

## Leadership Strategies for Enhancing Teacher Commitment in Public Secondary Schools in Tanzania: An Ethical and Moral Inquiry

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### **Abstract**

*This study explores the leadership strategies employed by heads of secondary schools to enhance teacher commitment in public secondary schools in Tanzania, with particular attention to the ethical and moral dimensions of teaching. In Masasi District, Mtwara Region, the study adopted a qualitative approach using a descriptive case study design. Twenty-four participants were purposively selected, including fourteen teachers, five heads of schools, and five ward education officers. The research was theoretically grounded in McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that rewarding teachers, creating a conducive working environment, providing professional support, delegating authority, and involving teachers in decision-making were key strategies to enhance commitment. However, heads of schools encountered challenges such as inadequate financial resources, political interference, limited management skills, and poor communication among staff. The study concludes that strengthening teacher commitment significantly improves learning outcomes, promotes the profession, and enhances overall teaching performance. It recommends that the government provide heads of schools with targeted management training and ensure timely and adequate financial support to facilitate the achievement of educational objectives.*

**Keywords:** Teacher Commitment, Leadership Strategies, Public Secondary Schools, Heads of Schools, Morality, Ethics

## INTRODUCTION

Teachers' commitment is a critical factor in enhancing the quality of education. Committed teachers demonstrate determination to work with their students and foster their academic and personal growth (Zhang et al., 2019). Contemporary educational debates increasingly highlight the need to strengthen teachers' commitment, particularly in government schools. Globally, education systems have recognized that enhancing teachers' commitment is essential for achieving educational goals (UNESCO, 2015). In many African countries, however, teachers' commitment in government schools has deteriorated, necessitating appropriate strategies by schools, governments, and other stakeholders to reverse this trend and improve quality education (Vera, 2016).

Heads of schools play a crucial leadership role by inspiring teachers to achieve educational aspirations. They are responsible for fostering a learning culture, supervising teachers, and facilitating collaboration (Wronowski, 2017). Nevertheless, heads of global schools, particularly those in government schools, face significant challenges in enhancing teachers' commitment. In developed countries such as the United States, high levels of teacher commitment are attributed to better remuneration and professional recognition (Hanover Research, 2012). Similarly, in Canada, substantial investments in recruiting qualified and competent teachers have minimised the need for intensive supervision (Haruni & Mafwimbo, 2014; Mwesiga & Okendo, 2018; Potter, Pavlakis, & Roberts, 2020). In contrast, public secondary schools in many African countries often require more active oversight to ensure teachers fulfil their responsibilities (Tony, 2011). As Bipath, Venketsamy, and Naidoo (2019) observe, teachers' commitment remains one of the most pressing challenges faced by heads of schools in South Africa's public education system.

The lack of teacher commitment has led to frustration, confusion, and strained relationships between teachers and school leaders, subsequently affecting student outcomes. In countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Uganda, diminished teacher commitment has contributed to the poor performance of public secondary schools (Gilzene, 2020). In South Africa, Okeke and Mtyuda (2017) highlighted teacher job dissatisfaction caused by resource shortages, overcrowded classrooms, and administrative inefficiencies. Moreover, poor working conditions, low

salaries, and diminished social status further exacerbate teachers' dissatisfaction and lack of commitment (Moses et al., 2017).

In Tanzania, reports also indicate a decline in teachers' commitment in public secondary schools, with some schools exhibiting poor student performance due to demotivated teachers, administrative intimidation, and political interference (Milana, 2014; Shao, 2021). Studies estimate that approximately 21.5 to 22.7 per cent of teachers in ward secondary schools demonstrate low commitment to teaching activities (Jones et al., 2017; Mwesiga & Okendo, 2018). Factors contributing to this trend include inadequate motivation, poor communication between administrators and teachers, limited career advancement opportunities, and a lack of essential teaching and learning materials (Martinez, 2019). These challenges highlight the growing demands placed on public secondary schools despite finite human, financial, and physical resources (Mosha, 2006).

