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## Quality of Teachers and Academic Performance in Non-Formal Secondary Education Centres: A Case of Arusha City Council, Tanzania

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### ***Abstract***

*This study aimed to investigate the relationship between the quality of teachers and the academic performance of learners in Non-Formal Secondary Education (NFSE) centres in Arusha City Council, Tanzania. The purpose was to determine how factors such as teacher qualifications, motivation, training, and classroom commitment influence student achievement in NFSE settings. Despite the increasing role of NFSE in widening access to education for marginalized groups, concerns persist about the competence and commitment of teaching personnel, and how these affect learners'*

*academic outcomes. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach using a convergent parallel design, which allowed for simultaneous collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. A total of 66 participants were involved, including 24 students and 24 teachers selected through simple random sampling, as well as 3 education officers and 5 centre coordinators selected purposively for interviews and focus group discussions, respectively. The findings revealed that while many teachers held academic qualifications, they lacked pedagogical training relevant to non-formal learners. Low motivation, poor time management, and informal recruitment were also identified as key barriers to effective teaching. Students and administrators reported absenteeism, lack of classroom support, and high staff turnover, which negatively impacted academic performance. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education and LAE develop formal teacher recruitment guidelines, introduce structured induction and professional development programmes, and empower NFSE coordinators with supervisory authority to enhance the quality of instruction and student learning outcomes*

**Keywords:** *Teacher Quality, Academic Performance, Non-formal Education, Arusha City Council*

## **Introduction**

Education is universally acknowledged as a fundamental human right and a catalyst for personal, social, and economic development. It serves as a cornerstone for societal advancement, equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to navigate and contribute meaningfully to their communities and the broader world. Globally, education plays a central role in reducing poverty, improving health outcomes, promoting peace, and fostering innovation (UNESCO, 2024).

Formal education systems, characterized by structured curricula, certified teachers, standardized assessments, and grade progression, have long been the dominant model for knowledge acquisition (Aftab, 2015). However, the rigidity of formal schooling does not accommodate the learning needs of all, particularly marginalized groups such as school dropouts, adults,

and nomadic populations. This reality has led to the expansion of Non-Formal Education (NFE), a flexible, learner-centred, and participatory approach designed to complement the formal system (Chimombo, 2022).

In developed countries, NFE programmes are institutionalized to support lifelong learning, reskilling, and inclusive education. For example, countries like Finland and Germany run strong adult education centres and vocational pathways that serve both unemployed populations and continuing learners (Desjardins, 2020). In developing countries, however, NFE plays a more remedial and bridging role, addressing educational exclusion caused by poverty, conflict, or systemic inequities (OECD, 2022). In South Asia and Latin America, NFE is widely used to improve literacy, vocational skills, and civic engagement among underserved populations (Chimombo, 2022).

In Africa, NFE is instrumental in reaching rural populations and out-of-school youth. Yet its development remains fragmented and underfunded, often lacking standardized teacher qualifications, infrastructure, and curricular integration (Aitchison & Alidou, 2021). Despite this, African governments have increasingly acknowledged its value in achieving Education for All (EFA) and Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education (World Bank, 2021). East African countries, including Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda have progressively integrated NFE into national education plans, with initiatives like Complementary Basic Education (CBE) and Community-Based Adult Learning Programmes. These are often supported by NGOs and government agencies targeting literacy, vocational training, and second-chance education (World Bank, 2021)

In Tanzania, NFE is regulated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology through the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) (URT, 2014). Programmes such as Integrated Community-Based Adult Education (ICBAE), Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET), and

Non-Formal Secondary Education (NFSE) have emerged as critical avenues for re-engaging learners excluded from the formal system (URT, 2022). These initiatives aim to provide second chances to out-of-school youth, adult learners, and disadvantaged groups, offering opportunities to acquire life skills and academic qualifications (Michael et al., 2022). However, the effectiveness of NFE, particularly NFSE hinges heavily on the quality of its instructional delivery, making teacher capacity a critical concern in this sector.

