

# EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP AND WORK ENVIRONMENT ON TEACHER SATISFACTION IN TWO TANZANIAN REGIONS

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## Abstract

This study explored the influence of school leadership and working environment on teachers' job satisfaction in Tanzania. The study was guided by two questions: how school leadership influences teachers' job satisfaction and how the working environment influences teachers' job satisfaction. Herzberg's two-factor theory guided the study. A mixed method approach was employed where both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analysed using a concurrent research design in which. The study focused on public secondary schools in Tanzania and involved 244 respondents who were selected using a simple random sampling technique. Questionnaires and interviews were used in data collection for the study. Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis while quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and linear regression analyses. The study findings reveal that school leadership influences teachers' satisfaction with the job. Importantly, the linear regression results revealed that teachers' collaboration significantly predicted commitment to the job ( $\beta=0.24$ ,  $t(4, 239) = 3.77$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). the findings imply that the increase in teachers' collaboration in various school matters stimulated their passion and engagement in school activities. On the other hand, a safe working environment at school accounts for 51.5 per cent in predicting teachers' satisfaction with the job ( $p \leq 0.01$ ). Therefore, collective leadership and a conducive environment at school help in increasing employees' satisfaction with the job. It is recommended that school leaders should continuously be trained on collective leadership and improvement of the working environment.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Shared leadership, job satisfaction, working environment and Schools

## 1.0 Introduction and Background

Teachers' Job Satisfaction in public secondary schools in Tanzania has become a crucial area of research interest. Teachers experience high working pressure and perceive the teaching career as a stressful job with no future (Maas et al., 2021). Several studies (i.e., Crehan, 2016; Thomas et al., 2020) show that the teaching workforce has high attrition, turnover, lack of confidence, dissatisfaction, and low commitment to the career. Similarly, dissatisfaction with the teaching career have been a source of teachers' strikes, absenteeism, low morale in teaching activities and engagement in various socio-economic activities after or during working hours for private economic gain (Olando, 2008, Iramba, 2016). Studies have shown that experience of the head of school leadership contributes much to the improvement of school climate instilling a sense of commitment among workers (Wan et al., 2020). But this is not the case in Tanzania as teachers are rarely involved in school decisions making (Mbonea et al., 2021) Tanga region, in Tanzania. The research design applied was survey. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in finding secondary schools and teachers that present all secondary schools in the region. 119 teachers

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(respondents; Sospeter, 2017). The government is expected to play a role to assuring a better working environment. In Sweden, Teachers have experienced an unsettled situation such as the UK and Tanzania (Lindqvist & Nordänger, 2016), the trend was linked to the rising rates of teachers' absenteeism, attrition and turnover during the last forty years, the 1980s and 1990s.

In the next decade, Sweden will experience a shortage of 80,000 qualified school teacher vacancies to be filled by 2031 (Toropova et al., 2021). Recruiting new teachers may be a challenging task for the Sweden Government as only about 11 per cent of the teachers voluntarily like the profession and think that the society values the teaching profession (OECD, 2017, OECD, 2019) a growing set of actors are increasingly involved in financial decision-making. This requires designing funding allocation models that are aligned to a school system's governance structures, linking budget planning procedures at different levels to shared educational goals and evaluating the use of school funding to hold decision makers accountable and ensure that resources are used effectively and equitably. This report was co-funded by the European Commission. Teachers in Tanzania leave their profession because their needs are ignored (Mgina, 2014). Ignoring teachers' needs increases the level of teachers' dissatisfaction with the teaching career. Teachers' job satisfaction is associated with several reasons (Wetherell, 2002) one is the environment, for example in public schools in the USA, the environment plays a role in teachers' satisfaction (Moore, 2012).

Job satisfaction is pivotal for the success of any school as it is an imperative aspect in today's life. A teacher with a high level of job satisfaction holds up to the job and does it willingly, while the one with low job satisfaction holds negative feeling about the job (Aliakbari, 2015). The success of any school, therefore, depends on the high staff commitment. Teachers' commitment, which is the result of positive attitudes toward teaching careers (Arar & Nasra, 2020), depends not only on the nature of the teacher's job but also on the working environment. A lot has been done on the influence of leadership on staff working performance (Börü, 2020), and the influence of school leadership on students' academic performances (Deng et al., 2020). But little has been done on the influence of school leadership experience and working environment on teachers' job satisfaction. However, the quality of the environment has illusional meaning as it is defined differently by teachers. The environment can be a natural or artificial setting that may enhance or demotivate satisfaction of individuals as they interact with it. In the context of this study, teachers' job satisfaction means the state of teachers feeling empowered and working in a normally acceptable school climate, quality working environment and students' achievement. Studies have indicated that teachers' satisfaction depends on the professional commitment, effectiveness, school culture and participation of an individual in professional development (Arar & Nasra, 2020).

