



Contribution of Teachers' Professional Ethics towards Teaching Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Meru District, Tanzania

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Abstract: The study investigated the contribution of teachers' professional ethics towards teaching performance in public secondary schools in Meru District, Tanzania. Specifically, the study was guided by the following objectives: to assess the influence of teachers' professional ethics towards teaching performance among public secondary school teachers and to determine the strategies for enhancing professional ethics among teachers in public secondary schools in Meru district. Utilitarianism Theory guided the study. A mixed research approach under convergent design was employed. The target population for the study consisted of the district secondary education officers, district TSC secretary, school heads, teachers and form four students from secondary schools in Meru district. Stratified sampling technique was used to select 80 students and 80 teachers while 8 heads of schools, one DEO and one TSC secretary were purposively selected making a total number of 170 respondents. Questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect data from the participants. Research experts ascertained the validity of the instruments while reliability was tested and found to correlate at Cronbach coefficient Alpha value of $r = 0.75$ at teachers' and students' questionnaires. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the results were presented in figures, tables of frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data were thematically coded and analyzed alongside research questions. The findings were presented in narrative forms. The study found out that there was positive effect of teachers' professional ethics on students' academic performance. The study concluded that teachers' professional ethics is an important criterion for students' academic performance.

Keywords: Teachers, Professional, Ethics, Performance, School

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1. Introduction

A code of ethics is a written set of principles and rules intended to serve as a guideline for determining appropriate ethical behavior for those individuals under its authority. It defines behavior in terms of right and wrong and stipulates what are the acceptable and unacceptable

behaviors for a particular profession (Gotterbarn et al., 2018). The purpose of the code of ethics is to create and maintain a sense of professionalism, to offer guidance to those facing thorny ethical dilemmas, and to give public a standard to which it can hold a corporation or profession (Stievano and Tschudin, 2019). Therefore, the main reason for having codes of professional conduct in

professions is to ensure that the members of that profession are behaving in an appropriate manner.

Teaching being one of the professions also has its code of conduct. This code is there to enforce responsible behaviors to teachers. For instance, the professional code of conduct for teachers in South Africa calls for all teachers to act in a manner that their behavior does not deter the quality of the teaching profession (Nuland and Khandelwal, 2006). Similarly, the professional code of ethics and conduct for teachers in England requires all teachers to demonstrate personal and professional high standards when at the school or outside the school (Rychert and Diesfeld, 2019).

The level of ethics among professionals in different fields is being questioned around the world. For instance, in Russia Evstratova et al., (2020) observed that the level of professional ethics among the civil servants in the country was low. Such low level of professionalism resulted into underperformance of their duties and some civil servants were found to be using official positions for their own personal gain. Teachers being one of the professionals need to be highly committed to the teaching profession. This is because, it is through effective teaching that students can acquire the required knowledge and skills necessary to make them responsible members of the society.

Meanwhile, the code of conduct for teachers in Nigeria calls for teachers to be disciplined and appropriate corrective measures are taken when inappropriate behavior is demonstrated (Iroegbu and Uyenga (2019). Therefore, teachers in different countries through the world are held responsible by the codes of conduct and are expected to demonstrate acceptable behaviors and be good examples to the students and the society at large.

Teachers in Tanzania are also required to demonstrate acceptable behaviors and the code of conduct is attached

in their employment contracts. The Tanzanian code of conduct spells the responsibilities of teachers to the children, the state, the employer, the profession and the community at large (URT, 2007). To the child, the code of ethical conduct requires teachers to ensure whole development of the children physically, cognitively, spiritually and socially. Under this accord, teachers have a crucial role to play to ensure physical, cognitive, emotional, spiritual and social development of children under their care (Anangisye, 2019). Teachers therefore are required to exhibit good behavior so that the children can imitate such good behavior and become responsible citizens. Also teachers should attend classes and teach accordingly for the students to master the contents and develop cognitively. The level of professionalism among teachers is reported to be low, teachers are not committed to the teaching profession and thus effective teaching and learning do not take place as intended. This being the case, it is necessary to carry out a study to find out the contribution of teachers' professional ethics towards teaching performance in public secondary schools. Thus, the current study was conducted to fill the existing gap.

