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Assessing the Role of School Heads' Leadership Styles on Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Selected Public Primary Schools in Mkuranga District, Tanzania

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Abstract: This study examined the influence of school heads' leadership styles on teachers' job satisfaction in selected public primary schools in Mkuranga District, Coast Region, Tanzania. Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping teacher motivation, engagement, and school performance. A mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating quantitative and qualitative data. The study targeted school heads, deputy heads, and teachers, with a sample size of 120 participants. Data were collected using structured questionnaires for teachers and in-depth interviews with school heads. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were interpreted through content analysis. Findings revealed that school heads practiced a combination of directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership styles, with varying impacts on teachers' job satisfaction. Supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented styles were associated with higher teacher motivation, engagement, and commitment. Teachers reported greater satisfaction when school heads communicated effectively, treated staff fairly, involved them in decision-making, and recognized their contributions. Directive leadership, when dominant, was perceived as authoritarian and less effective in enhancing teacher satisfaction. School-specific results showed School A favoring supportive leadership, School B participative, School C achievement-oriented, and School D predominantly directive. Qualitative interviews confirmed these findings, emphasizing that combining leadership styles according to situational needs enhances teacher morale and professional growth. The study concludes that adaptive leadership practices that prioritize support, participation, and achievement orientation are essential for promoting teacher satisfaction in public primary schools. It recommends that school heads involve teachers in decision-making, recognize their efforts, and provide guidance and resources to improve motivation, teaching quality, and overall school performance..

Keyword : Leadership Styles, Teacher Job Satisfaction, Academic Achievement, Public Primary Schools, Mkuranga Distric, Tanzania

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping organizational outcomes and employee satisfaction, and schools are no exception. Leadership styles adopted by school heads significantly influence not only institutional performance but also

teachers' job satisfaction, morale, and productivity. The link between leadership approaches and teacher satisfaction has therefore attracted considerable attention in educational research across diverse global contexts. In European schools, for instance, Berkovich and Eyal (2020) demonstrated that transformational and supportive leadership fostered emotional engagement among teachers, enhancing their commitment and job satisfaction, particularly in schools undergoing curriculum reforms or technological integration. Similarly, Bates and Kline (2021) highlighted that transformational leadership in the United Kingdom positively influenced teacher satisfaction by promoting innovation, professional growth, and a collaborative work environment. Studies from other regions echo these findings; in India, Bhargava and Soni (2020) observed that achievement-oriented school heads who empowered teachers and encouraged collaboration improved job satisfaction significantly compared to directive leadership styles, a trend also confirmed by Verma (2023) and Rao and Mehta (2021).

In Africa, leadership styles have been shown to critically affect teachers' satisfaction in public schools. Wamuyu and Kadenyi (2019) found that participative and supportive leadership styles in Kenya enhanced job satisfaction through participatory decision-making and open communication. Similarly, Meney (2024) reported that achievement-oriented leadership in Tanzanian secondary schools promoted collaboration, professional development, and shared vision, thereby increasing teacher satisfaction. Research from Ghana (Bamgboye, Akinyemi, & Okeke, 2021; Mensah & Osei, 2021) and Uganda (Kagoya & Nuwagira, 2022) also indicates that supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership positively affect employee satisfaction across educational and organizational settings. Conversely, directive and laissez-faire leadership styles have been associated with lower satisfaction levels, as evidenced in Tanzanian (Masalu, Mwakalukwa, & Mzuri, 2024; Salim & Hidayat, 2022), Kenyan (Mutua, Kamau, & Njeru, 2021), French (Benoit et al., 2022), and Indian contexts (Rao & Mehta, 2021). These studies collectively suggest that leadership style is a critical determinant of teacher satisfaction, yet the effectiveness of specific approaches is often shaped by cultural, socio-economic, and institutional contexts.

