Why are Teachers prompted to use their mobile phones unprofessionally? Experiences from Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

In this era of communication technology, educational benefits and many ethical problems associated with using mobile technology devices have emerged in the education sector. This study explored the reasons for teachers' indulgence in the unprofessional use of mobile phones and its repercussions on education in Tanzania. The study was conducted using a qualitative approach drawing on a sample of 28 participants selected from the Dar es Salaam University College of Education. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion methods. The findings revealed several reasons for teachers to use their mobile phones unprofessionally. They include the lack of policy on acceptable mobile phone use in schools, lack of professional training, lack of efficient induction and mentorship, and irregular in-service training on ethical matters. The study uncovered several repercussions of unprofessional use of mobile phones among teachers. These were the disruption of teaching and learning; increase in students' delinquent behaviour; hostility and quarrels in schools; and deterioration of the image and status of the teaching profession. The study recommends incorporating ethical issues related to ICT use in the teachers' code of conduct and integrating ethical literacy in using ICT devices in the teacher education curriculum. Moreover, concerted efforts should be taken to educate teachers on the ethical use of ICT devices to reduce the damage that threatens to undermine the government's attainment of the Education For All agenda and the development vision 2025**.**

Keywords: *teacher; mobile phone; unprofessional use*

INTRODUCTION

The most recent advance in the 21st Century has been information and communication technology (ICT), and within this field is the drastic advancement of mobile technology (Akpan et al., 2017). Recent innovations in mobile technology have presented a mobile phone with a better variety of abilities, such as audio and video recording, camera, text and multimedia messaging, and wireless Internet access, to mention a few. With these potential abilities, Angello (2015) noted that a mobile phone has established its presence in all spheres of people's life. The device has proven to improve teaching and learning in various ways significantly. For example, it provides teachers and students easy access to various educational resources (UNESCO, 2012; 2017). It enhances collaborative learning, communication, and interaction (Mfaume et al., 2019). The device also enables teachers working in challenging environments and those with busy schedules, to access in-service training at their convenient places and time (UNESCO, 2017). In recognising these educational benefits, initiatives to integrate the device into mainstream education systems are prominent across countries (Swarts et al., 2010; Gibbons et al., 2018; Mfaume, 2020).

The initiatives have included improving ICT infrastructure in schools and training teachers and learners on the educational utilization of the device (Jones et al., 2014; Mtebe et al., 2020; Traxler, 2016; UNESCO, 2017). Although the enthusiasm to integrate the device is high, its realisation depends on teachers' quality (Romano, 2002). Teachers' quality encompasses their competencies

and ethical use of the device in executing professional duties (Swarts et al., 2010; Mfaume, 2020). Teachers' ethical conduct is critical in transforming predetermined educational goals into practical terms (Green, 2010). It is critical in promoting students' performance and personality adjustment (Ebert et al., 2012). Therefore, achievement in integrating a mobile phone in the teaching and learning process abides within teachers' observance of the ethical standards of the teaching profession. However, with the growing adoption of this versatile device, reports accusing teachers of unprofessional use are widespread worldwide (Sunday, 2014; Pedraya, 2016; Porter et al., 2016; Walsh, 2014; Ifijeh et al., 2015, Nivashni, 2019; Mfaume, 2020, Karanja, 2016). For example, in the United States of America, teachers have been charged with sexting and distributing nude pictures to students (Pedraya, 2016; Reilly, 2022). In New Jersey, a substitute teacher was charged with possessing and distributing hundreds of videos depicting child sexual exploitation (Park, 2016). In April 2022, a Chapmanville middle school substitute teacher in West Virginia was arrested for sending sexually explicit images and messages to a Logan high school student via Snapchat (Tierney, 2022). In February 2022, a female trainee teacher in Austria faced the ACT magistrate's court for indecently assaulting a 15-year-old student and sending him a sexual image (Mcphee, 2022). In South Africa, Ghana and Malawi, teachers spend much time chatting and making and receiving phone calls in classrooms. Also, girls have received calls for sexual proposals and upsetting messages from male teachers (Porter et al., 2016). Teachers in Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, and Nigeria have also been found to perpetrate examination malpractices using their mobile phones (Karanja, 2016; Nteza, 2019; Masina, 2020; Senoo, 2021).