Since teachers are entrusted with the students, they have to create positive environment by ensuring that they teach effectively and they set good examples of behavior for the students to imitate and develop their own behaviors (Nuland and Khandelwal, 2006). To ensure that order is maintained by teachers in the schools, the teachers' professional code of conduct has been developed and it is implemented in both public and private schools. The code calls for teachers to be responsible to children under their care, the community in which they live, the teaching profession, the employer and the state as a whole (TSC, 2017). Despite having the code of conduct, cases of teachers' misconduct in schools, especially public ones in Tanzania, are still pronounced. For instance, from the year 2017 to 2019 a total number of 7123 teachers were expelled from the teaching profession for various reasons as indicated in table 1.

Table 1: Disciplinary Cases among Teachers from 2017/18 to 2020/21

Type of disciplinary offences	2017/18	2018/19	2020/21	Total
Absenteeism	1,801	2,005	1,641	5,447(76%)
Drunkenness	16	08	09	33(0.5%)
Corruption	-	06	-	06(0.1%)
Sexual relationship with students	39	63	60	162(2.3%)
Insubordination	12	46	34	92(1.3%)
Negligence	48	09	17	74(1%)
Theft and destruction	01	09	09	19(0.3%)
Failure to adhere with teachers' Conduct	311	389	590	1,290(18%)

Source: Teachers' Service Commission (2021)

Data in table 1 suggest that discipline among teachers in public schools is still a problem. Though the government

through the Teacher service commission (TSC) is taking necessary measures, still some teachers are not behaving

ethically. This negatively affects the teaching and learning process in schools. In Meru district, similar cases of indiscipline among teachers have been reported. Due to the presence of such cases, it is important for a study to be conducted to assess the contribution of teachers' professional ethics towards their teaching performance in public secondary schools in Meru district.

Research Questions

1. How does teachers' professional ethic influence teaching performance among teachers in public secondary school in Meru District?
2. What are the strategies for enhancing Professional Ethics among Teachers in public secondary schools in Meru district?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was also guided by Utilitarianism Theory by John Stuart Mill in 1863. The concept of validity is grounded in the Utilitarianism theory that postulates that utility should be seen as an important standard of evaluation in ethical reasoning and decision-making. The theory of utilitarianism drives the force on the thinking about the greatest happiness and the greatest number rather than self-interest (Tluway, 2015).

According to utilitarianism theory, once the rules have been decided, it is not right to break them even when it might be bitter in an individual case. This instance reduces the problem of biasness in decision making. For example, teachers are forced to abide with rules and regulations of the teaching profession that might stop the cases of misconducts such as absenteeism and drunkenness. The consequence principle of the theory decides that, the determinant of morality is not the action itself, but its consequences. A teacher can therefore judge the consequences of misconducts in a particular instance rather than misbehaving during the working time by not attending the classes.

2.2 Application of the Theory to the Current Study

The theory of Utilitarianism is relevant to the study since it describes the application of rules and regulations that can be used by the TSC and heads of schools to guide teachers aiming at avoiding the occurrence of teachers' professional misconducts at the school. Heads of schools can use the Utilitarianism to guide and counsel teachers on the consequences of a particular action of professional misconduct that can affect the majority of the students in their examinations such as absenteeism, physical harassment and private tuitions. The Ministry of

Education science and technology can also apply the Utilitarianism theory when making the rules and regulations that will guide the teaching profession to which are supposed to be obeyed by the teaching staffs when dealing with daily teaching and learning activities.

2.3 The Influence of Teachers' Professional Ethics on Teaching Performance

A quantitative study by Evstratova (2020) was conducted to investigate problems of the creation and direction of improving the professional ethics of civil servants in the Russian federation. The study employed survey research design to collect data from 94 respondents through questionnaire and document analysis. The study revealed out that there was low level of professional ethics among civil servants. Also, the researcher identified the reason for low quality of ethics, the use of official position for personal gain, irresponsible attitude to their official duties, indifference and disrespectful attitude towards consumers of public services. The study shows that in Russia, most civil servants, including teachers had negative qualities.

