

Quality Teaching: A Reflection of Students' Learning Outputs in Tanzanian Teacher Colleges

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Abstract

This paper is a report on the findings of a study conducted in 2013. The researcher employed descriptive research design of survey type. In this research two objectives were studied: to analyze national examination results for diploma students for determining students' examination pass rates in selected teacher colleges and to examine the level of tutors' teaching effectiveness by measuring their level of instructional procedures and interaction styles. The data were collected through documentary analysis and questionnaire survey. The sample of the study was 120 tutors from both colleges. The findings of this paper here are the part of Master Dissertation on Tutors' effective teaching and students' examination pass rates in teacher colleges in Tanzania.

Keywords: Quality teaching, examinations pass rates, Teacher Colleges

1. Introduction

Quality teaching is seen as a scientific process as it involves the systematic planning and programming instructional procedures and teaching strategies (Grosser, 2007 & Barry, 2010). It is regarded as one of the greatest attributes into students' achievements (Nuthall, 2004 & Mantooth, 2010). Poor student academic performance in schools/colleges is the effect of many factors one being inappropriate teaching among tutors. This is because the ability of the tutor to adopt instructional procedures and techniques is questionable. In consonance with Ajayi (1995) quality teaching is one of the environmental factors within the school/college that have strong association with students' academic achievement. In this sense, quality teaching is considered to be a visible factor in tutors' ability to initiate ideas and structures, organize and manage classroom, increase students' content knowledge, prepare and present interestingly and yet challengingly lessons, assess students' learning correctively (McBer, 2000; Allington, 2002; OECD, 2009; Adeyemi & Adu, 2012).

Therefore, it is disappointing to find that, tutors in teacher colleges are poorly performing their duties and that they fail to fulfill their instructional procedures and interaction strategies for quality teaching. In this situation there is a need to fix it. One possible way is by enabling tutors to comply the instructional procedures and capable of applying relevant teaching strategies. This includes; scheme of work and lesson plans preparation, attractive and challenging lessons presentations, administering learning tasks/activities, evaluation of students' learning progresses through tests and examinations and also application of relevant teaching methods.

Despite quality teaching being a prime factor into students' learning and performance, literature has shown that, teachers/tutors are rarely engaging instructional procedures and interaction styles in their teaching routine (HakiElimu, 2012; Mushashu, 2000; NECTA, 2010). Measures to mitigate this problem have been taken. In 2008, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training initiated Teacher development and Management Strategies of 2008-2013 with the objective of developing college tutors academically and professionally. The program meant also to equip college tutors with Information Communication and Technology knowledge and skills for smoothening teaching process. This was follow by regular seminars, workshops and short courses about pedagogical content knowledge.

Although the government through Ministry of Education and vocational Training extremely desired for quality teaching in teacher colleges, little is known about the quality of teaching in relation to high students' examination pass rates. The absent of reliable data on this issue lead to the following questions. To what level do students in teacher colleges achieve in term of examination pass rates? And to what extent do college tutors are effective in term of realizing instructional procedures and interaction strategies? Available studies by Chilumika (2013) which focused on Teacher educators' professional development for implementing competence based curriculum shows that professional development for tutors is limited and characterized by few professional development activities. Dimbo (2013) who focused on attracting teacher college tutors to postgraduate programmes offered through open and distance learning depicts that, the majority of Teacher College tutors in public teacher colleges were not aware about teaching improvement and that they are reluctant of involving in the professional development activities. This manuscript therefore reports the results of a study that was carried out to determine Tutors' effective teaching and students' examination pass rates in Teacher Colleges in Tanzania.

2. Objectives

Specifically this paper intends to

- i. Analyze national examination results for diploma students for determining students' examination pass

- rates in selected teacher colleges.
- ii. Examine the level of tutors' teaching effectiveness by measuring their level of instructional procedures and interaction styles.

3. Significance of the Study

The study sought to give a comprehensive data on students' examination pass rates in Teacher Colleges mirroring tutors quality teaching. Thus, the study sought to prove incentive for college tutors and principals to improve their teaching performance.

