



Effectiveness of School Administrators in Promoting Professionalism in Public Secondary Schools in Mkuranga, Coast Region, Tanzania

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Abstract: This study examined the effectiveness of school administrators in promoting professionalism among teachers in public secondary schools in Mkuranga District, Tanzania. The study was guided by three specific objectives: to examine the influence of administrative training on promoting professionalism, to assess the role of career development opportunities provided by school administrators in enhancing professionalism, and to evaluate how administrative accountability contributes to integrity, respect, and stewardship among staff. The study employed 'Transformational Leadership Theory' emphasizes on leaders' ability to inspire and influence followers to achieve professional behavior. The study adopted a mixed-methods research approach. It involved both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques. Research designed of the study followed a structured approach whereby stratified random sampling and purposive sampling procedures were used to collect data. The study used statistical software (SPSS) for data analysis. The 100 participants were involved in the study. The 93 teachers, four heads of schools, two Ward Education Officers, and one Teachers Service Commission officer. The results revealed that administrative training improves integrity, ethical conduct, and respect within schools, although regular training opportunities were limited. The study concluded that school administrators play a vital role in promoting professionalism through training, career support, and accountability, but their effectiveness is constrained by structural and cultural challenges. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission strengthen leadership training for school administrators, provide adequate resources, and support career development initiatives in regarding the promotion of teacher professionalism.

Keyword : Professionalism, Administrative Training, Accountability, Career Development, School administrators., Code of conduct

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Introduction

The effectiveness of school administrators in promoting professionalism among teachers is a critical factor influencing the quality of education globally. School administrators play critical roles in shaping educational systems and outcomes in various regions worldwide. Their roles are explored under historical, contextual, conceptual, and theoretical dimensions that vary from one country to another (Bush, 2022). This section explores the effectiveness of school administrators in beginning

with the rest of the world that is, United States of America, Germany in Europe, Japan in Asia, Nigeria in Africa, and eventually in Tanzania's Mkuranga District.

Globally, in the United States of America, school administration evolved through several phases, from the one-room schoolhouse of the 19th century to the bureaucratic structures of today. The establishment of the Department of Education in 1979 marked a significant shift towards federal involvement in education. Educational administrators are tasked in managing schools and implementing policies that address equity and access to education (Kirst & Wirt, 2009).

Contextually, the contemporary role of school administrators in the United States includes addressing challenges such as achievement gap, school safety, and integration of technology in education. They navigate federal, state, and local policies which requires effective administrators and advocacy skills (Michael Fullan, 2016).

In Europe, specifically Germany, the historical context of education is intertwined with its political view particularly in the periods of the Weimar Republic and Post-World War II. School administrators in Germany are responsible for maintaining educational standards set by regional governments and ensuring that schools reflect democratic values of the nation (Schratz & M.R.M, 2017). In Germany context, school administrators are required to practice inclusive educational environments that supports students with diverse needs. The emphasis on effective administration and professional development is crucial in enhancing the quality of education (Buchberger, 2007).

In Asia, especially Japan, educational system was influenced by Meiji Restoration in the late 19th century, which modernized its education. School administrators in Japan operate under centralized system, where they are responsible for implanting national curriculum standards while fostering collaborative school culture (MEXT,2020). Contextually, school administrators in Japan face the challenge of balancing traditional educational practices with modern demands. They are increasingly involved in community partnership and global education initiatives, reflecting the need for schools to adapt to a rapidly changing world (Tanaka, 2015).

In Africa, particularly Nigeria, education is marked by colonial influences and post-independence reforms. School administrators are effective in navigating the multi-ethnic society where education policies address cultural backgrounds. School administrators are tasked with ensuring educational access in a context of limited resources (Osokoya, 2007).

In East Africa particularly Tanzania, education system has undergone several transformations since independence in 1961. Initially, the focus was on expanding access to education as a priority for the newly independent nation. In 1970s, the policy called Universal Primary Education was established with an aim to increase enrollment rates. School administrators were tasked to manage resources and ensuring accommodation of the influx of students. However, there raised a need for

professionalism, then, roles began to shift towards promoting ethical standards and professional development. The introduction of Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) in the late 1990s marked a great change in education whereby school administrators were mandated to foster environment for professionalism among teachers that include promoting professional development and implementing disciplinary measures for unprofessional behavior.

Tanzanian education system specifically in Mkuranga as a study area, professional misconduct remains a static concern despite the existence of policies aimed at upholding high standards of professional ethics. Issues such as teacher absenteeism, unethical practices, favoritism, and lack of accountability have been reported in various regions (Kalinga et al., 2023). These problems disrupt the teaching and learning process, hinder students' academic progress, and erode the trust of parents and stakeholders in the education system. In Mkuranga District, the situation is further complicated by unique contextual challenges, including limited financial resources, shortages of qualified teaching staff, and disparities in the leadership capabilities of school administrators.