Despite the expansion of Non-Formal Secondary Education (NFSE) as a second-chance opportunity for out-of-school youth and adult learners, its effectiveness is frequently questioned due to persistent challenges in instructional quality (OECD, 2022). Reports from education authorities (URT, 2022; PO-RALG, 2024) indicate that many NFSE teachers are recruited informally, lack pedagogical training, and often show low levels of motivation and classroom commitment. As a result, learners in these centres perform poorly in national examinations, and dropout rates remain high. These challenges point to broader structural and systemic issues beyond individual teacher traits. Therefore, it is critical to adopt a holistic framework that considers how institutional inputs, such as teacher quality, interact with educational processes to influence learner outcomes.

This study is guided by Systems Theory, which conceptualizes an organisation as a system of interrelated and interdependent components working toward shared goals. In the context of education, schools including NFSE centres, can be understood as systems composed of inputs (e.g., teachers), processes (e.g., teaching and learning), and outputs (e.g., academic performance). Systems Theory emphasizes that if one critical input, such as teacher quality, is weak or dysfunctional, the entire system's effectiveness is compromised. In this study, the theory helps explain how deficiencies in teacher recruitment, training, and motivation can negatively affect student outcomes in NFSE centres. Thus, Systems

Theory provides a suitable lens for analysing how the quality of teachers influences academic performance in a non-formal education context.

Furthermore, Systems Theory supports the idea of feedback loops, where poor academic outcomes should trigger reflection and reform across the subsystems, including teacher recruitment, training, and motivation. In NFSE centres, which often operate outside mainstream oversight, the theory emphasizes the need for integrated planning and alignment of human, physical, and curricular resources to ensure educational effectiveness.

Empirical evidence consistently shows that teacher quality is one of the most significant school-level factors influencing student achievement (UNESCO, 2024). High-quality teachers possess strong content knowledge, pedagogical skills, and a positive disposition toward learners. In developed countries, teacher professional development (TPD) is continuous and evidence-based, supported by policy frameworks that mandate licensing, performance monitoring, and ongoing training (Desjardins, 2020). In contrast, in Sub-Saharan Africa, many education systems suffer from teacher shortages, under-qualification, and low motivation. Mitchell et al. (2024) note that teacher training programmes often lack contextual relevance and inclusivity, excluding female and rural teachers from access to professional development. They argue that weak TPD models directly contribute to ineffective teaching practices and poor student outcomes in both formal and non-formal education settings. A study by Foueka (2022) in Francophone Africa revealed a positive correlation between teacher quality, defined by academic credentials and in-service training and students' performance in literacy and numeracy. However, the study also observed that structural inequities, such as gender biases in teacher deployment and lack of incentives, undermine the effective functioning of teachers, particularly in marginalized and non-formal settings.

In an East African comparative study, Chimombo (2022) demonstrated that non-formal education centres in Kenya and Uganda experience similar challenges, particularly in teacher deployment and curriculum alignment. In both countries, non-formal education tends to operate under fragmented oversight, leading to inconsistent teacher standards and practices.

In Tanzania, teacher quality has been a recurring concern in both formal and non-formal education sectors. Mgaya (2024) identified several persistent challenges, including poor remuneration, lack of pedagogical innovation, and digital illiteracy among teachers. These limitations not only reduce classroom engagement but also inhibit the integration of technology in teaching, especially in non-formal environments where supervision is often weak. Michael et al. (2022), in their study of NFSE teachers in Tanzania, found that most centres recruit form six leavers or diploma holders with little or no pedagogical training. The study documented widespread absenteeism, lack of commitment, and limited use of syllabi, all of which negatively impacted students' examination performance. Teachers in these settings are often part-time, underpaid, and poorly supervised. Furthermore, the National Education and Training Policy (URT, 2014) and the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) in Tanzania highlight the need to professionalize the non-formal education workforce. However, implementation remains weak due to limited resources and lack of accountability mechanisms.

While the Education and Training Policy (URT, 2014) and the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) emphasize the need to professionalize the non-formal education workforce, implementation remains weak due to limited resources and lack of accountability mechanisms. This disconnects between policy and practice raises questions about the government's capacity to meet its own goals for NFSE delivery. The emergence of Non-Formal Secondary Education

(NFSE) in Tanzania, however, reflects the government's commitment to offering alternative educational pathways for individuals who missed out on formal schooling.

