



Contribution of School Boards for Effective Teaching and Learning: A Focus on Public Secondary Schools in Mbeya District, Tanzania

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Abstract: *This study sought to examine contribution of School Boards for effective teaching and learning. The study also explored challenges which School Board members face and how to mitigate them. A mixed research approach and explanatory sequential design were employed. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. A sample of 93 respondents, which included 56 teachers, 29 School Board members, 5 Heads of school, 1 District Secondary Education Officer (DEO) and 2 Quality Assurance officers were involved. Quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics using SPSS version 20. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The findings indicate that School Board members play crucial roles in ensuring effective implementation of the core functions of the school through regular monitoring of school plans and their implementation. Additionally, the findings indicate that school boards face a number of challenges resulting from lack of experience and appropriate training as well as political influence. The study recommends school board members to be provided with appropriate orientation and adequate support for effective implementation of their roles. Moreover, the study advises the ministry of education to establish a formalized mandatory short course on school leadership which will enlighten school board members on not only their core responsibilities but also on general management of schools. Finally, the study maintains that school boards matter because they are the voice and eye of the community and local government, hence, their role should never be taken for granted for at the helm of every successful school is an efficient school board.*

Keywords: *School Board, Teaching, Learning, Quality Education, Leadership*

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1. Introduction

This empirical study was conducted in the southern part of Tanzania, Mbeya district in Mbeya region. Its main purpose was to examine the contribution of school boards in ensuring effective teaching and learning. From the context of this study, school boards, though not directly involved in the regular operations of schools, they are regarded as the overseers of the core functions of school which is teaching and learning. As one among the key regulators of schools, school boards represent community members in ensuring the achievement of quality education

through effective teaching and learning. In other words, School Boards are viewed as both the eye and the voice of both the community and the local government. Additionally, school boards as the overseers of the core functions of schools, play leadership roles in ensuring conducive teaching and learning environment which can guarantee the nurturing of the best human resources for the nation and the global community. With this background information, the term school board is also used to refer to authority of the local schools, which is usually appointed by the district council and given the responsibility of providing and managing schools indirectly (Mlimbi, 2018).

Historically, school boards have existed in many school systems but with different names. For example in the United Kingdom, school boards are known as School Governors (SG). In South Africa they are known as the School Governing Boards (SGB), while in Kenya they are known as Board of Management (BM) (Okendu, 2012; as cited in Akinyi, 2017). In Tanzania, they are simply known as School Boards. Regardless of the different names, they are all similar in terms of their functions in their respective school systems. The origin of School Boards can be traced back to the year 1789 when the state of Massachusetts in North America, enacted a law that legalized the establishment of School Board with the purpose of overseeing schools (Ford, 2013).

In Tanzania, the establishment of School Boards has its origins in the colonial education system and was established in 1961 in all post-primary schools all over the country following the institutionalization of the Education Ordinance Act no.37 of 1961. The Act however, did not define the clear roles of these School Boards (Lweja, 1983; as cited in Mlimbi, 2018). In 1978 the government introduced the National Education Act no 25 under section 38, which identified the roles of School Boards which included to administer education in post-primary school (URT, 1978). In 1995 the government of Tanzania initiated the amendment Act no 10 of 1995, which amended the National Education Act no. 25 of 1978 to decentralize education (URT, 2014). The decentralization of education opened more doors for parents and community members to be involved in the development of schools. Consequently, School Boards as representatives of community members became stronger and their roles become clearer. Through decentralization, the Local Government Authority (LGA) was given legal authority by the Central Government to employ School Board Members (URT, 2010). The education Amendment Act no 10 of 1995 officially permitted School Boards to be involved in approving school development plans, budgeting and overseeing their implementation, providing advice to District Secondary Education Officers (DSEO) on school management, advising Teachers Service Commission (TSC) on disciplinary cases of teachers, deliberating quarterly school performance report, especially on financial and physical matters (URT, 2010; Sulley, 2016). With the specification of their roles School Boards came to be regarded as a key catalyst in influencing quality teaching and learning. Despite of the fact that the Government of Tanzania has made commendable efforts distributing leadership responsibilities to various groups including School Boards whose key function is to oversee schools so as to ensure excellence in teaching and learning, the delivery of quality teaching and learning is still a challenge in many parts of Tanzania including Mbeya district where this study was conducted.

