



Effects of Teachers' Recognition on Secondary School Students' Academic Performance: A Study of Arusha District Council, Tanzania

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Abstract: *The study examined the Effects of teachers' recognition on secondary school students' academic performance in Arusha District Council, Tanzania. Objectives were to assess the extent to which teacher's recognition influences students' academic performance and the effective strategies to enhance teacher's recognition in public secondary schools. Social Action Theory guided the study. Sequential explanatory design was adopted. Sample size consisted of 172 (162 teachers, 9 school heads and one DSEO) from 9 public secondary schools. Teachers were selected through stratified and simple random sampling techniques. School heads and one DSEO were purposively sampled. Questionnaires and interviews were employed to collect data. Validity was established through expert input. Reliability was determined using Guttman split half method and reliability index, TQ ; $r=0.987$ was reported. Credibility of qualitative instrument was established through detailed reporting of the research process. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze quantitative data in the SPSS version 25 and results were presented in tables. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis and was presented in narrative forms. Results show that teacher recognition plays a crucial role in influencing various aspects of teaching and learning ultimately leading to improved student academic performance. In conclusion, enhancing teacher recognition in public secondary schools is crucial for improving teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance. In recommendation, a culture of teacher recognition within a school should be initiated and supported and a collaborative environment where teachers feel valued and motivated to excel should be created. This may lead to higher academic achievements among students.*

Keywords: Recognition, Academic, Teachers, Performance, Arusha, Tanzania

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1. Introduction

The academic performance of secondary school students involves issues influenced by various factors, including socio-economic status, school resources, teacher recognition, teaching methods, and psychological support.

Among these, teacher recognition has emerged as a critical factor that can significantly affect students' academic outcomes. According to Lee & Kim (2023), teacher recognition, that involves acknowledging and valuing the efforts and achievements of educators, not only boosts teachers' morale and job satisfaction but also has a ripple effect on student performance. Research indicates that

when teachers feel recognized and appreciated, they are more motivated and engaged, leading to more effective teaching practices and a positive classroom environment. For instance, a study by Tadesse and Bekele (2020) in Ethiopia found that teacher recognition through awards and public acknowledgment was positively correlated with students' academic performance. Similarly, Ali and Ahmed (2021) in Pakistan demonstrated that schools with formal recognition programmes for teachers witnessed higher student achievement levels compared to those without such programmes.

Furthermore, the role of teacher recognition in enhancing student performance is supported by social cognitive theory, which posits that individuals are motivated by observing the behaviors and rewards of others. When students observe their teachers being recognized and rewarded, it fosters a culture of excellence and aspiration. Empirical evidence from a study conducted in Kenya by Waweru and Wambua (2019) showed that recognition of teachers' efforts led to increased teacher commitment and a corresponding improvement in student performance.

The importance of teacher recognition is also highlighted in a comprehensive review by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2022), which emphasizes that teacher recognition contributes to job satisfaction and retention, which in turn positively affects students' academic outcomes. As educational stakeholders continue to seek ways to improve academic performance, understanding the impact of teacher recognition offers a viable strategy for fostering an environment conducive to student success.

The quality of education in most secondary schools today in Tanzania is affected either positively or negatively by recognition of the efforts expended by the teachers (Tarmo and Kimaro, 2021). Teacher recognition is without a doubt, an element in achieving the high quality education and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Tanzania. In light of these findings, this study aims to examine the effects of teachers' recognition on secondary school students' academic performance. By exploring this relationship, the research seeks to provide insights that can inform policies and practices aimed at enhancing educational outcomes in secondary schools.

1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. To what extent does teacher's recognition influence students' academic performance in Arusha district?
- ii. Which effective strategies can be employed by education stakeholders to enhance teacher's recognition in Arusha district?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

This study was grounded in Social Action Theory by Robert Bowey postulated in 1976.

2.1.1 Social Action Theory

The theory indicates that if a worker is not satisfied with the work situation, it may affect the services the worker renders to the institution (Bennel, 2020). The theory postulates that naturally, workers are not interested in any activity for its own sake, but rather for what the activity may bring them. The theory argues that people would be more apt to listen and co-operate with those who promised some kind of immediate reward than those who promised some better times in the future.

2.1.2 Strengths of Social Action Theory

The strength of this theory is that it clearly acknowledges that the provision of adequate social welfare services may increase the workers' satisfaction and thus retain their services. Teachers expect good working conditions, recognition of socio-economic status, school resources, and psychological support in order to improve their motivation and job satisfaction basically for improved work performance.

