Teacher Professional Identity and Quality Assurance in Tanzania: The Case of The University of Dar es Salaam

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Abstract

The success of quality assurance in higher education depends on how well it is organised and the extent to which the stakeholders accept and own it. Indeed, how academicians perceive themselves, their profession, and others in the profession is reflected in their practice which in turn affects the quality of education being provided. Therefore, this paper is based on a study that investigated how expertise in various academic disciplines can be combined with expertise in the pedagogical disciplines to produce coherent training programmes that can be implemented successfully. To achieve its research objective, the study deployed mixed method research of interviews and questionnaire design to collect pertinent information from faculty members of Tanzania's premier institution of higher learning, the University of Dar es Salaam. The research focused on assessing the dialectical relationship between the construction of teacher professional identity and quality assurance practices. The research findings suggest the need for more and systematic sensitisation of academic staff; sharing of a common understanding; use of professionals in curriculum, psychology and educational management; and systematic induction of newly-recruited staff.

Keywords: Teacher professional identity; quality assurance; Tanzania

1. Introduction

In recent years, universities in East Africa under the umbrella of the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA) have seen the need to harmonise and ensure the quality of the programmes they offer (IUCEA, 2008). Towards this end, a regional Quality Assurance initiative was introduced for quality assurance co-ordinators in East African universities at the IUCEA headquarters. The primary aim was to support the universities in implementing good practices for quality assurance, the application of standards and criteria as formulated by competent authorities, the development of an adequate internal quality assurance (IQA) system in sync with international development frameworks, and the promotion of quality through the use of self-assessment instruments for IQA in the teaching and learning process. In fact, the training of quality assurance co-ordinators is based on a model for the self-assessment of teaching and learning which requires professional expertise in education, for example, curriculum design,

programme specifications, formulation of expected learning outcomes, organisation of the programme, didactic concept, student assessment and/or evaluation. However, the success of this innovation in higher education generally depends on how well it is organised and the extent to which the stakeholders accept and own it. Equally important in this process is how academicians perceive themselves and their profession as well as how they perceive others in the profession, attitudes reflected in their practice which in turn affect the quality of the education delivery. This study established that the success of such innovation depends on combining expertise in the various academic disciplines with proficiency in the pedagogical disciplines to produce coherent training programmes that can be implemented successfully.

2. The Problem

There has been no systematic study in Tanzania that has examined teacher professional identity in relation to quality assurance. In consequence, our knowledge about how the different quality assurance strategies have influenced the self-perception of academic staff is limited and remains unsupported by empirical evidence. In the light of the controversy surrounding teacher preparation models, as well as the unsettled relationship between pedagogy and content expertise, the triple roles of the university lecturers, and lack of a professional association for teachers in higher learning institutions, this research was aimed at investigating how various categories of university lecturers perceive their identity, and how the inception of quality assurance practice is influencing the development of professional identity.

3. Research Objectives and Questions

Therefore, this research undertaking focused on the construction of teacher professional identity in higher learning institutions in Tanzania and how the inception of quality assurance practice is influencing the construction of professional identity in these institutions. On the whole, the purpose of the study was to investigate how quality assurance practices affect teacher professional identity. The following research questions were used to realise the research objectives:

i. How do university lecturers perceive their professional identity?

ii. How does the perception vary between categories of lecturers?

iii. How does professional identity vary across time?

iv. To what extent have the quality assurance practices influenced the construction of professional identity?

4. Review of Relevant Literature

4.1 Conceptual overview

Identity is a matter of a mark of one person as opposed to another or others in a group (Charles Rycroft in Page & Thomas, 1979, p. 169; and Hornby, 2000). In this sense, the use of the term is aimed at differentiating one teacher from another teacher, or teachers, or as professionals from members of other professional communities. Such struggles for identity along certain qualities are global in character and have a long-standing history (Munoz Palm, 2008). At workplaces, people generally talk of *professional identity*. According to Page and Thomas (1979, p. 273), the evaluative term 'profession' is used to describe the most prestigious occupations, which meet the following criteria: (i) carrying out an essential social service; (ii) being founded on systematic knowledge; (iii) requiring lengthy academic and practical training; (iv) having a code of ethics; and (v) generating in-service growth. Teaching meets all these criteria.