Demoralization among teachers in public schools significantly undermines curriculum implementation, as teachers are key actors in realising educational objectives (Khakpour, 2015; Mosha, 2006). In contrast, teachers in private schools often exhibit higher levels of commitment, further highlighting the disparity between the two sectors (Mkumbo, 2016).

The Tanzanian government has tried to address teacher commitment by investing in teachers' housing, providing teaching and learning materials, and recognizing exemplary teachers (Mwesiga & Okendo, 2018; Olurotimi et al., 2015). Nevertheless, evidence suggests that poor salaries, inadequate working conditions, political interference, and limited involvement of teachers in decision-making continue to hinder improvements in teacher morale and commitment (Aunga & Masare, 2017; Betweli, 2013; Mfaume & Bilinga, 2017; Mgonja, 2017). A report by TWaweza (2017) noted that teacher commitment in the Mtwara Region, particularly Masasi District, remains insufficient, as evidenced by delayed student assessments and ineffective teaching practices.

Moreover, the lack of incentives, managerial intimidation, political intrusion, and limited promotional opportunities have further contributed to teacher demoralization (IMF, 2015; Jones et al., 2017; Mosha, 2006; Mwesiga & Okendo, 2018). Enhancing teacher commitment requires

concerted efforts to improve living and working conditions and to foster positive relationships between school leaders and their subordinates, as seen in more successful private schools (Haruni & Mafwimbo, 2014; Mosha, 2006).

From an ethical perspective, teaching is considered a noble profession that demands strong moral character (Anangisy, 2019). Teachers are expected to demonstrate true devotion, tolerance, and commitment to professional and non-professional responsibilities, helping students achieve academic and personal goals (Anangisy, 2018). Failure to adhere to these moral standards compromises teachers' effectiveness and students' outcomes. The importance of upholding morality and ethical standards in teaching cannot be overstated, especially in an era of globalisation and materialism, which has weakened traditional values (Prakasha & Jayamma, 2011).

Consequently, government interventions, faith-based organisations, and non-governmental organisations are necessary to reinforce teachers' professional and moral obligations. Heads of schools must be equipped with the managerial skills and resources to support teachers in fulfilling these obligations. Nevertheless, moral commitment should not be contingent on resource availability; rather, it must precede material considerations, reflecting the intrinsic values of the teaching profession. Unchecked declines in teacher commitment threaten to undermine students' academic success and impede the realisation of broader educational and national development goals. Against this backdrop, the present study aims to investigate the strategies employed by heads of schools to enhance teacher commitment in public secondary schools in Tanzania, focusing on ethical and moral dimensions. Specifically, the study sought to address the following objectives:

1. To explore the specific activities undertaken by heads of schools to enhance teacher commitment;
2. To identify the challenges faced by heads of schools in enhancing teacher commitment;
3. Examine the relationship between teachers' morality and commitment to their work.

This study contributes to the existing literature by illuminating the strategies and challenges encountered by school leaders in promoting

teacher commitment, with particular attention to the role of morality and ethics.

The following section presents the theoretical underpinning and empirical literature review relevant to the study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by Theory X and Theory Y, developed by social psychologist Douglas McGregor around 1960. These theories focus on how managers perceive and motivate their subordinates:

Theory X assumes that individuals inherently dislike work, lack ambition, avoid responsibility, and must be coerced, controlled, or threatened with punishment to achieve organizational goals. Thus, the "carrot and stick" management approach, rewarding good performance and penalising poor performance, is considered effective in this context (McConnell & Rorrer, 2009).

Theory Y, on the other hand, posits that individuals are self-motivated, enjoy their work, accept responsibility, and seek ways to be productive. Managers working within the assumptions of Theory Y are relieved of micromanagement and instead focus on supporting, empowering, and involving employees in decision-making (Milana, 2014; Potter et al., 2020). While both theories offer valuable insights, they also present challenges. One major weakness is the potential confusion for school heads about whether to apply the Theory X or Theory Y approaches. As Mark (2015) notes, Theory Y is not a completely progressive alternative to the seemingly negative assumptions of Theory X.

