



# Teacher's Perception on In-Service Training in Primary Schools in Dodoma City

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**Abstract:** This study aimed to examine teachers' perceptions of in-service training in primary schools in Dodoma City. It assesses how such training influences pedagogical practices, classroom management, and strategies for inclusive education. A qualitative case study design was employed, using in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document reviews with 22 purposively selected participants, including headteachers and both in-service and non-in-service trained teachers. Findings revealed that teachers generally perceived in-service training positively, highlighting gains in professional growth, teaching strategies, and classroom diversity management. However, challenges such as limited resources, irregular schedules, insufficient follow-up, and irrelevant content hinder effectiveness. The study concludes that structured, well-supported, and context-relevant training is essential for sustainable teacher development.

**Keywords:** In-service training, teachers' perception, Professional development, Dodoma City, Inclusive education, pedagogical practices

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## 1. Introduction

In-service teacher training is a fundamental element in improving educational outcomes worldwide, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where the quality of teaching significantly affects students' learning achievements (Darling-Hammond, Hylar, & Gardner, 2017). Globally, continuous professional development (CPD) enables teachers to acquire updated pedagogical skills, refine classroom strategies, and enhance the overall standard of education (World Bank, 2018). Effective training programs have been shown to strengthen teacher performance, boost motivation, and positively influence student learning, highlighting their importance in education reforms.

Within Africa, the demand for quality in-service teacher

training is particularly high due to challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, limited instructional resources, and heterogeneous student needs (UNESCO, 2015). Various countries have introduced approaches such as school-based training, mentoring, and professional workshops to address these difficulties. In Tanzania, the School-Based In-Service Teacher Training (SITT) program has been implemented to enhance teaching practices through mentorship and collaborative learning among teachers, yielding promising improvements in classroom performance (Global Partnership for Education, 2020).

Tanzania's education policies have consistently emphasized professional development as a strategy for improving education quality. The National Framework for Continuous Professional Development (CPD), launched in 2017, provides structured guidance to ensure teachers

continually enhance their knowledge and skills (Ministry of Education, 2017). Despite these initiatives, challenges remain, including limited access to training opportunities, insufficient resources, and mixed perceptions among teachers regarding the effectiveness of these programs (Komba & Nkumbi, 2008).

Examining teachers' perceptions is therefore essential to assess the effectiveness of in-service training and identify areas for improvement. Teachers' attitudes can influence their participation and the extent to which they apply newly acquired skills, ultimately affecting students' learning outcomes. This study aims to explore the perceptions of primary school teachers in Dodoma City regarding in-service training, providing insights into the program's strengths, challenges, and potential policy implications. The results are expected to guide policymakers and education stakeholders in designing more effective and targeted professional development interventions.

## 1.1 Objectives of the Study

The study aims to examine teachers' perceptions of in-service training in primary schools in Dodoma City, assess its impact on pedagogical practices, classroom management, and inclusive education, identify the challenges hindering its effective implementation, and propose strategies to enhance its relevance and effectiveness.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Empirical Literature Review

In the global context, numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the impact of in-service training on teachers' professional practice. A study conducted by Smith (2022) explored the impact of in-service training on teachers in Europe. Findings indicated that in-service training programs positively affect teachers' pedagogical skills, knowledge, and confidence. Moreover, teachers who engage in continuous professional development through in-service training demonstrate improved student learning outcomes. This review provides valuable insights into the European context and highlights the importance of ongoing training for teachers. In the African context, the impact of in-service training on teachers' professional practices has also been a subject of interest. Mwiria (2011), in a study conducted in Kenya, investigated the influence of in-service training on teachers' pedagogical skills and classroom practices, revealing that effective in-service training programs positively impact teachers' professional growth. This results in improved instructional approaches and student engagement.

Also, in another study conducted by Johnson (2021) on the effectiveness of in-service training in Africa highlights that in-service training programs positively contribute to teachers' pedagogical practice, content knowledge, and classroom management skills. The study also revealed that tailored and context-specific training programs were more effective in enhancing teachers' competencies. Another study by Mugarura et al. (2022), based on the role of in-service training in student performance in Kasoro District, Uganda, applied a mixed methods approach and found that in-service training enhances teacher effectiveness, improves achievement, and promotes the systematic use of appropriate teaching methods. The study recommended that training should emphasize subject content, teaching skills, strategies, and assessment practices. Furthermore, a study by Macha (2017), conducted in Lushoto District, Tanzania, explored teachers' perceptions of in-service training and examined education policies related to professional development. Findings revealed several constraints, including family responsibilities, heavy teaching workloads, a shortage of training centers, frequent changes in workstations, and limited government support. The study recommended increased government funding for both pre-service and in-service training to allow teachers greater participation in professional development opportunities.