In light of the Page and Thomas definition, a professional is a person who has completed a programme of rigorous initial preparation involving specialised knowledge as decided by the profession, and who has been approved by the profession as a registered practitioner with the right to exercise autonomous, professional judgment" (Hooley, 2007, p. 50). Thus, professional identity is reinforced by the existence of a regulatory body. Usually, the use of the term "professional" helps to make a distinction between professionals and non-professionals. In this respect, professional identity is linked to "the concept of profession and of the professional" (Munoz Palm, 2008, p. 113). In the education and/or teaching context, professional identity depends on three main characteristics: (a) expertise in one's area of specialisation, (b) moral integrity, and (c) expertise in didactical terms. Of course, other significant attributes include specialised knowledge, a code of professional ethics, professional autonomy, organisation and regulation, and the provision of public service (Carr, 2000; Shon, 2006). On the whole, these characteristics are central in all professional undertakings; they act as a framework within which every professional works. Moreover, they are instrumental in the attainment of the goals of professional communities.

Over time, scholars have been revisiting the concept of teacher professional identity. For example, Marcelo (2009 highlights four revised characteristics that are relevant in shaping teacher professional identity. First, teacher professional identity is an evolutional process that draws on the interpretation and re-interpretation of experiences. In this perspective, *teacher professional identity is continually being defined and redefined*. Second, professional identity is not global in character. Indeed, the conduct of professional teachers depends on the environment or context, or local particularities to which they are responding. In other words, teachers—as a professional group—are not homogenous; they differ considerably. Third, closely related to the second characteristic, teacher professional identity is a function, or a result, of sub-identities which are not necessarily related. Fourth, professional identity is instrumental in making teachers motivated, committed, satisfied, or in short, making them good teachers. We opine that

these attributes have implications for quality issues in educational institutions.

4.2 The role of professional identity

Scholars share the view that professional identity is important in the education and/or teaching sector (Marcelo, 2009). It is through professional identity that teachers, or members of other professional communities, perceive themselves, hence creating a sense of camaraderie and professional connection and recognition. As a matter of fact, professional identity is a function of teachers' efforts to define themselves and others (Marcelo, 2009, p. 9). Such professional definition is geared towards marking a distinction between these professionals and other groups of people. Teacher professional identity is also shaped during pre-service preparation, as new recruits are initiated into the basics of professional teaching. The other identity shaping factor is the professional context in which teachers assume work in their post-training professional undertaking. Nevertheless, the world of work for a teacher is not an end in itself; rather, it constitutes a beginning towards teachers' re-education programmes in their respective areas of specialty. On the whole, continuing professional growth is a necessary condition for enriched teacher professional identity. Collectively, these factors are crucial in the realisation of set educational goals.

Similarly, the available literature reaffirms the importance of professional identity in reinforcing quality issues in the education and/or teaching sector. Quality in higher education refers to effective teaching and learning, resulting from adequate resources, including teachers' competence (Okebuka and Shabani, 2007). Adequate and quality resources facilitate quality teaching and learning. It has also been established that competent teachers in their respective areas of specialty help to produce quality graduates. In other words, professional identity and quality are inseparable. Indeed, Bardi (2009) asserts that "quality assurance and enhancement are essential processes in all learning environments" for teachers from the lowest to the highest level of school or education. Thus, as Bardi points out, "any work on quality assurance needs to start from teachers' own perceptions and opinions about what quality means in their specific teaching contexts" (p. 6).

4.3 Professional teacher development

Quality assurance does not operate in a vacuum. In teacher professionalism, teachers are at the centre in efforts aimed at fostering quality education. Both education and re-education programmes prioritise quality assurance and enhancement. In fact, Bardi (2009) argues that quality assurance needs to include a personal development component. Globally, there is an increasing recognition of the inter-connectivity of quality assurance in education and/or teaching and teacher professional development. After all, teacher professional development, as a process, owes much to both teacher professional identity and quality assurance. Such a symbiotic relationship necessitates the emphasis on both expertise and quality in teacher professional development. In Tanzania, the development of modern professional teachers has a long history linked to the establishment of missionary and colonial education in the 1800s (Lawuo, 1982).

Since then, teacher professional development has remained a means that "provides opportunities for teachers to explore new roles, develop new instructional techniques, refine their practice and broaden themselves both as educators and as individuals" (Komba and Nkumbi, 2008,).

4.4 Teacher Categories and the development of teacher professional identity in Tanzania

Different teacher categories exist in Tanzania: the nursery school teacher (Std 7-Form IV), primary school teacher (Std 7-Form IV), secondary school teacher (Form 6 -BA/B.Sc/ MA/M.Sc.), college tutor (Form 6 -BA/B.Sc/MA/M.Sc.), and the university lecturer/professor (/MA/M.Sc/Ph.D.). These categories of teachers are exposed to different teacher professional development programmes. Among primary and secondary school teachers, some of the unlucky teachers have had no formal training in pedagogy; these become teachers through classroom practical experience and often get support from their peers and mentors. There are even teachers who had prior training of a limited period, not exceeding six months. The onus is on them to gain more hands-on teaching experience in the classroom. The ones in good stead had pre-service training for periods ranging from one to four years in teacher education colleges or universities. The luckiest of this lot are teachers with both pre-service and in-service post-training education, hence with an avenue for continuous professional development.