Despite this growing body of literature, several gaps remain. Most studies have focused on short-term effects of leadership on satisfaction, with limited longitudinal research examining the sustained impact on teacher morale and organizational performance. In addition, few studies have investigated leadership in private or chartered school settings, leaving a knowledge gap regarding variations across institutional types. Furthermore, in developing regions such as East Africa, contextual factors including resource constraints, political instability, and societal expectations may mediate the relationship between leadership style and teacher satisfaction, but

research addressing these dynamics remains limited (Ngowi & Kessy, 2022; Osaki & Lwoga, 2024).

In Tanzania, evidence on the relationship between school heads' leadership styles and teacher job satisfaction is emerging but still fragmented. Studies by Mwakalonge and Ng'umbi (2021) and Meney (2024) suggest that transformational and achievement-oriented leadership positively influence teacher satisfaction in Tanzanian schools, whereas directive styles may hinder motivation and engagement (Masalu, Mwakalukwa, & Mzuri, 2024; Salim & Hidayat, 2022). However, the specific effects of leadership styles in public primary schools in Mkuranga District, Coast Region, remain underexplored. Addressing this gap is critical for developing contextually relevant strategies to enhance teacher satisfaction, morale, and overall school performance.

This study, therefore, seeks to examine the effect of school heads' leadership styles on teachers' job satisfaction in selected public primary schools in Mkuranga District, Coast Region, Tanzania, with the aim of contributing to the broader discourse on educational leadership and improving teacher well-being and school effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the critical role of school heads leadership styles in enhancing teachers' motivation and job satisfaction, public primary schools in Mkuranga District face significant challenges linked to ineffective leadership styles, which reduce morale, increase job dissatisfaction and negatively impact teacher retention. Studies indicate that school heads leadership styles, such as achievement-oriented, supportive and participative significantly influence teachers' professional and private well-being and improve performance (Berkovich & Eyal, 2020). However, evidence from Mkuranga District revealed a growing concern about teacher absenteeism, lack of motivation and high turnover rates. Reports from the District Education Office (2024) have highlighted that over 35% of teachers had expressed dissatisfaction with the support and guidance they received from their school heads. Moreover, the prevalence of directive leadership styles in some schools has been linked to poor decision-making and inadequate teacher engagement in administrative processes thus further aggravating teachers' job dissatisfaction. Given the benefits of teachers' satisfaction in improving educational outcomes, the study investigated the effect of leadership styles on teachers' job satisfaction in the selected public primary schools in Mkuranga District, Coast Region, Tanzania. Addressing this issue was essential for enhancing teachers' job satisfaction, motivation, dedication, and promoting a supportive teaching environment in the district.

Research Objectives

1. To examine teachers' perceptions of supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership styles and their influence on job satisfaction in selected public primary schools in Mkuranga District.
2. To assess the impact of directive leadership style on teachers' job satisfaction and engagement in the selected schools.

Literature Review

This study was guided by the Path-Goal Theory of Leadership, developed by Robert J. House in 1971, which provides a foundational framework for understanding the relationship between leadership styles and employee outcomes. According to the Path-Goal Theory, a leader's primary role is to clarify the path for subordinates to achieve their goals by removing obstacles, providing necessary support, and ensuring that the reward structure aligns with performance outcomes. The theory emphasizes that leadership styles directly influence employee motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance, which are critical factors in organizational success. This theoretical perspective is particularly relevant to the present study, as it offers insight into how different school heads' leadership approaches can affect teachers' job satisfaction in the selected public primary schools in Mkuranga District, Coast Region, Tanzania. By focusing on the mechanisms through which leadership behavior shapes employees' perceptions of their roles, support, and recognition, the Path-Goal Theory underscores the potential for school leadership to enhance teacher morale and commitment.

