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## **The Role of Educational Psychology to Secondary Teachers; A Case Study of Makongeni Secondary School.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Educational psychology is widely taught nearly by all countries around the world, and Tanzania is not an exception. In Tanzania educational psychology in most universities which offers Bachelor of Arts with education or in education is a core course which is taught almost in first or second year of study. This study intended to investigate the role of educational psychology to secondary teachers in Makongeni secondary school. The study dominated by two ways of data collection which are interview and observation. The interview conducted via whatsapp video call. The findings indicates that educational psychology plays a vital role as it help the teachers in cultivating motivation to their students, it also help the teachers in application of learning theories in their classroom. In conclusion, with the regard to the importance of educational psychology especially to teachers the researcher recommends as the extension of time and the level where educational psychology should be learnt or taught. Curriculum developers should review the curriculum and come up with the moderated syllabus or course outlines that could be suitable to teach and learn educational psychology.

*Key Terms; Education, psychology, Curriculum*

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### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

Educational psychology is taught in various universities purposfully to enable the teachers to have an ability to to describe, explain, predict and change the behavior and mental processes of the students. In describing a behavior or cognition is the first goal of psychology. This can enable educationist to develop general laws of students behavior especially in learning. Also in explaining , Educational Psychologists propose theories which can help to explain a how or why a certain learning behavior occurs among the students. Furthermore Educational Psychology aims to be able to predict future learning behavior from the findings of empirical research or experience the teachers they have on teaching. If a prediction is not confirmed, then the explanation it is based on might need to be revised. To Change, or controlling ascertain learning behavior can be attempted (McLeod, 2019).

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### **Literature Review**

#### **Learning Theories**

According to Ormrod, (2012) Learning is the long term change in mental representations or associations as a result of experience. Also, Ormrod, (2012) learning is the means through which we acquire not only skills and knowledge but also values, attitude and emotional reaction. According to Skinner (1976), learning is a process of adjustment to adaptation through has simulation and accommodation between the basic units of cognition stimulation with someone. In the view of psychology behavior is miscue to the interaction between stimulus and response.

A learning theory can be described as a conceptual framework used to understand and frame how information is absorbed, processed, and retained during learning (Luis & D'Cunha 2014).It is for the aim of understanding how people learn in terms of acquiring new knowledge, develop skills, modify attitudes and values and learn new behavior. Lodico, Spaulding, Voegtle (2006) theories of learning become crucial since it helps the teacher to perceive the phenomenon in the world of learning. It contains of framework of concepts, and principles as well. Various theories are used to facilitate learning process. Theories of learning provide explanation about the underlining mechanisms involved in learning.

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### **COGNITIVISM LEARNING THEORY**

The most famous Cognitivist was Piaget and Inhelder (1990) who argued that knowledge is acquired by the natural development of mental structures as the child responds to experience. O'Neill et.al (2005). Simply occur through the interaction of innate capacities and environmental events and child pass through a series of stages. McLeod (2018).Furthermore, it involves the study of mental processes such as sensation, perception, attention, encoding and memory that behaviorists highly focus on behavior that may adopted or changed because of reinforcement or punishment.

### ***Key Principles of Cognitive Learning Theory***

The following are the general principles of cognitive learning theory as illustrated by Ormrod,(2012) ; People can learn by observing others' behaviors and the consequences that result. Many early behaviorists viewed learning largely as a matter of trial and error: In any new situation, people try a variety of responses, increasing those that lead to desirable consequences and leaving unproductive ones behind. In contrast, social cognitive theorists propose that most learning takes place not through trial and error but instead through observing both the behaviors of other individuals (models) and the outcomes that various behaviors bring about.

Learning can occur without a change in behavior. As behaviorists have traditionally defined learning as a change in behavior; from such a perspective, no learning can occur unless behavior does change. In contrast, social cognitive theorists argue that because people can learn through observation alone, their learning won't necessarily be reflected in their actions. Something learned at one time might be reflected in behavior exhibited at the same time, at a later time, or never at all.

Cognition plays important roles in learning. Over the past few decades, social cognitive theory has become increasingly, cognitive in its explanations of human learning. For example, contemporary social cognitive theorists maintain that awareness of response– reinforcement and response– punishment contingencies and expectations regarding future contingencies are important factors affecting learning and behavior. Also, as you'll soon see, social cognitive theorists incorporate such cognitive processes as attention and retention (memory) into their explanations of how learning occurs.