Similarly, Mbeba et al. (2018) found that in-service training in Tanzania positively influenced teachers' instructional practices, such as lesson planning, classroom management, and student engagement. Davis and Johnson (2019), in a systematic review, emphasized that long-term training programs supported by monitoring and reflection tend to yield more significant and sustained changes in teaching practices. Likewise, Hassan and Kikwaki (2020), in a meta-analysis of Tanzanian studies, concluded that training improves teachers' professional growth but stressed that effectiveness depends on teacher motivation, sufficient training duration, and continuous support. UNESCO (2022) also examined participation in in-service training across African countries, including Tanzania. While in-service training is critical for improving teaching quality, UNESCO highlighted challenges such as inadequate resources, weak infrastructure, and geographical barriers that limit teacher participation. Similarly, Msamba et al. (2023), studying English language teachers in Manyara and Kilimanjaro regions, reported positive impacts on subject and pedagogical knowledge but stressed the need for ongoing follow-up and institutional support to ensure sustainability.

Despite these documented benefits, significant gaps remain in the implementation of in-service training, particularly in Tanzania. Studies repeatedly point to challenges such as irregular training schedules, insufficient funding, lack of relevant and context-specific content, and weak

mechanisms for follow-up and monitoring. These gaps raise concerns about whether teachers actually find in-service training meaningful and applicable to their classroom realities. In Dodoma City, where education reforms emphasize improving quality and inclusiveness, the central problem is the limited evidence on teachers' perceptions of these programs. Understanding how teachers themselves evaluate the accessibility, relevance, and effectiveness of in-service training is therefore essential for designing initiatives that genuinely strengthen classroom practices and improve learning outcomes. This study addresses that gap.

## **2.2 Theoretical Review**

### **2.2.1 Adult Learning Theory (Andragogy)**

This study is anchored in the Adult Learning Theory, or Andragogy, developed by Malcolm Knowles in the 1980s. This theory is essential for understanding how adult learners such as teachers engage with professional development activities like in-service training. Knowles (1980) outlined six key assumptions about adult learners: they are self-directed, bring prior experience into learning, are ready to learn when they perceive a need, prefer learning that is relevant and practical, are internally motivated, and require a clear reason for learning new material. In the context of in-service training for primary school teachers, these principles are highly applicable. When training aligns with these assumptions, it is more likely to be effective and impactful. For example, teachers benefit from training programs that acknowledge their experiences, promote active participation, allow collaboration with peers, and provide immediate opportunities to apply new knowledge. Merriam and Bierema (2014) emphasize that adult learning is most successful when it is experiential, problem-centered, and connected to real-life professional contexts.

Furthermore, Knowles et al. (2015) suggest that training for adults should focus on solving practical problems they encounter in their work, which makes the learning process meaningful and sustainable. Brookfield (2013) also reinforces the need for respectful engagement and the recognition of adult learners' autonomy. In the Tanzanian context, where in-service training may be sporadic or inadequately structured, Adult Learning Theory offers a valuable lens through which to assess how well these programs address the actual learning needs of teachers. By applying this framework, the study explores how in-service training impacts teaching practices, whether it considers teachers' prior knowledge and professional goals, and how it addresses existing barriers to effective training. Ultimately, this theory guides the analysis of how in-service training can be

better designed to support teachers' continuous professional growth and improved classroom performance.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Methodology Overview**

This study was conducted in Dodoma City, Tanzania's administrative capital, which plays a pivotal role in national education policy and implementation. Dodoma has a diverse mix of primary school's public, private, and community-based that vary in language of instruction (Kiswahili and English) and inclusivity (Gaetan et al., 2023). Despite government efforts to enhance teacher development, there is limited research on the impact of in-service training on primary school teachers' professional practice in this area. Dodoma's representative educational context makes it an ideal location to explore how in-service training affects teaching quality and classroom practices, filling an important research gap (URT, 2020). The study used a qualitative approach, ideal for capturing deep insights into teachers' lived experiences and perceptions of in-service training (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Employing a case study design, the research focused on two purposively selected primary schools, including 22 participants (two head teachers and 20 teachers, both trained and untrained). Purposive sampling ensured participants had relevant knowledge to provide rich data on the topic (Palinkas et al., 2015). Data collection involved semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary reviews of lesson plans and training policies to obtain a holistic understanding of the phenomenon (Otto & Onen, 2005).