Empirical evidence from various global contexts demonstrates that leadership style significantly influences job satisfaction among employees and teachers alike. Participative leadership, which emphasizes shared decision-making and employee involvement, has been consistently associated with higher job satisfaction. In the United States, Smith et al. (2021) examined 300 employees across different industries and found a significant positive relationship between participative leadership and job satisfaction, particularly in organizations that emphasized employee development and empowerment. Similarly, Vargas et al. (2020) studied Spanish small and medium enterprises and reported that participative leadership, characterized by collaborative decision-making, was strongly correlated with employee satisfaction. In Tanzania, Osaki and Lwoga (2024) found that school heads who employed participative leadership experienced higher levels of teachers' job satisfaction, especially when teachers were actively engaged in school-level decision-making processes. These findings suggest that involving employees in organizational decisions can enhance their sense of ownership, motivation, and satisfaction.

Achievement-oriented leadership, which focuses on setting high standards, challenging goals, and promoting professional development, has also been found to

positively influence job satisfaction. In Singapore, Tan and Lim (2020) demonstrated that employees in the banking sector experienced greater job satisfaction under achievement-oriented leadership, particularly when seeking professional growth and autonomy. However, the study noted that in more hierarchical cultures, directive leadership might be more effective in achieving organizational goals. In West Africa, Ogunleye (2020) observed that principals with achievement-oriented and supportive leadership styles contributed to higher levels of teacher satisfaction in Nigeria, a finding echoed by other studies in Ghana and Sierra Leone (Bamgboye, Akinyemi, & Okeke, 2021; Mensah & Osei, 2021). In Tanzania, Mwakalonge and Ng'umbi (2021) found that achievement-oriented leadership positively impacted teachers' job satisfaction, especially by fostering collaborative work environments in urban schools, highlighting the relevance of this style in promoting both individual and institutional performance.

Supportive leadership, which involves showing concern for subordinates' well-being, providing guidance, and fostering positive relationships, has similarly been linked to increased job satisfaction. Verma (2023) reported that principals' supportive leadership significantly influenced teachers' satisfaction and organizational commitment in Indian schools, although the impact on teachers in rural or marginalized areas remains underexplored, revealing a gap in the literature. In Uganda, Kagoya and Nuwagira (2022) found that principals who exhibited supportive and participatory leadership were more likely to foster higher job satisfaction among teachers, while also contributing to a positive school climate. In Tanzania, Ngowi and Kessy (2022) explored leadership styles in public health organizations and noted that while directive leadership could affect job satisfaction, supportive leadership was more effective in sustaining motivation and engagement across hierarchical levels. These studies suggest that emotional support, recognition, and interpersonal care from leaders play a crucial role in enhancing employee satisfaction and loyalty.

In contrast, directive leadership, characterized by rigid control, top-down decision-making, and limited employee autonomy, has been associated with lower job satisfaction. Benoit et al. (2022) in France found that directive leadership negatively affected job satisfaction in customer-facing roles, emphasizing the detrimental consequences of passive or authoritarian leadership on employee morale. In India, Rao and Mehta (2021) reported that directive leadership decreased job satisfaction in service sector organizations, particularly where employee autonomy and well-being were not prioritized. In Ghana, Mensah and Osei (2021) found that employees under directive leadership felt excluded from decision-making processes, leading to reduced satisfaction and increased absenteeism. Similar patterns have been observed in Tanzania, where Salim and Hidayat (2022) reported that employees in government institutions under directive leaders experienced dissatisfaction due to restricted

participation in decision-making, and Masalu et al. (2024) found that directive leadership in public primary schools was linked to low job satisfaction, particularly among non-teaching staff. Collectively, these studies underscore that rigid, controlling leadership approaches can hinder motivation, engagement, and overall job satisfaction, highlighting the need for more participatory and supportive leadership in educational settings.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Mkuranga District, located in the Coast Region of Tanzania. A mixed research approach was employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative approach addressed numerical data, logic, and an objective stance, while the qualitative approach allowed for in-depth exploration of participants' lived experiences and local nuances. A mixed methods design was adopted because it facilitated a comprehensive understanding of school heads' leadership styles and their effects on teachers' job satisfaction.

