

Teachers' Beliefs about History and Instructional Approaches: A Survey of Secondary School Teachers in Kigoma Municipality, Tanzania.

Adam Namamba^{1*}, Congman Rao²

* Corresponding author

Email: yad100@nenu.edu.cn

^{1,2}Faculty of Education, Northeast Normal University,

5268 Renmin Street, Changchun city, Post Code: 130024. Jilin Province, China.

Abstract

This study assessed secondary schools teachers' beliefs about history and their instructional approaches in the context of education reforms in Tanzania. The survey research design was used with a sample of 132 history teachers who were supplied with questionnaires. The results indicated that teachers' beliefs about history were largely criterialist followed by copier and subjectivist stances. Student-centred instructional approaches ranked higher than teacher-centred ones. Teachers' beliefs about history positively correlated with instructional approaches. Copier and subjectivist stances significantly predicted teacher-centred instructional approaches while criterialist stance significantly predicted student-centred instructional approaches. Type of school and level of education had significant influence on teachers beliefs about history however all demographic factors had no influence on instructional approaches. This study recommends that both pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes should foster the development of both substantive and syntactic knowledge of history in order to improve teachers' instructional practices as advocated by recent educational reforms.

Key words: Teachers' beliefs, history education, instructional approaches, Tanzania

1. Introduction

Teachers play important role in implementation of school curriculum; their perspectives particularly beliefs worth considerable research attention as they influence their instructional decisions (McCrum, 2013; Evans, 1990). Following the emergence of cognitive revolution in education research in 1950's, there has been research focus on cognitive constructs such as teacher thinking, beliefs, and conceptions in relation to teachers' practice (Fang, 1996; Richardson, 1994). The same period is associated with educational reforms in the world: hence the cognitive variables such as beliefs have been studied in relation to their role in implementation of education reforms (Ashton, 2015; Evans 1990). Similarly research on teacher education and particularly on teachers' beliefs indicate that beliefs held by teachers are worth to be studied if educational reforms are to achieve the anticipated benefits (Pajares, 1992).

Teachers' have beliefs on various issues such as subject matter, pedagogy, students, curriculum and others (Pajares, 1992). Teachers' beliefs about their teaching subjects have a "direct influence on their teaching intentions" (Norton, Richardson, Hartley, Newstead, & Mayes, 2005, p.554). Research on teachers' beliefs and instructional approaches/ practices about social studies and history in particular has increased in the last 2-3 decades (Brophy, 1995) however most of them

have involved relatively small samples and are qualitative in nature (Fogo 2014; Maggioni, Vansledright & Alexander, 2009) and with less attention on epistemological dimension of history in studying teachers' beliefs about history (Yilmaz, 2008).

1.1. Context of educational reforms in Tanzania

The current structure of education system in Tanzania as stipulated in Education and Training Policy (United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 1995) is 2+7+4+2+3+, which means 2 years of for pre-primary education, 7 years for primary education, 4 years for ordinary secondary education, 2 years for advanced level secondary education and 3 years or more for higher education. Education is provided by both public and private schools since 1995. Teacher qualifications for secondary school teachers start from diploma in education to bachelor degree.

In the past three decades, Tanzania has launched a series of educational reforms with the intention of improving both access and quality of education. In terms of access to education the Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 1995 liberalized education provision, in which the private schools were allowed to be established (URT, 1995). The Government through the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) and Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP) has tremendously increased the number of schools (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training [MoEVT], 2013).

These educational reforms have brought changes in curriculum and pedagogy. The curricula of education at all levels of education in Tanzania are competence-based curriculum which emphasize students' mastery of key knowledge and skills. This is contrary to the previous curricula which were content-based (Tanzania Institute of Education [TIE], 2013; MoEVT, 2012). In terms of pedagogy the learner-centred education and pedagogy is emphasized. This pedagogical reform has transformed the role of both teachers and students in the teaching and learning process in which the teacher is no longer the source of knowledge but the facilitator while the students' role has changed from passive listeners to active participants in the teaching and learning process (TIE, 2013; MoEVT, 2012). The successful implementation of learner-centred teaching practices need not only teachers to use learner-centred teaching practices during instruction but also to develop and embrace constructivist teaching beliefs and sophisticated beliefs about knowledge (Richardson & Placier, 2001, p.914).

1.2. History education in secondary schools in Tanzania

History is among the subjects taught in secondary schools in Tanzania others being mathematics, English, Kiswahili (National Language), biology, civics, geography, physics, chemistry, book-keeping and commerce. It is a core subject in lower grades of secondary education (form1 & 2) and in social science stream (TIE, 2013). History is also an optional subject in other streams such as science and commerce. Curriculum for secondary education emphasizes application of learner-centred approaches in teaching and learning in all subjects. The learner-centred approach places the learner at the centre of teaching and learning process while the teacher plays the role of "facilitator, motivator and promoter of learning during the classroom interactions" (TIE, 2013, p.29). The teachers are supposed to plan, design and organise meaningful learning activities and tasks which promote and cultivate inquiry, critical thinking, problem solving and life-long learning (TIE, 2013; Makunja, 2015). Hence teaching and learning activities such as group discussions and presentations, debates, reading and summarizing written sources, analysis of case studies, inquiry, individual and

group library research are highly suggested in history subject (TIE, 2013; MoEVT, 2012). The history syllabus for ordinary secondary education recommends various teaching and learning materials for history subject such as use of written texts, primary sources, sketch maps, visiting museums and historical sites, songs, recorded stories and poems, films and videos.

