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Original Article

## Setbacks of Form One Orientation Programme in Secondary Schools: Lessons from Moshi Rural District, Tanzania

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The study objective was to identify the specific setbacks of the Form One Orientation Programme in secondary schools within Moshi Rural. A mixed-methods study approach was employed, conducted in two phases: a qualitative and a quantitative phase, with an exploratory sequential design. Four secondary schools were involved, with a total of 37 participants, including 2 Heads of Schools (HOS), 1 District Secondary Education Officer (DSEO), and 2 Schools Quality Assurers (SQA) participated in phase one, and 32 teachers participated in phase two. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, unstructured observations and the closed-ended questionnaire. The study revealed key setbacks in implementing the Form One Orientation Programme, including the transfer of students during the Programme's implementation, managing overcrowded classrooms, late student reporting, and a lack of training for teachers and school heads in implementing and supervising the Programme. The study recommended future studies that could adopt a quantitative or mixed-methods approach, taking larger samples to assess the setbacks of the Form One Orientation Programme for the generalisation of findings and examine strategies for unlocking the barriers to the successful Form One Orientation Programme.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Form One Orientation Programme (FOP) in the education context is a global practice, playing a vital role in helping students effectively adapt to their new academic environments and minimising the setbacks associated with this transition. In Germany, the FOP is an important milestone aimed at ensuring students' successful transition from primary to secondary school, focusing on academic and social integration (Griebel & Berwanger, 2006). The FOP is not the same worldwide; its focus differs depending on the educational system of a given country.

In South Africa, the Form One Orientation Programme (FOP) offers psychological and motivational support to learners, helping them build confidence in adapting to their new educational environment (De Wit *et al.*, 2010). In Kenya, the orientation programme focuses on familiarising students with school rules and routines while also guiding potential career pathways (Sigei, 2013). These variations display how different educational contexts influence the design and objectives of FOPs to address the unique needs of students in each country. This demonstrates that for each country, FOPs are modified based on specific cultures, backgrounds, and educational contexts.

In Tanzania, the FOP was launched to address the English language barrier faced by secondary school students. Specifically designed for Form One students, the FOP aims to improve their English language proficiency, thereby ensuring that they can fully engage with the curriculum and resulting in better learning outcomes (TIE, 2014). The FOP is intended to offer intensive language training, familiarise students with academic English terms, and provide ongoing support to boost their confidence in English usage. This focus on language skills in form one class helps reduce learning

difficulties and smooth the shift to secondary schooling. According to the Education and Training Policy, the language of instruction in secondary schools is English (URT, 2024). As the FOP serves as a foundation to bridge the gap between primary and secondary education, there are significant setbacks that hinder its effectiveness in some schools (Murasi, 2013).

While studies such as Murasi (2013) in Dodoma have explored the setbacks of implementing the Form One Orientation Programme (FOP) in secondary schools in Dodoma, they might manifest differently in Moshi due to regional variations. The specific contexts of Moshi could result in unique barriers and experiences which may not be present in other places. The need to understand these differences was a crucial motive for undertaking the study in Moshi. The current study aimed to identify the setbacks hindering the implementation of the FOP in Moshi Rural and their impact on students' English language proficiency in secondary education. Handling these issues is crucial for improving student outcomes in English-medium classrooms and ensuring better preparation for future academic success, as an effective FOP should address the setbacks that may hinder its implementation and support students' adjustment.

This study aimed to identify the specific setbacks in secondary schools within Moshi Rural. The dynamics of FOP implementation in Moshi may differ due to local factors such as student demographics, administrative support, school management, and varying levels of resource allocation. These context-specific setbacks could further hinder the FOP in the district, highlighting the need for research on Moshi's unique educational setting. Understanding these setbacks is crucial for improving the implementation of the FOP, ensuring

that students make a successful shift to secondary schooling and maximise their learning potential.

### THEORETICAL STANCE

This study is grounded in Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), developed by Albert Bandura, which explores how individuals' behaviour is shaped by cognitive and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986). Central to SCT are the concepts of self-efficacy, self-regulation and observational learning, which are crucial in the FOP context. The school leaders with high self-efficacy are more likely to feel confident in their ability to overcome setbacks hindering the FOP. The self-regulation process is self-monitoring, which ensures that the Programme is effectively delivered, even when faced with setbacks.

The concept of observational learning could be realised particularly through collaboration and mentoring. Observing and learning from more experienced heads of schools can improve their strategies for supervising the FOP implementation. Additionally, environmental factors such as administrative support and available resources are critical to understanding how these elements either facilitate or hinder the FOP. Together, these components of SCT provide a comprehensive framework.

### METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative and quantitative research approach and an exploratory sequential design where data were collected into two phases: a qualitative and a quantitative phase. Phase one of data collection employed semi-structured interviews and unstructured observations, and phase two employed closed-ended questionnaires. This design was selected as it allows integration of qualitative in-depth exploration with quantitative breadth for validity, reliability and robustness of the study findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study was conducted in Moshi Rural, located in Kilimanjaro Region of Tanzania. A total of 37 participants from four secondary schools were

involved in the study, including 2 Heads of Schools (HoS), 2 School Quality Assurance Officers, and 1 District Education Officer in phase one and 32 subject teachers in phase two. Qualitative data were thematically analysed, involving coding and identifying key themes to uncover patterns related to the setbacks of the FOP, while quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 28 and Microsoft Excel, presented in descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, tables, and figures for data visualisation.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants directly involved in monitoring and supervising the FOP implementation in the secondary schools. Kombo & Tromp (2006) suggest selecting individuals who could provide detailed and relevant information based on their experiences in the supervision of the FOP. Miles & Huberman (1994) emphasise the importance of ensuring the sample contains relevant data, permits the transferability of results, and considers the potential for effective analysis. Such a small sample was selected from four low-performing schools to facilitate a thorough and detailed examination of the phenomenon under investigation due to constraints related to time and resources (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). Patton (1990) argues that in research, the number of respondents is less important than the quality of the selected participants, generating valid findings. The study ensured ethical adherence, such as asking for a research permit from the authorities, participants' informed consent, anonymity and ensuring confidentiality (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented according to the two phases of the study: the qualitative phase and the quantitative phase.

#### Phase 1: Qualitative phase

The study presents results in the following sub-themes, providing a detailed discussion.

### Form One Students' Transfers to Other Schools During FOP

The study found that many students were unable to fully attend the Form One Orientation Programme (FOP) in its entirety due to the complex process of transferring to other schools. Due to the geographical setbacks and administrative issues surrounding school placement, parents often request transfers to schools that are closer to their homes. These transfer requests are sometimes made before the FOP concludes, resulting in students missing out on the full duration of the Programme. In an interview, SQA1 explained this situation:

“... reallocation of students causes disturbance and difficulties in implementing the FOP... selection of students should be based on the distance from home...” (SQA 1).

Explaining this challenge, the DEO said:

“...All students must attend the FOP. However, parents have the right to choose schools for their children; hence, they are allowed to transfer their children if they think that joining the school will cause them a lot of inconvenience...” (DEO).

The finding above reveals that the authorities responsible for the placement of students in different secondary schools did not take geographical distance into account. Considering the geographical location of students would reduce the need for transfers while the FOP is progressing. This, in turn, would prevent students from missing out on the full duration of the FOP.

### Overcrowded Classrooms During the FOP

Through the interview and observation, the study revealed that overcrowded classrooms were a hurdle to the implementation of the FOP. Overcrowded classes in schools A and B showed a challenge to the implementation of the FOP. The classroom environments were not friendly enough to facilitate interaction between teachers and students. Expressing the challenge of classroom congestion

in secondary schools, the SQA 2 said in the interview:

“...lack of sufficient classrooms is a big problem for many schools. This results in overcrowded classes and consequently, poor teaching of the FOP...” (SQA 2).

The findings through classroom observation in Schools A and B showed overcrowded conditions. The challenge of inadequate infrastructure made approximately four students share a desk. Students in the classrooms were closely packed together, leaving little space for teachers to move or interact. The overcrowding caused discomfort for both students and teachers, making running the FOP difficult as teachers appeared to struggle managing the large number of students. The conditions observed establish that overcrowded classrooms in both schools challenge the effectiveness of the FOP. Thus, a lack of sufficient classroom space creates difficulty for the FOP to be taught successfully.

These findings align with Maganga's (2016) study, which found that many schools in the Ilala Municipality experienced classroom congestion, creating setbacks for teaching and learning. In such an environment, it is unrealistic to expect effective learning, as both teacher-student and student-student interactions are limited. Additionally, Murasi (2013) highlighted that overcrowded classrooms were a barrier to implementing the FOP. The researcher found that classes were too large for teachers to manage effectively. Overcrowding results in reduced interaction between teachers and students, making it difficult to facilitate the FOP.