In Tanzania, integrating a mobile phone into education started with launching the ICT policy for basic education in 2007 (United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 2007). The policy emphasises the adoption and use of the mobile phone, among other ICT devices, as part of a strategy to address educational challenges and enable schools to deliver quality education (Swarts & Wachira, 2010; Gibbons, 2018). In collaboration with various development partners, the government has undertaken several initiatives, including equipping schools and colleges with a supportive infrastructure and training teachers on how to deliver through the device (Chirwa, 2018; Mtebe et al., 2020; Swarts et al., 2010). Statistics indicate that until 2017 approximately 20% of schools and 34 teacher training colleges in the country were connected to the Internet service that supports the educational use of a mobile phone (MoEST, 2017). Despite the government's dedication, like other countries, Tanzania has witnessed a spate of reports on teachers' unprofessional use of the device.

For example, in 2009, an evaluation report released by the National Examination Council of Tanzania [NECTA] on the administration of primary school leaving examinations disclosed that some teachers leaked the examinations through their mobile phones (NECTA, 2009). In 2016, Ndalichako, the former Minister of education, denounced teachers for wasting working hours chatting on WhatsApp (Lubasi, 2017). Mfaume et al., (2017) reported that some secondary school teachers in the Mbeya region failed to accomplish their duties due to excessive chatting on social networking sites. In 2018, the NECTA annulled the primary school leaving examination results following the examination leak perpetrated by teachers, heads of schools, and some education officers through mobile phones (Ramadhan, 2018). A recent study by Mfaume (2020) disclosed different forms of unprofessional actions committed by teachers through the devices. Notable, especially in actions such as making and receiving calls in classrooms, prolonged chatting during working hours, sexting, cyberbullying, cheating, chatting and playing games while invigilating examinations, chatting during staff meetings, and disclosing confidential information, among others. Despite these recurring reports, there is a paucity of knowledge about why teachers, the trusted professionals, resorted to unprofessional deeds and the implications of such deeds on education. Therefore, the researchers conducted this study with a conviction that gaining a research-based understanding can be an important stage in taking a firm resolve on designing appropriate mechanisms to promote the ethical use of mobile phones in education settings. The fundamental questions the study sought to answer were:

1. Why do teachers resort to the unprofessional use of their mobile phones in schools?
2. What implications do teachers' unprofessional uses of mobile phones have on education?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study relied on the qualitative research approach. The approach was pertinent for gaining the socially-constructed reality of a phenomenon and an in-depth understanding of human behaviours and their reasons (Creswell, 2014). A phenomenological research design informed the qualitative approach used in the study. The need for the lived experience of the possible reasons behind teachers' unethical use of mobile phones made this design imperative (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015). It enabled the researchers to understand the subject from the view of participants who have experienced the phenomenon instead of relying on imposing preconceived ideas (King & Horrocks, 2010; Hossain, 2011). The study was conducted among 28 participants, including in-service primary and secondary school teachers and education officers pursuing bachelor's and master's degree programmes at the Dar es Salaam University College of Education [DUCE] in the Dar es Salaam region. DUCE was selected because it explicitly offers teacher education courses, comprising teachers and education officers from different geographical localities. Thus, they could provide varied experiences and detailed accounts of the subject than it would be the case if only participants from a single locality of the country were involved.

