

# Pedagogical professionalism and its implication in educational accountability

Rose Ephraim Matete

*Department of Educational Foundations and Continuing Education, College of Education,  
The University of Dodoma, 1 Benjamin Mkapa Rd., 41218 Iyumbu, Dodoma, Tanzania*

**Abstract.** This study intended to explore pedagogical professionalism and its implications for educational accountability. This was a qualitative study employing an exploratory case study design, and it involved two (2) educational officials, 10 headteachers, six (6) school committee members, and 90 classroom teachers, with 108 participants in total. Data was collected through interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), open-ended questionnaires, and documentary review and was analysed through tables, frequencies, percentages, and semantic analysis. The findings indicate that teachers stood against being accountable to the school committees, as its members constituted people outside the teaching profession. The findings also indicate that teachers preferred to be supervised by headteachers, School Quality (SQ) assurers, and Ward Education Officers (WEOs) as they belong to the same profession. However, it was found that these professionals concentrated on checking the schemes of work, lesson plans, subject logbooks, and pupils' exercise books without helping the teacher in the classroom, which could have been the added value from professional expertise. It is argued that if teachers are to be accountable and improve pupils' learning, headteachers, SQ assurers, and WEOs have to help them in the classroom, and outsiders from the profession may be consulted if they are to facilitate the environment from which teachers as professionals can be accountable for pupils' learning.

**Keywords:** educational accountability, pedagogical professionalism, teaching profession, teaching and learning, pupils' learning

## 1. Introduction

Professionalism is a multidimensional concept that deals with professionalisation that relates to the commitment towards changes for improved quality of professional competence [1]. All over the world, professions have been recognised as occupations requiring specialised knowledge and skills acquired after training for a specific period [39]. A profession, as an occupation, also requires a high degree of skills drawn from a systematic body of knowledge and plays a crucial function in society [45]. The teaching profession all over the world has been regarded as a sacred activity, and teachers need to be committed to working for other people [47]. Professionalism is the state of qualities/features that characterise a profession or a professional person, whereas professionalisation is related to the process of making someone a professional [15, 40]. Pedagogy is the science and art of teaching pupils, or it can be referred to as the approach or practice of teaching [13]. Accountability denotes the information employees deem reasonable to share and document about their work practices, progress, and outcomes [22, p. 1]. Restless Development [43, p. 2] also defined accountability as “the process of holding actors responsible for their commitments and actions”. In short, accountability can mean a process where an individual gives an account to the authority on what has been done, why, and how, and with what kind of resources and outcomes. Teachers have two aspects of their

ORCID: 0000-0002-1452-3641 (R. E. Matete)

Email: [rose.matete@udom.ac.tz](mailto:rose.matete@udom.ac.tz) (R. E. Matete)

*Educational  
Dimension*



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claim to professional expertise. First, it is their knowledge of the subject matter, and second, their expertise in the process of teaching [24, 46, 50]. Lauglo [24] argued that it has been easier to base the claim of professional expertise on the content to be taught than on the expertise on how to teach. Thus, pedagogical professionalism requires that teachers demonstrate knowledge and skills as professionals in teaching to prepare the human capital of the nations [12]. In this case, proponents of pedagogical professionalism argue that although teachers need to be accountable for the pupils' learning, those who regulate the work of the teachers need to come from the same field. This is why pedagogical professionalism has the view that monitoring the work of the teacher has to remain with the people involved in the teaching profession i.e., colleagues and peers. Soliyev and Qodirova [46] state that teachers, as professionals, have to receive due respect as they always sacrifice their lives and work for society. Indeed, pedagogical professionalism requires that those who are involved in the profession receive respect as other professions.

However, we live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and in a competitive age where demand for quality education is increasingly at stake and requires the service providers or teachers to give an account to key customers [34]. According to Beaton [3], in today's life, professionalism faces extraordinary and new challenges that remind professionals to rethink their profession and continue to thrive and focus on the key attributes that distinguish them from other professions. Stevenson [47] also stated that the teaching profession is increasingly complex, and teachers work in a very challenging environment. Soliyev and Qodirova [46] suggested that teachers have to possess and demonstrate the knowledge and skills for them to be effective in their instructional delivery. Teachers have to define their purpose and practices within their professional expertise, ethics, and altruism that will make them worthy of trust in their societies [3, 47]. Hargreaves [15, p. 152] stated: "Being a professional . . . has to do with how teachers feel they are seen through other people's eyes—in terms of their status, standing, regard, and levels of professional reward". According to Demirkasimoğlu [8], pedagogical professionalism arises from a need to have certain standards that safeguard the profession in a competitive world.

Pedagogical professionalism has received special attention in today's life due to the role of a teacher in society [1, 7, 11, 12, 18, 24, 26, 41, 46]. However, previous studies have been undertaken in most developed countries such as Australia, England, Japan, Norway, The United States of America (USA), and Vietnam were concerned with students or adults in specific subjects such as Mathematics, and some focus on the teaching profession and development without linking with accountability frameworks. The studies conducted in Tanzania also focus on definitions, teaching profession, professional preparation, professional abuse, professional development, and professional status. See, for example, Creasy [7], Kasuga [17], Komba and Mwakabenga [21], Namamba and Rao [33], and Tweve [54]. The recent study by Matete [27] in Tanzania concentrated on the teaching profession and educational accountability. Pedagogical professionalism and its implications in educational accountability have not been well documented, and the literature in this area is scanty. This study was intended to explore pedagogical professionalism and its implications for educational accountability in Tanzania. The main research questions were: How can pedagogical professionalism foster the teachers' accountability for pupils' learning? How do headteachers and teachers feel to be supervised by the school committee members as an accountability framework? What are the views of school committee members regarding the supervision of teachers' work performance? How can teachers as professionals demonstrate professional ability, knowledge, and skills to deliver educational quality as an accountability framework requirement for effective pupil' learning? The study, however, did not involve the WEOs and School Inspectors (SQ assurers), who

could provide important information regarding teachers' professional accountability as demanded by teachers in this study.