### Students' Varied Reporting Time and Attending the FOP

The study found that some students reported late, either in the middle of or after the FOP had started. In some cases, students did not report until the FOP six-week period had ended, while it is required to be conducted soon after the school calendar begins. Some of these students missed the FOP or were only able to participate in the FOP partially. This created

setbacks for the effective implementation of the FOP, as student selection and posting were not managed within the school's administrative boundaries. Students who partially participated or missed the FOP entirely experienced inconsistencies in acquiring IL proficiency. As HoS B explained:

“...some students report late. The time for the FOP is to be extended to three months, or the selection of students is made early. There must be a time limit for students to report. Sanctions to latecomers can help...” (HoS B).

The above statement shows that students who joined the FOP mid-way or after it had started would be deprived of the opportunity to acquire English proficiency within the intended period. It requires students to attend a full dose of the FOP for six weeks. Regarding the reporting time, HoS A said:

“...Students' reporting times vary considerably. Some arrive in the morning, others in the afternoon. While some are punctual, many are late, with some arriving as much as two weeks after the school's opening date” (HoS A).

Therefore, it would be beneficial if the concerned authorities selected Form One students earlier. They should also set a clear deadline for all students to report, for instance, a few days before the start of the school term, to ensure that all students attend the FOP on time. The study found that the late reporting of students was caused, among other factors, by the transfer of students from one school to another. Many students preferred to study in schools closer to their homes, but were selected to attend more distant schools. As a result, parents spend a considerable amount of time trying to arrange transfers for their children.

### **Lack of Training in Implementing the FOP**

The study found that heads of schools and teachers lacked experience in teaching and managing the FOP, which suggests that both teachers and school heads require training for the effective

implementation of the Programme. When asked about the setbacks in supervising the FOP's implementation, the head of Secondary School B responded:

“... HOS need to be oriented; first on how to monitor the FOP and secondly, on coaching teachers who are the main implementers of the FOP ...” (HoS B).

Based on the above findings, it is evident that school heads must be properly oriented to effectively guide the teachers they supervise, ensuring better practices rather than relying on the traditional, routine approach to running the FOP. Previous studies have highlighted the need for teacher training in implementing the FOP in Tanzania (Faustin, 2014; Murasi, 2013). The district quality assurance officer also confirmed that training is a professional requirement. In response to the interview question about the setbacks encountered in supervising the FOP in schools, SQA 1 stated:

“...Many schools conduct the FOP based on experience, but today, almost everything has changed. Therefore, HOS should adopt new practices in implementing the FOP. This can be achieved by organising training for their teachers...” (SQA 1).

Founded on the view above, both teachers and school heads require regular training to update and broaden their understanding. Running the FOP is not solely a matter of experience, as students' needs and learning methods evolve. Training helps school leaders and teachers update their skills and equips them with the necessary tools to facilitate students' learning effectively. A study conducted by Murasi (2013) in Dodoma, Tanzania, supports these findings, stressing setbacks in FOP, including limited teacher facilitation skills. While insufficient English proficiency contributes to ineffective teaching strategies (Lyimo & Mapunda, 2016; Johanes, 2017).



The study by Yohana and Mwila (2022) highlights that the lack of seminars and training on proper FOP implementation has been identified as a significant challenge. Additionally, these setbacks extend to teachers and students' negative attitudes toward the programme. If these setbacks are not addressed, the FOP's intended objectives are unlikely to be achieved. Studies suggest that pre-service and in-service teachers to be oriented to the setbacks associated with the language of instruction in secondary schools (Lyimo & Mapunda, 2016). Apart from fore-identified challenges, the study by Yohana and Mwila (2022) identified key strategies in the FOP that can be used to enhance English language proficiency among students, including peer tutoring, which fostered collaboration and confidence, and positive teacher-student interactions that encouraged active participation. Additionally, student support through extra resources helped address individual learning challenges. These strategies emphasise the importance of collaboration in effective language acquisition during the FOP.