The participants were selected purposefully based on their positions, courses they pursued at the college, and working experience in their teaching careers. Thus, the researcher selected teachers, heads of school, and educational officers with at least five years of working experience who had taken a course on professionalism and ethics in education offered at the college. Specifically, the sample comprised 14 female and 10 male teachers, 2 heads of schools, and 2 quality assurance education officers. The assumption was that the participants were well informed about ethical issues in the teaching profession, and so were in an excellent position to provide relevant data on the subject under study (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2015). Data were collected using semi-structured face-to-face interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with heads of schools and educational officers. Semi-structured interviews gave the researchers a broader chance to elicit detailed data on the subject through follow-up questions (Turner, 2010). The researchers conducted four FGDs with teachers, and each group comprised six teachers. FGDs provided the opportunity to elicit diverse views from teachers. The group dynamics provided helpful information that individual data collection could not provide, as the participants were encouraged by each other to share the information (Patton, 2015). Tape recorders were used to capture all the interviews and FGD data with the consent of the participants.

The data collected were then analysed thematically. The thematic analysis allowed data to be analysed based on emerging themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2014). Six main stages were involved in the data analysis. The analysis started with the familiarisation of data, whereby the researchers read the data repeatedly and then transcribed the data from interviews and FGDs. Researchers then generated initial codes, searched for main themes, reviewed themes, defined and named themes, conceptualised, interpreted the data, and provided evidence to support each theme before the conclusions were drawn (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Denscombe, 2007).

FINDINGS

In this section, the findings are presented and discussed based on the themes arising from the responses to the research questions.

Reasons for Teachers' Unprofessional use of Mobile Phones in Schools

This study revealed varied explanations for the unprofessional usage of mobile phones among teachers.

The lack of policy on acceptable mobile phone use in schools: The participants attributed the teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phones to the lack of a specific policy guideline stipulating the proper and improper use of ICT in schools. They said the lack of the policy makes it difficult for teachers and heads of schools to have a point of reference regarding proper and improper uses of the devices. As a result, teachers blindly engage in unprofessional behaviour while using their mobile device. It also renders it difficult for heads of schools to deal with perpetrators as they rely only on pronouncements provided by top educational authorities. The view of a female teacher illustrates:

> *Teachers misuse their phones due to the absence of a formal policy guiding acceptable phone use in schools. This situation makes it difficult for teachers to understand these devices' proper and improper use. Even heads of schools do not have the benchmark for judging the proper and improper usage of these devices since they merely rely on pronouncements from educational leaders.*

The findings indicate the need for an official policy to determine the proper and improper use of ICT devices such as mobile phones in education settings.

Problems related to the teachers' code of conduct: The findings also disclosed that teachers engage in the unprofessional use of mobile phones due to two significant problems inherent in the teachers' code of conduct. First, the participants declared that most teachers do not have access to the code of conduct. Hence they lack knowledge about what conduct is expected of professional teachers. Second, they pointed out that the code of conduct for teachers is generally incomplete as it lacks specific sections or components on ethical issues related to using ICT devices such as mobile phones. Clarifying more, one of the heads of school interviewed noted:

> *Teachers use their phones unprofessionally because they do not have access to the professional code of conduct which is the term of reference for professional conduct. As a result, the majorities are blind to their expected behaviour as professionals. Equally, our code is outdated because it is pretty silent about ethical literacy regarding expected behaviour in using ICT devices in schools…*

The findings entail that since the teachers' professional code of conduct is a benchmark for teachers' conduct, it must be easily accessible to all teachers and contain content related to ethical principles on the proper use of emerging technologies like the mobile phone.

Lack of efficient induction and mentorship: Teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phones was attributable to a lack of rigorous induction and mentorship support. The participants reported that most schools never exposed teachers to any induction or mentorship that would introduce them to actual classroom practice and professional conduct, including the use of mobile phones. One female teacher pointed out that:

> *Most newly recruited teachers are just of adolescent age. They need rigorous and regular induction and mentorship to expose them to the basics of the teaching profession. However, I have never witnessed them mentored on ethical principles in the teaching profession, especially those related to ICT use, in all nineteen years of working as a teacher.*

The findings imply that teachers in Tanzania are less effective in using their phones in a professionally accepted manner due to lacking essential orientation and mentorship support that could familiarise them with self-conduct and the code of professional conduct set for the teaching profession.

