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Enhancing the Implementation of Teachers' In-Service Training Programmes: Strategic Approaches for Public Secondary Schools in Mbeya City Council, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This study examined strategies for enhancing the effective implementation of teachers' in-service training in public secondary schools in Mbeya City Council, Tanzania. The study was guided by the Human Capital Theory, which emphasises investment in human resources to improve productivity and performance. Despite government efforts to institutionalise in-service training, challenges such as inadequate funding, limited time allocation, poor coordination, and lack of motivation continue to hinder its effectiveness. The study adopted a mixed research approach using a convergent parallel design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. A total of 96 respondents participated, including 88 teachers, 5 heads of schools, and 1 City Education Officer. Data were gathered through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics through SPSS, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Findings revealed that effective in-service training requires adequate time allocation, teacher motivation through incentives and recognition, and the introduction of regular short courses and workshops to update teachers' knowledge and skills. The study further identified challenges such as insufficient funding, limited access to technology, and irregular training schedules that reduce participation and sustainability. It concludes that improving teacher competence and educational quality depends on sustained investment in professional development. The study recommends adequate funding, inclusion of training within the school calendar, teacher motivation, improved technological access, and stronger coordination among education stakeholders.

Keywords: In-Service Training, Teacher Professional Development, Human Capital Theory.

Introduction

Teachers' in-service training refers to the continuous professional development offered to teachers who are already in the teaching profession to improve their pedagogical skills, knowledge, and competencies (Osamwonyi, 2016). It is a process through which teachers are exposed to new educational practices, methods, and innovations that help them adapt to changing curriculum demands and classroom environments. Globally, in-service training has long been recognised as an essential component in maintaining teacher quality and improving educational outcomes. According to Onyango and Tangi (2020), teachers play a critical role in determining the effectiveness of any education system as they are the main facilitators of learning at all levels. For this reason, many countries have institutionalised in-service training programmes to ensure continuous improvement in teaching standards. For example, countries such as Japan, Finland, and the United Kingdom have developed comprehensive teacher development frameworks that emphasise regular in-service training to promote teaching excellence and lifelong learning among educators.

Across Africa, in-service training has also been adopted as a vital strategy for enhancing the quality of education and addressing the challenges of teacher competence and performance. Achana, Adhiambo and Ndeke (2019) note that in-service training in Uganda and Kenya plays a significant role in improving teachers' professional skills, lesson preparation, classroom management, and interaction with learners. However, the frequency and accessibility of such programmes remain limited, with many teachers lacking equal opportunities to attend due to inadequate funding and poor coordination. Similarly, Akhter et al. (2011), as cited in Safi (2014), emphasise that in-service training should be compulsory because it helps to update teachers' pedagogical knowledge and adapt them to new educational reforms. Despite its importance, many African countries still struggle to institutionalise consistent and well-structured in-service programmes, leading to disparities in teacher performance and student achievement.

In Tanzania, the government recognised the importance of in-service training soon after independence. The Education Act of 1962 was established to regulate the provision of education and strengthen teacher training to meet the needs of the expanding education system (URT, 1995). Subsequent reforms, including the Education and Training Policy of 1995, made in-service training compulsory for teachers as a means of enhancing professionalism and improving classroom practices. However, despite these efforts, the implementation of in-service programmes has faced several challenges, such as inadequate funding, poor coordination among providers, and lack of continuous follow-up (URT, 2007). For example, UNICEF (2017) reported that

although the government increased the education budget for in-service training between 2011 and 2015, it later declined sharply after 2015, affecting the sustainability of such programmes. Serapion (2018) further observed that unfairness in access to training and lack of opportunities for seminars and workshops continue to hinder teacher development. Therefore, this study seeks to propose strategies to enhance the effective implementation of teachers' in-service training programmes in public secondary schools in Mbeya City Council, in line with the Education and Training Policy of 2024.

Theoretical Perspectives

This study was guided by the Human Capital Theory, introduced by Theodore W. Schultz in 1961, which emphasizes the importance of investing in human resources to enhance productivity and performance. The theory explains that differences in education and training lead to variations in skills, knowledge, and job effectiveness, and that individuals invest in education to improve professional competence and career growth. In the context of this study, the theory provides a framework for understanding the value of in-service training for teachers in public secondary schools, as participation in workshops, seminars, conferences, and professional upgrading enhances pedagogical skills, classroom management, and overall job performance. It also highlights the importance of evaluating the benefits of investing in teachers' professional development and implementing policies that optimize these outcomes. Applying this theory to Mbeya City Council, in-service training represents a strategic investment in human capital that can improve teacher competence, instructional quality, and student learning outcomes. Therefore, strategies to enhance the effective implementation of in-service training should focus on adequate funding, equitable access, coordinated training programmes, continuous monitoring, and collaboration with educational stakeholders to ensure sustainable professional development and long-term educational benefits.

