

Factors affecting teaching profession in tanzania

Profession



Currently, issues related to teaching profession have become a topic of debate. This paper describes teaching as a profession, rationale for teaching and factors affecting teaching profession in Tanzania. This paper goes further to deliberate on how teaching may be transformed into a strong and powerful profession in Tanzania. Background to the Study Occupational status depends on the public valuing of the competence, role and overall contribution of a particular occupation to individual and societal welfare.

Regardless of development status, the teaching force in most countries has never enjoyed full professional status. However, the status of teachers as a developing-profession is more evident in developing countries like Tanzania. If it has to be traced back during colonial era and early years of independence the status of teaching professions was highly respected and valued, as during those times teachers were given fully respect and they were recognized by the societies, never the less, the introduction of Musoma resolution in 1974 and Arusha declaration in 1967 strengthened the status of teaching profession.

But soon after the introduction of universal primary education (UPE) in 1977 the status of teaching profession started to decline and seems to be of very low status as most people think of it as the work of those who failed or they have no alternative of life but to be rescued by the teaching profession. Teaching has been defined by Wells, G. (1982) as cluster of activities that are noted about teachers such as explaining, deducing, questioning, motivating, taking attendance, keeping record of works, students' progress and students' background information. Profession refers to enterprises or endeavor founded up on specialized educational training, the purpose of

which is to supply services to others or it is an occupation that requires extensive education or training (Babyegeya and Mushi, 2009) in (Ndibalema, P 2012). Teachers are more than workers. They are also members of a profession. Their occupation renders definite and essential services to society. As a profession, however, teaching has had a long and difficult history. Its social and cultural functions have never been critically challenged, but nevertheless the public has not adequately supported teaching, Compared with other learned professions such as medicine, law, engineering, and architecture teaching ranks rather low.

Goodson (2003) noted that Occupations that have attained professional status share the following characteristics: a high level of education and training based on a unique and specialized body of knowledge, a strong ideal of public service with an enforced professional code of conduct and high levels of respect from the public at large, registration and regulation by the profession itself, trusted to act in the clients' best interests within a framework of accountability, a supportive working environment, similar levels of compensation as other professions.

As noted above, a profession requires a lengthy period of academic and practical training. Training and certification are essential parts of a profession. Period long training is needed to develop specialists and technicians in any profession. There must be some specification of the nature of the training through state regulations. Teaching certainly fulfils this criterion, but the teacher's period of training is not as long as that required for doctors and lawyers. The code of ethics indicates how members of the profession should behave.

Professionalization occurs when enforcement is possible and vigorous (Ankomah, 2005). Tanzanian teachers have an ethical code of conduct. There exist however, no licensed body to enforce the codes. Rationale for Teaching Profession By its very nature, teaching possesses two very appealing traits. First, it deals with the young, with those whose minds and characters are forming. It is a privilege to be entrusted with the task of facilitating the growth and development of the younger generation. Second, teaching provides opportunities for intellectual development.

It brings those who pursue it into intimate contact with books, experiments, and ideas. Education and Training In Tanzania teaching profession ranges from degree level which takes three years, diploma level which takes two years and certificate level which takes two years, but due to country policy and demand of teachers those years of training do vary. For example in 2005/6 there was crash program of three months where form six leavers were trained to be teachers in secondary schools, so this situation seems to jeopardize the teaching profession.

Consequently, as an occupational group, teachers do not have the equivalent level of education and training nor the cohesiveness as well established professions, such as medical doctors, engineers and lawyers, which have uniformly high academic entry qualifications (Ingvarson, 1998). Self-Regulation The established professions enjoy a high degree of self-regulation and are successful in maintaining high barriers to entry in terms of qualification requirements and registration.

Teachers, on the other hand, tend to have weak, state-dominated professional organizations with factions (Wells, 1982). Public Service belief <https://assignbuster.com/factors-affecting-teaching-profession-in-tanzania/>

and Professional Conduct Teaching has become employment of the last source of help among university graduates and secondary school leavers in many countries. Consequently, teachers often lack a strong, long-term commitment to teaching as a vocation. On a comparative note, around one-half of (Form 4 and 6) secondary school leavers in Tanzania who finished school in 1990 were employed as teachers in 2001.

Thus, in the absence of alternative employment opportunities, becoming a school teacher is the main avenue for social and economic advancement for Tanzanian graduates (Ibid). The Work Environment and Remuneration Teachers rarely enjoy the same work environment as other professions. The size of the teaching force coupled with lower educational qualifications means that teachers are also paid considerably less than the mainstream professions. For example in Tanzania teachers' live in poor houses and other lacks even those poor houses.

And they also lack teaching facilities like books, teaching aids and well equipped classrooms (Goodson, 2003). The Social Class and Academic Background of Entrants to the Profession The standing of a profession is to some extent affected by the social class background of its recruits; the higher the social strata from which recruits generally come, the higher the status of the profession. And, of course, the higher the status of a profession, the more it will attract recruits from the higher social strata (Hoyle, 1969).

Also the teaching profession in Tanzania is affected, since those who are recruited into the education field of study are considered to have low grades that look education as the last option (Ingvarson, 1998). Commitment to the Profession Another problem that is affecting teaching as a profession is how

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committed are the teachers to the profession. There is no doubt that membership of the major professions implies a life commitment to the task. In the case of teaching, no such a life commitment to the task of teaching is apparent as in other professions.

There are a number of factors that contribute to this state of affairs. One of these factors is the general notion of teaching as a second Choice profession with many of the teachers only committing themselves to it at a late stage when they know that they cannot change their profession. Majority of the teachers at the initial stage of their teaching career did not expect to stay in teaching for more than a few years. They consider it as a stepping stone to other occupations. This invariably affects their commitment to the profession (Hargreaves, 2001). Salary Although the economic status of the teacher has been steadily improving, teachers do not in general receive salaries comparable to those received within the major professions. As a result commitment to the growth of the profession is affected (Ibid). Pupil-Teacher Ratios The weak correlation between school enrolments and the numbers of teachers employed in each school is the most obvious indicator of poor deployment. Variations in pupil-teacher ratios between schools are typically very large in most countries.

For example, in Tanzania the mid-late 1990s, they ranged from 50 to 70 pupils to 1 teacher. Recently, however improvements are being made to balance pupil-teacher ratio to 30-45 pupils to 1 teacher (Ankomah, 2005). After seeing what affect the teaching profession there are various measures which can be taken into consideration so as to restore and revive the status of teaching profession in Tanzania, some of them are elaborated hereunder.

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Need for Commitment to the Profession. Commitments bear no fruit until they are substantiated by action.

Once they have affirmed their commitments, teachers must devote their time and energies to their professional activities. Teachers should actively join in curricular development, instructional design, and technical planning, as well as policy making. They should have certain organized ways in which they can participate in the formation of the controlling aims, methods, and materials of the school system of which they are a part. Therefore, teachers' organizations have a very important role to play in the advancement of the teaching profession. Innovative pathways in recruitment and continual innovation in teacher preparation programmes are required. Teacher preparations programmes need to broaden their entry requirements to diversify the teaching corps and better represent diverse student populations. Teacher preparation programmes require innovative recruitment pathways that allow entry for non-traditional candidates. Teacher preparation programmes require continual innovation to respond to changing needs. Teacher education is enhanced by comprehensive teacher induction that fosters lifelong learning.

Induction is most effective when seen as a comprehensive system beyond just support and assistance for beginning teachers. Effective professional development strategies seek the active involvement of teachers and are largely school-based, developmental in nature and ongoing. Ankomah, Y. A. (2005 November).