

## **Decentralisation and Delivery of Secondary School Education: Influence of Institutional Arrangements in Mtwara Region, Tanzania**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examined the influence of institutional arrangements on the delivery of secondary school education in the Tandahimba and Mtwara districts in Tanzania. The study was grounded in Theory of Change and Principal-Agency Theory. Cross-sectional explanatory research employed a semi-structured questionnaire to collect quantitative data from 229 secondary school teachers and District Secondary Education Officers. Also, an interview guide was used to collect qualitative data from District Executive Directors (DEDs), and District Secondary Education Officers (DSEOs) as key informants, whereas a focus group discussion was used to collect data from teachers and parents. The quantitative data were analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0, whilst the qualitative data was analysed by using content analysis. The findings revealed that recruitment and curriculum development are not sufficiently decentralised to enable effective delivery of education. As a result, the schools do not have enough decision-making space. The study concludes that institutional arrangement influences the delivery of education and hence students' academic performance. The paper recommends that the central government ensure complete and accurate decentralisation of power to lower levels of the government. Local government authorities should provide schools with sufficient decision-making space in the implementation of their educational plans.*

**Keywords:** Decentralisation, Decision-making Space, Institutional arrangements

## **1.0 Introduction**

Decentralisation has been accepted as a management approach to improve public service delivery (Aycrigg, 2013; Sow & Razafimahefa, 2015). It is part of vigorous initiatives or reforms to support Local Government Authorities (LGAs) to improve social services delivery such as education (Aycrigg, 2013). The global interest in education decentralisation comes from the recognition that minimal centralised decisions would make educational institutions more effective and LGAs more capable in the delivery of education (Binswanger, 2011).

Empirically, the successful implementation of decentralisation is attributed to the level of bureaucracy and complexity of government structures as reflected by their institution arrangements (Komba, 2017; King, 2018; Lavonen, 2017; Mushemeza, 2019; Winkler & Gershberg, 2003). The current study is grounded in principal-agency theory, which explains the concepts of institutional arrangement as important dimensions of decentralisation which need to be emphasized to improve education delivery and hence student academic performance in secondary schools.

Frank and Martinez-Vazquez (2014) highlighted that decision-making steps need to be coordinated across levels of government to ensure efficiency. Decentralisation of education to local government plays a vital role in shaping the interplay relationship between various responsible government units in the provision of education. In turn, it influences the behaviour of actors in playing their roles as principals and agents in secondary school education delivery (Weiss, 1995; Rogers, 2014). Essentially, the institutional arrangement is the major condition of decentralisation that is supposed to increase the involvement and

participation of different actors in the delivery of secondary school education. Institutional arrangements play an essential function in determining individuals' behaviour and actions and their interactional effect, which instils changes in institutional processes and practices (Sow & Razafimahefa, 2015). However, clear obligations for each institution should be defined by the appropriate legislative and executive powers. Without genuine recognition and backing of their legal status, institutions cannot function properly.

Literature suggests that there is a scarcity of research showing the contribution of institutional arrangements on either the success or failure of decentralisation in the delivery of education in most developing countries, including Tanzania. Various scholars have investigated the influence of decentralisation policy on the delivery of education but did not focus on institutional arrangements; instead, their centre of attention was on decentralisation as a policy (Kigume & Maluka, 2018; Kisumbe et al., 2014; Lameck, 2017; Mollel & Tollenaar, 2013).

Other scholars have focused on the effects of community participation as a factor of decentralisation (Kigume & Maluka, 2018; Kisumbe et al., 2014; Lameck, 2017; Marijani, 2016) on the delivery of social services including secondary school education. Due to the dearth of literature regarding the influence of institutional arrangements in the delivery of secondary school education and its resultant academic performance, this study was conceived. The study examined schools and LGA's decision-making space regarding academic matters, mobilisation and use of resources, recruitment, curriculum development and implementation for improved education delivery.

In Tanzania, before the decentralisation, all decision-making powers were concentrated in the central government (Max, 1991). The Tanzania Local Government Reforms (LGRP), which began in 1998 aimed at transferring resources and decision-making power from central to local government to make the LGAs more autonomous (Kigume & Maluka, 2018). In the delivery of secondary education, the decentralisation focused on the total transfer of the decision-making power from the then Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) to the LGAs and to schools through school boards (Masue 2014; URT 2006). The decentralisation reforms in secondary education were guided by the Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP) under phase one (SEDP I) as well as the phase two (SEDP II); along with the Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 1995; and implemented under the general framework of the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP) (URT, 2009, 2010). The Secondary Education Development Programme II (SEDP II) is a continuation of SEDP I, which was implemented between 2004 and 2009.

Despite those efforts, Tandahimba and Mtwara districts in Tanzania have been ranking among the lowest in the national examinations results of form two and four for the last five years. In form four national examinations of 2016, Tandahimba District Council (TDC) ranked 163<sup>rd</sup> among 178 districts. In 2017 and 2018, the district ranked 160<sup>th</sup> among 178 districts and 185<sup>th</sup> among 185 districts respectively. Also, in 2019 the district still occupied the lowest position of 169<sup>th</sup> among 195 districts in the country. Similarly, Mtwara District Council (MDC) in form four examinations of 2016, 2017 and 2018 ranked 146<sup>th</sup>, 116<sup>th</sup> and 161<sup>st</sup> respectively.