1.3. The present study

In Tanzania following the adoption of constructivist learning theories and competence-based education as the overarching perspectives in education, it is worth important to assess teachers beliefs about knowledge particularly beliefs about their teaching subjects and their relations to their instructional approaches. This study attempted to examine teachers' beliefs about history, instructional approaches, relationship between teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches, predictive validity of teachers' beliefs about history on instructional approaches as well as the influence of demographic factors on teachers' beliefs and instructional approaches. This study aimed to answer the following research questions;

1. What are the teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches?
2. What is the relationship between teachers' beliefs about history and their instructional approaches?
3. What is the predictive ability of teachers' beliefs about history on instructional approaches?
4. How do the teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches differ in terms of demographic factors?

1.4. Significance of the study

This study is significant in a number of ways; (1) the understanding of teachers' beliefs about history and their instructional approaches is vital for the understanding of teachers' perspectives of the current education reforms, (2) the findings of this study will provide the status of teachers' level of syntactic knowledge of history subject and their pedagogical orientations. This will be useful for the improvement of teaching and learning of history, teacher preparation and professional development programmes. Despite focusing on history teachers only, the implication of this study extends to teachers of other subjects particularly social science subjects.

2. Theoretical background and literature review

2.1. Theoretical background

There is a general agreement among educational researchers about the importance of subject matter knowledge to teachers however no agreement about the amount and kinds of such knowledge to teachers (Slekar & Haefner, 2010; Shulman, 1987). Cochran and Jones (1998) identified four components of teachers' subject matter knowledge which include; content knowledge, substantive knowledge, syntactic knowledge and beliefs about the subject matter (teachers' views about the nature of their teaching subject). Shulman (1986) suggested that teachers need both substantive and syntactic knowledge. Substantive knowledge refers to factual knowledge, concepts, laws and theories of a particular discipline (Shulman, 1986, p.9). Syntactic knowledge refers to ways in which knowledge or knowledge claims are established in particular discipline (Shulman, 1986).

In history discipline, substantive knowledge includes "the content of history [past], what history is about" (Lee & Ashby, 2000, p.199). According to Lévesque (2008, p.29) the substantive knowledge of history is in "narrative form" based on different themes such as "books and textbooks". While syntactic knowledge of history includes "procedural ideas [concepts]" like "historical evidence, explanation, change and account" which help to understand and make sense

historical knowledge (Lee & Ashby, 2000, p.199). Yilmaz (2008) suggest that history and social studies teachers should be knowledgeable of historiography in order to be effective and competent history teachers.

Maggioni *et al.* (2009) using reflective judgement model (King & Kitchener, 2002) and levels of epistemological understanding model (Kuhn & Weinstock, 2002) developed three epistemic stances on teachers' beliefs about history (historical knowledge): copier stance, subjectivist stance and criterialist stance. Copier stance refers to set of beliefs which see history as a direct copy of historical events (history as synonymous to past events). Subjectivist stance refers to a perspective that history is a matter of interpretation and opinion per se. Criterialist stance includes the beliefs that historical knowledge is based on the process of inquiry and interpretation but with certain criteria which warrant the establishment of historical knowledge. These epistemic stances seem to be in a line of progression from simple to complex beliefs about historical knowledge. The criterialist stance is highly favoured as it reflects the nature of historical knowledge (Maggioni, 2010; Maggioni *et al.* 2009).

2.2. Teacher beliefs about history

Pajares (1992, p.316) defined beliefs as "individual's judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgment that can only be inferred from a collective understanding of what human beings say, intend, and do". Harvey (1986, p.660) defined beliefs as conceptual representations which signify to its holder a reality or given state of affairs of sufficient validity, truth or trustworthiness to warrant reliance upon it as a guide to personal thought and action.

Research on teachers' beliefs and conceptions about history (historical knowledge) has increased during the last two decades. Evans (1989) studied teachers' conceptions of history in United States by using questionnaire and interviews. He identified five conceptions of history; story teller, scientific historian, relativist reformer, cosmic/philosopher and eclectic. He also found that teachers' conceptions of history were related to teacher ideology and pedagogical orientation.

Yeager and Davis (1996) examined fifteen teachers' historical thinking in relation to the interpretation of historical texts and interpretive tasks in United States by using interviews and observations. They found three distinctive perspectives of historical thinking; (1) history as construction of meaning, which focus on academic perspectives on analyzing historical documents (2) history as entertainment, which focus on telling good stories and narratives and, (3) history as search for accuracy, with emphasis on accuracy of information without critical perspective.

