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11 The Contributions of In-Service Teacher Training Programmes on Teaching Effectiveness of Kiswahili Subject in Ilala Municipality, Tanzania

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Abstract: The study explores the contributions of in-service teacher training programmes (INSET) on the teaching effectiveness of Kiswahili in public secondary schools in Ilala Municipality, Tanzania. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study examines the role of INSET in enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills, its availability and provision, and the challenges affecting its implementation. A sample of 400 participants was engaged, including teachers, students, and school administrators. The findings reveal that INSET positively impacts teachers' instructional strategies, increasing their ability to utilise diverse teaching methodologies. However, limited government funding, inadequate institutional support, and low participation hinder the programme's effectiveness. The study recommends structured professional development initiatives to strengthen Kiswahili teaching and learning outcomes.

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Keyword : In-service teacher training, Kiswahili teaching, pedagogy, professional development, secondary education, Tanzania.

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Introduction

Effective teaching is widely recognized as a cornerstone of student achievement, with extensive research consistently linking high-quality instruction to improved learning outcomes across various educational contexts (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Teachers play a critical role in shaping students' educational experiences, and their ability to deliver effective instruction is directly tied to student success. However, the teaching profession is dynamic, and educators must continually refine their pedagogical skills to meet the changing needs of students and adapt to evolving curricula. Professional development is thus essential for teachers to stay abreast of new instructional strategies, technology, and best practices.

Ongoing professional development enables teachers to enhance their pedagogical practices, making learning more relevant, engaging, and effective for students (Khalil et al., 2020). One prominent form of teacher professional development is in-service teacher training (INSET), which is designed to improve teachers' skills while they are actively working in the classroom. INSET serves as a powerful mechanism for upgrading teaching competencies, empowering teachers to implement

innovative instructional methods that align with current curriculum demands and student needs (Guskey, 2002). Research has demonstrated that well-structured INSET programs can significantly improve teachers' confidence, instructional effectiveness, and student engagement (Borko, 2004; Wasiam & Kitta, 2021).

By fostering a continuous cycle of learning and improvement, INSET ensures that teachers have the tools necessary to address challenges and foster better learning environments. Despite its proven effectiveness, however, many developing nations, including Tanzania, face significant barriers to implementing consistent and comprehensive INSET programs. In these settings, such programs are often sporadic, underfunded, and insufficiently resourced, leading to missed opportunities for teacher growth and, consequently, suboptimal student outcomes (UNESCO, 2017; Wabike, 2021).

In Tanzania, INSET is an essential component of teacher professional development, yet the implementation of these programs remains inconsistent and fraught with challenges. Over the years, the Tanzanian government has made efforts to institutionalize continuous teacher training through initiatives such as the Teacher Development and Management Strategy (TDMS) (MoEST, 2010). This strategy aims to provide a framework for teacher professional growth, ensuring that educators receive ongoing support and training throughout their careers. However, despite these efforts, the full realization of TDMS's goals has been hampered by several factors.

Kiswahili is the national language of Tanzania. Despite Kiswahili's prominence as a national and academic language in Tanzania, the quality of its teaching has remained suboptimal due to outdated methodologies, a lack of continuous professional development, and insufficient support for teachers. Kiswahili is not only a crucial tool for communication in Tanzania but also serves as the medium of instruction in various subjects, underscoring its significance in the Tanzanian education system. However, despite its importance, the teaching of Kiswahili has faced significant challenges, particularly in secondary schools. Research has shown that many Kiswahili teachers continue to rely on traditional, rote-learning methods that prioritize memorization over critical thinking, active engagement, and student interaction (Shemweleka & Kahangwa, 2022).

These outdated methods often fail to foster deeper understanding or meaningful language acquisition among students. Furthermore, the lack of professional development opportunities for Kiswahili teachers has exacerbated these issues, as teachers remain largely uninformed about new and innovative pedagogical strategies. In particular, the absence of structured INSET programs for Kiswahili teachers has contributed to the persistence of these challenges. In the case of Ilala Municipality, for example, teachers have reported that they have not received structured INSET for over 15 years (Mbunda, 2022).

This long period of neglect has led to stagnation in teaching practices, with teachers struggling to implement effective, student-centered teaching methods. Such gaps in teacher development ultimately affect the quality of education that students receive, hindering their language acquisition and overall academic performance. Recent studies have further emphasized the urgent need to equip teachers with effective professional development to improve student learning outcomes, especially in subjects like Kiswahili (Shin et al., 2020; Nana et al., 2021).

