



An Investigation on the Effects of Teachers' Turnover on Public Secondary Schools' Academic Performance in Geita District Council, Tanzania

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Abstract: *This study investigated the effects of teachers' turnover on secondary schools' academic performance in five public secondary schools in Geita District in Tanzania. The study employed mixed methods research approach and descriptive research design. The sample for the study comprised of 57 respondents (teachers, district secondary education officer, teachers' services commission officer, school heads and students). Data collection tools were questionnaires and interviews. The findings indicated that teachers' turnover was related to teachers' regular absenteeism and job dissatisfaction. Further findings revealed that teachers' turnover was one of the contributing factors to the decline of academic performance among secondary school students. It was concluded that management of teachers' turnover in public secondary schools is necessary to enable the school to survive and produce quality education for the benefit of individuals and the national development. The study recommends that employers must motivate teachers and improve their working environment in rural public secondary schools.*

Key words: *teachers' turnover, academic performance, public secondary schools*

Introduction

In a society education is a powerful tool for bringing about transformation. Education helps people to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes that help them to better understand and appreciate immediate environment. The teacher is without doubt an especially important element in the whole educational setup. The educational prosperity of students at school depends on him or her. Nobody can effectively replace him or her in terms of the influence he or she has on students (Njung'e 2015). Teacher turnover is being defined as "change in teachers from one year to the next in a particular school setting" (Ladd, 2011). Teacher turnover

includes teachers who move to a different school and those who either leave the profession to retire or leave voluntarily before retirement. Movers and leavers together represent the degree of rate in the teacher workforce (Atteberry, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2017; Ingersoll, Merrill, Stuckey, & Collins, 2018), while leavers considered separately represent the rate of attrition in the workforce.

In the education industry, teacher turnover has become a global challenge and has different negative impacts on students' academic performance. A high teacher turnover rate is a fundamental problem on the educational system and the students it serves any school (Hoang, 2020). Long-term consequences on student learning and academic achievement can be caused by the high or low rate of teacher turnover (Boamah et al., 2022). According to Ingersoll (2011), about Teacher Turnover Teacher Shortage and the Organization of Schools in the United States, almost one out of every two new secondary school teachers leave the classroom by the end of five years of teaching. In a study by Ronfeldt, Loeb & Wyckoff, (2013) dealt with how teacher turnover harms student achievement, in America, it was found that educational system in the United States is on the margin of reaching a critical point because teachers are leaving the profession in increasingly higher rates than ever before where nationally, about 30 percent of new teachers leave the profession within 5 years and the turnover rate is about 50 percent higher in high-poverty schools in comparison to more affluent schools.

In United Kingdom, many teachers were leaving the teaching profession for greener financial pastures in other countries (Pillay, 2013). Also, in Malawi teacher's turnover has been reported to be overwhelming as compared to other developing countries (Xaba, 2003). Moreover, the study by Mugo and Guyo (2018) in public secondary school teachers in Embu County, Kenya, detected high labour turnover intentions that affected students' academic improvements. Factors contributing to the high turnover included lack of recognition and involvement during decision making low salaries, increased workload, and lack of time for professional development.

Like any other country in the world Tanzania is experiencing teachers' turnover problem at an alarming rate. According to Mbilinyi (2003), the level of teachers' turnover in rural areas is greater especially in secondary schools as many have a small number of teachers compared to the student population. Kafyulilo (2013), in his study of factors influencing teachers' turnover in public secondary schools in Tanzania, specifically Mbozi, revealed that district council lack of competitive reward programme and schools working environment was not conducive to most

of the teachers thus it contributed to high teachers' turnover rates in government secondary schools. It was also found to affect students' academic performance. Between 2014 and 2017, Geita district experienced teachers' turnover in public secondary schools, the teachers who are posted to secondary schools, leave their workstations (TSC personal interview, June 18, 2018).

