Volume 24 Issue 40
Originally issued as G9

Global Journal of Human-Social Science: G
Linguistics & Education
Volume 24 Issue 9 Version 1.0 Year 2024
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals
Online ISSN: 2249-460X & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

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GJHSS-G Classification: LCC: LB2331



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I. Introduction

High tertiary participation rates have led to larger class sizes and a more diversified student body, which has put more strain on university staff (Kálmán et al., 2020). In parallel, students' performance has been attributed to a wide variety of interacting factors, including teaching and learning pedagogies, classroom practices and students' readiness for university studies (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). Consequently, the effective development of academic staff is needed to meet these growing demands and challenges.

While many university teachers may possess a strong grasp of subject matter, they often lack the pedagogical abilities necessary for both effective teaching and skill development (Persellin & Goodrick, 2010). Thus, academic development is a key strategic lever for ensuring institutional quality and supporting institutional change in higher education (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013).

Another important feature is that the multiple competing roles of academic staff have become part of the higher education landscape (Chalmers & Gardiner, 2015). To be considered for a promotion or for tenure, academic staff are increasingly needed to demonstrate their ability in this field in addition to obtaining a qualification from university in teaching and research (Boughey & McKenna, 2021). Regarding tenure and promotion decisions, institutions seem to prioritise research to the detriment of teaching (Light et al., 2009). These conflicting expectations make the improvement in the quality of teaching an increasing concern (Yariv & Shelly-Huber, 2020).

With widespread criticism of the quality of teaching, many higher education institutions have developed staff and educational development centres to help academic staff enhance their teaching skills. Similar to many countries, in Mozambican higher education, the pedagogical training of university teachers was established and coordinated by a centre for academic development (Mendonça, 2014). As a feature of the development of established staff, professional training in teaching practice is mandatory for newly appointed or early-career academics (Cossa et al., 2016). This training serves both the objectives of enhancing teachers' pedagogical thinking and skills and fulfilling a requirement for promotion and tenure.

Nonetheless, there is little evidence concerning teachers' perceptions and beliefs regarding the role of pedagogical training in their approach to teaching and, in turn, how it augments student learning. The present study attempts to explore this aspect at a university in Mozambique. Such evidence is much needed to guide educational development units and to provide teachers with additional tools to reflect on pedagogical practices in higher education. This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do academic staff perceive good teaching practices in a Mozambican higher education institution?
2. How do academic staff understand the role of academic development?

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II. Literature Review

a) Concept of Academic Development

In an organisational context, *development* is the intentional enhancement of an individual or a group of individuals to better support the goal of an organisation (Camblin Jr. & Steger, 2000; Clegg, 2009; Phuong et al., 2015). As a concept, academic development has existed in higher education literature since the 1960s (Clegg, 2009; Gillespie et al., 2010). While many definitions have been posited, *academic development* is commonly referred to as initiatives that facilitate the professional development of academic staff, particularly in their roles as instructors/teachers (Castañeda, 2004; McKinney, 2013).

There are similar overlapping concepts, including *professional development*, *academic development* and *educational development*, all terms related to *academic development* (Clegg, 2009; Stes et al., 2010). Some researchers have used these terms interchangeably (Geertsema, 2021; Ouellett, 2010). However, these terms have different meanings in different contexts. *Academic and professional development* is preferred in Australasian and British contexts, whereas *faculty development* is common in North America (Clegg, 2009; Stes et al., 2010). While *academic development* attempts to enhance academics in their role as teachers, *professional and academic development* focuses on university teachers' whole career development and surpasses teaching to include research and social services (Stes et al., 2010). The term *educational development* is also used to refer to the entire spectrum of activities and development initiatives that give greater consideration to the various roles that academic staff play within departments, faculties and the larger university community, including those of scholar, researcher and instructor (Amundsen et al., 2005; Stes et al., 2010; Taylor & Rege Colet, 2009).

