

Teacher Professional Code of Conduct: its effect on Teaching and Learning Process in Public Secondary Schools in Busega District, Simiyu, Tanzania

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Abstract: A shared set of ideals that teachers base their professional work on are outlined in the Teachers' Professional Code of conduct. The Code is designed to give teachers the principles and guidelines they need to handle professional work. The main purpose for this study was to examine the effects of teacher professional code of conduct on teaching and learning process in public secondary schools in Busega District. Specifically the study aimed to explore forms of teachers misconduct that affect teaching and learning process. The 1986 Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory provided the theoretical foundation for the study. The study used mixed research methods approaches and designs. The data was collected from a total targeted population of 457 from which a sample size of 82 respondents was obtained through probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Data were collected from respondents using questionnaire and interviews. A pilot study conducted employed split half technique and the result was 0.7 correlation coefficient hence the researcher used the instruments to collect data. Quantitative data collected were analysed through descriptive statistics with the help of SPSS version 20 while qualitative data were thematically analysed and presented in narrative form. The study found that various forms of misconduct such as teachers absenteeism, unethical dressing, the use of abusive language, drunkenness, lateness and others, highly and negatively affect the teaching and learning process. Therefore the study concluded that teacher professional code of conduct is essential for successful teaching and learning process besides effective achievement of educational goals. The study recommended that the government should improve teachers' living and teaching conditions, use various discipline methods effectively to reduce indiscipline actions of teachers in school setting, service training and induction programmes concerning the teacher code of conduct for the newly appointed teachers, and cooperation between teachers and head teachers and also among teachers themselves for mutual relationship.

Keywords: Teacher, profession, code of conduct, misconduct, Secondary School, Teaching and learning process.

I. INTRODUCTION

A shared set of ideals that teachers base their professional work on are outlined in the teachers' code of conduct. The Code is designed to give instructors the principles and guidelines they need to handle professional work. The welfare and protection of students that teachers work with are its main objectives. Additionally, it serves to inform teachers, students, and anyone else who could benefit from knowing the ethical

norms and values that govern teachers' professional conduct. Thus, it is each teacher's personal obligation to strive for the greatest standards of behaviour in their work as a teacher, practitioner, and volunteer.

According to Kayongo (2019) the code of conduct can be defined as a formal document that spells out behavioural expectations for a company or profession and the people in that profession. It also underlines the professional behaviour, standards and codes of conducts among the teachers and other educational personnel in relation to the learners, parents and general public.

The Ireland teachers' professional codes of conduct are presented in various categories such as teacher's professional values and relationship, integrity, conduct, practice, collegiality and collaboration, and development. These categories in the professional code of conducts provide ethical foundation and standards for teachers to abide at all times (Teaching Council, 2016). Therefore, teachers should follow their codes of conduct. However, in Nigeria, the first edition of teachers' code of conduct was published in 2005 whereas the second edition in 2013 (TRCN, 2013). The code of conduct included principles of teacher professionalism, relationship with colleagues, the role of a teacher as an academic leader, their relationship with learners, parents, employers, and society.

Teacher professional codes are set of rules and principles that guide teachers in their teaching profession. The teacher professional code and conduct may be developed by teachers' unions, the government or several institutions in order to ensure that ethical values are observed by teachers and to facilitate conducive teaching, learning process, high performance and attain intended educational goals.

In addition, Kenya Teachers Service Commission (2015) which provides Code of Conduct and Ethics for Teachers Regulations as of 2015 analysed sets of principles and regulations to be followed by teachers. These include aspects of professionalism, conduct of duties, integrity, duty to protect children, fundamental human rights and freedom, rule of law and others. All these codes aim to build and lead teachers as professionals.