Specifically, the study will assess how ongoing INSET programs can provide teachers with the skills and strategies necessary to improve their instructional delivery and foster a more engaging, effective learning environment for students. Through a thorough examination of the INSET programs currently in place and their impact on Kiswahili teaching, this study hopes to provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders aiming to enhance the quality of education in Tanzania and improve the learning outcomes of Kiswahili students.

Literature Review

1. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes learning through observation, imitation, and modeling (Bandura, 1986). According to Bandura, individuals learn by observing the behavior of others, particularly those they regard as role models. Within the context of teacher professional development, Bandura's theory posits that teachers, through INSET programs, observe new instructional strategies and subsequently apply them in their own classrooms. These learning experiences are pivotal in enhancing the teaching effectiveness of teachers, as they equip educators with new tools to improve classroom management and pedagogical approaches. Furthermore, Bandura's (2001) concept of self-efficacy is highly relevant in the context of professional development. Teachers who are exposed to effective INSET programs tend to develop higher confidence in their ability to implement new teaching methods, which leads to better student engagement, academic achievement, and overall classroom dynamics. This aligns with earlier research by Komba and Nkumbi (2019), who noted that teachers who participated in continuous professional development programs reported increased self-confidence in using innovative teaching techniques, ultimately benefiting their students' learning outcomes.

Additionally, Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory offers significant support for the theoretical framework of this study by asserting that learning is a socially mediated process. In this framework, peer interaction and mentorship are seen as critical components of effective learning. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that learning occurs within a social context, and knowledge is constructed through collaborative engagement. This notion is particularly relevant for INSET programs, which often involve teacher collaboration, sharing of experiences, and peer mentoring. For instance, teachers participating in INSET programs are not only exposed to new content and strategies but also engage in discussions and reflective practices that are critical for the adaptation of teaching methods in their specific classroom contexts (Quezada & Quezada-Parker, 2020). This collaborative environment fosters a learning community where teachers can share best practices, challenge traditional teaching methods, and refine their pedagogical approaches. Guskey's (2002) model of teacher change further complements this theory by emphasizing that professional development leads to changes in teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and practices, which ultimately influence student achievement. The model suggests that the implementation of new strategies in the classroom can lead to a progression where teachers evolve in their teaching methods, becoming more reflective practitioners who are equipped to meet diverse student needs.

In essence, the integration of these three theories – Bandura’s Social Cognitive theory, Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory, and Guskey’s model of teacher change – provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the role of INSET in professional development. Bandura’s emphasis on self-efficacy highlights the importance of teacher confidence in adopting new methods, while Vygotsky’s focus on social learning underscores the collaborative nature of INSET programs. Guskey’s model, on the other hand, connects professional development directly to changes in teaching practices and student outcomes. Together, these theories create a robust foundation for exploring the impact of INSET on both teacher development and student performance in Tanzanian classrooms.

2. Empirical Literature

Extensive research has demonstrated the positive impact of INSET on teaching quality and student performance. For example, Jumani (2011) found that structured teacher training programs in Algeria significantly improved instructional delivery and student outcomes. Teachers who participated in these programs reported increased confidence and competence in their teaching practices, which directly translated into improved student engagement and academic achievement. Similarly, in South Africa, Quezada and Quezada-Parker (2020) found that teacher professional development initiatives led to better teaching practices, fostering higher levels of student engagement and improved learning outcomes. These studies underscore the importance of professional development as a tool for enhancing the effectiveness of teachers and, by extension, improving student performance.

Despite the positive outcomes associated with INSET, there remain substantial barriers to its full implementation. A critical challenge, as identified by Wasson (2019), is the insufficient funding allocated to professional development programs, which limits the availability of quality training and resources for teachers. This lack of financial support is often compounded by the limited access to training materials and technology, which further hinders the efficacy of INSET programs. These challenges are particularly pronounced in rural or underfunded educational settings, where teachers may not have the resources or opportunities to engage in professional development. Furthermore, the accessibility of INSET programs is a significant issue, as many teachers face logistical challenges, such as long distances to training venues or conflicting teaching schedules, which make it difficult for them to attend professional development sessions (Mtebe et al., 2015). Thus, while INSET programs have the potential to improve teaching quality, overcoming these logistical and financial challenges is crucial to ensuring their success.