Teachers' turnover presents significant a challenge to the successful and coherent implementation of instructional programmes and results to lower academic progress among students (Guin, 2004). The study by Ronfeldt et al., (2012) found that "patterned norms" of interaction among colleagues also predict student's achievement. When teachers leave schools, previously held relationships and relational patterns are altered, to the extent that turnover disrupts the formation and maintenance of staff cohesion, and it effects student achievement. Thus, this study was conducted to investigate the effects brought about by teachers' turnover on students' academic performance and bring about better understanding and awareness.

Literature Review

This study was informed by Herzberg's Hygiene Theory of Motivation (1966). The theory perceives motivational and hygiene factors to be separated in two dimensions affecting different aspects of job satisfaction. This belief differs from the traditional approach, which viewed job satisfaction and dissatisfaction as opposite ends of the same continuum. Hygiene factors (security, pay, fairness and working conditions) prevent dissatisfaction but they do not lead to satisfaction.

According to (Teck-Hong & Waheed, 2011) workers (teachers) need to work in clean areas, with accessible health institutions, areas with water supply and in areas with communities which are hygiene responsive via water source protection, and environmental protection to maintain a continuum of hygiene. On the other hand, motivators are the real factors that motivate employees at work. Basing on this study, it can be argued that if the government provide sufficient teaching and learning materials to the schools and subsidize more costs on secondary education by allocating more budget to better teachers' salaries and allowances, as well as creating better living and working environment in rural areas it will reduce the rate of teachers leaving their workstations. This will ensure the steady availability of teachers at their workstations and reduce turnover in Geita district council and all over the country.

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 1 informed the study on effects of teachers' turnover on academic performance. When teachers leave job disturb the teachers to students, this leads to ineffective teaching resulting from few teachers carry a heavier workload contrary to set standards. Ineffective learning is becoming highly pronounced due to the fact that students lack enough teachers to teach them, hence poor academic performance.

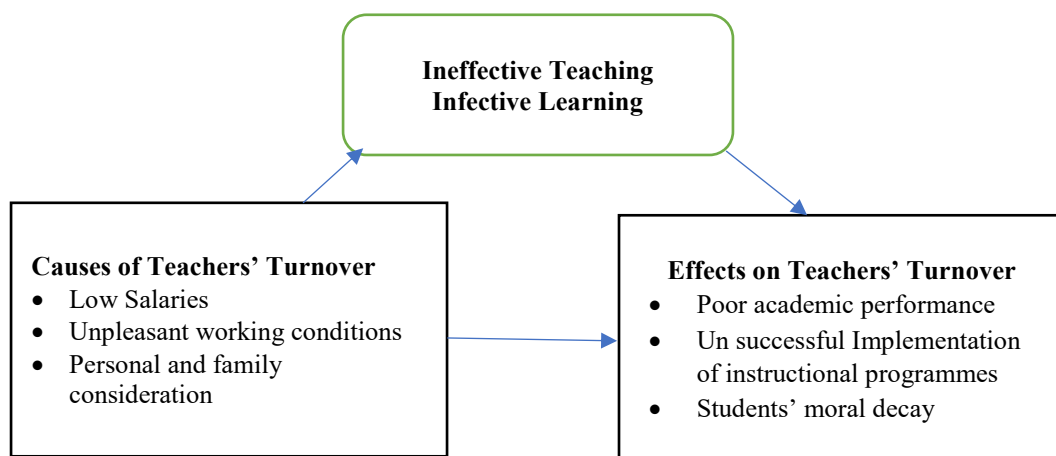


Figure 1: Analytical Framework About Effect of Teachers' Turnover on Students' Academic Performance

Teachers like all employees, deserve appropriate payment for the work that they do. When teachers believe that they are not receiving fair compensation or that their benefits are insufficient, they are more prone to go elsewhere for employment (Salin et al., 2020). Also, teachers' turnover is caused by unpleasant working condition, which makes them feel undervalued or ignored (Shatri,2020). Moreover, personal and family consideration also play a role in deciding to stay or leave the profession. It is possible that teachers with small children or with huge family responsibilities are more prone to abandon their teaching position in search of more accommodating working or location that suit their family needs, (Aulia and Haeran,2023).