In Tanzania, according to the Teachers' Service Commission Act number 25 of 2015 third Schedule under regulation 44 Code of Ethics and Conduct, the teachers' service is charged with enforcing teachers' efficiency and respecting ability. In this regard, teachers shall behave and conduct themselves as stipulated under the Public Service Code of Ethics and Conduct. Indeed, teachers in the service shall uphold professional conduct as stipulated under the Teachers' Professional Code of Conduct. Therefore, every teacher shall recognise that he/she has a level of responsibility to the pupils under his/her care, uphold his/her profession, and respect his/her employer as well as the state. The code of ethics and conduct for the Teachers Service Commission in Tanzania has been issued pursuant to the Teachers' Service Commission Regulations, 2008. A breach of the code will be dealt with under Regulation 40, National Security Act, Prevention of Corruption Act or any other relevant law (TSC, 2015)

TSC has been taking several initiatives and actions in enforcing the code among others including provision of seminars and workshops, guidance and counselling, reprimands, and dismissal of violators of the code of conduct (Mfaume and Bilinga, 2017).

Teachers' misconduct, particularly absenteeism and lateness, as revealed in 2011 SACMEQ report, affect the teaching of the subject content, whereby teachers fail or partially accomplish the syllabus (Betweli, 2013; Han and Peirola, 2021). Also, teachers' misconduct interrupts the planned interventions implementation and effectiveness of teaching and learning process (Nuland and Khandelwal, 2006). Currently, in Busega district there are some teachers in public secondary schools in rural and urban areas who violate the teacher professional code of conduct. Such misconduct include drunkenness during working hours, lack of accountability and being irresponsible in their work, absenteeism from class and school environment, lateness, unethical dressing, sexual harassment, using abusive language, and over punishment among others.

For effective teaching and learning process to take place, teachers should follow their professional code of conduct in order to achieve the set education goals. The misconduct among teachers such as teachers' absenteeism, cases of teachers' unprofessional conduct reported in the media and some cases observed in the local communities have inspired the researcher's interest to investigate whether teachers' professional code of conduct has an effect on teaching and learning processes or not. Various studies including Mabagala (2017); Nnorom, (2020); Mfaume and Bilinga (2017); Sherpa (2018) and Chirwa (2014) have investigated the types of teachers' misconduct, challenges, and the way forward on teachers' unprofessional code of conduct in secondary schools. However, this study was conducted in public secondary schools in a place with diversity of cultural, economic, and geographic settings (rural and remote) location. Therefore, the researchers investigated the effects of teachers' professional code of conduct on the teaching and learning

process. Specifically, the study explored forms of teachers misconduct that affect teaching and learning process. in public secondary schools in Busega District.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The social learning theory was developed by Albert Bandura in the 1980s. The theory is based on the idea that we learn from our interaction with others in a social context. It also points out that, by observing the behaviour of others, people develop similar behaviour. SLT further posits that people learn from one another through observation, imitation and modelling (Nabavi, 2012).

According to Bandura (2006), behaviour can be learned through modelling, for example, students can watch the demonstration of mathematic problems, or someone acting bravely and imitate the same. Based on this argument, aggression can also be learned through models. Some research indicate that children become more aggressive when they observe aggressive or violent models. Therefore, moral thinking and moral behaviour are influenced by observation and modelling. Consequently, the learning process includes acquiring moral judgments regarding right and wrong which can impart, or develop through modelling (Nabavi, 2012).

Therefore, this theory is applicable to this study as it shows that the learning process can be achieved by observing, imitating and modelling. In this study it implies that the students observe, imitate and model on the teachers' conduct during the teaching and learning processes. For example, teachers' unethical dressing can be imitated by students. Also the use of aggressive or abusive language by teachers may be imitated by students. Thus, the teachers' conduct may either positively or negatively affect the learning process through students' observing, imitating and modelling of their teachers

Empirical Review

Forms of Teachers' Misconduct on Teaching and Learning Process in Secondary Schools

Golubeva (2017) define code of conduct as the instrument that formulates positive ethical principles and provides specific guidelines on the conduct and practices a professional teachers is expected to abide. It enhances a sense of professionalism and promotes a conducive learning environment and the well-being of learners at all levels. Furthermore, codes of conduct are also a means of alerting that teachers conducting themselves below the expectations, should realign with good standards, possibly even without being subjected to cruel measures. These codes provide the ethical rules which, once a teacher abide by them, will improve the learning process due to accountability and responsibility of that teacher in the classroom but also reduce several aspects of teachers' misconduct (Golubeva, 2017).

