The Role of Work Organization in Teacher Training Projects: A Case Study from Bukavu, DRC

[1]Heritier OMBENI KALALIZI, [2]Sammuel CIMANUKA KARONGO

[1]Higher Institute of Agronomic and Veterinary Studies (ISEAV/ WALUNGU)

[2]Free University of the Great Lakes Countriesa

ABSTRACT

This paper examines how work organization influences the success of teacher training projects, using a case study from Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo. Although educational reform in Sub-Saharan Africa has focused heavily on access and equity, organizational structures remain an underexplored dimension in determining training outcomes. Drawing on a qualitative case study of a classroom management workshop for secondary school English teachers, the research reveals that poor task distribution, weak leadership, and ineffective time management significantly hinder project effectiveness and sustainability. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. Findings highlight the strategic importance of well-structured work environments characterized by role clarity, collaboration, supportive leadership, and effective resource use. This study calls for the strengthening of organizational competencies among educational actors as a prerequisite for improving teacher development and educational quality.

INTRODUCTION

In the ongoing efforts to improve educational quality in Sub-Saharan Africa, the organization of work within teacher training projects remains insufficiently addressed. While access and equity dominate the discourse, how tasks, time, leadership, and collaboration are structured in educational initiatives is equally vital. Recent studies show that effective project implementation in education hinges not only on resources but also on institutional capacity and organizational design (Snyder, 2021; Fullan & Quinn, 2020). This paper explores the role of work organization in shaping the outcomes of teacher training projects in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with a particular focus on a classroom management workshop conducted in 2023 for English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. Despite the presence of institutional support and training materials, such initiatives often struggle to achieve lasting impact due to fragmented planning and coordination. Our study investigates how organizational factors particularly leadership; delegation, time management, and collaboration influence the effectiveness of teacher training. The research addresses two key questions:

1. How does work organization shape the quality of training projects?
2. What are the essential components of effective work organization in educational project settings?

THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVES

Theoretical Foundations of Work Organization

Work organization refers to the way in which roles, tasks, time, and resources are structured to achieve project or institutional goals. In contemporary organizational theory, models such as Mintzberg's organizational configurations (1979), Bolman & Deal's four-frame model (2017), and sociotechnical systems theory (Trist & Bamforth, 1951) offer insights into how structures and processes influence performance. These frameworks emphasize the importance of aligning structure with context, fostering teamwork, and distributing authority appropriately. In the context of education, scholars like Leithwood et al. (2019) highlight how distributed leadership, participatory planning, and clear role allocation are critical in achieving teacher development goals. Similarly, Senge's (2006) concept of a "learning organization" underscores the need for adaptive, collaborative cultures in professional development settings.

Dimensions of Work Organization in Educational Projects

Key elements that affect the success of educational initiatives include:

- **Task distribution and role clarity**: Ambiguities in responsibilities often lead to inefficiencies and project delays (Bush, Bell, & Middlewood, 2019).
- **Leadership and decision-making**: Effective leadership provides vision, mobilizes teams, and ensures accountability (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).
- **Time management**: Timely delivery of training activities is essential, especially in resource-constrained environments (Gospel, 2003).
- **Collaboration and team dynamics**: Projects that encourage peer learning and shared decision-making tend to outperform hierarchical models (Gustavsen, 2011).
- **Working conditions and motivation**: Research shows that well-supported educators are more likely to adopt new practices effectively (Akar, 2018).

Despite growing attention to these issues globally, limited research addresses how such principles translate into teacher training contexts in fragile or under-resourced educational systems like that of Bukavu.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative case study design to investigate how work organization influences project performance. A classroom management training workshop held on May 10, 2023, under the Protestant schools' coordination in Bukavu, was selected due to its representativeness of typical training programs in the region and the logistical challenges it faced.

Data Collection

- **Interviews**: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 participants 3 project managers, 2 school administrators, and 5 teachers. These explored perceptions of coordination, leadership, and planning.
- **Observation**: The researcher conducted non-participant observation of the workshop, noting task execution, interaction patterns, and time allocation.
- **Document analysis**: Training schedules, institutional memos, and evaluation reports were reviewedto understand formal planning structures.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed through thematic coding using a hybrid inductive-deductive approach. Initial codes were drawn from literature (e.g., task delegation, leadership, time use), then refined based on emerging themes from the data.

Ethical Considerations

All participants provided informed consent. Data were anonymized, and the research adhered to ethical standards in qualitative educational research (BERA, 2018).

DISCUSSION

Organizational Gaps and Project Ineffectiveness

The data revealed major deficiencies in project organization. Project coordinators and facilitators juggled multiple roles, often without clear planning. This multitasking environment led to overrun schedules, unachieved objectives, and inconsistent follow-up. These findings confirm Gospel's (2003) observation that time mismanagement is a central barrier in project work.