Yilmaz (2008) examined twelve social studies teachers' conceptions of history through in-depth and semi structured interviews. He found that most of the teachers held objective and realistic views of history and naive epistemological view of historical knowledge. Teachers' lacked knowledge of historiography and they did not perceive it as important in their teaching and professional development.

Opong and Quan-Baffour (2014) examined four high school history teachers' conceptions of historical facts based on four characteristics of historical knowledge which are integrative nature, developmental, subjectivity and laws in history. They found that teachers had mixed conceptions about these characteristics, other conceptions being contrary to the nature of historical knowledge and all the teachers were not aware of theories and laws in history. However the teachers' conceptions of historical knowledge were not examined in tandem with pedagogical approaches.

Voet and De Weaver (2016) using interviews examined history teachers' conceptions of inquiry-based learning in Belgium. They found that teachers held sophisticated beliefs about history and these beliefs were essential for the teachers to teach history in inquiry-based approaches.

McCrum (2013) study on how secondary history teachers in United Kingdom viewed the nature and purpose of history found that teachers' views of history were broadly empiricist which is regarded as objective view of history.

2.3. Instructional approaches in teaching history

Instructional approaches refer to overall activities of teachers ranging from lesson preparation, actual implementation of the lesson in the classroom, assessment of students' learning and others (Buehl & Beck, 2015). Teachers' instructional approaches are related to teachers "normative beliefs" about teaching (Aulls & Shore 2008, p.190). Teachers' instructional approaches influence students learning and achievement (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). The debate of what constitute good teaching and instructional approaches has persisted for long time (Moore, 2004), however recently the constructivist teaching practices which are learner-centred are regarded as good teaching practices (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2012). The teachers' instructional approaches and practices are widely divided into two broad categories; teacher-centred and student/learner-centred teaching approaches/practices (Schweisfurth, 2013; McCrum, 2013; McCombs & Whisler, 1997). In this study student-centred and learner-centred approaches have been used interchangeably.

Teacher-centred instructional approaches are widely associated with behaviouristic theories of learning in which the teacher is the source of knowledge to students (Pear, 2007). The characteristics of teacher centred teaching include; use of lecture method, focus on content coverage, limited involvement of learners in teaching and learning process as students' play passive role in the learning process (Schweisfurth, 2013; McCrum 2013). Prior to 1980's the teacher-centred instructional practices which are often referred to as traditional teaching practices were the dominant instructional practices (Leithwood *et al.* 2010). Student-centred approaches focus on providing students with more opportunities to learn themselves and the teacher's role is facilitation of teaching and learning process (McCrum 2013; McCombs & Whisler, 1997). It involves instructional approaches and techniques such as cooperative learning, group discussion, independent inquiry, problem-based learning and group work (Schweisfurth, 2013).

Maloy and LaRoche (2010, pp.46-47) provide a comprehensive list and categorisation of history teaching methods into teacher-centred and learner-centred teaching methods. Teacher-centred teaching methods include lecture, teacher-led discussions and whole class discussion while learner-centred teaching methods include small group work, interactive discussions, primary source analysis, drama, role plays and simulations.

Teaching and learning of history and social studies has been dominated by teacher-centred practices as lecture method and memorizing of facts and events (McCrum, 2013; Martell, 2011), whole class discussion, memorization of facts, content drawing primarily from text-books (Maloy & LaRoche, 2010). Recent reforms on teaching and learning history emphasize approaches such as historical inquiry and historical thinking (McCrum, 2013; Bertram & Bharath, 2011). Barton and Levstik (2004, p.188) define historical inquiry as a practice of "asking questions, gathering and evaluating relevant evidence, and reaching conclusions based on that evidence". In this approach students are asked to address a particular research problem by using given historical sources. Through it, students use and develop their inquiry skills about history. Historical thinking refers to the process of constructing historical knowledge through critical examination of historical sources (Wineburg, 2001). This approach involves processes like corroboration (comparing historical documents), sourcing (analyzing the source of document) and contextualization (situating the documents in the context of the historical problem (Wineburg, 1991, p.77). According to Seixas and Morton (2012) historical thinking involves six core concepts which are; establishing of historical

significance, use of primary source evidence, identification of continuity and change, analysing cause and consequence, taking historical perspective and understanding the ethical dimension of historical interpretations. Generally this approach requires teachers to understand how historians establish historical knowledge and teachers have to use similar approaches in teaching their students. When teachers use historical thinking and inquiry practices in their teaching they are likely to develop such habits to their students (Yeager & Davis, 1996). Both historical inquiry and historical thinking are based on constructivist approaches to teaching and learning which emphasize the active role of students in constructing knowledge. However, these approaches seem to pose challenges to teachers as they are more suited to university students rather than secondary and primary schools' students (Martin, 2005).

In another study, Fogo (2014) by using Delphi technique which involved expert teachers, educational researchers and history teacher educators identified nine core practices for teaching history. The core practices include "use of historical questions, select and adapt historical sources, explain and connect historical content, model and support historical reading skills, employing historical evidence, use of historical concepts, facilitating discussion of historical topics, model and support historical writing and assessment of student thinking about history (p.176). He further contends that the application of these practices might be influenced by teachers' subject matter knowledge (historical and historiographical content knowledge), knowledge of students, nature of students and classroom contexts (Fogo 2014, p.177). Martell (2011) found that beginning teachers' teaching of history according to constructivist pedagogy were affected by historical content knowledge and classroom management skills. This suggests that teachers need a substantial amount of historical knowledge in order to teach history effectively.

