

An Investigation of Teachers' Perceptions of the Implementation of the Big Results Now Initiative in Tanzanian Education Sector

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Abstract

This study was conducted in order to investigate teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the Big Results Now (BRN) initiative in Tanzanian education sector. The specific objectives of the study were to examine teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector and recommend ways of improving the implementation of the initiative. The study involved 120 teachers from six government secondary schools in Njombe Region, one of the regions of Tanzania. The data were collected using a set of questionnaire and focus group discussions. The quantitative data were analyzed using computer software, Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 18, in which frequencies and percentages of responses on teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector were computed. In addition, the qualitative data were analysed using content analysis. The findings indicated that there was lack of understanding of the objectives of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector among the majority of teachers. Moreover, the teachers were not involved in the plans to implement the BRN initiative and conditions in schools were not supportive for the successful implementation of the initiative. On the ways of improving the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector, teachers recommended, among others, that they should be educated on the objectives of implementing the initiative as they are the cornerstone in making the initiative a success.

Keywords: teachers; perceptions; implementation; Big Results Now Initiative; Tanzania

1. Introduction

The history of the Big Results Now (BRN) initiative can be traced back to the year 2010 in Malaysia where the Malaysian government launched the Government Transformation Programme (URT 2013). This was an effort by Malaysian government to address seven key areas concerning the people of the country. It is worth noting that the key results areas were identified after conducting a wide national survey to ascertain the Malaysians demands and their most pressing issues. After the survey, it was revealed that the Malaysians were facing a number of problems such as increased crimes, corruption, unreliable clean and treated water supply, and low-living standards, just to mention but a few. In view of this, the national key results areas which were given priorities in implementing the government transformation programme included reducing crimes, fighting corruption, improving students' outcomes, and raising living standards of the low-income households. In addition, the programme sought to improve rural basic infrastructure and ensure access to clean or treated water, improve urban public transport, and address cost of living.

Since then, the BRN initiative spread to other countries in the world, including the African countries. In Africa, the first country to adopt the initiative was Nigeria. In this country, the BRN initiative was adopted for the purpose of raising living standards of the low-income, improving student outcomes, and fighting corruption. Then, the initiative spread to other African countries, including the East African countries such as Rwanda for the purpose of transforming the country from a low-income to a middle-income country by the year 2020.

In Tanzania, the BRN initiative was adopted by the government of the United Republic of Tanzania in 2013 with the aim of having new methods of working under specified timeframe for delivery of the step-change required (URT, 2013). The adoption of the initiative was meant to address six priority areas of the Tanzanian economy which include energy and natural gas, agriculture, water, education, transport, and mobilization of resources. The implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzania started in the 2013/2014 financial year (Nyirenda, 2013). As pointed out earlier, education sector, which was the focus of this study, is among the six priority sectors in the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzania. In this regard, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training developed 9 key initiatives to improve the quality of basic education and thereby increasing the pass rates in primary and secondary schools. The initiatives include official school ranking; school incentive scheme; school improvement toolkit; national reading, writing and arithmetic assessment; reading, writing and arithmetic teacher training; student-teacher enrichment programme; basic facilities construction; capital grants; and teacher motivation (Nyirenda, 2013). It was envisaged that if the 9 initiatives were implemented, the quality of education in Tanzania would improve.

However, it is indisputable that the successful implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector is dependent upon the active participation of many stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, and the government. These stakeholders are expected to play different roles in order to have the BRN initiative implemented successfully. The current study focused on teachers, as important stakeholders in the implementation of the BRN initiative in the education sector.

Literature indicates that teachers have significant roles in the implementation of any education initiatives or programmes. In other words, the ways in which teachers perceive the initiatives or programme being implemented determine whether or not the implementation would be successful. Like in any other education initiatives, the successful implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector would essentially depend upon the active participation of teachers, among many stakeholders.

A good number of studies have been conducted to investigate teachers' perceptions of different education initiatives or programs in Tanzania and elsewhere (Emanuel, 2012; Tarman, 2012; Mwalongo, 2011; Komba & Nkumbi, 2008; Susuwele-Banda, 2005). However, none of these studies had investigated teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. Meanwhile, there have been some mixed opinions regarding the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. For example, while some stakeholders, especially the politicians, had expressed optimism that the implementation of the initiative would result in the improvement of the quality of education (URT, 2013), other stakeholders, including teachers and parents had expressed reservations on the success of the initiative (Nyirenda, 2013). Thus, this study was specifically designed to investigate how teachers, as important stakeholders in the implementation of the BRN initiative in education sector, perceived the initiative.