The target population for this study comprised school heads, teachers, and deputy heads working in the selected public primary schools in Mkuranga District. These groups were chosen because of their critical roles in school leadership, management, and the teaching and learning process. A sample size of 120 participants was used to represent all teachers and school heads in the district. The sample size was determined using Kerlinger's formula, which recommends selecting 10% to 30% of the population to represent the views of the whole. Consequently, a total of 120 questionnaires were distributed to teachers in the selected public primary schools, of which 118 were returned, representing a high response rate of 98.3%. After checking for completeness and consistency, 100 questionnaires were deemed valid and used for analysis. A combination of simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques was employed to ensure that the sample adequately represented the population and addressed the research objectives.

Data were collected using questionnaires for teachers, an in-depth interview guide for school heads and deputy heads, and a document analysis guide. Quantitative data collected through questionnaires were coded, categorized, and organized according to emerging response categories. The coded data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, with frequencies and percentages calculated. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20 and Microsoft Excel were used for data coding and analysis (Landau & Everitt, 2004). Qualitative data collected through interviews were analyzed using content analysis, allowing for the identification of themes and patterns relevant to leadership styles and teachers' job satisfaction (Creswell, 2012).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings of the Study

1. Teachers' Perceptions of School Heads' Leadership Styles

To examine teachers' perceptions of school heads' leadership styles, the study employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Teachers were asked to respond to five key statements reflecting different aspects of leadership practices, including clarity of vision, participation in decision-making, recognition of teachers' efforts, fairness, and communication effectiveness. The responses are summarized in Table 1, which presents the frequency of each response category along with the mean scores for each statement.

Table 1. Teachers' Perceptions of School Heads' Leadership Styles

Statement	1 SD	2 D	3 N	4 A	5 SA	Mean
The school head demonstrates a clear vision	5	5	10	40	40	4.05
Encourages teachers to participate in decision-making	5	5	5	30	45	4.15
Recognizes and appreciates teachers' efforts	32	10	0	35	23	3.35
Treats teachers fairly and without favouritism	10	5	0	55	30	4.05
Communicates effectively with teachers	5	5	5	40	45	4.15

Source: Researcher (2025)

The study explored teachers' perceptions of school heads' leadership styles in the selected public primary schools in Mkuranga District through five key statements rated on a five-point Likert scale. Teachers rated the statement "The school head demonstrates a clear vision" with a mean of 4.05, indicating general agreement. Most teachers agreed or strongly agreed that school heads clearly communicated the school's goals and objectives, suggesting that heads provided clear direction and helped teachers align their efforts with the school's mission. This finding is consistent with the Education and Training Policy (ETP, 2014), which emphasizes the importance of strategic vision in improving learning outcomes and teachers' job satisfaction.

The statement "Encourages teachers to participate in decision-making" had a mean of 4.15, reflecting strong agreement among respondents. Teachers generally felt involved in decisions affecting school operations, curriculum delivery, and management. Participation in decision-making aligns with the participative leadership style, where leaders seek input and collaboration from staff, which enhances ownership and commitment. Previous studies have shown that teacher involvement in school decisions improves morale, reduces conflicts, and fosters a cooperative school environment. Tanzanian education policies, including school-based management guidelines, promote participative leadership as a strategy for enhancing governance and teacher satisfaction.

The statement "Recognizes and appreciates teachers' efforts" received a lower mean of 3.35, indicating moderate agreement. While some teachers felt appreciated, a

significant portion disagreed or remained neutral. Recognition is a critical aspect of supportive leadership, which the Path-Goal Theory identifies as central to motivating subordinates. Lack of recognition can reduce morale and negatively affect job satisfaction. Previous research in Tanzanian schools indicates that teachers often perceive inadequate acknowledgment of their efforts, which can affect performance and commitment. Although education policies advocate for teacher motivation and professional development, these findings suggest that implementation of recognition practices may be inconsistent, highlighting an area for improvement in school leadership.