Hootstein (1999) assessed beliefs and practices of fifty eight social studies' teachers on how to meet students' academic differences in the class where he found that majority of the teachers preferred teacher-centred instructional approaches with relatively few teachers mentioning learner-centred instructional approaches such as group techniques and peer interaction.

McCrum (2013) found that student teachers with modernist beliefs (objectivist view) were more inclined to focus on knowledge acquisition while teachers with post-modernism (history as interpretation) beliefs were more inclined to use learner-centred approaches to history teaching and in their classes they provided students with more opportunities to analyse primary sources.

The reviewed research studies indicate that teachers' beliefs and conceptions of history might influence teachers' instructional approaches and practices in the classrooms, however most of these studies employed relatively small sample and were qualitative in nature. Besides that most of the studies about teachers' beliefs and instructional approaches were conducted in western countries, hence it is imperative to understand teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches from context of developing countries such as Tanzania which have embraced learner-centred and competence-based educational reforms. Hence this study employed a survey research design to assess teachers' beliefs about history and their instructional approaches.

3. Methods

This study employed a survey research design which is appropriate for collecting data related to views, opinions and perceptions (Basit, 2010). Questionnaire was used as the only instrument of data collection as the study aimed to collect data which can be statistically analysed (Basit, 2010).

The sample of the research study involved about 132 history teachers who were randomly selected from 30 secondary schools located in Kigoma Municipality, Tanzania. The sample's characteristics are further explained in detail in the next subsection. In conducting this research

study, ethical procedures were well observed. The researchers obtained permission from local authority prior to data collection in schools. The researchers also asked for respondents (teachers) consent to participate in this study.

3.1. Sample characteristics

In terms of gender, 57.6%; n=76 were male while 42.6%; n=56 were female. Age wise 55.3%; n=73 aged 21-30 years the rest (44.7%; N=59) aged 31-40 years. Most of the respondents had bachelor degree (72.7%; n=96), 25.8%; n=34 had diploma in education and very few respondents (1.5%; n=2) had masters degree. In terms of teaching experience, majority of the respondents (72.7%; n=96) had working experience of 1-5 years which is termed as early career stage of teacher professional career. The rest (27.3%; n=36) had working experience of 8-15 years which is regarded as middle career stage. About 89.4%; n=118 were teaching in public schools and the remaining (10.6%; n=14) were teaching in private schools.

3.2. Research instruments

Beliefs about History Questionnaire (BHQ) (Maggioni *et al.* 2009; Maggioni, 2010) and Approaches to Teaching Inventory (ATI) (Prosser & Trigwell, 2006) were adapted for this study. These instruments were selected based on their suitability to the objectives of this study. The original BHQ instrument had 22 items with three scales which are copier (5-items), subjectivist (9-items), and criterialist (8-items). Copier included items like; “the facts speak for themselves”, “disagreement about the same event in the past is always due to lack of evidence”. Subjectivist stance included items like; “students who read many history books learn that the past is what the historian makes it to be”, “history is simply a matter of interpretation”, the past is what the historian makes it to be”. Criterialist stance involved items like; “history is a critical inquiry about the past”, “history is the reasonable reconstruction of past occurrences based on the available evidence”. However, a single item (i.e. “history is simply a record of past events”) was added in the copier stance subscale, therefore the BHQ had a total of 23 items. This was done purposely to reflect the context of this study.

The original ATI had 16 items with two scales (teacher-centred approaches and student-centred approaches) in which each scale has 8 items. Four items (two for each scale) were added; therefore the final instrument had 20 items (10 items for each scale). Teacher-centred approaches included items like; “I describe my lessons in terms of specific objectives relating to what students have to know for formal assessment items”, “I always present a lot of facts to students so that they know what they have to learn in history subject”, “I always use lecture method because I can cover large content within specified time and it’s very convenient”. While student-centred approaches included items like; “In my interactions with students in history teaching sessions I try to develop a conversation with them about the topics we are studying”, “I always use group technique in my teaching in order provide students with opportunities to discuss”, “Although I use lesson plans, my teaching is very flexible”. Both questionnaires were slightly reworded in order to improve readability to the target sample.

Both BHQ and ATI had five point Likert scale which ranged from strongly agree (SA=5) to strongly disagree (SD=1). Prior to data collection, the instruments were piloted to a small sample of thirty teachers in which BHQ and ATI yielded moderately high reliability coefficients. For BHQ (Copier $\alpha=.61$, Subjectivist $\alpha=.83$ and Criterialist $\alpha=.622$). While for the ATI (Teacher-centred, $\alpha=.754$ and Student-centred approaches, $\alpha=.811$). Hence the two instruments were appropriate for assessing teachers’ beliefs about history and their instructional approaches.

