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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Assessing Teachers' Quality Management Competencies and Their Influence on Students' Learning in Public Secondary Schools in Tarime, Mara, Tanzania

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All authors contributed equally to this research.

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to assess the quality management competencies possessed by teachers in influencing students' learning in public secondary school in Tarime, Mara, Tanzania. Quality management competencies among teachers are vital for fostering effective teaching and learning environments, directly impacting student engagement and achievement. In Tarime District, challenges such as inadequate training, poor classroom management, and limited resources hinder the development of these competencies, prompting a study to assess their influence on student learning outcomes. Moreover, the study employed a mixed research approach and a convergent parallel design. The study used purposive sampling for key informants and simple random sampling for teachers. Data collection methods comprised interviews and questionnaires. The findings reveal a widespread uncertainty among teachers regarding the effectiveness of traditional mechanisms for ensuring their competencies in managing student learning, with many expressing dissatisfactions with formal education, professional development, and performance evaluations. Despite some support for mentorship and collaborative efforts, there is a clear need for reform in teacher competency development to better align with the actual needs of students and the educational environment. The study concluded that the disagreement among educators about the effectiveness of current teaching practices indicates a critical need for re-evaluation and improvement in teaching methods to better support student learning outcomes. Therefore, the government should invest in innovative professional development programs, fostering a collaborative school culture that encourages peer sharing and adaptation of effective teaching strategies.

**Keywords:** Quality management; competencies; students learning; evaluation; quality**INTRODUCTION**

Quality management competencies among teachers are essential for effective teaching and learning. These competencies include the ability to foster a positive and productive classroom environment, manage student behaviour, and facilitate meaningful learning experiences. The significance of teachers' skills in classroom management is paramount, as it directly

impacts student engagement, achievement, and overall well-being (Brophy, 2019; Marzano & Marzano, 2017). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) supports this through Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for everyone. This goal establishes global education standards that

shape local policies for enhancing teacher training and development (UN, 2015). There are four key competencies that every teacher should possess: first, pedagogical competencies, which involve the knowledge and skills needed to deliver instructional materials; second, classroom management competencies, which refer to the ability to maintain control within the classroom; third, assessment competencies, which include the skills to design and interpret assessments to evaluate student learning; and fourth, professional competencies, which relate to skills for ongoing professional learning and development (Danielson, 2011).

Moreover, every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in the United States mandates highly qualified teachers and ongoing professional development to enhance student learning, emphasizing state accountability for teacher competencies and performance evaluations (U.S Congress, 2015). In Germany, quality management competencies were adopted in the 20th century to improve vocational education through continuous professional development for teachers and trainers (Bremer, 2020). Britain similarly integrated quality management principles in education during the late 20th century, responding to global competition and emphasizing the relevance and quality of educational programs (Kaplan & Vakili, 2015). In China, significant quality management practices emerged from economic reforms in the late 1970s, with the China Association for Quality playing a crucial role in promoting these practices (Mangin & Dunsmore, 2010). The Chinese teachers' law (amended 2015) emphasizes continual professional development in management competencies to influence student learning, paralleling efforts in other countries to ensure teacher qualifications and promote innovative teaching methods (Liang, 2015).

In Africa, various countries have adopted quality management competencies to enhance teaching and learning. Nigeria initiated this effort in the 1970s with the establishment of the Social Standard Organization (SSO) in 1971, aimed at promoting quality practices across sectors (Oduro, 2012). Ghana introduced the Ghana Standard Authority (GSA) in 1960 to focus on quality assurance and management, aligning its standards with international norms, particularly through the adoption of ISO 9000 series standards in the 1990s. The country has also established bodies like the Ghana Quality Organization (GQO) and the Ghana Association of Certified Quality Professionals (GACQP) to support

quality management initiatives (MOE, 2014). In South Africa, the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) was established in 1945 to promote quality management, and the country adopted ISO 9000 series standards in the 1980s to enhance its quality management practices (Kelly & Kiholoe, 2014). Uganda's focus on quality management gained traction in the early 2000s with the launch of the Quality and Standards Organization in 2002, in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), which aimed to improve quality management across various sectors, including education and healthcare (MOES, 2017).