In UK, the study by Bull et al., (2021) was conducted on discrimination in the education institutions. The study employed qualitative research approach whereby data were collected from students and teachers who were purposefully selected and interview schedule was tool used in data collection. The study revealed that sexual misconduct was prevalent in higher education. The study suggested that school management should find out the strategies to manage misconduct within the teaching profession. The study recommended the need to introduce the guidance to address staff sexual misconduct in UK higher education.

A qualitative study by Hogan, Ricci and Ryan (2019) was conducted to examine classroom teacher's verbal abuse in Canada. Data were collected through reviewing a sample of the decisions of the discipline committee of the Ontario College of Teachers from the Canadian Legal Information Institute online database, which provided a record of all the Ontario College of Teachers discipline committee decisions. The study found out that verbal abuse was present in Ontario classrooms, and measured responses and related methods of dealing with teacher misconduct were inadequate at best and slowly evolving. The study also found male Teachers were often offenders and the impact on all stakeholders was both life-changing and serious. Furthermore, the study concluded that any delay in effectively dealing with complaints and disciplinary matters was unacceptable as it stands and must be fixed to protect students from abuse.

In India, Muralidharan et al., (2017) conducted a study to investigate the fiscal cost of weak governance: Evidence from teacher absence in India. The study employed quantitative research approach under cross sectional

survey whereby data was collected from public schools. The study found out that nationwide representative sample of public schools in rural India found teacher absence rate of 23.6%. The study also found increasing school monitoring was strongly correlated with reductions in teacher absence rates.

Ayeni (2018) conducted study to investigate teachers' professional ethics and instructional performance as correlates to students' academic performance in secondary schools in Owo Local Government, Ondo State, Nigeria. The study adopted quantitative research approach whereby data were collected from 90 respondents through questionnaire in which, random sampling technique were used to select the sample from 9 public secondary school. The study revealed out that there was a significant relationship between teachers' professional ethics and instructional performance. The study also revealed that the level of teachers' professional ethics was high in punctuality, communication skills, human relations, effective time management, adequate knowledge of subject matter, and descent dressing habit. Moreover, the study revealed that the level of students' academic performance was above average.

Another study in Tanzania by Basimwaki (2020) investigated the influence of teachers' moonlighting on teaching in Tanzanian secondary schools: A case of selected secondary schools in Dar es Salaam City. The study adopted mixed research approaches. Data were collected from 168 respondents through questionnaires, interviews, and focused group discussion. The study found out that teachers had a number of moonlighting practices that were generating extra income. Moonlighting practices such as part-time teaching, petty business, retail shops, catering services, and selling snacks during and after school hours were found to be the common practices undertaken by teachers in public secondary schools. Furthermore, the study revealed out that teachers' moonlighting has positive and negative outcome. It was found that teachers' moonlighting was compromising time for classroom instructions.

In addition, a study in Tanzania by Mfaume and Bilinga (2017) was conducted on prevalence of teachers' professional malpractices in public secondary schools. The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research approaches whereby data were collected from 75 respondents through questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussion, documentary analysis and observation. The study revealed that absenteeism, abusive and violent behaviors, sexual abuse, just to mention a few, were prevalent forms of teacher malpractices in schools. The study also revealed reasons that influenced such malpractices in schools included teachers' low salaries and remunerations, poor living and working conditions, influence of science and technology, lack of professional knowledge and poor management. The study shows that teacher's malpractice was great problem in rural and urban

schools in Tanzania, the prevalent of teachers' misconduct affect students' academic achievements negatively.

2.4 Strategies to Enhance Professional Ethics among Teachers

An exploratory study by Rychert and Diesfeld (2019) conducted to investigate the relationship between teachers' wellbeing and professional misconduct in New Zealand. Data were collected from 41 disciplinary cases through reviewing of disciplinary cases from the New Zealand Teachers Disciplinary Tribunal (NZTDT) between 2017 and 2018. The study found out that use of alcohol and other drugs and, break of professional boundaries and inappropriate use of force were indiscipline cases among teachers. The study also found out that diminished wellbeing may contribute to misconduct and be further affected by the disciplinary proceedings. The study suggested that preventive strategies could include health-based interventions as part of professional development.

