

CURBING TEACHER MISCONDUCT IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN SUMBAWANGA MUNICIPAL AND RURAL DISTRICTS, TANZANIA: HEADTEACHERS' STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to explore the public primary school headteachers' strategies, in curbing teacher misconduct in schools. A qualitative case study design was adopted to collect and analyze data obtained from 10 participant headteachers, who were purposively selected among rural and urban public primary schools. The study revealed that both rural and urban school headteachers put in place several different strategies, to curb teacher misconduct in their respective schools. The commonly employed strategies included: warnings and reprimands; inspecting teachers' work; teachers' attendance registers; school discipline committees; guidance and counseling; reporting the cases to higher authorities. However, it was further revealed that headteachers' effort to curb teacher misconduct encountered challenges such as lack of cooperation from education officers, overwhelming responsibilities, lack of power to sanction teachers, and lack of commitment among teachers. Consequently, headteachers consulted their higher authorities and delegated some of their responsibilities, as their strategies to overcome or cope with the encountered challenges. Thus, the paper concludes that headteachers regardless of the location of schools, were determined to curb teacher misconduct in their respective schools, nonetheless, their effort to address the problem was undermined by challenges, that emanated from various sources.

Keywords: Teacher misconduct; headteachers; public primary school; Sumbawanga; Tanzania.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher professional misconduct has increasingly emerged as one of the serious issues of concern, which affects the attainment of educational goals across the globe in recent years. The incidents of teacher professional misconduct with varied nature have been reported in several countries. In England, sexual relationship with pupils, and downloading of extreme pornography on school laptops are among serious teacher misbehavior practiced by teachers in schools (Page, 2014). In the USA, between 2001 and 2005 there were more than 2500 cases of teacher misconduct of varied forms, such as raping, seducing and sexual abuse of students by their teachers (Brown, 2016; Carlson, 2007). Asian countries, China, India, and Bangladesh, in particular, have reported incidents of teacher misconduct in schools (Hallack & Poisson, 2002). In Africa, particularly Sub-Saharan African countries experience serious cases of teacher misconduct among educational institutions (Ng'oma & Simatwa, 2013; Hallack & Poisson, 2007; Bennell & Akyempong, 2007; Anangisyé & Barrett, 2006; Bennell & Mkyanuzi, 2005). Tanzania, like many other countries, has been also experiencing several cases of teacher professional misconduct among its educational institutions. Mass media such as radios, televisions, newspapers and social networks, as well as different studies, have unearthed several different forms of teacher misconduct in the country. The common forms of misconduct

among Tanzanian schools include absenteeism, sexual misconduct, corruption, private tutoring, unethical dressing, drunkenness, unethical language, examination malpractices (Mfaume & Bilinga, 2017; Mabagala, 2016; Betweli, 2013; Anangisye, 2006; Boimanda, 2004). As noted elsewhere, teacher misconduct regardless of its form or magnitude has a detrimental impact on the attainment of educational goals. Teacher misconduct, particularly absenteeism and lateness, affect the teaching of the subject content, where teachers fail or partially accomplish the syllabus (Betweli, 2013).

As a result of the prevalence and impact of teacher misconduct in schools, different countries have put in place through their education policies, the strategies to mitigate the impact of teacher misconduct in the attainment of educational goals. Studies on educational leadership and management indicate that headteachers/principals are among the important personnel in attaining the goal of education. The role of headteachers in managing teachers' and students' behavior, in particular, has been recognized by several countries. Different countries have established some strategies to ensure the headteachers' effectiveness in fulfilling their daily responsibilities. Such strategies range from the pre-service preparation (training), appointment (recruitment), and in-service training.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Preparation and Recruitment of the Headteachers

The literature on school leadership and management points out a strong need for the professional development of headteachers to prepare them to manage their schools properly, thus solve the problems that they encounter in their work situation. Like any other managers or leaders in other professions, the preparation of headteacher involves several forms and/or stages. The preparation of headteachers includes both the pre-employment and post-employment stages (Bush and Oduro, 2006). In most developed countries, pre-service headship training is highly recognized (Simkins, 2005). In countries such as the UK, Canada, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore, the aspiring headteachers must possess formal qualifications before applying for the headship post (Page, 2014; Bush & Jackson, 2003; Middlewood, 1997). In such countries, the aspiring headteachers are required to attend formal headship or leadership training before applying for such a position.

Conversely, in most developing countries African countries, in particular, there is limited or no formal pre-service training for aspiring headteachers (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Oplatka, 2004), as such for most of developing countries particularly Sub-Saharan African countries, the appointment of headteachers is based on work experience as the main criteria (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). The recruitment or appointment of the headteachers like the training varies from one country to another. Different criteria are used to recruit and select the headteachers in various countries. In a country like Canada, headteachers are required to undergo appropriate training and obtain relevant qualification before being posted to different schools, while in England the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) among other reasons, was introduced to provide the guidelines for the recruitment of aspiring headteachers (Middlewood, 1997). In other countries such as Greece, the headteachers are recruited based on three main criteria: the candidates' training and work experience; candidates' evaluations or performance evaluation reports; appraisals by the selection council, while in Cyprus the recruitment of headteachers is merely based on teaching experience, and experience serving as assistant headteachers (Athanasoula-Reppa, & Lazaridou, 2008).

The criteria for appointing headteachers in most developing countries differ from those in developed ones such as Canada and England. For most developing countries African countries,

in particular, the recruitment of headteachers is not based on formal qualifications and pre-service training, rather the headteachers are recruited based on their long-serving experience in teaching (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007; Bush and Oduro, 2006). In Botswana for example, it has been noted that there has been a lack of training provision for secondary school headteachers, from their initial appointment throughout their entire service thus, the recruitment of headteachers is based on possession of bachelor degree and three-year experience in serving as deputy headteachers (Pheko, 2008). In Kenya, the criteria for the appointment of headteachers/principals include at least 10 years of experience as a regular classroom teacher, three years as a senior teacher, and three years as deputy headteacher/principal (Okoko, Scott, & Scott, 2015). Likewise, in Uganda, headteachers are not required to hold a license or credential specific to school leadership apart from their experience in teaching, before being assigned with headship roles (Hallam, Boren, Hite, Hite, & Mugimu, 2013).