In Tanzania, the origin of quality management competencies can be attributed to a combination of international influences and domestic initiatives. The country has been responsive to global trends in education quality and has adopted principles from renowned quality management framework such as total quality management (TQM) and ISO standards. Tanzanian Education and Training Policy (2014) supports secondary school teacher's competencies including pedagogical skills, content knowledge and assessment expertise, this very crucial for creating better students' achievement. In educational policies it focuses on reinforcing the focus of quality teacher education and development for the better upcoming teachers. It also outlines the strategies for strengthening teacher education and institution program which will help teachers to develop their knowledge and skills and also growing their professionalism (URT, 2018).

In Tarime District, the issue of teacher's quality management competencies has no concrete report, although there is a large number of population and enough number of secondary schools. Yonas et al. (2023) revealed that a shortage of instructional materials, poor professional relationships between teachers and students, and poor classroom management skills were the challenges facing teachers. However, it was added that the lack of adequate training and professional development for teachers and administrators, which can result in insufficient knowledge and skills to implement quality management practices effectively. Additionally, limited financial resources often constrain schools' ability to invest in necessary tools, technologies, and infrastructure to support quality management initiatives (Makiya et al., 2022). There is also the issue of resistance to change, where educators and staff may

be reluctant to adopt new practices or technologies, preferring traditional methods. Furthermore, inconsistent policies and standards across different regions or districts can create disparities in the quality of education. Therefore, the researcher decided to choose Tarime as the area of study to assess the quality management competencies of secondary school teachers in influencing students learning. The study is expected to help in getting a clear status of competent and incompetent teachers and how it affects students' learning and what measures to be done to ensure the problem is solved.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In Canada, the study was done by Smith and Jone (2017) on quality management practices and student learning outcomes in public secondary schools. Qualitative approach was used to gather and analyse data. The study utilized methods such as interviews, observations, and surveys to collect data from teachers and students in public secondary schools. The study found that teachers, who demonstrated strong communication and organizational skills, as well as the ability to provide constructive feedback, were more effective in facilitating student learning. These competencies were observed to create a positive learning environment and encourage students to engage in their own learning. One of the potential critiques of the studies may be the generalizability of their findings. The results may be specific to the particular schools and contexts in which the studies were conducted, and may not be easily applicable to all public secondary schools. Thus, future studies should employ larger sample sizes and utilize more rigorous research methodologies, such as randomized controlled trials, to ensure the validity and generalizability of the findings.

In china, Wang and Chen (2016) did a study on the impact of teacher subject knowledge and pedagogical expertise on student learning. Quantitative approach was used for data collected through a survey questionnaire administered to teachers and students, as well as through standardized tests administered to students, explored the influence of teachers' subject knowledge and pedagogical expertise on student learning. The study found that teachers who possessed in-depth knowledge of their subject area and were able to effectively convey this knowledge to their students through various instructional methods had a significant impact on student learning outcomes. The study

focuses on teacher behaviour and skills, without considering external factors such as student motivation, home environment, and school resources. Research should explore the effectiveness of specific interventions and training programs targeted at enhancing teachers' quality management competencies. This would help identify best practices and facilitate professional development opportunities for teachers.

In France, Lacan and Dufour (2018) conducted a study on teacher competencies and student achievement: The link between quality management and learning outcomes. The study used a mixed methods approach, while methods of data collection including surveys/questionnaires administered to teachers and students, interviews with teachers and students, classroom observations, and analysis of student achievement records and assessments. The study found that teachers' competencies in quality management, including their ability to create a supportive classroom environment, use differentiated instruction, and provide timely and constructive feedback, were positively associated with students' academic achievement and engagement in learning. The study is the potential for self-report bias, as data on teacher competencies and student outcomes were primarily collected through surveys or interviews. Future study should examine the potential mediating factors between teacher competencies and student learning outcomes, such as student motivation, engagement, and self-regulation, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying processes.