Based on the background information just recounted, it is evident that School Boards exist because they have a

crucial role to play in ensuring effective teaching and learning whose end result is expected to be the achievement of quality education. Regardless of the significance of School Boards' roles and efforts being made to ensure implementation, it remains uncertain on the extent to which they are being effective in ensuring quality teaching and learning. Such concerns are being raised due to the persistence of unsatisfactory students' academic performance which is evident in the national examination results. According to statistical data provided by the United Republic of Tanzania in the year 2020, for a period of four years, Mbeya regional education evaluation reports portrays an ongoing drop down of students performance in the Form IV National examination starting from 2017 to 2020. The records are as follows; in 2017, among the students who sat for the Form IV national examination, 20% scored division zero. In the following year, 2018, division zero was 18%, which presents a slight decrease of 2 percent compared to the previous year which is not at all significant. In the year 2019, the number of those who scored division zero in the Form IV national examination was 23.4% which represents an increase of more than 5%. In the year 2020, the number of division zero went up to 28% which represents an increase of more than 10 percent. This situation prompted the researchers to conduct an empirical research with the aim of finding out possible factors leading to this situation for if left unaddressed it will jeopardize the life of many young people in Mbeya and the entire country as it may result into the increase of many young people roaming in the cities aimlessly due to frustrations resulting from lack of educational fulfillment.

The paper is organized into five major sections beginning with an overview which highlights the significance of the key roles which school board members play. Within the overview, the paper points to the issue or the situation and its possible consequences which necessitated the study. The second part of this paper presents the review of literature which informed the study. The third section is a brief about the methodological approaches which were adopted for the realization of the study. The fourth section contains the findings and discussion of the data which was gathered in relation to the contribution of school boards in ensuring effective teaching and learning as well as the challenges they face and possible solutions which can be applied to mitigate them. The fifth and last section of this paper presents the concluding views and recommendation.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Contributions of School Boards in ensuring quality teaching and learning

Quality teaching and learning is to some extent the determinant of the extent to which School Boards implement their role effectively. Hooge and Honing (2014) revealed that School Boards contribute to quality teaching and learning by ensuring the availability and improvement of

physical resources of the school they govern. The availability and effective management of physical facilities such as classes, furniture, laboratory equipment, and other teaching and learning materials may create a favorable condition for the students to learn. Similarly, Asiabaka (2008) suggests that physical facilities management is an essential component of general school management. This implies that effective execution of the School Board's role may have a significant impact on promoting quality teaching and learning. Likewise, Dibete (2015) contends that effective management of financial resources contributes to quality education. This implies that School Boards prepare a budget for the school, guiding what should be spent, ensuring the proper allocation of school funds based on the needs and priorities of the school. The effective utilization of school funds and ensuring regular financial monitoring may contribute to the availability of teaching and learning material that may influence provision of quality teaching and learning. Similarly, Mestry (2006) maintains that quality teaching and learning is determined by the ability of School Board to manage the financial resources through preparing annual budgets, keeping the financial records, and arranging the school expenditure based on school needs and priorities. This may help the School Boards, Heads of Schools, and staff to ensure financial control by viewing the current financial position of the school and focus on school needs. On that same note, Honing and Van Genuten (2016) argue that the School Boards are important organs that contribute to student's achievements by ensuring effective management of discipline of students and teachers. The effective monitoring of discipline matters may lead teachers and students to focus on teaching and learning activities, hence quality teaching and learning.

2.2 Challenges encountered by school boards

School Boards like other educational leaders, face a number of challenges which hinder implementation of academic roles and responsibilities. The challenges may include lack of collaboration between School Board members and teachers in the respectful schools. In order for school Boards to carry out their role effectively, maximum collaboration between them and the entire school is paramount. Unfortunately, as found out in a study conducted in Namibia, collaboration was an issue of great concern (Illonga, 2016). Although School Board members are given the power to govern schools, they are not usually given adequate opportunity to take part in important decisions affecting education of their children. This situation has negative repercussions on the role of school Boards in regard to ensuring quality. Likewise, as found by Makoena (2011), heads of schools and teachers tend to treat School Board as inferiors and not helpful enough. This situation brings negative perception on their task of promoting quality teaching and learning. Ignoring the involvement of School Board in the academic

activities may lead to ineffective implementation of quality teaching and learning in public secondary schools.