Since the quality of teaching is inseparably linked to the quality of learning (Askerc Veniger, 2016), the efficacy of training for teachers in higher education in enhancing university instruction has been the subject of extensive enquiry (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004). Subsequently, we present how academic development, the teaching approach and student learning are intricate aspects of teaching and learning in higher education.

b) Academic Development, Teaching Approach and Student Learning

For decades, teaching in higher education has been permeated by two main educational assumptions about the roles and responsibilities of academic staff. The first is that 'the expertise in one's own discipline has been the most respected feature of a university teacher' (Postareff et al., 2007, p. 557). The second is that 'the recognition that success for academic staff had been defined almost exclusively by research and publication success' (Ouellett, 2010, p. 4). Both ideas have made the ameliorating of the craft of teaching in higher education a great challenge for educational developers and educators alike.

The main goal of academic development is to support better responsive teaching practices for successful student learning (Feixas & Zellweger, 2010). In other words, research in this area seeks to understand 'the extent to which teachers' training contributes to the improvement of the quality of teachers' practices and, in turn, the quality of students' learning in higher education' (p. 94). However, researchers have not embraced the idea of effective teaching that works for all situations and student populations (Parsons et al., 2012). Factors such as context and teaching models applied in the classroom have become relevant (Donnelly, 2007), not to mention the role of the institutional actions and conditions that encourage and support academic development, which in turn reflect best practice in the classroom (Condon et al., 2016).

However, there is some evidence to support the idea that investing resources in quality enhancement processes, such as pedagogical training courses/ programmes, refines the teaching approach and student learning (Cilliers & Herman, 2010; Gibbs, 2010; Gibbs & Coffey, 2004; Postareff et al., 2007; Stes & Van Petegem, 2011). For example, Gibbs and Coffey (2004) studied university teachers in the UK, illustrating that their training has resulted in positive changes, such as better teaching skills or the development of more sophisticated conceptions of teaching. In this study, trainees reported an increase in how much they adopt student-focused approaches to teaching. Moreover, a student-focus approach is known to be associated with students taking a deep approach to a greater extent and, hence, to better student learning outcomes. Aspects of teaching scored higher ratings on student evaluation questionnaires, including good teaching. This finding was later confirmed by Postareff et al. (2007) in a qualitative study with 23 teachers at a university in Finland, where teachers mentioned only the positive effects of pedagogical training on teaching. Accordingly, teachers who received most of their pedagogical training reported being more student centred and less teacher centred, which makes sense, given that the institution is pushing student-centred teaching.

The existing professional culture and teaching experience can affect the way teachers value teaching and change approaches to teaching because of pedagogical training. Kálmán et al. (2020) demonstrated that teachers experienced more teaching approaches when they perceived their professional culture as supportive and collaborative. In addition, the study demonstrated that 'the more experience teachers had,

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the more they found almost all types of teaching approaches relevant' (p. 611). However, researchers acknowledge that changes in teaching occur over time (Chalmers & Gardiner, 2015; Cilliers & Herman, 2010). For example, compared to shorter courses, longer-running programmes guarantee greater chances to influence educators' ideas about teaching, learning and pedagogy (Askerc Veniger, 2016).

Prosser and Trigwell (1999) have shown that higher education instructors have fundamentally distinct ideas about teaching and learning and that these ideas are connected to the disparities in the methods they use to educate. Teachers who believe that teaching is merely about imparting knowledge to learners from the curriculum, for instance believe in a teaching method that places the instructor at the centre of the learning process. This method of instruction is known as *information transmission/ teacher focused*. However, a teaching strategy that aims to alter students' perceptions of the studied subject matter is linked to a concentration on the student as the centre of attention. This is termed *student-focused/conceptual change*.

Notably, research on the impact of the academic development of the teaching approach has made clear its implications for students' approaches to learning (Condon et al., 2016; Stes et al., 2010). This is because teaching approaches can influence students' learning interests and, in turn, their learning (Condon et al., 2016).