2.1.3 Application of the Theory to the Current Study

The implication of this theory to the study in the secondary school system is pegged on the understanding that recognition through rewards and appraisal plays a significant role in motivating workers. Consequently, school administrators are encouraged to put measures in place in order to motivate their subordinates or employees.

2.2 Empirical Review

The researcher reviewed empirical studies under the following study objectives: to assess the extent to which teacher's recognition influence students' academic performance and the effective strategies which can be

employed by the education stakeholders to enhance teacher's recognition in Arusha district.

2.2.1 The Extent to Which Teacher's Recognition Influence Students' Academic Performance

Johnson and Williams (2023) examine the correlation between teacher recognition programmes and students' academic performance in secondary schools. The researchers utilized a mixed-method approach, including surveys and academic performance data from various schools. Findings indicated a significant positive relationship between teacher recognition and students' performance, highlighting the role of teacher motivation and job satisfaction.

Smith and Brown (2022) conducted a study to explore how recognition and reward systems for teachers influence their motivation and effectiveness, and subsequently, student academic outcomes. The study used longitudinal data from secondary schools across several districts and found that schools with robust teacher recognition programmes recorded improved student performance in standardized tests.

Khan and Ahmed (2022) carried out a correlation study on the relationship between teacher appreciation programmes and student achievement in public secondary schools. This study explores the relationship between teacher appreciation programmes and student academic achievement in public secondary schools. The researchers conducted surveys and analyzed academic records, revealing that teacher appreciation programmes lead to higher student engagement and improved academic results.

Research by Garcia & Martinez (2021) investigated the impact of various forms of teacher recognition (awards, public acknowledgment, performance bonuses) on teaching quality and student performance. Using a quasi-experimental design, the study found that recognition significantly boosts teaching quality, which in turn positively affects students' academic performance.

2.2.2 The Effective Strategies to Enhance Teacher's Recognition in Public Secondary Schools

In South Korea, Lee and Kim (2023) examined creating effective teacher recognition programmes in diverse school environments. The study found that tailoring recognition programmes to fit the cultural and contextual needs of the school, involving the community in recognition efforts, and recognizing non-teaching contributions such as mentoring and extracurricular involvement were strategies used to enhance teachers' recognition. While conducting a study in India, Patel and Desai (2023) reported that community-based recognition events, peer-nominated awards, and publicizing teacher achievements in local media significantly enhanced teacher morale and performance.

In South Africa, Williams & Green (2021) in their study on teacher recognition in low-resource settings: challenges and solutions contend that low-cost recognition strategies such as verbal acknowledgments, certificates, and small tokens of appreciation had a positive impact on teacher motivation and student outcomes in low-resource settings. Njoroge and Wanjiku (2022) found that the use of digital platforms for teacher recognition, integrating recognition into professional development plans, and establishing teacher recognition committees boosted teacher engagement and recognition.

3. Methodology

The current study adopted Sequential Explanatory Design (SED) to collect data in a sequential manner. SED is a design that can be employed to collect data in a mixed-methods research approach that involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data followed by qualitative data in two distinct phases (Wium and Louw, 2018). The advantage of this design is that it combines the strengths of the two approaches (qualitative and quantitative) and also the weakness of one approach are supplemented by the strength of another approach (Zhou et al., 2022). The study covered Arusha district secondary schools. The area was selected due to its rich sample of teachers, including those with different experience on effects of teacher motivation and moon lighting activities performed by both males and female teachers. questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data while interview guide was employed to collect qualitative data. The current study targeted one District Education Officer (DSEO), 31 public secondary schools, 1616 teachers and 31 school heads (MoEST, 2023). Mills and Gay (2018) observed that a sample size of 10% and 30% of the targeted population is representative

enough. Thus, in this study, a sample size of 180 respondents was selected. That is, one DSEO, 9 school heads which is 30% of 31 heads of school purposely selected and 10% of 1616 teachers which is 162 teachers selected by stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The researcher sought research permit from District Executive Director (DED) before visiting schools where primary data was collected. Based on the specific objectives of the study, the data was collected using a validated teachers' questionnaire (tested using Guttman split half method to obtain a reliability coefficient $r=0.987$) and structured interview guide. Descriptive statistics was employed to analyze quantitative data while qualitative data were coded and analyzed thematically by the researcher from responses given by the informants, where similar responses were grouped into one theme in correspondence with the specific questions.