George (2017), in his study on the unethical practices and management options in mission schools in Delta State analysed the unethical practices of teachers. The findings showed that teachers who awarded unmerited scores to

students, were involved in sexual harassment and did not cover the scheme of work. Also, the study suggested some measures which could be adopted to manage teachers' misconduct including provision of ethics training programmes, appointment of ethics specialists who play a great role in top management decision making in schools and preparation of code of ethics for schools.

Chirwa (2014) conducted a study on the causes and effects of teachers' misconduct in selected public secondary schools in Dowa district (Malawi). The study pointed out that teachers' misconduct had an effect on teaching and learning process as the findings showed that absenteeism and late coming were common cases of teachers' misconduct in public secondary schools. The study indicated some factors which led to teachers' misconduct such as low job satisfaction, negligence, lack of support and cooperation among teachers. Further, the findings showed that human rights issues and lack of resources were some of the challenges in promoting proper conduct among teachers.

On the other hand, Mabagala (2017) conducted a study on the prevalence of professional misconduct in Nzega District. The study findings revealed that negligence of duty and absenteeism were the common professional misconduct acts in secondary schools. Findings also revealed that teachers' professional misconduct arose due to poor remuneration, failure to fulfil teachers' needs and lack of motivation among teachers. The study suggested that the government, through the Ministry of Education and President's Office (TAMISEMI) should respond to teachers' needs in a timely manner and conduct regular seminars on teachers' professionalism.

According to Mfaume and Bilinga (2017) on prevalence of teachers' professional malpractices in Tanzanian public secondary schools have pointed out that teachers' low salaries and remuneration, poor living and working conditions, influence of science and technology, lack of professional knowledge and poor management as well as infrequent visits and inspection of schools are among the factors that lead to teachers' misconduct in public secondary schools. The study suggests that TSD should be empowered to oversee teachers' discipline both in public and private secondary schools; this may enforce teachers to follow their professional code of conduct. However, the study has not addressed some factors which contribute to teachers' unprofessional conduct.

Betwell (2013) conducted a study on The Nature of Teacher Professional Misconduct in Tanzanian Public Primary Schools: The Case of Sumbawanga Municipal and Rural Districts. The paper revealed that, first; teacher professional misconduct was prevalent in both rural and urban settings in Rukwa Region with some variation in terms of type, cause, and frequency. Secondly, the variation of teacher misconduct in schools was greatly influenced by teacher's sex, work experience, and level of education. In view of the research findings, the paper concludes that teacher misconduct is a problem of great concern in both rural and urban schools that

affects teachers' work performance, the teaching and learning process, and the quality of education at large.

Also, Kiluvia and Ngwila (2017) carried out a study on the assessment of the causes of persisting teachers' professional malpractices in Kilwa District. The study aimed to identify the types of professional malpractices commonly practiced by teachers in secondary schools. They employed descriptive design whereby qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. The study sample comprised of 5 secondary schools and a total of 60 respondents. Their findings disclosed that, the dominant malpractice which affect the teaching and learning process were: absenteeism which seems to be the most common problem above all, the use of Swahili language in English language classes during teaching and negligence whereby teachers tended to neglect and skip classes as they had to engage in extra-curricular activities. Also, the study identified causes of teachers' malpractices including bad working conditions, poor management and stress. Moreover, the study suggests that, if teachers' needs are not fulfilled, they are not provided with good working environment, welfare and wellbeing are not maintained as per government regulations on teaching conditions, the malpractices would persist.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches under which convergent parallel design was used. Convergent parallel mixed methods, which refer to a form of mixed methods design in which the researcher converges or merges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Cresswell, 2014). This design is appropriate to use because it helps to minimise the weaknesses of each approach, hence triangulation of the findings that help to understand the research problem better.