In 2019, the district occupied 154<sup>th</sup> position. Though there were some improvements from 2016 to 2017 and 2018 to 2019, but still the results

were not inspiring. Also, in form two national exams TDC and MDC ranked among the lowest by occupying 166<sup>th</sup> and 165<sup>th</sup> positions respectively in 2017. In 2018 and 2019, their positions were still very low as TDC ranked 182<sup>nd</sup> and 169<sup>th</sup> and MDC ranked 145<sup>th</sup> and 148<sup>th</sup> respectively. Besides, the nine schools located in Mtwara Region, which had low performance in the national form two results of 2016, five schools were from TDC and two schools were from MDC (NECTA, 2016b).

Banking on the above situation, several questions remain unanswered as to why the performance of secondary schools students in the selected districts is of that status despite the implementation of decentralisation. Therefore, institutional framework structure is vital in examining how these interactions between the actors such as principals and agents are conducted. In this study, LGA's autonomous power provided by decentralisation on decision-making to plan and execute their activities and budget was examined. The aim was to understand local government policies and laws, systems, structures and practices that govern education delivery in Tanzania. The study thought it was important to find out whether the schools and district councils were free to make and implement their decisions at the local level without interference from politicians, the regional office and central government because the interferences affect policy's effect on access, equity, availability, quantity, quality, and the general delivery of education.

## **2.0 Theory of Change**

The theory of change emerged in the 1990s, and it was first used by the famous methodologist Carlos Weiss in evaluating community programmes. According to Weiss (1995), the Theory of Change uncovers the assumptions we make about what is possible in reaching a long-term

goal. Based on scholars' views, Ito (2018) argued that human challenges are multifaceted; therefore, it is tremendously imperative that there are need for theoretical shifts and societal actions to transform traditional institutions. As a result, decentralisation is currently adopted by many countries as an approach to empower individual schools to adapt to changes and enhance quality education delivery toward improved academic performance.

The Theory of Change in this study was used to understand how decentralisation is expected to lead to a specific development change that is delivery of high-quality education, evidenced by the way government reforms have transformed institutional framework arrangements for improved education services delivery in TDC and MDC, Tanzania. It is expected that if the desired aspirations of decentralisation implementers or actors are articulated and communicated to the lower level of the community then all education actors such as school board, school management, parents, students, and LGAs would play their roles effectively to achieve the long-term goals of high performance in schools.

Theory of Change, hence, helps to explain how activities such as upgrading the physical infrastructure at schools, giving of monetary and other non-pecuniary resources, supervision of the staff and the national curriculum are effectively implemented to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the improved education service delivery. Therefore, it is considered important to employ the Theory of Change to better understand the possible changes that have happened in education services delivery with a particular focus on student's academic performance in the study area. However, the theory does not explain how decentralisation evolves through the relinquishing of some powers from

the central government to LGAs. It does not explicate the implementation and influence of decentralisation to the community, especially in SE delivery. Thus, a need for the principal-agency theory arises.

## **2.1 Power in Implementation of Academic Plans**

Moreover, Sow and Razafimahefa (2015) argued that the decentralisation process requires the adequate political and institutional environment to improve public service delivery. Such conditions include effective autonomy of LGAs, strong accountability at various levels of institutions, good governance and strong capacity at the local level to implement their development and social services provision plans. Governance arrangements are the major tools for improving quality in all aspects of education service delivery, and they make institutions become more effective (Hénard & Mitterle, 2010). The central government, LGAs, school boards, parents, teachers and students are key elements and tools for monitoring the quality of education service delivery. Therefore, it is argued that an institutional framework is the most useful tool to enable schools to produce their annual academic and development plans and involve teachers and students in implementing their plans (European Commission, 2018). However, Oduro et al. (2008) found that school management does not have much power to make strategic academic decisions for school achievement.

## **2.2 Resource Mobilisation and Budgeting**

In his study about decentralised education in SSA countries, Naidoo (2002) established that authority is mostly held at the centre. Naidoo's study found that some countries tried to delegate the resource generation responsibilities to the local units to trim down the government budget burden while maintaining the power to decide how the resources are to be

used. As a result, the use of their own (local units of government) resources was controlled by several laws and procedures from the central government. Similar results were observed in Nepal where the central government had decided to involve the local community in the administration of public schools for the sake of reducing its resource constraints (Carney et al., 2007). Kessy and Mushi (2018) found that in Tanzania implementation of decentralisation is constrained by two major factors, namely: poor government commitment and failure to provide enough resources control to LGAs to execute the roles and functions stipulated in the guidelines. Anosisye (2017) explored the perception of councillors on their exercise of fiscal decision-making authority in local government authorities in Tanzania. The findings show that the council exercises reasonable authority over revenue mobilisation, the setting of the local tax rates and full expenditure authority over the locally generated revenue and the discretionary grants.