University lecturers/professors deserve a special description. The level of exposure for this cadre of professional teachers typically follows the scheme described in the preceding paragraph. Many of the university lecturers have had no formal training in pedagogy. They were recruited to teach on the basis of their high GPAs. These will gain teaching experience as university lecturers through trial-and-error. Few of these lecturers recognise that their lack of professional teaching training constitutes a challenge that needs to be addressed through exposure to pedagogical training. In fact, for the majority of these lecturers in Tanzania, possession of a strong basis in the academic disciplines such as mathematics, chemistry, engineering, political science, linguistics, or geography is considered a sufficient teaching credential. However, some of the university lecturers in the schools of education and other faculties have had prior professional training in education in their undergraduate and even post-graduate university education (some even have a diploma level education prior to joining the university) in addition to acquiring academic content in one or two disciplines. These often tend to have graduated with B.A.s/B.Scs. with Education or B.Ed. (Arts/Science) degrees or Postgraduate Diploma in education certificates prior to their employment at the university as tutorial assistants, assistant lecturers, or lecturers.

There has been much debate in Tanzania on which model of teacher preparation produces the right kind of teachers. At the primary and secondary school levels, conceptions about the best curriculum revolve around the primacy of knowledge of subject matter over pedagogy, and vice-versa. Levira and Mahenge (1996), Dasu (2001), Galabawa (2001), Kalugula (2001) and Wangeleja (2003) have emphasised pedagogical competence in the preparation of teachers over knowledge of subject matter. On the other hand, Mosha (2000), Rajabu (2000) and the TDMS report (2007) emphasise knowledge of the subject matter over pedagogical competence; they see

such knowledge as a critical ingredient in the preparation of teachers even as they are exposed to pedagogical issues. In fact, the replacement in 2000 of a Diploma in Education curriculum that had teaching subjects with one that had no teaching subjects was short-lived because in 2007 the Diploma in Education curriculum with teaching subjects was reinstated. This u-turn actually affirms the importance of both pedagogy and knowledge of subject content in the promotion of quality teaching.

The lesson that can be drawn from this development is that the best curriculum in the preparation of teachers benefits from both aspects. Indeed, an ideal curriculum requires a combination of an academic component (Viebahn, 2003), a pedagogical component and some reflective and practical experience (Lewin & Stuart, 2003). Such a combination can make the teacher knowledgeable and effective as well as confident and efficient. And yet, over the years, at the University of Dar es Salaam, the conception of the teacher professional identity appears to lean toward one or the other orientation. There was (and still is) a tendency on the part of some academic staff in the School of Education and other Faculties to look down on university lecturers with no formal training in pedagogy. For example, the selection and appointment procedure of university lecturers to be involved in the supervision of student-teachers during their teaching practice requires evidence of prior formal training as a teacher. This procedure excludes content experts from the Science and Social Sciences regardless of their involvement in the teaching the subject content to the same student-teachers. Conversely, there was also (and there still is) a tendency for some academic staff in the Science, Engineering, Arts and Social Sciences faculties to look down on lecturers and students in the School of Education or other faculties who have not studied subjects from two academic disciplines in the Sciences, or Arts and Social Sciences.

At another level, a university teacher's identity is defined within the context of the university's mission: teach, research, and provide service to the community. Since the 1970s, there have been programmes designed to provide pedagogical/didactic skills to academic staff with no prior formal teacher education. Between 2003 and 2005, a Quality Assurance Bureau (QAB) was established at the University of Dar es Salaam to monitor and ensure the quality of university teaching and learning. Prior to the establishment of the QAB, there was no formal structure responsible for monitoring and assessing the day-to-day teaching and learning activities except for the University Teaching and Learning Improvement Programme (UTLIP) that was meant to expose lecturers to the best methods of teaching. QAB generally reports its findings so that responsible organs such as departments so that they can institute remedial action. The responsibility for the quality of the programmes nevertheless rests with the major representative decision making bodies such as departmental boards, faculty (now college/school/institute) boards, and ultimately the University Senate. The courses or programmes on offer are initiated by specialists in the department before being submitted to the departmental board for discussion and approval. The Faculty/School Board endorses them before the Senate provides its final seal of approval.

