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EXPLORING STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON WOMEN TEACHERS' ROLES IN CENTRAL DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF ZANZIBAR

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Abstract: This study explored the students' perception on women teachers' roles in the public primary schools in Central District of Zanzibar. It involved primary school students from selected primary schools. The study applied a qualitative approach in the study process. Data were collected using focus group discussion method. The semi-mixed approach data were analyzed through thematic and descriptive methods. The study used explorative research design where by purposive sampling and convenience sampling was applied to obtain data from respondents. Indeed, the study involved 36 students from selected schools. Primary and secondary data were used to collect data. It was found that students had the positive perceptions over women teachers despite the low performance over their roles. The study recommended that, there should be frequently follow up of the women teachers after certain time or after job training program for the purpose of the identifying the weaknesses and achievements of the women teachers because women teachers are the basic asserts in the process of education at primary level. Mo over, the study recommended that, women primary school teachers should engage in professional interactions with other experts including their fellow teachers, teacher center coordinators and District Education Officers. Doing this helps women teachers to expand their knowledge and skills and improves professional development.

Keywords— Students' perception, Primary school, Women teachers & Zanzibar

INTRODUCTION

Teacher professionalism is defined as the knowledge, skills, and practices that teachers must have in order to be effective educators (Pena-Lopez, 2016).The quality of child's education relies much

on the quality of the teacher. Hence professional development contributes to the effectiveness of teachers by providing academic improvement that is essential for improving and enhancing students' academic performance (Zeiger,2018). In order to influence teacher's effectiveness, professional development must be of high quality, sustained, intensive and foster collective responsibility for enhancing students 'academic performance (Soine& Lump,2014).

In Europe, the highest number proportion and distribution of primary school teachers are women. As for instance in all European member states, primary school teachers in 2014 were predominantly women (Grandouska&Gheorghiu, 2016) and the share of women reached 90% in all 11 member states with the highest proportions in Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia (97%) and Italy 96%. Hence, the prevailing construction of primary teaching in the United Kingdom and elsewhere is that of a feminized occupation United Nation (2019). Primary education in Sub Sahara Africa expanded from 1960s to the1980s. In many countries the teaching profession was dominated by male (Haugen et al, 2014). On top of that, women teachers in Sub Saharan Africa, especially Western and Central regions were under represented (Majgaard&Minget, 2012). However, post-independence in many countries of Sub Sahara Africa, education system became among the significant components for every independent government in Africa and the feminization in primary education started there (Skelton, 2012), as a result of International Conventions of Education for all and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and that of Dakar frame work for action 2000. In some countries of the Eastern and Southern Africa such as Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, the gender parity in education in terms of teacher ratio is a problematic issue in primary level (Dilly & Francesca, 2019). Previous studies show that women teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa are faced with professional challenges in enhancing students' academic performance. As Mulkeen,(2009) explained that women need maternity leave and sometime frequent illnesses affect them. Women are affected with over loaded, due to the factor that, once teachers leave, the filling of their job position is a slow process, low payments and poor working conditions affect women teachers in their working places. Moreover,the author contributed that women teachers are faced with the negative words describing them from their men administrators. Tanzania has both women and men teachers with high number ratio of women teachers in primary schools (Ministry of education science and technology, 2017). This ratio indicates that, Tanzania goes a step in comparing with Kenya and Uganda in East African countries (Tamusuza, 2011). The educational system in the years 1960s-1970s in Tanzania transformed the primary education

assisted by the newly government and parents. However, in 1980s seemed to decline (Meena, 2018). As a result of the National and International Conventions, 1990s more efforts to revise the educational system was implemented. Zanzibar however, declared free and compulsory education since (1964) soon after independence, to meet the demand for the Education For All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (2000). More recently, Ministry of Education has changed the primary education system from 7 years to 6 years through Zanzibar Education Policy 2006 (Mo EVT, 2006). Apart from that, the Zanzibar constitution (1984) declared equal rights for men and women access to social economic and development opportunities. However, in addressing these issues, there are various international and regional convention, treaties and commitment as agreed by Tanzania government to implement, monitor and report the outcomes for the sustainable development on education. According to (Ministry of Labour, 1997) through Zanzibar Labour Act 1997 and the (Zanzibar Gender Policy, 2016) stated that, no female employee shall be discriminated by reason of her sex. However, the increasing number of primary schools led to employ more women teachers. Although women and men primary school teachers are treated similar in material conditions in Tanzania, women teachers seem to face professional challenges in enhancing student's academic performance (Sharon Tao, 2019). On top of that, most of the challenges that have been identified by previous studies seem to base on social and economic sphere and looked as general challenges, rather than professional one. Therefore, this situation boost the researcher to explore deeply what are the professional challenges facing women primary school teachers in enhancing students' academic performance in a particular region.