Thus, creditable staff in public secondary schools need leaders with high knowledge and leadership skills and leaders who can integrate various leadership styles to ensure employees' satisfaction. Teachers are dissatisfied with the teaching profession (Thomas et al., 2020; Wan et al., 2020). Thus, this study aims to explore the influence of school leadership and working environment on teachers' satisfaction. Specifically, the study answers two

questions: How school leadership influences teachers' job satisfaction and how the working environment influences teachers' job satisfaction.

## **2.0 Methodology**

The study was carried out in Hai and Bagamoyo districts in Kilimanjaro and Pwani regions respectively in Tanzania, particularly the regions were selected because they are characterised by both remote and accessible schools. Also, teachers are not satisfied with their teaching career (Sospeter, 2017; Nyiha, 2015) due to an inadequate working environment, which in turn has undermined the teaching profession (Toropova et al., 2021). The researcher employed a mixed approach together with a concurrent research design, enabling both the qualitative and quantitative data to be collected at the same time during the field visits. The mixed approach helped the researcher to address broader questions and provides a more expansive and creative approach to research (Bowen, 2017), intending to investigate the influence of school leadership experiences and working environment on teachers' job satisfaction. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected by administering questionnaires and interviews. The quantitative data focused on measuring the level of satisfaction among teachers. The formula developed by Yamane (1973 as cited by Sospeter, 2017) was used to determine the sample size of the participants using a 5 per cent precision level. Therefore, the actual sample size was 244 participants out of 1294. However, there was limited frequent contact with the participants and some cases of non-return of questionnaires because the study was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, the actual sample size included 29 heads of schools and 215 teachers. The heads of the schools were involved in the sample because of their position as chief executives of the schools and teachers were included because they are the ones affected by the influence of school leadership experiences and working environment.

Simple random sampling was used to select 29 public schools out of 40. Teachers involved in the study were randomly selected. The purposive sampling technique was deemed appropriate in selecting the heads of schools. The sampling techniques enabled the researchers to work with participants with relevant information on school leadership and the working environment. The data were collected using both Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires were administered to teachers while the semi-structured interview was conducted with the heads of schools. School leadership experiences and working environment were used as independent variables while teachers' satisfaction was used as the dependent variable. The relevant constructs were selected based on the instrument developed by Bolam et al. (2005) and Olivier et al. (2003) and adapted by Wan et al. (2020), focusing on the key measures and dimensions of school leadership. This study adapted and modified the selected constructs because of their applicability throughout different settings in measuring the influence of school leadership and working environment on teachers' job satisfaction. The survey was developed with four dimensions to measure how school leadership influence teachers' satisfaction. These measures include a) Teacher's collaboration (3 constructs namely, school leadership active collaboration with teachers to find means of handling school matters), b) reflective dialogue, and c) shared leadership (3 items namely, "school leadership