Low teachers' motivation and self-commitment: The findings established that teachers indulge in the unprofessional use of their mobile phones due to a lack of motivation and self-commitment to work. The participants argued that many teachers have low morale to work as they are frustrated by low pay and remuneration, poor living and working conditions, and the employers' disregard for their demands, including salary and leave arrears and responsibility allowances. As a result, they resort to playing games, listening to music, and chatting during working hours to release stress. Consider the following remark from one of the male teachers:

> *Most of us indulge in the unprofessional use of our mobile phones because we are frustrated and demoralised by several factors… Imagine we have not been promoted, given our legal salary arrears and annual increment for more than six years now… So one of the ways to get rid of frustration is by immersing in our phones, chatting, playing games, and looking for clients or alternative ways of generating income...*

Lackadaisical teachers' motivation and commitment express the high prevalence of teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phones in school settings.

Addiction to mobile phones: The study's findings also disclosed that teachers use their mobile phones unprofessionally due to addiction. The participants reported that some teachers are members of several social media groups, including Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. These platforms keep them busy discussing various social, political and economic topics. Frequent indulgence in online discussions has made them incapable of controlling their willpower and conduct on the devices. As a result, they find it fidgety and lonely without touching or interacting with their devices. One of the female teachers had this to say:

> *It is common for one teacher to be a group member on WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and my space, and he or she wants to be active on all platforms. As a result, most become addicted such that they cannot do anything without touching a phone unless the battery is low...*

The finding reveals that mobile phones have affected teachers' social and psychological behaviour. They feel anxious, lonely, and unable to be still without keeping in touch with their phones. This situation may denote the need for immediate psychological support to ameliorate this addiction problem among teachers.

Impromptu selection and leniency in the preparation of teachers: Unprofessional use of mobile phones by teachers could also partly be attributed to a lack of stringent selection and laxity in the preparation of teachers in universities. The participants maintained that low entry qualifications have made teaching so permissive as to admit relatively under-qualified candidates who did not regard teaching as a career of their first choice. After being employed for some time, many of these candidates lack a sense of accountability and commitment to work and end up implicated in unprofessional deeds, including misuse of mobile phones. The interviewees claimed further that teacher preparation, especially at the university level, was a source for the unprofessional use of mobile phones. They noted that most universities focus more on academic subjects and teaching methodology than ethical issues. In most universities, student teachers have unrestricted freedom for use of their mobile phones. The laxity in controlling and regulating mobile phone use makes it very easy to use their mobile phones even in classrooms and other critical places. As a result, the

behaviour later manifests and becomes chaotic in their workplace upon employment. The view of this head of school illustrates:

> *Many candidates join teaching as their last option. Unfortunately, contrary to the teacher training colleges, in most universities, much attention is paid to completing course modules and passing examinations rather than moulding moral behaviour among student teachers. So, graduates prepared under this environment become less committed and negligent to adhering to the set ethical standards when they secure a job... These are always the ones who misuse their devices inside and outside school compounds.*

The preceding quote shows that the impromptu selection of candidates for teaching and the laxity in moulding student-teachers moral behaviour escalates into the teachers' disregard of professional ethics when using their mobile phones in schools.

Low income: All the interviewees singled out low income to explain why teachers use their mobile phones unprofessionally. They expressed that salaries and remunerations paid to teachers were too scant for them to sustain their lives for a month. Most teachers opt for other income-generating projects like petty businesses, livestock keeping, and farming to complement their scant income. Such activities force many teachers to sacrifice their official time and duties and pay attention to their mobile phones looking for customers. Some teachers may stop teaching even when presenting a critical point and step outside to talk on the phone. One of the male teachers noted:

> *Frankly, our salaries are meager compared to the actual living costs. In order to fill the gap, most of us engage in various small projects that can enable us to raise our income...The mobile phone is a platform for communication with our customers or people working on the projects...under this situation, I must receive a call even in the classroom or meeting. Ignoring it means losing a customer...*

Drawing from the finding, given their relatively low income, many teachers have parallel income-generating projects that implicate them in failing to comply with ethical principles in the teaching profession when using their mobile phones.