The effectiveness of applying either theory depends largely on the real-life situation of the organisation. Nonetheless, Theory Y is often considered more effective in promoting teachers' commitment in public secondary schools (Danulo, 2016). In public secondary schools, some teachers demonstrate low commitment, irregular attendance, and an unwillingness to take responsibility (Gilzene, 2020; Milana, 2014), while others are self-motivated and passionate about teaching. Consequently, heads of schools must balance rewarding committed teachers and closely supervising or sanctioning less committed ones (Hanover Research, 2012; Jude & Cornell, 2015).

To strengthen the theoretical foundation, Transformational Leadership Theory was triangulated with Theory X and Theory Y. Transformational leadership focuses on fostering change and inspiring organisational commitment. It promotes the creation of cohesive environments where leaders and followers work collaboratively towards shared goals (Islam et al., 2021). According to Rolfe (2011), transformational leadership emphasizes building interdependent relationships based on mutual trust and belonging, thus promoting teamwork and organizational effectiveness.

### **Empirical Literature**

The empirical literature is presented under two subsections: teachers' commitment and morality in teaching.

#### ***Teachers' Commitment***

Several scholars have examined the strategies employed by school heads to enhance teachers' commitment in public secondary schools:

Mkumbo (2012) investigated teachers' commitment to and experiences of the teaching profession in Tanzania. Using focus group discussions, he explored the perspectives of both community and government school teachers. The study revealed that poor working conditions significantly affected teachers' commitment. Mkumbo recommended improving housing facilities and providing better social welfare services. Although the study employed a quantitative approach, the current study adopts a qualitative approach with interviews and focus group discussions, focusing specifically on school heads' strategies related to teachers' morality.

Mwesiga (2020) examined the effectiveness of school leadership in enhancing teachers' commitment in the Kagera Region. A mixed-methods approach using questionnaires was applied. The study found that heads of schools were overwhelmed with administrative tasks, limiting their effectiveness. Unlike Mwesiga's study, the present research exclusively employs a qualitative approach.

Mwamatandala and Muneja (2020) analyzed the effect of school management on teachers' commitment in Arusha City using a quantitative approach and closed-ended questionnaires. Although they applied a

different research approach, their findings provide important insights into the role of school heads in boosting teachers' commitment.

Synthesizing the reviewed literature shows that previous studies largely emphasized governmental strategies such as salary increments, infrastructure development, and professional development to enhance teachers' commitment (Outhouse, 2012; Olurotimi, 2015; Semali, 2016; Piovan, 2017; Kirya, 2019; Gilzene, 2020). However, little attention has been paid to the strategies used by heads of schools, particularly from a moral perspective. This study addresses that gap.

### ***Morality in Teaching***

Teachers are often regarded as role models, responsible for upholding and modelling moral behaviour (Chowdhury, 2016). As such, they must embody ethical standards shaped by the values of the society they serve (Mgonda, 2019). Teachers' commitment to the profession is not only a professional obligation but also a moral one. Ethical standards guiding teachers include integrity, fairness, respect, honesty, confidentiality, and dedication to excellence (Gotterbarn et al., 2018; Stievano & Tschudin, 2019; Evstratova et al., 2020).

In Iran, Ashraf et al. (2017) employed a quantitative approach to study the relationship between teachers' emotional intelligence and their commitment to professional ethics. Their findings showed a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and professional commitment. Relating this to the current study, teachers' complaints about low pay may partly reflect a lack of emotional competence to navigate professional challenges.

Moreover, Salehnia and Ashraf (2015) emphasize that teacher professionalism directly impacts pedagogical quality and student learning outcomes. Low professionalism, therefore, can undermine effective teaching and, by extension, affect students' academic success.

In summary, the reviewed theoretical frameworks and empirical studies highlight the critical role of leadership approaches, working conditions, and teachers' moral commitment in shaping teachers' dedication to their profession. While previous research has shed light on various strategies to enhance teachers' commitment, there remains a noticeable gap concerning the specific strategies employed by school heads focusing on moral



inquiry. Therefore, this study seeks to bridge this gap by exploring how heads of public secondary schools enhance teachers' commitment through leadership practices and moral considerations.