The emergence of Non-Formal Secondary Education (NFSE) in Tanzania reflects the government's commitment to offering alternative educational pathways for individuals who missed out on formal schooling. Under the coordination of the Institute of Adult Education (IAE), NFSE centres aim to reach youth, school dropouts, and adults who face socio-economic and geographic barriers to formal education (URT, 2014). Despite this significant initiative, teacher quality remains a major constraint. Many NFSE centres rely on part-time or volunteer educators, often recent school leavers or graduates with no formal teacher training (Michael et al., 2022). As a result, instruction tends to be inconsistent, lacking pedagogical depth, learner engagement, and curriculum alignment (Mgaya, 2024).

The importance of teacher quality in NFSE cannot be overstated, especially considering the diversity of learner profiles in these centres. Teachers must not only be content-proficient but also skilled in using flexible, adult-appropriate pedagogies (Foueka, 2022; Mgaya, 2024). However, Tanzania's current Education and Training Policy (URT, 2014) and the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) acknowledge the need to professionalize non-formal teaching but fall short of providing concrete implementation frameworks. There are no standardized national guidelines for the recruitment, training, or appraisal of NFSE teachers, leaving a significant policy gap. Without institutionalized support structures, NFSE teachers often lack access to continuous professional development, adequate teaching resources, and pedagogical supervision (Mitchell et al., 2024).

According to data from the Institute of Adult Education and NECTA reports, academic performance among NFSE learners in Arusha City Council has remained consistently low. In 2021, only 18.3% of NFSE

candidates passed with Division I–III. The figure slightly improved to 21.6% in 2022 but dropped again to 19.2% in 2023. These statistics reflect persistent underperformance in national examinations and raise concern over the quality of instructional delivery in NFSE centres. Compared to formal secondary schools, where average pass rates exceed 70%, this performance gap highlights a systemic issue, most notably linked to the competence and engagement of teaching personnel

The resulting key issues include lack of professional qualifications, low motivation due to irregular or inadequate pay, absence of regulatory oversight, and minimal instructional support. Most NFSE centres operate in resource-constrained environments with limited textbooks, laboratories, and classroom furniture, further hindering instructional effectiveness (Michael et al., 2022). These challenges lead to poor academic performance among students, high dropout rates, and growing public scepticism toward the credibility of NFSE as an alternative education pathway. As noted by Mitchell et al. (2024), without reforms targeting teacher standards, training, and accountability mechanisms, NFSE systems will continue to underperform (Foueka, 2022; Mgaya, 2024; Michael et al., 2022). This empirical gap justifies the current study’s focus on understanding the relationship between teacher quality and student academic performance in NFSE centres, with the goal of proposing data-driven interventions.

## **Methodology**

This study employed a mixed-methods approach using a convergent parallel design, which enabled simultaneous collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The design was chosen to allow for a holistic understanding of how teacher quality influences academic performance in Non-Formal Secondary Education (NFSE) centres. The study was conducted in Arusha City Council across 12 NFSE centres. The target population included teachers, students,

centre coordinators, and education officers. A total of 66 participants were involved: 24 teachers and 24 students were selected using simple random sampling from participating centres to ensure representativeness. In addition, 5 centre coordinators and 3 education officers (2 regional resident tutors and 1 district adult education officer) were purposively selected based on their supervisory roles and experience in NFSE coordination. This combination provided both numerical breadth and contextual depth.

Data were collected through four tools: questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and documentary reviews. Structured questionnaires were administered to both students and teachers to gather quantitative data on teacher qualifications, motivation, instructional methods, and learner support. In-depth interviews were conducted with the 3 education officers to explore challenges in teacher deployment, institutional support, and oversight mechanisms. A focus group discussion was held with 5 NFSE centre coordinators to generate group-level insights into daily instructional practices, staffing issues, and administrative roles. Documentary reviews (student performance records, exam results, and centre reports) were used to obtain data on learners' academic achievement and policy implementation status.

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. These allowed for comparison of perceptions between students and teachers. Qualitative data were analysed thematically to identify patterns in teacher engagement, recruitment, and systemic barriers to quality education. The integration of findings through triangulation enriched the interpretation and supported the validity of the study conclusions. Ethical procedures were followed throughout. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, confidentiality was assured through anonymized codes, and data collection was scheduled outside teaching hours to avoid disruptions.