The target population of this study included six groups of participants, who were the District Secondary Educational Officer (DEO), Teachers Service Commission Officer, Ward Educational officers (WEO), School Board, heads of schools, teachers and students in public secondary schools in Busega District. This study employed both probability and non-probability sampling procedures to select 82 respondents as the sample size from the targeted population of 457 people. The data were collected through interview and questionnaire. After modification of the research instruments the researchers conducted a pilot study to one secondary school which was non-participant in the main study whereby the split half technique was used and the questionnaire were administered to pre-test research instrument in order to measure the reliability. The coefficient of reliability obtained was 0.7 which enabled the researcher to use the instrument for data collection.

Quantitative data were collected from questionnaire after being filled by respondents and transferred into a spread sheet and then the analysis was done through Statistical Package for

Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 presented in frequencies and percentages. The qualitative data collected from the interview were analyzed by formulating themes emerging from transcript of interviews using direct quotes with a view to capturing the respondents' own talk and experiences which were analyzed thematically through narrative.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of teachers misconduct that affect teaching and learning process

Although the codes are amended to ensure teachers are working accordingly, there are some teachers who are

involved in different forms of professional misconduct. The common forms of misconduct among teachers in Tanzanian schools include absenteeism, sexual misconduct, corruption, private tutoring, unethical dressing, drunkenness, unethical language, and examination malpractices among others (Mfaume and Bilinga, 2017; Mabagala, 2016.) Respondents were requested to identify forms of teacher professional misconduct which affect teaching and learning process. The observations revealed various forms of teachers' misconduct that affect teaching and learning process in Busega District as summarized in table 1.

Table 1 Teachers' and Students' Responses on Teacher's misconduct

Category	Students N= 60	Teachers N = 16
Absenteeism	52 (87%)	10 (62.5%)
Abusive language	41 (68.3%)	7 (43%)
Examination malpractice	8 (13.3%)	3 (18%)
Unethical dressing	30 (50%)	11(68.7%)
Sexual abuse	10 (17%)	4 (25%)
Drug abuse	5 (8.3%)	2 (12.5%)
Drunkenness	12 (20%)	6 (37.5%)

Source: Field data (2021)

Findings in table 1 show majority of respondents, both students and teachers indicated, the presence of teachers' misconduct in their respective schools. Absenteeism was prevalent in public secondary schools. 87 percent of students and 62.5 percent of teachers on the findings implies that absenteeism was a common misconduct affecting teachers in their profession. Supporting this, Kiluvia and Ngwila (2017) carried out a study in Kilwa District to identify the types of professional malpractices commonly practiced by teachers in secondary schools. It revealed that the dominant malpractice which affected the teaching and learning process is absenteeism, which seemed prevalent among others.

Similarly, during interviews held with heads of schools, it was reported that teachers spent few work hours at school and used the rest of their time in private businesses such as *bodaboda*. In that regard, interviewee A had this to say: *The serious problem of teachers in my district is misconduct. Most of teachers work as Bodaboda during working hours so as to increase their income hence being absent from work*

(Interviewed, October, 2021). This was echoed by interviewee C who said that:

My school is located in a rural area as you have seen, I have 15 teachers in my school but in a week only 75 percent of teachers attend daily in school and 25 percent being absent. This shows that absenteeism is highly practiced in my school and one of the causes is the economic problem and the surrounding environment. Sometime some teachers work as *bodaboda* riders so as to increase their income but also others spent much time especially during raining season attending agricultural activities (Interviewed, October 2021).