### **2.3 Recruitment and Curriculum Development and Implementation**

Lameck (2017) noted that in Tanzania LGRP I, in 1999, granted full authority to the local government over its local staff. However, this authority was step-by-step curtailed by the Public Service Act of 2004 and a series of Public Service Regulations (Tidemand & Msami, 2010). A 2007 revision of the Public Service Act established a centralized recruitment system operated by the Public Service Recruitment Secretariat. The centralised system of recruitment and management of the local staff has two consequences. The first is that, it limits the control of the local council over the local administration. It cannot simply fire local administrators, who underperform nor can it organize the local administration. The second consequence of the centralized system of



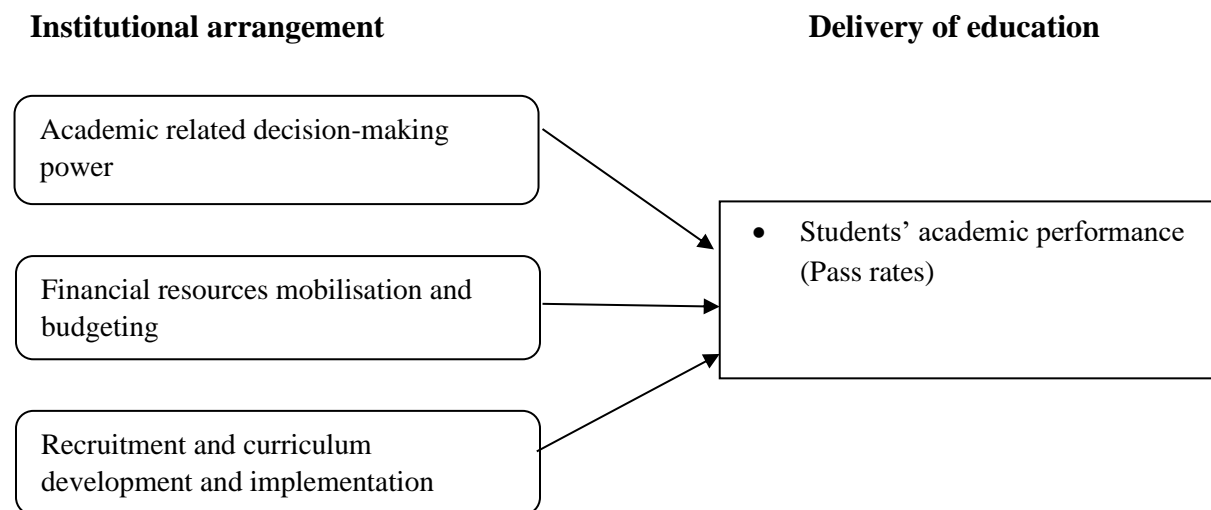
human resources management is that the career of senior officials entirely depends on how they perform from the perspective of central government and on good relations with central government officials, and/or national politicians (Lameck, 2017). This might have been a reason why politically biased decisions have been implemented more quickly than professional-based decisions.

Lavonen (2017) describes that under education decentralisation, the preparation of local curriculum in Finland involves LGAs and teachers as important stakeholders. LGAs and schools localise the national aims and content and describe how education should be organised. In the UK, Bush (2016) reported that the implementation of the national curriculum is monitored through an inspection process overseen by the statutory Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). Schools have to follow Ofsted expectations closely. This means that the schools' visions have to conform to centralised expectations. A distinction can be made between what schools should do, which is prescribed, and how they choose to do it, which is discretionary. While the English system has several self-managing features in curriculum development and implementation, the core activities are centrally prescribed. In Tanzania, institutional arrangements in curriculum development are rather restricted as power remains at the centre Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST). The Tanzanian educational system uses one national curriculum in both public and private schools (Sumra & Katabaro, 2014). Mulwa, Kimiti, Kituka and Muema (2011) reported that after decentralisation in 2005, decision-making on issues relating to quality assurance and standards and curriculum design falls under the then Ministry of Education.

## 2.4 Conceptual Framework

In a conceptual framework, it is depicted that delegation of academic-related decision-making power, financial resources mobilisation and budgeting recruitment and curriculum development and implementation play an indispensable role in determining how best a school would deliver better education, which in the end, bring about changes in school and students' performance.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Institutional Arrangement and Delivery of Education**



**Source:** Reviewed Literature, 2020

## 3.0 Materials and Methods

Based on the realm of the objectives of this study, pragmatism philosophy was used as it is based on a mixed-methods approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Pham, 2018). The design of this study was a cross-sectional explanatory design, because data were captured at one point in time due to time and resource constraints (Kothari, 2009). Moreover, the explanatory design was chosen to explain the influence of decentralisation

on the delivery of education (Denscombe, 2010). Thus, decentralisation as a social phenomenon was assessed under the pragmatism philosophy by applying scientific principles of quantitative and qualitative research.

The study was conducted in TDC and MDC both located in Mtwara Region, the Southern Part of the United Republic of Tanzania. The population for this study included all secondary schools teachers, parents, secondary school students, District Executive Directors (DEDs), Regional Education Officers (REO), District Secondary Education Officers (DSEOs), Ward Education Officers (WEOs), District Education Inspectors (DEI) and Councillors in MDC and TDC respectively. The reason for choosing these education actors is the fact that they are well-informed and possess good knowledge about the implementation of decentralisation policy in LGAs and secondary schools' education in particular.

In getting the key informants of the study, the researcher applied both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Purposive sampling technique, as a non-probability sampling method, was applied to choose the studied areas (TDC and MDC) and the key informants (2 DEDs, 2 DSEOs, 2 DEIs, and REO) due to the declining academic performance of secondary school students (NECTA, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020). Moreover, Councillors, WEOs, and 50 parents (25 in MDC and 25 in TDC) were purposively selected because they are crucial actors in the management of education. Likewise, the study conveniently selected 16 parents (8 in TDC and 8 in MDC) and 10 teachers (5 in TDC and 5 in MDC) who willingly participated due to several reasons including better precision of collected data, cost and time-saving. However, heads of schools, academic teachers and other teachers were selected by using a

systematic random sampling technique, which is the type of probability sampling technique that ensures the selection of an unbiased sample from a pool of the targeted population.