People can have considerable control over their actions and environments. In behaviorist views of learning, people are largely at the mercy of environmental circumstances— what stimuli are encountered simultaneously (which can lead to classical conditioning), what consequences follow certain responses (which can lead to instrumental conditioning), and so on. In contemporary social cognitive theory, however, people can take active steps to create or modify their environments— perhaps by making changes themselves, or perhaps by convincing others to offer assistance and support— and they often do so consciously and intentionally. As social cognitive theorists put it, human beings have personal agency. (Bandura, 2006, 2008; Schunk & Pajares, 2005).

### ***Behaviorism Learning Theory***

The founders of behaviorisms learning theory are Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936) and Edward Lee Thorndike (1874 - 1949) who studied how animals and humans learn. Furthermore, other pioneers of behaviorism learning theory were: Burrhus Fredric Skinner (1904-1990), Edwin Ray Guthrie (1886-1959) and others. Behaviorism concentrates on observable behavior without considering motivation or other mental processes. It developed from a number of experimental studies with animals, including the train of Pavlov's celebrated dog, and progressed to experiments with rats, pigeons and higher animals,O'Neill et.al (2005).

### ***Key Principles of Behaviorism Learning Theory***

The following are the principles of behaviorism learning theory as illustrated by Carlile et al. (2004), Olson & Hergenhahn,(2013)and Slavin (2015). Reinforcement, this includes positive or negative feedback which will lead the student to form a strong association between the stimulus and the intended behavior. Another is contiguity, the more immediate the feedback the stronger the association. Furthermore, repetition the more frequent the stimulus-response the more likely is the desired outcome. Variation, varying the pattern of the stimulus generalizes the response Intermittent. Extinction, if the stimulus-response bond is not reinforced the association will die.

### ***Cognitive Development***

Cognitive development is concerned with the ability to think, to reason and to understand and remember the world around us. Also cognitive development is a way of addressing the way a child learns to think, reason and use language. Apart from that cognitive development can be referred as the process by which human being acquire, organize and learn to use knowledge (Duchesne & Mc Maugh 2016).

### ***Developmental Stages as Proposed by Piaget***

Sensory- Motor Stage (0 to 2 Years). This stage begins at birth and lasts till the child is about 2 years old. It is called Sensory-Motor Stage, because children's thinking involves seeing, hearing, moving, touching, testing and so on. This stage marks a transitional stage for a person from a biological to a psychological being. Pre- Operational Stage (2 to 7 Years). This stage is called Pre-Operational because the children have not yet mastered the ability to perform mental operations. Children's thinking during this stage is governed by what is seen rather than by logical principles. Concrete Operational Stage (7 to 11 years). At this stage a child is concerned with the integration of stability of his cognitive systems. He or she learns to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Formal Operational Stage (11 & above). This type is characterized by the emergence of logical thinking and reasoning. Other important cognitive attainments during this period are: the ability to think about the hypothetical possibilities and to solve problems through logical deductions and in a systematic manner. In Islamic view the stage of development can be seen in Hadith of prophet Muhammad (P.bh) Tell your children to pray for seven, and beat them for it for ten.( sunani abuu Daud)

## ***Motivation***

Motivation is considered as a major part of achieving any goal. This is an important factor that has a positive influence in every educational learning process. Zhu and Yang (2012) explain the motivation to be a psychological tendency and internal impulse, which stimulates and regulates the actions of an organism. Gardner and Lambert (1979) define motivation as including three components: desire to achieve a goal, effort expended, and attitudes to learning. Motivation, in terms of academic performance, refers to “cognitive, emotional and behavioral indicators involved in learning. Motivation refers to the combination of attempt plus desire to obtain the objective of learning the language plus desirable attitudes towards learning the language. That is, to say motivation in learning involves the extent to which the learner works or tries to learn a certain concept because of a desire to do so and the contentment experienced in this task. Effort alone does not indicate motivation. The motivated person spends effort towards the aim, but the person expending effort is not inevitably motivated (Gardner, 1985).

### ***Types of Motivation***

According to Bernard (2010), several theories and categorizations contribute to an understanding of academic motivation generally. These include the theory of integrative motivation introduced during the social-psychological period, as well as self-determination theory, its extensions, and the general categorizations of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation developed during the cognitive-situated period. Instrumental. Various scholars provided different types of motivation as follows; Brown (2000) and Gardner (1985), categorized motivation into two basic types of especially in language learning, it involves; integrative and instrumental, where Gardner and Lambert (1959) defines integrative as type of motivation used to language learning for personal growth and cultural enrichment; that is, the learner likes to learn a language to enter successfully into the target language society. They continued that instrumental motivation arises out of a need to learn the L2 for functional or external reasons. They involve the attainment of aims, functional aims for learning like passing exams and financial rewards. This is also supported by Dörnyei (1998) who expressed that a motivational construct involves both instrumental and integrative motivation.