Statement of the Problem

Professionalism is the cornerstone of effective school management and the foundation for delivering quality education. It encompasses adherence to ethical standards, accountability, fairness, and a commitment to the educational mission. In schools, professionalism ensures that teachers, staff, and administrators operate with integrity, fostering a positive environment that supports learning and student well-being.

The study by Mhando (2020) indicates that approximately 30% of teachers reported experiencing some form of disciplinary action during their careers. In Mkuranga District, cases of teacher absenteeism, favoritism in decision-making, misuse of resources, and a lack of accountability among teachers have been reported in previous studies (Leithwood & Hopkins, D., 2021). These issues undermine the overall quality of education, student outcomes, and trust in educational institutions around the community.

Despite the existence of various policies, regulations and guidelines such as the Teachers' Code of Ethics and Conduct, there is limited empirical evidence that these policies have effectively addressed professionalism in public secondary schools. This study, therefore, seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of school administrators in promoting professionalism in public secondary schools in Mkuranga District.

Specific Objectives

1. To examine the influence of administrative training on teacher professionalism in public secondary schools.

2. To assess the role of career development opportunities in enhancing professionalism among teachers.
3. To evaluate how administrative accountability contributes to integrity, respect, and stewardship, considering resource gaps and socio-cultural factors.

Literatur Review

1. Theoretical Review

The study adopted the Transformational Leadership Theory as its guiding framework, which emphasizes leaders' ability to inspire, motivate, and influence their followers to achieve higher levels of ethical and professional behavior (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leaders act as role models, demonstrating integrity, fostering trust, and instilling a sense of purpose among their followers. They encourage staff to transcend self-interest for the greater good of the organization, promoting a collaborative and ethical work environment. This theory aligns with the educational context where school administrators play a pivotal role in setting standards for professional conduct, inspiring teachers to uphold these standards, and fostering a positive school culture conducive for learning.

2. Empirical Review

Effective strategies employed by school administrators to promote professional conduct include training programs, clear codes of conduct, regular evaluations, stakeholder engagement, and the use of disciplinary frameworks. These strategies collectively help to establish a school culture rooted in ethics, accountability, and professionalism.

Training equips educators with the skills to manage challenges, resolve conflicts, and adhere to professional ethics. For instance, regular workshops and in-service training on topics such as ethical leadership and classroom management enhance administrators' ability to model and enforce professional standards (Leithwood et al., 2021). Training programs also prepare administrators to address emerging ethical challenges, including those posed by advancements in technology and social media, which affect interactions within the school community (Bush & Glover, 2022). Furthermore, these programs build capacity among teachers to maintain professional boundaries and effectively manage their responsibilities (Kalinga et al., 2023).

The establishment and consistent enforcement of clear codes of conduct are critical for promoting professional behavior in schools. A code of conduct provides explicit guidelines on acceptable and unacceptable practices, helping staff understand their roles and responsibilities (Owens & Valesky, 2020). Research shows that schools with clearly articulated policies on professionalism experience fewer instances of misconduct, as staff members are aware of the consequences of unethical behavior

(Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2021). Administrators play a crucial role in ensuring these codes are well communicated, accessible, and reviewed periodically to remain relevant.

In Kenya, administrative practices have been shown to significantly affect teacher well-being and academic performance. A study by Richard (2024) in Kwale County revealed that effective administrative support, including professional development opportunities, positively influenced teachers' job satisfaction and student outcomes. Similarly, a study in Meru County highlighted the role of teacher professional development in the successful implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), emphasizing the need for continuous training to enhance teacher competencies (Ireru et al., 2024). Furthermore, research by Mbuvi (2023) underscored the importance of strategic leadership in teacher professional development, suggesting that administrative leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a professional teaching environment.

In Burundi, challenges and opportunities in teacher professional development have been explored. A case study by Srivastava (2024) in Bujumbura Province identified key areas such as program organization, resource availability, and teacher involvement in decision-making as critical factors influenced by administrative practices that affect teacher professionalism. The study recommended enhancing administrative support to improve the quality of professional development programs.

A study by Mbuli and Zhang (2023) analyzed the role of school management practices in supporting teacher professional development, finding that effective administrative strategies significantly contribute to enhancing teacher professionalism. Moreover, research by Mbuvi (2023) highlighted the importance of strategic leadership in teacher professional development, suggesting that administrative leadership plays a crucial role in fostering a professional teaching environment. Additionally, a study by Mbuvi (2023) in Kigoma Ujiji municipality addressed the gap between teachers' awareness of professional codes of conduct and their actual application, emphasizing the need for administrative guidance to uphold teaching professionalism.

Methodology

The study employed a mixed-methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

This approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of the research topic by providing both statistical data and in-depth contextual understanding (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Research design followed structured approach to ensure accuracy, reliability, and ethical integrity of the research process.

