

Perceptions on the Influence of Military Culture on Students' Academic Performance: A Study of Military Barracks Schools in Morogoro and Dar es Salaam Regions in Tanzania

Faustine Juma

Jordan University College (JUCO), Department of Education, P. O Box 1878
Email ID: [kasongifaustine\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:kasongifaustine[at]gmail.com)

Abstract: *The unique cultures of institutions seem to be the center determinants and the pivotal gravity to justify the means to an end. Many institutions currently have remained with obsolete culture. It was in reference to this realistic argument that the current study was set to find out the perceptions on the influence of military culture on students' academic performance in military barracks schools in Tanzania. The descriptive research design in a mixed method approach was used in the current study. Interview and questionnaire instruments were employed in collecting data. The study findings indicated that, good academic performance in barracks schools is centered on strict enforcement of rigorous rules, regulations to students and teachers, the cultural practices of hardworking, teamwork, commitment and time management, the culture of strict involvement of stakeholders and the employment of participative leadership in a military chain of command structure to explore talents and optimally utilize the creativity within a combined administrative structure. The study recommends to policy makers to recheck the effectiveness of rules, regulations and structures enforced in schools. The school administrators should rebuild the spirit of hard work and team work, strict involvement of the stakeholders and strict maintenance of staff discipline to enhance academic performance.*

Keywords: Military culture, rules and regulations, chain of command, participative leadership and academic performance.

1. Introduction

According to Barney (1986), cited by Nsubuga (2008), the creation of a positive school culture seems to be one of the approaches aimed at improving students' academic achievement when strictly put into practice. The quality of a military school administration is achieved if there are effective orders, rules, regulations and policies as disciplinary procedures for check and balance, for example, frequent staff meetings to discuss issues of the school, checking teachers' schemes of work and lessons plan (Kober, 2001).

Hooker (2011) insisted that, whenever there is the adherence to instructions in military schools' learning contexts as the driving factor, good academic performance to students can be ensured.

Soeters (2018) pointed out that in the administration of Military Barracks Basic schools, the practices such as truthfulness, hard work, collaboration, cohesiveness, and people orientation where the execution of tasks seem to be a result of team work rather than individual efforts, military culture is unconsciously inculcated into the civilian pupils.

Brenya, Arthur, Opoku, and Andam (2021) have addressed the issue of military administrative structure that civilian teachers in Ghana were not trained to fill the teaching vacancies in the Armed Forces schools nor had filled the administrative structures in such schools. They further contented that civilian teachers should be seen as worthy partners in the Administration of schools, their views would have been taken into consideration by various Education Officers in major administrative decisions.

The culture of hard working and discipline that the military seems to instill in their members is likely to have cascaded even to their sponsored schools and that they are performing better than ordinary and public schools in which the issue of creation of a positive culture supporting academic performance is less emphasized (Brown, 2005; Hofman et al.2002; Macneil et al.2009; Pritchard et al.2005; Worrel, 2014).

Thus, the current study stressed on finding out whether the military culture and its operationalization of rules, regulations, practices, disciplinary procedures and administrative structures with set strategies in military barracks schools enhance students' academic performance.

Statement of the Problem

Literature have revealed that military culture has effects on many variables that influence academic performance either positively or negatively. Many factors have impact on academic performance of students in Tanzania. Such could be availability of learning facilities, favourable learning environment, support from the government and adequate human resources.

The culture of hardworking and high discipline that the military seems to instill in barracks schools has ensured better performance than in ordinary and public schools in which the issue of creation of a positive culture supporting academic performance is less emphasized (Brown, 2005; Hofman et al.2002; Macneil et al.2009; Pritchard et al.2005; Worrel, 2014). As such, the current study was set to unearth if the military culture and the operationalization of its rules, regulations, disciplinary procedures, practices and structures

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enhance students' academic performance in barracks schools.

2. Literature Review

Apparently, the management of misbehavior and indiscipline cases in schools to children and teachers has attracted attention to many international organizations to see the need of protection of all forms of torture, humiliation and exploitation that children and teachers can encounter at school caring centers, or at home.