Thus, in the Central District of Zanzibar, very little is known about professional factors facing women primary teachers in enhancing student's academic performance. Therefore, the researcher of this study became interested to conduct this study to explore the professional factors, identify its root sources, and how those factors affect student's academic performance in the Central District of Zanzibar, through which, the findings will provide the gateway to the government towards the solution over the perception of students. Due to that, the study was very important to be conducted to fill that knowledge gap. Methodologically, most of the previous studies were conducted through a qualitative approach only. Therefore, this study felt the methodological gap by conducting the study through a mixed-method approach.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in public primary schools found in the Central District of Zanzibar. The researcher selected this area of study purposively because the area possesses the majority of women teachers with a low contribution in academic performance in the standard six national examination results among students. The target population of this study involved 36 students in six primary schools namely Mwera, Jumbi, Jendele, PongwePwani, Charawe, and Ubago. The others were head teachers, District education officers (DEO), and students from the proposed population. The purposive technique was used for head teachers and DEO. This study applied mixed research approaches, in data collection and data analysis involving key informant interviews, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) for effective collection of accurate data from the field. The researcher decided to use a mixed approach because it helps the researcher to gain in-depth knowledge that the researcher managed to get views and experiences of the participants based on the study objectives. In addition to that mixed approach helps to answer the research questions and reach the objectives of this study so easily (Cresswell, 2012). Also, the mixed approach is more flexible and relates to the sample size of this study (Albright et al 2013).

The study used an explorative research design. The researcher used this design because explorative research designs are normally used when the researcher has little information about the problem, so he/she require new and recent information about the problem. Indeed, little is known by the researcher concerning the professional factors facing women primary school teachers in enhancing student's academic performance in Central District, so the researcher established the information respectively. Also, the exploring research design is directly related to the research topic, research questions, and the objectives of the study. Sampling technique is a technique of selecting individual members or a subset of the population to make statistical/al inferences from them and estimate characteristics of the whole population (Fleetwood, 2020). The study used the purposive and convenience sampling techniques to select the respondents. Purposive sampling technique was involved to select six (07) key informants (the school heads and District education officer), three heads from schools with a high number of women primary teachers, and three schools from schools with a small number of women primary teachers. General these key informants had relevant and in-depth information as needed by the researcher of this study because of their job position. Convenience sampling technique was used because the researcher wanted to choose any men and women primary teachers as a participant from sampled population. Convenience sampling provided the chance to select six students from each selected school to form Focus group

discussions. The reason for selecting this technique was that convenience sampling direct allows the researcher to select the respondents in the sense that they were mainly ready and available at that moment (Taheerdost, 2016). Hence, six (06) schools were selected in this study out of 38 schools.

The sample size for this study was 36 students with some seven (7) teachers as key informants. The students include 18 girls and 18 boys. Primary data refers to data that have been collected from first-hand experiences (Muhammad & Kabir, 2016). The primary data were collected information directly from the field to explore professional factors facing women primary school teachers. This data assisted the researcher to gain accurate information from respondents.

The documentary review was utilized to collect secondary data. To obtain the information from secondary data the researcher reviewed varieties of documents related to this study topic. Hence, the data were collected through published and unpublished documents, such as books, policies, government reports journals, and other electric media. The secondary data was applied to make justification and more clarification about the topic. Data collection is a process of collecting information from all the relevant sources to find answers to the research problem (Dudovskiy, 2018). Generally, multiple data collection tools were used in this study to achieve the research goal and to answer the research questions as presented. Data analysis is the process of collecting, modelling, and analyzing data to extract insight that supports decision-making (Calzon, 2021). While data presentation refers to the organization of data into tables, graphs or Charts, so that logical and statistical conclusions can be derived from the collected measurements (Ocenar, 2014). Hence, this study used thematic analysis. Through thematic analysis, the participants were recorded using audiotaped after being given consent. However, the researcher was familiar with the data by reading several times, assigning preliminary codes, search for patterns or themes, review themes, defining and naming themes (Elkatawneh,2016). The researcher intended to use thematic analysis because it is a good approach to research any kind of study about people's views, opinions, knowledge, and experiences or values from a set of qualitative data such as interviews (Clarke & Braun, 2014).