Insufficient knowledge about the cybercrimes law: The study has revealed that most teachers indulge in unprofessional uses of their mobile phones due to a lack of knowledge of the cybercrimes law enacted by the government. Most participants stated that the law had stipulated the proper use of ICT devices and the penalty for abusive use. However, teachers in many schools are not informed about the law's content because they do not have a reading culture. They added that some teachers are not even aware of the law's existence; hence they use their devices blindly without being fully aware of the moral and ethical obligations stipulated in the law. The sentiment from one of the female teachers elaborates:

> *The government enacted the cybercrime Law in 2015 to guide the use of all computerised devices, including mobile phones. However, if one asks all of us here about its content, no one is aware... our schools have never received any copy of the Law, and teachers have never received any formal training about its content. Therefore, the majority realise that they abuse their devices when their actions enter into trouble with the responsible authority.*

The excerpt above indicates that teachers' lack of knowledge of the Cybercrimes Law encourages unethical use of mobile phones in education settings in Tanzania. The finding highlights the need to disseminate knowledge of the Law to the public and teachers.

Ineffective management at the school level: It emerged from this study that abusive use of mobile phones by teachers in the school was partly attributable to ineffective school management. Most participants believed that some heads of schools are weak in managing teachers' discipline since they are also perpetrators of the unprofessional use of mobile phones. They added that some heads of schools do not take time to remind teachers of their professional obligations. Sometimes they may implement sanctions on some teachers and turn a blind eye when others commit similar misconduct. This situation makes teachers see little point in behaving well while realising that some perpetrators are safe despite their unprofessional deeds. One of the education quality assurance officers noted:

> *Some heads of schools are the source of the prevalence of unprofessional use of mobile phones. They do not set a phone use policy in their respective school, and sometimes, they keep a blind eye on perpetrators, especially those who are their closest friends or relatives of the big bosses... Some heads are also the perpetrators of misusing the devices. This situation perpetuates this problem among teachers in some schools...*

The finding implies that schools need strong leaders who will be effective role models accountable for enhancing teachers' professional discipline, responsibilities, commitment, and accountability for effective teaching and learning each school day.

Lack of regular in-service training on ethical matters: The study showed that teachers indulge in unprofessional uses of mobile phones due to limited in-service orientation in ethical matters. The participants stated that, like other human beings, teachers must regularly be reminded of their ethical obligations. However, The Teachers' Service Commission (TSC), an authority entrusted with teachers' discipline, hardly prepares refresher training for teachers on related ethical matters. Some teachers did not have any training on ethics during their initial teacher education, so lacking in-service training makes them indulge in unprofessional deeds, including unethical use of mobile phones. One of the education quality assurance officers stressed:

> *Teachers need to be regularly reminded about their ethical obligations through seminars and workshops as human beings. However, it is uncommon for either the head of schools or the Teachers Service Commission to conduct refresher training to remind teachers about ethical matters. Lacking that opportunity, teachers find themselves implicated blindly in abusive uses of their mobile phones.*

The initial finding implies that teachers hardly receive in-service training focusing on moral and ethical responsibilities, a situation that makes them forget what conduct is expected of them as professionals.

Repercussions of teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phone

The second research question sought participants' experience with the repercussions of teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phones in schools. The findings revealed a myriad of educational, emotional, and behavioural effects.

