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QUALITY EDUCATION IN TANZANIA: PERCEPTIONS ON GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND LOCAL NEEDS

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ABSTRACT

The study explored notions of quality in education and the challenges facing Tanzania. The inquiry adopted a humanist approach to determining levels of quality in schools, thus respondents recorded their perceptions on key issues on quality education, relevant to Tanzania. The study used mixed methods and non-probability sampling which selected 20 schools involving 200 participants. Data was collected using written accounts and qualitative questionnaires and a preliminary quantitative questionnaire, which was used before further exploration of phenomena. The participants involved students, teachers, head-teachers and education officers from both urban and rural schools in Northern Tanzania. This data was analysed to form themes for discussion so as to describe and capture the challenges faced by schools in their quest for quality education. The ensuing discussion helped provide a clearer understanding through a qualitative description of Tanzania's local needs and global challenges regarding quality education. Despite Tanzania's commendable efforts in increased funding on education in recent years, ahead of its East African neighbors, this investment has not gone far enough to meet citizens' expectations and satisfaction on quality education, possibly due to widespread neglect in previous years.

Key Words: Education, Quality, Tanzania, Qualitative, East Africa

INTRODUCTION

One of the pressing, 'Education for All' goals in most developing countries including Tanzania entails 'improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills" (UNESCO., 2007). Tanzania acknowledges that quality education is the bedrock of national development. As a response to global challenges and local needs, the vision of the Ministry of Education and Culture in Tanzania is stated as follows; "Be a nation with high level

of education at all levels; a nation which produces the quality and quantity of educated people sufficiently equipped with the requisite knowledge to solve the society's problems, in order to meet the challenges of development and attain competitiveness at regional and global levels" (Tanzania Ministry of Education and Culture., 2011). It is noted that the attainment of quality education remains a national objective for Tanzania's policymakers as this enables the achievement of various other goals at governmental level. Tanzania increased spending on education and financed large-scale classroom construction programmes and abolished primary school fees in 2001. The number of children out of school declined from over 3 million in 1999 to around 33 thousand in 2008 (UNESCO, 2011). With this expansion of primary schooling, bringing more children from marginalized families into education, a sustained focus on quality education becomes critical. As noted by (UNESCO, 2011), getting children into school is a necessary but an insufficient condition for achieving the Education for All goals, which includes quality education.

Most Education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa face numerous challenges that impact on quality, such as insufficient manpower, unequally distributed education levels, which manifest in excessive disparities such as on gender inequality, the widened gap between the rich and the poor and between rural and urban institutions such as schools (Ndoye, 2008). These disparities and challenges often lead to low quality of education, poor health for most learners and cements gender inequality, considering also the positive role that may be played by educated women on health and nutrition. It is noted that most of Sub Saharan Africa's education systems have lower efficiency that results in the wastage of educational resources (Legotlo and Westhuizen, 1996; Ndoye, 2008; Tshabangu, 2010). A good example is the repetition and dropout rates of 2002 – 2003 which were recorded as high as 40 percent of the children that entered school but did not finish their primary education (Ndoye, 2008). Such challenges on low quality education in most African countries have further given rise to weaker links between education and other national economic and political goals. This study sought to expound on the notions of quality in education and what these may mean for Tanzania and other developing countries that face the task of being responsive to global challenges but also sensitive to local needs.

Tanzanian's Education

The structure of Formal Education system in Tanzania is as shown below:

2 years of pre-primary education,

7 years of primary education,

4 years of Junior Secondary (Ordinary Level),

2 years of Senior Secondary (Advanced Level)

3 years of Tertiary Education (Further or Higher Education)

The education system has three levels, that is: Basic, Secondary and Tertiary. Basic Education level includes pre-primary, primary and non-formal adult education. Secondary education has Ordinary and Advanced levels of education, while Tertiary education includes programmes and courses offered by colleges and universities (Tanzania Ministry of Education and Culture., 2011).