According to Denscombe (2010) and Kothari (2009), the determination of the sample size for quantitative or qualitative data depends on the size of the population and the accuracy of the estimates to be studied. To ensure that the sample size was appropriate to represent the opinions of the target population, the sample size was 256 mining SMEs. The returned questionnaires were 229. The number of unusable questionnaires was equivalent to 10.55%, which is less than 15% and hence ignorable (Hair et al., 2006).

Quantitative data were collected by using a questionnaire method. The researcher ensured content validity in the questionnaire through pre-testing and conducting a pilot study. Moreover, internal consistency was tested using Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the reliability of data collected using a prepared questionnaire. As a rule of thumb, the values above 0.7 represent an acceptable level of internal reliability (Cohen et al., 2007). The Cronbach's alpha for a variable institutional arrangement with 8 items was found to be '0.637' below the required standard value of 0.7. Then two items were deleted to accommodate the level of Cronbach's alpha to meet the requirement value. Thus, items 'to recruit teachers' and 'to formulate subjects' curriculum' were deleted and the Cronbach's alpha rose to 0.729 (Table 1).

**Table 1: Cronbach's Alphas Values and Number of Items for each Construct**

Indicators/items	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Institutional arrangement	.729	8

**Source:** Field Data, 2020

Questionnaires which were distributed to study respondents were administered by the researcher and a research assistant. They were also analysed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.0, which is a user-friendly in analysing and presenting statistical data (Landau & Everitt, 2004).

Moreover, the qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews and FGD and analysed by thematic analysis to discover patterns of frequent themes and sub-themes. The aim was to be able to entirely understand the process of decentralisation and its impact on the delivery of education so as to put forward proposals for change in the management of the education system, which will lead to a better society (Hammersley, 2013). The reliability of qualitative data was taken into consideration. The essence of reliability for qualitative research lies in consistency (Grossoehme, 2014; Miller, 1986). In this study, the researcher ensured the reliability of qualitative through constant comparison to verify the accuracy of data to validate the different sources where data came from (George & Apler, 2004; Patton, 1999). However, data comparison was initiated during the data analysis phase through the interpretation and reporting of the results. Furthermore, comprehensive references to qualitative aspects were made throughout the research as suggested by Patton (1999).

## **4.0 Results and Discussions**

### **4.1 Academic-Related Decision-making Power and Process**

This section examines whether schools and LGAs were free to plan and execute their academic improvement strategies without interference from other institutions dealing with education management. Table 2 summarises the measures of central tendency, mean and standard deviation of all items of institution arrangement, while Table 3 presents frequency and percentages.

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Schools’ Academic Authority (N=229)**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>Indicator/parameter</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean (M)</b>	<b>Standard deviation (SD)</b>
1	The school is free to plan and execute its academic improvement strategies	4	1	5	4.2096	.88342
2	School has the power to make their own strategic decisions	4	1	5	3.9782	1.05733
3	Without interference schools identify and implement projects such as infrastructure development/income-generating activity	4	1	5	3.9607	.96574

**Source:** Field Data 2020

The results in Table 1 indicate that the item, which says “*The school is free to plan and execute its academic improvement strategies*” scored the highest average of 4.21 (SD=.8834; range 1-5). This item has little dispersion and variability around the mean of the data set, on average. So, the values in the statistical data set are close to the mean of a sample population. The mean score value suggests that secondary schools’

management is free to plan and execute its academic improvement strategies. Furthermore, the item that asks “*Without interference, schools identify and implement projects such as infrastructure development/income generating activity*” averaged 3.96 (SD=0.9657, range 1-5) signifying that the item possesses consistent data. This means scores fall under the scale category of ‘agree’. Thus, the implication is that the surveyed secondary school teachers and DSEOs agreed that schools have the power to identify and implement their projects. Though the item “*School has the power to make their strategic decisions*” had shown high variability, it averaged 3.98 (SD=1.0573, range 1-5), which proposes that teachers and education officers in TDC and MDC agreed that school has the power to make their strategic decisions.

**Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Schools’ Academic Authority (N=229)**

	<b>Indicator/parameter</b>	<b>SD N(%)</b>	<b>D N(%)</b>	<b>NT N(%)</b>	<b>A N(%)</b>	<b>SA N(%)</b>
1	The school is free to plan and execute its academic improvement strategies	4(1.7)	9(3.9)	19(8.3)	100(43.7)	97(42.4)
2	School has the power to make their own strategic decisions	5(2.2)	24(10.5)	28(12.2)	86(37.6)	86(37.6)
3	Without interference schools identify and implement projects such as infrastructure development/income-generating activity	5(2.2)	17(7.4)	30(13.1)	107(46.7)	70(30.6)

**Key: A=Agree, D=Disagree, NT=Neutral, SA=Strongly Agree, and SD=Strongly Disagree.**

**Source:** Field Data 2020

The results in Table 3 indicate that 75.2% of surveyed teachers were happy that schools possess some autonomy in strategic decision-making, while about 12.2% were dissatisfied because their decision-making power

was limited. Moreover, the findings showed that 86.1% of the respondents were satisfied with the power schools' have to plan and execute their academic improvement strategies in the respective LGAs. Those who agreed were 43.70% and 42.40% strongly agreed that schools had much freedom to plan and execute their strategies to improve academic performance hence no interference from other institutions such as district councils, school boards, community, political leaders, ward/village development committee and even parents. However, 5.6% of the participants were not pleased with the schools' freedom to plan and execute their strategies aimed at improving the school's and students' academic performance in Mtwara Region. In the case of identifying and implementing projects such as infrastructure development and income-generating activities, 77.3% were pleased to report that schools were identified and implemented projects without interference.