Roles of Headteachers

Being the most senior teachers in schools, headteachers have various roles and responsibilities to play in managing the schools, as a result of the ongoing decentralization of educational administration. In most countries, headteachers as schools' chief executives are charged with the task of managing teachers and other school resources as well as teaching the students. In general view, the headteachers' or principals' roles fall into four major categories: stewards; models; experts; instructional leaders (Bredenson & Johansson, 2000). A headteacher is the keeper of keys, the director of transportation, the correspondence, the quartermaster of stores, the deviser of intricate schedules, the publisher of handbooks, the director of public relations and the instructional leader (Kwakwa, 1973). A headteacher is a pivot around which many aspects of school revolve and a person in charge of every detail of the running of a school (Shushila, 2004), thus, he or she is in charge of both academic and administrative issues in a school (Musungu & Nasongo, 2008). The provision of induction and mentoring programs for novice teachers (Owojori & Asauri, 2010), fall under the hands of a headteacher. Equally important, headteachers are expected to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations and communications experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs' administrators (Khan, Saeed, & Fatima, 2009). Therefore, the headteacher is a key person in the school and any education system in general, as he or she plays a crucial role in ensuring the performance of the school, more specifically, its teachers.

Ways Employed by Headteachers in Addressing Teacher Misconduct

A survey of literature highlights that headteachers and school principals employ several different ways and/or strategies to deal with the problem of teacher misconduct in schools. Headteachers' choice of ways to deal with a specific type of teacher misconduct depends on their effectiveness in addressing the problem. Nevertheless, some of the ways that headteachers employ to deal with teacher misconduct in schools are general, that is, they cut-across all forms of misconduct, while others are specific (Ng'oma & Simatwa, 2013). Attendance register and regular checking of teachers' folio record such as lesson plans, the scheme of work, have been noted as among the widely employed strategies by most headteachers to mitigate teacher absenteeism, lateness and commitment to work (Names & Sherali, 2015; Mobegi, Ondigi & Oburu, 2010; World Bank, 2005). Conversely, Warning and/or reprimand in both verbal and written forms are used by most of the headteachers and other education administrators to handle different types of teacher misconduct regardless of their types or forms (Ndung'u (2017; Ng'oma & Simatwa, 2013). However, elsewhere for some other cases of teacher misconduct headteachers have no power and authority to handle them, as a result, they are forced to report

such cases to their higher authorities. In combating the teacher misbehavior, the headteachers consult the HR representatives as soon as the incident occurs (Page, 2014). In Tanzania, the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) through its disciplinary guidelines for teachers, highlights some disciplinary measures that do not fall under the headteachers' power and authority. Among others, these measures include demotion, reduction of salary, and dismissal from service (TSC, 2017). In Kenya, more than half of participant headteachers admitted forwarding the cases of teacher misconduct to a higher authority (Ndung'u, 2017).

Challenges Encountered by Headteachers in Managing Teachers

Headteachers and/or principals face several different challenges when fulfilling their roles in managing teachers in schools. The challenges encountered by headteachers emanate from different sources. Most of the challenges faced by the headteachers are managerial or administrative-related challenges (Demir, 2016; Athanasoula-Reppa, & Lazaridou, 2008; Lahui-Ako, 2001; Whitaker, 1996). In some countries, headteachers being overwhelmed with many tasks and responsibilities, make their work more frustrating (Athanasoula-Reppa & Lazaridou, 2008; Whitaker, 1996). Most of the headteachers are burdened with many responsibilities such as teaching, planning infrastructure development, organizing human, financial and physical resources, and directing and controlling staff performance (Lahui-Ako, 2001), and difficulty in collecting and managing school fees and lack of cooperation from School Management Committees (Harber & Davies, 2002). Combining both teaching and administrative responsibilities provide a critical challenge for headteachers in managing schools and teachers in particular effectively (Whitaker, 1996). In other literature, it has been noted that the prevalence of teacher misbehavior in schools, has been one of the major challenges for headteachers to effectively engage in managing schools, as some cases of teacher misbehavior take a long time to be concluded (MacBeath, O'Brien & Gronn, 2012) as cited in Page (2014).

A study by Athanasoula-Reppa & Lazaridou on 'requirements, roles, and challenges of the principalship in Greece and Cyprus' revealed that the participants highlighted four potential impediments to effectiveness, including lack of expertise in management; the prevailing climate, ethos, and values in education; workload; and deficiencies in the laws and regulations for education (Athanasoula-Reppa & Lazaridou, 2008). Additionally, lack of pre-headship and in-service training programs among the headteachers and school principals, catalyze the magnitude of most of the challenges faced by headteachers and principals in managing schools. Lack of headship training was noted as one of the major challenges that hindered headteachers' effective management of schools in Kenya, as many as half of the headteachers (50%) had not received short in-service courses in school and financial management (Mobegi, Ondigi & Oburu, 2010).

Apart from the overwhelming nature of headteachers' roles coupled with lack of managerial and administrative skills among headteachers, headteachers' behavior problems have been highlighted in the literature as one of the critical challenges faced by headteachers. In some schools in most developing countries, headteachers are alleged of embezzlement of public funds, demanding illegal fees from students and examination malpractices (Oduro & MacBeath, 2003), thus tarnishing their image among their subordinates and the community in which they operate. Therefore, apart from having a crucial role in the attainment of educational goals at the school level, headteachers encounter a lot of challenges that appeal for urgent intervention.