In Nigeria, Owolabi (2017) examined on quality management competencies of teachers and student academic performance in Nigeria, investigate the relationship between the quality management competencies of teachers and student academic performance in Nigeria quantitative approach were used. Data for these studies were collected through surveys/questionnaires administered to teachers and students, analysis of student achievement records and assessments, and examination of teachers' quality management competencies. The study found that teachers who possess competencies in instructional planning, classroom management, and assessment strategies have a positive impact on student learning outcomes. The study focuses only on a specific region, therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other regions. Future studies should include larger and more

diverse samples to ensure the findings are representative educational system. Comparison studies between different regions within Tanzania would also provide valuable insights.

In Kenya, Kizito and Luvanda (2018) conducted a study on teacher quality management competencies and student motivation in Kenyan schools. The study investigated the influence of teacher quality management competencies on student motivation and engagement in learning. The researchers used a mixed-methods approach; the researchers utilized surveys or questionnaires to gather quantitative data on student motivation and engagement. Also conducted interview with teachers and students to gather qualitative data on teacher quality management competencies and their impact on student motivation. The study identified competencies such as effective communication, adaptability, and cultural responsiveness as key factors in promoting student motivation and engagement in the learning process. While the study focused on teacher quality management competencies, it would have been beneficial for the researchers to consider the potential influence of other variables such as classroom environment, curriculum, and student background on student motivation. Future research should explore the effectiveness of specific interventions and professional development programs aimed at enhancing teachers' competencies. This would help inform policy and practice for improving the quality of education in the country.

In Tanzania, the study was done by Kavishe (2015) on the quality Management Competencies of Teachers and Their Influence on Effective Learning in Tanzanian Schools. The study employed a mixed approach whereby data collected through surveys and analysis of student performance data. The study found that teachers with strong knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical skills were able to effectively engage students in learning. The study emphasized the importance of teachers' ability to design and implement effective instructional processes, assess student learning, and create a positive learning environment. The study is focused on specific regions or schools in Tanzania, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Future research should explore the effectiveness of specific interventions and professional development programs aimed at enhancing teachers' competencies in Tanzania. This would help inform

policy and practice for improving the quality of education in the country.

## **METHADODOLOGY**

This paper employed mixed research approach combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2017). The paper also utilized a convergent parallel design to merge diverse data, allowing for a robust analysis (Creswell, 2014). The target population included 532 teachers, 45 Heads of Schools, 1 District Educational Officer, and 26 Ward Educational Officers, totalling 604 individuals. The sample size was determined using the Yamane formula, resulting in a sample of 95 respondents. Various sampling techniques were employed, including purposive sampling for key informants and simple random sampling for teachers. Data collection methods comprised interviews and questionnaires to gather comprehensive insights into teachers' competencies (Yin, 2018; Bryman, 2016). Overall, the chapter emphasizes the importance of rigorous methodological approaches in exploring the role of teacher competencies in enhancing educational quality. The study employed questionnaire and interviews as instruments for data collection. The study ensured the validity of the instruments through expert review and reliability through split-half method alongside a pilot study to refine methodologies. Data collection followed a systematic procedure with ethical considerations to protect participant rights, while analysis involved both statistical methods for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative insights.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This objective aimed to find out the mechanisms used to ensure competences for teachers in managing students learning. The researcher attempted to find out the information from teachers, head of schools, DEO and WEOs on mechanisms used to endure students' learning. Information presented in this section was obtained first from teachers who were required to respond to questionnaires by responding whether they strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree or strongly disagree with the statements given. Secondly head of schools, WEOs and DEO were required to respond to questions through interview.

Table 1 outlines respondents' views of various mechanisms used to ensure teachers' competencies in

managing students' learning. Their responses are presented as follows

**Education and Certification**

A majority of respondents, 45.6%, strongly disagree that education and certification effectively ensure teachers' competencies in managing students' learning. Additionally, 34.2% disagree, while 13.9% are undecided. A small percentage, 3.8%, agrees, and 2.5% strongly agree. This indicates a significant scepticism about the role of formal education and

certification in ensuring teaching competency. On the contrary, Thompson and Richardson (2017) emphasized the importance of teachers' passion for teachers' subject matter and their ability to make the material engaging and relevant to students. This relies heavily on self-report measures, which are subject to bias and may not accurately reflect the actual impact of teacher enthusiasm, support, or relationships on student learning outcomes.