This finding was in line with Mabagala (2017) on professional misconduct in Nzega District who points out that teacher absenteeism were the common professional misconduct acts in secondary schools but also teacher's absenteeism was viewed by respondents as leading to failure to complete curriculum implementation and poor academic performance among students.

In the same line the findings were Similar to that, interviewee B also said that:

Majority of teachers in my school are absent from work several times due to various reasons. Some male teachers engage in economic activities such as *boda-boda* during working hours thus being absent from work and some female teachers conduct their small business activities in school such as selling tea, buns, *ubuyu* and others have female saloons hence being absent in classes (Interviewed, October 2021).

Teachers' misconduct, particularly absenteeism and lateness, as revealed in 2011 SACMEQ report, affect the teaching of the subject content, whereby teachers fail or partially accomplish the syllabus (Han and Peirola, 2021).

Sexual abuse was recorded by 17 percent and 25 percent of students and teachers respectively. This type of misconduct has a negative impact on provision of quality education. Interviewee K asserted:

Both rural and urban teachers, especially male, engage in this malpractice. Sexual abuse cases from teachers to students have been reported as some of the male teachers have love affairs with female students. But also there are some cases reported by girls students who lament on their male teachers disturbing them to engage in love affairs with them (Interviewed, October 2021).

Another is the use of abusive language by teachers. 68.3 percent of student respondents and 43 percent of teacher respondents pointed this as one of teacher misconduct that affects TLP. This misconduct is associated with the age of teachers whereby this behavior is mostly practiced by enrolled teachers and youthful teachers. The abusive language may demoralize students morally of learning.

The findings also relate with the responses of interviewee E who argue that:

There are some cases reported by students to their parents that some teachers use abusive language such as insulting language and improper language to students when teaching and outside the class. The students in their report comment that the abusive language of teachers when teaching draw out their attention in the lesson taught thus students do not understand well the lessons (Interviewed, October 2021)

But also, unethical dressing of teachers was indicated where by 50 percent of students and 68.7 percent of teacher respondents revealed this is teacher misconduct. Bad wearing style of teachers in working environment affect the TLP in the way that students may concentrate in teachers wearing style in class instead of listen to the lesson. Also, the problem is associated with the age of teachers. Interviewee F opined:

Moreover, unethical dressing of teachers during working hours were also reported, where by 60 percent of female teachers dress unethical and 20 percent of male teachers also dress improperly. The result reveals that female teachers mostly dress unethically in school (Interviewed, October 2021).

Also, interviewee A commented that:

Another teacher's misconduct which is highly practiced in my district is unethical dressing. Most of the teachers, especially female teachers, dress improperly like miniskirt, tight clothes. My office has been receiving various cases from the heads of schools concerning the improperly dressing and this affect the learning process in a way that students instead of concentrating to the lesson, they concentrate on the dressing code of a teacher (Interviewed, October 2021).

Similarly, drunkenness was also a problem among teachers in public secondary schools. The 20 percent of students and 37.5 percent of teachers indicated this as among of the teachers misconduct which affects the teaching and learning process in their schools. Moreover, majority of interviewees such as WEO, head of schools and TSC Officer stated that drunkenness was a problem that affected a large number of teachers in their schools but also the teaching and learning processes. Another teacher misconduct is drunkenness where by some cases were reported by the head of schools that there were some teachers being drunk during working hours and attend classes while drunk. Also there were some cases reported by the community members of some teachers drunk during working hours.

Interviewee D observed that:

Majority of teachers in my district abide with the teacher's professional code of conduct but at the same time, there are teachers who go against these codes due to various reasons. And most teachers misconduct which are reported by heads of schools and others being observed

by education leaders are lateness of teachers in school compound, absenteeism of teachers in classes and also school compound. But also, drunkenness, unethical dressing, irresponsibility and unaccountability are also revealed. (Interviewed, October 2021).