Teachers' turnover affects school instructional programme that coherence predict student achievement (Newman et al., 2001). The result of persistent turnover is that schools are always starting over rather than making progress on their instructional programme. This is because newly hired teachers initially tend to lack essential knowledge and skills to implement an unfamiliar instructional programme, so they must be brought up to speed before institutional progress can be made.

When teachers leave schools, previously held relationships and relational patterns are altered. To the degree that turnover disrupts the formation and maintenance of staff cohesion and community; may also affect student achievement. Moreover, Guin (2004) reveals that teacher turnover indeed has a negative effect on faculty interactions and school climate as teachers who leave employment creates a gap on previous academic relationships between teachers to teachers and teachers to students. In such setting any academic programme that was already created will not be implemented same applies to issues of maintaining students' behaviour, students may fall back bad behaviour due to absence of a teacher who strongly maintained students' behaviour. Likewise, a study conducted by Hanselman et al. (2011) indicated that teacher and turnover have a disruptive effect on the "development and maintenance of social resources" (p. 27) including staff collegiality, community, and trust in a school.

Methodology

The study employed mixed methods approach. Qualitative research methodology was used in order to determine the behaviours, characteristics, and attitudes of the teachers in Geita district on the factors of teachers' turnover and its effect on academic performance among students. This was done by collecting the opinions, life experiences, attitudes, and suggestions about the effect of teachers' turnover on academic performance from different respondents like teachers, school heads, students, and educational officers.

Quantitative research approach was applied to provide a numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. From sample results, the researcher can generalize or make claims about the population. Quantitative research provides an understanding of the relationship in a population between an independent variable (effect of teachers' turnover) and a dependent variable (students' academic performance). Therefore, a mixed research approach was employed for this study to generate rich data from multiple sources.

The study area was Geita District which has 30 wards in Geita Region of Tanzania. The research surveyed 5 public secondary schools out of 32 public secondary schools from 5 wards of Busanda, Butobela, Katoro, Lutozwe and Nyankongochoro. Systematic sampling was used to select 5 wards in which sampling frames were numbered, and the first random sampling unit was selected randomly by selecting every fifth number on the list of wards, from each of 5 wards 1 school was selected where teachers' turnover was seen dominant. The study

consisted of 57 respondents who are teachers, school heads, students, teachers service commission officer and educational officer. A simple random sampling technic was used to select students by asking each to pick one folded piece of paper with letters A or B depending on the number in the population. Those who picked the paper written A were provided questionnaires to provide data concerning the effect of teachers' turnover on students' academic performance. Systematic sampling was used to select 25 teachers from the study population of 206 teachers from 5 public secondary schools in 5 wards. Each sampling frame was numbered, and the first random sampling unit was selected randomly by selecting every eight number items on the list from each public secondary school.

Also, systematic sampling was used to select 5 wards out of 30 wards by selecting every sixth number of items on the list of wards. Lastly, purposive sampling was employed to get educational officers with detailed knowledge and expertise about the problem and provide information that is relevant to the study. Hence respondents like District Secondary Education Officer (1) and Teachers Services Commission officers (1) were consulted for data acquisition during the field.

Questionnaires were administered to 25 secondary school teachers, and 25 students. The questionnaires were intended to gather quantitative information regarding the research topic. The questionnaires comprised both closed and open-ended questions. Also, the researcher used a key informative interview that involved discussion with the respondents with certain professionals like the district educational officer (1), teachers services commission officer (1), and 5 school heads to gather.

