

Original Article

The influence of physical education teachers' demographic variables on compliance with the professional code of ethics and conduct in Tanzania

MABAGALA STEPHEN

Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, TANZANIA

Published online: December 30, 2014

(Accepted for publication December 26, 2014)

DOI:10.7752/jpes.2012.04096;

Abstract:

Physical Education teachers encounter situation of making ethical decisions while they inculcate into the learners the required values, skills and knowledge both in theory and practical lessons. Since physical education lessons involve close interactions between teachers and students, teachers need to be guided by the Professional Code of ethics and conduct. However, compliance with professional code of ethics and conduct may vary depending on physical education teachers' demographic characteristics of age, education level, gender, marital status and teaching experience. This study investigated the influence of physical education teachers' demographic characteristics on compliance with professional code of ethics and conduct in Tanzania. Descriptive survey design was utilized for this study and was conducted in secondary schools and teachers' colleges that had physical education and sport programmes. Purposive sampling was adopted to select PE teachers. Participants were 52 physical education teachers. The instrument of this study was developed by the researcher based on the Tanzania's public service regulations and literature review. Results revealed that PE teachers complied with professional code of ethics and conduct at high level ($M = 4.27$, $SD = .30$), there were no significant differences in compliance levels among physical education teachers across age ($p = .868$), gender ($p = .502$), marital status ($p = .208$) and teaching experience ($p = .469$). However, significant differences in compliance levels among physical education teachers were observed across their education levels ($p = .002$). It was concluded that the level of education is a determinant factor for compliance with professional code of ethics and conduct. It was recommended that there is a need to strengthen professional development courses for teachers and emphasize the teaching of moral and professional ethics in the teacher education programs. Moreover, studies should be conducted to understand the influence of institutional variables on physical education teachers' compliance with professional code of ethics and conduct in Tanzania.

Key words: physical education teachers, demographic variables, influence, compliance, professional code of ethics, code of conduct

Introduction

Physical education (PE) teachers encounter situation of making ethical decisions while they inculcate into the learners the required values, skills and knowledge both in theory and practical lessons (Hind & Palmer, 2007). PE lessons are usually done in theory and practice in and outside the classroom context. At times PE teachers act as coach and this aspect may compel them to travel outside the school environment especially during interschool competitions. Because of the nature of PE and sport, teachers and students develop relationships which may be multidimensional and continuous. As such, PE teachers need to be guided by the Professional Code of Ethics and Conduct (PCEC). This is because of the power teachers have over their students. Some teachers may exploit students if they are not guided by ethical standards. Studies have indicated that the teaching profession and of PE in particular is prone to abuse. For example, Ozbeck (2007) and Bennel (2004) show increase in ethics abuses such as sexual harassment and abuse in interschool sports competitions. In Tanzania, anecdotal allegations concerning incidences of sexual harassment and abuse during and after school sport, unsportsmanship behaviour during intramural and interschool competitions that involve PE teachers are rampant though documents are scarce.

A study by Anangisye and Barrett (2005) on professional identity and misconduct looked at the perspectives of Tanzanian teachers and found out that teacher misconduct and unprofessionalism, together with corruption amongst educational administrators, threaten to undermine initiatives to improve educational quality in many low-income countries, including most of sub-Saharan Africa. They argue that approaches to advance ethical standards must be established on an understanding of the positive professional models to which educators aspire (Anangisye & Barret, 2005).

Professional ethics is the entire set of general regulations considering the jobs performed by the members of the profession in an ethical way and complied with by most of the members (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005). The main aims of the code of ethics for teachers are to transform the behaviour of the members in the teaching profession to the most useful state, preserve public interest, protect the profession, discipline the members, guide and be a source of help for teachers in their daily professional duties (Campbell, 2000). The main objectives are to enhance commitment, dedication and efficiency of service among members of the profession (Van Nuland & Khandelwal, 2006). The professional code of ethics also provides self-disciplinary guidelines for the members of the profession by creating norms of professional conduct. Furthermore, the PCEC aims at obtaining the community's confidence by emphasizing the social responsibilities of the profession towards the community (Van Nuland & Khandelwal, 2006).

PE teachers make moral judgments and express their values as they perform their academic core duties and extracurricular activities. Therefore, they are supposed to be committed to their professional standards as they propagate ideas, knowledge and skills to learners, and as they interact with learners in and outside the class context. However, commitment to the PCEC may vary depending on PE teachers' age, education level, gender, marital status and teaching experience. Studies focusing on (PE) teachers' ethics and conduct in Tanzania focusing on the influence of demographic characteristics are still scarce. This is the gap this study intended to fill.