Once approved the course/programme then becomes integrated in the department. The

students participating in these courses/ programmes are assessed through coursework and university examinations set by the course tutor/lecturer. Prior to the establishment of this system, there was no established mechanism to check how well the lecturer had taught or delivered the content of the course. The quality departmental/faculty boards and Senate only became aware of the performance of the students when discussing the final examination results. In other words, the competence and dedication of the academic expert to deliver the content and ensure quality learning took place was taken for granted. The guarantee that a faculty member was capable of teaching effectively was simply her or his academic credentials in the field of specialisation at the Masters or PhD level. Against this legacy, the introduction and institutionalisation of a quality assurance system at the University whose implementation scrutinises the performance of the education experts as presumed to be received with mixed feelings.

The purpose of the present study, therefore, was to investigate the perceptions of the lecturers on their professional identity in relation to quality assurance.

5. Research Methods

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to investigate the University lecturers' perceptions of their identity in relation quality assurance. In-depth interview and questionnaires were the research tools to collect the required information. The University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), as a premier institution of higher learning in Tanzania, was used a case study. The focus was on the meaning that lecturers attached to quality assurance, their role in it, and how they perceive themselves professionally (Edson, 1997). The target population included all lecturers involved in the quality assurance implementation at the University of Dar es Salaam. Purposive and random sampling procedures were used to identify lecturers with different levels of experience, academic qualifications and areas of specialisation. Each participant was seen as capable of expanding the variability of the sample. As this was only a case study, the findings cannot be over-generalised to apply to all other university lecturers in the country without qualification, especially considering the differences in their operational environments. The background and sample characteristics of research participants are summarised and presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Background characteristics of participants in the study

Characteristics	Profile	Number of participants
Gender	Male	41
	Female	20
Academic rank	Assistant Lecturer	41
	Lecturer	04
	Lecturer Senior Lecturer	06
	Professor	04
Specialisation	Arts & Social Sciences	26
	Natural & Applied Sciences	13
	Education	22
	Others	05

Information generated through the use of interviews was transcribed word for word to make it more readable and detailed. Then categories developed which depicted different ways in which a certain phenomenon was conceived (Marton & Booth, 1997). This process is also known as coding done at three levels (Strauss & Corbin, 1990): *open coding*, the first level, involved identifying, developing, labelling and grouping concepts to form categories of the phenomenon found in the data; *axial coding*, the second level, involved an intense analysis of each category; and *coding*, the final stage, entailed selective coding. A core category of qualitative information was determined and analysed in relation to other major categories. Quantitative data, on the other hand, was analysed with the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

6. Research Findings

The results of the research findings are presented and discussed under five major headings in light of the research questions: (i) How do university lecturers perceive their professional identity?; (ii) How does the perception vary between categories of lecturers?; (iii) How does professional identity vary across time?; and (iv) To what extent have the quality assurance practices influenced the construction of professional identity

6.1 How do university lecturers perceive their professional identity?
6.1.1 Professional identity
In this section, the focus was on how lecturers at the University of Dar es Salaam perceive their professional identity. A questionnaire was administered to the lecturers. The research findings suggest that the majority of the participants involved in the study largely tended to identify themselves primarily as teachers rather than as researchers or consultants.

6.1.2 Teacher Professional Identity
Participants were asked about the minimum requirements for one to qualify as a professional teacher in Tanzania. The respondents provided several attributes as essential in defining and characterising teacher professional identity at the University of Dar es Salaam. The following are the attributes they provided:

Training and/or education: Training and/or education was identified as a crucial attribute for all professionals in the teaching enterprise. Every university teacher was expected to be knowledgeable and competent in not only the content of their specialised subject matter but also the pedagogical aspect. This finding is, indeed, in line with what other scholars indicate as the knowledge base resulting from education or training in a particular period in a recognised institution with approved curricula (see, for example, Carr, 2000).

Professional certification: Certification assumes the existence of an authority responsible for certifying teachers with appropriate credentials on successful completion of their training

programme and teaching probation. The respondents affirmed that professional certification was an indicator of qualification in a particular area of specialisation or programme. Indeed, certification is one of the gate-passes to the corridors of the professional teachers' community.

Professional experience: The respondents also cited experience as an important attribute in cultivating teacher professional identity in Tanzania. They indicated that a certified teacher is supposed to work for some time before gaining the stature of a professional teacher.

Adherence to a professional code of conduct: The research participants acknowledged the importance of a code of professional teacher conduct. The enforcement of a professional code of conduct by a professional body, they said, can preserve and sustain the sanctity associated with the teaching profession in addition to ensuring that its members rendered verifiable quality services. In fact, they were of the view that the code of professional conduct can serve as both a custodian of the values of the professions and a deterrent for members bent on contravening the code through, for example, indecency, fraud in student assessment, or abuse of their authority as teachers by getting involved in sexual liaisons with their students.

