

Unraveling the Academic Odyssey: Challenges, Discipline Dynamics, and Remedial Measures for Head Teachers in Public Secondary Schools of Micheweni District

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Abstract:

The study focused on challenges head teachers face in enhancing students' academic performance in Zanzibar secondary schools specifically in Micheweni District. Thus, the study aimed to address the challenges that head teachers face in improving academic performance. To determine the possible measures to address the challenges head teachers face in improving academic performance in public secondary schools in Micheweni district. Total sampled respondents were 160 people from 10 public secondary schools. This study involved 10 head teachers, 49 class teachers, 100 students and 1 District Educational Officer was selected as a sample. The study employed qualitative design by using interview, focused group discussions, observation and document review as methods of data collection. The overall findings show that head teachers worked in hard environments as compared to when the free education policy was not in operation from the teachers and the parents. The study recommended establishing extra curriculum for examination classes to improve student performance and to provide chance for teachers' professional development through in-service training in order to achieve quality education.

Keywords: Administrative, Human resources, Financial, and Personal challenges, High Academic performance

1. Introduction

Education is an essential tool for personal and societal development and it is often considered as the key for eradication of poverty especially in developing countries like Tanzania. However, in Micheweni District, the academic performance of students in secondary schools is often poor with low pass rates. According to the Tanzania National Examination council (NECTA), academic performance is the measurement of student's achievement across various academic subjects and the attainment of their short term or long-term educational goals. While there are many challenges that contribute to poor academic performance, this study focused on the challenges head teaches face that contributing to poor academic performance in Micheweni District.

Challenges: which mean difficulties or problems come from all domain at the same time and requires great effort.

Head teacher: means secondary disciplinary authority at school level where he over sees and regulate teachers conduct at school

Public schools: are schools that owned by community and supported by government in terms of salaries of the teachers and supplying teaching and learning facilities like books (URT, 2010).

High academic performance: means the matter what employees can achieve and how they achieve it. Similarly, performance means effect use of needed skills, knowledge and experience.

Background to the study.

Globally, head teachers face challenges in achieving student performance in Public secondary school's challenges such as, English teacher shortages, lacking materials, and unqualified teachers. Untrained, under-qualified teachers omit syllabus topics and hinder language skills. Challenges in public secondary schools include large classes, teacher workload, poor facilities, limited home support, and poverty Mosha, (2014). In Latin America hasn't fully addressed disparities relating on the Educational expansion with half of completing students lacking proficiency (Brunner 2009). Developing countries aim to balance enrollment and quality. Head teachers' roles focus on creating conducive learning environments (UNESCO, 2009). Eastern African countries, have undergone multiple reforms in its education system to align with global standards. In a study conducted by Mkumbo (2012) posited a low level of teachers' commitment, linked to poor performance among schools and students. In Tanzania, the government initiated Development Vision 2025 aims to achieve four main objectives: providing well-qualified human resources, establishing a highly standardized and relevant education system, addressing developmental disparities among regions, and improving transition rates from primary to secondary and tertiary levels. In relation to this study particularly in Zanzibar whereas the Micheweni district is the case study. At Ministerial level of education and Vocational Training, Performance in secondary education management in services delivery and development in Zanzibar has been raised as in the contemporary years on the development of digital system in the universe. In fact, the country has introduced free education system after Revolution in 1964. The education services have been improved year after year. MoEVT, (2006).

2. General Objective

To determine the challenges that head teachers face in improving and maintaining high academic performance in public secondary schools in Micheweni District.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study employed qualitative approach whereby the researcher used interview focus grouped discussion and documentary review as tools of data collection. The sample of 160 people comprising students 100 (80%) as main respondents district educational officer and head teachers 10 and class teachers 49 (20%) secondary schools in Micheweni District

4.0 STUDY FINDINGS

The first specific objective was to identify the challenges that head teachers face in improving and maintaining high academic performance in their public schools in Micheweni District. In this objective, the researcher wanted to identify the different challenges that have been facing head teachers in the public secondary school in Micheweni District. In this aspect the interview questions as the adopted tool by the researcher were used to ask selected head teachers in Micheweni. There were four different questions used by the researcher to ask the head teachers. Total of 10 different head teachers from 10 public secondary school in Micheweni were involved in providing information concerning the challenges facing head teachers in achieving student's high academic performance in public secondary school in Micheweni. The Researcher also asked head teachers (HT) from among the 10 secondary schools in Micheweni. The main question was based on the Challenges facing head teachers.

4.1 Administrative Challenges Faced by Head Teachers

In this section the researcher involved several head teachers in the study. The question asked relating on the administration aspect. The following interviews for the first Head Teacher (HT1) the first question was 'What are the administrative challenges that you have been facing as a Head teacher in achieving student's high academic performance in your office?' The followings are the results from the respondents

4.2 Shortage of some administrative skills and tools such as policy, Acts, and Regulations.

[HT1: As head teachers in this school have found the following challenges that threat high academic performance to public secondary school in Micheweni. The challenges include shortage of some administrative skills and tools such as policy, acts, and regulations.

Normally the Ministry of education appoints head teachers with only their point of views but even myself I don't know the proper criteria that they considered while appointing. The roles outlined by the ministry does include the administrative skills and tools that may help to develop skills and capability on effective and management control system at the school. It is different to find that skills have been tough to make head teachers have been built their capable in the area mentioned.