## Phase 2: Quantitative Results

Phase 1 themes informed for phase 2 questionnaires that aimed to quantify the results using 5 Likert rating scales: strongly agree, agree, neutral,

disagree, and strongly disagree. The analysis of overall results on barriers to the implementation of FOP reveals several significant setbacks. Transfers to other schools during the FOP were widely recognised as a major barrier, with a combined 78.1% of respondents (15.6% strongly agreed and 62.5% agreed) indicating that such transfers deprive students of full participation in the FOP. Classroom overcrowding was also identified as a considerable obstacle, with 68.8% of respondents (31.3% strongly agreed and 37.5% agreed) affirming that it impairs the facilitation of the FOP. Late reporting of students was another prevalent issue, where 53.2% of respondents (43.8% strongly agreed and 9.4% agreed) noted that it hinders students from receiving the full benefits of the FOP; however, a notable portion (34.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Lack of teacher training emerged as the most widely agreed-upon barrier, with 81.3% of respondents (37.5% strongly agreed and 43.8% agreed) indicating that it contributes to the ineffective implementation of the FOP. Overall, the results highlight that systemic and logistical issues, such as school transfers, overcrowded classrooms, student late arrivals, and insufficient teacher preparation, are key barriers affecting the effective delivery of the FOP. Table 1 indicates a detailed description.

**Table 1: Analysis of Barriers to the FOP's Implementation**

Statement	Likert Scale	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Transfers to other schools during the FOP Deprive students of their full participation	1	5	15.6%
	2	20	62.5%
	3	2	6.3%
	4	3	9.4%
	5	2	6.3%
Classroom overcrowding impairs the facilitation of the FOP	1	10	31.3%
	2	12	37.5%
	3	6	18.8%
	4	3	9.4%
	5	1	3.1%
Varied reporting time hinders full participation in the FOP	1	14	43.8%
	2	3	9.4%
	3	4	12.5%
	4	9	28.1%

Statement	Likert Scale	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Lack of teacher training leads to ineffective FOP implementation	5	2	6.3%
	1	12	37.5%
	2	14	43.8%
	3	1	3.1%
	4	2	6.3%
	5	3	9.4%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Key:** 1= Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

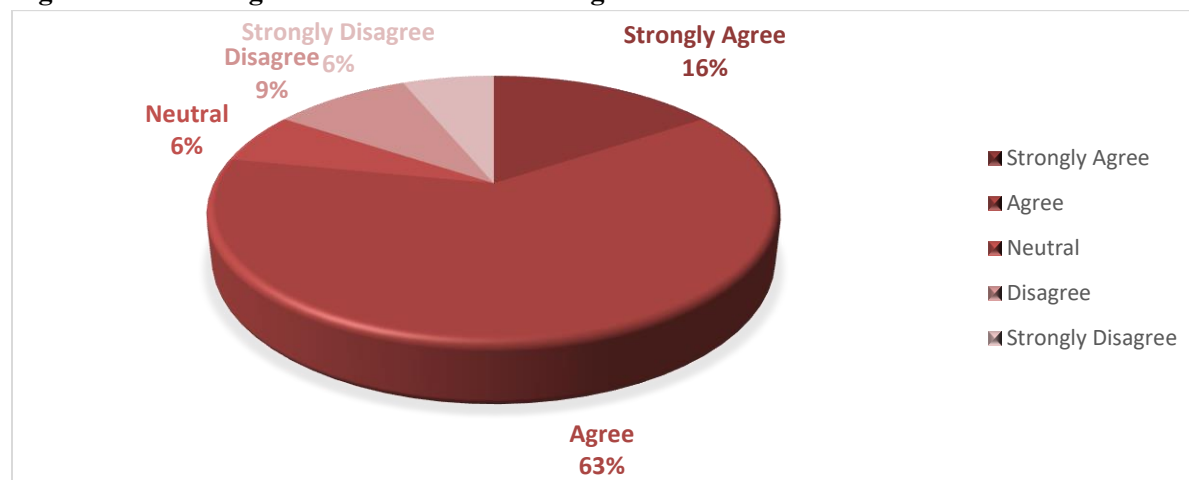
Table 1 indicates that the FOP is hindered by several key barriers. A majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that factors such as transfers to other schools, classroom overcrowding, late reporting of students, and lack of teacher training negatively impact the success of the FOP. Remarkably, lack of teacher training and student transfers emerged as the most critical barriers, receiving the highest levels of agreement. These findings suggest that administrative shortcomings and a lack of student satisfaction with schools, situations that need to be addressed to enhance the

effectiveness and uniform delivery of the FOP in schools.

### Students' Transfer to Other Schools During FOP

Results show that out of 32 respondents, the majority (62.5%) agreed with the statement, students transferring to other schools during the FOP deprive their full participation. Similarly, 15.6% strongly agreed. A smaller portion remained neutral (6.3%), disagreed (9.4%), or strongly disagreed (6.3%). Figure 1 indicates a detailed description of the results summary.