Another challenge is the lack of clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities of School Boards. Carpenter (2011) conducted an empirical study in the United States and found out that School Boards were critically challenged by their lack of clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This challenge was as a result of some members of School Boards who are less conversant with governance and management tasks. Furthermore, lack of proper orientation and Training directly related to specific functions of School Board members and low academic qualification are also among the challenges encountered by School Board members. A study by Douglas (2013) noted this challenge and recommended the responsible governments to provide relevant training which can nurture and equip School Board members with relevant leadership skills which they require in carrying out their responsibilities. Likewise, Sulley (2016) conducted a study in Tanzania on the challenges facing School Boards in managing community secondary schools. The findings indicated that board members were facing a number of challenges in implementing their key leadership roles such as ensuring effective teaching and learning. According to Sulley's findings, the challenges emanated from the lack of managerial training and some were as the result of some School Board members possessing low academic qualifications that make them feel inferior when executing their responsibilities. The feeling of inferiority along with limited understanding of their roles jeopardizes board members' effectiveness. Other challenges which are worth mentioning includes; inadequate funding and late disbursement of the fund for the daily operations of School Boards. According to a study by Michael et al. (2014), School Boards are challenged by lack of funds to facilitate the promotion of quality teaching and learning. In the same line, Matinda (2015), conducted a study in Kenya and found out that many boards in the Kenyan public secondary schools were struggling in fulfilling their responsibilities due to the deficiency of fiscal resources which they require for effective facilitation of the core school activities. All these challenges have a deleterious impact in the general operation of school boards.

3. Methodology

This paper is based on a study which was conducted as a requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Education Management and Planning at St. Augustine University of Tanzania. The study focused on examining the contribution of School Boards in ensuring effective teaching and learning for the purpose of warranting the achievement of quality education. The study was conducted in Mbeya district which is located in southern Tanzania. A mixed research approach and explanatory research design were employed. Respondents for this study were obtained through stratified simple random and purposive sampling. Data were collected through

questionnaires and interviews. The target population was 173 which included; a District Education Officer, Quality Assurance Officers, members of the School Boards, Heads of schools, and teachers. The sample size of this study was 93 respondents selected from five public secondary schools. This study validated the instrument through face and content validity. The trustworthiness of qualitative data was observed through credibility by employing methodological triangulation. The usage of different methods for data collection such as interviews and open-ended questionnaires, which determined the credibility of the research instruments was essential. Split half technique was used to test reliability of research instrument and the correlation coefficient was 0.84. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics analysis with the help of the SPSS, version 20. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically whereby themes and subthemes were identified and organized accordingly for the purpose of allowing a smooth and careful reading and re-reading of the data so as to allow

fair interpretation and meaningful discussion and conclusion.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Contribution of School Boards for effective teaching and learning

In finding out how school boards in Mbeya District were contributing to ensuring effective teaching and learning, the respondents were interrogated based on the roles of School Boards, which, if well implemented, can contribute to ensuring effective teaching and learning. Among the key roles of School Boards is overseeing planning and approving school annual budget. Those involved in this study were therefore asked to indicate the extent to which they would agree that School Boards were making a positive contribution by fulfilling these key roles.

Table 1: Responses on the contribution of School Boards in ensuring effective Teaching and Learning

Items	F	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed
School Boards' involvement in establishing of a well-articulated school plan and proper budgeting ensures effective teaching and learning process.	56	43(76.8%)	03(5.5%)	10 (17.9%)
School Boards' engagement in controlling the management of physical resources and overseeing the implementation school plan, contributes to ensuring effective teaching and learning process.	56	51(91.07%)	01(1.8%)	04(7.1%)
School Boards involvement in Managing students' discipline contributes to ensuring effective teaching and Learning process.	56	49(87.5%)	02(1.7%)	04(7.1%)
School Boards' engagement in the Mobilization of school funds and in ensuring availability of facilities and equipment contributes to effective teaching and learning process.	56	45(80.3%)	04(7.1%)	07(12.5%)

Source: Field Data (September, 2021)