## 2. Teaching professionalism and accountability relationships

Professionalisation does not necessarily always mean professionalism [15]. For a profession to be considered a profession, some universal indicators need to be accepted by the majority of people. Villegas-Reimers [56] and Kasuga [17] stated that the professionalism of teachers takes a long time and is a lifelong process where an individual receives the initial preparation at colleges and sometimes in on-the-job training programmes up to retirement time. According to Hargreaves [15], while professionalism denotes an improvement in the quality and standards of practice, professionalisation denotes an improvement of status, standing, and standards. Pedagogical professionalism in education implies that teachers have to be accorded considerable autonomy for their actions and have to be committed to educating the children [16, 24].

Indeed, for one to become an effective and excellent teacher, it takes an enduring process, working with a supervisor or an expert for professional guidance to maintain certain kinds of ethical values and attitudes [23, 46, 56]. A professional teacher needs to have civic responsibility, love for the pupils, and care about their learning needs [46]. According to Guerriero [12] and Soliyev and Qodirova [46], a teacher needs to be intelligent, genuine, spiritual, and cultural, desire to work together with others, have high cultural morality, dedicated to others, and devote most of the time to prepare the future generation. According to the Organisation for Economic and Cooperation Development [36], the ability to develop competencies is something in itself to be learned by using a sequenced process of reflection.

According to Lauglo [24], pedagogical professionalism requires that those people who are within the profession should regulate teachers' work performance. The claim for the pedagogic professional autonomy of teachers is legitimated by their credibility and specialised expertise in content and teaching [24, 32, 46]. The argument is based on the claim that "only the trained eye could judge the quality of teaching and . . . pupil progress" [19] as cited by Ranson [42, p. 203]. Rather, they favour collegiality, partnership, and trust within tiers of the service [15]. To Gaynor [10], teacher management functions by devolving responsibilities to people within the same profession are likely to enhance teachers' professionalism and accountability to colleagues. Pedagogical professionalism can also involve internal evaluation at the school level to discern areas of weaknesses and rectify them to improve the quality of education provided [15]. According to Gaynor [10], it is inappropriate to devolve the pedagogical supervision to the local community, although in Nigeria, local government education authorities funded by the state used the retired people to carry out the supervision of teachers and they were recruited at the local level. Yet, teachers viewed retired teachers as old-fashioned on what constitutes teaching and could not help them cope with a dynamic world.

However, Hargreaves [15] stated that teacher professionalism in this postmodern or post-industrial era faces many changes, and teachers are not only required to be more creative and professional to cope with them for their survival in the postmodern age. According to Ranson [42], professionals are challenged when public trust in professional judgment evaporates. Opponents of professionalism state: "The quality of public services could not be a private matter for specialists to determine alone. Ranson [42, p. 203] stated: "The goods internal to a task could not be determined by teachers and their advisors alone but should be opened to deliberation within the public sphere". Hargreaves [15] also believed that within the accountability framework,

teachers are expected to work harder than their predecessors did to survive in a competitive labour market economy.

In England and Wales during the 1870s, teachers' salary was paid based on the improved performance of pupils in reading, writing, and arithmetic, measured against the national standards, a well-known system as '*payments by results*' [35]. In England and Wales, also under the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) reforms, they carry out school inspections by stressing the teachers' and pupils' attendance, inclusion, and behaviour [31]. Recent reforms in England and Wales have introduced detailed report cards to provide a comprehensive view of school performance, moving away from single-word ratings [48]. Many countries use regular school inspections to evaluate and assess teacher effectiveness and adherence to educational standards [9]. Since 1992, England and Wales have been publishing the pupils' examination results on the Internet for parents and educational stakeholders to see the highly performing and falling schools to make their informed decisions about where to send their children [9, 57]. They also strengthen assessment and professional development for teachers [31].

In the member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assesses pupils of 15 years of age on their proficiency in reading, science, and Mathematics [38]. As stated by Brown and Lauder [4], all these processes are not only intended to assess individual pupils but also the general training systems and quality of national education. However, examination results cannot be a good indicator of the quality provision of education, and teachers' accountability for teaching alone cannot determine this goal. Some other factors are also crucial, such as well-trained and selected teachers, a reasonable teacher/pupil ratio, a clear and defined curriculum, a clear policy of education, availability of teaching and learning materials, trained school managers, a conducive school environment, an effective supervision programmes, and availability of libraries to ensure that the education system is working well are important for assessing teachers fairly and effectively [55]. Indeed, teachers' accountability needs a reciprocal relationship between the lower and higher levels of educational authorities, where the Ministry of Education, in the name of government, has to fulfil the responsibility of resource provision in schools, and teachers have to fulfil their obligation of educating the pupils [20]. According to Soliyev and Qodirova [46], however, if teachers do not involve themselves in teaching and raising pupils, there is a danger that after several generations, societies may cease their development, as the new generation may be insufficiently prepared to sustain the socioeconomic and cultural norms.