Disruption of teaching and learning: The results showed that teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phones was a major cause of school distraction. The participants noted that when a mobile phone rings in the classroom and a teacher stops teaching to attend the call or walks out to talk on the phone, the class attention is often shifted from the subject to the ring tone of the device and the teacher's movements, and this impairs the learning process. It was clarified further that when teachers are immersed in their phones during invigilation of examinations, they fail to provide students with immediate support like clarifications, additional answer sheets, and permission. This

situation forces students to raise their hands for quite a long time or decide to move in the teachers' direction or bang on their desks and disturb the concentration of other students. The tendency also provides students with an unfair advantage to cheat. One of the female teachers admitted:

> *Mobile phones cause distraction in schools. When a teacher's phone rings while teaching in class, both teachers and students are interrupted. They can even forget what was delivered. It is worse if the caller's tune is one of the songs of a famous musician like Diamond all students can start singing or dancing and it can take some minutes for a teacher to control the class. In the end, a teacher may fail to cover the subject syllabus…*

The findings imply that teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phones upsets teaching, learning, and school working environments.

The decline in students' academic achievement: The participants argued that students' academic achievement depends on effective teaching that originates from thorough preparations made by teachers. Teachers who spend much time chatting on social networking sites are likely preparing poorly for their lessons. They do not have time to provide students with the academic support needed, mark their assignments, and provide timely feedback. The participants added that when students are seduced by their teachers or harassed through their phones, they become psychologically affected and focus less on learning. Subsequently, they end up performing poorly. One of the male teachers stated that:

> *Teachers who spend a long time chatting do not have adequate time to prepare their lessons thoroughly. They usually go late to class and fail to complete their lessons. As a result, students' academic performance declines.*

The findings imply that teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phones is a growing threat to educational attainment among students.

An increase in education costs: The study also revealed that teachers' abuse of mobile phones has a financial impact on education. The participants argued that when teachers perpetrate examination leakage through their phones, the government, schools, and parents usually shoulder additional costs when students re-sit for the examinations. Moreover, when teachers fail to cover their subjects due to time wasted online, parents will likely incur additional costs for remedial studies for their children. Additional costs can affect the implementation of other plans at family and national levels and may exacerbate poverty. The remark from one of the heads of school elaborates:

> *Teachers' unethical use of mobile phones has cost implications for students, schools, and the government. For example, a teacher who fails to cover topics due to excessive chatting online may force parents to incur additional costs for private tuition. When NECTA nullifies examination results, parents, schools, and the government must shoulder the cost of preparing and administering new examinations.*

The findings imply that teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phones threatens to undermine the government's devotion to providing education for all citizens. Children from low-income families can be denied their right to education due to the inability to shoulder additional costs.

Increase in students' delinquent behaviour: The findings indicated that teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phones might lead to students' dishonourable behaviour. The participants admitted that students always tend to imitate their teachers' behaviour. So when they see them using their phones in classrooms or examination rooms, they are likely to do the same. They further stated that students exposed to sexually explicit messages or nude pictures posted by their teachers are

more likely to develop sexual attitudes and circulate the same materials. One of the education quality assurance officers noted:

> *Teachers are role models through which students learn. When students see them abusing their devices by talking in the classroom, listening to music while invigilating examinations, leaking examinations, or seducing students, they will consider it normal. They will bring their phones to school and do the same...*

The findings indicate that teachers must behave accordingly since their conduct and practices are the focal points of students' eyes.

Deterioration of the image and status of the teaching profession: The study established that unprofessional use of mobile phones tends to undermine the status of teachers and the entire teaching profession in various ways. The participants divulged that when teachers use their devices to perpetrate cheating in examinations, post sexual perverted images and seduce students, the public tends to have negative interpretations of teachers and the entire teaching profession. As a result, even the best candidates who were ambitious of becoming teachers for a career would not, more due to the little public respect teachers are accorded. This is how one of the female teachers expressed her view:

> *The unethical use of mobile phones tarnishes our status and the entire teaching profession. For example, when we post sexual perverted images, photos of students punished, leak examinations through our phones, and other immoral incidents, the community negatively interprets us and devalues our profession. No good candidate will aspire to become a teacher in the long run.*

The findings indicate that teachers' unethical acts are the root cause of the deterioration status of the teaching profession. In order to restore the lost status, they must reflect on their actions and behave exemplarily.