Socio-Historical Factors affecting Quality Education

When the industrial powers of Europe colonised Africa in the 19th century they produced a capitalist economy with similarities to their own countries. Africa was intended to serve two purposes: firstly to provide a potential market and secondly to be a source of raw materials (Mbah and Igariwey, 2001). In the process Africa was turned from a pre-colonial, self-sufficient communal agricultural economy to one compelled to embrace inter-dependence with other economies. Gradually the society was stratified and modelled after capitalism. Just as such developments served to establish capitalism in Africa they also served as an embryonic stage to socialism giving rise to trade unionism and revolutionary socialist parties during colonialism, such as Chama Cha Mabinduzi (CCM) in Tanzania.

At independence most African countries became socialist states and elected their education systems to model socialist ideologies such as 'Humanism' in Zambia, 'Harambee' in Kenya, 'Education with Production' in Zimbabwe and 'Ujamaa' in Tanzania. But as anarchists like Mbah and Igariwey (2001) would argue, either way, state socialism like state capitalism is fatalistically doomed.

Tanzania's 'Ujamaa' or 'Family-hood', a form of African socialism, was captained by Tanzania's founding father of the liberation and former president Julius Nyerere. He believed intensely in rural African traditional value systems and that the return to these values and its means of production would conspire to end capitalism. In spite of other successes, Tanzania moved from being the biggest exporter of agricultural products to biggest importer. All these economic failures impacted heavily on quality education and it is not hard to see why. Babu (1981), a former finance minister of Tanzania observed that most African leaders failed to analyse imperialism in relation to the African situation and hence as a result Africa found herself faced with neo colonialism. Capitalism found allies in the new African leaders especially through corruption and greed (Du Bois, 1958; Rodney, 1981; Mbah and Igariwey, 2001) (Babu, 1981). It is not uncommon in most of Africa, including Tanzania to find excessive wealth in the hands of a few coexisting side by side with depraving poverty of the masses, with devastating impact on quality education and schools infrastructure. A view has been advanced that most postcolonial leaders in Africa have largely failed to deliver the much hyped freedom and furore at independence (Ake, 1996)), which included quality education. This has been partly due to the gap between the leaders' radical rhetoric and actual performance, seen as counter-productive (Babu, 1981). There is also a view that socialism by its nature tends to centre on satisfying human needs as opposed to excessive capitalism. However, socialism under statism seems to have failed most of Africa. Since Tanzania's philosophy on education is still rooted on socialist ideologies which might have been relevant in dislodging exploitative forces of colonialism, educational policy makers may need to revisit these in light of globalized capitalistic world economies and international trade, so as to charter a path that is responsive and best poised to meet citizens' needs on quality provision of services including education. For a right fit between advancing cultural ideology and organisational strategy and

goals, it is paramount that leaders and managers consider external environment and are adaptable to changes (Daft *et al.*, 2010).

Notions on Quality Education

Quality education may refer to inputs, that is, numbers of teachers, teacher training curricula, and learning materials. Secondly it may refer to processes, which is the amount of direct teaching time, extent of active learning. Thirdly, it may mean outputs, that is, test scores, examinations, graduation rates, and lastly it may refer to outcomes, that is, performance in subsequent employment. Furthermore, in some quarters, quality education may simply imply the attaining of specified targets and objectives (Chapman and Adams, 2002). While acknowledging and embracing the above notions on quality, this study followed a humanistic approach to quality where customers/clients' perceptions are seen as a determinant factor as to the level of quality in education. It is on that basis that the study sought to be informed by respondents' perceptions on an array of issues as to the level of quality education in Tanzania.

