

**ENABLING CONDITIONS ENHANCING PERFORMANCE
AMONG HEAD-TEACHERS WITH LIMITED
LEADERSHIP TRAINING IN TANZANIA**

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ABSTRACT

This paper is a result of a pilot study which was conducted in ten government-run primary schools of Dodoma Municipality, Tanzania, between October 2009 and November 2009. The study was aimed at identifying the enabling conditions that help to enhance performance among head-teachers despite their having limited leadership training. Purposive sampling was used to select ten head-teachers and cluster sampling to select government primary schools. Data were obtained through the use of interviews and questionnaires. The study findings confirm that all head-teachers interviewed had limited leadership training in school management and administration but are in charge of primary schools belonging to different categories, ranging from best, medium, to poor performing schools. The study also established that there is more to school leadership than mere possession of academic and professional credentials. Nevertheless, the study recommends that qualifications in school management and leadership should continue being used as a yardstick in the appointments of head-teachers because of the added value and edge such training empowers competent teachers with in enhancing school management and education quality. In cases where competent teachers are appointed without such basic qualifications in-service training must be offered to equip them with requisite school management and leadership skills. Head-teachers, on their part, are advised to take personal initiative to ensure that they have the necessary qualifications to manage primary schools more effectively and efficiently.

KEY WORDS: Head-teachers, Leadership Training, Enabling Conditions, and Government Primary Schools.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The best management practice is a true science based upon certain clearly-defined, rules and principles (Sigh and Chibra, 1992; Galabawa, 2001, Draft, 2006 and Gupta, 2008). Such practice refers to an organised body of knowledge in management that could be learned to help systematise the best way to do things in an organisation (Gupta, 2008). In Tanzania, the Education and Training Policy (ETP, 1995:29) stipulates, “Educational managers at Ward and Primary School levels shall have a Certificate or Diploma in Education, as well as professional training in Educational Management and Administration from a recognised institution”. It is therefore, expected that head-teachers in Tanzania should at the very least possess these minimum qualifications as stipulated by the 1995 ETP of 1995 when they are appointed to the position of headship. In this regard, these head-teachers are expected to apply a scientific approach as stipulated by Taylor in discharging their duties as school heads. However, the reality on the ground might be far-from the truth since the appointed schools heads, as is often the case, may not possess the minimum prerequisites.

Recently a cross-sectional survey conducted in three selected regions of Tanzania—Morogoro, Lindi and Tabora by Nemes (2012)—revealed that of the 77 head-teachers interviewed, only 10 (12%) possessed a certificate in educational management and administration. Also, a needs survey in Tanzania by Galabawa and Ndalichako (2000) also revealed that a substantial proportion of school heads (49%) are charged with the responsibility of heading schools without even having undergone any professional training in educational management. This problem, which also persists in other African countries such as Botswana raises questions pertaining to the criteria employed in appointing teachers to school leadership position. In Botswana, the criteria include possession of a “degree or diploma, as well as three or more years of experience, as a deputy head-teacher or head of department (Ministry of Education, 1994:12, cited in Pheko, 2008:74)”. The Ministry of Education of that country believe that secondary school head-teachers have acquired leadership skills by simply having gone through college or university.

And yet, some of theories of management such as the omnipotent and symbolic theories, as proposed by Robbins and Coulter (2008), treat school leadership as dependent on more than mere academic or paper qualifications and experience on the job. From omnipotent perspective of management, the head-teacher, who is the incumbent in the charge of school activities or the person at the helm, is responsible for ensuring that the objectives of the school are achieved by

working with through others, and yet any failure is still attributable to the head-teacher who must be held accountable. The symbolic view of management, on the other hand, proposes that managers or head-teachers largely have only a limited effect on substitutive organisational outcomes because of the large number of factors outside their control that impinge upon them. These extraneous factors include the economy, customers, governmental policies, and decisions made by previous managers (ibid.). Generally, professional training and experience ought to be complemented by the Psychology of the head-teacher, particularly regarding his or her self-efficacy when it comes to handling leadership responsibilities. Then there is the issue of motivation, which is also imperative.