**Figure 1: Indicating Students' Transfer During FOP**



**Source:** Field Data (2025).

Figure 1 above indicates that a significant majority of respondents (78.1%) are in agreement (either strongly agree or agree) with the statement, suggesting a clear consensus on the statement being discussed. The low levels of disagreement and

neutrality reflect a strong acknowledgement of the situation among most participants.

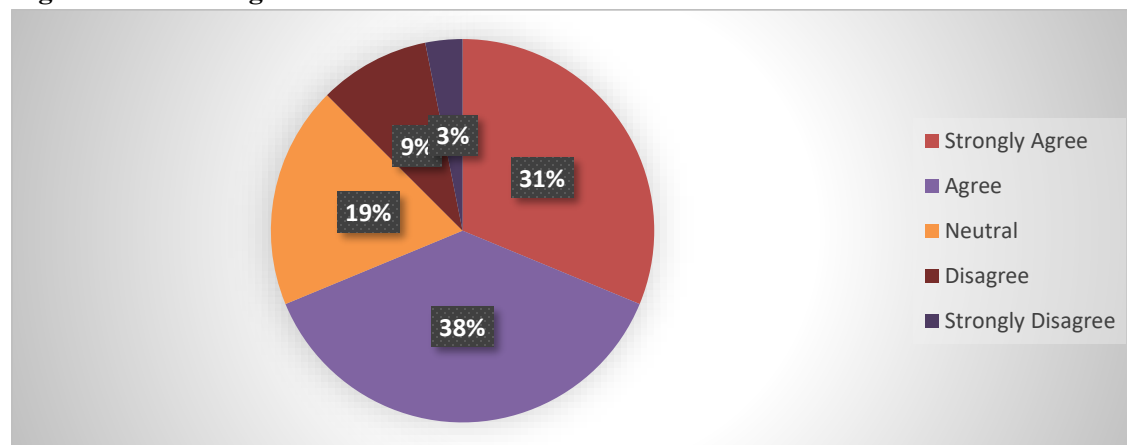
### Overcrowded Classrooms

Results revealed that among the 32 respondents, 37.5% agreed and 31.3% strongly agreed with the

statement that classroom overcrowding impairs the facilitation of the FOP. Additionally, 18.8%

remained neutral. A small proportion disagreed (9.4%) or strongly disagreed (3.1%).

**Figure 2: Indicating an Overcrowded Classroom**



**Source:** Field Data (2025).

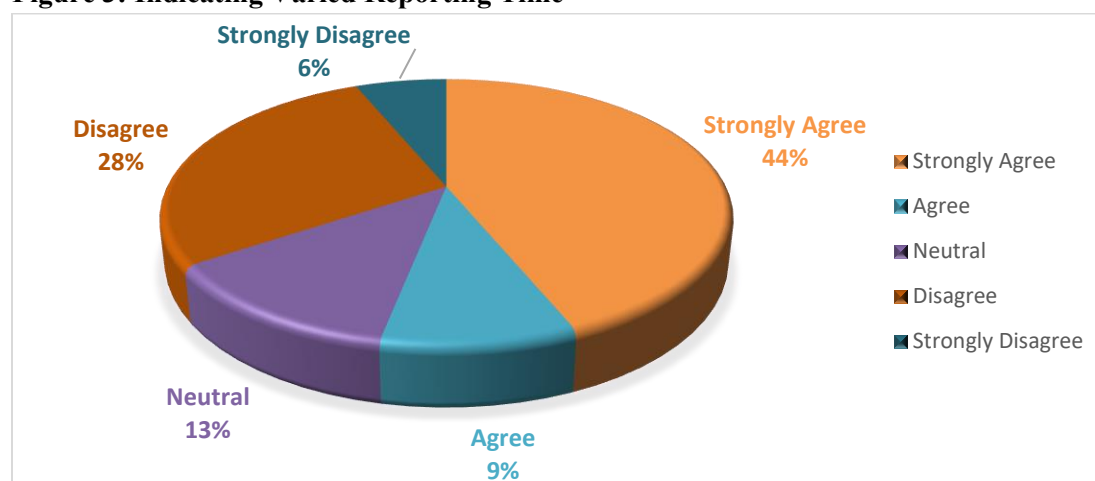
Figure 2 above suggests that a combined 68.8% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, indicating general support of the statement. However, the relatively higher neutrality rate (18.8%) compared to previous facts may point to some level of lack of strong opinion among a small percentage of respondents. The low disagreement rates further confirm a generally positive perception. Bandura's (1986) concept of environmental factors, such as administrative support and available resources, should be

considered to address the overcrowded classroom that impairs FOP.