Headteachers in the Context of Tanzania

In Tanzania, the Education and Training Policy (1995) and the Public Service Act, 2002 and Regulations, 2003 stipulate the role of a headteacher as the overall in charge of school

management, at the level of school. The preparation of headteachers in the context of Tanzania does not vary from that of most Sub-Saharan African countries. Currently, in Tanzania, there is no formally established program for the preparation of the aspiring headteachers. However, in recent years the Ministry of education, Science, and Technology (MoESC) endorsed academic qualification for both primary and secondary school headteachers, as one of the main criteria for the appointment of headteachers. Headteachers for secondary schools are required to possess at least a Bachelor's degree certificate in education, while for the primary school headteachers a diploma in education certificate as minimum requirements (URT, 2014). Nonetheless, neither of the two identified certificates involves the specific headship training skills for aspiring headteachers, other than the general school management that is offered to all pre-service teachers. In addition to academic qualification, the headteachers are appointed based on professional (work) experience as classroom teachers, as well as good disciplinary records and job commitment.

In fulfilling their responsibilities in their respective schools, the headteachers perform dual roles, that is, instructional and administrative roles. In the first place, headteachers like any other teachers employed in a school, they are in charge of classroom teaching, as their primary role. On the other hand, they are also charged with the day-to-day school administrative issues, such as teacher and student management, as well as the management of non-human school resources. Additionally, the assessment of both teaching and non-teaching staff at the school level falls under the hands of the headteacher (MoEVT, 2005).

According to the TSC Act No. 25 (2016) and its regulations (2016), teachers' disciplinary authorities include headteachers and the TSC District Committee. The disciplinary actions that can be taken by the headteachers involve the following categories of teacher misconduct: teacher absenteeism that does not exceed 5 days; lateness, leaving the work station during working hours without permission; negligence of duty; abuse of power; loss/destruction of public resources due to negligence (TSC, 2016). The headteachers have been provided with the authority to take disciplinary measures on the above-identified categories of teacher misconduct. According to the TSC Regulations 12(3), the headteachers have the power to provide warning and reprimand for the culprits, withhold the salary increment, and to order the teacher to repay the cost of the destructed or lost resources. The categories of teacher misconduct that fall under the power of the TSC-District office, among others include insubordination, chronic absenteeism, financial embezzlement, criminal offenses, and abuse of power. In dealing with such misconduct, the TSC may employ disciplinary measures such as demotion, withholding the salary/salary increment, and job dismissal. Nevertheless, the measure taken by the headteachers can also be taken by the TSC depending on the form and severity of the misconduct.

The Prevalence of Teacher Misconduct in Tanzania

The cases of teacher misconduct among Tanzanian primary and secondary school teachers, have been increasingly reported in recent years. The literature on the moral and ethical problems among Tanzanian teachers, highlights several different forms of teacher misconduct that prevail in schools. Most previous studies that were conducted in the early 2000s (e.g. Boimanda, 2004; Anangisye & Barret, 2005; Anangisye, 2006), unearthed several forms of teacher misconduct that existed in schools and other educational institutions. Among others, such misconduct included absenteeism, sexual abuse, corruption, private tutoring, improper dressing, drunkenness, and abusive and violent conduct.

As a result of the drastic increase of cases of teacher misconduct in schools, in recent years quite large number of studies in the country have drawn their attention in exploring the prevalence of teacher misconduct in schools (Betweli, 2013; Songela, 2015; Mabagala, 2016; Mfaume & Bilinga, 2017). The focus of these studies was laid on the forms/types, causes and effects of teacher misconduct in the country. Like the previous highlighted studies, recent studies have also revealed the cases of teacher misconduct that permeate in schools, nevertheless, the magnitude of such cases differs in some aspects. Teacher absenteeism, drunkenness, improper dressing, and abusive and violent conduct, in particular, have been reported as among the chronic problems among primary and secondary schools (Betweli, 2013; Twaweza, 2014; Songela, 2015; Mabagala, 2016; Mfaume & Bilinga, 2017). However, of all forms of teacher misconduct, teacher absenteeism has been noted as the most serious that increases at an alarming rate. The participants rated teacher absenteeism at 88% (Betweli, 2013), 66% (Twaweza, 2014), 81% (Songela, 2015), and 87% (Mfaume & Bilinga, 2017).

Correspondingly, in the country, mass media such as newspapers, social networks, televisions, and radios, have been reporting different cases of teacher misconduct in schools. In December 2017, a primary school teacher appeared in the court of law for sexual abuse, which included rape accusations of 9 students (Nyangasa, 2017). In January 2018, a secondary school teacher was arrested by police officers for allegations of using abusive language on Facebook (Aloyce, 2018). In May 2018, in another case, it was reported that a secondary school teacher was under the police custody for accusations of rapping his student (Moses, 2018). Most recently, on 27th November 2019, the TSC revealed that 4,046 teachers were sacked from service for various professional misconduct, between 2016 and 2019 (TSC, 2019).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies employed by headteachers to curb teacher misconduct among public primary schools in Sumbawanga Municipal and Rural Districts and the challenges that are encountered in the process. In particular, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

- i. What strategies are employed by headteachers in curbing teacher misconduct in their schools?
- ii. What challenges are encountered by the headteachers in curbing teacher misconduct?
- iii. How do headteachers overcome or to cope with the encountered challenges in their respective schools?

Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research approach. More specifically, the study employed a case study design to guide both data collection and analysis.

Sample Participants

The study involved 10 headteachers who were selected from 10 public schools in Sumbawanga Municipal and Rural Districts. The selection of the participant headteachers was based on the selected schools. Therefore, 5 headteachers (2 females and 3 males) from urban schools, and 5 headteachers (all males) from rural schools, were involved in this study.

Sampling Procedure

The purposive sampling procedure was employed to select both the sample schools and participant headteachers. First, with the assistance of the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) and District Education Officers (DEOs) in the respective districts (Rural and Municipal Districts), the researcher obtained a list of schools that had many cases of teacher misconduct to be involved in the study. Thus 5 schools from each district that had the most cases of teacher misconduct were selected for this study. Second, the headteachers whose schools had been

selected for the study were contacted to participate in the study. Thus, the headteachers who showed readiness and willingness to participate in the study were selected to take part in the study.