Validity and reliability are concepts used to evaluate the quality of research. They indicate how well a method, technique, or test measure something. Reliability is about the consistency of measurement that gives consistent results. While Validity is about the degree to which a questioner measures what it was intended to measure (Roopa & Rani, 2019). The study used data triangulation

methods including interview, and Focus group discussion (FGD) techniques to ensure the credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness of the study. Hence to validate the validity the researcher cross-checked the interview guide, and FGD guides to avoid ambiguous and poorly prepared items to manage consistency and validity of the instruments. For the sake of assuring validity and reliability, the collection of the data was in two languages to mitigate obstacles to communication. On top of that, there were pre-testing of the interview and focus group discussion guides as well as questioner and observation tools before the data collection process to determine the validity and reliability of the instruments to the study objectives.

The researchers asked for a research permit from the vice president's office on behalf of the revolutionary government of Zanzibar. Also, the researcher asked for another permit from the Central District officer who had the power to allow the study to be conducted in his/her district. On top of that, the researcher sent the informed consent letter to the respondents before the data collection process. The research permit allowed the researcher to be accepted in a targeted area. The issue of confidentiality was maintained by not using the information that was provided by the respondents out of this study. Furthermore, the respondent was asked not to write their name or any other identification that described the respondents. Therefore, confidentiality, anonymity, and informed consent were considered almost in conducting this study. The study got a research clearance from the State University of Zanzibar to enable the researcher to collect information in Central District.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper presents results on students' perceptions on women teachers' over their roles. The perceptions measured involved influence of teaching style, strategies, methodology, philosophy and being a model. Other indicators measured were learning instruction, learners understanding, students-teacher communication and teacher's approach.

Table 1: Students' Perception on Women Teachers' Roles (N=36)

<i>Variables Influencing Learning</i>	<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Influence of teaching style</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>94.4</i>
	<i>No</i>	<i>02</i>	<i>5.6</i>
<i>Influence of teaching strategies</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>91.7</i>
	<i>No</i>	<i>03</i>	<i>8.3</i>
<i>Influence of teaching methodology</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>100.0</i>
	<i>No</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>00.0</i>
<i>Influence of teaching philosophy</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>09</i>	<i>25.0</i>

	No	27	75.0
<i>Teacher's model</i>	Yes	13	36.1
	No	23	63.9
<i>Influence of learning instruction</i>	Yes	34	94.4
	No	02	5.6
<i>Learners understanding</i>	Yes	34	94.4
	No	02	5.6
<i>Students/teachers communication</i>	Yes	35	97.2
	No	01	2.8
<i>Teachers Approach</i>	Yes	7	19.4
	No	29	80.6

The results indicated that there were 36 primary students who participated in the study in selected schools of the Central District. Half of them 18 (50 %) were girls and 18 (50 %) were boys.

Influence of Teacher's Teaching Style in Learning

Table 1 presents the results on influences of teacher's teaching style in successful learning. It has been found that the majority of 34 (94.4 %) respondents said yes, there was the influence of teacher's teaching style in the successful learning process. While 02 (5.6 %) of respondents disagree with the influence of the teacher's teaching style in learning. The researcher has found that, due to the data from the field, is obvious that, teacher style has in an important position in successful learning and learners performances Even though, during Focus Group Discussion, the students argue that. "Most of our teachers did not teach us timely using school time table, instead they concentrate much on other activities". (Focus Group Discussion, Students: May 2021)

Teacher Strategies in Successful Learning Process

Table 1 also, presents the results on teacher strategies in a successful learning process. The results indicated that 33 (91.7 %) respondents agreed with the influence of teacher strategies in learning. While 03 (8.3 %) respondents disagree in their answers. The finding implies that for effective teaching, the teacher has to use varieties of teaching strategies in teaching/learning to pursue a successful learning process among students.

Teacher's Methods in Successful Learning

Similarly, Table 1 indicates the results on teacher methods in a successful learning process. It has been found that 36(100.0%) of all respondents replied that teaching methods have the most influence on learning. This implies that using varieties of methods in the teaching/learning process develops decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking of the learners.

However, during Focus Group Discussion students stated that. “Our teachers did not deal with us while they give us certain activities and most of the time they did not even use teaching and learning materials in teaching/ learning process except for some teachers”. (Focus Group Discussion, Students: May 2021)

Teacher’s Philosophy Influence in Learning

Table 1 presents the results on teacher’s philosophy in the influential successful learning process. The results revealed that 27 (75 .0 %) of respondents refused the question. While 9 (25. 0 %) of respondents agree that teaching philosophy has influential in the learning process. This result reveals that the philosophy of the teacher has minor chances to influence the successful learning process among students.