- **Leadership and Communication Failures**

Leadership was found to be top-down and unclear. Teachers felt excluded from decision-making, reducing their engagement and sense of ownership. This contradicts findings by Leith wood et al. (2019), who stress the importance of inclusive leadership in educational change.

- **Weak Planning and Delegation Structures**

Project planning tools were either absents or not effectively used. There was limited strategic allocation of tasks and no formal monitoring mechanisms. Crimmann et al. (2010) argue that successful projects require both planning capacity and delegation competence both lacking in this case.

- **Working Conditions and Motivation**

Facilitators reported unclear expectations, limited logistical support, and irregular stipends. These conditions reduced their motivation and preparedness. Literature (Locke et al., 2007) supports that favourable working conditions significantly influence employee performance and project success.

- **Educational Sector Specificities**

Unlike traditional corporate settings, education involves high levels of professional autonomy and intrinsic motivation. However, in this case, that autonomy was constrained by rigid hierarchies and weak institutional support highlighting a disconnect between project goals and organizational culture.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to explore how work organization influences the planning, execution, and effectiveness of teacher training projects in the context of Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo. Through a case study of a classroom management training workshop, it became evident that structural and managerial weaknesses particularly in leadership, planning, task delegation, and time management play a decisive role in undermining the success of educational interventions. One of the key findings is that project

inefficiencies were not primarily due to resource scarcity, as is often assumed in Sub-Saharan African contexts, but rather to a lack of organizational competence and strategic coordination. Even with adequate materials and institutional backing, the absence of clearly defined roles, participatory planning, and supportive working conditions resulted in disengagement among teachers, delayed activities, and limited impact on classroom practices. Theoretically, this research reinforces the view that work organization is not a peripheral concern but a strategic pillar of educational development. When informed by contemporary frameworks such as distributed leadership, participatory governance, and adaptive planning work organization becomes a tool for empowering educators and fostering sustainable change. Conversely, when neglected, it exacerbates inefficiencies and perpetuates the systemic challenges that undermine educational quality in fragile settings.

Practically, the findings point to the urgent need for capacity-building initiatives targeting project managers, school leaders, and facilitators. These actors must be equipped with skills in organizational planning, communication, conflict resolution, and team management. Moreover, ministries of education and donor agencies must recognize that improving educational outcomes is contingent not only on curriculum and pedagogy but also on how projects are structured and managed on the ground. Future research should build on this study by conducting comparative case studies across different regions or countries, particularly within the Global South, to further investigate how organizational dynamics vary across educational ecosystems. Quantitative approaches could also be used to measure the impact of specific organizational interventions (e.g., leadership training, time management tools) on project outcomes. In conclusion, educational reforms that overlook the organizational dimension are unlikely to achieve long-term results. A rethinking of how teacher training projects are designed and implemented with work organization at the center is essential for transforming teaching and learning in contexts like Bukavu and beyond. Investing in people is critical but investing in how people work together may be even more so.

REFERENCES

1. Akar, H. (2018). The Relationships Between Quality of Work Life, School Alienation, Burnout, Affective Commitment, and Organisational Citizenship: A Study on Teachers. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 7(2), 169–180.
2. Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. E. (2017). *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership* (6th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
3. Bush, T., Bell, L., & Middlewood, D. (2019). *Principles of Educational Leadership and Management*.
4. Crimmann, A., Wießner, F., & Bellmann, L. (2010). *The German Work-Sharing Scheme: An Instrument for the Crisis*. International Labour Office.
5. Fullan, M., & Quinn, J. (2020). *Leading in a Culture of Change*.
6. Gospel, H. (2003). *Quality of Working Life: A Review on Changes in Work Organization, Conditions of Employment and Work-Life Arrangements*. International Labour Office.
7. Gustavsen, B. (2011). The Nordic Model of Work Organization. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, 2(4), 463–480.
8. Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School*. Teachers College Press.
9. Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2019). Seven Strong Claims About Successful School Leadership Revisited. *School Leadership & Management*, 39(1), 1–18.
10. Locke, R., Kochan, T., Romis, M., & Qin, F. (2007). Beyond Corporate Codes of Conduct: Work Organization and Labour Standards at Nike's Suppliers. *International Labour Review*, 146(1–2), 21–40.
11. Mintzberg, H. (1979). *The Structuring of Organizations: A Synthesis of the Research*. Prentice-Hall.
12. Senge, P. M. (2006). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*.

13. Snyder, H. (2021). Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines. *Journal of Business Research*, 104, 333–339.
14. Trist, E., & Bamforth, K. W. (1951). Some Social and Psychological Consequences of the Longwall Method of Coal-Getting. *Human Relations*, 4(1), 3–38.