Empirical review

Strategies to enhance the effective implementation of teachers' in-service training focus on several key areas that have been highlighted through research across different countries. First, allocation of sufficient budget and provision of incentives is essential to support teachers' professional development and motivation. Studies in the United States revealed that planning a budget for training, promotion, and teacher motivation improves job performance and quality of education (Guzman, Lavarrend & Castillo, 2013). Similarly, research in Eastern Cape emphasized long-term studies, pay incentives, promotion opportunities, and proper training as critical measures to address challenges in implementing in-service training (Luning, 2015). Additionally, providing adequate time for training ensures that teachers can fully engage in professional development. Findings from Afghanistan and Tanzania show that well-structured preparation of teachers and proper planning of the duration of training programmes significantly enhance the effectiveness of in-service training (Safi, 2014; Namamba & Rao, 2017).

Other strategies include investment in technology, formulation of supportive education policies, and provision of relevant training programmes. Studies in the United States and Australia indicate that integrating technology into training and providing vocational teachers with new methods and skills improves teaching quality and job performance (Bluestone et al., 2013; Junejo, Sarwar, & Ahmed, 2018). Research in Malaysia and Ghana highlights the importance of administrators' support, teachers' positive attitudes, policy formulation, and motivation to ensure the successful implementation of in-service training (Omar, 2014; Winful, 2018). Moreover, studies in Algeria and Tanzania emphasize that training programmes should be relevant to teachers' subject specialization, curriculum content, teaching skills, and assessment methods to enhance professional growth and effectiveness (Boudersa, 2016; Kyaruzi, 2014). Collectively, these strategies provide a framework for improving in-service training implementation, ensuring that teachers gain the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance their performance and contribute to quality education.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

The study was conducted in Mbeya City Council, one of the seven districts of Mbeya Region, Tanzania, covering an area of approximately 2,432 square kilometres with a population of about 305,219 people. The city comprises two divisions and 36 wards, with major economic activities including agriculture, trade, and animal husbandry. The research focused on seven selected wards due to limited existing studies on the contribution of in-service training to teachers' performance in public secondary schools and because the city hosts a high concentration of such schools, making it an appropriate setting to examine the relationship between in-service training and teacher job performance.

Research Approach and design

This study employed a mixed research approach using a convergent parallel design, combining qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyze data simultaneously. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the research problem and compensated for the limitations of using a single method. It enabled the researcher to gather detailed insights on the contribution of in-service training to teachers' performance in public secondary schools.

Sampling procedure and Sample size

A total of 96 participants were involved, including 88 teachers, 5 heads of schools, and 1 City Education Officer, purposely selected from seven public secondary schools in Mbeya City Council. Teachers were selected through stratified and simple random sampling to ensure equal representation of males and females, while heads of schools and the City Education Officer were purposely included for their supervisory and policy-level roles in planning and implementing in-service training programmes.

Data collection Methods and tools

Data were collected through questionnaires for teachers and semi-structured interviews with heads of schools and the City Education Officer to capture both broad trends and in-depth insights on in-service training and its impact on teachers' performance.

Data analysis

Data were collected using questionnaires for teachers and interviews with school heads and the City Education Officer. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS with simple descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The validity of the tools was checked by experts, and reliability was tested using the split-half method and Cronbach's alpha. A pilot study was conducted to test the questionnaire and fix unclear questions. Ethical issues such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were carefully followed throughout the study.

Findings

Strategies for Effective Implementation of Teachers' In-Service Training in Public Secondary Schools

This section presents the findings on the strategies for improving the implementation of in-service training in public secondary schools. Data were collected through questionnaires administered to teachers to capture their perspectives, while interviews were conducted with school heads and the City Education Officer (DEO) to obtain in-depth insights. The results are analyzed and presented in the following subsections using frequency counts, percentages, and qualitative excerpts to provide a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' views.

Table 1: *Strategies for Effective Implementation of Teachers' In-Service Training in Public Secondary Schools*

Strategy / Intervention	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Allocation of Adequate Time	80	64%
Motivation of Teachers	92	73.6%
Training to Update Teachers	72	57.6%

Allocation of Adequate Time

In this aspect, the study findings revealed that allocating enough time for training to teachers will strengthen the improvement of the teachers in terms of knowledge and skills.

The findings that were obtained from the questionnaires which were given to teachers indicated that 80 teachers (64 per cent) established the fact that, in order to practice the in-service training, time planned for internal or external training should be increased instead of it being done during the holiday period only. The training should be planned even when there is no holiday and it can be done internally and externally through the teachers' resources centres (TRC). Teachers suggested that due the significance of in-service training, in-service training should be given more time to be conducted frequently.

Also, during the interview with heads of schools, it was suggested that for implementing well the in-service training time should be increased. It was further noted that the time planned for various in-service training was limiting the proper practice of in-service training, so, it was better to plan for both internal and external training sessions without considering the holiday time to improve their teachers' competences. This was noted down during the session with the head school D were the researcher quoted saying:

We need to add more time that might be used in conducting the in-service training because for me, it helps directly and indirectly to improve the teachers' academic achievement and competencies. (Interviewee D, 23rd, August, 2025).

