/2023).*

This was confirmed by one head of the science stream from one school, who said:

If there is any difficult issue related to our practices, we refer it to the one who is going to present it before the members of the subject association. The members of the subject association would discuss it and when the representative comes back the solution is given to the teachers. *(Data from the field:12/6/ 2023).*

Networking helped teachers gain skills and knowledge from other teachers both outside and inside the school. The knowledge and skills gained were then taught to teachers in the schools through formal staff and departmental meetings. Moreover, networking worked as a motivation to teachers who liked attending outside seminars as they got paid. This demonstrates the significance of networking as a TPD source.

However, Mosha (2006) found that teachers’ motivation was the most important factor. A teacher’s intrinsic drive towards self-improvement cannot be matched by any amount of pressure from educational managers. In TPD, the teacher must perceive it positively. The teachers must appreciate and accept the need to grow professionally. Teachers who positively perceive professional development are eager to attain new knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and dispositions. Within such dispositions are pride, self – esteem, team spirit, commitment, drive,

adventure, creativity, and vision. The teacher must own all of these attributes (Komba & Nkumbi, 2008).

This finding supports the results of Moolenar (2012) in a study conducted in Chicago regarding a social network perspective on teacher collaboration in schools. It was found that networking facilitates teachers' learning and motivates them to work hard in schools. Also, Swai (2015) added that teachers develop professionally by networking with teachers from other schools or institutions where they meet and share ideas. Through networking teachers interact with other members both within and out of school to share subject matters or activities that have an impact on teaching and learning. The study shows that school leaders promoted a collaborative culture between teachers and schools to develop teachers professionally. School leaders understood the benefits of networking with teachers from different schools, which led to better teaching.

Classroom Scrutiny

During the interviews with the teachers, it was found that they did not use classroom scrutiny to develop professionally at their workplaces. Most of the teachers interviewed said that classroom study was not a common practice for them to develop professionally at their schools, and there was no evidence of formal classroom observations in their schools. In fact, there was soreness among the teachers who observed each other in the class. This was revealed when one of the heads of the department said,

We used to inspect only student teachers from colleges when they come to our schools for teaching practices but in this school, we do not observe each other. (*Data from the field:12/6/2023*).

This was also confirmed by one teacher who asserted that:

Classroom study is not common in our school...here there is a tendency that if teachers are teaching and if you pass near their class they keep quiet, they do not want other people to hear what they are teaching. (*Field data:14/6/2023*).

Moreover, current findings indicate that class observations rarely occur within departments. This makes it difficult to teach a team on some topics. When one teacher was teaching others, they sat in the classroom listening and observing. At the end of this period, they sat together to discuss and share their experiences.

Findings from this study also concur with Siddiqua's (2019) study on professional growth opportunities to support staff in Athens. She discovered that classroom

observation is a type of learning whereby teachers observe each other's teaching. This leads to the acquisition of new knowledge, teaching and learning skills (strategies), and professional development.

However, during the interview, one of the participants, a science teacher, said that a very few teachers, especially in science streams, learned by observing other teachers teaching. This happened coincidentally. This happened when others were preparing for practical in the laboratory, and other teachers were teaching. In his explanation, he says,

... a very few teachers learn incidentally by observing others teaching. This happens when one is preparing for practical and at the same time another teacher is teaching in the same laboratory, therefore, teachers can observe each other... (*Data from the field:12/6/ 2023*).

This implies that the majority of teachers had not learned through classroom observations or studies, except for a few teachers who only engaged in incidental general observation. According to Ovens (1999), knowledge is not fully communicable by written accounts, and the best way for one professional person to understand another's professional practice is to witness, share, and discuss it with them.

These results are in line with a study in Pakistan by Alman (2006) who conducted a study on the effects of in-service training programmes and teacher professional growth as self-perceived based on gender, location, teaching experience, level of certification, and service after training in two variables: motivational techniques and subject matter knowledge. He argues that efficiency that teachers gain by virtue of training remains for a short time. After a few years, they forget many principles and practices learned during their training period. Therefore, it was obvious that to reach the objectives, employees should be retrained through often seminars and in-service training programmes. It was concluded that teachers with high academic qualifications performed well in terms of content knowledge and motivational techniques. Therefore, TPD is very important to teachers' capabilities.

Similarly, the current study supports Akinyele (2007) who conducted a study to determine whether staff training had any implication on the professional growth, behaviour, attitudes, skills, knowledge, and achievement of the business goals of organizations in Nigeria. The study found that effective professional training led to the acquisition of the skills and knowledge required for employees to achieve effective professional development and job performance. It was also revealed that

training had a highly positive impact on employees and reduced the nature of job hazards in the accomplishment of corporate objectives.

Sumra (2004) indicated that in Tanzania, primary school teachers' working conditions in terms of housing, transport, ongoing training, adequacy, and out-of-school income were associated with professional growth and job performance. The study also examined the attitudes of teachers towards the teaching profession and reasons for joining and staying in the profession. The research report concluded that teachers' living conditions do not reflect their status. On the other hand, Sumra supported that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation were the most essential performance factors. Mark (2015) commented that not all performance problems are explained by lack of motivation. The lack of training can prevent a motivated employee from professional development and performing well. The author and his colleagues question the tendency to hire a motivated person to do a job without training him/her to do so properly.

However, Combes et al. (2021) found that teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are the most important factors. A teacher's intrinsic drive towards self-improvement cannot be matched by any amount of pressure from educational managers. In TPD, the teacher must perceive it positively. The teacher must find important and accept the need to grow professionally. Teachers who positively perceive professional development are eager to attain new knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and dispositions. Within such dispositions are pride, self – esteem, team spirit, commitment, drive, adventure, creativity, and vision must be owned by teachers (Asio, & Riego de Dios, 2018).

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, the findings of this study suggest that teachers' intrinsic drive towards self-professional training at the workplace cannot be matched with any amount of pressure from educational managers. This is due to the fact that the heads of secondary schools in Tanzania do not have structured programmes for developing the teachers in different spheres. Therefore, teachers can use several methods such as personal effort and staff academic gatherings. There is a need for other research that will determine the outcome of teachers' professional diversification in their workplace if it is suitable or not to what extent. Basing on the findings and conclusion made, the study recommends the following: First, a combination of different training modalities to cater various learning preferences and needs of teachers. Second, professional development programmes should be

tailored to the specific context and challenges faced by teachers in Morogoro Municipal. Understanding the local educational environment can help in designing more relevant and effective training. Third, providing continuous support after training sessions, such as follow-up workshops or mentorship, to ensure that teachers are able to implement what they have learned in their classrooms. Fourth, encouraging collaboration among teachers, such as through peer learning groups or teacher networks, could be a key recommendation to promote the sharing of best practices and continuous improvement. Fifth, regular assessments and feedback mechanisms be put in place. This paves a way for improvements to be made and ensures that teachers are gaining valuable skills. Six, integrating modern teaching tools and technology in professional development programmes is recommended, especially when is deemed to enhance the effectiveness of the training.

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