In Tanzania, the appointment of the majority of primary school head-teachers has been intuitive rather than scientific. These school head teachers are entrusted with roles and responsibilities of managing primary schools despite their having only limited leadership training in school management and administration. On the one hand, their teacher training does not adequately equip them with the requisite school management skills; on the other hand, these new appointees generally lack the necessary school management experiences, particularly when they face first-time appointments without having had an opportunity to serve in an acting position. This study was inspired by the need to establish their coping mechanism that allowed them to succeed despite obvious handicaps in school leadership and management. The second inspiration was to establish the conditions that allow them to succeed despite the challenges they face due to limited leadership training.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To realise the research agenda, the study was guided by the following research objectives:

- i. To find out whether the head teachers possess qualifications of managing primary schools as stipulated in the 1995 ETP;
- ii. To identify the factors or conditions which facilitate the successful performance among head-teachers despite their having limited leadership training and exposure.
- iii. To find out whether there are unaccounted for conditions that positively influence and enhance the performance of head-teachers under the study.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was a pilot study conducted in 10 government or public primary schools based in Dodoma Municipality, Tanzania, between October 2009 and November 2009. Fink (1995) observes that the minimum number in a pilot study should be at least ten. The 10 schools, which took part in the study, were selected by using cluster sampling. Cluster sampling was used in selecting government primary schools from a list of all primary schools found in the District Education Officer (DEO)'s office. The school names were then clustered into three categories of outstanding, average and poor performing schools in the country's Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE) held in 2008. Such clustering helped to ensure representation from all the three categories. Then purposive sampling was used to select the head-teachers because of their strategic placement within these institutions.

Data were collected through the use of interviews and the questionnaire. The interviews were aimed at getting information from head-teachers on whether they possessed the 1995 ETP stipulated academic and professional qualifications. The head-teachers were also asked to fill in the questionnaire that contained standardised items. The questionnaire required them to rate their self-efficacy using a likert scale. The questionnaire contained 12 items to be rated on a likert scale: Strongly Agree= 4, Agree=3, Disagree=2, and Strongly Disagree =1. To elicit more information from the head-teachers, an additional question required them to mention other conditions (not itemised that contributed to their successful handling of their responsibilities as school heads despite their being handicapped in school leadership skills. To ensure validity and reliability in the study findings, the judgment of qualified observer such as senior colleagues in the College of Education at the University of Dodoma was used to cross-check the content validity of the research instruments before they were administered in the field. In addition, the study employed the triangulation of data collection methods to ensure the facts generated with one research tool were double or even triple-checked for their validity, gender. During the study, ethical considerations were also adhered to. Before the data collection process this entailed getting permission from the authorities, including the University of Dodoma and respective local government authorities before reaching the schools under study. During the study, the respondents were briefed on the nature of the study and the voluntary nature of the exercise. Moreover, they were assured that their identity would not be disclosed. Finally, the quantitative data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for Social

Sciences (SPSS) version 16. Qualitative data, on the other hand, was subjected to content analysis. Quantitative data was eventually presented in tabular form to complement the descriptive and narrative presentation of the largely qualitative data.

4. KEY FINDINGS

The study findings are presented and discussed on the basis of the research objectives that guided the study.

4.1 Qualifications of Head-teachers of Primary Schools in Dodoma Municipality

During interviews with the head-teachers, their qualifications were established and the findings have been presented in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Primary Schools Visited During the Study in Dodoma Municipality

Name of School	Gender	Category	Prior teaching Experience Before Appointment (Years)	Years of Heading	Ever served as Deputy Head-teacher	For How Long	Oriental	CEMA *
Mlimwa B	Male	Best	12	2	NO	NO	NO	NO
Mlimwa	Female	Best	32	3	YES	3	NO	NO
Dodoma Mlimani	Female	Best	12	3	YES	10	NO	NO
Ipagala	Female	Medium	20	2	NO	NO	NO	NO
Nkuhungu	Male	Medium	8	2	YES	2	NO	NO
Mlimwa C	Female	Medium	19	2	YES	1	NO	NO
Mkonze	Male	Poor	7	9	YES	2	NO	NO

Mbalawal a	Male	Poor	10	4	YES	7	NO	NO
Ntyuka	Male	Poor	13	5	YES	3	NO	NO
Lugala	Male	Poor	10	7	YES	5	NO	NO

*Certificate in Educational Management and Administration

Source: Field Data (October, 2009 and November, 2009).

