Professional identity and misconduct: Perspectives of Tanzanian teachers

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Abstract

Teacher misconduct and unprofessionalism, together with the corruption amongst educational administrators, threaten to undermine current initiatives to improve educational quality in many low-income countries, including most of sub-Saharan Africa. In this paper it is argued that strategies to raise ethical standards need to be based on an understanding of the positive professional models to which educators aspire. Research conducted in Tanzania elicited views of teachers and other educationalists on misconduct and primary school teachers' constructs of their professional identity. Similarities exist between Tanzanian teachers' understandings of their professionalism and those found amongst teachers in other parts of Africa. Prevalent forms of misconduct were found to transgress four orienting themes of the Tanzanian teacher identity landscape. On the basis of these findings, we suggest ways forward for tackling teacher misconduct and recommend the research approach taken for application in other contexts

Keywords:

Professional identity and misconduct; Tanzanian teachers