The Recruitment of Support Staff in Tanzanian Secondary Schools

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Abstract
This paper focuses on the meaning, classification and types of support staff, their contributions towards conducive teaching and learning environments, conditions required/attributes required for support staff to be employed in temporally or permanent terms. It   further identifies current situations and challenges in recruitment and recruited (employed) support staff in Tanzanian secondary schools, basing on a minor survey.The survey is challenging the ongoing Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDPI&II 2004- 2015) from the human recourses perspective. The demand for human resources to meet the need of quality education remains high. The main reward of the SEDP I&II programme is the increased number of schools, teaching staff and facilities and to the great extent the recruitment of support staff is almost neglected whilst there is a high demand of them. In short the survey justifies the need of support staff in or schools. The paper also proposes approaches to school administration in recruiting support staff for the aim improving the quality of education and therefore helping the school to excel a superb achievement and development in both academic and School community.Thus, for the reason of heading to the better education, recruitment of support staff in Tanzanian schools is obligatory for the reason of providing conducive environment for school management, teaching and learning. Every position in the school, regardless of what that job is, adds to the success of the school and therefore learning outcomes for the students as a whole. In short, it is a team effort.
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Introduction
The reality of Tanzanian secondary school education today is that, School administrators are responsible for the overall direction, management of school programmes, evaluating, reporting and designing interventions that helps the school community. In this regard, the school has to be well prepared so as to meet the needs of the society, which is primarily superb examination results. This is a symbol of school and excellence performance. This can only be achieved with regard to collaborative efforts of teaching and non-teaching staff.

However, it should not be expected that only one Education Administrator will have a set of skills to meet the needs of his or her institution all the time. School administrators should be prepared to work collaboratively with teachers, other professionals and support staff to help students achieve success learning.

Although, support staff have been an integral part in the secondary school education sector since independence, their numbers have substantially decreased in recent years particularly in Public schools, whilst the number of schools and students are increasing tremendously (Lassibille et.al 1999).   In schools, the school administrators always ensure that their schools have support staff by any means regardless whether they have enough financial resources or not.

The role of support staff is totally technical and advisory, some scholars regards their absence in the school structure would make it difficult for the teachers to achieve the total objectives of the curriculum implementation (Mutuva 2012 , Kuluchumila 2013).

The purpose of this paper is to provide Education administrators/Heads of Schools at school levels with sufficient information that will assist in developing best choices of support staff so as to successfully accomplish their working plans. It is so, because it is clearly understood that, many of public and community secondary schools do not have enough non- teaching staff that can work collaboratively with the teaching staff (Kuluchumila 2013).

What is a Support Staff in a school setting?
The definition and scope of education support personnel varies between countries and may include categories of personnel with differing status and conditions of service.

A support staff refers as an employee allocated to work in schools to assist school administrators, teachers and school counselors to address key educational needs within the school (SSD 2005). These can embrace administrative staff who support the efficient running of the school (for example, school secretaries, executive / clerical staff and secretarial / typing staff) (NZEI 2011)

Support staff can either be employed by schools, educational boards or government authority to deliver effective and efficient support services for teaching and learning and the day to day running of schools.

Their work usually add value to education services equipping students with knowledge, competencies and values to be successful citizens in the country, region or globally.

Classifications and Types of support Staff in Secondary Schools:

Education Support Staff cover a broad range of professional, administrative, technical and general staff working within the education sector, such as teaching assistants, school nurses and psychologists, bursars, and bus drivers, amongst others.

Table. 1 *The classification of support staff as required by Tanzanian schools:*

CLASS	SUDENT WELFARE	TECHNICIANS	ADMINISTRATION STAFF
	Student Counselors	ICT technicians	Bursar/Accountant/Finance Officer
	Nurse/Matron	Librarians	Secretary
			Cleaner
		Laboratory/Science technicians	Cooks
			Catering Officer
			Security Guards/Watchmen
			Typist
			Driver

Contributions of Support Staff towards Conducive Teaching and Learning:

Education support Staff are vital in their contribution towards quality education, as well as safe and positive learning environments.There are wide varieties of support staff roles and responsibilities that contribute towards provision of services that have seen to decrease the workload of teachers and administrative burden (Blatchford et.al 2009).   Their presence in schools allows teachers to spend more time on teaching and learning and less time dealing with non teaching activities such as bursary or catering.

One of the contributions of the support staff may be individual, paired and/or shared that assist in the implementation of their day to day activities within the school.

Support staff may be assigned to schools where students with special needs have individual Educational plans that demonstrates an assessed need for assistance, beyond what can be otherwise provided by his/her teachers and other school personnel.

Support staff works in cooperation with school staff to ensure that assignments and schedules achieve the most efficient and effective use of their time.

Support staff plays part responsibly and participate in planning for students practical with teachers. This role can be successfully played by Lab technicians, in Physics, Agriculture, Chemistry,Biology,Building Construction Practical courses etc.

Support staff helps to maximize the independence of students particularly those with special needs, or academic and disciplinary problems. They can greatly provide opportunities for students to grow and develop within school environment and at society levels at large (MOEVT 2014). Support staff such as counselors can play their part in this area.

Support staff have a professional responsibility and opportunity to model and promote an atmosphere of mutual respect for each other as well as for teachers, Students and parents.