Briefly, the scholarly literature-related interest in academic development and improvement in teachers' performance has declined in the West in the last 20 years. The reviewed studies in question were published in well-established international peer-reviewed journals in the English language. This trend suggests, first, that most of the response to the widespread need for change in higher education might have been addressed earlier because of increasing economic pressures and concerns about the quality of university teaching in Western countries. The fact that most recent studies were conducted in non-Western contexts confirms this argument (Askerc Veniger, 2016; Kálmán et al., 2020). Second, the dearth of research in this field was acknowledged by Postareff et al.'s (2007) study conducted in Finland concerning the impact of teachers' training on the teaching approach. However, in the context where universities, such as those in African countries, enjoy far fewer resources than North America or Europe, those concerns still shape the quality of teaching and learning. Because these institutions still struggle financially, they affect staff morale and commitment to teaching coupled with significant socio-economic disparities in society. Therefore, there is a need for research in this field that addresses how academic staff experience the need for change in teaching approaches that promote student learning vis-a-vis institutional factors that constrain the professional development of academics in their teaching roles.

III. Materials and Methods

This study focused on university teachers' perspectives of good teaching and the interconnected-ness between academic development, teaching approaches and students' learning in a university in Mozambique. The research approach adopted in this study is qualitative. Under the interpretative paradigm, a qualitative endeavour acknowledges the existence of different realities based on participants' multiple interpretations and perspectives (Cohen et al., 2018). The main emphasis of this study is to understand the how individuals (teachers) construct, alter and interpret meaning in their surroundings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), that is, classroom teaching. To make sense of participants' experiences, semi-structured interviews took place. Interviews enable subjects to discuss their interpretations of the world and to express how they regard situations from their own perspectives (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). To complement the interview data, official documents were analysed with classroom observation notes.

a) Participants

Data were gathered through interviews, and the interviewees included 10 teachers (six males and four females) in three faculties in a university in Mozambique. The selected teachers came from different disciplines, including the social sciences (psychology and sociology), education and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (biology, chemistry, engineering and computer science). Respondents were purposefully selected for this study considering their diversity in terms of gender, field of study and years of experience. Most individuals fells into the category of 'experts' because most of their career was in teaching even before they became university teachers. Participation in the study was voluntary; this was explicitly written in the official document authorising the study that was explained to participants. Other ethical issues, such as confidentiality and anonymity, were also addressed during the interview.

All the selected teachers agreed to be interviewed after an invitation was sent to the department and through the emails of the potential participants. The interviews were conducted online over Zoom and lasted approximately 60 minutes each. Informed consent was read to each participant to confirm that ethical concerns with human subjects were respected. Interviews were conducted in Portuguese and later translated into English by a professional language editor. The interviews were semi-structured and targeted three broad areas. The first focused on the motivational factors for starting to build a teaching

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career. The second aimed to elicit the teachers' conceptions of 'good' teaching, teaching approaches and the role of pedagogical training. The third enquired into teachers' challenges to be 'a good teacher' and implement the 'right' approach to teaching, thereby ensuring the quality of the learning experience.

Table 1: Description of the Participants

Participants	Sex	Field	Experience	Degree
Teacher 1	Female	STEM – Computer Sciences	8 years of experience	Master's
Teacher 2	Female	Psychology	7 years of experience	Master's
Teacher 3	Male	Education	14 years of experience	PhD
Teacher 4	Male	STEM – Mathematics	28 years of experience	Master's
Teacher 5	Male	Education	16 years of experience	PhD
Teacher 6	Male	Psychology	6 years of experience	Master's
Teacher 7	Male	STEM – Engineering	15 years of experience	PhD
Teacher 8	Female	STEM – Biology	15 years of experience	PhD
Teacher 9	Male	STEM – Chemistry	30 years of experience	Master's
Teacher 10	Female	Sociology	24 years of experience	PhD

b) Data Analysis

A qualitative method was used in the data analysis for this study. *Thematic analysis* is a technique for finding, evaluating and summarising themes in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Every interview was captured on tape and accurately transcribed. To establish familiarity with the empirical material, the transcripts and recordings were read and listened to several times. Initially, the transcripts were categorised based on the main themes found (Patton, 2002). An inductive and data-driven analysis was performed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To protect the identities of the participants by ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, the interviewees were identified by pseudonyms.