Data Collection

The current study employed semi-structured interviews to collect information from the participants. Before conducting interviews with the participants, the instruments were tested through a pilot study, that involved 4 headteachers from rural and urban schools who were not involved in the study. The adjustments of the instruments were done especially in terms of the clarity and relevance of content based on the pilot study. After conducting the pilot study, the researcher held interviews with participants. Each interview session lasted for about 40 to 60 minutes, and was held around the school premises, particularly in the headteachers' offices. The interviews were noted and recorded by the researcher by the consent of the participants.

Data Analysis Procedures

In the context of this study, data regarding the strategies employed by the public primary school headteachers, and challenges which they encountered in addressing teacher misconduct, as well as the coping strategies, were analysed qualitatively. The recorded interviews were transcribed, classified and synthesized in the major themes and sub-themes, and some of the arguments and explanations of participants were presented as quotations.

Ethical Issues Consideration

Ethical issues in the research were considered in the present study. The anonymity of both the study schools and participants was applied where the names of schools and participants were represented by letters 'A', 'B', 'C', 'D' and 'E' for rural schools, and 'F', 'G', 'H', 'I' and 'J' for urban schools.

RESULTS

Headteachers' Strategies to curb Teacher Misconduct in Schools

The responses of the participants revealed several different strategies that were employed by headteachers to address teacher misconduct in their respective schools.

Inspecting Teachers' Work

The responses of the participant headteachers revealed that inspecting teachers' work performance was one of the main strategies used to curb teacher misconduct. The findings indicated that headteachers inspected teachers' folio records such as schemes of work, lesson plans, lesson notes, and pupils' exercise books to ensure that teachers fulfilled their job responsibilities effectively. In this regard, HT-School D expressed his view, *"To make sure that everybody fulfills their responsibilities effectively, I regularly review teachers' lesson plans and students' exercise books...This helps to identify teachers who do not attend or miss classes"*. Additionally, HT-School I maintained:

"...In addition to checking teachers' lesson plans, I also inspect the class journals, the special forms where each teacher must sign by the end of his or her lesson in a given class. You know some teachers are clever, they can prepare their lessons just on papers without attending their classes thus class journals help to address it"

Based on the above experiences by the two headteachers, it was indicative that inspecting teachers' work performance through folio the use of records was helpful, as it enabled them to easily identify teachers who were not committed to work, and thus take appropriate disciplinary actions against them. Nonetheless, the use of such folio records varied from one school to another, though teachers' lesson plans and schemes of work were found in all sample schools.

Using Teachers' Attendance Register

The use of teachers' attendance register was revealed as one of the main strategies, employed by the headteachers in both urban and rural schools. The responses of the headteachers

disclosed that teachers' attendance registers were specifically employed to mitigate teacher absenteeism and lateness. Teachers were required to report at school before 7.30 am. After arrival, one had to sign in the attendance register, and signing was done on a daily basis:

"...Teachers must sign in the attendance book every day when they report at school in the morning. I and the deputy headteacher usually do close monitoring to make sure that everyone complies with this system. Of course, it is effective, it helps to curb misconduct particularly teacher absenteeism and lateness" [HT-School C]

In other schools, some headteachers apart from having the attendance book to be signed by teachers every morning when they reported at school, they also had in place the system that required a teacher to sign in whenever he or she had to leave the school premises before the end of the school daily timetable. HT-School F highlighted:

"...In addition to the attendance book, in recent years we also adopted the system of signing in another book for those who leave the school compound before the time, regardless of whether or not the teacher signed in the attendance book...He or she must seek permission from the headteacher before signing..."

The responses of the headteachers further revealed that every day the headteacher had to draw a line below the list of the names of teachers who reported at school on time. Henceforth, the headteacher was required to take appropriate measures against teachers whose names either appeared below the line or did not appear at all. Among others, the measures included teachers being required by the headteachers to give reasons for their lateness or absenteeism, and were given oral or written warnings by their headteachers when their behavior persisted, as HT-School A pointed out, *"I make sure that I deal with the late comers and absentees effectively, I draw the red line below the list of teachers in the book when the first lesson starts...Those who sign below the line, or those who do not sign at all, must explain..."*

The teachers' attendance register was viewed by headteachers as effective. However, teacher absenteeism and lateness remained the issues of concern because teachers came up with new forms of teacher absenteeism and lateness. It was revealed that although teachers got at school on time and registered, after a couple of hours most of them disappeared to attend their private business affairs. To ensure teachers' presence at school and lesson attendance, some schools introduced a system that required teachers to sign in a lesson attendance form at the end of each period he or she taught, as indicated by HT-School J earlier on.

Warnings and Reprimands

All participant headteachers indicated that that warnings and reprimands were frequently used to curb teacher misconduct in their schools. During interviews, it was learned that warnings and reprimands were employed as preliminary measures before further actions would be taken against persistent culprits. HT-School G, in particular, expressed this view, *"Warning, in this case, I refer to the verbal warning is widely used to regulate not only the behavior of teachers but also other staff and students. I usually warn them immediately when I notice bad behavior..."*. Correspondingly, other participant headteachers maintained that warning and reprimands were frequently employed to address various forms of teacher misconduct:

"I often provide verbal warning and reprimand in the first place for a misbehaving teacher, depending on the nature and effect of the misbehavior. If the misbehavior is serious thus might have a serious impact on the students or the general public, I provide written warning to show the teacher involved that the matter is serious..." [HT-School A]

HT-School H added:

"Some teachers are reluctant to change their bad behavior unless further measures are taken against them. If verbal warning proves failure, then written

warning will follow, and if the misbehavior persists then it will call for strong measures..."

Based on the headteachers' responses, it was evident that oral and written warnings and reprimands were mostly used by headteachers to curb teacher misconduct in their respective schools, based on two grounds. First, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, when a teacher committed an offense for the first time, the headteacher warned him or her verbally. Second, when the teacher involved in misconduct was unable to change his or her unprofessional conduct, he or she was given a warning letter with a copy kept in his or her file. The filed letter served as evidence in the future when the headteacher reported the incident to higher authorities for further actions.