### Students' Varied Reporting Time During the FOP

Results revealed that, out of 32 respondents, 43.8% strongly agreed and 9.4% agreed with the statement that varied reporting time hinders full participation in the FOP. Whereas 12.5% were neutral, 28.1% disagreed, and 6.3% strongly disagreed. This indicates poor students' attendance during the FOP.

**Figure 3: Indicating Varied Reporting Time**



**Source:** Field Data (2025).



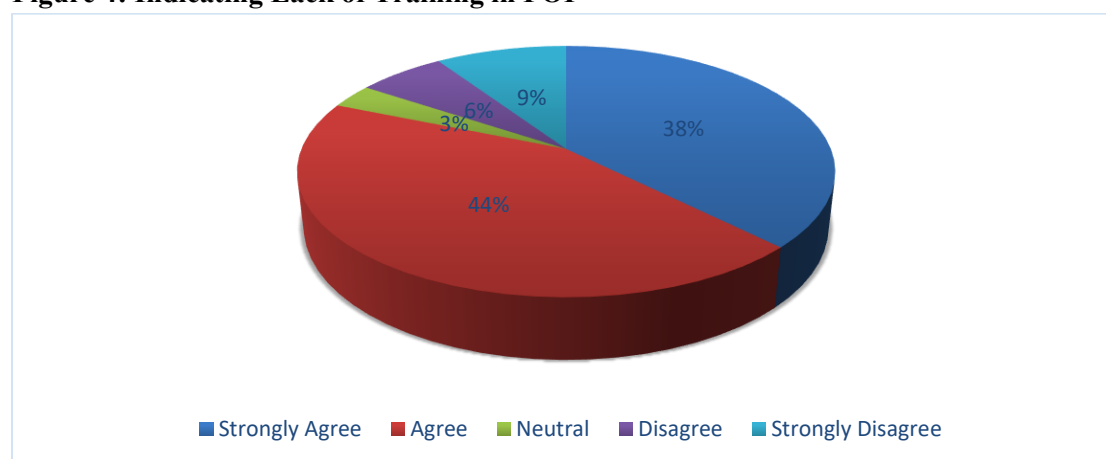
The results in Figure 3 above show a divided perception. While a significant percentage (53.2%) of respondents supported the statement (strongly agree or agree), a considerable number (34.4%) expressed disagreement (disagree or strongly disagree). This suggests that although the statement is positively acknowledged by many, there are also outstandingly differing experiences among participants, stressing the presence of mixed views. Bandura (1986) suggests that heads of schools and district administrators responsible for the supervision of FOP need to observe and learn from other successful administrative areas to ensure a

standardised programme. Observing and learning from more experienced heads of schools can improve their strategies for supervising the FOP.

### Lack of Training in Implementing the FOP

The results disclosed that out of 32 respondents, 81.3% (26 individuals) either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that lack of teacher training leads to ineffective FOP implementation. Even though only 15.7% (5 individuals) disagreed or strongly disagreed. A small proportion (3.1%) remained neutral.

**Figure 4: Indicating Lack of Training in FOP**



**Source:** Field Data (2025).

The findings in Figure 4 above indicate strong agreement with the statement being assessed. The high percentage of agreement suggests that the majority of respondents positively affirm the statement presented. The minimal disagreement and neutrality imply that the statement echoes with most individuals, reflecting a shared experience among the group. These findings agree with the study by Faustine (2014), who found that teachers were teaching FOP while lacking training to effectively teach the programme. But, Bandura (1986) recommends that observation, collaboration and mentoring by more experienced and successful stakeholders could help address the implementation of FOP technical know-how.

### CONCLUSION

The study concluded that setbacks in running the FOP in secondary schools in Moshi, such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of teachers' training, late student reporting and frequent transfers while the FOP was in progress, led some students not to get a full dose of the FOP. The study further concluded that certain setbacks, such as late student reporting and frequent transfers to other schools that disrupted the smooth implementation of the FOP, stemmed from factors outside the administrative control of schools.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study lead to two recommendations. Initially, future research could

adopt a quantitative or mixed-methods approach to assess the setbacks of the FOP in different regions for a broader generalisation of findings. Furthermore, it is recommended to conduct studies examining strategies for unlocking the barriers to successful FOP to ensure that it is given due importance as an essential element of students' academic development in Tanzania's unique secondary schooling.

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