Membership in a professional association: The respondents also indicated that every teacher must be a member of a professional association. Such membership in a professional association was seen as central to cultivating teacher professional identity. As one of the respondents put it:

> […] *Why do other professions like engineering have professional associations? If the person has training, has internship, why should someone practice without membership to a professional body? I think it is because they want to protect their profession from being tarnished by un-professionals; they want to maintain quality services* (Senior Lecturer).

The inference is that professional associations not only bring together individuals with shared common professional interests but also foster professional etiquette and standards that improve and sustain the cherished image of a given profession.

Professional humility: The university lecturer respondents identified humility among teachers as vital in cultivating a positive teacher professional identity in Tanzania. The respondents said that teachers with humility should be self-critical, eager to learn, helpful and available to their students and colleagues, and devoid of arrogance, egotism and self-aggrandisement.

The other attributes the respondents identified as characterising teacher professional identity included loving the teaching job, loving the students and serving as role models to the students, other teachers and the community at large.

In other words, teacher professional identity is defined largely by both external and internal attributes. The external attributes include certification, teaching experience or membership in a professional association. And the internal attributes embody the drive to conduct oneself

ethically. On the whole, these professional attributes draw upon a professional code of conduct and commitment to provide good service to the students.

6.2 How does the perception vary between categories of lecturers?

The perception of university lecturers regarding the teacher professional identity was deemed necessary to establish whether there was a variation based on the categories of the research participants in terms of rank, gender, or professional specialisation.

Gender: In order to determine the perceptions of the lecturers on teacher professional identity from a gender perspective, data from the interviews and questionnaires were analysed separately by gender. Information in Fig.1a is a summary of the research findings from a gender perspective.
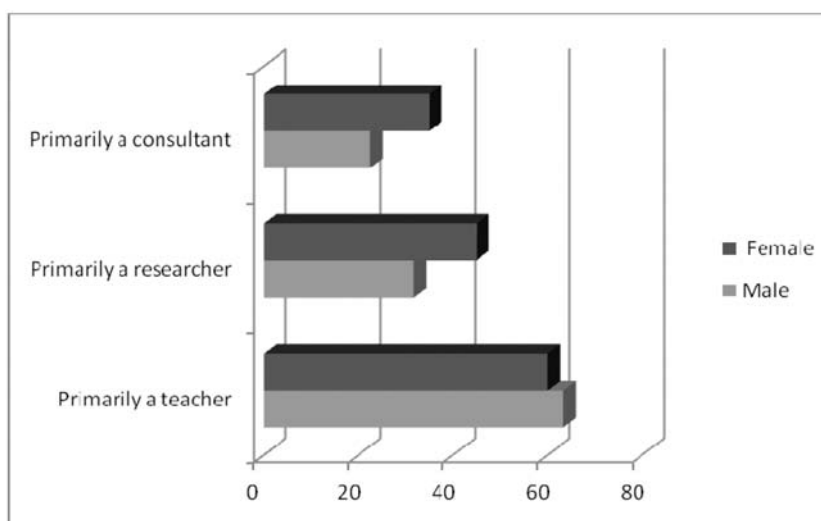

Fig. 1a: Gender-based Self-perception of Professional Identity

The findings show that male respondents tended to identify themselves more as teachers than anything else. Female respondents, on the other hand, tended to identify themselves as researchers and consultants. Nevertheless, for both male and female respondents, consultancy (and services to the community) featured last. One can deduce that the respondents were not as activein consultancies as they were in other University roles—teaching and research.

Academic specialisation: The participants' expertise or specialisation was also used as a parameter to determine their perception of teacher professional identity. Information in Fig.1b is a summary regarding their perceptions on the basis of each faculty member's academic specialisation.
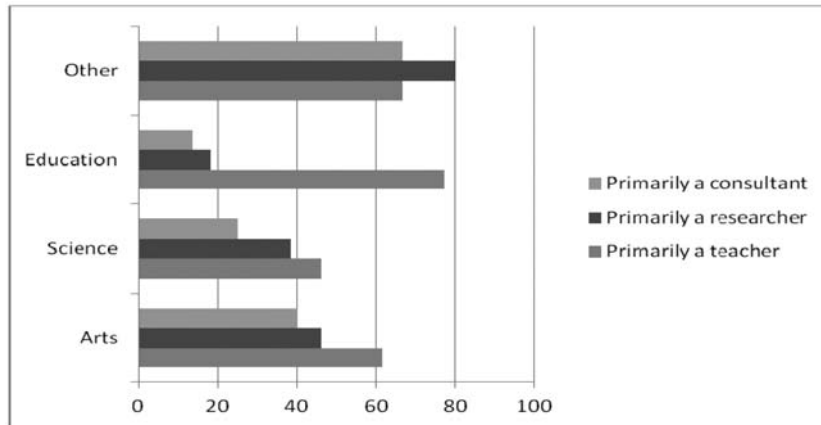
Fig. 1b: Academic Specialisation-based Self-perception