School Discipline Committees (SDCs)

All the interviewed headteachers regardless of the location of their schools disclosed that the use of SDCs in addressing teacher misconduct in their schools was predominant. Their responses revealed that the members of SDCs comprised teachers who were appointed by their headteachers. The participants indicated that the major role of SDCs was to maintain staff and pupils' discipline in schools. Specifically, the discipline committees were responsible for resolving cases related to teacher misconduct before reaching the headteacher. HT-School B remarked, *"Sometimes in handling cases of teacher misconduct I collaborate with my fellow teachers at my school, through the School Discipline Committee. It helps as we get views from different members before taking the action..."*:

"...Discipline committees perform the role of the headteacher. They counsel and warn teachers who misbehave. Indeed, they are helpful because sometimes it is easier for a teacher to take advice from his or her colleagues than from his/her headteacher" [HT-School J]

The majority of participants were of the view that the school SDCs played a key role in assisting the headteachers as they performed some of the headteachers' tasks in dealing with teacher misconduct. Thus, quite a large number of the interviewed headteachers acknowledged the place of SDCs as one of the best ways of addressing teacher misconduct.

Guidance and Counseling

The responses of participants indicated that guidance and counseling were commonly practiced among headteachers in addressing teacher misconduct. All participant headteachers revealed that they employed a sort of guidance and counseling, to some teachers who were involved in misconduct. It was noted that sometimes teachers engaged in misconduct as a result of job frustration and loss of hope on the teaching profession, since the government had not attended most of the teachers' needs and claims. Such

claims included teacher promotion and payment of transfer allowances. HT-School C, in particular, indicated, *"Before taking disciplinary action against a misbehaving teacher, I usually call him or her and talk about the matter so that I guide and counsel him or her where necessary...The task of dealing with students sometimes makes the teachers frustrated..."*. Other participants believed that job stress among teachers appealed for the need of guidance and counseling, as one of the strategies to address teacher misconduct:

"...A large number of teachers are having several concerns, some of their demands have not been met for a couple of years. Some of them demand promotion, salary increments, work in unfavorable environments...All these circumstances are among the sources of job stress which make teachers frustrated, thus commit misconduct. Therefore, under those circumstances, guidance and counseling is required first before considering other measures" [HT-School G]

Henceforth, it was suggested that most headteachers believed in guidance and counseling as appropriate options to help teachers adhere to professional conduct, while waiting for their claims to be fulfilled by the government.

Reporting the Case to Higher Authorities

Participant headteachers declared that they would report teachers who committed misconduct to higher authorities such as Ward Education Coordinators (WECs), District Education Officers (DEOs) and the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC). It was noted that the headteachers who employed this strategy claimed that, they took such a measure as a last resort after other measures such as guidance and counseling, and the use of SDCs did not work:

"I report the matter to the higher authorities especially after trying all my effort unsuccessfully. Together with that, some misconduct especially the serious one does not fall under my authority. For example, criminal cases such as raping or sexual misconduct can't be handled by a headteacher because they have legal implications" [HT-School E]

The strategy was viewed as having great impacts on teachers, as it would lead to dismissal depending on the sensitivity of the case reported and the evidence given, as suggested by HT-School A, *"There are some cases of misconduct that when are committed lead to job dismissal. I have no power to dismiss a teacher from service, that is the task of the higher authorities particularly the TSC"*.

Challenges towards Curbing Teacher Misconduct in Schools

The participants were asked to highlight the challenges that faced them in curbing teacher misconduct. The following were the main challenged that headteachers encountered in curbing teacher misconduct in their respective schools.

Lack of Cooperation from District Education Office

Participant headteachers revealed that DEOs and TSC officials in particular, sometimes failed to cooperate with headteachers to curb teacher misconduct in different ways. First, the DEOs were unwilling to cooperate with headteachers especially when cases of misconduct involved teachers who had some personal relationships with the DEOs and other influential government officials. HT-School E, during the interview unearthed that:

"Some of the DEOs are not cooperative enough to the headteachers in handling some cases of teacher misconduct, that involve teachers who have personal relationships with some DOEs and other government officials. Once you report them you find that no serious action is taken against the culprit..."

It was claimed that teachers who were relatives of some DEOs and other government officials had many problems of misconduct. Others who had family relationships with the DEOs and other important officials who held high influential positions within and outside the region such as daughters, sons, nephews and others alike, were also favored by some of the DEOs when headteachers reported their misconduct. These teachers used their personal relationships with the DEOs and other government officials as loopholes to behave unprofessionally:

"...When you report the unprofessional conduct of some teachers to the DEO for the action to be taken sometimes nothing is done. For example, in my school, two female teachers are often found misbehaving... I have reported them several times to the DEO but no action has been taken against them. All these happen because such teachers are wives of certain district government officials" [HT-School I]

The Duality of the Headteachers' Roles

Data from the field indicated that headteachers had a dual role. Apart from having administrative roles, headteachers were also required to perform a teaching role. The dual role made their work particularly to curb teacher misconduct unmanageable. Most of the headteachers complained that combining teaching and administrative roles made them overloaded and ineffective to deal with teacher misconduct. In the same vein, the study found that headteachers' dual role involved many tasks such as teaching pupils, managing teaching and non-teaching staff, managing school finances and supervision of various educational programs. In that regard, during the interview, the HT-School G expressed this concern:

“...I teach for many hours each school day and I administer teachers and students at the same time... I am a human being sometimes I get tired! Let me have my roles reduced so that I concentrate on teacher management to curb teacher misconduct effectively”

Arguably, combining administrative and teaching roles provided a critical challenge to headteachers, not only in addressing teacher misconduct but also in performing any other administrative and teaching responsibilities. Consequently, such circumstances, left the headteachers with less time to deal with teacher misconduct effectively since they were overwhelmed with a multiplicity of responsibilities.