### METHODOLOGY

A descriptive case study design was employed in this study. It is one of the forms of research design that deals with a single unit, such as an individual, one group, or one organization (Cohen et al., 2011). The descriptive case study design was useful as it was applied to educational officers, including Ward Education Officers (WEO), Heads of Schools (HoS) and teachers who are information-rich on educational issues related to strategies used by heads of school in enhancing teachers' commitment (Neuman, 2012 and Creswell, 2004). Descriptive case study design is characteristically utilized when small numbers of cases are being explored (Crowe et al., 2011; Harrison et al., 2017). It is normally undertaken through semi-structured interviews and FGDs, with open-ended questions leading to information collection in narrative text instead of numbers (Punch, 2013). In the current study, semi-structured interviews and FGDs were used to fully comprehend strategies used by heads of schools to enhance teachers' commitment and the challenges they faced in doing so.

The study was conducted in the Masasi district in Mtwara region following the results of CSEE in 2018, 2019 and 2020; the district was selected from the cluster of low-performing districts in CSEE (Jones et al., 2017). This study sampled 24 participants, including five (5) Heads of Schools, five (5) Ward Education Officers, and fourteen (14) Teachers from five (5) selected public secondary schools. Table 1 provides the sample and respective tools used for data collection.

**Table 1:**  
*The Sample and Data Collection Tools Used for Data Collection*

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Sample Size</b>	<b>Sampling Procedures</b>
Ward Education Officers	5	purposive sampling
Head of schools	5	purposive sampling
Teachers	14	Purposive sampling
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	

Source: Field Data, (2023)

Creswell (2014) asserts that a qualitative work should have a small sample size to obtain significant depth and useful information. From this perspective, the study's sample size had 24 participants, which was determined by point of saturation. This sample size enabled the researcher



to obtain in-depth information regarding the strategies used by heads of schools to enhance teachers' commitment.

The purposive sampling technique was employed and served as a mechanism to obtain study participants who were more experienced in issues related to the study (Freire, 2013; Vera and Rosemary, 2015; Creswell, 2009; Van Der Vleuten et al., 2010). Heads of schools were purposively sampled because the study focused on their strategies to enhance teachers' commitment, including the challenges they encountered; thus, their firsthand experiences were crucial. Ward Education Officers were also purposively selected based on their role as immediate supervisors of heads of schools, making them rich sources of information regarding the strategies employed and the overall morale of teachers. Additionally, with the assistance of teachers on duty, classroom teachers without leadership responsibilities were purposively sampled to provide varied firsthand perspectives on the issues under investigation, offering insights distinct from those of school leaders.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with Heads of Schools (HoS) and Ward Education Officers (WEOs), as well as focus group discussions (FGDs) with teachers. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes and was conducted in the offices of the HoS and WEOs, chosen for their conducive environment. The FGDs, which lasted around 60 minutes, comprised male and female teachers, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives. Participants were encouraged to share their views openly, with the researchers establishing ground rules to ensure equal participation. Two FGD sessions were held in two schools, each with seven teachers. During interviews and FGDs, the researchers took detailed notes and recorded audio to aid data analysis. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the researchers employed several strategies, including peer debriefing, member checking, sustained involvement, and triangulation (Taherdoost, 2016).

Following the triangulation of data collection methods, comprehensive and rich information was gathered regarding the strategies that Heads of Schools (HoS) used to enhance teachers' commitment in public secondary schools and the challenges they encountered. A thematic analysis was employed to analyze the data systematically, identifying common patterns and themes. Braun and Clarke (2012) found that the six-step thematic analysis process was instrumental in identifying these patterns.