Data in Fig. 1b suggests the following observations. Although there were slight variations across academic specializations, the academic staff identified themselves first and foremost as teachers. Unlike other academic members of staff, the respondents from the Faculties and School of Education (77.3%) identified themselves more as teachers than as researchers (18.2%), or as consultants[1] (13.6%). This was also the case with the academic staff in the College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS) and the College of Natural and Applied Sciences (CONAS). However, there was a significant change in perception among respondents from other disciplines, such as the University of Dar es Salaam School of Business Studies (UDBS). In the UDBS category, the respondents identified themselves more as researchers (80.0%) than as teachers (66.7%) or consultants (66.7%). It is notable that even their identification with consultancy was far higher than indicated other categories of the University staff who took part in the study. One possible explanation is that academic members of staff in CASS and CONAS were generally initially trained as teachers. In fact, their academic units had components integrated in the BA and BSc with Education teacher education and training programmes.

Staff academic rank: As already indicated, the faculty respondents were drawn from tutorial assistants, the lowest ranking teaching staff, with professors, being the highest ranking faculty at the University. The academic rank helped to establish the perceptions of university lecturers from all the academic categories. Information in Fig.1c provides a summary of the perceptions of these respondents on the basis of their academic rank.

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1 According to the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) (2007), the concept of consultancy embodies service to the public. In this regard, "consultancy (and service to the public) generates income supplements to staff and therefore helps to retain them at the University and reduce the brain drain from the University. It enhances linkage of the University with the productive sector. Through University-industry collaboration, the University comes in contact with the society and the real drawbacks hindering productivity. Consultancy also maintains contact with industrial and political developments relevant for the various academic fields". From the foregoing, there is little doubt that consultancies are a source of revenues and income to the University and individual lecturers. Specifically, in addition, every University don is expected to undertake "consultancy" alongside research and teaching. As such, this conceptualization is 'parochial' in character; therefore its use in this paper does not indeed intend to demean what other scholars hold about it.
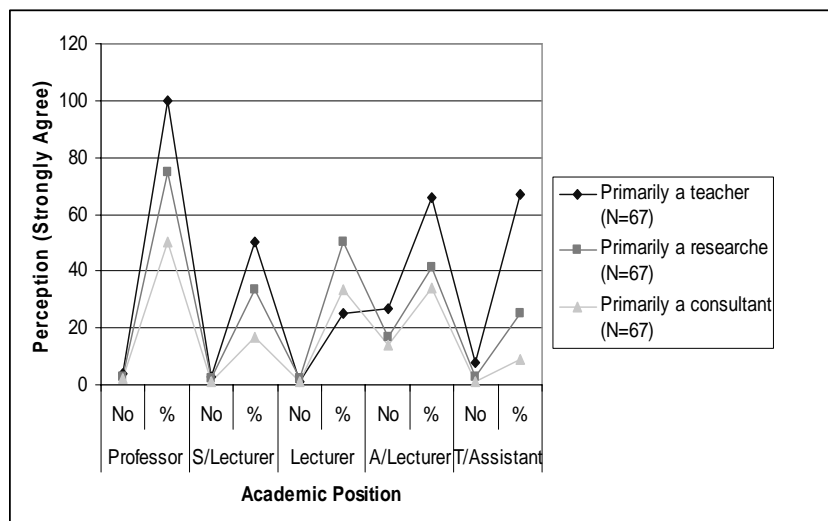
Fig. 1c: Academic Rank-Based Self-perception of Professional Identity

From Fig 1c, we can make the following observation. Regardless of the academic rank, the university lecturer respondents tended to consider themselves primarily as teachers. The reasons they provided varied according to the respondents' teaching experience and academic specialisation. The professors and senior lecturers in their responses regarded themselves more as teachers than researchers or consultants because they spend more time teaching and less time undertaking research and consulting activities.