The effect of the duality of headteachers' role was more serious in rural-based schools than in the urban ones, and two main reasons were advanced for such conditions. First, their teaching load was greater than that of their counterparts in urban schools. This was due to the small number of teaching staff in rural schools, which forced the headteachers to have many classes and lessons to attend. Second, headteachers in rural areas traveled long distances to the district headquarters to attend meetings and other assignments, and discuss with DEOs on various issues about teacher and school management. The time away from school had an impact on what was to take place.

Lack of Commitment on the Part of Teachers

The responses of headteachers unveiled a lack of teacher job commitment as influencing headteachers to spend more time and effort, to ensure that teachers become committed and maintain good conduct. Such efforts by headteachers among others included frequent face-to-face meetings with teachers who did not show up for work. Headteachers complained that lack of commitment had an adverse impact on teachers' work performance, attendance, and punctuality. For instance, lateness and absenteeism were attributable to lack of commitment among teachers, as commented by HT-School J:

“My teachers are not committed to their work at all. For example, teachers have to report at school before 7.30 am, but most of them get here around 8.30 am while some of them may not come to work at all! ... I have to use much effort to remind them of their responsibilities, thus making my work extremely difficult”

Lack of Headteachers' Power to Sanction Teachers

The research findings found that lack of headteachers' power to sanction teachers who commit misconduct was partly responsible for teachers' negative and uncooperative attitude towards headteachers' work. The participant headteachers indicated that teachers particularly in urban areas, were unable to change their unprofessional conduct simply because they knew that their headteachers had no power to sanction them. HT-School F expressed this concern:

“...I have not been given the power to sanction teachers who misbehave, that is why some of my teachers undermine my authorities... Unlike a headteacher of a private school; I cannot sanction teachers who misbehave”.

More importantly, it was revealed that sometimes when headteachers reported teachers who were involved in misconduct no action was taken against them. This situation was said to affect headteachers' effectiveness in addressing teacher misconduct in their schools:

“... Sometimes when I report teachers involved in misconduct to the DEO, nothing is done especially when the case involves a teacher who is a relative of the DEO or other big shots. This always undermines my effort to deal with the teacher misconduct...” [HT-School G]

From the above claim by the headteacher, it was evident that lack of headteachers' power to sanction teachers who behave in an unprofessional manner, did not only discourage headteachers to curb teacher misconduct, but also it encouraged unprofessional behavior among teachers.

Strategies to Overcome or Cope with the Challenges

Participant headteachers were asked to provide information on the strategies which they employed to overcome or cope with the encountered challenges. The researcher intended to establish strategies used by primary school headteachers to address the challenges. The participants revealed several different experience based strategies as explained below.

Delegation of Responsibilities

Some of the participant headteachers indicated that to overcome the faced challenges, they delegated some of their responsibilities to teachers. The findings indicated that headteachers established committees to deal with students' and teachers' welfare. Such committees included the discipline committee, the academic committee, and the social affairs committee. Heads and members of such committees were chosen from among the teachers within the school. The major responsibility of the committees was to deal with various issues regarding students' and teachers' welfare. The headteachers acknowledged that the presence of committees helped to reduce the complexity of their responsibilities, as one of them had this to say:

"... As you see, as a headteacher I am burdened with many responsibilities, thus, through the use of such committees, some of my responsibilities are delegated. For instance, the discipline committee plays a great role in maintaining both teachers' and pupils' discipline within the school" [HT-School I]

The system of using the committees established within schools proved helpful to the headteachers, since such committees performed some of the headteachers' roles. The Discipline committees, in particular, were helpful as they dealt with disciplinary issues that involved both teachers and students.

Consulting the District Education Office

On some occasions, headteachers consulted the urban and rural district educational offices to seek guidance on how to address various issues. This strategy was used when headteachers were faced with difficult situations in decision making. It was found that this strategy was employed by most of the headteachers. They aimed at getting some advice and directives on teacher management, since most of them had inadequate skills to manage teacher misconduct, and were less empowered to act in some areas. Although this strategy expended both time and resources particularly for the rural headteachers, most of them viewed it effective as HT-School A:

"... sometimes I get stranded in managing teachers, therefore I normally travel to district educational office to seek help from the DEOs. I spend the whole day traveling to reach the DEOs... My school is located in a rural area but sometimes I get helped".

Inviting District School Inspectors (Education Quality Assurance Officers)

The findings disclosed that headteachers invited the district school inspectors to visit their schools. Headteachers revealed that they employed this strategy when there was an extreme lack of commitment among the teachers in their schools:

"I secretly invite the school inspectors without the knowledge of teachers, to come and inspect the school particularly the teachers. I often invite them when I find that the situation is worsening...When such officers visit the school it shows seriousness among teachers, that the government is serious on this matter..." [HT-School C]

This strategy was predominant among the headteachers in rural schools because in such areas the frequency of school inspectors' visits was very low. Headteachers had a strong belief in school inspectors. Most of them indicated that when teachers were frequently inspected they became committed to their work. School inspectors assessed both the teachers' professional conduct and their job performance, and insisted the teachers that they should adhere to the code of professional conduct.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed several different strategies employed by headteachers to curb teacher misconduct, as well as the associated challenges, and strategies employed to overcome or cope with the challenges. Based on the headteachers' responses, it was evident that headteachers both in urban and rural schools employed various strategies, to deal with different types of teacher misconduct in their schools. The use of attendance registers or books, an inspection of teachers' work, and warning and reprimands, were the most predominant strategies, that headteachers employed to address teacher misconduct in their respective schools. The responses of headteachers disclosed that the use of teachers' attendance registers and inspecting teachers' work, in particular, were specifically employed to deal with teacher absenteeism, lateness, and the general teachers' lack of commitment to work. However, in some schools especially in urban areas, such measures could not work effectively, as a result, the headteachers employed another strategy that required teachers to sign in whenever they left the school compound before the normal time. That strategy was used in addition to teachers' attendance registers and inspection of teachers' work, to curb teacher absenteeism. Regular checking of teachers' folio records and attendance registers were highlighted as one of the headteachers' effective quality assurance supervisory strategies in Gucha District, Kenya (Mobegi, Ondigi & Oburu, 2010). In other developing countries, the use of teacher attendance register to curb teacher absenteeism has been proven effective (World Bank, 2005). Class journals (lesson attendance books) are used in addition to teachers' attendance registers, to monitor teacher classroom attendance, in some secondary schools in Kondo District (Names & Sherali, 2015).