In Turkey, Koç and Fidan (2020) conducted a study to examine teachers' views on the institutionalization of ethical and unethical behaviors in school settings. The study adopted qualitative research approach whereby data were collected from 20 working teachers by using semi structured interview. The study found out that there were no systematic efforts to institutionalize ethics in schools. The findings indicated that there was no disciplinary committee for dealing with teachers' professional misconduct.

The study by Rychert and Diesfeld (2019) shows that before any further action is taken against teachers when they commit misconduct, health-based intervention should be applied in order to help them to recover to their normal state. As human being, not always do they intend to commit misconduct but sometimes it happens because of psychological reason such as stress due to factors surrounding teachers such working condition, family, illness. Therefore health-based interventions could be a good strategy to help in protecting teachers.

Ndung'u (2017) conducted study to examine teacher indiscipline and the effectiveness of disciplinary measures employed by head teachers in public secondary schools in Githunguri, Kiambu County, Kenya. A quantitative research approach was used to collect data from 110 respondents through questionnaires, in which purposefully and simple random techniques were used to select the sample. The study found out that the common indiscipline cases among the teaching staff were missing classes, failure to come to school and also failure to seek permission from the school administration, absconding duties and refusal to obey seniors. The study also revealed out that all the head teachers used verbal warning as disciplinary action against teachers. Moreover, the study revealed other approaches used by the head teachers,

included written warning and forming of a disciplinary committee.

Mwesiga and Kireti (2018) conducted a study on teachers' commitment and compliance with codes of ethics and professional conduct in Kagera region, Tanzania. The study adopted mixed research approach under convergent parallel design whereby data were collected from 352 respondents through questionnaires, interview guide and document analysis guide. It was found out that techniques heads use include, asking teachers who misbehave to change, and if the problem persists then , reprimanding followed by warning letter and finally is just to report to the higher administration for further measures. The study also found out that withholding of salary increment techniques was not frequently used by heads to deal with misconduct.

3. Methodology

The study employed mixed research approach under convergent design Gay, et al., (2012).. The target population for the study consisted of the district secondary education officers, district TSC secretary, school heads, teachers and form four students from secondary schools in Meru district. Stratified sampling technique was used to select 80 students and 80 teachers while 8 heads of schools,

one DEO and one TSC secretary were directly involved in the study making a total number of 170 respondents. Questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect data from the participants. Research experts ascertained the validity of the instruments while reliability was tested and found to correlate at Cronbach coefficient Alpha value of $r = 0.75$ at teachers' and students' questionnaires. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the results were presented in tables of figures, frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data were thematically coded and analyzed alongside research questions. The findings were presented in narrative forms.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings were discussed with regard to research objectives.

4.1 The Influence of Teachers' Professional Ethics on Students' Academic Performance among Public Secondary Schools in Meru district

The study sought to investigate the influence of teachers' professional ethics on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Meru district. Both Students and teachers were involved. The responses were summarized in table 2.

Table 2: Students' Responses on the Extent Teachers' Professional Ethics Influence Academic performance

Statements	Very high extent		High extent		Moderate Extent		Low extent		Very low extent	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
i. Teachers' attendance	55	68.8	16	20.0	9	11.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
ii. Good communication skill, trustworthiness, caring and confidential	47	58.8	23	28.7	10	12.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
iii. Fulfilling responsibility (teaching)	63	78.8	12	15.0	5	6.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
iv. Commitment and good time management	51	63.7	15	18.8	11	13.8	3	3.8	0	0.0
v. Good relationship with students	53	66.3	16	20.0	11	13.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
vi. Teacher having respect and good dressing habit	44	55.0	27	33.8	3	3.8	3	3.8	3	3.8
vii. Teacher use of appropriate measure to curb students' misconduct	63	78.8	10	12.5	7	8.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
viii. Teachers embracing guidance and counseling	58	72.5	15	18.8	7	8.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
ix. Teachers' proper use of language to influence students' good performance	60	75.0	13	16.3	7	8.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
x. Teacher profession ethics as an effective way of students' academic achievement	48	60.0	17	21.3	9	11.3	6	7.5	0	0.0