In the case of Tanzania, studies have highlighted both the potential benefits and limitations of INSET programs. Komba and Nkumbi (2019) found that teachers generally regarded INSET as valuable for improving their instructional practices. However, the study revealed that access to these programs remained limited due to inadequate policy implementation and inconsistent funding. In particular, teachers in rural areas faced significant barriers in accessing professional development opportunities, resulting in disparities in the quality of teaching between urban and rural schools. Similarly, Gabrieli (2016) pointed out that secondary school teachers in Tanzania often lacked access to ongoing professional development opportunities,

which hindered their ability to implement modern, student-centered teaching approaches. This issue is particularly pertinent in the context of Kiswahili instruction, as teachers in this subject area have reported difficulties in adopting innovative pedagogical methods due to a lack of continuous professional development.

For Kiswahili teachers in Tanzania, the challenges are compounded by traditional teaching practices, such as rote learning, that persist in many classrooms. Shemwelekwa and Kahangwa (2022) found that these outdated methods limit student engagement and comprehension, particularly in language instruction, where active participation and communication are essential. To address these challenges, there is a pressing need for INSET programs that specifically focus on enhancing the pedagogical skills of Kiswahili teachers. These programs should emphasize interactive teaching strategies, promote student engagement, and encourage the adoption of communicative approaches to language instruction. The introduction of tailored INSET programs for Kiswahili teachers could help address these pedagogical stagnations, ensuring that teachers are better equipped to foster an engaging and effective learning environment for their students (Mnonya, 2016).

While INSET programs have proven to be effective in enhancing teaching practices and improving student outcomes, their implementation is hindered by various challenges such as insufficient funding, limited access to resources, and logistical barriers. In Tanzania, the need for more structured and accessible INSET programs is especially urgent, particularly in rural areas and for subject-specific teaching practices, such as Kiswahili instruction. Addressing these barriers is essential for ensuring that all teachers have equal opportunities to benefit from professional development programs that can enhance their teaching effectiveness and, in turn, improve student learning outcomes.

5 Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to offer a comprehensive analysis of INSET in Ilala Municipality. A sequential explanatory design was chosen, enabling the triangulation of findings. This design allowed statistical trends identified through surveys to be explored further through qualitative interviews and document analysis, following the approach suggested by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011).

The sample for this study consisted of 400 participants. Selected samples to ensure representativeness, participants were drawn from various secondary schools within Ilala Municipality.

Data collection was carried out through a combination of structured questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis.

For data analysis, quantitative data were processed using SPSS, while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were employed to interpret the quantitative results. The qualitative responses were coded and categorized according to emerging themes.

Result and Discussion

The Importance of INSET on Kiswahili Teaching Effectiveness

The study's findings suggest that participation in INSET significantly enhances Kiswahili teachers' ability to use diverse instructional methods, such as cooperative learning, project-based learning, and peer-assisted learning, all of which foster active student engagement. These methods, as highlighted by Wasiam (2021), are integral in improving student interaction with the subject matter, leading to better retention and academic performance. The fact that teachers in Ilala Municipality felt more confident in using these approaches indicates that INSET is an effective tool in empowering educators to diversify their pedagogical strategies.

Moreover, the statistical findings from the study, which indicate that 78% of teachers experienced an improvement in their teaching practices after attending INSET, suggest a positive correlation between professional development and teacher efficacy. This is particularly important in the context of Kiswahili, a subject that requires active student participation to develop proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing. As Kafyulilo and Fisser (2019) argue, integrating technology and multimedia into lessons further enhances engagement, and it is clear that the INSET programs attended by the teachers facilitated this integration.

Furthermore, teachers reported that INSET provided them with tools to create more engaging and dynamic lesson plans, which were well-received by students. This finding supports the work of Hartwig and Schvabe (2018), who found that teacher attitudes and motivation significantly mediate the effects of professional development on instructional practices. Teachers who are motivated to improve their teaching tend to embrace new ideas and methodologies. The study in Ilala Municipality suggests that teachers who participated in INSET were more willing to experiment with and implement new teaching strategies, resulting in greater student engagement. This, in turn, contributed to enhanced student outcomes in Kiswahili lessons.