On the other hand, the use warning and reprimands (verbal and written) a strategy that was also employed by all the interviewed headteachers, was used to deal with all types of misconduct depending on the seriousness and/or severity of such misconduct. Verbal warnings/reprimands were used to address teacher misconduct that seemed to be less serious or severe. Notwithstanding, written warnings/reprimands were employed when such misconduct persisted. Indeed, written warnings/reprimands were also employed to tackle serious teacher misconduct, to show the culprit that his or her misconduct was serious thus should not be repeated. The findings of this study noted that the use of written warnings/reprimands, in particular, was effective as a copy of the warning letter was kept in the teachers' file for future reference. In Tanzania, the TSC Regulations 12(3), provides the headteachers with the power to provide warning and reprimand for various forms of teacher misconduct (TSC, 2015). Correspondingly, the previous research shows that warnings/reprimands are widely used by most of the headteachers to address teacher misconduct. In Kenya, Ndung'u (2017) revealed that warning was one of the most frequently used strategies, as 100% of headteachers admitted to frequently use verbal warnings, while more than 14% admitted to frequently use written warnings. Similarly, public primary school headteachers and deputy headteachers highlighted the use of both verbal and written warnings as one of their preferable strategies in managing professional misconduct particularly lateness, absenteeism, alcoholism, and financial mismanagement (Ng'oma & Simatwa, 2013).

Furthermore, School discipline committees (SDCs) and the use of guidance and counseling played a key role in addressing teacher misconduct among both rural and urban schools. The use of SDCs in particular, helped to reduce the work burden of the headteachers since they performed some of the tasks that were primarily meant for headteachers. Given the real situation of the headteachers where most of them were overwhelmed with administrative and teaching tasks, the SDCs assisted the headteachers to handle not only the student misconduct

but also some teacher misconduct. The literature shows that the use of SDCs in combating teacher misconduct is prevalent in various countries. More than 28% of headteachers in Kiambu County, Kenya acknowledged the use of SDCs in addressing teacher misconduct in public secondary schools (Ndung'u, 2017). Similarly, in the UK, it has been noted that headteachers seek cooperation from other senior staff within the school, other than handling the cases of teacher misbehavior on their own (Page, 2014).

Additionally, the study revealed that headteachers' use of guidance and counseling was prevalent among both rural and urban schools. The use of guidance and counseling was employed by headteachers as a strategy to try to prevent the escalation of teacher misconduct in schools before employing more serious measures. Headteachers believed that some forms of teacher misconduct were attributable to teachers' job stress, resulted from the demands of their needs and rights, which had not been attended to for a relatively long time. The headteachers were of the view that guidance and counseling was the right strategy in the first place before employing other disciplinary measures. Some previous studies also acknowledge the use of guidance and counseling, as one of the strategies by school administrators to combat teacher misconduct elsewhere in the world. Some headteachers among public primary schools in Kenya employed guidance and counseling along with other strategies, to address teacher professional misconduct in schools (Ng'oma & Simatwa, 2013).

Most importantly, reporting the cases to the higher authorities DEOs and TSCs, in particular, was unveiled by the study one of the most used strategies in curbing teacher misconduct. Headteachers regardless of the location of schools indicated that some cases of teacher misconduct were referred to higher authorities. Headteachers' limited power and authority to sanction teachers, and the types of teacher misconduct that had legal implications, among others were the main factors for headteachers' decisions to refer the cases to the higher authorities. The TSC Regulations 12(3) (2015), and Teacher Disciplinary Guidelines (2017) stipulate some forms of disciplinary measures that do not fall under the authority of the headteachers. Among others, these measures include demotion, reduction of salary, withholding of salary, and job dismissal. This finding supports Ng'oma and Simatwa's research who found that headteachers among Kenyan schools report some cases of teacher misconduct to higher authorities particularly the TSC. Such cases included absenteeism, financial mismanagement, assault, drug abuse, and alcoholism (Ng'oma & Simatwa, 2013). In another study in the same country, more than 71% of headteachers among secondary schools admitted forwarding some cases of teacher misconduct to higher authorities (Ndung'u, 2017). In the UK, headteachers consult their HR representative as soon as the incident of teacher misbehavior occurs, to establish precisely the parameters of disciplinary action (Page, 2014).

Indeed, it was evident through this study that headteachers in both rural and urban schools employed several different strategies to curb teacher misconduct, nonetheless, their effort encountered some challenges, that affected their effectiveness in addressing the problem. The study unearthed various sources of challenges that faced headteachers' effort to address teacher misconduct in their respective schools. First, combining administrative and teaching roles (Demir, 2016; Athanasoula-Reppa & Lazaridou, 2008; Whitaker, 2003; Riley) provided headteachers with a critical challenge in dealing with teacher misconduct effectively. It was learned that most headteachers were overwhelmed with multiple responsibilities. Attending classes to teach students, monitoring teachers' daily performance, dealing with other school administrative issues, and reporting to the district office to report cases and attend meetings, among others, made their work frustrating. As a result, most of the headteachers could not manage teachers and teacher misconduct in particular effectively. Elsewhere, headteachers are

burdened with many responsibilities such as teaching, planning infrastructure development, organizing human, financial and physical resources, and directing and controlling staff performance (Lahui-Ako, 2001), and difficulty in collecting and managing school fees (Harber and Davies, 2002).