Source; Field Data (2022)

The findings in table 2 show that teachers' attendance influence academic performance at the rate of 55(68.8%), 16(20.0%) and 9(11.3%) which is very high extent, high

extent and moderate extent respectively. This implies that majority of the students view teachers' school attendance as having a lot of influence on their academic

achievement. This implies that teachers' attendance in public secondary schools in Meru district to a large extent affects positively their academic performance. This may be due to the fact that a teacher may be in good position to fulfill his/ her responsibility, including covering the curriculum on time. As supported by Kusumaningrum et al., (2019) who found that high level of professional ethics affects positively teaching performance thus educational goals that have been set are achieved because teachers will be carrying out their duties and responsibilities that lead to an increase in students' achievement. Therefore, good teaching performance is one of the factors for the success of the teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, 47(58.8%), 23(28.7%) and 10(12.5%) of students indicated good communication skills, trustworthiness, caring and confidential among teachers at very high extent, high extent and moderate extent respectively influence teacher's performance and subsequently, students' performance too. This implies that most(58.8%) of students indicated that good communication skills, trustworthiness, caring and confidentiality among teachers have influence on students' academic performance. Good communication skills of teachers are basic need of academic success of students, and professional success of teachers. Teachers with poor communicational skills may cause failure of students to learn and promote their academics. As supported by Amadi and Amadi (2020) when teachers have intellectual skills, communication skills, integrity, respect, trustworthiness, caring, confidential, descent dressing habit, and guidance-oriented affects positively students' academic performance.

Also, 63 (78.8%), 12 (15.0%) and 5 (6.3%) of students indicated on teachers are fulfilling their responsibilities at very high extent, high extent and moderate extent respectively. This implies that majority (78.8%) of the

students showed that teachers fulfilling their responsibilities in public secondary schools in Meru district has a positive impact on students' academic performance because if teachers fulfill their duties, students may be in a position to perform very well as their teacher may have enough time to assist them in their areas of weakness. since they may have covered the curriculum very earlier. As supported by Rychert and Diesfeld (2019) (2019) who found that high level of professional ethics affects teaching performance, thus educational goals that have been set are achieved on time because teachers will be carrying out their duties and responsibilities that lead to an increase in student achievement. Therefore, good teaching performance is one of the factors for the success and success of the teaching and learning process.

In addition, 44 (55.0%), 27 (33.8%), 3 (3.8%), 3 (3.8%) and 3 (3.8%) of students indicated that teachers' respect and good dressing habit affect their performance at very high extent, high extent and moderate extent respectively. This implies that most (55.0%) of the students showed that teachers' respect and good dressing habit in public secondary school positively affects the academic achievement of students. When a teacher has respect and observes good dressing habit, it is easy to impart such habit to students as it makes them gain respect and act as good example to their students. As supported by Daniel and Sapo (2020) many teachers perceived to be fully compliant with professional ethics create positive environment for learning process thus leading to good performance among students. Having respect and good dressing habit is an indicator for a teacher to adhere teachers' professional ethics and conduct.

To confirm the findings the same question was also asked to the teachers to find out the extent to which teachers' professional ethics influenced academic achievement of students in public secondary schools in Meru district. Their responses are summarized in table 3

Table 3: Teachers Response on the Extent to which Teachers’ Professional Ethics Influences Academic performance of Students

Statements	Very low		Low		Moderate		High		Very high	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
i. Teachers’ attendance	0	0.0	0	0.0	16	20.0	38	47.5	26	32.5
ii. Good communication skill, trustworthiness, caring and confidential	0	0.0	0	0.0	16	20.0	38	47.5	26	32.5
iii. Fulfilling responsibility (teaching)	0	0.0	0	0.0	16	20.0	38	47.5	26	32.5
iv. Commitment and good time management	0	0.0	0	0.0	32	40.0	22	27.5	26	32.5
v. Good relationship with students	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	15.0	42	52.5	26	32.5
vi. Teacher having respect and good dressing habit	0	0.0	0	0.0	22	27.5	21	26.3	37	46.3
vii. Teacher use of appropriate measure to curb students’ misconduct	16	20.0	16	20.0	0	0.0	22	27.5	26	32.5
viii. Teacher embracing guidance and counseling	0	0.0	0	0.0	16	20.0	27	33.8	37	46.3
ix. Teachers’ proper use of language to influence students’ good performance	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	15.0	42	52.5	26	32.5
x. Teacher profession ethics as an effective way of students’ academic achievement	0	0.0	0	0.0	16	20.0	16	20.0	48	60.0