The Humanist approach to Quality Education

The Humanist paradigm emerged in mid-20th century with great focus on human freedom, dignity, potential and self-determination. The humanist assumption is that people act with intentionality and values (Huitt, 2001). Therefore it may not be enough to judge quality in education based on functionalist and mechanical approaches rooted in the commodification of education such as examinations league tables (Stronach, 2000). The Dakar Framework for Action, adopted in 2000 affirms that a quality education based on a human rights approach means that the rights are implemented throughout the whole education system and in all learning environments. It means that the education systems are oriented towards human values allowing the realisation of peace, social cohesion and the respect for human dignity (UNESCO., 2005). Cliff *et al.* (1987), claim that quality in education is somewhat problematic. Like beauty, they say, it lies in the eye of the beholder. It is an intangible commodity posing great difficulty as to its measurement with exactness. There are critical concepts submerged in the study of quality. These contrast quality as seen through a procedural eye and quality as seen in a transformational way. The procedural concept is explained by Sallis (1996) as products or services meeting a predefined specification in a consistent fashion. The fundamental question occupying the producer is whether the product will be fit for its purpose or use. In the education system, this may be the schools or the Ministry of Education seeking to define what quality education means and whether acquired skills and knowledge will be fit to serve the economy. Such a view of quality is functionalist, mechanistic and offers a highly reduced view of holistic quality. The transformational approach to quality is not so much focused on the product but on the customer. It is seen as seeking to improve rather than prove. To empower rather than impose what is quality. Such a view of quality would be seen as wide-ranging, democratic in nature and befitting to most African Education systems where at times there are fluctuating democracies (Potter *et al.*, 1997), illiberal regimes (Dahl, 1989) and ethnically divided communities (Salih, 2001).

Customer Satisfaction

The consumer plays a significant role in defining quality and its pursuit, just as the governed or the electorate would largely determine levels of democracy in a polity. Though the concept of customer satisfaction is quite familiar in private sector practices, it has also gained attention and some level of applicability in public sector organisations. Schools by their nature are organisations, which are established to accomplish their goals by teaching, educating and instilling values, thus enabling people of all ages to succeed and to lead a life of satisfaction (Stronach *et al.*, 2000). Quality education would therefore entail learners who are healthy and ready to participate and learn under a supportive environment that is safe, protective, gender-sensitive, and provides adequate resources and facilities relevant to the curricula for the acquisition of basic skills particularly in literacy, numeracy and other life skills such as in health, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace building. The use of child-centred teaching approaches and fair assessments would also add to quality education through the facilitation of learning and a reduction of inequalities thus aiding national goals for education and enhanced positive participation in society (UNICEF., 2000). It is observed that the mechanically set standards on quality, as in management principles may not necessarily reflect or achieve customer satisfaction. Quality in its essence is the degree of satisfaction perceived by important stake holders and this satisfaction is proportional to the differential among the expected and perceived benefits to them (Stronach *et al.*, 2000). The mere compliance with standards is a matter of course and the drive by some educational bodies to seek to measure quality as a target in learning settings will most likely cause it to cease to be a good measure (Stronach, 2000). From a humanist perspective, learners are at the centre of 'meaning-making' (Freire, 1970), which implies an interactionist and interpretive approach to quality education. This reinforces a view that quality should be sought for in varied and flexible ways that are akin to local cultures and responsive to global challenges, devoid of external domination through forms of systems transfer as often perceived by some former colonies in Africa (Cossa, 2011).

Customer Knowledge

Quality therefore means knowing customers in ways and depths never fully explored before and using this knowledge to translate needs into innovative new approaches (Artzt, 1992). Since the education scenario is complex, it is not surprising for example, that teachers are service providers when they teach, but customers when they receive service from government. In this multifaceted relationship, the government and parents are sometimes secondary customers of education but also providers of funds and services within schools. Customers in education do not usually have an equal socio-political standing due to traditional hierarchical structures (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2002). Therefore, effort should be made to apply forms of distributed leadership (Harris, 2008)which empower those below, such as teachers, students and some parents, if levels of quality education are to be improved.