IV. Findings

This study explored university teachers' perspectives of the role of academic development in teaching approaches and student learning. Moreover, as a follow-up, it investigates how academic staff construct the notion of 'good teaching' in higher education. From the responses provided by the informants, four themes emerged, as follows: (I) learning the craft of teaching: motivational drivers; (II) conceptions of 'good teaching'; (III) perceptions of the role of pedagogical training for teaching and learning and (IV) teaching and learning challenges. The representative interview excerpts illustrate how these themes were expressed.

a) Learning the Craft of Teaching: Motivational Drivers

The interviewees in the sample cited a variety of factors as motivating them to launch a teaching career at university. Participants also discussed their passion for teaching and student learning. Some had learned to teach before becoming university lecturers. Others had previous experience teaching or had worked in the education sector. After being hired as tutors at an early stage, some participants revealed how they learned to master the craft of teaching while still undergraduate students and how they gained inspiration to initiate their careers from more experienced academics:

> 'When I started teaching, I usually looked up to the senior professors, who were also my teachers'. (Teacher 1)
>
> 'Those who become tutors, obviously, can extend this passion for teaching, because they will learn from their teachers'. (Teacher 6)

An important element of building interest in a particular career is the role model effect. While attending courses, as students start observing and following examples of teachers' good practices and behaviours, they end up gaining inspiration to become one:

> I had different experiences […] while attending some classes. Each professor taught in his own way, and there was always one or another professor who stood out, as students say, who teaches well, who communicates well with the students. It was from then on that I began to see and look at teaching. (Teacher 3)

The key words here are *good communication skills* and *knowledge about people's behaviours*. These attributes can cultivate an interest in teaching.

> However, one participant had a different trajectory for becoming a lecturer. She revealed that teaching was not her first career choice:
>
> It was never my dream to be a teacher. I remember when I completed my bachelor's in psychology, one of the teachers in a subject where I had very good grades invited me to be a tutor, and I paused my decision. After that, I went to work for a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). So, at the NGO, there were some problems with funding, and I was in

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the process of looking for a job. That is when someone told me about the hiring for teachers at university. (Teacher 2)

b) Conceptions of 'good teaching'

Subjects discussed their conceptions of good teaching practice based on their experiences. For instance, respondents commented that good teaching is transmitting knowledge while meeting students' expectations and following their growth:

> To become a great professional, you must look at the classroom as a space of great opportunity to build or to enhance your profile as a professional. […] Each student brings their own difficulties. It is gratifying when you are able to meet the expectations of the student who, at the beginning of the class […], you were unable to see their potential, but over time, they improve, grow and meet expectations. (Teacher 3)

While creating opportunities for interactions, teachers can learn from their students:

> (…) [I]n my field, I have the opportunity not only to transmit knowledge but also to learn many things from the students. (…) It gives us the opportunity to explore both the teaching aspect, where we teach students, but also the particularity of having student-centred teaching, in which they build their own knowledge.[…] (Teacher 1)

These excerpts suggest that teaching is a two-way street while a teacher promotes student learning. Simultaneously, the teacher grows professionally by doing so.

Apart from valuing interactions with students, another teacher described how he enjoys teaching very much due to self-confidence and the possibility of improving his self-efficacy:

> I prioritise teaching so much that I do not teach for the money […] because I realised that teaching is the reason to be constantly updated, to be informed, so that you can teach with […] scientific support […]. On the other hand, you have the opportunity to interact with students and in this discussion process. (Teacher 4)

The quote above suggests that the teacher views teaching as an opportunity to stay current on developments in his field and to incorporate these developments into his instruction.