According to Ranson [42], public trust is given to the professionals due to their specialised knowledge and the accountability requirements can be attained through delegated authority to headteachers, teachers, and advisors of the schools. As observed by McGinn and Welsh [32], the common trend in the pedagogical-professionalism belief is that professional expertise position is the most common way to think about governance, and almost everywhere in the world, education is suggested to be an activity left in the hand of professionals, i.e., persons with special training, skills and knowledge. To McGinn and Welsh, professionals may consult those who are not experts to legitimate the continued governance of the system. According to Soliyev and Qodirova [46], in many societies, a professional teacher devotes most of the time to teaching and raising pupils while other adults and parents are busy with their professional problems and household chores. OECD [37] also stated that teachers spend most of their time working hours on important tasks other than teaching, such as involving themselves in lesson plans, preparation and assessment of tests and National Examinations.

As stated by Ball [2], when teachers become more uncertain about their actions and

face all these pressures in their profession, they need to reflect and ask themselves whether they remain good in what they do even if the performance indicators signify a different story and have to value who they can be in performativity environment era. Soliyev and Qodirova [46] argued that the teacher is the course of his professional activity. According to Hargreaves [15], there is a need to build strong professional communities in teaching that are well-supported and authentic with fundamental purposes intending to benefit teachers and students alike without overloading teachers to steer unpalatable policies to control them. According to Gaynor [10], if there are any measures to be undertaken to increase teachers' accountability, teachers need to be given enough income for them to concentrate on their teaching duties, for example, the provision of teacher in-service training and support services for them to perform. Teachers are also unlikely to succeed unless they are provided with enough resources to allow them to concentrate on their work and perform.

### **3. Teacher professionalism and accountability in the Tanzanian context**

Teaching professionalism in Tanzania has been an issue of discussion. The Government of Tanzania, through its Primary Education Development Program (PEDP), has stipulated that the school committee has to oversee the day-to-day functions of the schools to ensure that teachers are accountable for pupils' learning [52]. School committee members are also responsible for the sensitisation and involvement of parents, teachers, and community members in the school development plans. They also need to monitor the compulsory enrolment of pupils and attendance at school for all school-age children. They are further empowered to manage the school's human and financial resources and endorse the school budget. In addition, they need to ensure that they control the school bank account operations to inform the community members about the school functions and ensure that there is accountability and transparency of the school's financial resources. The United Republic of Tanzania [51] stated that the government has strengthened the community members to be given the power to ensure that teachers are accountable for the pupils they teach. The belief is that such collaboration enhances parental involvement in school management and development plans; parents and community members are more likely to take part and feel a sense of belongingness to their plans.

In Tanzania, sometimes head teachers at both primary and secondary school levels have been demoted, and the school committees have sometimes voiced out the removal of the head teacher from their schools because of poor performance of pupils in the National Examination results [25]. The implication is that teachers need to be accountable and answerable to the school committee members on issues related to teaching, pupils' learning, and general academic performance. In 2009, it was reported by the Human Rights Report that the police officers were ordered by the district commissioner to cane teachers in front of their pupils because of poor performance of pupils in the National Examinations [5, 6, 44]. This was highly debated by the Teachers' Union and social media, and the majority of teachers voiced out against it. To Hargreaves [14], all these tendencies and conflicting pressures remind the teachers and those who work with them to re-evaluate their professionalism and the kind of professional learning they wish to build up to get better in their field.

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1. Research approach and design**

This study opted for a qualitative approach employing an exploratory case study design for an in-depth understanding of the issues related to pedagogical professionalism and its implications for educational accountability. Qualitative studies

allow the exploration of individuals’ lived experiences and opinions. However, the qualitative approach does not allow generalisation of the findings, although they can be transferred to other places with similar characteristics or features.

**4.2. Area of the study**

The study was carried out in Dar es Salaam and Mbeya. The data was collected from 10 schools, five (5) schools in Dar es Salaam and five (5) in Mbeya. The selection of schools to be involved in the study was purposeful, with a belief that they could have information on the quest. Two (2) schools were selected from urban settings in Dar es Salaam, and three (3) schools were from peri-urban areas. In Mbeya, three (3) schools were selected from urban areas, and two (2) schools were from peri-urban areas. Dar es Salaam was selected because it is the largest city in Tanzania and is a business base in the country’s economy. At that time (before the transfer of the country’s capital city to Dodoma), all the ministries were located there. It was hoped that parents and community members could be in a better position to support the education provision of their children. Mbeya was selected because of its successful implementation of the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP), where Mbeya Region ranked second in classroom construction after Mtwara [28, 29]. Again, Mbeya was a leading district within the region in the National Examinations, and it ranked 4<sup>th</sup> position in the National Examinations [30]. It was hoped that community participation in the school development plans through the school committee members could have been the secret behind such success in the improvement of the education provided to pupils.

**4.3. Sample size and data collection**

A purposive sampling technique was employed in this study. The belief was that such people could have the required information, and it was based on saturation, as there was no pre-determined sample before the fieldwork. The study involved the DEOs as educational leaders who need to monitor and ensure that teachers perform. The school committee members are the ones given the responsibility of overseeing the day-to-day functions of schools for teacher accountability for teaching and pupils’ learning. Headteachers were also involved in the study, as they were responsible for monitoring and ensuring that teachers fulfil their teaching obligations. Classroom teachers were the main target of the study and are the key implementers of the curriculum who need to ensure that pupils learn. The study involved two (2) DEOs, six (6) school committee members, 10 headteachers, and 90 classroom teachers, with 108 participants in total (table 1). Data was collected through FGD, open-ended questionnaires, interviews, and documentary review.