Also, interviewee C said that:

Drunkenness is a major problem that affects majority of teachers but also the teaching and learning process in schools. Some teachers were reported by the community that they use most of their time in drinking local beers in street even during the working hours and others attend school while they are drunk. This leads to ineffective teaching and learning process (Interviewed, October 2021).

It was revealed that teachers developed drunkenness problems when they became more familiar with communities since the prices for local brews were relatively cheaper compared to those of modern beers.

The findings support violation of the code of conduct and the consequences are as stipulated, "A breach of the code will be dealt with under Regulation 40, National Security Act, Prevention of Corruption Act or any other relevant law" (URT, 2016)

Furthermore, 8.3 percent of students and 12.5 of teacher's respondents indicated drug abuse as among of teacher's misconduct. It seems also a problem where some teachers use drug abuse such as to smoke marijuana for the sense of leisure and other due to environmental factors. The use of marijuana was common where teachers smoke even during working hours especially in rural areas.

During the interview, interviewee E argued that:

There are some teachers who use drug abuse such as Marijuana in the school environment. Some cases were reported from the students who witness some of the teachers use drug abuse and attend classes, the result of this is failure to deliver well the skills and knowledge to the learners hence leads to ineffective teaching and learning process. (Interviewed, October 2021).

Moreover, examination malpractice was also pointed as teachers' misconduct that affect teaching and learning process. 13.3 percent of students and 18 percent of teachers indicate this factor but this was minimal practice by teachers' due low percentage rate as indicated in table 1

In addition, interviewee A comments that: "Examination malpractice is at low amount practiced by teachers in a way that only few cases were reported in my office. The examination malpractice is illegal issues some few teachers were reported as they fraud the national examinations." (Interviewed, October 2021).

This concurs with the interviewee C views who commented that; *Examination* malpractice in our district is minor, there are few cases which were reported as some few teachers try to

cheat the examination so as to help their students. (Interviewed, October 2021).

During the interview interviewee B comments that:

Absenteeism, drug abuse, unethical dressing and the use of abusive language are common teacher's misconduct practiced in my school and they are mostly practiced by the youth teachers but also they affect learning process because they are unethical practice (Interviewed, October 2021).

Similar to that, the finding was supported by Tluway (2015) whose similar study in Moshi, Tanzania argued that the variation of teacher misconduct in schools was greatly influenced by teacher's sex, work experience and level of education.

The general findings agree with the social learning theory by Bandura (2006) based on the idea that we learn from our interaction with others in a social context. It also points out that, by observing the behaviour of others, people develop similar behaviour. Also, (Nabavi, 2012) postulate that people learn from one another through observation, imitation and modelling. This implies that, teachers and all stakeholders should be keen to uphold professional code of conduct to avoid misconduct that really confuses learners in the teaching and learning process.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The study concludes that teacher professional code of conduct is important on teaching and learning process for successful of teaching and learning process leading to effective achievement of education goals.

The findings also conclude that various forms of teachers misconduct revealed in the school such as teachers absenteeism, unethical dressing, the use of abusive language, drunkenness, lateness and others highly and negatively affect the TLP. The challenges facing teachers in adhering to their professional code of conduct are highly caused by teachers themselves, government, community, environment and other social factors.

Finally, various strategies can be taken to address the challenges such as provision of seminars and workshops.

Recommendations

The government should improve teachers' living conditions in terms of quality houses and other social services. Teachers should accept and comply with the environment of their working place apart from the challenges they encounter.

Moreover, education leaders should use various discipline methods effectively in order to reduce indiscipline actions of teachers in school setting. Some of the measures are like the use of warning letters for absenteeism, lateness, unethical dressing and other form of misconduct

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should embark on pre-service training and induction programmers concerning the teacher code of conduct for the newly appointed teachers.

There should be cooperation between teachers and head teachers and also among teachers themselves in order to establish mutual relationship among them for successfully teaching and learning process.

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