Table 1. The mechanisms used to ensure competencies of teachers in managing students learning.

Mechanisms Used to Ensure Competencies of Teachers in Managing Students Learning	1		2		3		4		5	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Education and certification	2	2.5	3	3.8	11	13.9	27	34.2	36	45.6
Professional development	1	1.3	2	2.5	3	3.8	27	34.2	46	58.2
Observation and evaluation	1	1.3	1	1.3	5	6.3	20	25.3	52	65.8
Feedback from students and parents	3	3.8	7	8.9	11	13.9	21	26.6	37	46.8
Professional standards	7	8.9	9	11.4	9	11.4	22	27.8	32	40.5
Standardization tests	2	2.5	3	3.8	14	17.7	24	30.4	36	45.6
Mentorship programs	3	3.8	7	8.9	10	12.7	19	24.1	40	50.6
Performance evaluation and feedback	1	1.3	4	5.1	11	13.9	24	30.4	39	49.4
Supportive school environment	2	2.5	4	5.1	5	6.3	22	27.8	46	58.2
Professional learning communities	2	2.5	4	5.1	13	16.5	20	25.3	40	50.6

Source: Field Data (2024)

**Professional Development**

For professional development, 58.2% strongly disagree and 34.2% disagree with its effectiveness in ensuring competencies. Only 3.8% are undecided, 2.5% agree, and 1.3% strongly agrees. The overwhelming disagreement suggests that respondents do not view professional development as a critical mechanism for improving teachers' ability to manage student learning. As supported by interview response, Head of school E responded that:

We ensure that teachers remain competent by providing continuous professional development opportunities. These include workshops, seminars, and courses focused on the latest teaching strategies, classroom management techniques, and educational technologies. By keeping teachers updated on best practices, we ensure they are well-equipped to manage student learning effectively (Interview E, July 2024)

This reflects that continuous professional development keeps teachers at the forefront of educational

advancements, ensuring they have the necessary skills to manage and enhance student learning effectively.

**Observation and Evaluation**

Observation and evaluation are perceived negatively, with 65.8% strongly disagreeing and 25.3% disagreeing that these mechanisms ensure teacher competency. A small percentage, 6.3%, is undecided, while 1.3% either agree or strongly agree. The high level of disagreement implies that these practices may not be seen as effective tools for enhancing teaching skills. From teachers' response, during interview one head of school said that:

We conduct regular performance evaluations to assess teachers' effectiveness in managing student learning. These evaluations involve classroom observations, student feedback, and self-assessment. The insights gained are used to provide targeted support and resources to help teachers improve areas where they might be struggling (Interview, A, July 2024)

This shows that performance evaluations provide a structured mechanism to identify strengths and areas

for improvement, ensuring that teachers receive the support they need to enhance their competencies and manage student learning more effectively. Likewise, Dapaah and Shouh (2016) stated that teachers' encouragement and guidance can foster conducive learning environment for students. Therefore, teachers play a significant role in providing academic and emotional support to students, which positively influences their learning both inside and outside the classroom.

### **Feedback from Students and Parents**

In terms of feedback from students and parents, 46.8% of respondents strongly disagree, and 26.6% disagree with its role in ensuring teaching competency. However, 13.9% are undecided, 8.9% agree, and 3.8% strongly agree. This suggests that while feedback is valued by some, the majority do not see it as a reliable mechanism for managing student learning. Moreover, Stürmer and Seidel (2019) emphasized the importance of teachers' ability to create meaningful connections with students, provide constructive feedback, and encourage independent and collaborative learning. Therefore, teachers should incorporate a multi-level approach that considers the interactions between teachers, students, schools, and the wider community in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing student learning outcomes.