engagement with teachers in setting school goals”) and d) continuous improvement. The second part which examined how the working environment influenced teachers’ satisfaction with the job, consisted of one dimension which was a conducive environment (3 items namely, I am contented with the job because I stay at school accommodation and my school is a safe place to work). The third part examined teachers’ satisfaction; it consisted of two dimensions: a) contentment (2 items namely, I am blessed because my head of school recognizes my efforts in teaching) and b) commitment (had two constructs namely, “I am hardworking because the head of school pays attention to my needs.” Parts 1, 2 and 3 used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The scale was valid and reliable with an alpha coefficient of  $\alpha = 0.897$ . Cronbach’s Alpha was used in assessing teachers’ satisfaction with the job at a working place. As Cohen, et al (2007) observe, the acceptable level of reliability is 0.8. However, 0.67 or above is acceptable reliability. The internal consistency of the items identified was high (0.897 and 0.907), which was the acceptable level of internal consistency. Construct validity was verified by using Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Factor analysis was used to determine the meaningful interpretation of factors that provided insights for further analysis of the item’s correlation. The correlation matrix of the items revealed a correlations coefficient ranging from 0.327 to 0.9 with a diagonal coefficient correlation of 1.000. PCA revealed five items with the eigenvalue exceeding 1, explaining the variance of 48.299, 12.837, 8.488, 7.798 and 5.589 per cent respectively with a total variance of 83.00 per cent. The Kaiser Meyer Olkin measures verified the sampling adequacy for the KMO analysis of 0.852,  $P = .000$  indicating that the correlation between one item was sufficient for the PCA. This enabled researchers to accurately decide on deleting or retaining the components as measures of school leadership and teachers’ satisfaction. The researcher ensured the respondent’s safety and security and obtained their informed consent during the actual data collection process. The data were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Quantitative data were subjected to IBM-SPSS software version 21. Descriptive statistics including Mean scores, standard deviation, frequency, percentages, variance, and linear regression analysis were carried out. This is b the study intended to determine the extent the school leadership and working environment can significantly predict the level of teacher’s job satisfaction.

### **3.0 Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1 The influence of school leadership on teachers’ satisfaction**

The study findings reveal that school leadership influences teachers’ job satisfaction. About 77.3 per cent of the participants reported that the school leadership collaborates with teachers on school matters. While 12.6 per cent of the participants disagreed with the statement that school leadership collaborates with teachers. When teachers were asked how the school leadership influences their satisfaction with the job, the results show an overlap in the mean, standard deviation and percentages on how shared leadership, teachers’ collaboration, reflective dialogue and continuous improvement influence teachers’ job satisfaction (Table 1).

**Table 1:** School leadership and teachers’ satisfaction linear regression model

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| Model | R                       |       | df1 | df2    | Sig. F | Durbin-Watson |        |        |       |
|-------|-------------------------|-------|-----|--------|--------|---------------|--------|--------|-------|
|       | R                       |       |     |        | Change |               |        |        |       |
|       | Square                  |       |     |        |        |               |        |        |       |
| 1     | .407 <sup>a</sup>       | 0.166 | 4   | 239    | 0      | 1.698         |        |        |       |
| Model | Coefficients(a)         |       |     | B      | SE     | Beta          | T      | Sig.   |       |
|       | (Constant               |       |     | 3.296  | 0.759  |               | 4.343  | 0      |       |
|       | Teachers' collaboration |       |     | 0.156  | 0.042  | 0.134         | 0.24   | 3.765  | 0     |
|       | Shared leadership       |       |     | 0.403  | 0.77   |               | 0.546  | 2.997  | 0.003 |
|       | Continuous improvement  |       |     | -0.324 | 0.766  |               | -0.395 | -0.421 | 0.674 |
|       | Reflective dialogue     |       |     | 0.062  |        |               | 0.075  | 0.081  | 0.935 |

a. Dependent Variable: commitment

\*\*  $p < .01$

The study results revealed that school leadership significantly predicted the level of teachers' satisfaction in the working place. The results from the model summary show that the value of  $r=0.407$ ,  $P=0.000$  indicates that one unit for school leadership increased by 40.7 per cent with a 15.23 per cent standard error of the estimated predictor value and the Dubin Watson was 1.69. The model summary is significant if the  $R^2$  is less than 0.5 and the Durbin Watson is closer to 2 (Andy, 2009; Sospeter et al., 2021) (see Table 1). The results revealed further that teachers' collaboration significantly predicted commitment to the job ( $\beta=0.24$ ,  $t(4, 239) = 3.77$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). this implies that an increase in teachers' collaboration in various school matters stimulated teachers' passion and engagement in school activities. Moreover, the results show that shared leadership significantly predicted teachers' satisfaction with the job ( $\beta=0.546$ ,  $t(4, 239) = 2.99$ ,  $p=0.003$ ). The tendency of school leadership to involve teachers in decisions making at school increases teachers' level of contentment with the job because teachers see themselves as part and parcel of the school. As revealed in other studies (Klar et al., 2020), collaboration among workers links to strong school cultural development. The bond created among teachers during collaboration is considered the catalyst for a long stay and commitment of an individual to the job in the organisation.

It was reported further that sometimes heads of schools involve teachers in decision-making. This makes teachers feel part of the school hence devoting their time and effort to the attainment of the school goals. The study also established that school leadership predicted teacher satisfaction as teachers feel happy and thereby become committed to teaching careers when working in a school where the head of school mostly involves them in decision-making.