In Europe, Article 3 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms states that "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In Africa countries like Namibia, Sudan, Zimbabwe and South Africa regarding to the Africa Charter have established laws on how corporal punishment is to be administered in which the alternative ways/corrective measures should precede corporal punishments (Broatman et, al, 2008).

In countering the European Article 3, Muneja (2013) argued that there is a need to mold child's behavior while still young (bend the fish while flesh). The process of molding differs from one culture to another. It should also be known that the global culture must not be necessarily superior to local culture. Thus we should formulate our own functional rules, regulations and disciplinary measures or policies that suit and accommodate our culture in our schools in Tanzania

In the global literatures, the issue of rules and regulations on academic performance, the strict rules, regulations disciplinary procedures are addressed as the center of students' academic performance, however the operationalization of such rules, regulations, disciplinary procedures, military drained practices and the administrative structure in enhancing students' academic performance is less considered. Kober (2001) argued that in military school the quality of school administration can be achieved if there are effective rules, regulations and policies that govern the school system. In contrast he argued that where there is poor school administration with partial rules and regulations to be observed, teachers and pupils begin to relax in doing the academic work. Rules and regulations are the centers for discipline which is inseparable with successful academic performance. His study which was carried out in the US military schools, a context which is away from Tanzania military barracks secondary schools, however, did not expose clearly such rules and regulations and their operationalization in enhancing students' academic performance. Thus, the current study was set to fill in the gap for the literature by finding out how the rules, regulations, disciplinary procedures, military trapped practices and the administrative structures with set strategies are operated in military secondary schools to enhance students' academic performance.

The University of Norwich (2018), in its stipulated document on policies and regulations to cadets pointed out that the disciplinary system is set to maintain the good order to develop self - discipline of cadets, to promote high standards of ethical behavior and for that case the

disciplinary system is designed to be instructive and corrective in nature. The ordinary disciplinary actions that are non - judicial procedures intended to correct minor violation of the rules and regulations which a cadet leader can effect included on - the - spot corrections, verbal counseling, written counseling, disciplinary tours (marching and work) and awards for achievement, performance and service. The major disciplinary actions are suspension and dismissal which are referred to an administrative discipline hearing (Full hearing board of the commandant's summary session). Rules, regulations and disciplinary procedures are therefore twins requiring high care if good academic performance is in quest. This study covered the picture of training and learning in Norwich at a level of university in England, but did not unearth the specific rules and regulations over which the corrective measures are taken, hence a gap. Thus, the current study fills in the gap by unveiling if and how the rules, regulations and disciplinary procedures, military drained practices and administrative structures with strategies are operated in the Tanzania military barracks schools to enhance students' academic performance.

Soeters (2018) carried out a study in the United Kingdom's military basic schools on militaries organizational cultures in a globalizing world in which he pointed out that academic performance is ensured when the administration of military barracks basic schools have the military cultural values such as truthfulness hard work, collaboration, cohesiveness and people orientation where the execution of task is seen as teamwork rather than individual effort are unconsciously inculcated into the civilian pupils in their basic school. Sergon (2005) in his study on principal rules by the Principals in Finland insisted that academic performance is a result from hard working, excellence, honest, discipline, responsibility and commitment. The practices discussed seem to be of paramount toward academic performance if well internalized into learners' mindset toward studies. These studies, however, were carried out far away from the Tanzania military schools and just the practices of military culture were enlisted without elaborating their operationalization towards academic performance. Thus, the current study fills in the gap for the literature by finding out if the military practices and their operationalization in military schools to enhance academic performance.

Brenya, Arthur, Opoku and Andam (2021) in their study on assessing the effects of regimented administrative structures of Education on pupils' academic performance of basic schools in military barracks in Ghana, while used a quantitative approach by collecting data using questionnaire instrument, revealed that the Ghana Armed Forces regard civilian teachers as worthy partners in the administration. It has introduced an inclusive system where every staff officer including civilian personnel is given a role to play. Civilian teachers do not feel alienated and their welfare needs are being worked up attentively by the management considering their personnel development which naturally traps teachers' Commitment, however it has not stated how civilian personnel are involved in leadership. Thus, the current study fills in the gap for the literature by finding out whether civilians are incorporated in the administrative positions and how such administrative structures are formed in military

barracks schools in Tanzania and the strategies they set towards academic performance.