### **Professional Standards**

Regarding professional standards, 40.5% of respondents strongly disagree, and 27.8% disagree with their effectiveness. Meanwhile, 11.4% are undecided, 11.4% agree, and 8.9% strongly agree. This mixed response indicates that while there is significant disagreement, a portion of respondents recognizes the importance of adhering to professional standards. Additionally, WEO said that:

Professional standards are essential for maintaining quality in education, but many teachers feel overwhelmed by them. It's important to provide support and resources that help educators understand and implement these standards effectively. Building a collaborative culture can help bridge the gap between compliance and genuine improvement (Interview WEO, August 2024).

This highlights the need for ongoing professional development that empowers educators to view standards as tools for growth rather than just requirements. By fostering a supportive environment, we can enhance the overall effectiveness of teaching

and learning in our schools. Linking this to competency theory, ongoing professional development equips educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate and apply professional standards effectively. By viewing standards as growth tools, teachers can develop critical competencies that enhance their teaching practices and ultimately improve student outcomes.

### **Standardized Tests**

A significant 45.6% of respondents strongly disagree, and 30.4% disagree that standardized tests ensure teachers' competencies. In contrast, 17.75 are undecided, 3.8% agree, and 2.5% strongly agree. The high level of disagreement suggests that standardized testing is not widely seen as an effective tool for ensuring teaching quality. In contrast, Mgaya and Mihale (2016) shows that teachers who showed genuine care and interest in their students' well-being and academic success were able to create a conducive learning environment both inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, high level of disagreement regarding the effectiveness of standardized tests indicates a strong uncertainty among educators about their ability to measure teaching quality. This underscores the importance of alternative assessment methods that recognize and value teachers' interpersonal skills and their commitment to student well-being. By fostering supportive relationships and focusing on holistic educational approaches, schools can create more effective learning environments that enhance both teaching quality and student outcomes.

### **Mentorship Programs**

For mentorship programs, 50.6% strongly disagree, and 24.1% disagree with their impact on teacher competency. A total of 12.7% are undecided, 8.9% agree, and 3.8% strongly agree. While mentorship is appreciated by some, the majority do not believe it sufficiently ensures competency in managing students' learning. Moreover, from the interview, head of school C said that:

We also encourage mentorship and peer collaboration among teachers. Experienced teachers mentor newer ones, sharing effective strategies and insights into managing student learning. Additionally, peer collaboration sessions allow teachers to share challenges and solutions, fostering a community of continuous improvement (Interview B, July 2024).

This demonstrates that mentorship and peer

collaboration create a supportive environment where teachers can learn from one another, refining their competencies and improving their ability to manage student learning. Moreover, Waithira (2015) is in line with these findings as revealed that, students who felt supported and encouraged by their teachers were more motivated to achieve their academic goals.

### **Performance Evaluation and Feedback**

In the area of performance evaluation and feedback, 49.4% of respondents strongly disagree, and 30.4% disagree with its effectiveness. A smaller group, 13.9%, is undecided, 5.1% agree, and 1.3% strongly agrees. This suggests that while performance evaluations are used, they are not widely trusted as mechanisms for ensuring teaching quality. The data indicates a significant lack of trust in performance evaluations, which suggests that these assessments may not adequately reflect teachers' competencies in quality management. Competence theory emphasizes the importance of effective evaluation methods that accurately assess not only knowledge but also the ability to apply skills in real classroom settings. When a large percentage of respondents express ambiguity about the effectiveness of evaluations, it undermines the potential for these assessments to drive professional growth and improve teaching quality. To enhance trust and effectiveness, performance evaluations should be aligned with comprehensive competence frameworks that incorporate feedback, ongoing support, and opportunities for professional development. Likewise, Adarkwah, (2021) found that a blended form of formative and summative feedback can improve teaching and learning. Feedback in any form should be specific, timely, frequent, supportive, and constructive. Negative feedback can distort learning, affective states of the recipient of feedback, and the job performance of employees. This highlights the need for a more comprehensive and supportive feedback system that aligns with competence frameworks to foster professional growth and enhance teaching quality.