One of the teachers 1 from school D said,

“In our school, most of the time the head of school uses a participatory approach in deciding school matters, something which makes teachers feel valued by the head of school. This is what influences teachers’ commitment to the work including coming to school every day...”

The results revealed that the only thing that gives teachers mental health and gets satisfied is the use of a democratic leadership style at school. However, another teacher 2 from school C was quoted saying,

“Democratic leadership style is one of the factors that make me feel part of this school because our school head involves us in every school matter that is concerned with all teachers. For example, he informs us to fill forms for a holiday for those who want to go for a holiday, and he also encourages teachers to work in cooperation...”

This implies that teachers expect the school leadership to be aware and keen on their physical and psychological well-being. The school leadership needs to show some shared views, love, trust and recognition of teachers. Also, school leadership needs to provide a platform for reflective dialogue for sustainable school improvement. This implies that if the school leadership is sensitive to teachers’ development, health and working environment, teachers’ passion and commitment to the job would increase. This result is consistent with the results from other studies (i.e., Pulis, 2018; Toropova et al., 2021) on the influence of leadership on teachers’ satisfaction. Studies depict that career development opportunities for teachers are among the variables that affect job satisfaction (Mbunea et al., 2021; Tanga region, in Tanzania. The research design applied was survey. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in finding secondary schools and teachers that present all secondary schools in the region. 119 teachers (respondents Toropova et al., 2021; Pendletonbrown, 2019). Continuous improvement helps teachers add knowledge, and gain experience and contributes to teachers’ personal development; factors such as promotion increase teachers’ satisfaction with the job (Toropova et al., 2021). This implies that during continuous professional development teachers have a reflective dialogue with their fellow teachers. These relations may also contribute to teachers feeling more contented and committed to their teaching careers. The study findings concur with the findings of prior studies (Thomas et al., 2020) which revealed that shared leadership creates a strong bond among school leaders and teachers. This enables the leadership team and teachers to engage willingly in routine and extra school activities to help students achieve school goals (Shields & Hesbol, 2020). Additionally, teachers’ high level of satisfaction has an impact on the quality of students because they (teachers) devote much time to the duties and responsibilities assigned to them at the school (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2016).

However, school leaders experience some challenges in leading schools towards attaining their objectives (Klar et al., 2020). Study leave, promotion and professional development are reported as some of the factors for teachers’ turnover in the teaching profession. Thus, schools take the initiative of developing a clear school mission and monitoring student progress and instructional process (Peck & Reitzug, 2014) to improve school performances. Hence, school leaders need to develop interest and concern with external and internal environments for teachers to perform highly contrary, the opposite is likely if schools become less concerned with teachers’ affairs. A weak negative influence was found between continuous improvement and teachers’ commitment to the

job ( $\beta = -0.395$ ,  $t(4, 239) = -0.421$ ,  $p = 0.0674$ ). Therefore, continuous improvement and updating of teachers' skills or knowledge may not be the only solutions to teachers' satisfaction with the job; hence consideration of other factors such as recognition and involvement in decision-making may be instrumental for teachers' job satisfaction.

### 3.2. Working environment and teachers' satisfaction

The study results as presented in Table 2 indicate that the working environment significantly predicted teachers' job satisfaction. A moderate positive relationship was found between the conducive environment and teachers' commitment to the job ( $r = 0.718$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). The value of  $R^2$  was 0.515, which informs that the presence of a safe working environment at school can account for 51.5 per cent of the prediction of teachers' commitment to the job. **Table 2:** Working environment and teachers' job satisfaction

| Model Summary(b)    |                             |            |                           |                              |               |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|---------------|
| Model               | R                           | R Square   | Adjusted Square           | R Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
| 1                   | .718a                       | 0.515      | 0.513                     | 2.451                        | 1.837         |
| Coefficients(a)     |                             |            |                           |                              |               |
|                     | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients |                              |               |
|                     | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      | T                            | Sig.          |
| (Constant)          | 1.777                       | 0.922      |                           | 1.928                        | 0.055         |
| Working environment | 1.159                       | 0.072      | 0.718                     | 16.026                       | .000          |

a. Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction \*\*  $p < .01$

Moreover, the interviewed participants reported that a conducive environment may determine their level of satisfaction at the job, as Teacher 1 from school "A" said,

When teachers' demands and needs are met, they tend to be committed and work willingly from their hearts. But when the reward does not correspond to their work done, they tend to be demoralized and just work to fulfil obligations... However, the environment is not the only determinant of teachers' job satisfaction...