Teachers rated the statement "Treats teachers fairly and without favouritism" with a mean of 4.05, indicating that school heads were generally perceived as fair and impartial. Fair treatment fosters trust, professional respect, and job satisfaction, which are central concepts in Path-Goal Theory. Studies have shown that equitable treatment positively affects motivation, commitment, and school climate. In Tanzania, Teacher Service Commission guidelines emphasize fairness and transparency in management, and the high rating in this study suggests that school heads in Mkuranga District were successful in promoting fairness among teachers.

The statement "Communicates effectively with teachers" received a mean of 4.15, indicating strong agreement. Effective communication is essential across all leadership styles, ensuring teachers understand expectations, policies, and their roles. Path-Goal Theory highlights communication as a tool for clarifying goals, reducing uncertainty, and providing feedback. Previous research has consistently found that open and transparent communication from school leaders strengthens teacher satisfaction, collaboration, and commitment. Tanzanian education policies encourage clear and consistent communication, and the high rating in this study indicates that teachers perceived communication as one of their school heads' strengths.

The findings indicate that directive, supportive, and participative leadership styles, as described in Path-Goal Theory, were actively practiced by school heads in the selected schools. Directive leadership was evident through school heads providing a clear vision, setting specific goals, giving precise instructions, and monitoring teacher performance. This approach reduced ambiguity and ensured that teachers understood their responsibilities, which was particularly important in schools with limited resources. Supportive leadership was observed in the way school heads treated teachers fairly, communicated openly, and showed concern for their welfare. Teachers reported that fair treatment and effective communication created a positive and motivating work environment, helping them feel valued and respected. These practices align with the ETP (2014), which emphasizes professional development, equitable treatment, and a conducive work environment. Participative leadership was evident in teachers' involvement in decision-making processes, including curriculum planning, school policy development, and daily operational decisions. Teachers felt

empowered and took ownership of school initiatives when their opinions were considered, supporting Path-Goal Theory's assertion that participative leadership enhances motivation and satisfaction. International studies also corroborate this link, with Leithwood and Jantzi (2020) reporting that participative leadership significantly enhances teacher engagement, while Sato et al. (2022) found that inclusion in decision-making fosters commitment and productivity.

Qualitative findings from interviews with school heads further supported these observations. Head of School A described leadership as combining directive and supportive approaches, emphasizing clear instructions alongside professional and emotional support for teachers, stating, "I always ensure that teachers know exactly what is expected of them, but I also make sure to provide guidance and support whenever they face challenges. This motivates them to perform better and fosters a positive environment." Another head explained that constructive feedback during staff meetings and one-on-one sessions strengthened teacher confidence and classroom performance, balancing firmness with care to maintain discipline while encouraging professional growth. Head of School B highlighted the participative nature of their leadership, noting, "I always involve teachers when planning school activities, setting targets, and deciding on strategies for teaching and learning. When teachers feel part of the decision-making, they are more committed and motivated to achieve the goals we set together." The head emphasized that open discussions and consultations enhanced ownership, trust, and teamwork, reducing resistance to new initiatives.

Head of School C focused on achievement-oriented leadership, stating, "I set clear performance targets for teachers and provide the necessary support, whether through mentoring, resources, or guidance. Teachers respond positively when they see that their efforts are recognized and that I am willing to help them overcome obstacles." This approach promoted goal attainment and continuous professional improvement while combining supportive practices to maintain motivation and confidence. Head of School D reported using a combination of supportive, participative, and directive leadership styles, adapting approaches according to the situation: "Sometimes I need to give clear directives, especially for urgent tasks, but I always ensure teachers are supported and consulted in major decisions. Listening to their concerns and providing guidance helps build trust and strengthens their commitment to the school's vision." This head noted that regular staff meetings, feedback sessions, and mentorship programs promoted collaboration, improved morale, and encouraged professional development, ultimately enhancing teacher satisfaction, teaching quality, and the overall learning environment.