Objectives

The main objective of the study was to determine PE teachers' level of compliance with the PCEC as influenced by their demographic characteristics. Specifically, the study thought to determine the influence of PE teachers' age, education level, gender, marital status, and teaching experience on compliance with the PCEC

Hypotheses

Ho₁: There would be no significant difference in PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC across their age categories.

Ho₂: There would be no significant difference in PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC across their education levels.

Ho₃: There would be no significant difference between male and female PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC

Ho₄: There would be no significant difference in PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC across their marital status.

Ho₅: There would be no significant differences in PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC in relation to their teaching experience

Method

This study utilised a descriptive survey research design. The method was suitable for this study because it allowed freedom for the respondents to express their views regarding their compliance with the PCEC. This study was carried out in Tanzania in secondary schools and teachers' colleges that had PE and sport programmes. The target population of the study was the PE and sports teachers from institutions that offered PE programmes at secondary schools and teachers' colleges in Tanzania.

Participants

This study comprised a sample 52 PE teachers. The criteria for selecting respondents were determined by presence of PE programmes and involvement in PE lessons.

Procedure

The instruments used for data collection were close-ended questionnaires. Closed-ended questionnaire items required participants to evaluate Physical Education (PE) teachers' compliance with the professional codes of ethics and conduct on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5), agree (4), no opinion (3), disagree (2) to strongly disagree (1). After administering the questionnaires, during coding and data entry the measures of choice were rearranged as full compliance (5), high compliance (4), moderate compliance (3), little compliance (2) and non-compliance (1) due to the fact that the level of following the code of ethics and conduct were evaluated. Before actual data collection, the instruments were pre-tested to determine the reliability of the questionnaires. Test-retest method was used at an interval of two weeks. The Pearson correlation was then computed and the reliability of 0.78 was obtained.

Permission for data collection was sought from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training in Tanzania. A permit to conduct the research was also sought from regional and district administrative secretaries in Tanzania. The researcher used research assistants to collect data. Follow-ups were made to ensure that respondents receive the questionnaires and make returns. For each of the closed ended questionnaires, the respondents were required to tick (✓) the answers that best represented their views out of the choices provided.

Data collection and analysis Data collected from the questionnaires were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme, version 20. Descriptively, the data obtained were calculated in percentages, means and standard deviations for easy interpretation of the information. Inferentially,

independent t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test significant mean differences between variables at 0.05 level of significance, while Tukey post hoc test was employed to further explain significant mean differences.

Results

PE Teachers' Level of Compliance with the Professional Code of Ethics and Conduct (PCEC)

The research objective was intended to find out the extent of compliance of Physical Education (PE) teachers with the professional code of ethics and conduct in Tanzania. To do this, items related to the code of ethics and conduct were presented. The items highlighted the code of ethics and conduct for PE teachers in the dimensions of professionalism, responsibility, care and respect, as well as integrity and honesty. Items for each dimension were summed up using the Scientific Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to get the total compliance for each particular dimension. Then the four dimensions were summed up to get overall compliance. The responses ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Physical education teachers were asked to evaluate and respond appropriately on the manner they exhibited their behaviour for each item.

After the respondents had filled the questionnaires, responses were rearranged as full compliance (5), high compliance (4), moderate compliance (3), little compliance (2) and non-compliance (1). The highest scores on the likert scale implied full compliance while the lowest scores implied non-compliance. Results are presented in

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics on PE Teachers' Compliance with the PCEC in Tanzania

Variable	M	SD
Professionalism	4.30	.37
Responsibility	4.25	.42
Care and Respect	4.18	.35
Integrity and Honesty	4.35	.40
Total Compliance	4.27	.30

As Table 1 indicates, overall PE teachers responded that they complied with the PCEC at high level (M = 4.27, SD = .30).

PE Teachers' Compliance with the PCEC across Demographic Variables

The research objective was to examine the relationship between demographic variables and PE teachers' extent of compliance with the PCEC in Tanzania. The hypothesis stated that there would be no significant difference between PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC across demographic variables. The hypothesis was further split into sub-hypotheses that captured the variables of age, level of education, gender, marital status and teaching experience.