Specifically, the study sought to achieve two objectives: first, to examine teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector and secondly, to recommend ways of improving the implementation of the BRN initiative in the Tanzanian education sector.

2. Literature Review

In the context of this study, perception is considered as an attitude or understanding based on what is observed or thought. It could also be conceived as a way of regarding, understanding or interpreting something. Therefore, teachers' perception, which was the focus of this study, is ultimately a product of their belief system.

It is generally accepted that a teacher plays a pivotal role in promoting the quality of education. For example, Galabawa (2001) points out that the academic performance of students in schools is very much dependent upon the teachers who are the main instrument for bringing improvement in learning. This implies that when there is an initiative and/or programme introduced in the education sector, the successful implementation of the same will essentially depend on the teachers' perceptions of the introduced initiative or programme. This is because, in most cases, the teacher is directly involved in the implementation of the introduced initiatives or programmes. Therefore, if the teacher perceives the initiative positively, the implementation of the same is likely to be smooth and successful (Mosha, 2006). On the other hand, it also means that if the teacher has a negative attitude towards the introduced initiative or programme, the implementation of the same is likely to face challenges.

Many studies have been conducted globally on teachers' perceptions of various education issues (Mbuti, Masinda&Makewa, 2012; Adeyemo, 2011; Ifanti, 2011; Jekayinfa, 2011; Schreiner, 2010; Ladd, 2009). For example, Ladd (2009) conducted a study on teachers' perceptions of theory working conditions in the United States of America. The main objective of this study was to examine the extent to which survey based perceptions of working conditions were predictive of policy relevant outcomes, independent of other school characteristics such as the demographic mix of the students. The findings of this study showed that the actual outcome measures helped to highlight both the strengths and weaknesses of using teacher survey data for understanding outcomes of policy interest. However, Ladd's study was different from the current study because it did not focus on teachers' perceptions of the government transformation programme in education sector.

Moreover, Ifanti (2011) conducted a study on teachers' perceptions of professionalism and professional development in Greece. The main objective of this study was to explore the notions of teachers' professionalism and professional development by investigating the views of in service teachers. The findings of this study revealed that the teachers were acquainted with the issues of professionalism and sought to enhance their professional development. Like Ladd's study, this study did focus on the teachers' perceptions of the transformation programme in the education sector, which was the focus of the current study.

Furthermore, Jekayinfa (2011) conducted a study on teachers' perceptions of social studies education in Nigerian secondary schools. The findings indicated that the perceptions of teachers' on social studies education were on varying degrees. For example, while most of the teachers perceived social studies as both citizenship education and social science, few perceived it as reflective inquiry. Nevertheless, this study was different from the current study because it did not focus on teachers' perceptions of the transformation programme in the education sector.

In addition, Mbuti, Masinda and Makewa (2012) conducted a study on teachers' perceptions of selected leadership qualities of their head teachers in Tanzania. The main objective of this study was to determine how teachers evaluated selected leadership characteristics of the head teachers of private schools. The findings of this study revealed that their head teachers practiced instructional leadership, appropriate communication systems and decision making procedures, democratic leadership, autocratic leadership and some degree of laissez-faire leadership. However, this study was different from the current study because it did not focus on teachers' perceptions of the implementation of transformation programme in education sector, like The BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector.

Also, Adeyemo (2011) conducted a study on the effect of teachers' perceptions and students' perceptions of Physics classroom learning environment on their academic achievement in Nigeria. The main objective of this study was to investigate the effect of teachers' perceptions and students' perceptions of physics classroom learning environment and how it affected their achievement in physics. The findings indicated that teachers' perception and students' perception had an effect on the students' academic achievement. However, this study did not investigate on teachers' perceptions of transformation programme in education sector, which

was the focus of the current study.

It could be deduced that most of these studies had focused on teachers' perceptions of other education issues such as mathematics classroom assessment; teachers' perceptions of ICT for teaching; teachers' perceptions towards school inspections, working conditions, professionalism and professional development; and teachers' perceptions of social studies education. In realizing the significance of teachers' roles in the implementation of any education initiatives or programmes (Thompson, 2013; Mosha, 2006; Galabawa, 2001), an investigation of teachers' perceptions of the implementation of The BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector was pertinent. This is because there were limited studies which had been conducted to investigate teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector since its introduction in 2013. Thus, it was envisaged that this study would enlighten stakeholders on issues surrounding the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector.