Chain of command which is dominant in army and churches seem to be a practice of military culture for success once carefully applied. Muteja (2013) while addressing on chain of command pointed out that a structure which follows a chain of command, follows the rule in which there is the structured flow of information from top to bottom and vice versa. Orders and instructions flow in an orderly way where monitoring and control are effective. This study which concentrated on chain of command without explaining whether it can be combined with other leadership styles like that of participative approach leaves a gap to be filled. Thus, the current study was set to find out whether and how military schools use only chain of command or combine it with other leadership styles and how the operationalization of such leadership structures enhance good academic performance.

Yusuph (2014) in his study on introduction to educational management and school administration in Tanzania, has addressed the issue of participative leadership where every member of the institution is given chance of contributing in planning, decision Making and in implementation. The top leader exploits his followers' creativity by optimally exploiting their talents. This study which was conducted in non - military institutions, however, concentrated just on the importance of participative leadership without unveiling other strategies for good academic performance. Thus, the current study fills in the gap by seeking out whether and how the barracks school in Tanzania employ even participative leadership and how it can lead to good academic performance to students.

Therefore, the current study was set to fill in the gap by finding out how the rules, regulations, military drained practices and administrative structures are operationalized to enhance students' academic performance in military barracks schools in Morogoro and Dar es Salaam regions.

3. Research Methodology

The current study used the descriptive research design in a mixed approach in which interview and questionnaire instruments were employed in collection of data. The sample of 97 respondents comprising of 20 senior staffs, 37 students and 40 teachers from the five military barracks secondary schools located in Morogoro and Dar es Salaam regions in Tanzania was involved and worth to work with. Quantitative data were analyzed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software while qualitative data were analyzed with content/thematic analysis code where direct quotes were used in a triangulation discussion as collected from the respondents.

4. Research Findings and Discussions

The collected qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The themes that emerged were as follows: Close supervision of studies (CSS), effective disciplinary policy (EDP), motivation and effective communication (MEC), military culture of hard work (MCHW), team work and time management (TWTM), adequate learning resources (ALR) and structured administrative positions (SAP). Table 4.1 presents the thematic analysis code of the qualitative data.

Table 4.1: Thematic Analysis on Findings from Qualitative Data

Verbatim Quote	Theme	Code
<i>There is a range of set disciplinary procedures inculcated to students in our military secondary school including rigorous parades, extra work and drills (fatigue), marching in smart area, salutes, parade turns and close supervision of the studies including supervision in shifts</i> DCM2	Close supervision of studies	CSS
<i>Our school employs a range of corrective/disciplinary actions which include verbal warning, written statements, guidance and counseling, rare suspensions to students and termination of contracts to civilian teachers if they miss the mark</i> DCM4	Effective disciplinary policy	EDP
<i>Our staff as in the army are motivated to work, every 'A' in National Examinations is awarded to a subject teacher or head of department, they show commitment and ensure there is effective communication</i> HM1	Motivation and effective communication	MEC
<i>There are unique elements of military culture that trigger off the academic performance in our school, such include total obedience, completion of duties, coverage of syllabus and creation of the competitive spirit</i> SHM5	Military culture of hard work	MCHW
<i>In our military secondary school has employed inclusive leadership, team work and time management as factors which have enhanced academic performance</i> HM3	Team work and Time Management	TWTM
<i>In our school, there is the availability of adequate learning resources such as books, chemicals and apparatus that are provided to students enhancing academic performance</i> SAM2	Adequate learning Resources	ALR
<i>The administrative structure in my school is made in a such a way that each officer including civilian teachers are given specific roles to perform with diligence and follows a chain of command. This has proved effective in enhancing academic performance</i> HM5	Structured Administrative positions	SAP

Source: Research Data 2023

Table 4.1 shows the respondents' views on rules, regulations, disciplinary procedures, the military cultural practices and the administrative structures of the military barracks secondary schools that seem to enhance students' academic performance. The qualitative responses from the interviewees were thematically analyzed and discussed as follows: -

4.1.1 Close Supervision of Studies

Close supervision of studies is the provision of strict guidance and feedback on matters of personal, professional and educational development in the context of a trainee's experience of providing safe and appropriate care (Herpern and Mckimm, 2009). During interview a respondent echoed:

.....there is a range of set disciplinary procedures inculcated to students in our military secondary school including rigorous parades, extra work and drills (fatigue), marching in smart area, salute, parade turns and close supervision of the studies including supervision in shifts and the strict use of teachers' assessment forms... (DCM2)

The views expressed by the respondent (DCM2) seem to suggest that close supervision of studies play a pivotal role for students' enhanced academic performance. This finding concurs with a study by Terziev, Bogdanova, Kanev and Gengieve (2019) which revealed that training must be organized and systematically conducted to ensure that there is an active interaction led by teachers who shall stimulate and direct training activities and the trainee behaviour to achieve certain goals. Thus, it shows that academic performance in military secondary schools is triggered by close supervision in studies.

4.1.2 Effective disciplinary policy

Knight and Ukpere (2014) defined effective disciplinary policy as an internal training policy which is designed to correct behaviour and to maintain a balance in the training context or in the employment relationship. During interview a respondent commented;

...our school employs a range of corrective/disciplinary actions which include verbal warning, written statements, guidance and counseling, rare suspensions to students and termination of contracts to civilian teachers if they miss the mark... (DCM4)

The comments provided by the respondent (DCM4) suggest that the effectively enforced disciplinary policy has ensured timely corrective measures which regulate students' and teachers' behavior toward enhanced academic performance. This is in agreement with a study by Hammarfelt (2018) which pointed out that academic performance is given impetus when high discipline is induced when distinct corrective measures from the chain of command like that existing in church or the military. This suggests that the military barracks secondary schools have set a constantly checked disciplinary policy which has enhanced academic performance.

4.1.3 Motivation and effective communication

Motivation means powering people to achieve high levels of performance and overcoming barriers in order to change. It is the driver of guidance, control and persistence in human behavior (Tohid and Jabbari, 2011). Effective communication is the that communication which comprises of qualities like clarity, brevity, completeness, empathy, concreteness, choice of words (Malik and Girdhar, 2018). During interview a respondent argued;

...our staff as in the army are motivated to work, every 'A' score in National Examination is awarded a sum of amount to a subject teacher and a particular department, teachers and students show commitment and ensure there is effective communication... (HM1)

The expressed view of the respondent (HM1) shows that motivation and effective communication play a significant

role in enhancing academic performance. This is in link with a study by Moran and Turner (2021) which observed that academic performance is enhanced when the military moves from stereotypical tactics of humiliation, aggression and coercion towards a military philosophy of motivating internal change and communication, commitment to work and reinforcing positive behavior by recognizing accomplishments rather than punishing failures. The issue of motivation, commitment and a good communication net seem to be employed in military schools to enhance academic performance.

4.1.4 Military culture of hard work

Jobbagy (2009) expressed the culture of hard work as the permanent existing nature of assuming and completing tasks assigned by the superior or which is at hand as per the position/appointment which is reflected from training, this is preceded by unquestionable obeying of orders and morale. During interview a respondent stated;

...there are unique elements of military culture that trigger off the academic performance in our military school, such include total obedience, completion of duties, coverage of syllabus and creation of the competitive spirit... (SHM5)

The expressed views of the respondent (SHM5) suggest that academic performance is centered on traits of hard working among students and teachers. The aforesaid quote above on military culture of hard work is in tandem with a study by the US Army (2010) after a war in Iraq in which it revealed that any successful performance is preceded by hard work, completion of assigned tasks, adherence to instructions and maintenance of focus. From that understanding, it seems military barracks secondary schools internalize a sense of hard work to students and teachers hence enhanced academic performance.

4.1.5 Team work and time management

Team work and time management embody the well - structured cooperation in accomplishment of a task at hand which results from training, proper utilization of time and comradeship at work (Paananen and Pulkka, 2019). During interview the researcher experienced one of the interviewee saying;

...our military secondary school has employed inclusive leadership, team work in syndicates and time management as factors which have enhanced academic performance... (HM3)

The opinions of the respondent (HM3) above seem to suggest that team work and time management have a significant impact on academic performance. This is in link with the study by Kondalkar (2007) on National cadet corps which revealed that successful performance in any training depends on the practices such as participative leadership, team work, comradeship, cooperation and time control. Thus, it seems that military barracks secondary schools employ such elements to trigger academic performance.