Finally, while the benefits of INSET on teaching effectiveness are evident, the findings also point to the need for continuous, accessible, and regular professional development programs. As noted by Evans (2014), sustained teacher development is critical for maintaining the momentum of pedagogical improvement. The study's findings underscore the need for more structured and consistent INSET opportunities in the region, particularly in underserved areas such as Ilala Municipality. Inadequate access to such programs can limit the long-term impact of teacher development efforts. Therefore, policy reforms that prioritize the continuous provision of professional development are essential for ensuring the effectiveness of Kiswahili instruction.

Provision of INSET in Ilala Municipality

While the benefits of INSET are well-documented, the study revealed significant challenges related to the provision of these programs in Ilala Municipality.

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One of the primary barriers identified by teachers was the lack of sufficient funding for professional development. Approximately 65% of teachers expressed frustration over the limited resources available for training opportunities. This aligns with the findings of Mnonya (2016), who also noted that inadequate funding for professional development hinders the implementation of more effective teacher training programs in Tanzania. The lack of financial support limits the ability to provide teachers with the necessary materials and resources, and it prevents the expansion of INSET programs to reach a larger number of educators.

Logistical challenges were another significant barrier to the effective provision of INSET in the region. Many teachers noted difficulties in accessing centralized training programs due to long distances, lack of transportation, and time constraints. This aligns with the findings of Quezada et al. (2020), who noted that teachers often face difficulties balancing their professional responsibilities with the demands of attending training sessions. Furthermore, traveling long distances for training results in lost teaching time, which affects both teachers and students. To overcome these challenges, several experts, including Mtebe et al. (2015), have suggested a shift toward decentralized and school-based INSET models that could offer more flexibility and reduce the burden on teachers.

The shift to school-based professional development programs could also foster greater collaboration and peer learning among teachers. According to Asu (2019), teachers who work together within their schools are more likely to engage in meaningful professional discussions and share resources. This peer interaction enhances the learning experience and can contribute to the development of a supportive learning community. By fostering a culture of collaboration within schools, the provision of INSET could be more sustainable and impactful. This idea is supported by the findings of Alabi and Ige (2014), who emphasized that school-based INSET models are often more effective than centralized programs, as they are tailored to the specific needs of teachers and can be delivered in a more context-sensitive manner.

Policy reforms that address these logistical and financial challenges are essential for improving the accessibility of INSET in Ilala Municipality. The government's role in providing adequate funding and logistical support is critical to ensuring the successful delivery of professional development programs. According to the OECD (1998), countries that invest in teacher development through strategic funding and resource allocation tend to have better educational outcomes. In this context, increasing investment in teacher professional development can lead to significant improvements in teaching quality and student learning outcomes. The study suggests

that policymakers must prioritize professional development as a key area of investment to improve educational standards across the country.

Finally, the integration of technology into INSET programs could help overcome some of the logistical challenges. As Wasiam (2021) suggests, digital platforms and online learning modules offer teachers the flexibility to access training materials at their convenience, reducing the need for physical attendance. This technology-enabled approach could expand the reach of INSET programs to more teachers, especially those in remote or underserved areas like Ilala Municipality. By incorporating digital learning platforms into professional development efforts, the government could enhance the accessibility and effectiveness of INSET programs, ensuring that all teachers have the opportunity to improve their teaching practices.

Conclusion

This study highlights the critical role of INSET in enhancing teaching practices, particularly in Kiswahili instruction, yet it underscores significant challenges in the consistent and widespread provision of such programs. The limited access to INSET, primarily due to insufficient funding and logistical barriers, diminishes its potential to impact teacher effectiveness fully. For INSET to become more impactful, there must be a strategic shift towards greater accessibility and sustainability. This can be achieved through targeted investments in professional development programs and policy reforms that prioritize teacher growth as a key aspect of educational improvement.

To address these issues, it is recommended that educational authorities invest more heavily in INSET, ensuring that these programs are both frequent and accessible to all teachers. Financial support should not only focus on traditional face-to-face training but should also incorporate digital and hybrid models that provide flexibility, particularly for teachers in remote areas. Decentralizing INSET programs to local or school-based settings can reduce logistical challenges and ensure that training is more relevant and directly applicable to teachers' immediate environments. Furthermore, fostering peer learning and collaboration within schools can enhance the impact of INSET by creating communities of practice that promote ongoing professional development.

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