3. Methodology

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The adoption of these approaches was based on two reasons: First, the first objective of this study sought to collect data which were in numerical form from the participants. Secondly, the study sought to collect word data from participants as implied in the second study objective. In the same light, a case study research design was adopted. The design, among other advantages, allows the researchers to collect data leading to an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Gall, *et al.*, 1996). The phenomenon in this case was teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. In addition, the design is useful when mixed approaches are used in conducting the study. The study was conducted in Njombe Region, one of the regions of Tanzania, involving 120 teachers from six government secondary schools. Njombe region was chosen to represent other regions in the country with teachers whose characteristics were more or less the same. On the other hand, the choice of government schools was done because the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector was specifically aiming at improving the state of affairs in Tanzanian government secondary schools. A set of questionnaire and focus group discussion were used to collect data on teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. The quantitative data were analyzed using computer software, Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 18, in which frequencies and percentages of responses on teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector were computed. The qualitative information collected through focus group discussion were analysed thematically and some direct quotations from the respondents have been reported in this article.

4. Findings of the Study

4.1 Teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the BRN Initiative in Tanzanian Education

Sector

The first objective of this study was to examine teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. In collecting data to achieve this objective, a total of 120 respondents were each given ten statements by which they were asked to tick one of the five levels of opinion against each statement to indicate the extent to which they either agreed or disagreed with the statements. The responses can be grouped into five thematic areas as follows:

4.1.1 Teachers' Understanding of the Objectives of the BRN Initiative in Tanzanian Education Sector

It was presumed in this study that teachers were the cornerstone as far as the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector is concerned. In view of this, the first statement sought to obtain responses on whether or not the respondents had the understanding of the objectives of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. The findings on this aspect were as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Responses on Teachers' Understanding of the Objectives of the BRN Initiative

LO	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2	11	9.2	9.2	9.2
3	8	6.7	6.7	15.8
4	30	25.0	25.0	40.8
5	71	59.2	59.2	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

LO= Level of Opinion; 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree.

Table 1 shows that 84.2% of the respondents disagreed that they had an understanding of the objectives of the BRN initiative. On the other hand, 9.2% of the respondents agreed that they understood the objectives of the BRN initiative while 15.2% were undecided. These findings imply that the majority of the respondents who were involved in this study did not have the understanding of the objectives of implementing the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector.

Moreover, the researchers were also interested to find out whether or not the respondents felt that the government of the United Republic of Tanzania was making enough efforts to sensitize them on the objectives of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. The responses were as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Responses on the Government's Efforts to Sensitize Teachers on the Objectives of the BRN Initiative in Tanzanian Education Sector

LO	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2	4	3.3	3.3	3.3
3	3	2.5	2.5	5.8
4	36	30.0	30.0	35.8
5	77	64.2	64.2	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

LO= Level of Opinion; 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree.

As it can be seen in Table 2, 94.2% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the government was making enough efforts to sensitize teachers on the objectives of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. However, the minority (3.3%) of the respondents agreed that there were enough efforts made by the government to sensitize teachers on the objectives of the initiative while 2.3% of the respondents were undecided. Therefore, the majority of the respondents felt that the government was not making enough efforts to see to it that teachers were sensitized on the objectives of implementing the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector.

Based on these findings, it could be concluded that the majority of teachers did not have the understanding of the objectives of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector.

4.1.2 Teachers' Involvement in the Plans to Implement the BRN Initiative in Tanzanian Education Sector

It is generally accepted that when stakeholders are involved in plans to implement any project, the subsequent implementation of the same becomes smooth. In view of this, the researchers were interested to find out whether or not teachers were involved in the plans to implement the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. This was considered to be an important aspect, considering that teachers were the cornerstone in the implementation of the initiative. The responses on this aspect were as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Responses on Teachers' Involvement in the Plans to Implement the BRN Initiative

LO	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2	2	1.7	1.7	1.7
3	3	2.5	2.5	4.2
4	32	26.7	26.7	30.8
5	83	69.2	69.2	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

LO= Level of Opinion; 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree.