Second, it was revealed that lack of cooperation from other administrative authorities particularly the district education offices, demoralized headteachers' effort to combat teacher misconduct in their respective schools. The headteachers' responses suggested that the district education officers, that is, the DEOs and TSC officers, failed to cooperate effectively when they were brought with some cases of teacher misconduct from schools. The findings revealed that the district education authority did handle fairly the cases that involved some of the culprits. The education authority's mishandling of some cases of teacher misconduct was attributable to nepotism among the education officers. Correspondingly, headteachers' lack of cooperation from other education authorities, has been identified in the literature as one of the major problems, that face headteachers in managing schools and teachers effectively. In other countries, it has been noted that headteachers lack cooperation from School Management Committees (Harber and Davies, 2002).

Third, the lack of power to sanction teachers who indulge in misconduct affects headteachers' effort to handle some cases of teacher misconduct effectively. The responses of the headteachers revealed that, as a result of headteachers' lack of power, some teacher disrespected their headteachers since they knew that, their bosses were powerless to sanction them. It was further disclosed that in urban areas some teachers who had some personal relationships with some education officers who were in charge of handling teacher misconduct, did not respect their headteachers. This condition was laid on the ground that, such teachers believed that even if their misconduct were forwarded to a higher authority, the authority's decisions would be made in their favor. Under those circumstances, it was evident that headteachers' lack of power to sanction the misbehaving teachers, coupled with education officers' mishandling of the reported cases of teacher misconduct, added frustration on headteachers' task of managing schools and teachers. Teacher Disciplinary Guidelines (2017) indicate that only the TSC District office, has the power to sanction teachers who are proven to commit misconduct lead to their dismissal from service, demotion, as well as withholding of salary and salary increment (TSC, 2017).

In dealing with the encountered challenges, headteachers both in urban and rural schools put in place some strategies to overcome or cope with the challenges. It was indicative through the responses of the participants that, the delegation of some headteachers' responsibilities to other staff at school, was imperative in overcoming some of the encountered challenges. The use of school committees that involved teachers, in particular, the discipline committee played a key role in reducing headteachers' burden, as most headteachers were having a relatively heavy burden of their responsibilities. By the same token, being composed by teachers within a school, it was arguably easier for the members of the discipline committees to advise their fellow teachers to live an ethical life, other than relying on the headteachers' effort only. Equally important, the place of the discipline committees was not only viewed in addressing teachers' disciplinary issues but also students' disciplinary problems. Elsewhere, the previous research indicates that headteachers' delegation of responsibilities and/or involving other staff in addressing teacher misconduct, has been significant. In the UK for instance, in handling teacher misbehavior in some schools, headteachers seek the assistance of both their deputy headteachers and other senior staff (Page, 2104). Likewise, in some secondary schools in Kenya, headteachers strategically involved the disciplinary committees in handling cases of

teacher misconduct, based on the fact that they were overwhelmed by many administrative engagements (Ndung'u, 2017).

Additionally, working hand in hand with the District education authorities was identified as another dimension of headteachers' strategies to overcome or cope with the challenges, that they encountered in addressing teacher misconduct. The participants' responses highlighted that headteachers in both rural and urban areas, consulted the District education officers to seek advice on various challenges that affected their decisions. In so doing, this practice helped the headteachers to address different teacher management dilemmas, thus, enabled them to make the right decisions. On the other hand, headteachers, particularly in rural areas, requested the District school inspectors (Education quality assurance officers) to visit their schools, in addition to consulting the District education officers. It was revealed that the majority of rural schools were not regularly visited by the school inspectors, unlike their counterpart urban schools. The participants believed that when teachers were regularly visited by school inspectors, they were in a good position to maintain their professional conduct, thus making the headteachers' work to manage teachers less challenging. Lack of regular visitation by quality assurance officers among schools implies that headteachers do not receive the advisory services which they could expect from the officers (Mobegi, Ondigi & Oburu, 2010).

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, headteachers play a key role in addressing teacher misconduct in schools. Several different ways are employed by headteachers to curb teacher misconduct in both rural and urban schools. These include warnings and reprimands in both oral and written forms; reporting to the cases of misconduct to higher authorities; using the School disciplinary committees; guidance and counseling; attendance registers; inspecting teachers' work performance. Nonetheless, the headteachers' effort and commitment to curb teacher misconduct in their schools, are undermined by some challenges that they encounter in the process. The duality of headteachers' roles (teaching and administrative roles), lack of cooperation from some of the DEOs, lack of power to sanction teachers for some forms of misconduct, and teachers' lack of commitment for their work, provide critical challenges for headteachers' effectiveness in handling cases of teacher misconduct. However, headteachers adopt some strategies to overcome or cope with the faced challenges. Using school disciplinary committees, and consulting the District education authorities are some of the notable strategies that headteachers in both rural and urban areas employ to deal with the challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are put forward to ensure headteachers' effectiveness in curbing teacher misconduct, among public primary schools in Tanzania:

First, there is a need to reduce headteachers' burden of their responsibilities, to ensure headteachers' efficiency and effectiveness in addressing teacher misconduct in schools. Combining both teaching and managerial/administrative roles, make the headteachers overwhelmed with their responsibilities, thus making them less effective in managing schools and teachers in particular. Therefore, it is imperative that headteachers should be assigned with administrative role only, to make them more effective in curbing teacher misconduct.

Second, power and authority to sanction teachers who misbehave, need to be vested on public primary school headteachers by the government through the ministry that is in charge of

education affairs. Providing headteachers with power and authority to sanction teachers who indulge in misconduct would help to raise respect among teachers towards their headteachers. This is because headteachers' lack of power to sanction teachers who misbehave, make teachers underrate the power and authority of their headteachers.

The District education authorities the DEOs and TSC officers, in particular, should cooperatively work with the headteachers in handling various cases of teacher misconduct that are reported by the headteachers. The uncooperative attitude demonstrated by some of the DEOs and TSC officers, demoralizes the headteachers' effort and commitment to curb teacher misconduct in schools.

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