The findings indicated that the majority of the respondent's 76.8 percent were of the view that School Boards were effectively contributing through their engagement in assessing and approving school plan and budgeting. This finding, therefore, suggests that an excellent long term and short-term work plan and budgeting contributes significantly to proper operation of the school including the core activities which is teaching and learning. For the 76.8 percent of the respondents, this was a remarkable achievement for most School Boards. However, on the same inquiry, 5.5 percent of the respondents were neutral in that they were uncertain about the contribution of School Boards contribution in improving teaching and learning. Contradictorily, some respondents, 17.9 percent were of the view that School Boards were not effective in contributing to improving

teaching and learning. Despite, the contradictions which are obvious, this finding implies that in Mbeya district, School Boards are making a positive contribution in improving teaching and learning process. The findings from this study confirm what was previously found by Debete (2015) whose study noted that when School Boards are properly engaged in ensuring schools have strategic plans and a good budgeting process which they are responsible of approving, it can contribute significantly to improving the quality of teaching and learning as well as the outcome of education. It is also true that when School Board members are actively engaged in assessing school budget, monitoring how money is being spent, and ensuring proper allocation of school funds based on the needs and priority of the school, the result is that the economic situation of the school stabilizers and

when school is economically stable, the core function of the school, that is teaching and learning will also become quality. According to Mesty (2006), quality teaching and learning is determined by the ability of the School Boards to ensuring a realistic school plan which they assess its implementation. Furthermore, for Mesty (2006), annual budgeting and proper expenditure, financial recording, accountability and transparency, which school Boards should demand from school leaders is one of the approaches through which school boards contribute to ensuring the achievement of school's key functions. This, demand was raised by most School Boards in Mbeya School District, the fact which contributes to their success as found by this study.

Furthermore, in finding out how School Boards were contributing to improving the quality of teaching and learning, respondents were asked about the extent to which they might agree on their contribution through active engagement in the management of school's physical resources. The respondents, 91.07 percent, subscribed that School Boards were keen in the management of school physical resources which has a significant contribution to ensuring quality teaching and learning. However, 1.8 percent of the respondents were neutral to this view, while 7.1 percent disagreed. This means that a significant number of respondents recognize the contribution of Mbeya district School Boards in ensuring quality teaching and learning through effective implementation of one among their core role which is ensuring availability and management of physical resource. The findings of this study correlates well with the study done by Hooge and Honing (2014) which revealed that quality teaching and learning is an outcome of the School Boards ability to ensure the availability and proper upkeep of physical resources of the school they govern. Effective management of school physical facilities such as; school furniture, laboratory equipment, classrooms and the like, creates a conducive and favorable environment for effective teaching and learning. Such an environment is motivational to both teachers and students. Lack of motivation on both sides jeopardizes the quality of both teaching and learning. Therefore, by ensuring a proper school environment, School Boards significantly contribute to ensuring quality. Nyandusi (2012), argues that school boards contributed to quality teaching and learning based on the extent to which they fulfill their role of ensuring the availability of efficient resources, which support teaching and learning process. Quality education does not occur in vacuum but rather in an environment that supports effective teaching and learning and one that makes both teachers and students to like schooling and to feel fortunate that they are part of their school.

Ensuring discipline in the school is another key role of School Boards which also acts as a means through which quality teaching and learning can be ensured. Hence, in finding out the extent to which School Board in the studied schools in Mbeya district were contributing to quality

teaching and learning, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement on how School Boards contributed through engagement in ensuring discipline in the school. According to the analysis of their responses. Table 1 indicate that 87.5 percent of the respondents agree that School Boards were strategically involved in ensuring discipline in the school. To ensure discipline, school Boards, were checking on issues related to school leaders and teacher's accountability and how they were managing and implementing their own key roles as educators. They also made a follow up regarding students' discipline. By doing this, respondents were contented that school Boards were contributing significantly to ensuring quality teaching and learning. Nonetheless, a few respondents, 1.7 percent were neutral or were not willing to agree or to disagree on this issue, while 7.1 percent would not agree that school Boards were making a contribution by getting involved with matters of discipline in the schools.

Despite variability in the respondents' views, the fact remains that the majority recognize the contribution of school Boards. These findings relate well with those of Ngwokabuenui (2015) study which established that effective management of discipline in the school through positive reinforcement of school Boards and their moral support to school leadership, contributes remarkably to ensuring quality teaching and learning. By monitoring educators' and learners' behavior in the school contributed to more commitment in fulfilling school's key functions whose end result is the achievement of the desired quality education. Liguluka and Onyango (2020) argue that quality teaching and learning is realized by the ability of School Boards to maintain discipline in the whole school by providing advice, guidance and canceling to both teachers and students. This study concurs with their finding while affirming that proper management of teacher's discipline is significant because teaching and non-teaching staff have impact on influencing learners' positive behavior which is imperative in their learning process.