The Influence of Teacher as a Model

In addition to that, Table 1 presents the results on the influence of the teacher as a model. It has been found that the majority 23 (63 .9 %) of respondents disagree that, their way of thinking and judging was not influenced by their teachers as a model. But 13 (36. 1 %) respondents agreed that they were influenced by their teachers. The finding reveals that the majority of the students, their ways of thinking and judging have been influenced by their teachers. While minorities were not influenced perhaps some of the students have negative attitudes towards their teachers. The truth of the matter is that teachers as role models for appropriate behaviour must always show respect to their staff members, school management, learners, and parents of the learners so as motivate the learners.

Students Understanding of Teacher’s Learning Instruction

On the other hand, Table 1 presents the results on Students' understanding of teachers learning instruction. The results found that 34 (94. 4 %) respondents replied yes, which means that they understand very much their teacher’s instructions in the learning process. While 02 (5. 6 %) of respondents said no, means they did not understand their teachers learning instructions. This reveals that the majority of students understand well their teachers' teaching/learning instruction.

Teacher’s Understandability by Students

Table 1 presents the results on teachers easily understandable. It has been found that 34 (94. 4 %) respondents agree that, their teachers were easily understandable. While 02 (5. 6 %) respondents disagree that their teachers were not easily understandable. This implies that learners in the same class and same level may differ in understanding the teacher. Primary teachers should use varieties

of teaching/learning methods and styles to help students understanding especially those learners with difficulties in their studies to capture learners' understanding.

Teacher's Communication in Learning

Table 1 also presents teacher's communication in the learning process. It has been found that most of the respondents 35 (97. 2 %) agreed that there is student/ teacher's communication in the learning process. However, 01 (2. 8 %) respondents refused this item. The result implies that women primary school teachers have enough communication with their learners. In addition to that, teacher's communication in the learning process improves learners' engagement, minimizes disruptive behaviour, and makes good use of instructional time.

Teacher's Approachability in the Class

Table 1 indicates the results of the teacher's approach in the class. The results found that 7 (19. 4 %) of respondents agree that, their teachers are approachable in the class. While 29 (80. 6 %) respondents refused that teachers are not approachable in the class. The result implies that it's not easy for primary students to approach their teachers during the teaching/learning process. Therefore, teachers have a great role in motivating and persuading the learners to answer or ask questions concerning the lesson and even to pursue them to perform certain activities positively. As most of the responded students agreed during Focus Group Discussion that. "Generally, most of the students perceive positively with our women teachers. Women teachers somehow perform their roles but not as men teachers do." (Focus Group Discussion, Students: May 2021) Also, during the interview heads of the schools said that, "Most of the students perceive positively to their women teacher's role. Because most of the students were too young to differentiate the professional capabilities of their men teachers concerning their women teachers. In addition to that, it has been found that, according to the age of the primary students, they perceive their women teachers as their rely on mother so they could not do against their teacher's wish." (Interview, School Head: May 2021)

Teacher's Relevance in Teaching

Table 2 presents the results on how students explain about their teachers regarding qualification in teaching.

Table 2: Indicators Informing Influence of Women Teachers in Learning (N=36)

<i>Measures</i>	<i>Primary Schools in Study Area (%)</i>							<i>Ran k</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>J</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>JE</i>	<i>%</i>	
<i>Teachers ‘ qualification in teaching</i>								
<i>All teachers have enough qualification</i>	6	6	6	6	6	6	100	1
<i>Teachers influence learning in the class</i>								
<i>Teachers participate us during the T/L process</i>	1	1	0	2	0	2	16.6	4
<i>Teachers guide us during the learning process</i>	1	3	0	3	1	0	22.2	2
<i>Teachers use T/L materials</i>	0	1	2	1	0	2	16.6	4
<i>Teachers teach us very well</i>	4	1	1	0	2	1	25.0	1
<i>Some of the teachers, don't use T/L materials</i>	0	0	3	0	3	1	19.4	3
<i>Teachers influence students</i>								
<i>Some of the students perform well others fail</i>	1	3	0	0	0	0	11.1	3
<i>Performance of students is good</i>	1	3	0	2	0	0	16.6	2
<i>Teachers teach us very well to rise performance</i>	2	0	4	4	6	6	61.1	1
<i>Teachers work hard</i>	2	0	1	0	0	0	08.3	4
<i>Some teachers do not follow the school time table</i>	0	0	1	0	0	0	3.0	5
<i>Teacher’s success/failure in Facilitation</i>								
<i>Teachers care about us.</i>	2	3	0	0	2	0	19.4	2
<i>Teachers help us to raise our performance</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	5.5	5
<i>They work on us but not timely</i>	1	0	0	1	0	0	5.5	5
<i>They succeed because they lead and guide us</i>	0	3	5	3	1	3	41.6	1
<i>Teachers diagnose our academic factors</i>	1	0	0	1	1	0	8.3	4
<i>They participate us in the teaching process</i>	1	0	0	0	1	0	5.5	5
<i>Teachers work hard but some students are truant</i>	0	0	1	1	1	2	14.0	3