The initial stage involved transcription, familiarization with the data, and selecting quotations. The researchers transcribed and reviewed the data thoroughly to identify preliminary themes and important sections. Relevant quotations were then selected to answer the research questions. The second step involved identifying keywords, where the researchers examined the data for recurring patterns, terms, and visual elements, which were referred to as keywords. The third step was coding, where short phrases or words were assigned to data segments to derive meaning and significance. In the fourth phase, codes were organized into meaningful groups to identify patterns and relationships. The fifth step involved conceptualizing and interpreting keywords, codes, and themes. Finally, the sixth phase resulted in the development of a conceptual model.

Throughout this process, the researchers listened to the audio data and took detailed notes to familiarize themselves. They then generated initial codes and used NVIVO software to search for themes, reviewing and defining them before reporting the findings (Creswell, 2011).

Regarding ethical considerations, ethical clearance and research permits were obtained from the University of Dodoma, which facilitated permission from the Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) of Mtwara Region and the District Administrative Secretary (DAS) of Masasi District. This allowed the researchers to access the schools through a letter from the District Executive Director (DED). Informed consent was sought from all participants, who were fully briefed on the purpose of the study and their right to participate or withdraw at any time. All participants signed consent forms affirming their voluntary participation. Anonymity was ensured by using pseudonyms when reporting the findings.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings and discussions of the study are presented, as well as the study objectives.

### **Activities Carried Out by Heads of Schools in Enhancing Teachers' Commitment**

The first specific objective of the study was to explore the specific activities done by Heads of Schools to enhance teachers' commitment.

Interview results indicated that rewarding teachers, creating a conducive working environment, and giving appreciation to teachers were crucial strategies for enhancing teachers' commitment to work hard and to have a sense of commitment. Rewarding teachers by giving cash and providing certificates and letters of appreciation inspired teachers to determine their teaching responsibilities. In this regard, one of the participant school heads had the following to share:

Despite the scarcity of resources, rewarding teachers is very important, especially when they work hard. In my school, we provide cash to those teachers producing grades A and B in different teaching subjects relating to the National examinations. Following those payments, teachers are highly committed to teaching (Interview with Head of School A).

In the same point of view, Head of School B commented that:

Rewarding has a significant role in enhancing the teachers' commitment because it encourages teachers to work hard. In our school, we appreciate the teachers who enable students to have good academic performance in the national examinations (Interview with Head of School B)

In the same vein, the WEO of Ward A suggested that:

To enhance the teachers' commitment, the head of the school in our ward rewards teachers by giving cash to the teachers who enhance good grades and the student's academic performance during the national examinations. She enhances the teachers' working attitude to the highest level (Interview with WEO from ward A).

During the focus group discussion, most of the study participants had views that heads of schools used to reward their teachers as the best way to enhance working commitment. Explaining this point, the study participants from the five selected ward secondary schools supported the same point. Conversely, the findings from the FGD observed that the heads of some schools rewarded their teachers. This was proven by one of the participants' teachers, who had the following to say in an FGD session:

In this school, teachers are usually motivated by the Head of the school when students get higher grades in the National examinations. The head of the school also appreciates teachers following their contributions to the school's good performance. In so doing, teachers found themselves committed to teaching (FGD with teachers).

The findings from FGDs further revealed that some heads of schools failed to reward their teachers. Referring to the discussion, the study participants realized the potentiality of rewards for teachers' commitment,

and they argued that rewards should consider the appreciation and recognition of the teachers. While cementing this point of view, one of the participant teachers argued that:

Our School Head does not reward the teachers. This is to say that rewarding in this school is not considered, not because of limited resources but because of the nature of our Head of school. I am confident in saying this because the application of reward is in many ways, including appreciation orally or in written form (FGD with teachers).

As the discussion was going on, another participant teacher had the following to cement on the particular point:

I have never received any rewards at this school. Its absence has not inspired me to work hard. Our school head has got no idea of supporting, encouraging and appreciating her teachers. Failure to do so, teachers cannot be committed to teaching (FGD with teachers).