3.3. Data analysis

The data analysis procedures involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics involved measures of central tendency and dispersion such as mean and standard deviation respectively. Inferential statistics involved statistical tests like independent t test, correlation and linear regression analysis.

4. Results

In this section, the research results are reported in order of research questions. This has been done in order ensure connection and continuity of the findings.

4.1. Teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches

Teachers' beliefs about history were measured by using Beliefs History Questionnaire (BHQ) which divides the beliefs into three main categories of copier, subjectivist and criterialist. The results show that copier beliefs had a mean of 3.33, standard deviation of 0.62, subjectivist beliefs had a mean of 3.02 and standard deviation of 0.84 and the criterialist beliefs had a mean of 3.99 and standard deviation of 0.95. These results generally indicate that the criterialist beliefs ranked higher, followed by copier beliefs and subjectivist (see Table 1 for more details).

Teachers' instructional approaches were measured by using Approaches to Teaching Inventory (ATI). The instructional approaches were divided into two main groups; teacher-centred approaches and student-centred approaches. The results show that teacher-centred approaches had a mean of 3.61 and standard deviation of 0.64 while student-centred approaches had a mean 3.98 and standard deviation of 0.84 (see Table 1 for the summary of teachers' instructional approaches). These results generally indicate that the student-centred approaches ranked higher than teacher-centred approaches.

Table 1: Teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches

S/N	Variable	Mean	SD
1.	Copier beliefs	3.33	0.62
2.	Subjectivist beliefs	3.02	0.84
3.	Criterialist beliefs	3.99	0.95
4.	Teacher-centred approaches	3.61	0.64
5.	Student-centred approaches	3.98	0.84

4.2. Relationship between teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches

The relationship between teachers' beliefs about history and their instructional approaches were estimated in terms of Pearson correlations coefficients. The results show that there are significant correlations between teachers' beliefs about history beliefs and instructional approaches. The copier beliefs were positively correlated with teacher-centred approaches $r(132)=.555$, $p=.000$ and with learner-centred approaches $r(132)=.263$, $p=.002$. The subjectivist beliefs were positively correlated with teacher-centred beliefs $r(132) =.579$, $p=.000$ and there was no significant correlation between subjectivist beliefs and student-centred approaches $r(132)=.165$, $p=.059$. The criterialist beliefs were positively correlated with both student-centred approaches $r(132)=.403$, $p=.000$ and teacher-centred approaches $r(132)=.199$, $p=.019$. Table 3 below indicates the correlation matrix;

Table 3: Correlation between teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches

	Copier	Subjectivist	Criticalist	Teacher Centred	Student Centred
Copier	1				
Subjectivist	.569**	1			
Criticalist	.242**	.116	1		
Teacher-centred	.555**	.579**	.205*	1	
Student-centred	.263**	.165	.403**	.199*	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

4.3. Predictive ability of teachers' beliefs about history on teachers' instructional approaches

The study also examined the predictive ability of teacher's beliefs about history (copier, subjectivist and criticalist) on teachers' instructional practices (teacher-centred and student-centred approaches). Standard multiple regression was used to analyse the data.

A significant model (see Table 4) emerged when the dependent variable of teacher-centred approaches was regressed on the various categories of teacher beliefs { $F(3, 128) = 30.58, p < .01$ }. All the predictors (categories of teacher beliefs about history) together explained 41.7% ($R^2 = .417$) of the variance in teacher-centred approaches. Among the three sets of beliefs, subjectivist beliefs made the largest unique and significant contribution ($\beta = .392, p < .01$). This was followed by copier beliefs ($\beta = .312, t = 3.718, p < .01$) and criticalist beliefs ($\beta = 1.202, p > .05$). As can be seen criticalist beliefs did not make any statistically significant contribution. This implies that only subjectivist beliefs and copier beliefs influences teacher-centred approaches.

Table 4: Regression results for teachers' beliefs about history on teacher-centred approaches

Predictors	β	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	R^2
All variables		3, 128	30.58**	.417
Copier	.312**			
Subjectivist	.392**			
Criticalist	.084			

Note: * $P < .05$; ** $P < .01$; *** $P < .001$

Predictors: Copier, Subjectivist, Criticalist beliefs

Dependent Variable: Teacher-centred approaches

For student-centred approaches also a significant model (see Table 5) emerged when the dependent variable of student-centred approaches was regressed on the various categories of teacher beliefs, $F(3, 128) = 10.143, p < .01$. All the predictors (categories of teacher beliefs about history) together explained 19.2% ($R^2 = .192$) of the variance in student-centred approaches. Among the

three sets of beliefs, only criterialist beliefs made the largest unique and significant contribution ($\beta = .361$, $t=4.406$, $p < .01$). However, both copier beliefs ($\beta=.157$, $t =1.583$, $p> .05$) and subjectivist beliefs ($\beta =.034$, $t=.348$, $p> .05$) did not make significant contribution. This implies that only criterialist beliefs influence student-centred approaches.