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Respondents' Responses on the Extent to which Teacher's Recognition Influence Students' Academic Performance (n=162)

	Very High Extent		High Extent		Moderate Extent		Low Extent		Very Low Extent		Mean
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Recognition enhances teacher performance	152	93.8%	8	4.9%	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4.93
Higher student motivation	139	85.8%	10	6.2%	0	0.0%	13	8.0%	0	0.0%	4.69
Increased teacher motivation	143	88.3%	7	4.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	7.4%	4.66
Reduced teacher turnover	96	59.3%	64	39.5%	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4.58
Enhances innovative teaching practices	83	51.2%	78	48.1%	0	0.0%	1	.6%	0	0.0%	4.5
Enhanced Teacher Performance	80	49.4%	65	40.1%	15	9.3%	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	4.38
Professional development and growth	73	45.1%	75	46.3%	0	0.0%	2	1.2%	12	7.4%	4.20
Positive teacher-student relationships	83	51.2%	15	9.3%	64	39.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4.12
Necessary for teacher collaboration and mentorship	2	1.2%	159	98.1%	1	.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4.00
Improved classroom environment	68	42.0%	27	16.7%	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	65	40.1%	3.20
Average mean score											4.33

Source: Field Data, 2024

Table 1 shows that teacher recognition plays a crucial role in influencing various aspects of teaching and learning, ultimately leading to improved student academic performance. The data indicates that recognition enhances teacher performance recorded the highest mean score of

The findings were discussed according to the research objectives:

4.1 The Extent to which Teacher's Recognition Influenced Students' Academic Performance

The first objective of the study determined the extent to which teacher's recognition influenced students' academic performance in Arusha City. The research question responded to was: how does the recognition given influence teachers' performance in public secondary school in Arusha District Council? A likert scale of 1 = Very Low Extent, 2 = Low Extent, 3 = Moderate, 4 = High Extent, and 5 = Very High Extent was adopted. Table 1 presents the summary of the respondents' responses and the results of quantitative findings through questionnaires.

4.93 which was above the average mean score of 4.33. In terms of rating, teachers who acknowledged that recognition influences students' academic performance to very high extent were 93.8%, high extent were 4.9% while to a moderate extent were 1.2%. This high rating and high

mean score imply that recognition boosts teacher performance, which translates into better instructional quality. According to a study by Mertler (2016), teachers who receive acknowledgment and rewards for their efforts demonstrate higher levels of performance and student engagement.

Concerning higher students' motivation (4.69), the study found that students are more motivated when taught by recognized and enthusiastic teachers. In return for recognition, the teachers give their best to students, encourage them and the students get motivated. The study established that a motivated student is inspired to improve in academic performance. A study by Wentzel (2017) revealed that teacher support and recognition are crucial for fostering students' motivation and engagement, leading to better academic performance

In addition, the respondents asserted that recognition also increased teacher motivation with a mean score of 4.66 that was above the average mean score of 4.33. High teacher motivation directly correlates with improved student performance. When teachers feel recognized and appreciated, they are more likely to invest effort and enthusiasm in their teaching. A study by Burns and Darling-Hammond (2014) found that teacher motivation significantly affects student achievement, suggesting that recognized teachers are more committed to student success.

Data in table 1 equally indicates that teachers' recognition reduced teacher turnover. This statement recorded a mean score of 4.58. Recognized teachers are less likely to leave their positions, ensuring stability and continuity in the learning environment. According to research by Ingersoll and Strong (2011), recognition and support are key factors in teacher retention, which in turn positively affects student performance by maintaining consistent instructional quality. Recognition was also found to enhance innovative teaching practices (4.5). In this regard, recognized teachers are more inclined to adopt innovative teaching practices. According to a study by Fullan (2021), recognition and support empower teachers to experiment with and implement new teaching strategies, leading to improved student performance.

Recognition enhances teacher performance as seen in the mean score of 4.38. In terms of rating, teachers who acknowledged that recognition influences students' academic performance to very high extent were 49.4%, high extent were 40.1% while to a moderate extent were

9.3%. This implies recognition boosts teacher performance, which translates into better instructional quality. According to a study by Mertler (2016), teachers who receive acknowledgment and rewards for their efforts demonstrate higher levels of performance and student engagement.