Note: *M = Mwera. J= Jumbi. C =Charawe. P= Pongwepwani. U = Ubago. J= Jendele.*

(i) **Qualification of Teachers :** The results found that all respondents 36 (100. 0 %) stated that, their teachers have enough qualifications to deliver lessons to the learners. This result implies that primary teachers are qualified to teach primary level.

(ii) **Teacher’s Facilitation of Lesson:** Table 2, presents the results on how the teacher facilitating the lesson in the class. It has been found that 6 (16. 6 %) of respondents replied that teachers participate students during the teaching/learning process. 8 (22. 2 %) of respondents said teachers guide them in the teaching and learning process. Others, 6 (16. 6 %) respondents stated that their

teachers used teaching/learning materials in the teaching process. However, 9 (25.0 %) respondents commented that their teachers teaching them very well, the rank of this response is (R: 1). Even though, 7 (19.4 %) respondents argue that some of the teachers did not use teaching and learning materials in their daily teaching. This implies that students are taught by their teachers regardless of, teachers interact with them or not, use varieties of methods and materials or not but they teach them.

(iii) **Students' views on Class Performance:** Table 2 presents the results on how teachers perform to their students. The results revealed that (11.1 %) respondents replied that some of the students perform well, others fail. 6 (16.6 %) respondents explained that the performance of students is good. 22 (61.1 %) responded that their teachers teach them very well to raise the performance of students. Also, 3 (8.3 %) respondents answered that their teachers work hard but some students despise their teachers and some of them have disruptive behaviour towards their teachers and their peers. In addition to that, 1(3.0 %) respondents replied that some of the teachers did not follow the school timetable efficiently. This indicated that women teachers use their effort to raise learner's performance. However, some professional factors drew back their efforts.

(iv) **Teacher's Ability to Influence Students' Performance:** Table 2 presents the results on the teacher being successful/ failure in students' performance. It was found that 7(19.4 %) respondents replied that, their teachers care for them. 2 (5.5 %) respondents answered that their teachers help them to raise learner's performances. In addition that, 2 (5.5 %) respondents stated that, teachers work on them but not timely. However, 15 (41.6 %) respondents with the rank (R = 1) said that their teachers succeeded because they lead and guides them. While, 3 (8.3 %) respondents replied that, teachers diagnose learner's academic factors. Also, 2 (5.5 %) respondents stated that teachers participate during the learning process. 5 (14.0 %) respondents, commented that teachers work hard but some of the students are truant. This implies that, even though the majority of the student's respondents agreed that, women primary teachers care about them, women teachers lack the professional attributes to demonstrate to their learners to raise student's academic performances.

CONCLUSION

This part presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study. This paper explored the students' perceptions on female teachers' academic performance in the selected schools in Zanzibar. The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents stated that, most of the students perceive positive to their women teachers and treated them as their parents. On top of that,

the results found that women primary teachers teach and guide their learners in and outside the class. However it was found that women teachers need ongoing professional development to improve their capabilities since monitoring of the students is a challenging task for many primary teachers. Also, the results imply that to make women teachers perform well their roles more effectively women teachers should collaborate professionally with their fellow teachers and subject advisors to enable them to share ideas and improve their academic performances among teachers. Generally, students had a were positive perceptions over women teachers on their roles. To facilitate the teaching/ learning process, women teachers have to interact effectively with their students to strengthen their relationships in the learning process.

It is recommended that the government should appreciate the contribution of women teachers by paying enough salary in which they can get chance to improve their professional capabilities to update their general knowledge and specialized skills of teaching/learning process. This helps them to learn how to deal with primary school learners. So that, the involvement of the women teachers towards their students helps to extend beyond the classroom setting. Women primary school teachers should engage in professional interactions with other experts including their fellow teachers, Teacher centred coordinators and Does. Doing this will helps women teachers to expand their knowledge and skills and will improve teacher's professional development. Moreover, the study was limited to women teachers only. Hence there is a gap to look at the factors facing primary school teachers in enhancing students' academic performances as men teachers are the partner in the teaching process at the primary level. In addition to that, further study should be done for secondary schools level to explore the factors of women teachers in enhancing student's academic performances.

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