Table 4.1 shows that out of the 10 head-teachers interviewed in Dodoma Municipality, four (40%) had been teaching in primary schools for seven to 10 years. The teaching experience for the remaining six (60%) of the head-teachers ranged from 12 to 32 years. The implication is that all of the head-teachers had ample teaching experience of more than 7 seven years in government primary schools. Also, the majority (80%) of the head-teachers have been heading primary schools for between two and five years, remaining 20 percent had headships of more than five year In this regard, none of the respondents were novices in their posts. As such, they were in possession of rich information pertaining to the study.

The table also shows that eight (80%) of the 10 head-teachers had served as deputy-heads before being appointed to the more substantive position of head-teacher. Of these, 62.5 percent had served as deputies for between two and three years, and the remaining 37.5 percent were deputy-heads for five to 10 years. The remaining two (20%) had not served as deputy-heads. Under normal circumstances, one would expect those who had served as deputy heads to have gained experience in leadership skills during their period as under-studies of substantive heads of school. The findings show that all of the head-teachers—that is, both who had served as deputies and those who had not—were Form Four leavers (with the Ordinary Level Secondary School Leaving Certificate) and held a certificate in teaching profession (Grade A). More significantly, none of head-teachers had received any orientation after being appointed as head-teacher. Neither did any of them possess the mandatory Certificate in Education Management and Administration under the 1995 ETP. Also, findings from previous studies such as those of Galabawa and Ndalichako (2000) and Nemes (2012) in Tanzania, Dejaeghere (2009) in Uganda, Arikewuyo (2009) in Nigeria, Pheko (2009) in Botswana and Georgiou and Nicolaidou (2009) in Cyprus support these findings.

Generally, one can make judgment pertaining to the qualifications of head-teachers heading primary schools under the study. In the case of the respondents of this study, none of the head-

teachers interviewed possess the requisite credentials stipulated in the 1995 ETP and yet they have been given the mandate to run the primary schools of different categories ranging from the outstanding, medium and poor performing schools as indicated in Table 4.1. Against this backdrop, several questions remain unanswered, particularly those pertaining to the ability of, for example, unqualified head-teachers managing the best performing primary schools in the country. Are they appointed to these positions because they have enough experience of teaching in primary schools? And can this suffice as an adequate parameter? Another puzzling question has to do with those appointed to head outstanding primary school without even passing through apprenticeship as deputy-heads? For those who had significant experience as deputy-heads, one can argue that they, at least managed to get exposure to the position of institutional leadership and the rudiments of management through hands-on experience. Finally, even medium and poor performing primary school also need capable hands as heads since their leadership skills can help to handle physical, financial and human resources and maintain cordial school community relationship. In fact, these schools need even more capable hands for them to be transformed into better performing primary schools. Despite these shortcomings, it is evident that these head-teachers are still able to hold the fort and head functional schools. As such, the study interrogated further to find out whether there mitigating conditions that allow the head-teachers to succeed despite their obvious credential handicaps. This part of the study was investigated under objective number two.

4.2 Enabling Conditions that Promote Successful Administrative Performance Among Head-teachers with Limited Leadership Training and Exposure

In this regard, the researcher strived to generate responses from head-teachers to the question: How were the head-teachers managing to cope with school headship despite not having the basic qualifications stipulated by the 1995 ETP? This question also sought to determine whether there were mitigating conditions that facilitated the management of the schools they were heading despite having limited or no prior leadership training. A standardised questionnaire was used to obtain data and the head-teachers' responses have been presented in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2: Rankings of Mitigating Conditions Aiding Successful School Management

S/N	Item	Mean	Rank	Decision
1	Working with very co-operative teachers and students	3.7	1	A
2	Having previous experience of succeeding in a similar task	3.6	2	A