As shown in Table 3, the teachers' responses on whether or not they were involved in the plans

to implement the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector indicated that 95.9% of the respondents were not involved in the plans to implement the initiative. In addition, 1.7% of the respondents indicated that they were involved in the plans while 2.5% of the respondents were undecided. These findings imply that the majority of the teachers who are involved in the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector were not involved when the plans to implement the BRN initiative were being prepared.

This observation was also confirmed by another statement which sought to elicit responses on whether or not the teachers were only informed about the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. The responses on this statement were as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Responses on whether or not Teachers' were Only Informed about the Implementation of the BRN Initiative in Tanzanian Education Sector.

LO	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	62	51.7	51.7	51.7
2	36	30.0	30.0	81.7
3	5	4.2	4.2	85.8
4	4	3.3	3.3	89.2
5	13	10.8	10.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

LO= Level of Opinion; 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree.

Table 4 shows that 81.7% of the respondents agreed with the statement that they were only informed about the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. Furthermore, 14.1% of the respondents disagreed with the statement and only 4.2% of the respondents were undecided. This, further, confirms the earlier observation that the majority of the teachers were not involved in the preparations of plans to implement the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector.

4.1.3 Presence of Supportive Conditions for the Implementation of the BRN Initiative in Schools

In this study, it was presumed that the implementation of the BRN initiative would be dependent upon the presence of supportive conditions in schools. For example, considering that the key objective of this initiative is to improve the quality of basic education and thereby increasing pass rates in primary and secondary schools, the researchers were interested to find out the extent to which the conditions in schools were supportive for the achievement of this objective. The conditions include infrastructural, transactional, and fiscal inputs. The findings on this aspect were as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Teachers' Responses on whether or not the Conditions in Schools were Supportive for the Implementation of the BRN Initiative

LO	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2	2	1.7	1.7	1.7
3	2	1.7	1.7	3.3
4	21	17.5	17.5	20.8
5	95	79.2	79.2	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

LO= Level of Opinion; 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree.

Table 5 shows that 96.7% of the respondents felt that the conditions in schools were not supportive for the implementation of the BRN initiative. The respondents who felt that the conditions were supportive and those who were undecided constituted 3.3% altogether. These findings imply that the majority of the respondents in this study believed that the existing conditions in secondary schools would not lead to the successful implementation of the BRN initiative.

In addition, the researchers were also interested to find out whether or not there were efforts to improve teaching and learning conditions in schools since the adoption of the BRN initiative in 2013 in Tanzanian education sector. The responses on this aspect were as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Teachers' Responses on Efforts to Improve Teaching and Learning Conditions in Schools since the Adoption of the BRN Initiative

LO	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2	3	2.5	2.5	2.5
3	3	2.5	2.5	5.0
4	22	18.3	18.3	23.3
5	92	76.7	76.7	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

LO= Level of Opinion; 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree.

As indicated in Table 6, 95% of the respondents felt that there were no efforts to improve teaching and learning conditions in schools since the adoption of the BRN initiative in 2013 in Tanzanian education sector. On the other hand, those who felt that there were some improvements in teaching and learning conditions constituted 2.5% and the respondents who were undecided were 2.5% as well.

In view of these findings, it could be stated that the majority of the respondents in the study area had the perception that the conditions in secondary schools were not supportive for the successful implementation of BRN initiative.

4.1.4 Integration of the Objectives of the BRN Initiative into School Action Plans

In this study, it was considered that the successful implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector would depend on the kind of activities implemented at school level. Since schools have annual action plans, enlisting all activities envisaged to be carried out in a particular year, the researchers were interested to find out the extent to which schools integrated the objectives of the BRN initiative into school action plans. The responses on this aspect were as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Teachers' Responses on whether or not Schools Integrated the Objectives of the BRN Initiative into School Action Plans

LO	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	4	3.3	3.3	3.3
2	16	13.3	13.3	16.7
3	22	18.3	18.3	35.0
4	24	20.0	20.0	55.0
5	54	45.0	45.0	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

LO= Level of Opinion; 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree.

Table 7 shows that 65% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that schools integrated the objectives of the BRN initiative into school action plans. On the other hand, 16.6% of the respondents agreed with the statement while 18.3% of the respondents were undecided. Therefore, it seemed that the majority of the respondents felt that the school administrations did not integrate the objectives of the BRN initiative into school action plans.