In data organization the information obtained from an interview was separated by the instrument for example interview with the District Secondary Educational Officer was organized together and the other data were analysed in the same categories. Also, interview information was coded to show respondents' information collected and analysed by using Microsoft Word 2010. In the coding process respondents like School Head were given codes A, B, C, D and E. The questionnaire data from school heads, teachers, and students were analysed by using the computer software known as Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.

Results

This study investigated the effects of teachers' turnover on students' academic performance in Geita District Council in Tanzania. The findings are presented under the following sections.

Effect of teachers' turnover on students' academic performance

In achieving this objective, heads of school (N=5), teachers (N=25) and students (N=25) were provided with a questionnaire with five items looking at the effect of teachers' turnover on students' academic performance. The questionnaire involved four-point Likert scales with options (1) Strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Agree, and (4) Strongly agree. The items measured students and teachers' experience and knowledge on the effect of teachers' turnover on students' academic performance. The findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' opinion on the effect of teachers' turnover on students' academic affairs

S/N	Item	Responses				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
1.	Affects implantation of Instructional Programs	-	-	32 64%	18 36%	50 100%
2.	Moral Decadence	-	-	38 76%	12 24%	50 100%
3.	Low Academic Performance	9 18%	5 10%	22 44%	14 28%	50 100%
4.	Students Fail to reach their Ambitions	7 14%	7 14%	28 56%	8 16%	50 100%
5.	Any other	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Affect Implementation of Instructional Programmes

Findings presented in Table 1 indicated the 100 percent of respondents agreed that teachers' turnover results in delays in academic programmes. The findings from the questionnaire were supported by the findings from interviews with heads of schools, that teachers' turnover affect successful implementation of instructional programmes, resulting to some periods lacking teachers while other teachers become overloaded.

During the interview with one of the head of secondary school said:

“Teachers’ turnover hinders successful implementation school instructional programs, when teachers leave job creates a room of some subjects to lack teachers to be taught and remained teachers are overloaded with periods...”. (Interview with Head of secondary school A, on 23rd July,2018 at Lutozwe ward in Geita District).

Moral Decadence

Findings in Table 1, show that 100 percent of respondents agreed that teachers’ turnover results in moral decadence among students. The findings from the questionnaire were supported by the findings from interviews with heads of schools and teachers’ services commission officer.

The head of secondary school “B” said:

“... Students' morals are observed by teachers if a teacher leaves job moral decay happens...”. (Interview with Head of secondary school B, on 24th July,2018 at Butobela ward in Geita District).

The teachers’ services commission officer had this to say:

“... Teachers uplift morals of a student; a teacher plays this role when a student is at school. Thus, teachers’ turnover hinders the development of students’ good behaviour at school since students' behaviour is observed by their teachers at school...” (Interview with teachers’ services commission officer, on 31st July,2018 in Geita District).

Low Academic Performance

As Table 1 shows 72 percent of respondents agreed that low academic performance is a result of teachers’ turnover. On the other hand, only 28 percent of respondents disagree on the statement that low academic performance is a result of teachers’ performance.

Students’ failure to reach their ambitions

The findings from Table 1, about 72 percent of respondents agreed that teachers’ turnover results in students' failure to reach their ambitions, whereas about 28 percent of respondents disagreed with the statement that teachers’ turnover results in students' failure to reach their ambitions. The questionnaire data correlated with the interview data from district secondary education officer. The district secondary education officer had the following to say:

“When a teacher leaves job creates a ground for some subjects being not covered is laid, this makes some students fail to reach their academic ambitions”. (Interview with district secondary education officer, on 2nd August, 2018 in Geita District).

Discussion

The findings revealed that teachers’ turnover affects successful academic instructional programmes since some subjects lacked teachers to teach them, while remaining teachers are overloaded with teaching extra subject periods. The study findings are comparable to Guin (2004), who found that teachers’ turnover presents significant challenges to the successful and coherent implementation of instructional programmes and harms student achievement since teachers’ leave a burden to few teachers at school. This comes as they are forced to handle more periods that were previously handled by their counterpart who left, also some periods lack teachers cover them hence affects students’ achievements. The researcher recommends that employers must improve the working environment and working conditions in rural public secondary schools. This should be done to motivate the teachers in their work, hence reducing the high rate of teachers’ turnover and its negative impact on students’ academic performance.