3	Feeling free and encouraged to delegate duties to relevant staff	3.6	2	A
4	Working in a very supportive community	3.6	2	A
5	Being surrounded by influential parents and elders that are interested in seeing me succeed	3.5	3	A
6	Availability of dependable human resources for the challenges of my roles	3.5	3	A
7	Having friends that are supportive of my succeeding in the challenges of my headship	3.4	4	A
8	Having a strong beliefs that I will succeed in the challenge of heading a school	3.3	5	A
9	Believing that although not well qualified I still have what it take to succeed in my job	3.0	6	A
10	Knowing my roles very well	2.8	7	A
11	Having the physical resources required for success	2.4	8	D
12	Working with well-motivated and highly-qualified teachers	2.3	9	D

KEY A= Agree with mean score ranges between 3.79 -2.50

D= Disagree with mean score ranges between 2.49 – 1.50

Table 4.2 shows that the majority of head-teachers generally agreed that were mitigating conditions that facilitated their effective execution of their duties as school heads. The enabling conditions they mentioned that contributed to their success include “working with very cooperative teachers and students”, “having previous experience of succeeding in a similar task”, “feeling free and encouraged to delegate duties to relevant staff”, “working in a very supportive community”, “ being surrounded by influential parents and elders that are interested in seeing me succeed”, availability of dependable human resources for the challenges of my roles”, “ having friends who are supportive of my succeeding in the challenges of my headship”, “ having a strong beliefs that I will succeed in the challenge of heading a school”, “ believing that although not well-qualified I still have what it takes to succeed in my job”, and “knowing my roles very well”. All these parameters received plaudits from the respondents. These findings are in line with the Self-efficacy Theory, as articulated by Bandura (1994), which affirms that past experience of success in a challenging task is the most potent source in boosting self-confidence

and performance. Besides, according to Bandura (1994), any encouraging words from people around the performer also help to build, fertilise and strengthen one's sense of self-efficacy.

On the hand, the study findings do not agree with those by Nicolaidou and Georgiou (2009) who found their participants stated that their experience as deputy head-teachers was not enough to equip them with the necessary qualifications and experience to make them excel as substantive head-teachers. In consequence, the scholars strongly argued for the provision of relevant preparations for head-teachers being appointed to those positions. As one of the interviewees noted during that study:

You cannot solve the problems of today and you cannot shape the future with practices from the past... especially since as a deputy you cannot actively involved with management issues as most of our head teachers are over-controlling... and we often find ourselves copying behaviours observed as the safety way to act... (Head-teacher 5 in Nicolaidou and Georgiou, 2009: 170).

Evidently, the results of the present study present a different picture, whereby the respondents did actually benefit from their prior experience. Moreover, the findings can be said to be in line with McCllands Needs Theory, which emphasises the need for affiliation, and which proposes that one does well when operating in the context in which one is accepted and supported by those with whom one works. This means that some of the head-teachers interviewed were lucky to work in schools with co-operative and collegial teachers, students and community. Also, they were surrounded by influential and supportive parents and elders interested in seeing them succeed. As a result, the head-teachers were able to do well despite having only limited leadership and school management training. In other words, the limitation of such head-teachers tends to be mitigated by the creative and supportive contributions of the experienced teachers among their teaching staff.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the findings of the present study indicate that the head-teachers gave negative rating to “having availability of physical resources for success” and “working with well-motivated and highly qualified teachers”. They did not believe that these two factors were among conditions that facilitated their successful performance of their roles in schools. This finding is reflective of a problem that is endemic and chronic in most of the public primary school in Tanzania. Indeed, the Joint Review of the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) found most of the public schools visited did not have reading materials let alone adequate text books for the sheer large numbers of pupils they had to cater for.

On the basis of these findings, the PEDP review team urged schools to develop a reading culture among pupils and teachers, which in turn raises a question: how can they do so without ample resources? The team also recommends that all schools should have libraries with books that are of interest to pupils and the community at large (URT, 2004). As the capitation grants to the schools hardly meet the needs of these schools, one wonders where the additional resources are going to come from to equip these schools appropriately. Neither is this problem prevalent only in Tanzania because many developing countries, especially rural schools, have un conducive environments that hamper the flourishing of effective teaching and learning. More often than not, there are shortages of basic physical facilities (classrooms, desks, chairs and teacher's houses), supplies (textbooks and other teaching and learning materials) and other necessary equipments (Mosha, 2006). These schools also generally face a critical shortage of well-qualified teachers. Under these circumstances, the teachers were right to preclude "having availability of physical resources for success" and "working with well-motivated and highly qualified teachers" since they were required to be innovative to cover these obvious operation gaps as well.