In this perspective, it could be said that all the study participants basically acknowledged the importance of rewarding. However, the practice was constrained by insufficient availability of resources. In some cases, the Head of Schools were unsure whether teachers' commitment was motivated. Thus, the absence of motivation in schools lower down the teachers' morale to work hard. The findings that teachers considered rewarding in form of appreciation orally or in writing, suggest the need to do away with overreliance of monetary rewarding but more creative and innovative kind of rewarding could be put in place.

The importance of rewarding agrees with what Mwamatandala and Muneja (2014) pointed out that some teachers work hard when they are rewarded by their leaders. For this reason, the heads of schools should reward their teachers through praising, giving cash, providing letters and certificates of appreciation so as to enhance the teachers' commitment. As commented by Martinez (2019) that a reward inspires teachers towards their teaching performances. In this regard, the heads of schools are required to apply different forms of reward such as praising, appreciation and giving money so as to push teachers' commitment in public secondary schools.

In Ghana, the government pays teachers who enabled their students to perform well in science subjects in the National exams (Milana, 2014). In

the same case, Wronowski (2017) in South Africa found out that the teachers perform well their teaching assignments as they are paid huge money by the state authority.

With reference to the discussion, it could be argued that the schools' heads who did not reward the teachers lowered down the teachers' commitment. The study thus, recommend the schools' heads to apply different forms of reward such as certificate of appreciation, letter of appreciation, promotion, and giving cash so as to enhance the teachers' commitment.

### **Challenges Faced by the Heads of Schools in Enhancing Teachers' Commitment**

The second specific objective explored the challenges which Heads of Schools encountered in the course of enhancing Teachers' commitment.

The findings of this study showed that the lack of financial resources was a challenge faced the school management. Financial resources are scarce in nature and they create some setbacks to manage some important programmes in many schools such as buying of the teaching and learning materials and repairing some school buildings. In this view, the schools' activities cannot be implemented well due to lack of financial resources. Basing on this finding, the study participants supported this point of view. In advancing this point, one of the participants Head of school revealed the following during the interview:

In our school just as it is for others', financial resource is a setback towards implementation of school activities. The educational goals cannot be achieved well in absence of fiscal resources. As the heads of schools, we usually fail to achieve our plans due to shortage or absence of money consequently our teachers are demoralized (Interview with HoS).

The aforesaid was cemented by a participant Teacher during FGD as follows:

Teachers' needs and interests are not taken into consideration due to the shortage or absence of money. Financial resource is a major problem in the implementation of school's activities. Without doubt, teachers' commitment to teaching is jeopardized by the lack of financial resources (FGD with teachers).

Based on the study findings, financial resource seems to be a major problem in enhancing the teachers' commitment. The findings of this

study are concurrent to those of Martinez (2019) which state that there are limited financial resources in many public secondary schools of which educational goals were not well implemented and teachers' commitment is lowered. As argued by Lewis (2015) that lack or shortage of capital among government schools lead to the failure of implementing strategic plans in many schools. Therefore, the government should support financially its secondary schools in the actual implementation of designed strategic plans (Mwesiga & Okendo, 2018). In doing so, the head of schools can be in a better position of enhancing teachers' commitment.

In the light of these findings, it was depicted that ward councilors interfere in the decision-making among heads of schools. The interference was mainly based on the expenditure of the capitation and development grants given to schools. The school heads found themselves restricted to make a right decision. The heads of schools become ineffective when the ward councilors impede the expenditure of school capitation grants, administration and academic activities. Following this, the heads of schools got difficulty to execute school activities in effective way.

Responses from the participant teachers during the FGDs indicated that the majority of the teachers' commitment was constrained by politicians. To justify this point, one of the participant teachers had the following to say:

The politicians have got more power than the school's management. The Head of school face difficulties in the implementation of school activities following the political interferences. In our school, the Ward Councilor disturbs our school management by bringing in political issues in the schools' management. This is deliberately done to gain political popularity from the community members (FGD with Teachers).

On the same note, another teacher shared the following on the same point:

The way politicians interrupt the school management leads to interference and confusion on the decision regarding the school activities. This situation results into discouragement among heads of schools. Hence, it leads to poor teachers' commitment to teaching (FGD with Teachers).