Another key role of School Boards which if implemented effectively can contribute to ensuring quality teaching and learning is mobilization of funds and monitoring proper spending of the funds in obtaining school facilities and equipment which are utilized in carrying out the key roles of the school. In regard to this role, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement in relation to this matter. The findings indicated that 80.3 percent of the respondents agreed that the School Board's involvement in mobilizing fund and ensuring the purchase of facilities and equipment which facilitate teaching and learning had a significant contribution to the wellbeing of the school. Nonetheless, 7.1 percent opted not to agree or disagree while 12 percent disagreed. As previously found by Mlimbi (2018), ensuring availability of funds and its proper utilization is undeniably one of the key aspects in ensuring quality teaching and learning. It is for this very reason that as found by both Mlimbi's study and this study, School

Boards are mandated to consider highly the implementation of both managerial and technical activities which facilitate teaching and learning. This means that the School Boards, engage both in mobilization of funds and also oversee how the acquired funds are being managed by school leaders. Moreover, School Boards also get involved in overseeing the construction of classes, purchasing laboratory equipment all of which are asserts which make a significant contribution to quality teaching and learning. Hence, though engagement in these key functions, School Boards remarkably contributes to quality teaching and learning whose end result is the achievement of quality education.

4.2 School Board challenges in ensuring Quality teaching and learning

In order to understand the kind of challenges hindering School Boards from properly ensuring quality teaching and learning, a list of survey questionnaires was distributed to a selected group of School Board members as well as Heads of Schools. They were first asked to indicate their level of agreement to some of the common challenges which the researchers noted to be common among previous studies which were analysed during literature review. These included challenges related to: finances, level of education, political interference, lack of motivation and lack of training of School Board Members. Respondents were therefore instructed to indicate their level of agreement by selecting only one of the following against each of the listed challenges. Selection included: Strongly Agree (SA); Agree (A); Neutral (N); Disagree (D) or Strongly Disagree (SD). The findings are as indicated in the table one below.

Table 2: School Board Members' Key Challenges

Teachers' responses	F	SA	A	N	D	SD
Financial Challenges	29	4(13.8%)	19(65.5%)	1(3.4%)	3(10.3%)	2(6.9%)
Level of education	29	2(6.9%)	15(51.7%)	3(10.3%)	5(17.2%)	4(13.8%)
Political Interference	29	9(31.0%)	16(55.1%)	2(6.9%)	1(3.4%)	1(3.4%)
Lack of motivation	29	12(41.4%)	8(27.5%)	3(10.3%)	4(13.8%)	2(6.9%)
Absence of training	29	6(3.4%)	15(51.7%)	2(6.9%)	4(13.8%)	2(6.9%)

Table 2 shows the constraints that were encountered by the School Boards in various public secondary schools in Mbeya district. Majority of respondents 82.7 percent were in agreement with the view that financial constraints affected the effectiveness of School Boards. Moreover, from the qualitative data which was obtained through face-to-face interviews with school heads, it became evident from their expression that the budget deficit was one of the constraints faced by School Boards in most public secondary schools in Mbeya. The interviewee further expressed that the operations of School Boards and their effectiveness depend much on the availability of funds to operationalize their activities and ensure smooth running of schools. Hence, without reliable funds, School Boards cannot operate. What was encouraging in this study was the finding that there are some intentional efforts which are being made by the government in stemming the problem and promoting quality teaching and learning by supporting schools' financials. Although this was not much, for the researchers this was significant. Moreover, majority of respondents said that, although the government through ministry of education has been sensitizing the practice of School Boards, still its

operational budget comes from the central government the fact which cannot be relied much due to the number of many needy schools which is difficulty for the central government to cater for.