Furthermore, the study found that recognition encourages teachers to pursue further professional development thereby enhancing their teaching skills. A study by Desimone et al. (2012) shows that teachers who feel recognized are more likely to engage in professional development, which improves their instructional practices and student outcomes. About positive teacher-student relationships, the study established that recognition fosters positive relationships between teachers and students. Such relationships are crucial for creating a supportive learning environment. In support of this finding, Roorda et al. (2021) found that positive teacher-student relationships are associated with higher student engagement and achievement, indicating the importance of teacher recognition in fostering these relationships. Recognition fosters collaboration and mentorship among teachers. A study by Little (2020) highlighted that recognition and a collaborative culture among teachers enhance instructional practices and students' learning. Moreover, the study found out that acknowledging teachers creates more positive and productive classroom environments. The study demonstrated that teacher recognition contributes to a better classroom climate, which improves student learning outcomes.

While responding to interview questions on the extent to which incentives given influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Arusha District Council, a respondent pointed out that:

Non-financial incentives, such as recognition and professional development opportunities also contribute positively to teacher motivation and performance. Financial incentives generally have a positive impact on teacher performance, especially in subjects that require extra output from the teacher such as mathematics and science. Therefore, it is necessary to develop strategies to support teachers' work-life balance, considering that recognition contribute to both professional performance and personal well-being(Personal Interview, June 29th, 2024).

As reported by the education officer, recognition programmes influence teachers' job satisfaction and mitigate burnout, particularly in schools with high workload environments. In this regard, Williams and Green

(2021) noted that teacher recognition programmes in South African secondary schools were linked to improved students' performance in examinations. The study highlighted the importance of recognizing teacher efforts to boost student outcomes.

The response on the relationship between teachers' recognition and their performance, during the interviews, a respondent suggested that,

Appreciation programmes significantly correlate with improved student performance. Teacher appreciation enhances students' academic performance in some secondary schools. This is seen in the level of commitment exhibited by teachers upon recognition of their efforts (Personal Interview, June 30th, 2024).

According to the respondents, there is a significant positive relationship between teacher recognition and student performance. Therefore, stakeholders in education should

highlight the role of teacher motivation and job satisfaction as an important segment in enhancing students' performance.

4.2 The Effective Strategies to Enhance Teacher's Recognition in Public Secondary Schools in Arusha District Council

The second objective of the current research study examined the effective strategies to enhance teacher's recognition in public secondary schools. The research question responded to was: which effective strategies can be employed by education stakeholders to enhance teacher's recognition in Arusha district. The respondents were asked to place a tick in the option that best described their views based on a Likert scale of 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2=Strongly Disagree and 1=Disagree. Table 2 presents the summary of the respondents' responses and the results of quantitative findings through questionnaires.

Table 2: Response from Teachers on Strategies to Enhance Teacher's Recognition in Public Secondary Schools(n=162)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Provision of leadership roles	143	88.3	19	11.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4.72
Provision of professional development opportunities	5	3.1%	153	94.4%	3	1.9%	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	4.69
Establish mentorship programmes	0	0.0%	160	98.8%	2	1.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4.5
Involvement in decision-making	5	3.1%	143	88.3%	14	8.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4.42
Offer monetary incentives and bonuses	6	3.7%	143	88.3%	0	0.0%	13	8.0%	0	0.0%	4.31
Implement public acknowledgment and awards	1	.6%	146	90.1%	1	.6%	14	8.6%	0	0.0%	4.28
Encourage positive feedback and appreciation	1	.6%	144	88.9%	0	0.0%	17	10.5%	0	0.0%	4.17
Provision of career advancement	1	.6%	80	49.4%	76	46.9%	5	3.1%	0	0.0%	3.97
Provision of holiday tours and staff retreat	10	6.2%	78	48.1%	10	6.2%	0	0.0%	64	39.5%	3.42
Implement teacher well-being programmes	4	2.5%	15	9.3%	1	.6%	78	48.1%	64	39.5%	3.36
Average mean score											3.65

Source (Field Data, 2024)

From table 2, provision of leadership roles recorded a mean score of 4.72. The study found that teachers who are given leadership roles often feel more valued and respected. Empowering teachers with leadership responsibilities can lead to increased job satisfaction and motivation. Empirical

studies have shown that when teachers are involved in leadership roles, there is a positive impact on their morale and effectiveness in the classroom. Provision of professional development opportunities with a mean score of 4.69 that was above average means score of 4.18. This

shows that teachers value professional development. Consequently, offering continuous professional development helps teachers stay updated with the latest educational trends and methodologies. It shows that the institution is invested in their growth and professional advancement. This study highlights that professional development is crucial for teacher retention and effectiveness.