Also, O-Saki and Agu (2002), who examined the interaction of children during school instruction and extra-activities in twenty schools from four districts of Musoma, Kisarawe, and Kinondoni (on Tanzania Mainland) and Zanzibar (on the archipelago), found that the children were uncomfortable with the persistent lack of basic facilities. The problems they highlighted were insufficient number of toilets, the absence of doors in the toilets and unsanitary toilets. There were also cases of severe overcrowding and insufficient number of desks and children had to squat on the floor. There were also double-session shifts, which limited the quality learning time for lessons. As schools did not have fencing, outsiders and intruders were able to vandalise the schools and threaten the well-being of the school-children. Finally, the schools lacked books, other teaching and learning materials, games and recreational facilities. These were similar problems the head-teachers under study largely hard to contend with.

In terms of teacher motivation in Tanzania, it is clearly known that teachers experience irregular salary payments, poor remunerations, lack of proper housing, inadequate teaching facilities, and they also complain about the low status accorded to them as professionals as well as the limited opportunities for professional development (URT, 1995). Under these circumstances, it is not surprisingly that the head-teachers hardly rank "working with well-motivated and highly qualified teachers".

4.3 Other Conditions Behind Headship Success according to Head-teachers

Further exploring the basis of the success of the head-teachers with limited exposure or training in school management and leadership, the respondents were asked to mention other conditions they believed positively influenced and enhanced their performance as heads of school. Data relating to these dimensions were obtained through the use of a questionnaire. The results obtained have been summarised in Table 4.3:

Table 4.3: Other Conditions for Management Success

Condition	Frequency	Percent
Adherence rules and regulations	3	30
Using extra-time	2	20
Commitment to duty	2	20
Confidence	2	20
Seeking advice from experienced teachers	1	10
Total	10	100

Source: Field Data (2010)

Table 4.3 shows that the majority of the head-teachers explained the bases of their success as “adherence to rules and regulations”, “working extra time”, “commitment to duty” and “self-confidence”. These responses indicate that succeeding as a school head requires more than mere academic or paper qualifications. After all, public primary schools in Tanzania do not only lack resources, tend to be poorly-funded and do not always get sufficient numbers of qualified teachers. These gruelling circumstances demand from head-teachers than one would expect from those running normal schools.

From these findings, we also learn that adhering to rules and regulations is one of the secrets to effective headship. As a matter of fact, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC)’s (1998) *Manual for Primary Schools in Tanzania* outline a list of key documents essential in supporting the head-teachers perform their day-to-day roles. These documents include the ETP of 1995, Education Act No. 25 of 1978 as amended in 1995, the Teacher’s Service Act No 1 of 1989, which establishes Teachers’ Service Commission, the Teacher Service Commission Regulations of 1990, and the National Education Expulsion and Exclusion of Pupils from School Regulations of 1979. Others are the National Education Corporal Punishment Regulations of 1979,

Government circulars, School rules and regulations, Government standing orders, regulations governing the conduct of National Examinations, the National Culture Policy 1997, Tanzania Government Financial and store orders regulations, and Local Government staff regulation. This litany of guidelines, rules and regulations in themselves would not amount to much without the head-teacher actually making use of them, hence the importance of being diligent to ensure that they integrate these items in their work ethic.

The MoEC manual further directs head-teachers that these documents will help them make proper and rational decisions regarding pupil discipline, teacher-pupils relationships, teacher-teacher relationships, teachers' conduct, enrolments and attendances, corporal punishment, school-community relationship, formation of school committees and general teachers' welfare. Finally, the manual indicates where the head-teachers can get hold of these valuable documents, including the District Education Offices, District and Zonal Chief Inspector of School Offices, Regional Education Offices, Ministry of Education and Culture—Headquarters of the Government Publishing Shop, Department of Civil Service, President's Office-Dar es Salaam, bookshops in the regions and district, Teacher Resources Centres, District Commissioner's office, Libraries, Courts of Law, and Teacher Training colleges. In reality, however, these documents are not as accessible as they should be even for school-heads.