We are made aware that preceding customer satisfaction is customer knowledge, which entails knowing the cultures obtaining in the school community of customers, the values and aspirations of

those people, their fundamental beliefs, practices and socio-economic needs. A solid base of customer knowledge by any school administration should be regarded as a prerequisite if schools are to raise satisfaction levels, as this indexes quality education.

METHODOLOGY

The study sought to establish understanding on challenges facing Tanzania on quality education. Data was collected through mixed methods involving written accounts and qualitative questionnaires and a preliminary quantitative questionnaire, which was used before further exploration of phenomena. Participants included students, teachers, head-teachers and education officers from both urban and rural schools in northern Tanzania. The collected data was used to describe and capture the challenges faced by schools in their quest for quality education. It is noted that the use of qualitative data in a research study helps to explore in depth the studied phenomena (Parahoo, 1997; Cohen *et al.*, 2000) and is relevant when studying an intangible phenomenon such as quality in education. A quantitative questionnaire was also use in the preliminary stages of the research so as to establish key perceptions of respondents on quality before further exploration. This mixed and triangulated approach in the study helped enhance rigor and some validity. Non-probability sampling was used, selecting 20 schools, involving 200 participants. The main rationale for choosing these institutions was because of ease of access seen as critical in research (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The focus of the study was not only on primary customers of education namely the students, but also extended to secondary customers such as teachers, head-teachers and education officers. Collecting data from these diverse respondents, helped introduce a triangulated approach for purposes of validity. The qualitative data was used to form patterns (Wolcott, 1994) before thematization (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion below focuses on some of the key issues affecting quality education in Tanzania and is drawn from various data sets.

Preliminary Findings

Perception on Quality

Of the 200 hundred respondents 80% felt that levels of quality in their schools was average to low quality. 3% felt it was very low. Only 13% felt their schools offered high quality education and 3% very high quality. It was noted that those few schools who recorded high to very high quality were International schools or a few established private schools. In year 2000, the Tanzanian government introduced the primary education development plan (PEDP) and after 2004, the secondary education development plan (SEDP), where communities and individuals participated in building more schools in their local areas. Even though such a policy attended to the quantity provision of

education, the large number of mushrooming schools continued to lack in quality provision. Most of these schools continue to experience low levels of quality due to poor infrastructure and unskilled manpower.

The majority of students and teachers in the studied schools, almost 75% expressed the need to transfer from their school to a better one. This suggested that most teachers and students had very low levels of satisfaction within their schools and possibly felt 'imprisoned' within those institutions as most may not be able to transfer thus impacting on staff and students' motivational levels as well. This could be an indictment on public education hence the need by communities and government to invest more so as to raise levels of quality in most schools.

Further Findings

Funding

Despite Tanzania's commendable efforts in increased funding for education in recent years, and at 7.1% of GNP in 2008 ahead of its regional neighbours (UNESCO, 2011), this investment has not gone far enough to meet citizens expectations and satisfaction on quality education as noted above. Most of educational funding comes from the government especially in public schools. However, parents are also involved in the development of schools through payment of various fees and levies. Some of these fees include tuition, examination, caution, watchman, academic, furniture, identity and fees for lunches. The major issues impacted by inadequate funding especially in rural areas were noted as low teacher salaries, lack of sufficient facilities, educational equipment, electricity, clean water and qualified staff. The poor economic status of most parents especially in rural communities further compounds the problem of funding, rendering them unable to support most educational programmes in schools. It is not uncommon to find students crammed in dilapidated classrooms sitting on the floor and over 50 of them sharing a textbook. The same also obtains in some impoverished urban communities. Schools that are located in towns often get some government attention, partly due to local political pressure on governing authorities to meet minimum standards and the ability by most gainfully employed parents to pay fees to fund various educational programmes. The funding of schools by parents has often created quite a burden on many families' especially large families, single parent families and to orphaned learners. In families where parents do not yet appreciate the value of education, such as girls' education, these financial demands weigh heavy enough to discourage them from educating their children or paying their fees timely. Lack of adequate funding in education has led to lack of access to quality education thus preventing many Tanzanians from escaping the cycle of poverty. The state of Tanzania's economy which is ranked as among the poorest in the world (UNDP., 2010), continues to impede quality education efforts as most educational programmes cannot be introduced or sustained efficiently.