The finding shows that politics can interfere in the decision-making including academic issues and school capitation grants among the heads of schools. The school heads found themselves restricted to make a right decision on issues relating to academic activities and expenditure of the

school capitation grants. The school heads become ineffective when the politicians impede the school activities such as contribution from parents, administration and capitation grants. So, this situation disturbs heads of schools and the same negatively impacts teachers' commitment.

This point of view is similar to those by Olurotimi (2015) who claims that in Nigeria the politicians bring confusion and misunderstanding in the public secondary schools. In maintaining the same claim IMF (2015) in Ghana adds that the schools' heads are attacked by the politicians who are bent on gaining political scores.

In view of that situation, the findings suggest that politicians should not interfere with professional and educational matters to ensure that educational goals are achieved. They should leave the heads of schools to implement their strategic plans for the betterment of respective schools. Cooperation between politicians and HoS may be healthy and useful in bringing harmony to the school and consequently teachers' commitment would be enhanced. Regarding expenditure related to capitation grants, the warrant of fund, financial regulations and other related government directives and circulars should guide Heads of Schools rather than subjective views of politicians.

It was further depicted that the welfare of teachers is another challenging issue which lowers teachers' commitment to teaching. It was intimated that where there was no reasonable welfare among teachers including lack of houses, water supply and electricity, it became difficult to sustain teachers' commitment to teaching. The need for enhancing conducive welfare among teachers is crucial and fundamental as the need for teachers' commitment. During the FGD, one of the participant Teacher said the following:

In this school, welfare of teachers is not highly guaranteed by the school leadership. Our school head does not have strategies to enhance the teachers' welfare including housing, ..... That is why the teachers are highly demoralized. Hence, the teachers do not work hard in teaching and other extra-curricular activities (FGD with Teachers).

The findings that teachers' welfare were less conducive in the study location fails to appreciate the fact that these are crucial in enhancing teachers' commitment. The findings that the head of school had no effective strategies to ensure that teachers' welfare were improved,



contrast to those of Mwangi, Odhiambo, and Otieno (2019) that in Kenya the welfare of the teachers was taken into consideration by the educational management. Similarly, findings by Barth (2020) in South Africa showed that the wellbeing of teachers was identified as a crucial in enhancing the teachers' commitment especially in the government schools. In this perspective, the findings suggest that leaders in education system should ensure that they consider the welfare of their teachers so as to raise their commitment.

The findings revealed that some of the heads of schools lacked management skills. The heads of schools lacked planning, organizing, leading and controlling skills. With regard to this reason, it became difficult for the schools' heads to manage their schools effectively. In this view, the heads of schools encounter challenges when it comes to enhancing the teachers' commitment to teaching.

Basing on the responses from the participants during FGD, one of the participant Teacher intimated the following:

The school heads should have the management skills such as planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling school activities so as to produce positive results in their respective schools. In our school, the head is not creative enough to motivate his teachers. This is due to the lack of leadership skills (FGD with Teachers).

While explaining this point during the FGD, another participant Teacher from the same school had the following to add:

To be effective in managing schools, the head of school need to plan and organize his strategic activities so as to enhance teacher' commitment. However, our head of school is ineffective in planning and controlling his designed goals. In this regard, teachers' commitment to teaching is not enhanced accordingly (FGD with Teachers).

The findings indicate that many Heads of Schools (HoSs) struggle to enhance teachers' commitment due to insufficient management skills. While some HoSs in Tanzania lack the necessary management skills, the situation differs in other countries, such as Ghana. Lewis (2016) found that HoSs in Ghana effectively apply management skills, as they are trained twice a year. In contrast, HoSs in Tanzania have limited opportunities for professional development, with some receiving no training at all after appointment (Gilzene, 2020). This lack of managerial skill among Tanzanian HoSs is consistent with the transformative

leadership theory, which emphasizes that leaders should be transformative in guiding their schools to higher performance levels. Transformational leadership fosters teacher commitment and can address challenges such as low pay, which some teachers cite as a reason for their disengagement.