A good teaching approach can also be construed as an internal process of being good at a particular discipline and having that kind of ability to transmit or explain. One believes that one can perform that task easily to convince or make others understand a subject matter. One participant mentioned this in an enthusiastic way:

> That is where I have the most creativity. I sense that when I come home from a class I feel that this is an art. I mastered the art of summarising. Okay. In addition, this mastery arises, as you say, the inclination – I have already noted this inclination. Because I lived in a very small town that counted the number of people who made it to 12th grade, people came to me asking me to explain this or that to them. I explained it and always received this feedback (That I am good at it). I explain it well, and people understand the mathematics, the science that I explained and so on. (Teacher 7)

There were two main implications for when this teacher tried to make learning easier for students. Since the teacher viewed his role as the transmitter of knowledge, a teacher-centred approach to teaching was likeliest to be adopted in this case. Second, students' prior knowledge was not considered; they were viewed as essentially passive recipients of information.

c) Perceptions of the Role of Pedagogical Training in Teaching and Learning

The participants mentioned a few aspects of pedagogical training that indirectly or directly affected the way they approach teaching and learning. Moreover, some of them contained elements of student-centred learning and a teacher-centred approach. Both aspects were mentioned as resulting from pedagogical training courses. For example, one teacher described by comparison how pedagogical knowledge could make a difference in teaching.

> Because those teachers who do not have this pedagogical training have difficulty even starting a class, they have difficulty motivating the students. They teach in the same way. Depending on the content, depending on the level of difficulty, it is important to always find a way to motivate the students in such a way that they are interested in the class. (Teacher 4)

Student-centred learning has its advantages. Good teaching practice is also about how to manage situations that arise from giving students too much freedom and responsibility for their learning. For instance, treating students fairly should not be exaggerated, as one teacher indicated below.

> So, we have to consider this so that we don't let ourselves be influenced by the idea of, they come like this from high school, so we can't mistreat them too much. We really need to have excellent students, and we need to balance this. So, this exercise of balancing this idea of student-centred teaching, which I think, or for me at least, is quite challenging, knowing that the student I receive is this one, has these characteristics, has these shortcomings, these deficiencies. (Teacher 2)

Although the student-centred teaching approach is ideal, understanding students' behaviours concerning this approach and its limitations is also crucial because challenges may arise during implementation. One participant elaborated in detail on how he perceives the nuances of this approach:

> In the subject I am teaching, I have expected results, and I want the student to be able to do this […] at the end of the subject. How am I going to make sure he/she gets there, considering that teaching is student centred? It is very challenging. […] [W]hen the teacher demands, the teacher guides and tells them to go there to do research and everything, they think the teacher is boring, is very

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> demanding, and they always try to manipulate an attempt to get the best results with less effort. (Teacher 9)

Clearly, for learning to be student-centred, students also require some degree of understanding about their responsibilities and consequent behavioural shifts; otherwise, the aforementioned unwillingness may jeopardise the whole process of teachers to make the transitioning from teacher-centred to student-centred learning approach.

Pedagogical training courses also prescribe teachers to consider the role of learning in a context. On this subject, one participant commented about how he deals with the issue of students' diversity when it is presented and the consideration of different learning styles:

> Well, I think it contributes to the extent that it enables the teacher to create a learning space that is much more adjusted to reality, but at the same time, it allows the teacher to deliver what is foreseen in the curriculum. So, pedagogy courses come precisely to tell us how we can do this, taking reality into account. […] There are situations in the classroom in which the teacher has a student with visual impairment. Pedagogy can recommend that the teacher use the knowledge learned in the field of inclusive education, in the field of special needs, to deal with that student. (Teacher 6)

Evaluation in higher education is one component of pedagogical courses, and the integration of student feedback is important for improving teaching quality:

> (…) One of the things that (…) has helped me a lot, it's a practice a colleague taught me. In the middle of the semester, I invite the students to evaluate my work anonymously. The students write down the positive and negative aspects and how I can improve. These are aspects that I take into consideration so that if the student fails, the following year, he is supposed to not find that flaw anymore. (Teacher 2)

d) Teaching and Learning Challenges

Participants discussed some of the challenges they face in improving teaching and student learning in their field of study. Most challenges mentioned relate to the general quality of higher education in Mozambique. These aspects affect their work as teachers and students' quality of learning.