4. Related Literature

The literature surveyed show that the main challenges that teachers/tutors face in the classroom worldwide include motivating students to learn, classroom management, assessing student work and demonstration of quality teaching (OECD, 2009). However, the positive and negative behaviors that a teacher exhibits determine to a great extent their competence in the classroom and ultimately the impact they have on students' achievement.

Quality teaching is a foremost input into the educational system, constituting important aspect in pupils'/students' learning. This contestation concurs with the idea of Adeyemi and Adu (2012) who argued that, the level of performance in any school is intimately related with the commitment of teachers to teach effectively. Walls, Nardi, von Minden, & Hoffman (2002, p.5) explains that effective teachers;

Appear to have better developed schemata for classroom teaching with strong link between subject matter and ways to teach it; to be more effective lesson planners and implementers, and yet be more flexible and reflective in meeting student needs and facilitating student social and academic growth.

Similarly, Allington (2002) notes that effective teachers manage to produce better achievement regardless of which curriculum materials, pedagogical approach, or reading program they use.

In school/college setting a tutor is considered to be committed to teach effectively if has more to do with; scheme of works and lesson plan preparation, have competence in subject matter and clearly present lessons in classroom settings, is rich in using teaching strategies that elicit learning among learners, and is enthusiastic to students in a manner that provides tasks in term of questions, assignment which enable students to acquire problem solving skills. Moreover, Bain (2004) in his book 'what the Best College Teacher Do' asserts that effective teaching begins with the relationships between the teacher and each individual students in his/her class. This can be with a reason that teachers do not teach a class but students in classroom. Acknowledging this statement, effective teaching comes to the building of a learning collaboration with an individual student: support and challenge.

In words of Bain, a student wants to be challenged to learn more through questions, quizzes, assignments, tests and examination, however, they want support from the teacher and his/her classroom learning environment that enable them to think that they will be able to meet the challenges. McBer (2000) points out that, effective teachers, employ variety of teaching strategies and techniques to engage students and to keep them on task. The teacher presents lessons to students with a high degree of clarity and enthusiasm. The teaching techniques include; group discussion, presentation, questions and answers, lecturing which are interactive in nature and enable the teacher to control and manage the class for students learning progress. Questions engage students actively in the lesson and the teacher is able to monitor students' understanding and challenge their thinking by skillful questioning. According to McBer (2000) it is evident that effective teachers use sophisticated questioning approach ranging from asking many brief questions on main and supplementary point to multiple questioning of individuals to provide greater understanding and challenge.

In effective teaching the lesson to be learnt is presented clearly and with measurable learning objectives, which state specifically what students should know and be able to do as a result of the lesson. The teacher has to focus on the class as needed to maintain progress in completing the lesson and achieving the lesson objectives. This concurs with the idea of Hall, (2009) who addresses that teachers in classroom have to breakdown complex lesson activities/skills into a series of manageable steps, which aid students in mastering the learning objectives. Thus, using questions, assignments, homework or group work can enhance learning and increase task completion. This allows students to become successful in independent activities. Since the literacy meaning of effectiveness is good attainment, the implicit assumption is that the criteria used to measure performance reflect important educational objectives. Therefore, the literature suggest indicative performance of quality teaching as; lesson plans preparation which reflect important concepts in the discipline and accommodate relationships among concepts and skills, clear and accurate classroom lesson explanations, accurate answers to student questions, demonstration of mastered teaching strategies and techniques which allow interactive learning and completion of syllabi and curricula materials.