Table 5: Regression results for teacher beliefs on student-centred approaches

Predictors	β	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> ²
All variables		3, 128	10.143**	.192
Copier	.157			
Subjectivist	.034			
Criterialist	.361**			

Note: * $P < .05$; ** $P < .01$; *** $P < .001$

Predictors: Copier, Subjectivist, Criterialist beliefs

Dependent Variable: Student-centred approaches

4.4. Differences of teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches based on demographic variables

The differences on teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches based on demographic factors such as gender, age, educational level, working experience and type of school were established by using independent t tests.

4.4.1. Gender

In terms of **gender**, the results (see Table 6) indicate that there were no significant differences between male and female teachers in terms of both beliefs about history and instructional approaches. Copier beliefs, $t(130) = .323$, $p=0.747$, male ($M=3.34$, $SD=0.63$), female ($M=3.31$, $SD=0.62$). Subjectivist beliefs, $t(130) = -1.567$, $p=0.12$, male ($M=2.92$, $SD=0.83$) and female ($M=3.15$, $SD=0.85$). Criterialist beliefs, $t(130) = 1.222$, $p=0.224$, male ($M=4.04$, $SD=0.44$) and female ($M=3.93$, $SD=0.53$). These results show that male teachers had slightly higher mean on copier beliefs ($M=3.34$) and criterialist beliefs ($M=4.04$) than female teachers who had mean of 3.31 for copier beliefs and 3.93 for criterialist beliefs while female teachers ranked slightly higher on subjectivist beliefs (3.15) than male teachers (2.92). Teacher-centred approaches: $t(130)=1.829$, $p=0.07$, male ($M=3.69$, $SD=0.64$) and female ($M=3.49$, $SD=0.61$). Student-centred approaches: $t(130)=.838$, $p=0.403$, male ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.48$) and female ($M=3.93$, $SD=0.52$). However male teachers were slightly higher in both teacher-centred and student-centred approaches.

Table 6: Teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches by gender

Variable	Male (n=76)		Female (n=56)		T	df	Sig.
	M	SD	M	SD			
Copier beliefs	3.34	0.63	3.31	0.62	.323	130	.747
Subjectivist beliefs	2.92	0.83	3.15	0.85	-1.567	130	.12
Criterialist beliefs	4.04	0.44	3.93	0.53	1.222	130	.224
Teacher-centred approaches	3.69	0.64	3.49	0.61	1.829	130	.07
Student-centred approaches	4.00	0.48	3.93	0.52	.838	130	.403

4.4.2. Age

Based on **age** the results in Table 7 indicate that there were no significant differences on both teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches. Copier beliefs: $t(130) = 1.834$, $p = 0.069$, 21-30 years ($M = 3.41$, $SD = 0.53$) and 31-40 years ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.71$). Subjectivist beliefs: $t(130) = 1.962$, $p = 0.052$, 21-30 years ($M = 3.15$, $SD = 0.74$) and 31-40 years ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 0.93$). Criterialist beliefs: $t(130) = -.208$, $p = 0.836$, 21-30 years ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.49$) 31-40 years ($Mean = 4.00$, $SD = 0.47$). Teacher-centred approaches $\{t(130) = 1.515$, $p = 0.132$, age group 21-30 ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 0.59$) and age group 31-40 ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.67$)}. Student-centred approaches $\{t(130) = -.448$, $p = 0.403$, age group 21-30 ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.46$) and age group 31-40 ($M = 3.99$, $SD = 0.55$)}.

Table 7: Teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches by age

Variable	Age: 21-30 (n=73)		Age: 31-40 (n=59)		T	df	Sig.
	M	SD	M	SD			
Copier beliefs	3.41	0.53	3.21	0.71	1.834	130	.069
Subjectivist beliefs	3.15	0.74	2.86	0.93	1.962	130	.052
Criterialist beliefs	3.98	0.49	4.00	0.47	-.208	130	.836
Teacher-centred approaches	3.69	0.59	3.52	0.67	1.515	130	.132
Student-centred approaches	3.95	0.46	3.99	0.55	-.448	130	.403

4.4.3. Type of School

As shown in Table 8 teachers from private schools had significantly higher criterialist beliefs than public schools' teachers; $t(130) = -1.626$, $p = 0.018$, private schools' teachers ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.27$), public schools' teachers ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.49$) and on copier beliefs there was no significant difference between public and private school teachers: $t(130) = -1.408$, $p = 0.162$, public school teachers ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 0.62$) and private school teachers ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 0.75$). On subjectivist beliefs also there was no significant difference between public and private school teacher: $t(130) = -1.560$, $p = 0.106$, public school teachers ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.84$) and private school teachers ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 0.75$). Teachers' instructional approaches did not differ significantly based on type of school. The teachers from private schools were slightly higher on teacher-centred approaches $\{t(130) = -1.222$, $p = 0.224$, private schools' teachers ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.45$, public school teachers ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.65$) while teachers from public schools were slightly higher on student-centred approaches $\{t(130) = 1.983$, $p = 0.066$, public schools' teachers ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.49$) and private schools' teachers ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.49$)}.