Ryan & Deci They said that Self-Determination Theory categorizes motivation in accordance with the different rationales, causes, or targets which strengthen a deed or an achievement. In line with this theory, the most basic types of motivation are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Hilda, Nahusona and Toto (2004) intrinsic motivation is an encouragement that comes from inside a person, related to satisfaction. Intrinsic learning motivation is the driving force that arises from the students in the form of desire, aspiration, and ability to become someone he or she wants. Indicators of intrinsic motivation to the students includes the habit of following lectures, reading books, visiting the library, readiness to take the exam, and searching materials from the internet. Bernard (2010) stated that intrinsic motivation is then broken into three separate parts: intrinsic motivation for knowledge, for accomplishment, and for stimulation. Dörnyei defines extrinsic motivation as the motivation which refers to the actions that are performed to get some instrumental aims like earning a reward or stopping a punishment.

### ***Teacher's personal Philosophies and preferences.***

Teacher's personal philosophy of education is a self statement of your believes about teaching and learning. It encompasses what teachers believe and value about teaching, as well as how students learn best. This has great importance because; it is from this philosophy that teachers will base their decisions (Webster 2005). It is developed throughout a teachers' studies, career and teaching experiences and is best evident in pedagogical practice. It is dynamic, as the result of new and diverse experiences, especially in pre- service training, as undergraduate students are exposed to different schools, students, teachers and learning environments through professional experience (Duffy 1998).

On the other hand teacher's personal preference, Chang et al (2004), defines Personal preference as the degree to which teacher likes a specific student. Low teacher preference to the students may bring the impact to the student in studying the specific subject. Evidence suggests that teacher-student and peer social relationships are related. For example, several studies have found that low teacher preference and problematic teacher-student relationships are related to peer rejection (e.g., Chang et al., 2004; Hughes, Zhang, & Hill, 2006; Wentzel & Asher, 1995). Inclusion of teacher preference in the study of classroom peer acceptance is important due to the possible influence of low levels of teacher preference on peer rejection and vice versa. Taylor (1989) found that peer rejection in kindergarten and first grade classes did not contribute to the prediction of teacher preference in second and third grade classes after accounting for prior teacher preference. Taylor, however, did not assess peer rejection and teacher preference more than once in the same academic year, preventing determination of whether within-teacher change in teacher preference was predicted by peer rejection.

Islamic education is often perceived as education on religious matters, where in fact Islamic education based on Qur'an and sunnah. In Islam acquisition of knowledge is obligatory. Islam teaches us to uphold the highest standard of morality and teaches righteous thinking and action. In Islamic philosophy of education stresses that both teacher and students are equally responsible for teaching and learning process. Therefore the philosophy of teaching is neither student centered nor teacher centered. Allah says, Allah bears witness that has no who worshiped but He), and the angles, and those having knowledge (also give this witness) He is always maintain His creation in justice. (non has to be worshiped but He). The All the Ally wise. Qur'an 3:18.

## ***Methods***

This study uses a qualitative approach in its course of conduct. This is because the data collected were in the form of words, which carried opinions, feelings, and attitudes that reflect people's understanding of the phenomena and do not need any quantification to understand them. In this study, three methods were taken into use for data collection. First, the documentary review has been used to collect facts and identify debates prevailing in existing

writings. Besides, recorded interviews from two teachers have informed this study with significant information on role of educational psychology in secondary school teachers. Further more researcher observation was used to witness teachers class practice in relation to role of psychology. Alongside the three methods, the researcher's own experience has been of importance in offering data significant for the study. Being a student of the selected teachers, the researcher experienced many issues informing about the role played by education psychology.

Data Analysis Descriptive analysis was used for the analysis of the data obtained. The process for descriptive analysis is as follows; Forming conceptual framework; At this stage, a thematic framework was created to be used in the analysis of the data obtained. The researcher formed themes by categorising the questions he asked to the teachers. The themes formed include motivation, cognitive development, teachers personal philosophies and teachers' personal preferences, and cognitive and personality development in teaching and learning.

Data processing according to thematic framework; at this stage, the researcher formed sub-themes by categorising each question under main themes and coded the answers given. The activities shared by the teachers which is sub-theme of the theme called the motivation in learning and classroom practices environments, teacher's personal philosophies and teachers' personal preferences, application of learning theories, cognitive and personality development in teaching and learning.