5. Methodology

This study was drawn on the quantitative inquiry deploying descriptive research design of the survey. It was conducted in Dodoma and Morogoro regions, Tanzania in 2013 including Mpwapwa and Morogoro Teacher Colleges respectively. The selected study areas were particularly useful because both Mpwapwa and Morogoro Teacher Colleges are government owned institutions and train diploma student-teachers, which met the requirements of data gathering for this study. 120 tutors from both Colleges returned the supplied questionnaires. Tutors were purposively chosen by virtue of their professional, knowledge and experience in the context of Teacher colleges in Tanzania as illustrated in figure 3.1

Table 3.1 Distribution of Tutors under Study

Teacher College	Location	Respondents		Total
		Male	Female	
Mpwapwa	Dodoma	51	9	60
Morogoro	Morogoro	31	29	30
TOTOL		82	38	120

The required data were collected through questionnaire survey and documentary review. Tutors were supplied with closed ended questions in the questionnaire just to respond for the list of items about instructional procedures, interaction styles and students' pass rates. Descriptive Statistics was used to analyze the data from returned questionnaires. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for various responses in order to determine the extent to which tutors were effective in their teaching.

5 Findings and Discussion

Presentation and discussion of the findings drew upon two research questions: (1) what relationship exists between instructional procedures and students' examination pass rates? (2) What relationship exists between teaching strategies/instructional styles and students' examination pass rates?

6. Diploma Examination Pass Rates in Selected Teacher Colleges

The first question in this study sought to identify the longitudinal trend of national examination results for diploma students in both colleges from 2000 to 2012. Documentary analysis was employed to derive the data. The data are presented in table 6.1 here below

Table 6.1 Diploma Examination Results from 2000 to 2007

YEAR	Mpwapwa Teacher College							Morogoro Teacher College						
	Distribution Scores							Distribution Scores						
	PASSED		REPEATED		FAILED		TOTAL	PASSED		REPEATED		FAILED		TOTAL
	*N	%	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%	N	%	
2000	244	95	10	4	2	1	256	302	97	8	2	2	1	312
2001	179	94	9	5	2	1	190	336	97	8	2	3	1	347
2002	255	78	62	19	8	3	325	413	95	12	3	8	2	433
2003	236	91	18	7	4	2	258	445	95	16	3	5	2	466
2004	179	94	9	5	2	1	190	447	90	45	9	5	1	497
2005	232	98.7	2	0.8	1	0.5	235	466	94	28	5.6	2	0.4	496
2006	365	93	26	6.6	1	0.4	392	542	94.7	29	5	1	0.3	572
2007	268	98.8	0	0	3	1.2	271	496	97	14	2.7	1	0.3	511
2008	224	92	14	6	5	3	243	529	86	79	13	9	1	617
2009	349	78	98	21	1	1	448	420	80	99	19	7	1	526
2010	284	67	140	32	3	1	427	759	65	395	34	15	1	1169
2011	310	75	99	24	2	1	411	671	81	156	18.8	1	0.2	828
2012	554	88	52	8	24	4	630	411	69	143	24	40	7	594

Source: Documentary Review (February 2013)

*N= Number of students

The results in Table 6.1 portray that for thirteen years from 2000 to 2012, the highest pass rate in Mpwapwa TC was in 2005 and 2007 where 98.7% and 98.8% of students who sat for diploma in education examination passed while the lowest pass rate was in 2010 in which 67% of students passed the examination. Moreover the highest pass rate in Morogoro TC was in 2000, 2001 and 2007 whereby 97% of students who sat for diploma in education examination passed and the lowest pass rate was in 2010 in which pass rate was 65%. The average pass rates in Mpwapwa TC from 2000 to 2012 is 87.8% whereby in Morogoro TC is 87.7%.

The results show no significant difference of examination pass rates of 0.1% in the two colleges. This implies that Mpwapwa and Morogoro Teacher Colleges had the same level of curriculum implementation. This can be implicated that tutors in both colleges had implemented the curriculum effectively, as the result

examination pass rates became high. This concurs with HakiElimu (2012) expression that, poor national examination results are the outcome of poor curriculum implementation in colleges/schools and vice versa. This view is also in line with Nuthall (2004: 278) who argues that, “within the professional culture of teaching it is commonly believed that if something is taught it is automatically learned. If it is not learned, then the problem is presumed to lie with the inadequacy of the learner's ability, motivation or persistence.”