Hostility and quarrels in schools: The participants believed teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phones in schools had been the source of hostility and quarrels. They cited that sexting, cyberbullying, taking other peoples' photos, and posting online without consent create aggression among teachers, students, and the wider public. This situation sometimes leads to quarrels that disrupt the favourable teaching and learning environment. The assertion of one of the female teachers confirms the findings:

> *Before coming here for further studies, I was the school academic master. I ensured that teachers prepared their lessons thoroughly and attended classes regularly. Some teachers, especially those who failed to accomplish their duties due to excessive chatting, insulted me through text and voice messages. This situation made the working condition terrible.*

Supporting the preceding assertion, another male teacher added:

> *I witnessed two male teachers fighting because of mobile phones. They were hunting for a girl student, so one bought her a Smartphone, and another bought a SIM card without knowing each other... When one found messages on the girl's phone and realised the colleague had sent them, he became furious, leading to the open fighting. Finally, the authority transferred both to other schools as a punishment.*

Based on the preceding views, it is apparent that unprofessional use of mobile phones, such as cyberbullying, creates fear and hostility in schools and impairs effective teaching and learning.

DISCUSSION

The study findings indicate that the lack of a policy to guide the ethical use of mobile phones and insufficient knowledge about the cybercrimes law prompted teachers to use their devices unprofessionally. From the responses, it would be essential to draw attention to the fact that there is a need to institute a specific national policy as a guideline on using ICT devices and educate teachers about cybercrime. The well-stipulated policy and adequate knowledge about cybercrimes will serve as a reference point regarding the acceptable and responsible use of ICT devices in education settings (Porter et al., 2016).

The study also found that the limited access and the lack of teachers' knowledge of the code of conduct led to the unprofessional use of mobile phones. Teachers' lack of knowledge of the professional code of conduct has been a recurring concern (Anangisye, 2006; Mfaume, 2012; Oziambo, 2013; Songela, 2015; Mabagala, 2016; Mfaume & Bilinga, 2017). The finding reflects the view that responsible education authorities have not played their role in disseminating the code and providing teachers with sufficient knowledge about its content. As a result, teachers blindly carry out their professional duties (Campbell, 2003). The responsible authorities, mainly the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), must ensure teachers access the code of conduct. The TSC can disseminate the code through online platforms accessible to many teachers rather than relying on hard copies (Mfaume et al., 2019).

Moreover, the unprofessional use of mobile phones was attributable to the lack of effective mentorship and teachers' low commitment and motivation to professional duty. Induction and mentorship are critical in internalising young teachers with actual classroom practices and professional ethics. Experience from the best education systems, show that when teachers get exposed to stringent induction and mentorship, they become full-fledged professionals who are more self-confident and self-motivated to observe the core ethical values. Therefore, it is imperative to ensure that young teachers get self-sustaining supervisory guidance and assistance from senior teachers (Ishumi, 2013).

Lack of pre-service and in-service training on ethical issues prompted teachers to indulge in unprofessional mobile phone use. The findings supported the works of (Anangisye, 2010; Mfaume, 2012; Ishumi, 2013; Mgeni & Anangisye, 2017). Due to the lack of adequate and regular training in professional ethics, teachers are half-baked in moral and ethical dimensions. This situation makes them less efficient in keeping abreast with new ethical challenges in the digital era. Pre-service and regular in-service training on professional ethics should be mandatory to enable teachers to cope with emerging ethical challenges in the increasingly globalised world.