PE Teachers' Compliance with the PCEC across Age Categories

The research objective was to examine the relationship between age and PE teachers' extent of compliance with the PCEC in Tanzania. It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference between PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC across their age categories. Data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Data on PE Teachers' Compliance with PCEC across their Age Categories

Age Groups	n	Mean	SD
25-30 years	19	4.25	.30
31-35 years	8	4.21	.39
36-40 years	6	4.22	.16
41-45 years	10	4.32	.33
45+ years	9	4.34	.36
Total	52	4.27	.30

Results in Table 2 indicate that all PE teachers irrespective of their age categories reported high level of compliance (M = 4.27, SD = .30). However, respondents of 45 years and above had a relatively higher level of compliance (M = 4.34, SD = .36) than the others. Results also show that mean differences of compliance level across age categories were very small. This implies that respondents had common opinions on compliance with the PCEC. In order to determine whether there were significant differences among the subjects across the age categories, a one-way ANOVA was computed as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3. One-way ANOVA to Test the Statistical Significance Difference between Means of PE Teachers' Compliance with the PCEC across Age Categories

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.121	4	.030	.312	.868
Within Groups	4.552	47	.097		
Total	4.673	51			

* $p < .05$

Results in Table 3 show that there were no significant differences across the five age categories [$F(4, 47) = .312, p = .868$]. Therefore, the sub-hypothesis that there would be no significant difference in PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC across their age categories was not rejected. It was revealed that all the five age categories had high levels of compliance with the PCEC and their compliance was not based on age.

PE Teachers' Compliance with the PCEC across their Educational Levels

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC across their levels of education. Data are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Data on PE Teachers' Compliance with PCEC across their Educational Levels

Education Level	n	M	SD
Certificate	4	3.96	.28
Diploma	15	4.29	.25
Degree	31	4.26	.28
Postgraduate	2	4.93	.10
Total	52	4.27	.30

Results from Table 4 indicate that respondents who had postgraduate degrees complied fully ($M = 4.93, SD = 0.10$). The level of compliance with the PCEC by the degree and diploma holders was high ($M = 4.26, SD = .28$ & $M = 4.29, SD = .25$ respectively) whilst respondents with certificate level of education had moderate level of compliance with the PCEC ($M = 3.96, SD = .28$). These mean differences imply that compliance with the PCEC was related to the education level of respondents. To determine if there were significant differences in the observed mean differences among the four education levels, a one-way ANOVA was computed. Results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. One-way ANOVA to Test the Statistical Significance Difference between Means of PE Teachers' Compliance with the PCEC across Educational Levels

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.271	3	.424	5.976	.002
Within Groups	3.402	48	.071		
Total	4.673	51			

* $p < .05$

The results in Table 5 show that compliance with the professional code of ethics and conduct differed significantly across the four education levels [$F(3, 48) = 5.976, p = .002$]. To further examine the magnitude of the differences, a post hoc analysis using Tukey HSD was conducted as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Tukey HSD Post Hoc Results for PE Teachers' Compliance with the PCEC across Levels of Education

Educational Level (I)	Educational Level (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Certificate	Diploma	-.33029	.14982	.137
	Degree	-.29869	.14144	.164
	Postgraduate	-.97187*	.23056	.001
Diploma	Certificate	.33029	.14982	.137
	Degree	.03160	.08374	.981
	Postgraduate	-.64158*	.20041	.013
Degree	Certificate	.29869	.14144	.164
	Diploma	-.03160	.08374	.981
	Postgraduate	-.67319*	.19423	.006
Postgraduate	Certificate	.97187*	.23056	.001
	Diploma	.64158*	.20041	.013
	Degree	.67319*	.19423	.006

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Results in Table 6 reveal that there were significant differences in the level of compliance with the PCEC across PE teachers' levels of education. Postgraduate holders differed significantly with holders of other

levels of education: certificate holders (.97187, $p = .001$), diploma holders (.64158, $p = .013$), and degree holders (.67319, $p = .006$).

However, the results also reveal that there were no significant differences in the level of compliance with the PCEC between certificate and diploma holders (-.33029, $p = .137$) and certificate and degree holders (-.29869, $p = .981$). Furthermore, there was no significant difference between diploma and degree holders (.03160, $p = .981$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that there would be no significant difference in PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC across their educational levels was rejected. Significant differences were observed that PE teachers with the highest level of education (postgraduate) differed significantly with the other three levels of education. PE teachers with postgraduate qualification complied fully with the PCEC.

PE Teachers' Compliance with the PCEC across their Gender

As far as gender was concerned, the sub- hypothesis stated that there would be no significant difference between male and female PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC. Results are presented in table 7.