In the same vein, the respondents were also asked to indicate whether or not the school action plans were in line with the objectives of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. The responses on this aspect were as presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Teachers' Responses on Whether or not School Action Plans were in Line with the Objectives of the BRN Initiative

LO	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	13	10.8	10.8	10.8
2	15	12.5	12.5	23.3
3	31	25.8	25.8	49.2
4	24	20.0	20.0	69.2
5	37	30.8	30.8	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

LO= Level of Opinion; 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree.

As shown in Table 8, 50.8% of the respondents felt that school action plans were not in line with the objectives of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. In addition, 23.3% of the respondents agreed with the statement that the school action plans were in line with the objectives of BRN while 25.8% of the respondents were undecided as far as this statement is concerned.

Therefore, on the basis of the findings on this aspect, it could be concluded that the majority of the respondents were of the view that the schools were not integrating the objectives of the BRN initiative into school action plans.

4.1.5 Teachers' Perceptions of the Achievement of the Objectives of the BRN Initiative

Since teachers are expected to play a pivotal role in the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector, the researchers were interested to find out the extent to which the teachers were optimistic regarding the achievement of the objectives of the BRN initiative. In view of this, the respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they were positive that the objectives of implementing the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector would be achieved, given the prevailing conditions. The responses were as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Responses on Teachers' Perceptions of the Achievement of the Objectives of the BRN Initiative

LO	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2	4	3.3	3.3	3.3
3	3	2.5	2.5	5.8
4	19	15.8	15.8	21.7
5	94	78.3	78.3	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

LO= Level of Opinion; 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree.

Table 9 shows that 94.1% of the respondents were of the feeling that the objectives of implementing the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector would not be achieved. On the other hand, the findings indicated that 3.3% of the respondents felt that the objectives would be achieved while 2.5% of the respondents were undecided on this aspect. It means that, the majority of the respondents had the feeling that the objectives of implementing the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector would not be achieved. This feeling could be attributed to the earlier observation that the conditions in schools were not supportive for the successful implementation of the BRN initiative.

Considering that the overall objective of the BRN initiative is to improve the quality of education, the researchers were also interested to find out whether or not the respondents felt that the implementation of the BRN initiative would result in the improvement of the quality of education in Tanzania. The responses on this aspect were as shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Teachers' Responses on whether or not the Implementation of the BRN Initiative would Result in the Improvement of the Quality of Education

LO	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2	5	4.2	4.2	4.2
3	1	.8	.8	5.0
4	21	17.5	17.5	22.5
5	93	77.5	77.5	100.0
Total	120	100.0	100.0	

LO= Level of Opinion; 1 = Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree.

As indicated in Table 10, 95% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the implementation of the BRN initiative would result in the improvement of the quality of education. On the other hand, 4.2% of the respondents agreed with the statement while only one respondent was undecided. These findings imply that the majority of the respondents felt that the implementation The BRN initiative would not result in in the improvement of the quality of education.

Therefore, in overall, it seemed that the teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector were negative. This is evident from the findings of this study which have revealed the following: First, there was lack of understanding on the objectives of BRN in education sector among the teachers. Secondly, it seemed that the teachers were not involved in the plans to implement the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. Lastly, the conditions in the schools were not supportive for the successful implementation of BRN initiative. These are to mention, but a few.

4.7 Ways of Improving the Implementation of the BRN Initiative in Tanzanian Education Sector

The second objective of this study was to recommend ways of improving the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. To achieve this objective, a total of six focus group discussion sessions were conducted, involving 63 teachers. It is worth noting that the teachers involved in the focus group discussions were among those who filled in the questionnaire which sought to collect information needed to address the first objective of this study. The main question during the focus group discussions sought to elicit responses on what should be done in order to have the BRN initiative implemented successfully in Tanzanian education sector. The findings from the focus group discussions revealed the following: First, the respondents were of the view that the government should conduct seminars on the BRN initiative for the purpose of having the teachers informed about the same. On this aspect, one of the respondents had this to say:

I think it is important for the government to conduct seminars for teachers because these are very important persons in the BRN initiative implementation process. If these people (teachers) are not knowledgeable, I don't think that the anticipated outcomes of the initiative will be realized.

Secondly, participants in the focus group discussions talked about the importance of the government to motivate teachers if the government was really determined to achieve the objectives of the BRN initiative. In this regard, the respondents explained that teachers were demotivated as they had a lot of unsettled dues by the government. For example, one of the respondents stated this:

I am one of the teachers of this school. The government owes me a lot of money. I have not been paid my annual leave allowance, my salary increment.... leave alone paying my new salary after being promoted in the past three years. So, what I can tell you is that I am not motivated at all in implementing the so-called BRN initiative.