Gender

As noted above, financial demands often militate against the girl child. Such inequalities also contribute to most school girls' not reaching secondary education and in some cases adversely affecting their academic performance. In 1980 Tanzania's professional women gathered to form a special organ called Women Education and Development (WED), whose main goal was to enhance gender equity in education. Since then the levels of enrolment across most mainstream sectors of education have reflected improvement in terms of quantity and access. However, the qualitative challenge of meeting girl child needs such as creating gender sensitive environments in schools, affirmatively aiding their academic performance to favorably compete with their male counterparts in future professional work settings especially in areas such as leadership, Mathematics and Science fields, still remain. it is noted that girls often enter school burdened by disadvantages linked to poverty, gender inequality and other negative factors and thus require additional support from teachers and the wider education system. Lack of access to quality education by most girls has not only led to low educational achievement for them, but also condemned them to an inferior cultural status which negatively impacts on Tanzania's economic growth and competitiveness in the world.

The Leadership Challenge

Most head-teachers especially in rural areas faced enormous challenges mainly due to lack of funding, thus they fail to motivate and retain qualified, adequate staffing levels. Many teachers face transportation and housing problems that hinder them from getting to school on time thus creating a regular loss of working hours in some schools. In urban areas, some teachers hold second jobs, which may detract them from the time and energy they should expend in their classrooms. When teachers miss school regularly it impacts on quality education. With less motivated staff and students, particularly arising from sub standard infrastructure and lack of educational materials, it is not uncommon for head-teachers' time to be wasted dealing with disciplinary issues involving students and sometimes teachers. Political interference was also cited as a factor in schools, giving rise to overcautious leadership that holds schools back. Cases abound where invited public officials and some politicians make false promises to schools, especially on funding, and when a head-teacher takes an effort to follow up, he ends up spending a lot of funds going to and fro with no success. Several participants noted that Tanzania has very good policy on paper when it comes to quality education and human rights issues at primary and secondary level, but the implementation of these was seen as very poor. Each school may need to design its own frameworks, which establishes a quality conscious school ethos. It is necessary that such designs and practices are arrived at, not through imposition by the school administration, but through a wider consultation involving all stakeholders such as students, teachers and parents.

Quality Gap between Schools

The study noted a massive gap between many poorly resourced public schools and a very few well maintained largely private ones. Thus as noted earlier, most students were dissatisfied with their schools and indicated an intention to transfer to a few schools perceived as better. The standard of

public qualified teachers' ratio (PQTR) for secondary schools is recorded at 1:40 per subject. However the average PQTR was 1:51 in 2010 which indicated a serious shortage of qualified teachers in secondary schools. There are also other endemic issues of regional disparities for example Mara and Kigoma regions having PQTR of 1:82 and 1:80 respectively, while Pwani, the region's capital and capital city Dar-es-Salaam, had a PQTR of 1:31 and 1:36 respectively (Tanzania Ministry of Education and Culture., 2010). This therefore implies that there is uneven distribution of teachers across regions and schools and the situation much dire in rural regions and poor urban schools. Part of the challenge, like in most of Africa, is that the majority of Tanzanians live in rural areas, and most teachers do not prefer working in remote rural communities where there is often poor mode of transport and squalid housing conditions. Schools are often sparsely populated and students have to travel long distances. This scenario replicated other cases in Africa where most rural schools are poorly resourced, have fewer enrolments and often have to rely heavily on the peasant parent community (Legotlo and Westhuizen, 1996). Remote schools were often hard hit by staff turn-over, as teachers favoured developed regions. Rural schools also experienced higher levels of teacher absenteeism. Performance management systems that combine incentives and regular inspections may need to be introduced and strengthened at district and school levels so as to reward staff who are committed and add value to quality education efforts. Considerable investment in terms of human and material resources seemed highly necessary in most of Tanzania's schools particularly in rural areas, if quality education was to be realised.