Also, the faculty respondents specialising in natural and applied sciences tended to regard themselves more as teachers than researchers and consultants. In addition to having a heavy teaching load, this perception can be attributed to the research environment in the university and the country at large, which is generally not conducive for promoting and sustaining research among these science-based teaching professionals. For example, there are no chemical industries, to enable them to provide consultancy and put their research ideas into practice. Another stumbling block, as senior academics indicated, was limited research funding, with proposals submitted to solicit funding not even getting any feedback:

I am more of a teacher and I like the teaching part. Concerning research, we are writing proposals on very important research topics with significant implications in our society but we don't get any feedback, so why should I keep on writing research proposals? I know it is important that we should research for us to publish [and gain academic promotions]; some of the proposals are not even being implemented. There is no research without funding as research requires money for it to be effected. So, I would say, research is hindered by the fact that we don't get funding, let alone feedback on our proposals (Associate Professor Interviewee).

The respondents also raised the issue of the lack of transparency in the allocation of research funds. With regard to consultancy, senior academics complained that the 25 percent

consultancy fee, set by the University Consultancy Bureau for every consultancy undertaken, was too high.

As for Assistant Lecturers and Tutorial Assistants, they indicated in their responses that they regarded themselves primarily as teachers. Unlike other categories of University faculty, this junior faculty had even fewer research and consultancy opportunities due to their inexperience and the fact that they had yet to establish themselves in their field to have useful contacts and recognition. At the University of Dar es Salaam, such lower ranking academics tend to draw on limited research endeavours that were part of the fulfilment of the research component of their undergraduate or Masters Studies.

6.3 How does professional identity vary across time?

The majority of respondents believed that their teacher professional identity had changed over time as the data in Fig.2 illustrates.
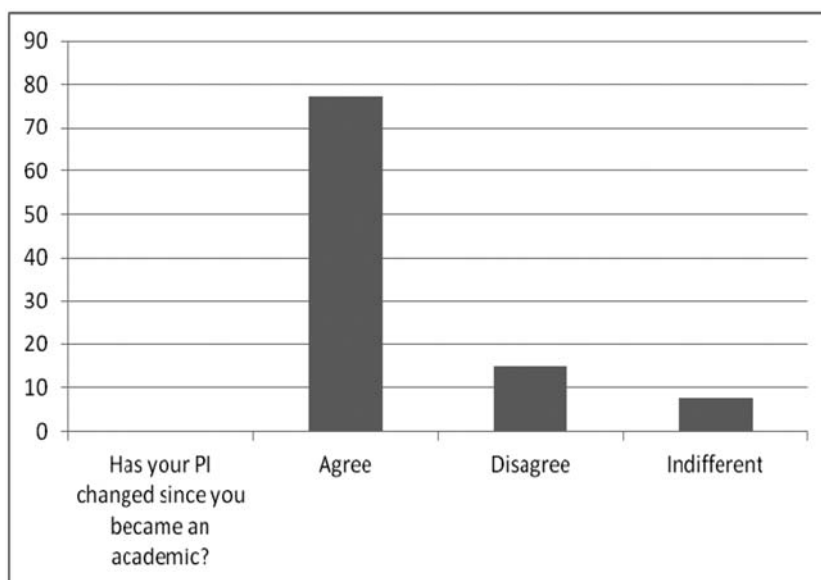

Fig.2: Change of Professional Identity

As the data suggests, 77.2 percent of the respondents expressed the view that their professional identity had changed. Ranked according to the frequency of occurrence, factors which contributed to the change of identity were seen as exposure to new challenges, interaction with colleagues, interaction with students, experience in teaching, training in content, training in pedagogy, interaction with mentors, access to and use of new educational technology, and attendance at short professional courses. In particular, the respondents identified training in pedagogy, access and use of educational technology and attending short courses as significant influencing factors that had helped to make a difference. On the whole, however, most of the respondents acquired their professional teaching identity through practice, that is, the process of carrying out their teaching duties. The opportunities to benefit from meaningful short courses

on teaching and new teaching media, which the respondents identified as helping to make a difference, were rather limited for many faculty members across the entireestablishment of the University of Dar es Salaam. The respondents also said that professional identity was also molded by self-discipline, personal effort, and international exposure through workshops, sabbatical leaves and joint research works and publications.