Conditions Required for recruitment of support staff for permanent and/ or temporal basis:

Schools and educational bodies are explicitly recognises the needs of teaching and non-teaching staff, this is also an important subject given priority by the Tanzanian ministry of Education and vocational training(Dodd 2006, MOEVT 2010).In order to achieve the desired outcome in schools, the supporting staff to be recruited at least should demonstrate the following:

1. Because they work or expect to work in secondary school environment they must possess   a general knowledge of the legal and human rights of School Children and youth. Knowledge of and compliance with school/Board policies dealing with the right and well beings of students and staffs (E.g. Child policies, Human rights)

 2. Willingness   to support students and school as a whole during unstructured time in schools.

3. Good in academic skills, including oral and written communication, so that the support staff may follow through reinforcement techniques designed by school administration.

4. Ability to work collaboratively within a team structure.

5. Positive regard for the distinction among roles and responsibilities of administrators, teachers and support staff.

6. Ability to establish and maintain rapport with students, teachers, and other school personnel by working collaboratively within a team structure.

Current Identified success and challenges emerged in recruitment and employed support staff: Summary of results from local survey in Rukwa region Tanzania:

The Survey for Education Administrators (Head of schools) at school levels and support staff in a random

sample of schools were conducted in the month of September 2015. The survey was done purposely to study the recruitment and conditions of employed support staff that do exist in our schools, both public and non-public. The findings have been presented so as to showcase the experiences of Head of schools/School Administrators and views of support staff in variety of roles. This has only been done using the participants own words.

It additionally, engaged to come up with conditions and challenges that exists and trends that are developing. Simple random sampling method was employed for the reason of avoiding biasness in selection of schools to be surveyed and hence represent the valid information (Kothari 2004). Majority of participating Head of schools and support staff reported to respond positively to the survey questions. Data from the surveys showed that among both participating Heads of Schools and support staff members there was great appreciation regarding the contributions of support staff members in Rukwa Region schools. There were many very positive views (100%) expressed about the contributions that support staff makes to the day-to-day running of the school.

Main findings from the survey, found there is   none of support staff that has been recruited in recent years. From the survey, almost 1% are long term staff, employed by the government (public) and 37% employed by non-public schools.

On Job contentment, 98% of support staff who are government employed and 89% in non-public schools was very satisfied with their job and working environment including working arrangements and Contracts. This is opposing to Support staff who mostly are part time employed in Public schools, whereas 100% are dissatisfied with their job status   regarding to the nature of contracts, which mostly do lack insurances and good working environments, including their monthly pay. Most of the public schools pays to part time support staff the wage of TZS between 50,000/= and 100,000/= per month. The amount which is not enough to fulfill the monthly need of the worker, for this reason they do engage in extra work to top up their monthly pay.

The results of this study reveal most public secondary schools do not have Support staffs that are employed by government or local government authority (91%), due to financial challenges the support staffs are employed casually.

The   result continue to reveal that, more than 67% of support staffs in Non-Public schools are enrolled in social welfare Funds such as National Security Social Fund (NSSF) and Community Health Funds(CHF) as a part of motivation. This is different from public schools where as 9% of support staff are found to benefit in social welfare funds.

However, at the same time, results reveal further that most school heads raised the issue of requirements of support staff for their schools by Local government authorities, with negative response. In addition to that they otherwise asked to be supported financially to recruit this category of workers, again the response remained the same.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Results of the surveys from Head of schools and support staff simultaneously indicate high levels of overall positivity by and about support staff in schools and the work that they do. The following are the recommendations:

1. Creating an environment in which temporally support staff are (and feel) supported and valued this will reduce un-necessary questions.
2. The government should recruit the support staffs that will correspond with the number of schools and ensuring that relevant, good quality professional support staff in schools are available .
3. Soliciting other sources of funds so as to maximize the ability to employ support staffs, in permanent or temporary terms.
4. Recruiting Support staff who are multi -skilled, to reduce the costs wherever possible. In this regard, schools or educational governing bodies may recruit support staff who can fulfill more than one role, for example:
   i)   Driving staff who have maintenance skills
   ii) Library staff who also undertake ICT duties
   iii) A Lab technician who can teach at least one Science Subject e.g. Chemistry, Biology, Agricultural Science or Physics
   iv) A typist who can also undertake duties of receptionist and
   v)   A security guard/watchmen who can undertake cleaning duties and so forth

Conclusion:

This paper, **the recruitment of support staff in secondary schools** provides Education Administrators/Head of schools the information that they are required to work together harmoniously with support staff to address the educational needs of the students and the school community as a whole.

The paper points out that in order to provide conducive environment for teaching and learning, there is a need of a wide range of support staff from cleaners to Accountants.

Moreover, the paper specifically clarifies the contributions made by support staff in schools. It also present recommendations for Heads of schools regarding the key issues raised during the survey.

Support staff in secondary schools are valuable and contributing team members in the education process.

Although teaching staff have the ultimate pedagogical responsibilities for students regardless to the present challenges, the inputs of support staff should be valued and encouraged so as to respond positively and effectively to achieve optimal learning outcomes for the students.

Concerns associated with recruitment of support staff following the need and growing number of secondary in the country, the Education governing bodies should put more consideration in recruiting support staff to avoid casual employment in schools particularly in public schools as these schools are more vulnerable to challenges related to support staff.

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