Moreover, the amount of money directed to school by the government was not enough to even ensure implementation of School Board's key strategic plans and core responsibilities. Speaking of this situation, one of the Heads of schools who was interviewed, humbly admitted that due to the budget deficit, their School Board was failing to operate as effectively as one would expect. Giving as an example, the interviewed head of school noted that the deficit of funds was so severe that it was difficulty to even do-little things such as; producing adequate copies of policy documents and guidelines for their employees as well as organizing regular seminars and workshops for teachers and the like. In a conversation with some of School Board members, they expressed that financial barrier was one of the stumbling blocks which was causing them to fail in the planning process as well as the implementation of their key functions. As a result, the School Board was being blamed for their failure to operate

well. Financial deficit was one of the alarming challenges, speaking of this; one of the head teachers had this to say:

The first challenge we face is a budget deficit. Since the beginning of fee free education policy, the budget for School Board has been quietly abolished despite of the fact that as per policy, School Boards must organize to have four meetings in a year. So, we have been doing at least two School Board meetings instead of four. Yet, we do not have any investment, but we depend on the government for operational budget. The amount we receive is very little such that we cannot fulfill the planned activities of schools. Surprisingly, we are always blamed for failing to conduct the School Board meetings (Interviewee C, 5th October, 2021).

These findings simply imply that unless schools are provided with sufficient funds, School Boards' roles will be rendered meaningless and achieving the kind of teaching and learning to achieve the desired quality education needed to achieve the national goals of sustainable development will be rendered impossible to realize. This finding confirms what Michael et al (2014) study found eight years ago. The underlining findings was that School Boards were critically challenged by the lack of funds to facilitate quality teaching and learning. This study further established that due to insufficient funds, School Board members get demoralized and after sometime of tolerance they end up becoming inactive and eventually abandoning their responsibilities in the schools, the fact which jeopardizes not only the quality of education, but also the wellbeing of the nation. This challenge is not new because similar concerns were found in Mwombeki (2013) study which revealed that public secondary schools in Tanzania depend on funds from the government, but such funds are insufficient and sometimes late disbursement of funds also affected School Boards activities. This situation is heartbreaking to all school management and to all beneficiaries and stakeholders of the school systems, therefore such a challenge should be addressed.

Other challenges were the level of education of School Board members. The findings from questionnaires which were administered to teachers indicated that majority of respondents, 68.9 percent, agreed that the level of School Board members was among the constraints that critically hinder School Boards from functioning appropriately. The study also noted that the role of School Boards which include interpreting the education policy and enforcing its practice was negatively being affected as some of the Board members were illiterate and did not understand the educational policies and so could not interpret nor

enforce what they themselves did not know or understand.

Based on this challenge, some of the participants vividly argued that there is the need to appoint school Board members who are more literate and are well versed with education issues. Additionally, the findings indicated that the need for competent personnel among School Board members was wanting and urgent. During the interviews, one of the participants expressed that the people who get to the positions of school Boards were not properly selected the fact which led to corruption and putting into office a person that is not well informed. The participant confirmed that shortage while arguing that:

There is a board whereby a member with good level of education was only one who is the school head and the rest were not even aware of the interpretation of various education documents. We are required to deal with teachers' registration, promotions, discipline and all other duties across the district. That is a great challenge inhibiting us to deal with school issues (Interviewee: 8th October, 2021).

The findings signify that due to lack of educated personnel with required skills, some of the roles and functions of School Boards are hardly attended to. The study findings relate well with the findings from previous studies such as Ndou (2012) and Douglas (2013). Both of these studies though conducted separately had similar findings which indicated that the low level of education of some School Board members were a real challenge and had a severe impact on schools. Accordingly, these studies suggest that when education level of school board members is too low it may not be easy to implement key roles. The current study confirms this argument. The fact remains that when School Board members lack relevant skills and competences the likelihood is that they cannot execute their responsibilities as it is required. This situation will eventually lead to the downfall of the effort of promoting quality education and eventually the failure to find meaning in education.

Political interference was another constraint that hindered the practice of School Boards in Mbeya district. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents, 93 percent, agreed that the politics interfered with the practices of some School Boards functions. Majority of the School Boards had member who are there because of the political positions that sometime influence the decision of the board on operating the schools. Additionally, through the interview with heads of schools, it became evident that some political issues have been hindering the operation of the School Boards. Speaking of this situation, one of the participants was quoted as saying:

Some of the school board members have been confusing the school boards function with the political affiliation they are coming from. They thought that the ideas from their parts need to be implemented in school and sometime raises some confusion to other members. (Interviewee B, 4th October, 2021).

The findings imply that political issues have affected the operationalization of school matters. In line with the findings, Kija (2015) contends that majority of school board members in Tanzania were associated with their political parties, which interfered with decisions made by the school board. This caused some School Board members to resign from the board due to political isolation.