2. Leadership Styles in the Surveyed Schools

The study further explored the leadership styles exercised by school heads in the surveyed schools and their perceived effects on teachers' job satisfaction. In School A, the head predominantly employed a supportive leadership style, which proved highly effective in promoting fairness and treating teachers without favoritism. This approach also encouraged teacher participation in decision-making processes and allowed the school head to recognize and appreciate teachers' efforts, creating a positive and motivating work environment. On certain occasions, however, the head adopted a directive leadership style, which was less effective and did not significantly enhance teachers' job satisfaction. The occasional use of directive methods highlighted that while supportive leadership was well-received, rigid directive practices could reduce motivation and engagement.

In School B, the head of school primarily practiced participative leadership. Teachers were actively involved in various school activities, including planning and decision-making processes, which enhanced their sense of ownership and responsibility. This leadership style proved effective in improving teacher motivation and encouraging higher performance in their assigned tasks. By involving teachers in decisions that affected their work, the school head fostered a collaborative environment that positively influenced job satisfaction.

In School C, achievement-oriented leadership was the predominant approach. The head emphasized collaboration among teachers to achieve both academic goals and overall school performance. Teachers were motivated to meet high expectations, and the leadership style built their confidence and professional competence. The achievement-oriented approach was particularly effective because it aligned teachers' efforts with measurable goals, resulting in both improved student outcomes and increased teacher satisfaction. Teachers reported that being supported to meet ambitious targets enhanced their sense of accomplishment and commitment to the school.

In School D, the dominant leadership style was directive, although the head occasionally employed supportive and participative approaches. The directive style, characterized by top-down instructions and limited teacher input, was less preferred by the staff and did not result in high levels of job satisfaction. Teachers perceived this approach as authoritarian and often felt constrained in expressing their opinions or contributing to school decisions. While the occasional use of supportive or participative strategies had some positive impact, the overall perception of leadership in School D was that of rigidity, which limited teacher motivation and engagement.

Overall, the findings suggest that supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership styles were generally more effective in promoting teacher job satisfaction, while directive leadership, when dominant, tended to reduce morale and professional motivation. Teachers responded positively to leadership that encouraged

collaboration, recognition, fairness, and involvement in decision-making, highlighting the importance of adaptable and inclusive leadership practices in public primary schools.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of this study reveal that school heads in the selected public primary schools in Mkuranga District exercised a combination of directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership styles, with varying impacts on teachers' job satisfaction. When analyzed in light of the Path-Goal Theory, these findings indicate that leadership styles significantly influence teachers' motivation, engagement, and perception of organizational support, consistent with the theoretical assertion that leaders clarify paths, remove obstacles, and align rewards to performance to enhance employee outcomes (House, 1971).

In School A, the predominance of supportive leadership contributed to teachers' satisfaction by fostering fairness, recognition, and participation in decision-making. This aligns closely with Path-Goal Theory, which emphasizes that supportive leadership increases motivation and job satisfaction by attending to subordinates' welfare and addressing their needs. Empirical literature corroborates this finding, as Verma (2023) noted that supportive leadership positively influences teacher satisfaction and organizational commitment, while Kagoya and Nuwagira (2022) highlighted that supportive leaders create environments where employees feel valued, leading to higher job satisfaction. The occasional use of directive leadership in School A, however, was less effective, reflecting findings from Masalu et al. (2024) and Salim and Hidayat (2022), who reported that directive leadership in Tanzanian schools and public institutions often reduces motivation and limits teachers' sense of autonomy. This contrast emphasizes the Path-Goal Theory's premise that leadership effectiveness depends on adapting the style to meet followers' needs and situational demands.