This implies that time is a crucial factor in implementing in-service training to the teachers to ensure the performance of teachers in public secondary schools.

Also, the head of school A added:

Sometimes I think that it is better to go back to the previous system where teachers were assigned the induction course before entering the class to teach students. Also, there was a different learning system that was planned by the government. For example, upgrading through postal study. (Interviewee A, 19th, August, 2025).

The above quotation indicated that in-service training was crucial in Mbeya City and needed to be allocated more time for teachers' effective practice.

Motivating Teachers

For successful operation of in-service training in public secondary schools, it was recommended that teachers were required to be motivated to be involved in the implementation process. It was suggested that there should be a regular effort of encouraging teachers to join in the in-service training that is offered in schools to strengthen an understanding of school activities. It was further established that if teachers were encouraged to be involved in those activities, the schools could benefit from different productive materials. The findings indicated that the majority of the teachers, 92 (73.6 per cent), proposed that there should be an inspiration factor such as gratuity, extra payment for overtime, appreciation when they execute well and training in the areas of co-curricular activities.

The findings from the interview with interviewee B point out that teachers and pupils in different primary schools should be encouraged through attending to in-service training. They contend that the majority of training was practical-oriented activities in which teachers were supposed to be active participants. Therefore, it was recommended that in order to implement well in-service training, the teachers are required to be motivated by being awarded when they excel by paying extra payment to teachers. This was gathered in the interview with respondent B who had this to say:

In-service training involves practical oriented activities, which differ from core subjects taught in class...this involves attending and learning different practical concepts. Thus, teachers should be encouraged through getting gratuity or allowance for the schools needing to praise them when they do well (Interviewee B, 26th, August, 2025).

The above quotation proposes that teachers should be encouraged to participate in the in- service training through recognizing them for producing good performance.

Introduce Training to Update Teachers

It was noted that most of the teachers and heads of schools had no expertise in various areas. Due to the fact that, teachers were allocated to monitor different co-curricular activities based on experience and interest not by expertise. Therefore, it was recommended that different training courses and workshops that would equip teachers with the required knowledge, ability and skills in supervising various core and co-curricular activities should be established. For instance, the responses from questionnaires provided to teachers showed that 72 (57.6 per cent) of them suggested that training and workshops on core and co-curricular activities have to be put in place to assist teachers to acquire relevant knowledge, ability and skills. Also, through interviews with heads of schools, it was proposed that for effective performance of school activities, appropriate seminars and workshops for training teachers have to be introduced. These courses and seminars will update teachers' skills, ability and knowledge. This was noted through the interview sessions with the head of school C, who was quoted as saying:

I believe there should be a short course training workshop that boosts our teachers once we assign them the role of supervising various school activities. This will assist them in executing their task well because they will have gained the relevant skills and knowledge on a certain activity. (Interviewee C, 21st August 2025).

The quotation above indicates that teachers lack specific training in some areas. Therefore, it was suggested to initiate short courses and workshops that might help teachers be trained and acquire new abilities, skills and knowledge. It was proposed that short courses and seminars have to be initiated to help teachers to properly implement various school activities.

Discussion

The study revealed a critical need for comprehensive training programs that enhance teachers' understanding of various school matters. Teachers emphasised that in-service training should not only focus on subject knowledge but also on pedagogical skills and school management. This aligns with Jala (2022), who argued that well-structured professional development programs significantly improve teaching effectiveness and classroom outcomes. In addition, respondents highlighted the importance of allocating sufficient budget for in-service training initiatives. El-Hamamsy et al. (2023) support this view, noting that adequate financial resources are crucial for the successful implementation and sustainability of teacher development programs.

Time allocation for training emerged as another key factor. Teachers reported that limited time, especially when training is scheduled during holidays only, reduces the effectiveness of in-service programs. Guggemos (2021) emphasized that inadequate time is a major barrier to effective professional development and recommended dedicated periods within the school calendar for training activities. Furthermore, improving access to technology was suggested as a strategy to motivate teachers and facilitate participation. Baabdullah et al. (2024) highlighted that technological infrastructure, including reliable internet access, enhances the reach and quality of professional development programs, allowing teachers to access online workshops, resources, and collaborative platforms.

Conclusion

The study concludes that effective implementation of in-service training is essential for improving teachers' knowledge, skills, and overall performance in public secondary schools in Mbeya City. Key challenges identified include limited time, inadequate budget, lack of motivation, and insufficient access to technology, which hinder teachers' participation and reduce the effectiveness of professional development programs. Addressing these challenges is critical for enhancing teacher competence and, ultimately, the quality of education provided to students.

Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness of in-service training, the study recommends designing comprehensive training programs that cover pedagogy, curriculum updates, and school management. Adequate time should be allocated within the school calendar for training, while sufficient budget and resources should be provided to support implementation. Teachers should be motivated through recognition, allowances, or other incentives to encourage active participation. Additionally, improving technological access and creating a supportive policy environment will help ensure that in-service training programs are sustained and impactful.

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