Source; Field Data (2022)

From table 3 and using the scale of very high extent, high extent and moderate extent, respondents indicated teachers’ attendance at the rate of 26 (32.5%), 38 (47.5%) and 16 (20.0%) respectively. While none of the teachers in public secondary school in Meru district indicated lower or lower extent of the teacher’s attendance. This implies that majority of the teachers (47.5%) indicated that teachers’ attendance at school in Meru district influences students’ academic performance due to the fact that students’ may find help from their teachers wherever they find difficulties. Moreover, teachers may have enough time to deal with students’ academic problems thus, teachers’ attendance affects positively the academic achievement of students. As supported by Mwesiga and Kireti (2018) who found that high level of professional ethics affected positively teaching performance thus, educational goals that have been set are achieved because teachers will be carrying out their duties and responsibilities that lead to an increase in student achievement. Therefore, good teaching performance is one of the factors for the success of the teaching and learning process.

Besides, the respondents indicated that teacher’s good communication skill, trustworthiness, caring and confidentiality to students influenced students’ academic achievement at the rate of very high extent (32.5%), high extent(47.5%) and moderate extent(20.0%). This implies that majority of the respondents indicated that in public secondary school in Meru district, good communication skill, trustworthiness, caring and confidential among

teachers have influence on students’ academic performance. Good communication skills of teachers are basic need of academic’s success of students, and professional success of life. Teachers with poor communicational skills may cause failure of students to learn and promote their academics. As supported by Amadi and Amadi (2020) teachers having intellectual skills, communication skills, integrity, respect, trustworthiness, caring, confidential and good dressing habit positively influence students in their academic performance.

In addition, the researcher established that teachers with ability to fulfill their responsibilities influenced students’ academic performance to a high extent. This implies that majority (80%) of the teachers show that fulfilling their responsibilities in public secondary schools in Meru district affects students’ academic achievement positively. As supported by Kusumaningrum et al., (2019) who found that high level of professional ethics affects positively teaching performance thus educational goals that have been set are achieved because teachers will be carrying out their duties and responsibilities that lead to an increase in student achievement.

Moreover, having respect and good dressing habit among teachers was mentioned as a factor that influences their performance as seen in students’ academic achievement. This implies that majority (72.6%) of the teachers believes that respect and good dressing habit among themselves in public secondary school has a positive effect on students’

academic achievement. When a teacher has respect and good dressing habit, it allows one to gain the respect needed and to setting positive example to their students. In support of this finding, Daniel and Sapo (2020) found that teachers perceived to be fully compliant with professional ethics are also seen as role models in the society.

To confirm the findings from students and teachers during the interviews, one head of school said that;

In this school some teachers disobey profession ethics as I have experienced absenteeism, truancy and bad dressing code among teachers (Personal Interview, 28/04/2022).

This implies that some public secondary school teachers tend to disobey professional ethic, which affects negatively level of teachers' profession conduct thus in one way or another also have negatively students' academic progress. More efforts should be made to help teachers to follow profession ethics.

Also, during interview on level of the teachers' profession ethics TSC district secretary remarked that;

Level of teachers' profession ethics in Meru district is wanting because still there is a lot of report on teachers' misconduct and if not managed on time may have negative effect on students' academic performance (Personal Interview, 2/05/2022)

This implies that the level of teachers' profession ethics in Meru is affects efficiency and effectiveness in learning process as the result of poor job performance among teachers as level of profession conduct has great impact on performance of both students and teachers. As supported by Evstratova et al. (2020) who noted that there was low level of professional ethics among civil servants. Also, the researcher identified the reason for low quality of ethics included the use of official position for personal gain, irresponsible attitude to their official duties, indifference and disrespectful attitude towards consumers of public services.

