

Influence of support services on novice teachers' performance in public secondary schools in njombe district

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The study explored the influence of support services on novice teachers' performance in Njombe district's public secondary schools. The objectives of the study were to: identify the professional and occupational challenges newly-employed teachers face in Njombe district; establish the kind of support services provided to newly-employed teachers and examine the influence of support services provided to novice teachers on their performance in Njombe district's public secondary schools. The study employed a qualitative research approach specifically it used a multiple case study design. Participants included public secondary school heads, novice teachers, school board members, the District Secondary Education Officer (DSEO) and the Regional Education Officer (REO). Data were collected using interviews, documentary review and focus group discussions. Qualitative data were subjected to content analysis. The study found that inadequate accommodation in or near school compounds, heavy teaching load and overcrowded classes, inadequate teaching and learning resources, delayed salaries as well as unsatisfactory allowances, poor attitudes towards the teaching profession among novice teachers, and lack of seminars and workshops were challenges novice teachers encountered in public secondary schools. It was also established that support services provided to novice teachers involved assisting them in looking for houses to rent, subsistence allowances, seminars, food provision and counseling. These support services boost their teaching morale, facilitate coping with the new environment and allow novice teachers to settle in the community. Support services extended to novice teachers needed to be formalised so as to meet these novice teachers' professional and occupational needs. Therefore, the study recommends that support to novice teachers should be sustainable, starting with personal and emotional support, before expanding to include specific task-or problem-related support and provision of help to newcomer so that they can develop a capacity for critical self-reflection on the teaching practice. Further researches can include private schools and how other stakeholders can be co-opted into supporting novice teachers in their initial years of the teaching job