Table 7. Descriptive Data and t-Test for PE Teachers' Compliance with PCEC across their Gender

Gender	n	M	SD	t-Value
Male	41	4.26	.31	.502
Female	11	4.33	.30	
Total	52	4.27	.30	

* $p < .05$

Data in Table 7 reveal that both male ($M = 4.26$, $SD = .31$) and female ($M = 4.33$, $SD = .30$) complied with the PCEC at high levels. However, female's compliance level was relatively higher than that of male. This might have been due to the fact that females see themselves as mothers and therefore try their best to be well-mannered. To determine whether the difference was significant or not, an independent t-test was conducted and results indicated that there was no significant difference [$t(50) = -.677$, $p = .502$] in compliance with the PCEC between male PE teachers ($M = 4.26$, $SD = .31$) and female PE teachers ($M = 4.33$, $SD = .30$). Therefore, the null hypothesis that there would be no significant difference between male and female PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC was not rejected. The PE teachers complied with the PCEC at high levels irrespective of their gender.

PE Teachers' Compliance with the PCEC across their Marital Status

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC across their marital status. Results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Descriptive Data and t-Test for PE Teachers' Compliance with PCEC across their Marital Status

Marital Status	n	M	SD	t-Value
Single	15	4.19	.29	.208
Married	37	4.30	.30	
Total	52	4.27	.30	

* $p < .05$

Table 8 indicates that although both single and married PE teachers had a high level of compliance, married PE teachers complied more ($M = 4.30$, $SD = .30$) than single PE teachers ($M = 4.19$, $SD = .29$). One possible explanation for married PE teachers to score higher on compliance is that married people are expected to advise, guide and counsel the young ones (Mwisukha, 2006) because of their status as parents or guardians. To determine whether the difference was significant or not, an independent t-test was conducted. Results indicate that there was no significant difference [$t(50) = -1.276$, $p = .208$] in compliance with PCEC between single ($M = 4.19$, $SD = .29$) and married ($M = 4.30$, $SD = .30$) PE teachers. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there would be no significant difference in PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC across their marital status was not rejected.

PE Teachers' Compliance with PCEC in Relation to their Teaching Experience

It was hypothesized that there would be no significant difference in PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC in relation to their teaching experience. Results are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. PE Teachers' Compliance with PCEC in Relation to their Teaching Experience

Teaching Experience	n	M	SD
1-5 years	30	4.26	.31
6-10 years	9	4.24	.27
11-15 years	4	4.14	.12
15+ years	9	4.40	.38
Total	52	4.27	.30

Table 9 indicates that all PE teachers irrespective of their teaching experience complied with the PCEC at high levels ($M = 4.27$, $SD = .30$) although there were slight variations amongst groups. To determine whether there were significant mean differences across PE teachers with varying years of experience or not, a one-way ANOVA was computed as shown in Table 10.

Table 10. One-way ANOVA to Test the Statistical Significance Difference between Means of PE Teachers' Compliance with the PCEC across Teaching Experience

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.238	3	.079	.859	.469
Within Groups	4.435	48	.092		
Total	4.673	51			

* $p < .05$

Results in Table 10 show that compliance with the PCEC did not differ significantly across the four groups of PE teachers for varying years of teaching experience [$F(3,48) = .859$, $p = .469$]. Therefore, the null sub hypothesis that there would be no significant differences in PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC in relation to their teaching experience was not rejected.

Discussion

The findings in the current study show that PE teachers in Tanzania complied with the professional code of ethics and conduct at high level in all the dimensions that were measured. This is an indication that their behaviours were consistent with their stated values and that they exhibited professionalism, were honest, ethical, responsible and trustworthy. Mahony (2009) contends that teachers as professionals are expected to uphold a duty of care, being responsible and acting in the best interests of their students.

The findings revealed that there were no significant differences in PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC across their age categories. The findings of this study concur with those of Holloman (1999) who examined personal and school-related variables associated with first year school teachers' compliance with professional codes and found no statistical significant differences between areas of compliance and values of age. However, the results are in contrast with those of Sezgin (2008), who indicated that age was related to teachers' compliance with their professional duties. According to him, teachers who are older tend to be satisfied with their jobs hence are able to adjust and comply with their work environment. Sezgin (2008) also found that age is related to organizational commitments. Other scholars like Shahiri (1999) and Lau, Yuen and Chan (2005) also found significant relationship between age and compliance. Mooij (2010) examined disciplinary behaviour among secondary school teachers and found that young teachers scored higher than older teachers on the disciplinary items that expressed social partnerships or collaboration between teachers.

The current study also shows that there were significant differences in the level of compliance with the PCEC across PE teachers' levels of education. These results are in line with findings of other several studies. For instance, the results concur with those of Sezgin (2009) who found a relationship between teachers' organizational commitment and educational level. These findings also concur with those of Jones (2006) who found that teachers who have less training experience face difficulty in complying with their professional duties. Day (2004) found that the concept of professionalism in teaching is understood through the level of education. He maintains that professionalism concerns professional qualifications which are accumulated from participating in professional development initiatives. These ideas are supported by Sezgin (2009) who contends that with the expert knowledge gained through the level of education, teachers are expected to reflect their knowledge through conduct. Ifant and Fotopoulou (2011) too found out that the years of study at the in-service training school is closely related with the upgrading of teachers' professionalism.