4.5 Strategies for Enhancing Professional Ethics among Teachers

The objective aimed at finding out different strategies that could be adapted to enhance professional ethics among teachers in public secondary school. Before, indicating the strategies, teachers were first asked to identify some common types of professional misconduct exhibited by teachers in public secondary school and possible measures to improve the misconduct. This was an open -ended question whereby a number of professional misconducts were indicated. Their responses were summarized in table 4.

Table 4: Teachers' Responses on the Forms of Profession Misconduct in Public Secondary Schools in Meru District

S/N	Forms of profession misconduct	f	%
1	Use of abusive language	58	72.5
2	Improper dressing style	52	65
3	Failure of fulfilling responsibilities	43	53.75
4	Sexual abuse	30	37.5
5	Alcoholism	23	28.75
6	Absenteeism	12	15

Source (field data, 2022)

Data in table 4 show that the use of abusive language was indicated by 58 (72.5%) of secondary school teachers. The data shows that, abusive language was identified as the most common form of professional misconduct among public secondary school teachers in Meru district. These findings imply that a good number of teachers in secondary schools do use abusive language in most of their interactions with students. This may be due to the fact that teachers think that they have authority over the students and then they can speak any word to them regardless of how the word will be interpreted. Similar findings were reported in Canada by Hogan et al., (2019) who found higher rates of verbal abuse among teachers in the country. The findings of this study also concur with report given by TSC (2019) which indicated a huge number of teachers being fired from the teaching

profession due to different professional misconducts, including verbal abuse.

Improper dressing styles and failure to fulfill responsibilities were identified as common forms of professional misconduct by 52 (65%) and 43 (53.75%) of the teachers respectively. These findings are in contrast to what was observed in Nigeria by Amadi and Amadi (2020) who reported that teachers demonstrated good dressing styles as recommended by the code of ethics for the teaching profession. The contradiction in the findings of the two studies suggests that it is possible for teachers to dress properly if laws and regulations are set, implemented and followed by everyone responsible. The existence of cases of improper dressing among secondary school teachers in Meru district also suggest that in

Tanzanian context the laws that require teachers to abide by the codes of professional ethics are not well reinforced.

Other forms of professional misconduct among teachers in public secondary school as pointed out by teachers included sexual abuse, absenteeism and alcoholism. These findings suggest that there are a number of cases pertaining to professional misconduct among teachers in public secondary school in Meru district. Similar findings were also reported in New Zealand by Rychert and Diesfeld (2019) who also found out alcoholism to be a common case among teachers. Similarly, Ayeni (2018) found out a number of teachers to be engaged in malicious behaviors including alcoholism, drug abuse and absenteeism. These findings show that although teachers

and students generally rated the level of ethical conduct of teachers to be acceptable, there are still a number of teachers who do not follow the professional code of conduct for teachers.

Due to the existence of such cases, it was then important for the researcher to know from the study participating on different strategies to be adapted for the purpose of enhancing professional ethics among teachers. Teachers responded to an open-ended question in their questionnaire to indicate different strategies to be adapted for enhancement of professional ethics among secondary school teachers. Their responses were summarized and are presented in figure 1.