Data were analysed using thematic analysis, allowing identification of key themes related to in-service training's influence on professional practice (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Triangulating findings from interviews, focus groups, and documents strengthened the validity of results (Fusch et al., 2018). This approach provided comprehensive insights into how in-service training supports or limits teachers' professional growth and informed recommendations to improve teacher development initiatives in Tanzania's primary education sector (Brookfield, 2015).

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Teacher's Perception on In-Service Training in Primary Schools**

#### **4.1.1 Positive Impact on Professional Development**

During the interviews with teachers, it was revealed that many perceive the training positively, particularly regarding its impact on their professional development. One teacher expressed their view on the training, stating that,

*The in-service training program is good because it has helped us build capacity in teaching and learning through professional improvements. (school A, FGD,15.07.2024)*

This response reflects the teacher's recognition of the training program's positive influence on their professional growth, suggesting that in-service training not only enhances their teaching skills but also fosters a collaborative environment. Supporting studies, such as Akbari et al. (2018) and Imants and Van der Wal (2018), have shown that effective professional development fosters collaboration among teachers and significantly improves their pedagogical skills and confidence in their teaching abilities. This highlights the broader theme of how in-service training contributes positively to teachers' professional development. Moreover, during interviews, Teacher D from School A stated,

*The training has transformed how I approach my teaching. I feel more confident and competent in the classroom. (school A, interview 15.07.2024)*

This comment further emphasizes the theme of positive professional development, as it highlights the personal growth experienced by teachers through the training. Furthermore, Headteacher B from School B emphasized the value of such training, saying,

*investing in our teachers' professional development is crucial. The positive changes in their teaching practices are evident in the students' performance. (school B, interview ,17.7.2024)*

This statement underscores the overarching theme that in-service training has a significant impact on teachers, which in turn benefits student outcomes. Additionally, during the interviews, Teacher E from School A remarked,

*Before the training, I struggled with classroom management. Now, I feel equipped with the tools to create a conducive learning environment. (School A, interview, 15.07.2024)*

This observation reinforces the theme of professional development through in-service training by directly addressing critical areas of teaching that impact student engagement and success. Research by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) and Hattie (2015) supports these findings, noting that well-designed professional development fosters collaboration among teachers and significantly improves their pedagogical skills and confidence in their teaching abilities.

#### **4.1.2 Acquisition of New Skills and Methodologies**

Moreover, during the interview sessions with teachers, it was revealed that many found the acquisition of new skills and methodologies to be a significant benefit of in-service training. A teacher from School A, referred to as Teacher C, emphasized this by stating,

*It has increased my experience and provided me with new and better methods for teaching large classes. (school A, interview, 17.07.2024)*

This quote illustrates the teacher's acknowledgment that the training has equipped them with innovative teaching strategies essential for effectively managing large classes, thus contributing to the overall theme of positive perceptions of in-service training in primary schools. Studies by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) and Hattie (2015) support this finding, noting that teachers who participated in well-designed in-service training were more likely to adopt innovative teaching practices that significantly enhance student achievement. Furthermore, during the interviews, Teacher H from School B shared their experience, stating,

*The techniques I learned have made a significant difference in my classroom management and engagement with students. (School A, interview 18.07.2024)*

This reflection emphasizes how practical strategies gained from the training can directly affect student interactions and the overall classroom atmosphere, reinforcing the theme of skill acquisition through in-service training. Headteacher D from School B added,

*I have seen teachers applying the new methodologies they learned, which has improved not only their teaching but also students' learning experiences." (School, Interview, 17.07.2024)*

This acknowledgment highlights the observable changes in teaching practices that result from effective in-service training, linking back to the theme of teachers' perceptions of the value of ongoing professional development.

Additionally, during the interviews, Teacher F from the School noted,

*The hands-on training allowed us to practice new methods, making it easier to implement them in our classrooms. (school A, interview, 15.07.2024)*

This point underscores the importance of practical training experiences in ensuring that teachers can effectively apply new skills, aligning with the main theme of the positive perception of in-service training. Research by Wayne and Youngs (2017) and Harris and Sass (2017) demonstrate a positive correlation between teacher training and student performance on standardized assessments, indicating the critical role of in-service training in enhancing educational quality.