Furthermore, findings indicated that teachers’ turnover results in moral decadence among students. The study findings are similar to Oladipo (2009) who observed that ethics education in schools improves communication skills. Communication between teachers and students is vital in improving students’ academic achievements in absence of teachers at school influence the decay of ethical values and norms of students and school at large. Scholars, especially educational psychologists acknowledge that children are born with certain innate endowments but not ethics or morals (Oladipo, 2009). This implies that children learn morals from their immediate environment (school) in which they are brought up. Teachers must ensure that children are morally upright. The teaching of moral and ethical values is further taken over from the family setting by formal learning institutions such as schools and colleges (Oladipo, 2009). This is likely to improve students’ overall academic performance. Moreover, this study recommends that motivation and attractive packages be provided to teacher who live in rural areas (hardship allowances) so as to ensure teachers remain at their workstations.

The findings further revealed that low academic performance is a result of teachers’ turnover. It was found that teachers’ leave their job just because of non-conducive

working environment and job dissatisfaction thus lowering performances. These study findings are in line with Miller (2012) who stated that teachers are the most important school-based determinant of students' academic success. In the absence of a teacher at school, teaching and learning programmes cripples hence low academic performance to students happens. It must be noted that the teacher is a vital resource to students' achievement, thus good working environment has to be there so as to ensure the presence of teachers at school to enhance effective teaching that has an important role on improving students' academic achievement (Suswanto et., 2017).

Lastly, the findings revealed that teachers' turnover results in students failing to reach their ambitions. The findings are similar to Newman et al. (2001) who stated that the absence of teachers at a school creates a ground for students to lack teachers to teach them and be motivated to meet their ambitions. In addition, the current study findings agree with Guin (2004) who argued that staff turnover presents significant challenges to the successful and coherent implementation of instructional. It also harms student achievement and prevents them from reaching their set ambitions. This implies that in absence of sufficient number of teachers at school no way the school can run its academic programmes hence crippling the achievement of students in reaching their targeted ambitions. Therefore, the study suggests that improvement of the working environment, provision of motivation packages to teachers, better salaries as well as community involvement in building teachers' houses and other activities should be emphasized to enable teachers remain at their working stations.

The findings suggest: firstly, that the employer must improve the working environment and working conditions in rural public secondary schools. This should be done to motivate the teachers in their work, hence reducing the high rate of teachers' turnover with its negative impact on students' academic performance. This can be achieved through establishing a friendly environment both working and living, to retain teachers. Secondly, the rate and mode of payment for teachers' allowances, salaries and other benefits should be improved by setting clear payment policies and using them to guide the full process of payment. The government should increase teachers' salaries and allowances in order to motivate them. The government should also make equivalent salary scales with other cadres like nurses, doctors, soldiers, and some others since teachers are leaving their profession by shifting to other cadres so that they can get good salaries and better working conditions. Thirdly, motivation and attractive packages should be provided to the

teacher living in rural areas (hardship allowances). The government should ensure that there are attractive packages for teachers such as transport, risk allowance and responsibility allowances, loans along with timely payment of teachers' salaries, claims, and other benefits. Unnecessary delays in payments of teacher salaries should be minimized to motivate them to work hard. Fourthly, a good supply of teaching and learning material and improvement of the teaching environment can be used as a strategy to counter teachers' turnover. Achieving high quality of education in view of Education for All is not an easy task. Lastly, community involvement should be emphasized since most of these schools are expected to be run by the community around them. Teachers and community cooperation should be enhanced in various activities like building teachers' houses and other activities to create a good working environment. This will reduce the gap between communities around the school, thus enhancing community support and building relationship between the teachers and the community members.

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