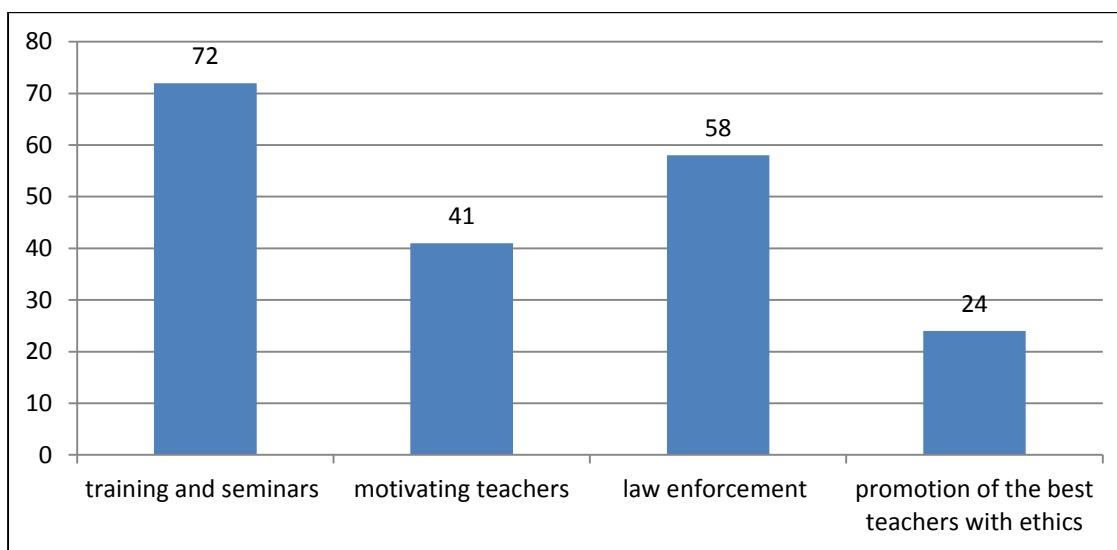


Figure 1: Teachers' Responses on the Strategies for Improving Professional Ethics
Source (field data, 2022).

Data in figure 1 show that 72 (90%) of the teachers who participated in the study suggested the use of training and seminars on teachers' professional ethics as a strategy to enhance professional ethics among public secondary schools. These findings suggest that there is a need for more seminars and workshops to orient teachers on the importance of maintaining professional ethics. Data in the same figure also indicate that 41 (51.25%) of the teachers indicated the application of attendance register as one of the strategies for enhancing teachers' professional ethics. This implies that teachers in public schools believe that the application of attendance register by the heads of schools can be an effective method towards improving teachers' school and class attendance. These findings are in agreement with Masiaga (2017) who recommended the use of attendance register as one of the strategies to enhance teachers' school and class attendance.

Enforcement of laws and regulations was indicated by 58(72.5%) of the teachers as being one of the strategies for enhancing professional ethics among teachers in public secondary schools. These findings suggest that the

presence of teachers with professional misconduct in public secondary schools may be due to poor enforcement of laws and regulations. These findings are supported by Betweli (2020) who found out that not all professional misconduct among teachers are reported to higher authorities as required by the law but failure of heads of schools to report the cases of professional misconduct among their teachers makes these teachers to continue misbehaving. Therefore, there is a need for heads of schools and other higher authorities to ensure enforcement of laws pertaining to teachers' professional ethics so as to enhance professional conduct among teachers. Promotion of the teachers with high levels of ethics was also pointed out by 24(30%) of teachers who participated in the study. These teachers saw the need of recognizing the ones with higher levels of professional conduct so as to motivate other teacher also to behave in the same manner.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

There is a positive effect of teachers' level of professional ethics on students' academic performance. Teachers with high level of professional ethics are committed to their job, they always come to school on time and teach effectively. Through doing so, they complete the syllabus on time, leading to improved students' academic performance. Also, through maintaining acceptable relationships with students, teachers with high level of profession ethics provide support to the needy students and hence help them to do better in their academic performance.

Teachers' professional ethics is an important criterion for students' academic performance. Therefore, it is the responsibility of everyone involved in the teaching profession to ensure high levels of professional ethics among teachers. This can be done through conducting seminars and workshops to teachers regarding the importance of maintaining professional ethics. Also, the higher authorities should take immediate measures to different cases pertaining to teachers' professional misconduct being reported by the heads of schools.

5.2 Recommendations

From the study, the following recommendations were suggested:

1. Colleges and universities offering teacher education should emphasize on teachers' professional ethics by offering different courses pertaining to teachers' ethics and monitoring the behaviour of teacher trainees to ensure that ethical principles of the teaching profession are practiced during the time of training.
2. Teachers should maintain high level of professional ethics because it has a significant effect on students' academic performance. Teachers should be committed, punctual and exhibit good behaviour.

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