The findings indicated further that teachers indulge in the unprofessional use of mobile phones due to low income. The finding reinforces previous studies (Bennell and Akyeampong, 2007; Mkumbo, 2012) that inadequate salaries and incentives have a far-reaching and undesirable impact on teachers' behaviour and performance. Adequate income promotes teachers' motivation and a high sense of professional accountability, commitment, and professionalism. Thus, the government should make rigorous efforts to provide teachers with adequate salaries and incentives to keep them settled, accomplish their professional duties, and observe ethical values.

The findings attributed the unprofessional use of mobile phones to addiction among teachers. The findings of this study confirmed the work of Brian (2013) that the use of ICT can lead to addiction that may affect the user's psychological and social habits. Addiction is a behaviour that develops gradually due to excessive use of mobile phones. Hence, teachers and the wider community need adequate knowledge about the risks of excessive mobile phone use and the associated addictive behaviours.

The study also explored the repercussions of teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phones. The findings divulged several repercussions, including the disruption of teaching and learning, an increase in students' delinquent behaviour, hostility and quarrels in schools, and distortion of the image and status of the teaching profession. The findings correlate with a series of previous studies conducted on the effects of mobile phone use in education (Burns & Lohenry, 2010; Duncan et al., 2012; Pottharst, 2010; Toomey, 2013) that the devices create a great distraction in education settings, hence upsetting the achievement of the goals and objectives of education.

Further, the study's findings revealed that teachers' frequent use of mobile phones in classrooms, sexting, and cyberbullying exacerbates student absenteeism, dropout, and emotional distress. The findings are in line with the work of Anangisye (2006), Magwa (2015), and Thabane (2014) that some students run away from school after being sexually harassed by teachers. Teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phones may deprive students of their right to quality education. Hence, it threatens to undermine the government's commitment to attaining the Education For All agenda and the development vision 2025.

Moreover, the findings established that teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phones contributed to escalation in students' delinquent behaviours. In line with the findings, Mfaume (2012) disclosed that teachers' malpractice significantly led to declining students' discipline. Similarly, Pappas (2013); Magwa (2015) reported that students exposed to sexually perverted material through the Internet developed permissive sexual attitudes and engaged more easily in early sexual practices, alcoholism, and drug abuse than their counterparts. It is pertinent to stress that teachers should learn to manage their use of mobile phones and demonstrate a high sense of professionalism as role models**.**

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Due to time and financial limitations, this study relied on a small sample size obtained from only one college. Thus, caution should be taken in generalising findings across the education system in Tanzania. Further, the study employed only two data collection instruments, interviews and FGDs. Although researchers were extra careful to ensure that the data and the findings were valid and authentic, more insights might have been obtained by using other instruments.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sought to account for teachers' unprofessional use of mobile phones in schools in Tanzania, using one college as the study site. Among others, the participants referred to the lack of policy guiding phone use, the shortfalls inherent in the teachers' code of conduct, low salaries, and lack of induction and mentorship support, addiction, and ineffective school management as reasons for teachers to use their mobile phones unprofessionally. Unprofessional use of mobile phones has adverse effects on education. It leads to distraction in the classroom, the decline in the status of the teaching profession and students' academic achievement, an increase in education costs, and propels hostility and quarrels in schools. However, since teaching is inherently moral, none of the reasons are justifiable; hence teachers must behave accordingly in all situations. As technology is advancing rapidly and engulfs all sectors in this globalised world, there is a need for the government and other educational stakeholders to develop and formalize policies and rules to guide the use of electronic communication devices like mobile phones in the workplace. Also, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), an authority responsible for maintaining teachers' discipline, should incorporate ethical principles in the teachers' code of conduct to guiding the proper use of ICT devices and regularly reminding teachers. There is also a need for teacher training colleges and universities to integrate courses related to ethical literacy in using ICT devices in the curricula of initial teacher education. It may be more beneficial for teachers to be apprised of and become

well informed of the ethical principles governing the use of technology devices before they are employed.

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