As teachers face pressure to change their teaching approach to more student centred, the challenge brought by increasing student enrolment is to balance the new approach with student preparedness. As one participant described the following:

> Because at no point in high school [is] the student prepared for university, we are trained to use this approach. The student comes from a very different study regimen in which the teacher is the holder of knowledge. So, this transition is quite challenging. (Teacher 2)

In reporting student-related problems, university teachers also shared aspects of students' lack of commitment to their studies and difficulty in improving teaching when certain facilities are not available. The following two extracts exemplify teachers who had noticed both abovementioned challenges.

> I have a big focus on students who have failed and are repeating a subject. Since they already have knowledge of the material, they end up slacking off. I have seen them miss most classes. They hardly do their work. They participate very poorly in the class. (Teacher 1)

> One challenge that I understand is the issue of materials, for example practical classes on computers. We usually don't have enough computers for each student. Since we don't have computers for each student, this ends up making the teaching and learning process more difficult in some way. And it ends up compromising in some way the quality of teaching. (Teacher 9)

Concerning teachers' perceptions of students' behaviour, the new phenomenon called *digital learners* is pervading higher education internationally. According to one participant, it is threatening the 'university culture'.

> Another issue is university culture. I feel at the time when I was a university student, there was a university culture. I think that this is being lost […]. This generation that we call digital learners and works a lot with technology; […], the role of higher education is to transform this mentality of immediacy to build a more credible mentality to preserve the identity of higher education. (Teacher 3)

Whether this is a real issue for universities in Mozambique depends on where one stands on the role of new technology in teaching and learning. One can argue that it is both revolutionary and disruptive.

Teachers also reported that, in some circumstances, managing professional commitments and ensuring the quality of teaching becomes even harder when they must deal with teaching being an underpaid profession. These two situations interfere with the time dedicated to one institution and the motivation to put in the work, as one of the participants said:

> There is not much appreciation for the work teachers do. That is why what we are looking for besides teaching is to be able to provide improvements for ourselves and for our loved ones. So, what happens is that many times this also ends up hindering the teaching career a little, because what happens is that people then must look for multiple and competing roles because of having other things to do to cover this gap. (Teacher 1)

As the interviewee mentioned below, universities are compromised by 'turbo teachers', that is 'teachers who teach in different institutions' (Teacher 3).

Finally, there is the bigger picture: The quality of teaching and learning in higher education does not happen in a vacuum. One subject candidly highlighted the following:

> […] Not to mention other factors beyond the control of the teacher and even of the institution, itself. The university depends on cultural factors, social factors, political factors

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and demographic factors, and they have a great impact on the life of educational institutions, as well as on the life of teachers. We are witnessing, for instance a drastic reduction in terms of funding for higher education in the last two years, not only in Mozambique. How are we going to guarantee quality? (Teacher 3)

V. Concluding Discussion

This study sought to understand how teachers at a university in Mozambique conceptualise the notion of 'good teaching' in HE and how they interpret the connectedness of academic development, teaching approaches and students' learning. Therefore, two research questions were asked. (1) How do university teachers perceive good teaching practices in HE? (2) How does a university teacher understand the role of academic development in teaching practice and student learning in the Mozambican HE context?

Findings from this study reveal that the understanding of 'good teaching' in HE varies widely among the participants and incorporates a wide range of aspects related to one's experience, professional growth as a teacher, teaching philosophy and knowledge of the classroom context. According to participants, factors such as meeting students' expectations, learning from interacting with students, mastering the art of transmitting knowledge and applying research to teaching make a difference in classroom teaching. The reasons for adopting good teaching practices can vary from personal reasons such as inclination and enjoyment to institutional incentives. In scholarly terms, good teaching should be understood as 'teaching that promotes student learning and other desired student outcomes' (Bernstein & Ginsberg, 2009, p. 8). It is believed that excellent instruction occurs 'naturally' and that those who are hired to teach at such institutions do it because they 'care about teaching' (Gillespie et al., 2010). It is also believed that 'one could be very effective, in terms of promoting student learning, without being able to identify any theories of learning or teaching' (Smith, 2001, p. 70).