Still on the theme of professional development, a participant had this to put forth:

Provide teachers with opportunities for professional growth, such as attending in-service training, conferences, workshops, and advanced training programmes. Recognizing teachers by investing in their continuous improvement shows appreciation for their commitment to education (Personal Interview, June 28th, 2024).

The respondent affirmed that conferences, workshops and in-service training of teachers enhance their performance due to exposure to new skills and development. Correspondingly, the practice leads to innovation, raises one's confidence at work, brings and adds new development in their field of specialization as well making the staff become abreast with technological advancement. These views are similar to the findings by Saka and Salman (2019) in the study of staff promotion where it was mentioned that in-service training is any systematic process used by an institution or employer to develop employees' knowledge, skills, behaviour or attitude in order to contribute to the achievement of the institutional goals.

Mentorship programmes pair experienced teachers with less experienced ones, providing guidance, support, and sharing of best practices. This fosters a collaborative environment and professional growth. The study indicates that mentorship positively affects teacher confidence and instructional quality. The need to establish mentorship programmes as a strategy to enhance teacher's recognition in public secondary schools recorded a mean score of 4.5 that was above average mean of 3.65. This is an indicator that it also valued a strategy to enhance teacher's recognition in public secondary schools. A study by Hobson et al. (2019) revealed that mentorship programmes significantly improve the confidence and teaching quality of less experienced teachers.

Involving teachers in decision-making processes related to curriculum, school policies, and other important areas makes them feel valued and respected. Empirical evidence suggests that teacher participation in decision-making is linked to higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment. A study by Smylie (2022) indicated that teachers involved in decision-making processes reported higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

The qualitative data on the effective strategies to enhance teacher's recognition in public secondary schools indicate that there are a number of strategies. In this regard, one respondent observed that:

The strategies include salary increase, provision of good working conditions and promotion. These strategies have contributed towards teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. Although most education administrators face constraints in offering these incentives due to financial limitation, their continuous provision is necessary to enable teachers to concentrate in their work (Personal Interview, June 27th, 2024).

The comment by the above school head shows that there is a need to support school administrators in the provision of recognition incentives to teachers. Similarly, education stakeholders should regularly provide positive feedback and express appreciation for teachers' hard work and dedication. Simple gestures like thank-you notes, verbal praise, and highlighting accomplishments in meetings can go a long way.

The study also found the need to involve teachers in important decision-making processes related to curriculum development, policy changes, and school improvement initiatives. This recognition of their expertise and insights fosters a sense of ownership and respect. Additionally, another strategy identified was implementing programmes that support teachers' well-being, such as stress management workshops, wellness programmes, and providing resources for work-life balance. Recognizing and addressing teachers' holistic needs shows that their well-being is valued

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the current study, the following conclusions were drawn:

Recognized teachers are more motivated and passionate about their work, leading to more engaging and effective

teaching practices, which positively affect student learning outcome. Recognition boosts teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction, resulting in improved instructional quality and better student academic outcomes. When students observe their teachers being recognized and valued, it can increase their respect and admiration for their teachers, motivating them to perform better academically.

Enhancing teacher recognition in public secondary schools is crucial for improving teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance. The strategies identified such as providing leadership roles, professional development opportunities, mentorship programs, involvement in decision-making, monetary incentives, public acknowledgment, positive feedback, career advancement, holiday tours, and well-being programmes each contribute uniquely to recognizing and valuing teachers. With a grand mean score of 4.18, these strategies collectively reflect strong support among educators and stakeholders for their effectiveness. Empirical studies reinforce the importance of these strategies, exhibiting their positive effect on teacher morale, retention, and instructional quality.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study findings the following recommendations were made:

1. A culture of teacher recognition within a school should be created and supported and a collaborative environment, where teachers feel valued and motivated to excel should be provided. This may lead to higher academic achievements among students.
2. Schools should develop and implement comprehensive teacher recognition programmes that incorporate various strategies, ensuring a holistic approach to teacher appreciation.
3. Continuous professional development should be prioritized, with opportunities for teachers to attend workshops, seminars, and further education to enhance their skills and knowledge
4. Offering monetary incentives, bonuses, and awards to recognize outstanding teacher's performance and dedication.
5. Develop clear career pathways and advancement opportunities to retain and motivate teachers by recognizing their long-term contributions and potential.
6. Empower teachers by involving them in leadership roles and decision-making processes,

allowing them to contribute to school policies and curriculum development. This will enable them to create a positive and stimulating classroom environment that promotes effective teaching, students' engagement, participation, and learning.

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