### **Supportive School Environment**

A supportive school environment is viewed somewhat positively, with 58.2% strongly disagreeing, and 27.8% disagreeing with its impact on teacher competency. Only 6.3% are undecided, 5.1% agree, and 2.5% strongly agree. Despite some agreement, the majority do not believe that a supportive environment alone ensures effective teaching. Likewise, Hamez (2017) highlighted that teachers find it challenging to address

the diverse learning needs of their students, particularly those with special educational needs. Factors such as specific school policies, societal attitudes towards education, and teacher professional development opportunities could not be identified.

### **Professional Learning Communities**

For professional learning communities, 50.6% of respondents strongly disagree, and 25.3% disagree with their effectiveness in managing student learning. A total of 16.5% are undecided, 5.1% agree, and 2.5% strongly agree. This indicates a general scepticism about the effectiveness of learning communities in fostering teacher competencies. On the contrary, competence theory posits that collaborative environments should enhance professional development by enabling teachers to share best practices and refine their skills. However, when over three-quarters of respondents express doubts about the efficacy of PLCs, it suggests that these communities may not be adequately structured or supported to promote meaningful growth. To align with competence theory, PLCs must focus on targeted, results-driven initiatives that prioritize the development of specific competencies essential for improving teaching and student learning.

The overall data reveals a strong sense of disagreement among respondents regarding the effectiveness of most mechanisms used to ensure teachers' competencies in managing student learning. This widespread uncertainty could imply a need for revisiting and possibly reforming these mechanisms, focusing on improving their perceived relevance and effectiveness. Addressing these concerns could be crucial in enhancing teacher development programs and ultimately improving student learning outcomes.

Despite teacher's responses, interview was conducted to head of schools concerning the mechanisms used to ensure competencies of teachers in managing students learning. Their responses are presented as follows. Moreover, through interview with the DEO it was added that:

We provide teachers with access to a variety of teaching resources and tools, including lesson planning, educational materials, and technology platforms. These resources are designed to support teachers in delivering high-quality instruction and managing diverse student needs effectively (Interview A, July 2024).

This implies that access to a wide range of teaching

resources empowers teachers to manage student learning more effectively by allowing them to tailor their instructional approaches to meet diverse student needs. Access to a diverse array of teaching resources and tools directly aligns with competence theory, which emphasizes the necessity of equipping educators with the skills and materials they need to enhance their teaching effectiveness. When teachers have the ability to tailor their instructional approaches using varied resources, they can better address the unique learning needs of each student, thereby fostering a more inclusive classroom environment. This empowerment not only enhances teachers' competencies in lesson delivery but also enables them to engage students more effectively, leading to improved academic outcomes. Ultimately, providing these resources supports the development of a competent teaching workforce that can adapt to the complexities of modern education. However, Lee and Lee (2019) demonstrated that students who feel safe and valued in their classroom are more likely to be engaged in their learning and develop a sense of belonging within the school community.

## CONCLUSIONS

The data on measures used by teachers to influence students' learning, both in and out of the classroom, reveals a significant level of dilemma regarding the effectiveness of many traditional teaching practices. A substantial number of respondents expressed disagreement with the impact of effective teaching methods, clear explanations, and engaging activities on student learning. This widespread disagreement suggests that these commonly employed strategies may not be fully aligning with students' needs or expectations, potentially highlighting areas where teaching practices could be reevaluated or improved. The overall lack of confidence in these methods indicates a need for educators to explore alternative or enhanced strategies that better support student achievement.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommended that, in order to address the concerns regarding the effectiveness of traditional teaching practices, it is crucial for the government to invest in professional development programs that equip educators with innovative teaching strategies tailored to diverse student needs. Head teachers should foster a culture of collaboration and continuous feedback within

their schools, encouraging teachers to share best practices and engage in peer observations to refine their approaches. Additionally, teachers themselves should be empowered to experiment with and adopt new instructional methods, utilizing student feedback to adapt their teaching styles and enhance engagement. Collectively, these efforts can lead to a more responsive educational environment that prioritizes student achievement and aligns with contemporary learning expectations.

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