Research has found that conceptions of teaching can influence whether a teacher adopts a more student-centred or more teacher-centred approach to teaching (Kálmán et al., 2020; Postareff et al., 2007). In our study, no interviewee revealed they used a more teacher-centred approach to teaching. This makes sense because it is not what the university is promoting (Postareff et al., 2007). All informants seemed to value the student-centred approach, although they showed no sophisticated understanding of what it entails other than saying that students are responsible for constructing their knowledge. In Mozambique, this is understandable for various reasons. First, the motivation to implement new pedagogical approaches is attributed either due to the external imposition of Western countries' agendas or as university managers' imposition following local policies and practices. This can cause hesitancy to implement and misinterpret what this new approach entails. Some teachers will merely sit in the classroom, let the students do all the teaching and call it student centred. Others are not ready to relinquish their time to talk and show off their knowledge to the whole class. The third aspect concerns students: Lecturers believe they are not ready to embrace new responsibilities as learners (Mendonça, 2014). Last is the lack of an institutional quality control mechanism, such as supervising novice teachers throughout the stages of their professional development and performance in the classroom, which can have a detrimental effect (UEM, 2012).

Research on the connectedness of academic development, the teaching approach and student learning has shown a direct connection between academic development and teaching practice, though there is no clear connection to student learning (Condon et al., 2016). However, Gibbs and Coffey (2004) demonstrated that training increased the how much teachers adopted the student-centred approach to teaching, which promotes deep learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011). The findings of our study indicate that all participants had taken pedagogical training courses before and after the inception of their teaching. They revealed they are still struggling to find the best way to implement a student-centred approach vis-à-vis the context of implementation. However, some were more confident than others concerning the benefits of this approach, such as how to motivate students to be interested in the class and how to promote active participation. Other positive aspects that resulted from teacher training included the incorporation of student feedback for improvement and an awareness of how student diversity can affect learning. The most important aspects of the learning context of implementation highlighted by the teachers' concern about students' preparedness and attitudes towards the new approach and learning in general. A study in the same academic context demonstrated that all parties involved in teaching and learning showed reluctance to implement the student-centred approach (Mendonça, 2014).

Positive organisational circumstances are necessary for the successful implementation of innovative teaching techniques in HE. In other words, teachers value a supportive and collaborative professional culture that values their work (Kálmán et al., 2020). Regarding this subject, findings revealed that participants tend to attribute the challenges of being effective teachers and the likelihood of changing to a student-centred approach to circumstances they cannot control. The challenges reported include the increasing enrolment of unprepared students coupled with their lack of commitment to their studies and the lack of proper facilities for learning. In addition, teaching staff have a heavy workload because they teach at many universities. These challenges are the crux of the

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problem of the quality of teaching and learning in higher education in Mozambique (Mendonça, 2014; Miguel et al., 2022). This scenario is exacerbated by reduced funding for higher education in recent years internationally; developing countries suffer the most consequences (Carr-Hill, 2020).

VI. Implications for Practice

Given the dispersed understandings of good teaching and the challenges of implementing student-centred learning, educational policy and practice regarding academic development in the context of this study should have a mechanism to follow up with trainees (mostly novice university teachers) to assess how in practice they are carrying out the task of teaching. Of course, this should be accompanied by local incentives for teaching effectiveness and continuous in-service learning to further improve academics' pedagogical and didactic skills.

Declarations

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

Conflicts of Interest/Competing Interests

The author have no conflicts of interest relevant to the content of this article.

Availability of Data and Materials

Data applied for the manuscript are available by contacting the corresponding author. They were collected at Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique.

Authors' Contribution

The author contributed solely to the conception and design of this study. The material preparation and data collection and analysis were performed by Francisco De Carvalho.

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