Institutional arrangement in decentralisation aimed to improve the coordination of education delivery to ensure better access, quality and delivery of secondary education by expanding the administration capacity of LGAs through resource management, construction of infrastructures and provision of equipment to schools. This arrangement includes linkage between and among organisations at the local, state/provincial, and national levels. They also include the involvement of non-governmental education stakeholders and the local community.

The findings entail that that schools had much freedom to plan and execute their strategies to improve academic performance hence no interference from other institutions such as district councils, school boards, community, political leaders and even parents. The decentralisation policy intended to ensure that every institution plays its



role in making sure that quality education is delivered to improve the academic performance of students, which was in a fragile state in the two selected LGAs and Mtwara Region in general.

The finding was also corroborated and validated by DSEOs of the two selected LGAs during semi-structured interviews. They reported that the LGAs had the power to implement their strategies to ensure quality education is delivered to secondary school students to improve their academic performance. So, in a similar capacity, they can also give directives to lower levels and provide advice to higher levels regarding the best ways to manage education. However, the information which was provided during the focus group discussion with teachers at Nanguruwe in MDC was quite the opposite as teachers claimed to not have power to make strategic decisions in improving the academic status of their schools.

These findings corroborated with John's study (2015), which reported that school autonomous decisions concerning education development strategies such as learning programmes like remedial classes for the classes, which have National Examinations, are limited. Proponents of school autonomy advocate that greater freedom and autonomy for school is the route to genuine and lasting achievement in education (Carlitz, 2016). However, regardless of the importunate and growing importance of school autonomy in Tanzania, most secondary schools teachers consider themselves significantly constrained by the LGAs and government's requirements. This 'constrained autonomy' does not feature well the institution's arrangement, since the central has more power than the local. Therefore, it is a study's take that institutional arrangement in Tanzania has, to some extent, helped the implementation of

decentralisation policy in education by providing schools with some decision-making power on some matters, thus, improving delivery of secondary school education in the selected LGAs.

## **4.2 Resource Mobilisation and Budgeting**

In this sub-section, the results of the parameters, which are geared to execute the school budget, procure services such as contractors, procure equipment and resource mobilisation and identification and implementation of income-generating projects are interpreted and discussed. Under the said parameters, the study undertook to examine whether schools and LGAs possess the power to mobilise and use financial resources at their discretion. The results in Table 4 shows that the item “School procure equipment without interference” averaged 3.68 (SD=.9682, range 1-5). The data shows less variability, and so the data are close to the mean of the population. Thus, the proposition is that teachers and education officers in TDC and MDC agree that schools procure equipment without interference.

**Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of Resource Mobilisation and Budgeting (N=229)**

S/N	Indicator/parameter	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)
1	The school has autonomous power in planning and implementing its budget	3	2	5	3.6114	1.15168
2	Schools exercise freedom in purchasing services such as building contractors	4	1	5	3.6376	1.19376

3	School procures equipment without interference	4	1	5	3.6812	.9682
4	The school has the power to mobilise their resources the way it sees fit	4	1	5	3.7162	1.08932

**Source:** Field Data 2020

However, three items showed high variability, which includes “*School has the power to mobilise its resources the way it sees fit*” averaged 3.72 (SD=1.0893, range 1-5), “*School exercise freedom in purchasing services such as building contractors*” which averaged 3.64 (SD1.1938, range 1-5) and “*School has autonomous power in planning and implementing its budget*” which averaged 3.61 (SD=1.1517; range 2-5). Still, the three parameters’ averages imply that, teachers and education officers agreed that schools have the power to mobilise their resources the way they sees fit, schools exercise freedom in purchasing services such as building contractors, and schools have autonomous power in planning and implementing their budgets.

**Table 5: Frequency Distribution of Resource Mobilisation and Budgeting (N=229)**

S/N	Indicator/parameter	SD N(%)	D N(%)	NT N(%)	A N(%)	SA N(%)
1	The school has autonomous power in planning and implementing its budget	-	65(28.4)	18(07.9)	87(38)	59(25.8)
2	Schools exercise freedom in purchasing services such as building contractors	9(3.9)	41(17.9)	42(18.3)	69(30.1)	68(29.7)
3	School procures equipment without interference	7(3.1)	23(10)	44(19.2)	117(51.7)	38(16.6)
4	The school has the power to mobilise their resources the way it sees fit	8(3.5)	32(14)	33(14.4)	100(43.7)	56(24.5)

**Key: A=Agree, D=Disagree, NT=Neutral, SA=Strongly Agree, and SD=Strongly Disagree.**

**Source:** Field Data 2020

In determining the extent of resource mobilisation and budgeting decentralisation, the results in Table 5 pointed out that 63.8% of surveyed teachers were satisfied that decentralisation provided schools with the power to execute the school budgets without being interfered with by other institutions. Those who agreed were 38% and 25.8% strongly agreed that schools had much freedom to execute their budget. Those who were dissatisfied were 28.4% because schools' power to execute their budget was limited. Regarding the item which says "*Schools exercise freedom in purchasing services such as building contractors*", the results in Table 4 showed that 59.8% of the respondents were happy with schools' power or autonomy to procure services, while 21.8% were unhappy.