Description of findings; the data obtained according to research questions were described. At this stage, the researcher gave place to direct quotations to support his findings. Therefore, each teacher in the interview was given a code number (T.1) and (T2) his opinions were given as (T.1) and (T2) respectively. Interpretation of the findings; at this stage, the findings obtained at the end of the research were discussed by being correlated with other researches or other situations.

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## **Result/ Findings and Discussion**

### **The said data were collected from two teachers from**

#### **Motivation**

According to Pourhosein Gilakjani, Leong, and Saburi (2012), the success of any action is dependent on the extent to which persons try to get their goal, along with their desire to do so. Generally people refer to this psychological factor as the impulse that generates the action as motivation. It is a motive force that arouses, incites, or stimulates action. Motivation is an important factor in specifying the readiness of learners to communicate. (T1) Competition in the classroom isn't always a bad thing, and in some cases can motivate students to try harder and work to excel. Work to foster a friendly spirit of competition in your classroom, perhaps through group games related to the material or other opportunities for students to 'show off' their knowledge or skills. (T2) Adding fun activities into your school day can help students who struggle to stay engaged and make the classroom a much more friendly place for all students.

"Benjamin Bloom" (1971) believes in that other factors such as the passage of time and environmental conditions have been affected on learning (8: p 67). Simply due to lack of learning motivation cannot be stopped the learning process of learners, they can be motivated during teaching and studying (8: p 71). Motivation is not static, it changes depending on the context, content and it changes over time and it varies from one person to another. Therefore the same student might have not the same motivation in the different context and content (Gass and Selinker, 2008). (T1) clean environment is the first key factor that I consider before starting a lesson, the cleanness should start student body, clothes, exercise book, and whole school in general. Motivation provides learners with an aim and direction to follow. Therefore, it has a key role in learning. Due to the lack of enough motivation, some difficulties may happen for learners. Without desire to learn, it is very difficult for learners to gain effective learning.

The classroom environment seems to be an important motivating factor that makes or mar the teaching and learning process. The classroom has a great contribution towards students motivation, the students may either be well or ill motivated with classroom environment (Akomolafe and Adesua 2015). Learning and teaching process normally takes place within environment, therefore for effective teaching and learning process the environment should precede all activities associated with teaching and learning. The result obtained from interview done to both teachers shows that they insist the cleanness of the classroom environment. Teachers should make the classroom environment comfortable and functional for learning to take place, so that students can learn and perform better academically and behave better (Akomolafe and Adesua 2015). Adesua (2014) environment is an important, most powerful and effective instrument of socialization where learners from different socio-economic backgrounds come together to learn. It is difficult to escape environment in the learning process. Hence Educational psychology plays a big role to train these teachers on the importance of environment on students motivation to learn.

#### **Learning Theories**

(T1) The application of these learning theories isn't easier especially when it comes to the matters of environment, curriculum, my ambitions, and nature of the students, to my side teaching by using behaviorism is good and I simply applying to my class by considering its principles. Sometime I have to shift to other theory so as to go together with the demands of the topic and the nature of my students. Aim sensitive to bad behavior shown by students, I quickly respond to the worse behavior easily through reinforcing my students to desired behavior. Reinforcement Positive or negative feedback which will lead the learner to form a strong association between the stimulus and the desired behaviour (Olson & Hergenahn, 2013).

(T2) Teaching requires profession, teaching isn't for everyone, the profession required does not end on knowing teaching materials and teaching methods only but it is strengthened by the ability to apply learning theory to respective context.

Cognitive development is concerned with the ability to think, to reason and to understand and remember different concepts, meaning or definitions provided by teacher in the classroom or concerning teaching and learning activities (Duchesne & Mc Maugh 2016). "As a qualified teacher aim responsible in nurturing the intelligent capacity of the student and not to demise it I therefore provide activities and question to the students with only reason of building their capacity to remember or think wide and wisely on the concept they have done or those they will be required to cover"(t1).

"The ability to grasp and to think about different concept varies among the students, therefore I always teach by considering the pace to which all student will understand the concepts, sometimes I have to change the items so as to make them easy understandable, sometimes I have to mix my methods to go with the capacity of the student, and mostly I teach my students by very simple language"

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## Conclusion and Recommendation

In summary, we believe that educational psychology as a field has a great contribution to y teachers in two sense; in the preparation of prospective teachers and it is responsible for continuing to push for greater involvement in teacher education programs. Making the case for such continued participation, however, may depend on the field's ability to provide empirical evidence of its relevance and effectiveness. Based on his reflection that educational psychology theory and research has contributed little to teachers' practice or to policy decisions.

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