**Table 1**  
Sample of participants by location and gender.

Location	Teachers		Headteachers		Committee members		DEOs		GT
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
DSM	7	38	2	3	3	–	1	–	54
Mbeya	9	36	3	2	3	–	–	1	54
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>108</b>

**4.3.1. Open-ended questionnaires**

This study employed open-ended questionnaires in data collection, especially for teachers, who were the main group of research participants. Teachers were free to

write anything related to their supervision by the school committee, headteachers, and WEOs. Questionnaires, however, are believed to aid the collection of huge data in a short time, although if mailed, they face low return rates. To achieve a high return rate, it was necessary to ensure that they were administered personally.

#### **4.3.2. Interviews**

Interviews also played a significant role in data collection, especially for the headteachers and the school committee members. Interviews are used to seek deep information and clarification of issues under investigation. Through the interview, it was possible to rephrase the questions, and participants were able to express themselves freely. However, interviews usually take a long time, and sometimes, there is a danger for a researcher to induce what she/he wants in the questions of the participants. In this study, there was no intention to influence the participants' thinking, and they were left free to air their views without any interference. Again, it was important to rephrase the questions to ensure that participants were direct to the point and did not go astray.

#### **4.3.3. Focus group discussion**

The data was collected through *Focus Group Discussion* (FGD), interviews, open questionnaires, and documentary analysis. FGD also helps collect huge amounts of information, as one response triggers other responses from participants, and individuals are free to give their opinions. However, FGDs are also criticised that if the moderator is not careful, it is more likely that only a few can dominate the discussion, and some may shy away from giving their views and opinions. To overcome this challenge, it was important to ensure that all members had equal opportunity to air out their feelings and views and ensure that there was no dominance for a single participant.

#### **4.3.4. Documentary review**

The use of documents was also useful for this study (table 2). Journal articles and policy statements gave information that could not be found through other data collection methods. Some documents, such as pupils' and teachers' attendance, were useful for this study. School committee minutes played an important role in data collection in this study to ascertain if school committees work together with teachers and have school meetings. Both soft and hard copies of journal articles and books were also important for the study's background. International articles gave experience from other countries at global and local levels on how teachers as professionals need to behave and be respected. However, some documents were sometimes old and written in a different context. Since they had relevant information for this study, it was important to ensure that they were scrutinised to consider those that were relevant to the Tanzanian context.

### **4.4. Data analysis and ethical issues**

The first phase was to familiarise myself with the data by reading and reading. The second stage was to transcribe them. Then, data were coded depending on their similarities. Themes were formulated based on repeated information from different participants. All materials talking about the same thing were labelled by colours, i.e., the most important quotations were labelled in green, the relevant ones were labelled in yellow, and irrelevant materials were labelled in red. Data were analysed using tables, using frequencies and percentages and semantic analysis (voices from participants). All ethical clearance procedures were followed by requesting research permission from the university and channelling it to the Regional and District Administrative officers, District directors, and DEOs. All participants took part by their consent and were free

**Table 2**

Documents surveyed with their respective information.

S/N	Document type	Information collected
i	International journal articles and books	Background information
ii	School committee meeting minutes	Information on their engagement in school development plans
iii	Empirical studies	Evidence of what is taking place in other countries on teacher professionalism
iv	Government documents	Information on the government's commitment towards teachers' supervision

to be involved or withdraw as the purpose of the study was explained to them. It was important to learn from participants without the inducement of ideas. Plagiarism of ideas was, to a great extent, avoided by paraphrasing the words and acknowledging the sources of information. Where possible, the direct quotation was given, indicating the page number and quotation marks.

## 5. Findings

This section presents the three key findings: the supervision of teachers by the school committee members, teachers' supervision by WEOs, and headteachers' supervision of the school and teachers.

### 5.1. Supervision of teachers by school committee members

The findings indicated that above a quota (38%) of teachers stood against being supervised by the school committee members, and only a few of them (12%) stated that it helps the school improve if it works within its limit of authority (table 3). Those who opposed their supervision under the school committee members argued that school committee members do not belong to the same profession and may not be in a position to understand what the teacher needs to do when it comes to classroom teaching and learning. Teachers thought it was unfair for teachers to be supervised by people who do not belong to the profession. To them, school committee members are not teachers to understand what constitutes teaching.

They also argued that the school committee members do not have enough education about pupils' learning and that they are not themselves teachers by profession. They further stated that the school committees are composed of people from occupations other than teaching and, therefore, could not monitor and identify the weaknesses of the teachers. These responses came from almost half of the teachers in schools 'G' (peri-urban) and 'H' (urban) Dar es Salaam, and from schools 'A' (peri-urban) and schools 'E', 'F' and 'I' (urban) in Mbeya. Few teachers considered the involvement of school committee members in monitoring their work as a degrading practice of their profession. To them, it could create unnecessary hostility between teachers and parents. In addition, some teachers thought that involving the school committee in the supervision of teachers' work indicated a lack of trust in the teachers. They recommended that the supervision of teachers' work performance be left to the school inspectorate, headteachers, and the WEOs as they belonged to the teaching profession. One of the teachers from school 'D' (Q 87) said:

The school committee should sensitise their fellow parents on how they can support schools, and my performance as a teacher should be left in the hands of school inspectors and my educational officials.

**Table 3**

Teachers’ views on school committee supervision of their work performance.