In School B, participative leadership emerged as the dominant style, fostering collaboration and teacher involvement in decision-making processes. The positive response from teachers supports the Path-Goal Theory's view that participative leadership enhances motivation by granting employees a sense of control and responsibility over their work. Similar findings in international studies, such as Leithwood and Jantzi (2020), indicate that participative leadership significantly improves teacher engagement, morale, and satisfaction. Moreover, the involvement of teachers in decision-making aligns with Tanzanian school-based management policies, suggesting that inclusive leadership is effective in promoting teacher ownership, commitment, and satisfaction, as also noted by Vargas et al. (2020) in Spanish SMEs and Osaki and Lwoga (2024) in Tanzanian schools.

School C demonstrated the effectiveness of achievement-oriented leadership, where the school head set high expectations and supported teachers in meeting them. Teachers reported feeling motivated and confident in their work, which supports the Path-Goal Theory assertion that achievement-oriented leadership increases satisfaction by clarifying performance goals and providing necessary guidance and resources. The finding is consistent with studies in Asia and Africa, such as Tan and Lim (2020) in Singapore and Ogunleye (2020) in Nigeria, which indicate that achievement-oriented leaders enhance employee motivation, foster professional growth, and improve organizational outcomes. In the context of Tanzanian public schools, this approach appears to effectively link teacher effort with measurable performance outcomes, reinforcing the theoretical perspective that aligning goals, support, and rewards is essential for increasing job satisfaction.

In School D, directive leadership was the most prominent style, though occasionally supplemented by supportive and participative strategies. Teachers reported lower levels of job satisfaction under this style, perceiving it as authoritarian. This finding aligns with the literature that documents the negative impact of directive leadership on teacher satisfaction, as noted by Benoit et al. (2022) in France, Rao and Mehta (2021) in India, and Mensah and Osei (2021) in Ghana. According to Path-Goal Theory, directive leadership is effective when subordinates require clear guidance, but overreliance on control and limited participation can demotivate employees, reduce engagement, and negatively affect performance outcomes. The mixed response in School D underscores the importance of combining directive approaches with supportive and participative strategies to balance guidance with employee autonomy and satisfaction.

Overall, the study's findings reinforce the applicability of the Path-Goal Theory in the Tanzanian public primary school context. Leadership styles that consider teachers' needs, involve them in decision-making, recognize their efforts, and set achievable goals are most effective in promoting job satisfaction. The results also reflect trends identified in the empirical literature: supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership consistently enhance teacher motivation and satisfaction, while directive leadership, when used excessively, can diminish morale and engagement. These findings highlight the critical role of adaptive leadership in educational settings, suggesting that school heads who skillfully combine leadership styles according to situational and teacher needs are better positioned to foster a positive working environment, improve teaching quality, and achieve broader educational objectives.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that school heads in the selected public primary schools in Mkuranga District exercise a combination of directive, supportive, participative,

and achievement-oriented leadership styles, with varying effects on teachers' job satisfaction. Supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented leadership styles were found to positively influence teacher motivation, engagement, and commitment, whereas directive leadership, when dominant, often reduced satisfaction and was perceived as authoritarian. The findings align with the Path-Goal Theory, which emphasizes that effective leadership clarifies paths, provides necessary support, and aligns goals and rewards to enhance employee performance and satisfaction. Teachers reported higher satisfaction when school heads treated them fairly, involved them in decision-making, communicated effectively, and recognized their efforts, indicating that adaptive and inclusive leadership is essential for creating a positive work environment, improving morale, and fostering professional growth in public primary schools.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that school heads in Mkuranga District prioritize supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented approaches while minimizing overreliance on directive leadership. School leaders should actively involve teachers in decision-making processes, recognize and appreciate their contributions, and provide guidance and resources to achieve both school and individual goals. Professional development programs should be introduced to strengthen leadership skills that promote collaboration, fairness, and teacher empowerment. Additionally, policy makers and educational authorities should encourage school heads to adopt flexible leadership strategies that respond to situational demands and teacher needs, thereby enhancing teacher job satisfaction, improving teaching quality, and ultimately contributing to better learning outcomes in Tanzanian public primary schools.

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