Additionally, the study also found out that lack of motivation and training on how to practice various School Board functions hampered the practice and the effectiveness of School Board operations. The majority of respondents 79.2 Percent argued that lack of motivation to School Board members affected the operation of the school board activities. Some of the members were reported to come from far in the school environment and sometime that have not got any training on the function of School Boards. The respondent's 72 percent agreed that training was important in educating school board members. Though, school board members had no training which was affecting the practice of the school boards functions. In supporting this, data collected through interview, revealed that lack of motivation and absence of training were some of critical constraints which have continually affected the effectiveness of School Board operations in most public secondary schools in Mbeya district where this study was conducted. The challenge related to lack of training which would empower those chosen to the position of School Board members as has been established by various educational researchers including, James et al (2011), whose study concluded that although there is a provision of seminars during inauguration of the new School Board members, a more intensive training is still necessary. Similarly, Ndou (2012) contends that school board members who lack required knowledge and skills fail to execute their roles effectively. Hence, to ensure effective performance, training of the members should be considered essential and so be given the kind of priority it deserves. Speaking of the same, Mncube (2012) also emphasized the significance of training for the new appointed School Board members insisting that to ensure effectiveness, there is the need to organize an ongoing training which will eventually equip Board members with the necessary management skills that facilitate the provision of quality education. Knowledge is power and without power one cannot lead. For this reason, School Board members need to be trained to build their

confidence, autonomy and power which they need in order to operate effectively.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This paper which is based on empirical research has assessed the contribution of School Boards in ensuring effective teaching and learning. With regard to the aspect of the kind of contribution which School Boards are making in ensuring effective teaching and learning, the study clearly indicated that School Boards have significant roles to play and there are recognizable contributions. However, the study found out that there are a number of challenges which hinder their effectiveness. Some of the challenges are more systemic than personal; while a few of them including lack of motivation are more personal and can be mitigated easily. The systemic ones such as those related to finances and lack of training, require intervention from the top authorities in the education system. The findings, have led to a conclusion that the work of leading schools is never an easy take. It is normally surrounded by a number of challenges some of which can hinder the effectiveness of those involved including School Board members. The good news however, is that, just as every question has an answer, every challenge, including those of School Boards also has a solution. Hence, the challenges should be viewed as a necessary means to grow and to become more effective by working harder to overcome such challenges. Effective teaching and learning is paramount to the production of the kind of human resources which Tanzania currently needs urgently. For this reason, it is fair to argue that, there is an urgent need for a systemic intervention which should begin by making education a priority number one and in so doing, the instruments responsible in ensuring quality education including School Boards could be empowered through provision of adequate support.

5.2 Recommendations

School Boards encounter several challenges that demise their effectiveness. To overcome them, this study recommends the following strategies as the possible way forward;

- i. To avoid the challenges brought about by little understanding of how schools operate and the low level of education, in selecting School Board members, priority should be given to those with a good academic background, and they should have a minimum of a bachelor degree and have some basic understanding of how schools generally operate.
- ii. Prior to coming into power, those appointed as School Board members, should undergo an

- intensive induction program which will familiarize them to their new responsibilities. The program should cover issues related to expectations, the scope of responsibilities and functions.
- iii. They should be given a chance to undergo seminars, workshops and short trainings through which they can advance in their understanding of proper functioning of schools and develop some leadership skills which they require for effective implementation of their key roles and responsibilities. During seminars and workshops, they are to be oriented to various policy guidelines related to operation of School Board.
 - iv. School Boards should be given the financial support required for the implementations of their key roles including ensuring availability of teaching and learning resources as well as conducting regular board meetings which are necessary for proper planning and monitoring of school core activities.
 - v. School Boards in partnership with the school community should establish well-articulated vision and strategic goals which can guide them in ensuring effective teaching and learning. Along with the vision and the goals they must determine clear indicators for effective teaching and learning.
 - vi. School Boards should set a clear framework for promoting the culture of teaching and learning which can ensure the achievement of the learner's academic goals.
 - vii. In order to ensure effective teaching and learning, at the helm of every school, there should be; a strong, knowledgeable, enlightened and committed School Board.
 - viii. Local government and other educational stakeholders including; school administrators, teachers, parents and the surrounding communities should be more supportive to School Boards members, as they carry out the role of planning, monitoring, and evaluation of school activities.

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