On other hand, the results in Table 6.1 show that the highest examination repetition rate from 2000 to 2012 was in 2010 in Mpwapwa and Morogoro TCs by 32% and 34% respectively. The average examination repetition rates for thirteen years were 10.6% and 10.8% in Mpwapwa and Morogoro Teacher Colleges respectively. This makes a slight difference of 0.2%. Though the findings show a small difference of supplementary rates, it is demanding that more efforts in curriculum implementation were deemed important in order to eliminate supplementary and improve students' academic achievements in both colleges.

Moreover, the results in Table 6.1 show that in 2012 there was a high failure rate by 4% and 7% in Mpwapwa and Morogoro Teacher Colleges respectively. The average failure rates are 1.5% and 1.4% in Mpwapwa and Morogoro TCs. This shows that tutors in both colleges were effective in the curriculum implementation, which resulted to low failure rate. This is evident as Mosha (2000) found that an adequate teaching is likely to produce quality students who perform highly in their examination and lower failure rates. Nevertheless, students who fail the final examination in the Diploma in secondary education examination are not employed as they do not qualify to be teachers. Kalaghan & Greaney (2003) found that in many countries, including Tanzania, passing examinations in specific courses is among the attributes which certify an individual person for an employment opportunity in both public and private sectors. Then, more efforts were needed to be put in lesson implementation so as to eliminate examination failure in teachers' colleges, as students who completely fail the final examinations do not get employment (MoEVT, 2010 & Kalaghan et al. 2003).

7. Quality Teaching in the Investigated Teacher Colleges

A commitment to effective teaching is considered to be one of the most important qualities a successful tutor/teacher can possess. Variables in table 4.1 were used to measure quality teaching to tutors as follows.

Table.7.1 Components of Quality Teaching Studied in the Surveyed Colleges

ITEM	RESPONSE (N=120)					
	Low		Average		High	
	*N	%	F	%	F	%
Level of lesson planning and scheme of work preparation	25	21	14	12	81	67
Level of lessons presentation in the classroom	13	11	9	7	98	82
Level of tests administered	46	38	11	9	63	53
Level of assignments provision	12	10	13	11	95	79
Level of syllabus completion	5	4	17	14	98	82

*N= Frequency

The findings in Table 4.1 portray that the levels of lesson presentation and syllabus completion are high at 82% in the investigated colleges. It can be concluded that high rates of lesson presentation/delivery in classroom indicates effective implementation of the syllabus of a specified class/program or course. Hirsch (2000) states that, effective classroom teaching is positively related to students' achievement because it maximizes students' time and engagement in learning tasks and encourages students' active participation during lessons. With this in mind, it can be said that effective teaching remains an important variable for effective learning facilitation, leading to good students' academic achievement.

On the other hand, the findings revealed that the levels of assignment provision in the surveyed colleges are high at 79%. Assignments contain questions which make the students interact with a variety of sources like textbooks, supplementary books and the Internet for deepening their learning over a given problem (Hirsch, 2000). Table 4.1 shows also that there is a high level of lesson planning at 67 percent in the investigated teacher colleges. This shows that, before undertaking actual classroom lesson presentation, a tutor/teacher must plan a lesson to be delivered which specifically indicates the learning objective intended to be achieved in the class. It also helps tutors/teachers to suggest proper teaching techniques to be used while teaching so that the stated learning objective is achieved (Barroso and Pon 2005). Mantooth (2010) & Adams (2010) for example, called the teacher a professional question maker and claimed that the asking of questions is one of the basic ways by which the teacher stimulates students' thinking and learning. Additionally, asking questions in a test or examination is one of ten dimensions for studying teachers' behavior in the widely used system for interactive analysis. Thus, textbooks and examination questions and assignments undoubtedly make a contribution to the learning process. The key function of questions relies on learning by doing with questions accelerating and deepening the learning process, which also includes self-questioning and reflection. Questions allow students to harvest learning.

8. Teaching Strategies Used by Tutors in Surveyed Colleges

Through questionnaires, tutors were asked if they use learner centered teaching techniques effectively. Figure 4.1 describes more in details, the teaching techniques which are commonly used in teacher colleges as follows.