This informs that many informants complained of the stumpy working environment. Teachers reported working in a moderate environment where most teachers' offices have inadequate furniture such as chairs and tables. Thus, school leaders need to ensure the availability of adequate furniture in staff offices. Furniture is part of the context factors that influence employees' satisfaction. The findings are consistent with what Herzberg (1959) calls intrinsic/content/ motivator and extrinsic/context factors and Maslow's theory of hierarchy of needs which identifies security, social needs, self-esteem and self-actualisation as physiological factors. The first three needs of Maslow belong to context needs as established by Herzberg (1959). For example, as the finding reveals,

working conditions, good leadership and cooperation belong to these needs and the last two belong to content as they motivate teachers internally.

According to the study findings, it is evident that teacher satisfaction is associated with both external and internal factors rather than on external factors only such as the environment; the working environment was found to account for about 51.5 per cent of teachers' satisfaction with the job. Similarly, Kumar and Jain (2013) found the working environment as the key driver of job satisfaction. A similar finding is reported in a study by Mberia and Midigo (2016) who revealed that the benefits and professional environment have some influence on employees' satisfaction in the public sector in Nairobi. Elsewhere, Rossberg, Eiring, and Friis (2004 in Huilin, 2011) revealed that there is a strong relationship between a working environment (self-realisation, workload) and employees' job satisfaction. And according to Alex (2015), extrinsic factors related to job content were found to play a key role in determining teachers' job satisfaction. Accordingly, the study rejects the statement by Herzberg (1962) that extrinsic factors in one's job such as supervision, working conditions and salary do not motivate employees. Additionally, Bush (2018) reveals that recognition of the types of leadership styles and different approaches determines the success of the organisation. A study by Tony Bush which surveyed 120 secondary schools in the urban area of Serbia established that diverse leadership styles employed by headteachers resulted in teachers' self-efficacy. Thus, the improvement of instructional programmes at school results in increased teachers' efficacy due to the multidimensional application of different leadership styles that make teachers feel worthwhile at school.

#### **4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

Teachers' job satisfaction in public schools is something of value that needs careful examination as it creates high enthusiasm among teachers and improves their attitude and commitment to the teaching profession. The study provides two main insights regarding the teaching profession; first school leadership significantly influences staff satisfaction with the work. The study established that the collaboration between school leadership and teachers at school influenced teachers' commitment to the teaching career. This is because the staff is made to feel part of the organisation when their leaders collaborate and involve them in decisions making. Continuous professional development among staff seems paramount which in turn increases teachers' satisfaction with the teaching career as it provides teachers with the opportunities to update their skills and provides a platform to teachers for sharing experiences and improving their work.

The second insight was that the working environment positively predicts staff commitment and contentment with their work. It is high time to devise continuous professional development in leadership and management to improve school leadership skills in public schools and emphasize shared leadership among teachers and other key stakeholders. Through this, teachers may have time for reflective dialogue to enrich their skills and experiences which are the catalyst for job commitment.

Also, the working environment should be given high priority to assuring safety working environment as it predicts employees' satisfaction. Based on the study findings and discussion, it is worth noting that employee's satisfaction

with leadership and a working environment is paramount for staff performance and commitment at the workplace. Moreover, recent evidence suggests that satisfaction also influences organizational citizenship behaviour that in turn enhances job performance and loyalty at the workplace.

This study suggests continuous professional training for heads of schools on the 21<sup>st</sup> leadership and management competencies in sustaining a school culture and mobilising individuals toward attaining organisational objectives. This will enhance leadership abilities among educational leaders hence improving staff satisfaction. The President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government should increase the budget for financing the construction and rehabilitation of staff accommodation in local government.

In addition, the Government of Tanzania in collaboration with other educational development partners should take a more serious effort in improving the working environment. The working environment plays a vital role since it influences job satisfaction, as employees are concerned with a comfortable physical working environment that will ultimately make them develop a more positive attitude to work and attain job satisfaction. Further studies are required on the role of school leadership in promoting gender responsiveness in access and the provision of quality education in Tanzania.

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