Teacher views	School										Frequency	%
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J		
School committee are not teachers by profession	5	1	4		5	8	5	6	3	1	38	38
It helps school improvement if it works within its limits of authority			1	1	3	2	1	4			12	12
It degrades for teachers		1		1	3			1			5	5
It helps solve school problems	1				1		1				3	3
School inspection is sufficient			1		1						2	2
The school committee needs to know my work performance		1	1			1			2		5	5
It helps improve academic performance	1						1			3	5	5
It does not follow up on academic matters			1							2	3	3
It allows me to learn											1	1
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>75</b>
No answer	3	7	2	4	-	3	2	-	1	3	25	25
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

*NB: The answers exceed the actual participants because of multiple responses.*

A headteacher from school ‘G’ also insisted that school committee members need to focus on issues that hinder pupils’ learning, and she stated during the interview:

The school committee members should simplify the work of the teacher, such as dealing with truancy, stubborn parents, and the provision of various requirements in a school. They should not be planning for the school and telling teachers what to do.

The same comments were given at school ‘E’ during the FGD. Teachers thought that because school committee members did not come from the teaching profession, they would not be able to identify the problems faced in teaching. One of the teachers commented:

My thinking is that teacher supervision by school committee members is not good as they keep tracking a teacher up to the place where you live. First, they are not teachers, and sometimes, they take revenge and express unnecessary hatred against teachers. Supervision of teachers should fall under the headteacher, WEO, and the school inspector. However, if they make a follow-up on school development plans, it is a good thing. Thus, we teachers would like to cooperate with parents in ensuring that pupils are learning at school.

Another teacher commented on the same, and she was against the school committee members’ supervision of teachers’ work performance; she added:

School committee members are not teachers by profession, so they cannot understand the work of the teacher in detail. In my view, they can just hate the teacher, and sometimes, if you have a problem, the main talk in the street can be pointing out that a certain teacher is incompetent. The headteacher, the WEOs, and SQ assurers can do the job better.

However, few teachers thought that since school committee members are the representatives of the community members and the parents whose children they teach, it was ok for them to check how pupils learn in the classrooms to ensure that teachers attend classes and teach the allocated subjects. These teachers also noted that the school committee acts as a link between teachers and parents. It can, therefore, help in improving academic performance if the parents cooperate with teachers in identifying the problems faced by pupils and educate their fellow parents about the importance of helping their children to learn at home; it is more likely to help the improvement of a pupil's performance. During the FGD at school 'E', one of the teachers said:

It is good to involve the school committee in supervising teachers, as they can identify problems that teachers face and pupils in school. This cooperation with teachers will help solve the identified problems.

Another teacher commented that if school committee members are involved in the school development plans, they can help in identifying the problems that schools face and help in seeking solutions and she said:

The school committee, as the representatives of parents, has the right to follow up on pupils' development. School committee members simplify the work of the teachers by participating in identifying problems and how to solve them, for example, by being involved in activities such as classroom or school toilet construction. These activities could otherwise shorten the time for teaching.

Another teacher stated during the FGDs that the school committee is the owner of the schools, and thus, they need to know what teachers are doing. She stated:

The school committee is the owner of the school. It would be good if it could know how I am performing as a teacher, and I would like to know what the school committee members think about my work performance.

The headteacher from the same school, 'E', commented on the importance of involving the school committee members in the school development plans, and she said during the interview:

Having a school committee is important as it helps me as a teacher to improve my work performance. The school committee consists partly of parents' representatives. If something needs to be done at school, parents are more likely to listen and accept such an idea if it comes from the school committee rather than teachers.

School committee members also seemed to have different views on the supervision of the teachers' work performance in their schools. School committee members also thought that they could go to the classroom and check what pupils learn, such as exercise books, assignments, and tests. A school committee member from school 'I' responded during the interview to the question on what has been the responsibility of the school committee to ensure that teachers do their job as required for pupils to receive education with the desired quality; he commented:

We have agreed that school committee members can, at a certain time, visit a classroom and try to talk to the pupils about what subjects they have learnt and if the teacher attends the classes. We always check the subjects that are taught every day, such as English, Kiswahili, and Mathematics. Today, I visited a few classrooms, and I observed that teachers are very committed to their work. I saw that all the subjects were properly taught, and pupils wrote in their exercise books.

He also added on what they need to do when they observe some dubious behaviours among teachers that in one way or another can affect the pupils' learning, and he said during the interview:

In cases where a teacher demonstrates dubious behaviours, it could be an absence from work, or the headteacher or fellow teachers report on this to us. We tell the headteacher to give a verbal warning twice. If that is unsuccessful, the head teacher has to write a warning letter to the teacher twice. If it does not work, the headteacher should let the school committee discuss the matter before informing the employer. However, that has never happened. Teachers do their work properly, and our pupils' performance has been rising year after year.

Another school committee chairperson from school 'B' confirmed during the interview that they had been visiting and checking the pupils' work in the classrooms, and he said:

We visit the school to check whether the pupils write and do some tests. We make sure that every weekend, pupils have some exercises and that there are tests to evaluate how they progress academically. School committee members, and especially the chairperson, have permission to visit the school at any time so that we can have evidence when we come together in a meeting.

Further, a school chairperson from school 'I' commented during the interview on how they support teachers who work for extra hours:

We have agreed with teachers to have remedial classes for pupils with low capabilities in classrooms from Standards I–VII, as some do not even know how to write their names. That is indeed extra time for teachers, and thus, they need some payments. We understand that teachers usually sacrifice their time for our children, and we cannot pay them as required. I think the amount we pay for their work is very little.

Another school committee chairperson from school 'D' gave his witness that teachers have been working hard and the pupils' performance rate in the National Examinations has been rising, and he explained during the interview:

Pupils' performance in the National Examinations has been rising by about 80 per cent, as we have no irresponsible teachers. However, if a teacher does not work, it is the responsibility of the school committee chairperson to communicate with the headteacher to ensure that there is discipline among teachers and that they set a good example for the community around the school.