4.3 Emergency of different classes among teachers based on political ideology

In the interview with Head Teacher (HT3), it was revealed that there is a presence of different political ideologies among teachers in the school, which can lead to challenges in maintaining a harmonious educational environment. This situation requires strong administrative skills to navigate. While diverse political perspectives among teachers can have positive outcomes, such as promoting critical thinking skills, open dialogue, and exposure to various viewpoints, it also raises concerns. These concerns include the potential for teachers' biases to influence classroom discussions, the risk of polarization within the school community, and the need to ensure that hiring and promotion decisions are based on merit rather than political affiliations.

4.4 Political Interaction by Different Political Interest

The researcher asked respondent four head teacher 4 (HT4) concerning the challenges that facing on administration, he answered that,

Political interaction by different political interest. This normally happens when political leaders find that when the general election is nearby, they could be closest to the teachers and students to participate in general election. It could be all parties not only ruling party but also other political parties. Several times I have faced with this challenge. (HT4)

4.5 Management of the Teachers, Students and Surrounding School Environment

Researcher also developed to ask the respondents 5 head teacher (HT5) who was the five head teacher involved in this study.

5. Summary of the study

The study sought to determine the challenges that head teachers face in improving and maintaining high academic performance in public secondary schools in Micheweni District. It further explored the process that head teachers use in maintaining the levels of school discipline among teachers and students and to determine possible measures to identified challenges of head teachers.

Challenges that Head Teachers Face

The findings on the first objective of the current research study identified that, there are three main challenges that head teachers face in improving and maintaining student's academic performance in their public secondary schools. Firstly, administrative challenges which include lack of administrative skills, policies, acts and regulations. Secondly, human resource challenges and thirdly, financial challenges which bring about shortage of funds for teaching and learning materials as well as ICT equipment.

Head Teachers' Strategy for Maintaining School Discipline

Findings on the second objective of the study identified the strategies that head teachers use to maintain discipline among teachers and students. These were developing close relationship between teachers, students and parents. Head teachers' ability to encourage and boost the morale of teachers so as to be patriotic through participating in school's local income generating activities that secure funds for school's administrative work. They also help to negotiate with Government through MoEST to be given funds for the smooth running of their schools. Enhance the students' parents or guardians to contribute petty cash to cater for the teaching and learning resources.

Possible Measures to Overcome Head Teachers' Challenges

The findings on the third objective which was to determine the possible solutions to the head teachers' challenges are outlined as follows. The MoEST ought to supply necessary laws, policies, acts and regulations to Head teachers. The school administration and parents of students have to show commitment towards time management so that they can achieve the schools' desired goal which is students' high academic performance. There is also need for proper arrangement of in-service training for teachers in order to improve their skills and capacity which are inextricably connected with students' academic performance.

6. Conclusions

The findings of this research highlight the various challenges faced by head teachers in enhancing students' high academic performance in public secondary schools in Micheweni District. These

challenges span administrative, human resource, and financial domains, and they significantly impact the overall effectiveness of school management and academic outcomes. Administratively, head teachers struggle with issues such as the shortage of administrative skills and tools, time management, political interactions, and maintaining discipline among students and staff. These challenges underscore the need for continuous professional development and clear administrative guidelines to address them effectively. On the human resource front, head teachers grapple with challenges related to skills mismatch among teachers, inadequate skills and capacity in some educators, poor motivational strategies, and issues related to student discipline. Addressing these challenges necessitates targeted training and support for teachers, as well as effective strategies for fostering a positive school environment. Financial constraints are also a significant hurdle, with inadequate funds affecting important aspects of school development, such as ICT infrastructure, educational materials, and overall school progress. The need for sustainable sources of income at the school level and improved financial support from the Ministry of Education is evident.

7. Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Education should prioritize and invest in continuous professional development for head teachers and teachers alike. This should include training in administrative skills, subject specialization, and effective teaching techniques.
2. The Ministry should provide clear administrative guidelines and tools to head teachers to facilitate effective school management. This can help address challenges related to policy, time management, and political interactions.
3. The Ministry should establish programs to enhance the skills and capacity of teachers, especially those handling examination classes or subjects outside their specialization. Regular training and support can improve their effectiveness in the classroom.
4. Schools should develop and implement effective motivational strategies for teachers to boost their morale and job satisfaction. Adequate financial incentives, timely bus fare, and recognition for outstanding performance can help motivate educators.
5. Schools should collaborate with parents and guardians to address issues of student discipline. Clear disciplinary policies and mechanisms should be in place to ensure a conducive learning environment.
6. The Ministry of Education should review its funding mechanisms to ensure that schools receive adequate financial support. This includes addressing issues related to the availability of funds for school development and infrastructure improvement.
7. Investments should be made to improve ICT infrastructure in schools. Access to information and technology is crucial for modern education, and schools should have the necessary resources to provide students with up-to-date information.
8. Encourage greater involvement of parents, guardians, and the community in school affairs. This can help bridge financial gaps and enhance the overall school environment.

8. Suggestions for further study

- The role of parents in enhancing students' academic performance.
- The impact of drug and substance abuse on the discipline of students in public secondary schools.
- The effect of teachers and parents' partnership on the students' academic performance in public secondary schools.

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