## **Results and Discussion**

This section presents findings related to this study that examined the quality of teachers in relation to academic performance in NFSE centres in Arusha City Council. Results are drawn from both quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (interviews and focus group discussions) data. The findings are organised into demographics, student survey responses, and thematic insights from coordinators and tutors.

### **Demographic Information**

This part presents the demographic characteristics of respondents who participated in the study. The data is organised into three categories: students, teachers, and education officers (including coordinators and tutors). Understanding these background characteristics is essential for interpreting the perceptions and experiences shared regarding the quality of teachers in NFSE centres.

### **Demographic Characteristics of Students**

This section presents background information about the 24 students who participated in the study, focusing on gender, age, admission stage, and prior learning experience. These characteristics help contextualize their perceptions about teacher quality and academic performance in NFSE settings.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Variable	Categories	N	%
Gender	Male	11	45.8%
	Female	13	54.2%
	Total	24	100%
Age(years)	Between 10-15	3	12.5%
	Between 16-20	16	66.7%
	Between 21-30	5	20.8%
	Above 31	0	0.0%
	Total	24	100%
Stage in which you were admitted	Stage one (Form 1 and 2)	10	41.7%
	Stage two (Form 3 and 4)	14	58.3%
	Total	24	100%
Prior Learning experience	Never been to school	0	0.0%
	Primary-school drop-out	3	12.5%
	Primary school leaver	7	29.2%
	Secondary school drop-out	2	8.3%
	Secondary school Graduate(re-sitter)	12	50
	Total	14	100%

As shown in Table 1, the group was slightly dominated by females (54.2%), and the majority (66.7%) were aged between 16 and 20 years, aligning with the typical secondary school-going age. Most students (58.3%) had joined at Stage Two (Form 3 and 4), and half were repeaters who had previously completed or dropped out of secondary school. These findings suggest that students in NFSE centres come with diverse academic backgrounds and learning gaps, which may influence their expectations and sensitivity toward teacher effectiveness and classroom support. Understanding this demographic diversity is important because learners who are older or repeating may be more reliant on well-prepared, committed teachers to help them recover lost academic ground. It also means that inadequate teaching quality such as absenteeism or lack of

feedback, can have a disproportionately negative impact on these learners' performance and motivation

## Demographic Characteristics of Teachers

This section describes the background of the 24 NFSE teachers who participated in the study. Key variables include gender, age, academic qualifications, teaching experience, and whether they are professionally trained.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Teachers**

Variable	Option	N	%
Gender	Male	23	95.8%
	Female	1	4.2%
	Tot	24	100%
Age	between 10-15	0	0.0%
	Between 16-20	0	0.0%
	Between 21-30	19	79.2%
	Above 31	5	20.8%
	Tot	24	100%
Education Level	Form Four	0	0.0%
	Form Six	4	16.7%
	Certificate	0	0.0%
	Diploma	4	16.7%
	Bachelor Degree	16	66.7%
	Master Degree	0	0.0%
	Doctorate	0	0.0%
Tot	24	100%	
Profession	Teacher	14	58.3%
	Non-teacher	10	41.7%
	Tot	24	100%
Teaching Experience Years	Less than 3	12	50.0%
	Between 3-5	6	25.0%
	Above 5	6	25.0%
	Tot	24	100%

As summarized in Table 2, the teaching staff was overwhelmingly male (95.8%), with most being relatively young, 79.2% were aged between 21

and 30 years. While a majority (66.7%) held bachelor's degrees, nearly half (50%) had less than three years of teaching experience. Notably, only 58.3% of the respondents identified themselves as trained teachers. These demographic characteristics are important to the study because they reflect the structural profile of NFSE staffing: academically qualified but pedagogically underprepared, with limited classroom experience. Young, inexperienced teachers may struggle to engage non-formal learners who often require flexible, personalized instruction. This mismatch potentially undermines teaching quality and learner performance especially in NFSE centres, where diverse student needs call for skilled and committed teaching.