A total of 100 participants were involved, including 93 teachers selected through stratified random sampling and 6 school administrators and one education officers selected purposively.

Data were collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis.

Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were strictly observed to ensure the integrity of the research process.

Findings and Discussion

Influence of Administrative Training on Promoting Professionalism

The results of the study indicates that, professional training plays a very important role in promoting professionalism among teachers in public secondary schools. Training helped to improve the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of school administrators, which in turn positively affected how teachers behave and interact in the school environment. The findings suggested that when school leaders receive proper training, they are better equipped to guide teachers, enforce rules, and maintain a professional working atmosphere like teachers' punctuality, lesson preparation, maintaining students' discipline, and positive relationships among individuals.

From interviews, a head of school A explained:

"I once attended a management course and it helped me change my style of leadership. I started involving teachers in decision-making, and I treat them with more respect. This has improved discipline and reduced conflicts. However, the problem is that such training is rare. Sometimes we just rely on experience and personal efforts to learn." (Interview, July, 2025).

Several key themes emerged from the interviews. First, training appeared to enhance administrators' self-awareness and leadership competencies, equipped them with strategies to manage staff effectively, promote accountability, and establish a professional working environment.

Another head of school B added:

"Training opened my eyes to the importance of professional ethics. Before attending, I focused mostly on administrative tasks, but now I understand that leadership also means setting an example in honesty, fairness, and accountability. Teachers have noticed the change, and they are more willing to cooperate. The challenge is that these workshops are not organized regularly, so sometimes it feels like we are left to figure things out on our own." (Interview, July, 2025).

The interview with Head of School B provided further evidence of the transformative impact of professional training on school leadership and teacher professionalism

Teachers' Responses on Career Development Initiatives

The findings of the study demonstrates that career growth opportunities, mentorship, and in-service training significantly shaped the level of professionalism among teachers in public secondary schools in Mkuranga District. Quantitative results revealed that 96.2 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that career growth opportunities were a strong motivator in maintaining professional behavior.

A Ward Education Officer stated:

"School heads support teachers to pursue further studies by adjusting timetables or giving recommendation letters. Some teachers are now pursuing bachelor or master's degrees. Workshops and seminars are rare, but mentorship is common. I know school heads who sit with young teachers, helping them with lesson plans and professional conduct. This support has helped teachers become more professional even without many formal seminars." (Interview July, 2025)

The statement from the Ward Education Officer provided a vivid illustration of how mentorship and encouragement for further education acted as strong catalysts for enhancing teacher professionalism in public secondary schools.

Accountability practices were reported to significantly promote professionalism. Administrators who enforced transparent rules, conducted regular evaluations, and handled resources fairly were found to enhance integrity and respect among teachers. However, resource gaps including shortages of teaching materials, overcrowded classrooms, and delays in policy enforcement frequently weakened accountability measures

Theoretical Implication of Findings

The Transformational Leadership Theory provides a robust lens through which the effectiveness of school administrators in promoting professionalism can be analyzed. It emphasizes the critical role of leadership strategies, such as modeling ethical behavior, fostering collaboration, and motivating staff to achieve higher professional standards. By examining how administrators inspire and influence teachers and staff, the study can evaluate the effectiveness of these leadership practices in fostering ethical conduct. Furthermore, the theory helps identify gaps in leadership training and institutional support, offering insights into how administrators can overcome challenges and enhance their impact. This framework is particularly relevant in the context of Mkuranga District, where professional conduct issues are prevalent.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that school administrators play a pivotal role in promoting professionalism in public secondary schools through training, career development, and accountability mechanisms. Administrative training enhances ethical leadership, career development motivates teachers and strengthens professionalism, and accountability reinforces integrity and responsibility. However, inconsistent training opportunities, insufficient resources, and socio-cultural barriers limit administrators' effectiveness. Addressing these challenges is crucial for improving the quality of education and sustaining professional standards in Mkuranga District.

Based on the findings, several recommendations are made to different stakeholders.

1. To policymakers, particularly the Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission, it is recommended that regular and compulsory leadership and management training be introduced for all school administrators. Policies should also provide financial support for workshops and seminars to enable teachers to continuously update their professional skills. Resource allocation for teaching and learning materials must be prioritized to reduce the negative effects of shortages on professional conduct.
2. To school administrators, it is recommended that they strengthen mentorship programs and maintain accountability practices that are transparent and fair. Even in the absence of sufficient resources, administrators should strive to create supportive environments by guiding teachers, offering feedback, and upholding ethical standards in handling misconduct.
3. To teachers, the study recommends that they take personal responsibility for their professional growth by pursuing further studies and embracing mentorship opportunities provided by school heads. Teachers should also commit to the Teachers' Code of Ethics and maintain professionalism regardless of resource or cultural challenges.

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