Science and Mathematics

Quality challenges also existed in the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics. It is noted that Mathematics and Science subjects are essential for social and economic development particularly for developing economies such as in Africa. Numerous schools lacked laboratories, relevant books and teaching equipment. Only a few privileged schools had qualified and capable Mathematics and Science teachers. There were many instances where unqualified teachers or teachers qualified in other disciplines were assigned to teach Mathematics and Science. As a result there has been a perennial poor performance in these subjects in most instances with some failure rates of around 70% (African Organisation of English-speaking Supreme Audit Institutions, 2009). There appeared to be a glaring need for greater attention and clarity of priorities on poor performing students in Mathematics and Science subjects as this threatened to hamper Tanzania's efforts on economic growth and competitiveness at regional and international levels. There should be a concerted effort in training more Science and Mathematics teachers, up skilling the existing ones and promoting learner centrered pedagogies which have been proven to be successful elsewhere in Kenya (Willitter *et al.*, 2012).

Eroded Confidence

Overall, there was overwhelming lack of satisfaction on quality education levels. It was noted above that most students and teachers indicated higher levels of dissatisfaction with their schools. If teachers in these schools are the ones judging themselves as offering "average" to "poor" quality

education, this in effect became indicative of eroded confidence in the system, thus presenting a massive challenge to Tanzania's policy-makers on education. There was a sense that curriculum innovation was lacking due to over-cautiousness that struggles to break away from the traditional past, thus a slow response to change.

Key dissatisfiers bordered on human relation issues such as lack of housing, poor transport, insensitive leadership which is not responsive and the daily subjection of students and teachers to excessive lack of educational facilities and materials that could otherwise aid quality education provision. It was also noted that most expatriates working in Tanzania opted to send their children to a few local international schools which charged exorbitant fees. Some local wealthy Tanzanians also sent their children to these schools or to neighboring Kenya where it is perceived there is a wider choice of schools and higher quality education standards.

Reports of examination leakages also dealt a big blow to education quality efforts in Tanzania thus eroding trust among stakeholders and reducing satisfaction levels, something which is seen as impeding innovative thinking and academic excellence. (Nyanje, 2011; Daily News Online., 2012). Some of the reasons for cheating in school examinations have been cited as linked to incompetent teachers and education officials; the failure to compete with East African counterparts especially Kenyans. Poor proficiency in the English language was also cited as one of the major reasons given for cheating in examinations. It is noted that unlike some of its neighbors such as Kenya and Uganda, Tanzania places greater emphasis on the Swahili language throughout primary schooling and in official national discourse, which may prove incapacitating to most students as they transition to secondary and higher education where they face up to the academic demands that require proficiency in English speaking and writing. Emphasis on a bilingual approach to teaching and learning from early on in education may reduce the monolingual handicap suffered by most students (Alidou *et al.*, 2006). A much more pragmatic language policy may advantage many Tanzanians particularly in a highly competitive and integrated Eastern Africa region.

Stakeholders' Participation

Parental behaviour plays a significant role in a child's cognitive growth and performance (Clarke 1983) and it is further observed that a mother's level of education is often correlated with the child's performance (Makewa *et al.*, 2012). General involvement of parents in the education of their children was seen as very low with most students recording that they are not assisted or encouraged with their school work as this often comes secondary to household chores. Parents were also cited as not actively involved in support of school projects and programmes. The only exception was the negligible few serving in the schools' administration. It is claimed that in their defense some parents complained that after the collection of funds for various educational projects was often not used for the development of the school. On the other hand, most teachers especially in rural areas continued to perceive most parents as not valuing education and thus lacking commitment.