6.4 To what extent have the quality assurance practices influenced the construction of professional identity?

The academic staff respondents were also asked to share their views on the concept of quality assurance at the University of Dar es Salaam, its relationship to fostering teacher professional identity and the three cardinal academic roles. The goal was to gauge whether quality assurance promoted or hindered professional teacher development. The outcome based on their responses suggests that the members of the faculty had positively embraced the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) as illustrated by Fig. 3.
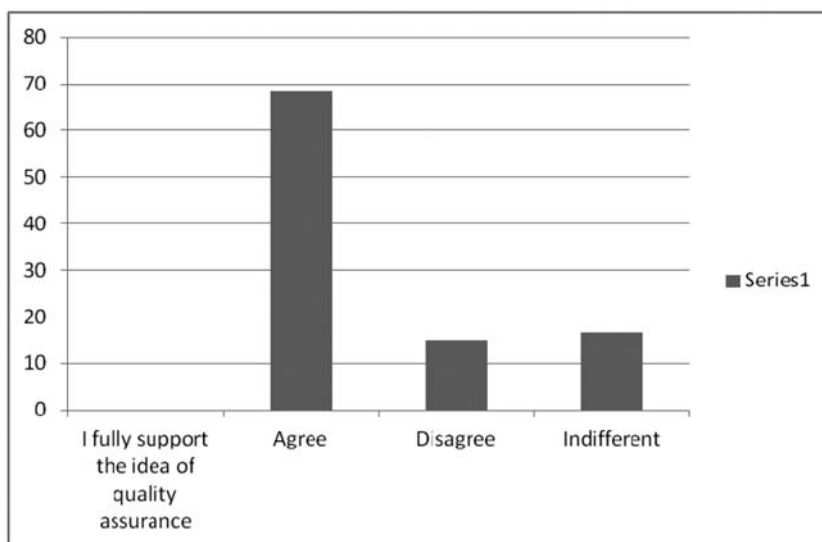

Fig. 3: Support for Internal Quality Assurance

The idea of internal quality assurance is associated with control of the quality of products, standardised performance, and accountability to stakeholders such as students, parents, and the general public. And yet, some respondents had some misgivings about IQA. In fact, these respondents were hostile to how IQA was being enforced by the University. As one of the respondents explained from experience:

The idea of quality assurance is definitely good because you need to control the quality of whatever products or programme you are offering. But it is equally important that whenever you do it you should be systematic. I know during the 1990s we also had quality assurance whereby heads of section or departments or tutors would come and sit-in at the back of the class and listen to what one was teaching. After attending to you, they

would call you and tell you about your teaching or approach; they would tell you where to improve and that sort of things. These checks were not like people coming in secretly, and listening to whatever you are doing without notifying you, like auditing. It was something like volunteering, and it was handled in a friendly atmosphere. That was something that I liked very much. ...there has to be quality assurance, but, the thing is, it sounds like catching them when unaware. I feel very uncomfortable when someone walks in while I'm teaching, and standing at the back of my class without notifying me beforehand. I don't like that. The use of students' evaluation forms is also subjective because whenever you are strict they are not going to get negative assessments. They will not give you the marks that you deserve. ... I really don't really like the classroom testing way of observation... (Professor Interviewee).

In fact, the implementation of IQA at the University is generally adversely affected by the incompetence of some of the officers appointed to undertake the job, as some of the respondents pointed out. To redress the situation, the respondents recommended that a more systematic University-wide sensitisation of academic staff at all levels be undertaken. The respondents also said that there was a need to incorporate issues of common understanding of professional teaching and the use of professionals well-versed in curriculum issues, psychology and educational management in these IQA. On the whole, the general consensus was that the IQA approach at the University should be research-based and more innovative, with systematic induction being provided to newly-recruited staff.

7. Conclusion and Implications

This study sought to establish the contribution of teacher professional identity to quality assurance in Tanzania. The research findings show that academic members of staff at the University of Dar es Salaam identify themselves primarily as teachers rather than lecturers. The research and consultancy components are generally secondary. The perceptions vary according to gender, academic specialisation, and seniority. The respondents said teacher professional identity is defined by both external and internal attributes. External attributes include certification, teaching experience or membership in a professional association. And internal forces draw on the internal drive for one to conduct oneself ethically as guided by commitment to teaching and adherence to an established professional code of conduct. Also, it was established that changes in teacher professional identity are associated with exposure to new challenges, interaction with colleagues, mentors and students, teaching experience, training in content and pedagogy, as well as access to and use of new educational technology, and short courses. On the whole, the respondents fully supported the idea of internal quality assurance (IQA) because it helps to enhance education quality. Their reservations focused on how IQA was being implemented at the University which; they want the implementation of IQA improved in order to make quality assurance more meaningful in the definition of one's professional

teaching identity. In line with the suggestions of the respondents, this study concludes that there is a need for a more systematic University-wide sensitisation of academic staff, more sharing of a common understanding of professional teaching, and more use of professionals well-versed in the curriculum, psychology and educational management in the IQAs, as well as systematic induction of newly-recruited staff.

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