Other school committee members, however, thought that since they were not teachers by profession, they did not need to interfere with the work of teachers in the classrooms. To this group, the school committee needs to ensure that teachers work in a conducive environment by identifying the problems that schools face and have a shared responsibility in seeking solutions. A school committee chairperson from school 'C' stated during the interview:

We, as school committee members, are not teachers by profession. We have the responsibility to ensure that our children perform well, but our role is to support the school to have a conducive environment for learning. Our duty is not to go to the classroom, but we can support our children at home by checking their exercise books and ensuring that they attend school. It is also our role to ensure that we cooperate with teachers to identify the causes of problems that pupils and teachers face, and then we need to discuss how we can solve them during the parental meetings.

A school committee chairperson from school 'E' also commented that they do not need to interfere with the work of the teacher in the classroom and had this to say during the interview:

We do not need to interfere with the work of teachers, as we are not teachers by profession. School committee members should not tell teachers what to do. We as parents need to help our children learn at home, and I think visiting a classroom is outside the school committee's authority. However, a chairperson may secretly discuss with the headteacher if there is any problem regarding teachers. Those problems that need the attention of the employer can be communicated later after a verbal warning from the teacher. We need to support the teachers in doing their work freely without any interference.

As can be seen from the findings, there is a mixed picture. Few teachers thought that the school committee members were required to be involved in supervising the work of the teacher as school committee members represent the community members and parents who are the school owners. However, the majority of teachers thought that they did not need to be supervised by the school committee members. To them, the supervision of teachers' performance fits better with the school inspectors, headteachers, and WEOs as they belong to the same professionals. Teachers viewed school committee members as having occupations that do not enable them to identify the weaknesses of teachers in the classroom setting. Teachers thought that the supervision of their work in the classroom by the school committee members might degrade the teaching profession's status, career, and standing. In their views, the school committee members need to mobilise the community members and parents on issues related to the school development plans, and their work in the classroom should not be touched, as they need the freedom to perform their duties as professionals. However, few teachers thought that it was ok if the school committee members supervised their work, as school committees comprise the parents whose children they teach and need feedback on what teachers are doing and how their children learn.

## **5.2. Teachers' supervision by WEO**

The majority of teachers (88) from both Dar es Salaam and Mbeya reported that the WEOs had visited their schools in the past 12 months, and only a few (10%) disagreed (table 4). Teachers in all of the ten visited schools stated that the WEOs made a follow-up on teachers' performance by checking the schemes of work, lesson plans,

logbooks, and teaching and learning materials. Teachers also stated that the WEO advised teachers to work hard and fulfil their duties and responsibilities.

**Table 4**

WEOs' supervision of the work of the teacher.

Question asked	Region	School	Agree	Disagree	Total
Did the WEO follow up on your work performance in the past 12 months?	M	A	10	0	11
	Dar es Salaam	B	7	2	9
	Dar es Salaam	C	8	2	10
	Dar es Salaam	D	3	3	6
	Mbeya	E	8	2	10
	Mbeya	F	10	0	10
	Dar es Salaam	G	10	0	10
	Dar es Salaam	H	10	0	10
	Mbeya	I	6	0	6
	Mbeya	J	7	0	7
	<b>Grand total</b>			<b>79 (88%)</b>	<b>9 (10%)</b>

*NB: The total number of participants fluctuates because some of them skipped the question.*

One of the teachers from school 'H' (Q 53) commented: "I feel good because even if I make mistakes, the WEO helps me in correcting the mistakes, and the advice helps me to do my work effectively and efficiently". Another teacher from school 'D' (Q 85) also commented that it was good to be supervised by WEOs because they belong to the same profession and that they can understand how teachers fulfil their responsibility of teaching:

Supervision by the WEO is important for me to improve my teaching. It would be good if the WEO could undertake classroom observations of individual teachers to know the extent to which they are committed to their work.

Through the document analysis, it was noted that the Government of Tanzania also puts an emphasis on and encourages the WEOs to carry out the supervision of teachers and to make a follow-up on teachers' work performance in their areas of jurisdiction as external school supervisors to maintain the quality of education provided to pupils. The The United Republic of Tanzania [53, p. 88] stated:

The main actors in school supervision are the Head of School (HoS) and the Ward Education Officer (WEO). The Head of School plays the role of the 'Internal school supervisor' to ensure quality education delivery at the school level. In contrast, the WEO plays the role of 'External school supervisor' supervising the work of the HoS.

As a locally-based educator, however, the WEO can be considered to be part of the 'internal' supervision to monitor the school's work, in contrast to visits by SQ assurers, who are external to the local education service and can also question the work of WEO if schools perform poorly. The majority of teachers, however, stated that the WEOs had not visited their schools for a long time. As one of the teachers indicated, this might have been because the WEO tended to meet with the headteacher only. Teachers thought that the WEOs needed a planned schedule to visit the schools if teaching was to be improved to help the teachers improve the classroom practices. One of the teachers from school 'C' (Q 75) commented:

The WEOs should not sit in their offices. They should visit the schools and meet with each teacher so that they can understand the problems that teachers face and the work performance of all teachers. They should not concentrate on the schemes of work, lesson plans, logbooks, and teaching and learning materials. We need them to help us teach in the classroom setting.