The findings in the current study also revealed that there was no significance difference in compliance levels between male and female PE teachers. Both male and female physical education teachers complied with the professional code of ethics and conduct at high levels. These results concur with those of Holloman (1999) who examined personal and school-related variables associated with first year school teacher compliance with professional codes and found no statistical significant differences between areas of compliance and gender. However, the results are in contrast with those of Mooij (2010) who conducted a study on disciplinary behaviour among secondary school teachers and found that secondary school female teachers scored higher than male teachers on the disciplinary items that expressed social partnerships or collaboration between teachers.

Results indicate that there was no significant difference in PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC across their marital status. The findings show that PE teachers' compliance with the PCEC was not related to their marital status. These results are in line with those of Holloman (1999) who examined personal and school-

related variables associated with first year school teacher compliance with professional codes and found no statistical significant differences between areas of compliance and marital status.

Results also indicated that compliance with the PCEC did not differ significantly across the four groups of PE teachers for varying years of teaching experience. These results are in contrast with those of Lau, Yuen and Chan (2005) who found that as teachers grow older they tend to be more satisfied with their jobs, thus teachers tend to comply with their professional duties. The results also do not concur with those of Sezgin (2008) who found a relationship between teachers' organizational commitment and years of experience among the Turkish primary school teachers. Moreover, the findings are in contrast with those of Ifant and Fotopoulou (2011) who found out that teaching experience tends to affect teachers' perceptions about their profession. These contested results imply that teaching experience alone is not a measure of teachers' compliance with the PCEC.

Conclusions and recommendations

The findings of the current study have indicated that PE teachers in Tanzania comply with the PCEC at high level. Compliance with the PCEC is influenced by one's level of education. The findings call for professional development for (PE) teachers, strengthen professional development courses for teachers and emphasize the teaching of moral and professional ethics in the teacher education programs. Moreover, studies should be conducted to understand the influence of institutional variables on teachers' compliance with the PCEC in Tanzania.

References

- Anangisye, W. A. L., & Barrett, A. (2005). Professional identity and misconduct: Perspectives of Tanzanian teachers'. *Southern African Review of Education (SARE) with Education with Production (EWP)*, 11, 5-22.
- Bennel, P. (2004). Teacher motivation in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia: Knowledge and skills for development. London: Department of International Development.
- Campbell, E. (2000). Professional ethics in teaching: Towards the development of a code of practice. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 30(2), 203-222.
- Day, C. (2004). A passion for teaching. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Hind, E., & Palmer, C. (2007). A critical evaluation of the roles and responsibilities of the Physical Education teacher – perspectives of a student training to teach P.E. in Primary schools. *Journal of Qualitative Research in Sports Studies*, 1, 1-9.
- Holloman, H. L. (1999). Factors related to burnout in First year teachers in South Carolina, unpublished PhD thesis, University of South Carolina.
- Ifant, A. A., & Fotopoulou, V.S. (2011). Teachers' perception of professionalism and professional development: A case study in Greece. *World Journal of Education*, 1(1), 1-12.
- Jones, J. (2006). *Developing effective teacher performance*. London: P.C.P.
- Lau, P. S.Y., Yuen, M. T., & Chan, R. M. C. (2005). Do demographic characteristics make a difference to burnout among Hong Kong secondary school teacher? *Social Indicators Research*, 71, 491-516.
- Mahony, P. (2009). Should ought be taught? *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(1), 983-989.
- Mooij, T. (2010). Secondary school teachers' personal and school characteristics, experience of violence and perceived violence motives. Nijmegen, The Netherlands: Radboud University.
- Ozbek, O. (2007). The levels of compliance of physical education teachers with professional ethics codes. Retrieved on 12th August 2009 from <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED494885.pdf>
- Sezgin, F. (2009). Relationships between teacher organizational commitment, psychological hardiness and some demographic variables in Turkish primary schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 47(5), 630–651.
- Shahiri, A. R. (1999). Levels and sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among teachers in the state of Sarawak, Malaysia, in both Primary and secondary school. Unpublished PhD thesis.
- Tichenor, M. S., & Tichenor, J. M. (2005). Understanding teachers' perspectives on professionalism. *The Professional Educator*, 17, (1 & 2), 89-95.
- Van Nuland, S., & Khandelwal, B. P. (2006). *Ethics in education: The role of teacher codes Canada and South Asia*. Paris: UNESCO.