### Demographic Characteristics of Education Officers and Coordinators

The study also involved 8 participants serving in oversight and coordination roles: 5 centre coordinators, 2 regional tutors, and 1 district adult education officer. Their demographic information includes designation, age, academic qualifications, and years of experience.

**Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Education Officers and Coordinators**

Variable	Option	N	%
Designation	Co-coordinator	5	62.5%
	Resident Tutor	2	25.0%
	DAEO	1	12.5%
	Tot	8	100%
Gender	Male	7	87.5%
	Female	1	12.5%
	Tot	8	100%
Age	Between 21-30	0	0%
	Above 31	8	100%
	Tot	8	100%
Education Level	Bachelor Degree	5	62.5%
	Master Degree	3	37.5%

	Doctorate	0	0%
	Tot	8	100%
Experience	Less than 3	2	25.0%
	Between 3-5	2	25.0 %
	Above 5	4	50.0%
	Tot	8	100%

Table 3 shows that all participants were over 30 years old and had significant experience in NFSE coordination, with 50% having more than five years of service. Most (62.5%) held bachelor's degrees, and 37.5% had attained a master's degree. The majority were male (87.5%). These characteristics add value to the study by ensuring that the institutional insights gathered through interviews and focus groups were informed by experienced, knowledgeable stakeholders. Their long-term involvement in NFSE gave them first-hand understanding of staffing practices, teacher challenges, and how these influence academic outcomes. Their perspectives were particularly helpful in identifying systemic gaps in teacher recruitment, supervision, and professional development factors that directly affect instructional quality and student performance in NFSE centres.

### **Findings on Quality of Teachers in NFSE Centres**

The study aimed to assess how students perceive the quality of teachers and how this perception relates to their academic performance. Teacher quality was assessed based on five key indicators: academic qualifications, teaching methods, time commitment, motivation, and training specific to non-formal education.

### **Findings from Students**

Table 4 summarizes student responses across the five items using mean scores (M), standard deviations (SD), and interpretive remarks. These values were derived from a Likert scale questionnaire administered to 24

students enrolled in NFSE centres in Arusha City Council. The findings indicate mixed student perceptions on teacher quality. Students generally agreed that teachers in NFSE centres were academically qualified (M = 1.25) and applied effective teaching methods (M = 1.58). These responses suggest that, from an academic standpoint, most NFSE teachers possess sufficient content knowledge and use teaching strategies that students find understandable. This aligns with national reports that emphasize growing access to graduate teachers within Tanzania's education system (URT, 2014).

**Table 4: Students' Responses on Teacher Quality in NFSE Centres (N = 24)**

Item	Variable	Mean	Std Dev.	Remarks
1	Teachers in your centre are qualified	1.25	0.44	Agreed
2	Teaching methods used by teachers in your centre are good enough	1.58	0.72	Agreed
3	Time spent in classroom with teachers is adequate to enable you pass exams	2.52	1.02	Disagreed
4	Teachers are highly motivated in the centre	2.58	1.14	Disagreed
5	Teachers in the centre are trained to teach non-formal students	2.71	1.08	Disagreed

**Note:** Decision criteria were based on the following scale: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree. Mean scores from 1.00 to 2.49 were interpreted as "Agreed", while mean scores from 2.50 to 4.00 were interpreted as "Disagreed".

However, the students disagreed with statements regarding time commitment (M = 2.52), teacher motivation (M = 2.58), and the adequacy of training specific to NFSE learners (M = 2.71). These results point to more profound systemic issues. Teachers may be academically qualified

but lack practical training tailored to adult or second-chance learners, and motivation appears to be low, possibly due to irregular pay, lack of supervision, or dual responsibilities (as noted by Michael, Ndiujye, & Ephraim, 2022).

Moreover, students perceived that teachers were not spending adequate time in class, which could directly affect academic preparation and performance. This finding reflects prior qualitative insights where students and coordinators reported frequent teacher absenteeism, late arrivals, and inattentiveness during lessons (e.g., use of mobile phones during class). According to Systems Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968), this breakdown in one subsystem, teacher engagement can compromise the effectiveness of the entire educational setting, resulting in poor student outcomes.