One of the headteachers from school 'C' stated on the same issue that the WEO needs to support the teachers in solving the challenges they face when teaching, and he commented during the interview:

WEOs should have a good understanding of the subject matter or content so that they can help us improve teaching. They should also have a timetable or schedule for visiting the schools. It could be within a month or even after every two months to help improve the quality of education.

The majority of teachers, mainly from schools 'C' and 'G' in peri-urban Dar es Salaam and schools 'E' and 'F' in urban Mbeya, stated that WEO's supervision could help in improving teaching and learning. Teachers recommended that WEOs should have enough time during their visits to schools for them to discern the weaknesses based on classroom observation that could have more value rather than a mere concentration on schemes of work, logbooks, lesson plans, and the availability of teaching and learning materials. Others stated that since the WEOs are close to the school, they could be consulted when new headteachers are appointed to help them with key roles, and few teachers thought that WEOS should not be nominated to avoid favouritism. Working with the school committee to prepare the WSDP and provide professional support to teachers appeared to have not been carried out by the WEOs. However, the WEOs were not interviewed to corroborate this issue.

### **5.3. Headteachers' supervision of the school and teachers**

It was revealed that the majority (91%) of teachers agreed that head teachers supervised their work performance and were happy to be supervised by the headteachers as they belong to the same profession and are close to the school, something that allows them to receive support when they face challenges in teaching. Only (6%) of teachers disagreed on that matter (table 5). Almost all of the teachers in the visited schools in Dar es Salaam and Mbeya agreed that the headteachers supervised their work performance. Teachers, generally from schools 'B' and 'G' (peri-urban) and 'H' (urban) in Dar es Salaam and schools 'E' and 'F' in urban Mbeya, indicated the same as it was the case for the WEOs, that the main responsibility of the headteachers appeared to be mainly on checking schemes of work, lesson plans and how teachers mark the pupils' exercises.

This was mostly reported by teachers at schools 'B', 'G', peri-urban in Dar es Salaam and 'J' and urban in Mbeya. One of the teachers from school 'C' (Q 58) stated:

Our headteacher checks the school attendance book of teachers and the lesson plans. It would be good if the headteacher could come to the classroom to see how I teach so that it can help improve if there are some weaknesses.

Similarly, teachers commented that the headteacher should undertake classroom observations and not just check the lesson plans and schemes of work since these documents cannot help discern what the teacher is doing in the classroom. One of the teachers from school 'D' (Q 85) stated: "The headteacher should not concentrate on lesson plans, log books and schemes of work, but should undertake the classroom

**Table 5**

Headteacher supervision of the school and teachers.

Question asked	Region	School	Agree	Disagree	Total
Does the head teacher follow up on your work performance?	M	A	11	0	11
	Dar es Salaam	B	8	0	8
	Dar es Salaam	C	9	0	9
	Dar es Salaam	D	4	2	6
	Mbeya	E	8	1	9
	Mbeya	F	12	0	12
	Dar es Salaam	G	10	0	10
	Dar es Salaam	H	9	1	10
	Mbeya	I	5	1	6
	Mbeya	J	6	0	6
<b>Grand total</b>			<b>82 (91%)</b>	<b>5 (6%)</b>	<b>87 (97%)</b>

*NB: The total number of participants fluctuates because some of them skipped the question.*

observations and this should be done for all teachers to ensure equality”. Another teacher from the same school (Q 87) added: “The headteacher should inspect teachers without favouritism or bias; we are all equal. She always inspects some teachers in the classroom, and some are not inspected”. Another teacher from the same school (Q 86) said:

The headteachers are not perfect and they are just teachers like others. Thus, they cannot inspect all the subjects in their totality as they cannot have knowledge in all subjects, and they have weaknesses as well. Headteachers also need to teach the pupils and not just come to school to sign, and off they go. I was working hard, but now I have come to understand that I have been enslaving and torturing myself unnecessarily.

As it can be seen from the findings, it seems that the majority of headteachers, as was the case of the WEOs, were checking the schemes of work and lesson plans, logbooks, and pupils’ exercise books. However, this focus on professional documents was not considered to be enough to ensure that teachers were doing their job. To teachers, classroom observation could have been a useful and important responsibility for the head teacher and the WEOs to help them improve classroom practices. For head teachers to help teachers in a specific subject area, however, they have to be competent in all subjects offered in primary schools, which might sometimes be difficult.

## 6. Discussion of findings

The findings indicated that teachers stood against the supervision of their work performance by school committee members and preferred to be supervised by headteachers, SQ assurers, and WEOs because they belonged to the same teaching profession. Teachers thought that school committee members needed to deal with all matters concerning the school development plans outside the classroom. They should leave them free to perform their professional duties. These findings comply with that of Soliyev and Godirova [46], Kvam [23], Lauglo [24], and Tatto [50], who state that since teachers have professional expertise in the content and methods of teaching pupils, those who regulate their work have to come from the same field of specialisation. As observed by McGinn and Welsh [32], pedagogical professionalism dwells on professional expertise, and all over the world, education needs to be an

activity that fits within professionals because of their specific training, knowledge, and skills on both content and methods of teaching. Thus, it is always suggested that those people involved in the supervision of the teachers have to belong to the same profession as was revealed in this study.