Table 8: Teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches by type of school

Variable	Public schools' teachers (n=118)		Private schools' teachers (n=14)		T	df	Sig.
	M	SD	M	SD			
Copier beliefs	3.30	0.62	3.54	0.75	-1.408	130	.162
Subjectivist beliefs	2.98	0.84	3.35	0.75	-1.560	130	.106
Criterialist beliefs	3.97	0.49	4.18	0.27	-1.626	130	.018

Teacher-centred approaches	3.58	0.65	3.80	0.45	-1.222	130	.224
Student-centred approaches	4.00	0.49	3.70	0.49	1.983	130	.066

4.4.4. Level of education

The results as summarized in Table 9 indicate that there was significant difference on subjectivist beliefs between teachers with diploma and those with bachelor degree: $t(130)=2.209$, $p=0.029$, diploma ($M=3.29$, $SD=0.70$) and bachelor degree ($M=2.94$, $SD=0.86$). This means that the teachers with diploma had significantly higher subjectivist beliefs than teachers with bachelor degree. On copier and criterialist beliefs there was no significant difference between teachers with diploma and those with bachelor degree; however in both copier and criterialist beliefs teachers with diploma ranked slightly higher than teachers with bachelor degree. Copier beliefs: $t(130)=.811$, $p=0.419$, diploma ($M=3.29$, $SD=0.66$) and bachelor degree ($M=3.30$, $SD=0.62$). Criterialist beliefs: $t(130)=-.746$, $p=0.457$, diploma ($M=3.93$, $SD=0.47$) and bachelor degree ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.48$). The teachers' level of education had no influence on teachers instructional approaches, however teachers with diploma in education were slightly higher in both teacher-centred $\{t(130)=1.297$, $p=0.059$, diploma ($M=3.73$, $SD=0.49$); bachelor ($M=3.57$, $SD=0.68$)} and student-centred approaches $\{t(130)=1.903$, $p=0.059$, diploma ($M=4.10$, $SD=0.51$); Bachelor ($M=3.92$, $SD=0.48$)}.

Table 9: Teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches by level of education

Variable	Diploma (n=34)		Bachelor degree (n=96)		T	df	Sig.
	M	SD	M	SD			
Copier beliefs	3.29	0.66	3.30	0.62	.811	128	.419
Subjectivist beliefs	3.29	0.70	2.94	0.86	2.209	128	.029
Criterialist beliefs	3.93	0.47	4.00	0.48	-.746	128	.457
Teacher-centred approaches	3.73	0.49	3.57	0.68	1.297	128	.059
Student-centred approaches	4.10	0.51	3.92	0.48	1.903	128	.059

4.4.5. Working experience

Generally there were no significant differences in terms teachers beliefs about history and instructional approaches based working experience. As shown in Table 10 the early career teachers were slightly higher on copier and subjectivist beliefs while the middle career teachers were slightly higher on criterialist beliefs. Copier beliefs: $t(130)=1.029$, $p=0.306$, early career ($M=3.36$, $SD=0.57$) and middle career ($M=3.24$, $SD=0.74$). On subjectivist beliefs: $t(130)=1.634$, $p=0.109$, early career ($M=3.10$, $SD=0.75$) and middle career teachers ($M=2.80$, $SD=1.02$). Criterialist beliefs: $t(130)=-1.439$, $p=0.164$, early career ($M=3.96$, $SD=0.47$) and middle career ($M=4.00$, $SD=0.49$). The early career teachers were slightly higher in teacher-centred instructional approaches $\{t(130)=.217$, $p=0.828$, 1-5 years ($M=3.62$, $SD=0.60$, 8-15 years ($M=3.59$, $SD=0.73$)} while teachers with 8-15 years of working experience had slightly higher mean on student centred approaches: $\{t(130)=-1.790$, $p=0.076$, 1-5years ($M=3.93$, $SD=0.49$; 8-15 years ($M=4.10$, $SD=0.50$)}.

Table 10: Teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches by working experience

Variable	1-5years (n=96)		8-15 (n=36)		T	df	Sig.
	M	SD	M	SD			
Copier beliefs	3.36	0.57	3.24	0.74	1.029	130	.306
Subjectivist beliefs	3.10	0.75	2.80	1.02	1.634	130	.109
Criterialist beliefs	3.96	0.47	4.00	0.49	-1.439	130	.164
Teacher-centred approaches	3.62	0.60	3.59	0.73	.217	130	.828
Student-centred approaches	3.93	0.49	4.10	0.50	-1.790	130	.076

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined history teachers' beliefs about history, instructional approaches, relationship between beliefs about history and instructional approaches, the predictive influence of teachers' beliefs about history on instructional approaches and the influence of demographic factors on both beliefs about history and instructional approaches.

The teachers' beliefs about history are relatively scattered in all three scales of teachers' beliefs about history in which criterialist stance ($M=3.99$, $SD=0.48$) ranked higher than both copier stance ($M=3.33$, $SD=0.62$) and subjectivist stance ($M=3.02$, $SD=0.84$). These findings are consistent with Maggioni *et al.* (2009) who found that most of the teachers favoured criterialist stance than copier and subjectivist stances. However, the findings also suggest that teachers have mixed beliefs about the nature of history as the means of the three categories of beliefs about history did not differ much. These findings concur with McCrum (2013) in which early career history teachers had mixed conceptions about the nature of history.