To complement the quantitative results, students were asked open-ended questions to describe their perceptions and experiences regarding teacher quality in their centres. Their responses were thematically grouped and analysed. The purpose was to obtain deeper insights into teacher behaviour, competence, and commitment, factors that are central to the quality of education delivered in NFSE settings. Table 5 summarizes the key themes that emerged from students' responses, along with the frequency and percentage of mentions per theme (based on N = 24 students).

**Table 5: Students' Opinions on Teacher Quality in NFSE Centres**

S/No.	Themes	N	%
1.	They are not supportive to students	9	37.5%
2.	They came late to class	20	83.3%
3.	Spend more time chatting on phone	14	58.3%
4.	Teach through discussion	18	75.0%
5.	Most of them are not qualified teachers	15	62.5%

The qualitative findings reveal several critical concerns from students regarding teacher conduct, professionalism, and engagement. The most frequently reported issue was lateness to class (83.3%), which suggests a severe lack of time discipline among NFSE teachers. This complaint echoes the earlier quantitative result where students disagreed that teachers spent enough time in the classroom (Mean = 2.52). Such habitual lateness compromises syllabus coverage, learner motivation, and exam preparedness.

Another dominant concern was the use of mobile phones during lessons (58.3%), indicating unprofessional behaviour that detracts from instructional quality and student focus. It points to weak classroom management and a lack of pedagogical ethics. Combined with the claim that teachers are not supportive to students (37.5%), these issues indicate strained student-teacher relationships and inadequate academic guidance, which are essential in a non-formal learning environment that often requires personalized support. Interestingly, 75% of students acknowledged that teachers use discussion methods, a practice generally encouraged in adult and non-formal learning contexts. This may suggest that some pedagogical awareness exists among teachers. However, 62.5% still believed that most teachers are not qualified, underscoring a perceived gap between content delivery and pedagogical training. This reinforces quantitative findings where students disagreed that teachers were trained to teach NFSE students (Mean = 2.71).

These findings align with Systems Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968), which argues that dysfunction in one part of a system (teacher engagement and competence) affects the whole. If students consistently experience delayed lessons, inattentive instructors, and a lack of support, their academic confidence and performance will inevitably decline. Additionally, these concerns affirm earlier reports in the Tanzanian NFSE context (Michael et al., 2022; Mgaya, 2024), which cite weak teacher preparation, poor

monitoring, and low morale as systemic barriers to learning in non-formal settings.

### Findings from Teachers

To complement student perceptions and enrich the analysis of teacher quality, teachers were asked to evaluate their own professional experiences, commitment, and systemic support. Their responses help identify the structural and motivational factors that affect their effectiveness in NFSE settings. The items assessed issues such as multiple job engagement, incentives, salary adequacy, attendance, and comparison with formal education systems. Table 6 summarizes the mean (M), standard deviation (SD), and interpretive remarks for each item as reported by the 24 participating teachers.

**Table 6: Teachers’ Responses on Quality and Academic Performance in NFSE Centres**

Item	Variable	M	SD	Remark
1	You are employed somewhere else apart from the centre	2.92	1.06	Disagreed
2	You are paid other incentives for good student performance	2.79	0.98	Disagreed
3	The payment you receive from the centre is adequate to meet your daily needs	2.79	0.93	Disagreed
4	Daily classroom attendance is used in the centre	1.67	0.70	Agreed
5	There are no qualified teachers in non-formal education	2.33	1.13	Agreed

**Note:** Decision criteria were based on the Likert -scale used, which ranged from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 4 (Strongly Disagree). Mean scores between 1.00 and 2.49 were interpreted as “Agreed,” while scores from 2.50 to 4.00 were interpreted as “Disagreed.”