Opponents of professionalism also always stand against accountability to the outsiders of the profession. To them, public service is not a private property for professionals to detach themselves from public scrutiny. As observed by Stevenson [47], the teaching profession is increasingly becoming complex, and teachers are working in a challenging environment that necessitates them to rethink their professionalism. Ranson [42, p. 203] stated: “The quality of public services could not be a private matter for specialists to determine alone”. Thus, as suggested by Soliyev and Qodirova [46], and as indicated earlier, a professional teacher needs to have civic responsibility, love for pupils, and care about their learning. Villegas-Reimers [56] stated that a professional teacher needs specific knowledge and skills and, at the same time, needs to promote ethical values and attitudes. In an actual sense, it should be noted, however, that as argued by Soliyev and Qodirova [46], many factors determine the success in teaching to raise pupils, and thus a teacher should not be condemned alone, and if such factors are inevitably neglected, it may lead to failures. To Ranson [42, p. 203], “The goods internal to a task could not be determined alone by teachers and their advisors but should be opened to deliberation within the public sphere”. Thus, as recommended by UNESCO [55] and Komba [20], a supportive environment for teachers to be accountable for pupils’ learning is important. The government needs to increase its budget for schools for the procurement of teaching and learning materials, the availability of library facilities, and effective teacher supervision. The recruitment of well-trained teachers, control of the congestion in classrooms, provision of a clear and defined curriculum, the provision of a clear policy of education, and organising training for school leaders are equally necessary.

However, few teachers thought that since school committee members are the representatives of the parents whose children they teach, then it is important that they have feedback on what the teachers are doing to ensure that pupils receive the education with the desired quality. This argument supports what Neave [35] and Soliyev and Qodirova [46] have argued: that teachers need to be accountable to the community members, parents, and taxpayers whose children they teach. The findings also confirm the argument by Soliyev and Qodirova [46] that a professional teacher needs to fulfil the professional obligation by showing love, responsibility, and care about pupils’ learning and ensuring that their learning needs are met. Kvam [23] also stated that professional practice has to rely on the practical knowledge expressed through skills and actions that may be emulated by pupils who are the future teachers and human capital for the nation.

As further recommended by Guerriero [12] and Soliyev and Qodirova [46], a professional teacher is the very one responsible for the preparation of the future generation, and thus, needs to demonstrate professional knowledge and skills by being genuine, spiritual, and intelligent with high cultural morality and dedicated for others. As also suggested by Hargreaves [15] and OECD [36], a professional teacher needs to reflect on his/her strengths and weaknesses and try to desire to improve. Stevenson [47] suggested that teachers and all people involved in the profession need to define their course, purpose, and practices. Ranson [42] also suggested that when public trust evaporates, there is a need to delegate authority to advisors, as professionalism is not a private entity detached from the public sphere. To Villegas-Reimers [56], becoming an excellent teacher takes a long time, and it is an enduring process that leads to the development of practical and complex skills under the supervision of experts.

The findings indicated that professional supervisors, i.e., the headteachers and

WEOs, concentrated on the professional documents without helping teachers in the classroom setting, which implies that they need to be trained based on their subject areas to be competent enough. As suggested by Stigler and Hiebert [49, p. 67], “a focus on standards and accountability that ignores the processes of teaching and learning in classrooms will not provide the direction that teachers need in their quest to improve”.

## **7. Conclusion and implications**

The study was intended to explore pedagogical professionalism and its implications for educational accountability. Based on the key findings from this study, it can be concluded that teachers did not want to be accountable to the school committee members and they preferred to be supervised by headteachers, SQ assurers, and WEOs as they belong to the same profession. Teachers thought that school committee members needed to facilitate all matters concerning the school development plans outside the classroom and leave the teachers free to perform their professional duties. However, this group of professionals focused on checking the pupils’ exercise books, schemes of work, lesson plans, and subject logbooks without helping the teacher in the classroom setting, which teachers thought could be a benefit from the professional expertise. Few teachers, however, thought that it was ok for the school committee members to supervise their work as they are the representatives of the parents and community members whose children they teach, and thus, they have the right to know the type of education offered to their children.

For teachers as professionals to be effective and accountable in their teaching for pupils’ learning, headteachers, SQ assurers, and WEOs need to work closely and help them in the classroom. While teachers need to be accountable for pupils’ learning, their supervision has to fall under the professionals, and those who regulate their work need to belong to the same field of expertise, and outsiders have to be consulted to support the pupils’ learning. Teachers as professionals also have to demonstrate their professional expertise in both content and pedagogues, as they are the very ones who prepare the future generation. It should be noted that teachers are not only professionals but also are the essence of the transfer of knowledge with a mission of creating personalities and establishing civic and social responsibility to the society they serve. Thus, they need to instil in pupils knowledge and skills, love, positive attitudes, cultural ethics, and values acceptable in the society that can help them survive and compete in the competitive world of science and technology of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and labour market economy. Teachers should also understand that they live and work in a complex world where parents and community members will always need and desire that their children receive a quality education. Thus, accountability for pupils’ learning will remain one of the obligations of educators. It is equally important for the government to ensure that teachers are not subjected to people outside the profession as such practice degrades teaching professional status and standing. This goes hand in hand with improving the teaching and learning environment through which teachers can be accountable for pupils’ learning.

## **8. Limitation of the study and future research**

This study focused on only 10 schools, and it was a qualitative study. There is a need for further research focusing on examining teachers’ supervision under the school committee members in a wider range of schools. Another area for research could be the exploration of the extent to which the WEOs and school quality assurers facilitate teachers’ work and trends in learning, as teachers demand that they supervise them, although WEOs and quality assurers were not involved in the study. As

teachers commented that headteachers concentrated on professional documents when supervising them, there is a need for further research on headteachers' effectiveness in supervising teachers' work performance. In addition, there is also a need for further study on why teachers as professionals need to give an account to community members in the name of school committee members, people who are mainly outside the teaching field, to set accountability in a decentralised framework for improved quality of education provided to children.

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