The head-teachers also had to work beyond the official working hours for no additional pay or bonus to ensure they did not have any backlog of key tasks. Similarly, Wilson (2009) in Scotland confirmed that the complexity of the role of head-teacher was behind the long hours beyond the normal call for duty. Indeed, most of the head-teachers in that study complained about the shortage of time and the growth in paper work; they needed to record and report activities to teachers, pupils, parents, school committees and the community at large. Locally, Venge's (2010) study on the head-teachers' perception of their roles and academic challenges under the PEDP implementation in Mkuranga District, Tanzania, established that PEDP has increased roles of head-teachers. Head-teachers have to deal with finances, act as school bursars, administer and control all construction activities within their schools as well. They also have to collaborate with the school committees on expenditure planning and purchasing of books and other teaching and learning materials. Furthermore, they also have to prepare reports on the expenditure for capitation grants from the government and other funds aimed at developing the schools.

Considering how daunting managing public primary schools in Tanzania has become, it is not surprising that the head-teachers in this study identified commitment as one of the traits that helped to make them succeed in their roles and responsibilities. Commitment is related to dedication to first the organisation, second to the profession and third to the students (Ibrahim et al, 2012). Commitment to the organisation creates a sense of community, affiliation, and personal caring among adults within the schools and facilitates integration between the personal life and work life (Louis, 1998 as cited in Ibrahim et al 2012:59).

The study findings also show that self-confidence is another ingredient vital in the successful execution of headship duties in the daunting public primary schools in Tanzania. Such self-confidence is also instrumental in gaining the confidence of others. Oplatka and Tamir (2009) observed during interviews with 25 Israeli female deputy heads, who explicitly did not aspire to headship, that being confident is one of kind of self-perception since school-heads must be assertive and have high self-confidence. Indeed, the rationale is that without being sure the people one leads will notice that and can undermine that person's leadership.

Confidence can be acquired through schooling. In Scotland, for example, the headship programme that prepares budding teachers for headships helps develop the professional identity of aspiring head-teachers, broaden their outlook and cultivated their confidence and self-belief (Cowie and Crawford, 2008). Historically in the Tanzania, it appears there was a better programme for those earmarked for headship in 1965. Then, a six-week course for similarly intuitively appointed primary school heads was prepared by the Ministry of Education. After undergoing this training, the beneficiaries were officially proclaimed "Headmasters" instead of "Head-teachers" and were promoted to the rank of Educational Officer Grade 111. As trained heads of school, they took up appointments in those new capacities in January 1966, the subsequent year. The promotion was considered better, and new salary an incentive in itself. They were paid Tsh 900 a month, when a dollar was only Tsh 7. More importantly, the heads were equipped with knowledge and the confidence they needed to succeed (Hiza, 2009).

5. CONCLUSION

On the basis of these findings, the following lessons can be learnt. First, the head-teachers under the study confirm that, apart from academic qualifications stipulated in the ETP of 1995, there conditions that enabled them to perform their roles despite their limited prior school leadership and management training. The enabling conditions include "working with co-operative teachers,

students, and supportive community”, “having previous experience of succeeding in a similar task”, “feeling free to delegate duties to relevant staff”, being “surrounded by influential parents and elders that are interested in seeing head-teachers succeed” and “availability of dependable human resources for the challenges of their roles”. Furthermore, head-teachers identified adherence to rules and regulations, putting in extra hours, commitment, confidence, and seeking advice from more experienced teachers as other factors that helped them to succeed in their headship duties and responsibilities. Considering the lack of enabling physical resources coupled with the difficult work environments in the Tanzania primary schools, the head-teachers need more than the credentials stipulated in the ETP of 1995 for them to succeed. These findings prompt, the study to recommend that the education authorities in Tanzania should retain the requirement that head-teachers acquire qualifications in school management and leadership; however, where this is not possible, on appointment as school-heads the teachers should benefit from in-service training arrangements to ensure that the head-teachers have the tools that would further augment the individual qualities and experience at their disposal. Head-teachers in particular are advised to take personal initiative to ensure that they qualify to manage primary schools, particularly when institutional support is lacking.

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