### 4.1.3 Enhancing Inclusive Education Practices

During the interviews, it was revealed that many teachers recognize the importance of in-service training in enhancing their ability to teach inclusive classrooms. A teacher from School T shared insights regarding inclusive education, stating,

*Teaching children with special needs is challenging, but this training has enabled me to teach in ways that help these students learn." (School A, interview 15.07.2024)*

This highlights the teacher's recognition of the challenges posed by inclusive classrooms while illustrating the transformative impact of in-service training on enhancing their teaching practices, thereby linking back to the main theme of teachers' perceptions. Supporting research by Sharma and Deppeler (2017) and Vaughn et al. (2016) emphasizes that in-service training significantly improves teachers' abilities to effectively teach in inclusive classrooms, leading to better educational outcomes for all students. Additionally, during the interviews, Teacher J from School A commented,

*The training has opened my eyes to various strategies I can use to support children with different learning needs. I feel more prepared to create an inclusive environment. (School A, interview, 15. 05.2024)*

This sentiment reflects the comprehensive nature of the training, emphasizing the importance of equipping teachers with tools and techniques to cater to diverse learning needs. Headteacher B from School B also shared,

*We have seen a positive shift in how teachers approach inclusive education after undergoing training. It's evident that students are benefiting. (school B, interview, 17.05.2024)*

This statement reinforces the main theme that in-service training can lead to improved practices that directly enhance learning experiences for all students. Moreover, during the interviews, Teacher K from School A added,

*I now use differentiated instruction techniques, which have helped my students engage better. This approach wouldn't have been possible without the training. (school A, Interview, 16.07.2024)*

This insight illustrates the tangible changes in instructional strategies that result from targeted professional development, tying back to the overarching theme of enhancing teachers' perceptions through effective training. Research by Sharma and Deppeler (2017) and Vaughn et al. (2016) confirms that effective in-service training improves teachers' abilities to address the unique needs of students with special educational requirements.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study assessed the perceptions of primary school teachers regarding in-service training in Dodoma City. The findings revealed that teachers generally perceive in-service training positively, recognizing its significant contribution to their professional development, including enhanced pedagogical skills, improved classroom management, and increased confidence in lesson delivery. The study further highlighted how in-service training enables teachers to adopt modern instructional strategies, manage diverse learners more effectively, and implement inclusive education practices. However, despite the provision of in-service training by the government and other stakeholders, challenges such as inconsistent training schedules, limited follow-up support, and inadequate resources persist. These barriers hinder the full realization of the intended outcomes of professional development programs. Therefore, it is evident that while teachers appreciate the value of in-service training, there is a critical need to improve the structure, delivery, and

sustainability of such programs to align with the practical needs of teachers in real classroom settings.

## 5.2 Recommendations

### 1. Recommendations for Action and Practice

School leaders and administrators should promote a culture of continuous professional development within schools by organizing regular in-house training, workshops, and peer-learning sessions. Teachers should be encouraged to participate actively in these initiatives to enhance their skills and share best practices. Training content should focus on practical areas such as handling large class sizes, inclusive teaching strategies, and the application of learner-centered methods. Additionally, schools should establish mentoring systems where experienced teachers support less experienced colleagues in implementing new skills acquired during in-service training.

### 2. Recommendations for the Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education should strengthen the in-service training framework by ensuring consistent funding and logistical support to allow regular implementation of training programs. It should develop clear guidelines for planning, monitoring, and evaluating in-service training to assess its relevance and effectiveness. Collaboration with higher education institutions, such as teacher colleges and universities, should be enhanced to ensure training content is updated, responsive to curriculum reforms, and aligned with competency-based approaches. This alignment would ensure teachers are better equipped to meet the demands of modern classrooms.

### 3. Recommendations for Stakeholders

Educational stakeholders, including NGOs, donor agencies, and community-based organizations, should collaborate with the government and schools to support teacher professional development. These stakeholders can provide technical expertise, training materials, and follow-up systems to ensure that in-service training leads to practical changes in teaching. Community stakeholders should also be involved in identifying local training needs and providing support structures that promote accountability and continuous learning among teachers. Their involvement can help ensure that training is context-specific and meets the unique needs of each school environment.

### 4. Recommendations for Further Studies

Future research should explore the long-term effects of in-service training on students' academic performance to

determine whether improved teacher practices lead to measurable student gains. Comparative studies between urban and rural schools could help identify disparities in access to training and propose strategies for equitable provision. Additionally, qualitative research is needed to explore the role of school leadership and institutional support in sustaining the impact of in-service training. Such studies would provide deeper insights into how organizational culture and leadership influence the effectiveness of professional development in primary education.

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