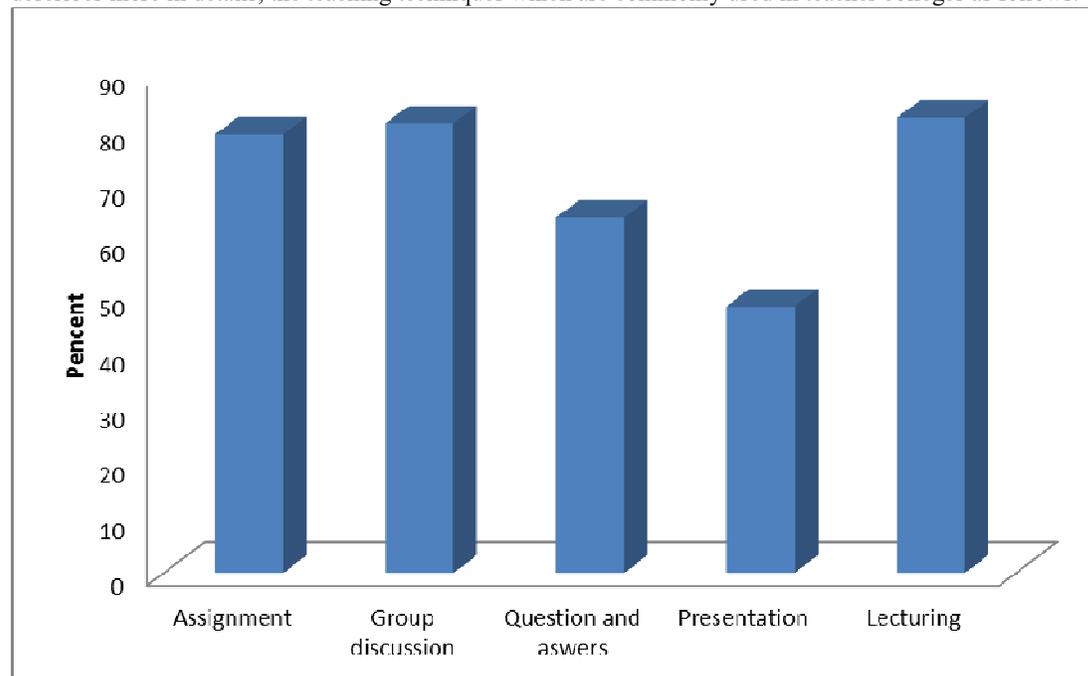


Figure 8.1: Teaching techniques used in the surveyed teacher colleges.

Source: Questionnaire analysis (May, 2013)

The findings in Figure 4.1 reveal that although learner centered teaching is done in both colleges, the lecturing technique is still dominating. This could be for several reasons, such as it is less time consuming in terms of lesson planning and delivery since learning activities are fixed, it is effective for teaching a large number of students at one time and tutors may not have experienced or be familiar with other techniques. However, this reflects that there is no rule book on which teaching methods match up best to which skills and or content that is been taught. But Jacobs and Gawe (1996:208) state that;

The outcome of any method is determined by the teacher's motivation, the effort that has been put into the planning and preparation of the lesson, the motivation of the pupils and the ability of the teacher to create opportunities for pupils to participate in the learning process.

The key advantage of such teaching methods is that it allows interaction between the teacher and learner with the sole purpose of harvesting better learning outcomes. Additionally, group discussions, assignments, questions and answers and presentations are communicative teaching methods which provide a wide range of student participation in the learning process.

9. Conclusion

This study was able to make various observations about quality teaching in relation to students' learning outputs in Tanzanian Teacher Colleges. It is quite trivial that supervision, in-service training and motivation if well handled by College Principals could go a long way maintaining and improving quality teaching, job performance and learning achievements in Teacher Colleges. So the Government in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Vocational Training should provide opportunities for in-service training programmes for tutors to update their content and pedagogical knowledge for enhancing quality teaching hence good students' academic achievements.

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