In the case of parameter, to procure equipment, 68.3% of the participants were pleased that the schools have the power to procure equipment. Furthermore, the results for the parameter 'resource mobilisation' showed that 68.2% of respondents agreed that schools have autonomous power to mobilise resources on their own as contributions from community members, parents and other well-wishers. Similarly, 68.2% of respondents were satisfied that schools had the power to identify and implement income-generating projects. This implies that although the schools have the power to decide their income and expenditure, the authority was less inspiring.

These findings were confirmed and validated by MDC-DEOs during in-depth interviews. The DSEOs presented two major points of view as to why they more often than not did think they had no considerable

budgeting powers; they pointed to the fact that the budget must be inspected and agreed upon by the central government which provides over 90% of most LGAs in Tanzania and the second is the requirement of the LGAs to put up with the budgeting procedures provided by PO-RALG annually. So, the view of this study is that the LGAs have some substantial but not impressive power over their budget. Under decentralisation, the objective of delegating power to schools and LGAs to mobilise and use financial resources (fiscal decentralisation) was to reduce wastage of funds to ensure funds were put into proper use.

Fiscal decentralisation is the set of rules that defines roles and responsibilities among different levels of government for fiscal functions including planning and budget preparation, budget execution, revenue generation and intergovernmental allocation of budgetary resources (Frank & Martinez-Vazquez, 2011). Fiscal decentralisation is the blood veins at the heart of any decentralized local government system as the policy defines the creation and allocation of financial resources between and within different government levels, which are utilised to respond to citizens' demands.

Decentralisation policy in education aimed at giving schools and LGAs power over their financial resources to increase effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of education. By the subsidiarity principle, the financing of public sector functions should be performed by the lowest level of government that can do so efficiently. Thus, fiscal decentralisation in education is intended to make sure that schools and LGAs mobilise and spend their financial resources efficiently by transferring financial decision-making power to schools and LGAs. As a result, the central government is currently disbursing funds directly to

schools' accounts to make sure they are obtained in full and promptly (Day & Sammons, 2014). According to Carlitz (2016), formerly the funds were channelled through district councils to schools. In this way, a lot of funds were misused and schools ended up getting less than the targeted amount distributed by the central government (Twaweza, 2012).

Unlike Boex and Yilmaz (2010) and Anosisye (2017) who found that LGAs or schools had less authority to procure than budgetary power, the findings of the current study indicated that schools have more expenditure power than budgetary power. This could be because the fund from the central government is nowadays disbursed directly to schools' bank accounts. The findings from FGDs with teachers at Nanguruwe divulged that the schools are free to buy the equipment they need as long as they get approved by DSEO and buy from authorised dealers. Correspondingly, in interviews with DSEOs and DEDs of MDC and TDC, they corroborated the findings about schools' and LGAs' procurement power.

The general view of the study based on the descriptive findings depicted that schools and LGAs have some decision-making power regarding to mobilisation and budgeting of their resources. As per government regulations, the expenditure process must follow the articulated procedures on how to use public funds. The lower levels must secure approval from the presiding office. For example, schools had to secure approval from DSEO, which also is under REO. The schools involve the parents and general community via the school board in the decision-making process regarding resource mobilisation and budgeting. Thus, it is a study's take that the institution's arrangement was not constraining the decision-making process in the case of resource mobilisation and

expenditure. Therefore, every institution has to play its role in making sure that quality education is delivered to improve the academic performance of students in MDC and TDC.

### **4.3 Recruitment, Curriculum Development and Implementation**

In this sub-section, the results of the items; to recruit teachers, formulate a subject curriculum, and implement a curriculum are interpreted and discussed. Under these parameters, the study undertook to examine whether schools and LGAs possess the power to recruit teachers and formulate curricula at their discretion. In Table 4.5, the results of the parameter that asks if “*School is involved in curriculum implementations*” recorded a high average of 4.08 (SD=.9087, range 1-5) signifying that data variability around the mean is very small, and that surveyed secondary school teachers and DSEOs strongly agreed that secondary school management was involved in the implementation of the curriculum. Thus, curriculum implementation is among the variables of successful decentralisation.

On the contrary, the item “*School has the power to recruit teaching staff/teachers*” scored 1.73 (SD=.8421, range 1-4) and “*School is involved in curriculum formulation and development*” scored 1.76 (SD=.8929, range 1-4) exhibit moderate variability around the population mean. The mean values imply that schools do not have the power to recruit teaching staff or teachers, and also the schools are not involved in curriculum formulation and development. Regarding these parameters surveyed teachers of secondary schools and DSEOs, disagreed the schools had the power to recruit teachers, and that the schools were involved in curriculum formulation and development. So, recruitment and curriculum

formulation and development were found to restrict the impact of decentralisation on education delivery.

**Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation of Recruitment and Curriculum (N=229)**

S/N	Indicator/parameter	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (M)	Standard deviation (SD)
1	The school has the power to recruit teaching staff/teachers	3	1	4	1.7249	.84206
2	School is involved in curriculum formulation and development	3	1	4	1.7598	.89293
3	School is involved in curriculum implementations	4	1	5	4.0873	.90867

**Source:** Field Data 2020

Decentralised recruitment enables LGAs to get the right employees who possess the needed skills, education qualifications and experience. Decentralised recruitment and selection has widely been regarded as a substitute way of increasing effectiveness, efficacy and equality in the employment of LGA's human resources. In the case of curriculum development, the goal of decentralisation is to formulate a curriculum that reflects the cultural settings of the learners as well as national and international objectives. As a result, in many countries in the present day, curricula are undergoing modifications in favour of local, national and global objectives aimed at improving the academic performance of students. Secondary school curriculum in Tanzania, for instance, has been modified six times between 1961 and 2020 as the country passes through social, economic, cultural, and political changes. Let us start by discussing decentralised recruitment and then we will discuss the curriculum development and implementation.



**Table 6: Frequency Distribution of Recruitment and Curriculum (N=229)**

S/N	Indicator/parameter	SD N(%)	D N(%)	NT N(%)	A N(%)	SA N(%)
1	The school has the power to recruit teaching staff/teachers	109(47.6)	86(37.6)	22(9.6)	12(5.2)	-
2	School is involved in curriculum formulation and development	106(46.3)	91(39.7)	13(5.7)	19(8.3)	-
3	School is involved in curriculum implementations	-	19(8.3)	28(12.2)	96(41.9)	86(37.6)

**Source:** Field Data 2020

Regarding the extent recruitment of local government staff is decentralised Table 6 established that the surveyed teachers and education officers disagreed by 85.2% that the decentralisation policy provides autonomous power to schools and LGAs to recruit their staff. The findings imply that human resource recruitment is centralised. The analysis through triangulation of data obtained from secondary sources and the key informants (i.e., DED, DSEOs and REO) validated the findings that recruitment of local government personnel including teachers is nowadays conducted by central government and even the power of teachers' deployment and allocation, which remained with LGAs, has recently also been taken by the central government via MoEST and/or the ministry under PO-RALG. Focused group discussions with teachers corroborated the results.

In this regard, the discussion and analysis established that recruitment is tightly centralised as the central government does not involve the LGAs or any education actors to identify and estimate the number of teachers required, needed skills, qualifications and experience. So, the full

autonomy of recruiting teachers in Tanzania rests in the hands of the central government due to the poor performance of the decentralised system (Lameck, 2015). In one way or another, it has resulted in poor delivery of education and academic performance as Ngamesha (2013) iterated that “where devolution requirements are provided the effects (academic performance) are good, while where the requirements are not adequately provided the effects of devolution are not realized.” The amelioration of such a state of affairs calls for revised coordination mechanisms among education stakeholders to warrant effective decentralised recruitment and education delivery improvement.

The findings coincided with Mbora (2014) who found that recruitment of permanent employees in Moshi District Council was not decentralised. In addition, while Nigeria has shared responsibilities between federal and local governments, still recruitment and deployment of secondary school teachers are still fully controlled by the federal government. On the contrary, in a neighbouring country Kenya, M’Nkanata (2012) disclosed that teacher recruitment and management is by regional government using central government guidelines. Brosio (2014) revealed that most Asian countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia and the Republic of Korea undertake central recruitment of teachers in secondary schools. Besides, Daba (2010) in Ethiopia and Carlitz and Boex (2017) in Tanzania found similar results.

Similar to many countries worldwide, during the past two decades, Tanzania engaged in LGRP, which intended, among other things, to increase efficiency in the recruitment of local government personnel by giving power to local government councils to recruit and discipline their human resources (Lameck, 2015). However, due to poor performance of

local government, the central government took over and retained the power to hire and fire local government staff. The LGA recruitment process was influenced by informal social rules together with socio-cultural factors, ethnicity differences, nepotism, corruption, tribalism (Njovu, 2013; Kinemo, 2015), and unequal personnel distribution between rural and urban, on one hand, and well-off and poor councils, in the other (URT, 2012), and lack of accountability, incentive and capacity of local actors (Lameck, 2015). LGAs are in addition considerably limited in local human resource administration (Carlitz & Boex 2017).

Theory of Change argues that human challenges are complex and dynamic, and thus require theoretical and practical shifts as well as social movements to transform established institutions. The theory helps to understand the historical context of educational decentralisation and its challenges and then extends on these paradigms to understand the extent the desired quality of education delivery change has been achieved and how these achievements are translated into students' academic performance. The Principal-Agency Theory shows a shift and transformation in the light of the relationships between the central and local governments. The success of the relationship between the CG and LGAs depends on the level of decentralisation of power and decision-making from CG and LGAs. Therefore, local government reforms are viewed as processes whereby institutional framework structures adopt decentralisation policy for improved education services delivery. Under this framework, boundaries of the institutions' roles, obligations and prohibitions are defined.

The institutional structure in the recruitment of LGA's personnel in Tanzania means public administration, which establishes the rules and

guidelines for the recruitment of LGA's personnel. Also, it includes unofficial social rules and traditions of conduct which channel the actions of officials and politicians concerned with the process of recruitment of LGA's human resources. The main legislation governing the recruitment and selection of local personnel includes the Public Service Act No. 8 of 2002 and its amendment Act No. 18 of 2007, which grants power to the president of Tanzania to appoint city directors while providing the minister responsible for local government power to appoint town, municipal and district councils' directors and heads of departments. Also, the Public Service Regulations of 2003, the Public Service Scheme of 2003 and the standing Order of 2009 are legislations, which govern the recruitment of LGA's personnel.