4.1.6 Adequate learning resources

Adequate learning resources refers to abundant availability or provision of teaching and learning materials like books,

charts, maps, chalks, workbooks, audio visual and electronic instructional materials such as radio, tape recorder, television and others in supportive environment to facilitate learning (Okongo, Ngao, Rop and Nyongesa, 2015). During interview a respondent commented;

.... in our military school there is the availability of adequate learning resources such as books, chemicals and apparatus that are provided to students enhancing academic performance... (SAM2)

The opinions given by the respondent (SAM2) seem to suggest that the plenty availability of learning resources have paramount impact on students' academic performance. This is in tandem with the study by Akessa and Dhufera (2015) which revealed that students can perform well if they are exposed to well organized laboratory equipment, computer laboratory, books, chemicals, apparatus and other infrastructure. Therefore, military schools seem to have excelled a mileage toward improving their learning environment and provision of adequate learning resources.

4.1.7 Structured administrative positions

Refers to the models of internal relations of an organization, power, relation and reporting, formal communication channels, responsibility and decision making (Ahmad, Mehrpour and Nikooravesh, 2016). During interview in responding on the issue of structured administrative positions in one of military schools, a respondent retorted;

...the administrative structure in my school is made in a such a way that each officer including civilian teachers are given specific roles to perform with diligence and follows a chain of command. This has proved effectiveness in enhancing academic performance... (HM5)

The views expressed by a respondent (HM5) stresses the whole staff involvement from the planning, decision making and implementation of academic activities has potential impact on academic performance. This concur with the study by Dziwanowski (2020) which pointed out that cadets' good performance is the result of a hierarchy in the army which assesses soldier's obedience. Thus, from the respondents' views, it seems that military barracks secondary schools, apart from the army's chain of command are employing a participative style which even involve civilian employees to perform some roles hence academic performance is enhanced.

Therefore, from the respondents' qualitative responses, it can be concluded that military schools have employed a number of factors to enhance academic performance such of those include close supervision in studies, effective disciplinary policy, motivation and effective communication, military culture of hard work, team work and time management, adequate learning materials and structured administrative positions.

5. Summary of the Findings

The findings revealed that the good academic performance in military schools is triggered by the set rigorous rules, regulations and disciplinary procedures.

As it is not enough, the military culture of hard work, team work, close supervision, high discipline and time management seem to give impetus to learners in military secondary schools.

The result also indicated that the students' good performance in military secondary schools is yielded from strict involvement of stakeholders, managed staff discipline with teaching curiosity and high accountability as well as the employment of the administrative structure exercising chain of command in combination with participative leadership which breed adherence to instructions, exploration of staff talents and optimal utilization of staff's creativity.

6. Conclusions

From the research findings it can be concluded that; Firstly, the adoption and application of strict rules, regulations and culture enhances good students' academic performance. Secondly, the spirit of hard work, team work, commitment and time management in the studies enhances good students' academic performance. Thirdly, the strict involvement of stakeholders in the school process yields positive results and so it is essential for positive outcomes in education. Fourthly, leadership style in schools that employ a technique of both strict observances of rules, regulations, disciplinary procedures and the exploration and optimal utilization of the talents and creativity of the staff enables good academic performance. Fifthly, the schools which have strongly employed motivations and competitive spirits resulting to sacrifice and high expectation to success among students and teachers enhance regular good academic performances. Lastly, it can also be concluded that the staff discipline and commitment to accomplish the set goals and objectives is of paramount to good academic performance in education.

7. Suggestions for Further Studies

From the study findings, the following topics are suggested for further research: -

- The efficacy of school rules to enhance discipline in schools.
- The role of initial corrective actions/disciplinary measures for enhanced students' academic performance.
- The changing dynamics of the school cultures and strategies in enhancing academic performance.

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served the army in Tanzania in the department of education in one of military barracks secondary schools. Currently he is a senior military officer serving in the Tanzania Peoples' Defence Forces (TPDF).

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Author Profile

Faustine Juma attained his bachelor degree of education in Linguistics and Literature in 2009 in the University of Dar es Salaam Main Campus - Tanzania. Since 2011 to 2023 he has