There were also many other similar observations from other respondents which implied that teachers were not motivated to work. Given such responses, it was most likely that the achievement of the objectives of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector would not be realized.

In addition, some participants pointed out that it was important for the government to train and recruit more science teachers for secondary schools in the country. The respondents highlighted this after the researchers had shared some information with them on one of the objectives of implementing the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector, which is to increase pass rates in examinations. The respondents noted that it was unrealistic to expect students' better performance in their examinations while the number of teachers in schools, especially science teachers, was small.

Furthermore, some respondents felt that the government's efforts to make the conditions in schools supportive for the smooth process of teaching and learning were inadequate. On this aspect, the respondents noted that many schools lacked adequate text books, reference books, and teaching aids. It was also revealed during the discussions that the schools had no laboratories for science subjects and thus, the teaching of the subjects was more theoretical.

5. Discussion of the Findings

The findings of this study have revealed that the majority of respondents were pessimistic regarding the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. As pointed out earlier, it seemed that the respondents' pessimism was based on the following: First, there was lack of understanding on the objectives of BRN in education sector among the teachers. Secondly, it seemed that when the plans to implement this initiative in education sector were being prepared, the majority of teachers were not involved. Instead, the teachers were only informed about the BRN initiative. Moreover, the conditions in schools were not supportive for the successful implementation of the BRN initiative.

It is generally accepted that teachers have significant roles in the implementation of any education initiatives or programmes. Therefore, their understanding of the objectives underlying the educational initiative or programme to be implemented is important if the initiative has to be successfully implemented. For example, Thompson (2013) points out that in

curriculum implementation, teachers are expected to combine a variety of teaching methods, motivate students, and facilitate processes of acquisition of knowledge and skills among students. In the same light, Galabawa (2001) points out that the academic performance of students in schools is very much dependent upon the teachers who are the main instrument for bringing improvement in learning. Since, one of the objectives of the BRN initiative was to increase pass rates in secondary schools, it would be difficult for this objective to be achieved given the observed state of lack of teachers' understanding of the objectives of the BRN initiative.

Regarding the findings that the conditions in schools were not supportive for the implementation of the BRN initiative, these agree with the findings of other studies which have also established that conditions in most of the government schools are not conducive (Komba, Hizza, & Jonathan, 2013; Mlozi, Kaguo&Nyamba, (2013); Mbelle&Katabaro, 2003). For example, a study conducted by Komba, Hizza, and Jonathan (2013) revealed that the conditions in schools were not conducive for effective teaching and learning to take place. In particular, the study found that the number of teachers was not proportional to the number of students; there was lack of staff quarters and hostels for students and teachers; teaching and learning materials were inadequate; schools had no laboratories for science subjects; and in some cases there were problems of parental predisposition on issues regarding their children's education. These are to mention but a few. Some more or less similar findings have also been revealed by other scholars, including Mlozi, Kaguo and Nyamba (2013) and Mbelle and Katabaro (2003). Therefore, it seemed that the government's efforts to improve teaching and learning conditions in schools were inadequate and, in this regard, the respondents' pessimism regarding the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector was not surprising.

Furthermore, the observation that the majority of teachers were not involved when plans for implementing the BRN initiative were being prepared is likely to affect the implementation of the initiative. This is because of the common view that educational initiatives or programmes will be more effective if teachers are given more autonomy and they are involved in decision-making concerning the programmes (Komba & Kira, 2013). It means that teacher participation in decision making is always associated with successful implementation of any educational initiative (Kira, Komba, Kafanabo & Tilya, 2013).

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it seemed that the implementation of the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector was facing a number of challenges. This implies that it is pertinent for the government to address the challenges if the initiative has to be successfully implemented. In view of this, it is recommended that teachers should be educated on the objectives of implementing the BRN initiative in Tanzanian education sector. This is important as the findings of this study through both the questionnaire and focus group discussions have revealed that the majority of teachers were not knowledgeable about the objectives of the BRN

initiative. Moreover, since teachers are the cornerstone in the implementation of this initiative, they should be motivated. This could be done by, for instance, settling their dues on time and providing them with a variety of motivation packages such as accommodation facilities and hardship allowances especially for teachers who work in rural or remote areas. Lastly, the government should improve the teaching and learning conditions in schools in order to make them supportive, hence successful implementation of the BRN initiative.

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