Back to the case of curriculum development, Table 6 shows that 86% of the teachers disagreed that the existing policy and laws on decentralisation empower them to participate in the formulation of a national curriculum or their curriculum. Regarding curriculum implementation, the results in Table 6 indicate that 79.5% of surveyed teachers were pleased that schools and teachers were free to implement the specified curriculum. During the FGD, the study was informed that teachers had not been actively involved in the development of the secondary education curriculum. Their opinions did not matter because the officers from TIE and MoEST did not give them a chance to give their concerns about the proposed curriculum, which had been brought up for discussion. The officers had their resolved stand regarding the curriculum and were not ready for changes. Moreover, in-depth interviews of selected respondents in the study corroborated the above findings that the level of autonomy of schools and LGAs in curriculum development is negligible. All powers are bestowed to the

central government through the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST).

In a review of secondary information to validate the findings, the study revealed that the degree of autonomy of LGAs is doubtful due to overlaps in the powers and authority between the two levels of government. Conflicts in the functions and responsibilities between the central government and LGAs in the formulation and implementation of curriculum, hence, cause inadequate curriculum formulation and implementation. HakiElimu (2016) observed poor academic performance of secondary students' result of inadequate and overcrowded curriculum. Teachers blame MoEST and TIE for not training them to handle the curriculum properly, while the central government blame LGAs for not supervising teachers properly during curriculum implementation (Koissaba, 2018). Attention must be provided to the significance attached to institutional arrangements and interactions for decentralisation for fostering education delivery.

These explanations entail that plans to decentralise are essentially affected by the institutional arrangements in Tanzania. Scholars iterated that the majority of decentralisation reforms either faulted in their institutional design or central governments have not decentralised adequate authority and funds to LGAs to facilitate them contain considerable achievement in education delivery. Considering the institutional arrangements in curriculum formulation and implementations, the LGAs are under the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government but curriculum and standards are formulated and issued by the then Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT), while implementation and their adherence is done at the level of LGAs. Needless to say, the

aspects of implementation of curriculum from central government through LGAs become spiritless and the general public suffers the consequences in terms of poor education delivery and hence deteriorating academic performance.

With regard to curriculum development, the findings of this study concurred with a study by Carlitz and McGee (2013) that assessed and documented the impact of Hakielimu's advocacy work on education policy and budget in Tanzania. The findings revealed that the curriculum is formulated by the central government and implemented by the local government. The analogous results were later put forward by Kopweh (2014) and Lameck (2017). Similarly, the findings from selected LGAs conform to the study conducted by Koissaba (2018), which indicated that curriculum development is the obligation of the central government and the implementation is done by teachers, who are barely equipped. The findings revealed that the national curriculum in Tanzania is not competent enough to educate students to be competitive in the modern world and amid these teachers are blamed for poor academic performances while even schools that have an acceptable number of qualified teachers were also poor.

## **5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

The results depict that schools and LGAs had demonstrated a high degree of power to plan and execute their academic improvement strategies, and highly been involved in curriculum implementations, school has the power to make their strategic decisions, and without interference, school identify and implement projects such as infrastructure development/income generating activities. However, schools' authority and freedom in planning and implementing its budget; freedom in

purchasing services such as building contractors; procuring equipment; and power to mobilise its resources the way it sees fit, were found to be less, whereas they lack authority in recruitment of teachers and curriculum formulation and development. Various institutional frameworks and guiding principles are in disagreement with the driving force to advance the delivery of education.

The study findings imply that schools have enough decision-making space compared to LGAs. Based on the findings, this study concludes that institutional arrangement in terms of authority and division of responsibilities does not very much allow for lower levels (LGAs and schools) to possess much power as stipulated in decentralisation policy and SEDP-II. Thus, poor delivery of education might be attributed to this because when schools want to implement their plans, they submit them to DEO for approval, which sometimes hinders its implementation if it does not fall under LGAs' priorities. Similarly, DSEOs also have to request permission from the respective Ministry whenever they want to implement a plan. If LGAs' plans do not fit within the national priorities' framework, the Ministry will never approve them. Thus, policymakers should attend to the institutional framework to bring into line the existing imbalances in central government-schools-local government relations by redefining the relationship, functions and roles of central and local governments as institutions.

Thus, based on the findings of this study and the overview of the implementation process of decentralisation and its influence on education delivery, the study makes the following recommendations: There is a need for the government to consider reviewing legal frameworks and institutional set-up to address the problem of conflicts on roles and

responsibility between central government and LGAs. At this point, there is a need for more commitment and political will from both the central government and political leadership for successful decentralisation and improved education delivery.

The reforms need to be wide-ranging to wrap up both systems, structures, processes and the people that are involved in the adoption and implementation. Effective participation and accountability mechanisms are needed. All of these enable the government, shortly, to identify the hurdles of decentralisation at both national and local levels and thus redesign the decentralisation policy to allow smooth delivery of quality education, which reflects the available resources and government structures. This will ultimately improve the outcome of decentralisation on the delivery of quality education.

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