Table 6 presents teachers' responses regarding employment conditions, motivation, accountability, and comparisons between formal and non-formal education settings. The highest mean ( $M = 2.92$ ) for Item 1 suggests that most teachers are employed elsewhere beyond the NFSE centres, indicating divided professional commitment. This weakens teacher quality by reducing preparation time, engagement, and consistency in instructional delivery. Students corroborated this by reporting frequent absenteeism and late arrivals by teachers. Items 2 and 3 both had mean scores of 2.79, meaning teachers disagreed that they receive adequate pay or performance-based incentives. This indicates demotivation and financial instability, key contributors to poor teacher morale and diminished classroom commitment. Such conditions undermine the quality of teaching and ultimately affect students' academic outcomes. In contrast, Item 4 had a mean of 1.67, meaning most teachers agreed that daily attendance registers are used. This suggests some accountability mechanisms exist, although student reports contradict this claim, citing weak enforcement and limited classroom supervision. For Item 5 ( $M = 2.33$ ), teachers agreed that formal schools have more qualified instructors. This highlights a self-perceived gap in teacher quality within NFSE centres and supports the study's argument that systemic recruitment challenges and lack of professional development hinder instructional effectiveness in non-formal education. This supports earlier quantitative data from students and the teachers' own recognition of a training and qualification gap in the non-formal sector. It also speaks to the structural inequity between formal and non-formal systems, a point emphasized in national education policy documents (URT, 2014) and supported by Systems Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968), which underlines the importance of balanced inputs for effective institutional output.

In addition to rating their own performance, teachers were asked to express their opinions on the general quality of teaching staff in NFSE centres and how that affects academic outcomes. Their responses,

summarized in Table 7, highlight key institutional and human resource challenges that impact the effectiveness of non-formal education delivery.

**Table 7: Teachers' Open-Ended Opinions on the Quality of Teachers in Relation to Academic Performance in NFSE Centres (N = 24)**

S/N	Quality of Teachers in Relation to Academic Performance	N	%
1	Some are not qualified	20	83.3%
2	Other centres use form six leavers	18	75.0%
3	Most of them are part-time teachers	14	58.3%
4	They came late	9	37.5%

The findings in Table 7 reflect open-ended responses from 24 teachers who were asked to share their opinions on factors affecting teacher quality and academic performance in NFSE centres. Unlike the structured Likert items in Table 6, these were generated from qualitative prompts. The most frequently mentioned concern (reported by 83.3% of teachers) was that some colleagues are not professionally qualified. This aligns with both student feedback and earlier quantitative results, reinforcing the idea that under qualified teaching staff weaken instruction and student performance.

Secondly, 75% of the teachers reported that other centres employ form six leavers. This practice, common in under-resourced contexts, implies that learners are being taught by individuals with limited or no formal pedagogical training. It reveals a systemic compromise in instructional quality due to financial or staffing constraints. Further, 58.3% noted that most teachers in NFSE are part-time. This suggests limited instructional commitment, reduced syllabus coverage, and irregular support to learners, conditions that negatively affect performance. Lastly, 37.5% of teachers acknowledged lateness as a recurring issue, echoing student complaints about class time being lost due to teacher tardiness. These findings provide

deeper insight into teacher quality challenges from the staff themselves. These insights align closely with Systems Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968), which holds that dysfunction in key inputs (in this case, teaching personnel) reduces overall system performance.

### **Findings from Centre Coordinators and Education Officers**

Interviews with 2 education officers and a focus group discussion with 5 NFSE coordinators were conducted to understand administrative perspectives on teacher quality and its impact on student academic performance. These participants are responsible for supervision, recruitment, and centre management, making them important informants for identifying institutional gaps and implementation challenges. The responses were coded and grouped thematically, resulting in the summary in Table 8.

**Table 8: Thematic Summary of Coordinators’ and Education Officers’ Views on Teacher Quality and Academic Performance in NFSE Centres (N = 7)**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Informal recruitment without qualifications	100%
2	Use of form six leavers due to funding/staff shortages	87.5%
3	High prevalence of part-time teaching staff	75.0%
4	Lack of orientation or professional development programmes	62.5%
5	Undefined contracts and unclear terms of service	62.5%
6	High turnover due to low pay and lack of job security	87.5%
7	Lack of authority to enforce discipline and quality assurance	100%

The themes presented in Table 8 reinforce the conclusion that teacher quality challenges in NFSE centres are systemic and structurally embedded. All education officers and coordinators confirmed that

teachers are commonly recruited informally, without standardized qualifications or teaching credentials. This practice is driven by limited funding, lack of autonomy at centre level, and the absence of a formal recruitment framework for NFSE.