The teachers' instructional approaches were divided into two categories; teacher-centred and learner-centred instructional approaches. Learner-centred instructional approaches had higher mean ($M=3.98$, $SD=0.50$) than teacher centred instructional approaches ($M=3.61$, $SD=0.64$). This means that teachers have more preference on learner-centred approaches but teacher-centred instructional approaches exist to a considerable extent. Also these findings might suggest that teachers' have mixed and overlapping beliefs and instructional approaches to history (McCombs & Whisler, 1997). Similarly previous studies in Tanzania have reported that teaching practices are predominantly teacher-centred with minimal and ineffective use of learner-centred instructional approaches (Makunja, 2015; Vavrus & Bartlett, 2012). The teachers' persistence with teacher-centred approaches to teaching is largely contributed by lack of professional development programs to teachers especially on new curriculum reform and its related pedagogy and lack of teaching and learning resources in schools (Makunja, 2015; Paulo & Tilya, 2014).

The analysis of correlation coefficients indicated that teachers' beliefs about history were significantly correlated with instructional approaches with exception of subjectivist beliefs which did not significantly correlate with learner centred instructional approaches. Strong correlations exist between the following pairs; copier stance and teacher centred approaches [$r(132) = .555$, $p=0.000$], subjectivist stance and teacher centred approaches [$r(132) = .579$, $p=0.000$], copier stance and learner centred approaches [$r(132) = .263$, $p=0.002$] and, criterialist stance and learner centred instructional approaches [$r(132) = .403$, $p=0.001$]. These findings are further supported by linear regression analysis which showed that copier stance ($\beta=.312$, $t = 3.718$, $p < .01$) and subjectivist

stance ($\beta = .392$, $t = 4.775$, $p < .01$) significantly predicted teacher centred instructional approaches while criterialist stance ($\beta = .361$, $t = 4.406$, $p < .01$) significantly predicted learner-centred instructional approaches. These findings are consistent with previous studies, for example Evans (1990) found that teachers' conceptions of history were related to instructional practices, for example story tellers focused on telling interesting stories to students while scientific historian focused on promoting historical thinking. McCrum (2013) also found that teachers who viewed the nature of history as interpretation favoured learner-centred approaches to teaching of history. They viewed their role as facilitators and preferred students to learn by themselves.

This study also aimed to find out whether teachers beliefs about history and instructional approaches differs in terms of demographic factors such as gender, age, type of school, level of education and working experience. The results of independent t-test indicated that teacher' beliefs about history and instructional approaches did not differ significantly based on gender, age, and working experience. However, factors such as type of school and level of education had significant influence on teachers' beliefs about history but had no influence on instructional approaches. There were significant differences between teachers from public and private schools on criterialist beliefs [$t(132) = -1.626$, $p = 0.018$] in which private school teachers significantly ranked higher ($M = 4.18$, $SD = 0.2$) than public school teachers ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 0.49$). This might suggest that private school's teachers subscribed to criterialist beliefs than public school teachers. In terms of level of education, teachers with diploma had significantly higher subjectivist beliefs ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.70$) than teachers with bachelor degree ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.86$). In general these findings imply that demographic factors had slight influence on teachers' beliefs about history however, they had no influence instructional approaches.

The present study like others it has limitation(s), the findings of this study solely relied on self-report measures in the form of a closed questionnaire; hence the findings are numerical in nature and statistically analysed. The use of mixed methods which combine questionnaire, interview and classroom observation might have enriched the findings of this study and provide a more complete understanding of teachers' beliefs about history and their instructional approaches. Hence future studies should look to use multi-methods in order to broaden the understanding of teachers' beliefs about history and their instructional approaches.

In conclusion, this study established that teachers' beliefs about history and instructional approaches to some extent seemed to reflect the current educational reforms in Tanzania which are based on constructivism and competence-based education. On the other hand teachers' seemed to have mixed beliefs about the nature of history and instructional approaches. The three sets of teachers' beliefs positively correlated with instructional approaches, however the interesting and relevance of this study relies on predictive validity of criterialist stance on learner-centred instructional approaches as these two variables represent right beliefs about the nature of historical knowledge and modern pedagogy.

The findings of this study imply that there is a need for effective and sustainable initial teacher education and professional development programs which enable teachers to be aware of their beliefs and practices and develop new sets of beliefs and practices in accordance with educational reforms (Richardson & Placier, 2001; Mc Combs & Whisler, 1997; Richardson, 1994). Loughran and Russell (1997) suggest that pre-service teachers should learn the subject matter in a problematic way in order to develop both competence in subject matter and constructivist-oriented teaching practices. This can be achieved when teacher education programmes embrace constructivist theories of teaching and learning as theoretical base for the education of prospective teachers (Martell, 2011). Yeager and Davis (1996) observed that constructivist approaches to

teaching of history were much developed through in-service. This implies that in-service teacher education should be given high priority in order to improve teaching and learning in schools.

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