Some teachers also felt strongly that they were not being properly consulted by policymakers on curricular issues despite the fact that its successful implementation rested on them. Teachers also observed insincerity on the part of some government officials who often make promises to aid quality education provision in schools but hardly delivered. Some respondents also cited Tanzania as having a propensity to take things more political in education rather than technical and professional, which may discourage open and positive participation within the education system. Most students recorded higher satisfaction levels on teacher-students' relationships, including being consulted on various issues that affect them. However, it was clear that trust among adult stakeholders was lacking and thus created a stumbling block in the advancement of various educational goals. It is important to reiterate that despite poor quality levels on education, Tanzania's investment on education was seen as heading in the right direction compared to its regional neighbours (UNESCO, 2011), even though there was still a long way to go in quality provision.

Quality Strategy

Based on the study's findings there seemed to be a need for a commitment strategy on quality education, possibly at every school. It is not enough for school authorities to be wholly dependent on the Ministry of Education's direction as general policies by the Ministry may not necessarily be responsive to local school needs. A quality strategy in a school will provide frameworks and procedures involving all processes and operations. The strategy will set out how quality development is managed, explain how customer perceptions are collected and how the quality of the service is evaluated so that needs are analysed and targets are set for quality improvement. West-Burnham (1992) observed that one of the great myths surrounding traditional views on quality is that it costs more. Despite glaring inadequacies in the funding of education across most schools, it is noted that not all solutions lie in increased funding. Oftentimes those in school leadership are starved of ideas and are desirous of 'critical friends'(Brighouse and Woods, 1999). A commitment to a quality strategy will mean the coming together of various stakeholders including local business, religious and political leaders, parents and students, thus providing an open and explicit commitment to quality offering rigor and a consistent approach to improving standards, processes and outcomes in an environment that is open and non-threatening and inclusive (Breen and Littlejohn, 2000; Clegg, 2000).

At the heart of any quality strategy must be the teachers' enduring commitment to quality as they envisage their learners' potential in life as national assets. Expectations on quality provision must be established, monitored and evaluated with a view to meeting improvement benchmarks. With schools set in different localities, it must be noted that what works in one situation may not necessarily work in another, hence the need by the schools' governing bodies to constantly review their institutions' quality strategy. The opening up of borders in East Africa signalled a competitive environment; not just on business markets, but also on education, placing greater demand on Tanzania's education system to position its human resource base to favourably compete and meet

regional and global challenges. It is said that a nation's wealth is its people. Seeking to provide quality education to its citizens is one of the major ways Tanzania may ensure its continued relevance and competitiveness in East Africa.

CONCLUSION

Based on a humanist approach to quality education, the study established understanding on some of the major challenges faced by the education systems in Tanzania. There is widespread lack of sufficient manpower and infrastructure, poor policy implementation and sometimes a lack of political will to engage stakeholders in a purposeful, trustworthy environment thereby threatening healthy links between education and other national socio-economic goals. As also noted by (UNESCO, 2011), levels of learning still remain low, and disparities seen as too wide between rich and poor, rural and urban and also on gender, thus impeding 'Education for All' goals. In view of Tanzania's improved access policy to education for the poorest between 1999 and 2008, the challenge still remains of raising quality standards in education while sustaining access for all. Such a combined strength may help Tanzania meet its citizens' needs on quality education provision as well as position the nation to favourably compete on a regional and international stage.

It was noted in the study that raising levels of quality in education may require less dependence on central government for direction, but a concerted effort by school administrators working with local leaders to create a quality conscious ethos within schools. For its part, the government may consider addressing the unfair distribution of qualified teachers and to provide adequate funding to schools so as to beef up infrastructure and learning materials. Without these critical ingredients, Tanzania's citizens will continue to experience low satisfaction levels on quality education; increased levels of poverty and the inability to favourably compete economically with other nations.

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