One education officer highlighted this by stating, *“We don’t have any formal recruitment process; we just take whoever is willing to teach, even if they haven’t gone to college.”* (Field Interview, August 2024). This quote illustrates the severity of informal staffing practices that compromise instructional quality and student learning outcomes. It also reveals the weak regulatory environment surrounding human resource management in NFSE.

The use of form six leavers, reported by 87.5% of respondents, further reflects these structural limitations. Another participant added, *“Sometimes we’re forced to work with form six graduates because we can’t afford diploma holders or trained teachers.”* (Field FGD, August 2024). This underscores how financial constraints contribute to the use of underqualified personnel, who may lack the pedagogical skills needed for adult and second-chance learners. These findings confirm that weak institutional frameworks, informal staffing, and lack of professional oversight are core impediments to quality instruction in NFSE centres. According to Systems Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1968), when one subsystem, in this case, human resource governance is disconnected or underperforming, the entire education system’s output, i.e., student learning, suffers.

## **Conclusion**

This study aimed to examine the quality of teachers in relation to academic performance in Non-Formal Secondary Education (NFSE) centres in Arusha City Council. Drawing on Systems Theory, the research recognized that the academic performance of learners in non-formal education is a result of interconnected inputs, chief among them being teacher quality. Using a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, data

were collected from students, teachers, NFSE centre coordinators, and education officers. The study specifically focused on factors such as teacher qualifications, motivation, institutional support, recruitment practices, and their collective influence on learning outcomes in NFSE centres.

The demographic analysis revealed significant disparities in experience and professional readiness across respondent groups. Most NFSE students were in Stage Two and had interrupted or incomplete formal education histories, making them highly dependent on qualified and committed teachers. Conversely, teachers were predominantly young males with bachelor's degrees but limited pedagogical training and classroom experience. Coordinators and education officers were more experienced but consistently expressed frustration over their limited authority, lack of teacher monitoring tools, and absence of national guidelines to enforce quality assurance. These demographic findings point to a structural misalignment: while learners have complex academic support needs, the NFSE system remains under-equipped in staffing and professional development mechanisms.

In relation to the core research objective, the study concludes that teacher quality in NFSE centres is compromised more by institutional weaknesses than by individual incompetence. While academic qualifications were present, low motivation, poor time management, informal recruitment practices, and the use of untrained staff—often from six leavers—severely undermined teaching effectiveness. Coordinators and officers reported high turnover, lack of training, and an absence of regulatory frameworks, highlighting systemic dysfunctions that echo student and teacher experiences. Therefore, enhancing academic performance in NFSE centres requires comprehensive policy reforms focused on regulating teacher recruitment, investing in targeted training, establishing performance incentives, and empowering administrators with

enforcement authority. Only through such system-level changes can NFSE realize its mission as a credible pathway for second-chance learners

### **Recommendation**

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and the Institute of Adult Education (IAE) urgently develop and implement formal guidelines for the recruitment of NFSE teachers. These guidelines should define the minimum academic and pedagogical qualifications required, with clear protocols to vet and approve candidates. This will help eliminate the current reliance on form six leavers and untrained individuals who compromise the quality of instruction and academic performance in NFSE centres.

In addition to recruitment reform, the government and centre sponsors should invest in regular induction programmes and continuous professional development (CPD) tailored specifically for non-formal education. These programmes should focus on adult learning principles, classroom management, and learner-cantered methodologies suited for second-chance students. Training should be institutionalized and not left to the discretion of individual centres, ensuring all teachers are equipped to respond to the academic and emotional needs of diverse learners.

It is also critical to empower NFSE coordinators with formal supervisory authority. They should be legally mandated and equipped with tools to monitor teacher attendance, evaluate classroom effectiveness, and enforce discipline. Strengthening the coordinators' role will bridge the current gap between administration and implementation, allowing for real-time interventions in cases of absenteeism, low performance, or misconduct. These measures are essential not only to improve teacher accountability but also to ensure that learners consistently receive quality instruction. As demonstrated in this study, poor supervision and weak teacher

engagement are directly linked to inadequate syllabus coverage and declining student achievement. Enhancing oversight mechanisms can therefore contribute significantly to improved academic outcomes for NFSE learners.

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