Further, poor communication between teachers and school management was identified as a major challenge in enhancing teachers' commitment. Both horizontal communication among teachers and communication between teachers and HoSs were inadequate, hindering collaboration, conflict resolution, and effective coordination. One teacher in the focus group discussion (FGD) noted:

In this school, there is poor communication between teachers. Our school head has failed to maintain peace and love among the teachers. As a result, morale is very low, which affects teachers' commitment to teaching.

These findings align with IMF (2018), which reports that school heads in Kenya fail to manage communication effectively due to tribal divisions, and with Mkumbo (2012), who found that ineffective communication between the community and school management limits teachers' commitment in Tanzania. Similarly, Haruni and Mafwimbo (2014) found that poor communication in Tanzanian schools reduced teachers' sense of commitment. These results highlight the critical role of effective communication in school management.

Enhancing teachers' commitment, in turn, positively impacts students' academic performance. As teachers become more motivated, they are more effective in their teaching, leading to improved learning outcomes. Bipath (2020) and Milana (2014) emphasize that fostering teacher commitment sustains work morale. Piovani (2017) and IMF (2015) further argue that sustaining teacher commitment is a key responsibility of HoSs, and it directly contributes to positive learning outcomes, as supported by Outhouse (2012).

In alignment with this, Mwamatandala and Munija (2020) found that committed teachers significantly enhance learning outcomes. Mkumbo (2012) and Mwesiga (2020) also stress that effective school management hinges on having committed teachers. In Rwanda, Gilzene (2017) observed that teachers' commitment is crucial for improving learning outcomes in private secondary schools.

Ultimately, the findings suggest that enhancing teachers' commitment is a key strategy for improving student performance. This is consistent with findings from Bipath and Naidoo (2019), who observed that improvements in teachers' welfare in India led to increased commitment. Wronowski (2017) similarly found that in Malaysia, teachers' commitment was strengthened through recognition of the importance of the teaching profession. In Canada, Potter and Roberts (2020) reported that teachers' commitment promoted the profession across both public and private schools. Therefore, the commitment of teachers is essential for the advancement of the teaching profession (Lekule, 2020).

### **Teachers' Morality**

The third objective of the study was to examine teachers' morality in relation to their commitment to their work.

The findings that some teachers were less committed to the work including teaching and that some were able to speak plainly on their commitment status, raised a number of questions as far as morality was concerned. The study findings from the interviews with Head of schools and Ward education officers revealed that for teachers to confess that they were less motivated has something to do with morality rather than motivation. In this regard, one of the participant Head of school had this to say in an interview session:

Nowadays some of our teachers are less committed and would openly say that they were less committed due to the fact that they owe the employer certain claims. In my view, there is a serious moral death to some of our teachers. The government is trying hard to build school infrastructures to improve the working environment (Interview with Head Teacher).

On the basis of the findings, there are signs of low moral reasoning and degradation to some of the participant teachers. Normally, it is rare for professional teachers to directly declare their lack of commitment to teach, provided that teaching is their responsibility as per their employment contract and the obligation of delivering services to the society. These dissatisfactions arguably are detrimental to the teaching job and is prone to jeopardizing students' academic performance. Having teachers who can declare their lack of commitment to teach, dilutes the inherent understanding of teaching as a call, devotion and noble profession. This is to say that; a lack or shortage of certain resources

should not constitute sources of moral dilemmas rather teachers should exhibit the best ethical example possible.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It can be concluded that Heads of Schools (HoSs) have a significant opportunity to enhance teachers' commitment through the effective use of available resources, managerial skills, and emotional intelligence. Despite the challenges they face, including teachers' confessed lack of work morale, the study highlights the need for educational leaders to actively promote professionalism and ethics within their leadership practices. Furthermore, the teaching profession should be reaffirmed as a noble and worthwhile vocation for all educators.

To address the challenges identified, it is recommended that the government, alongside other educational stakeholders such as faith-based organizations and non-governmental organizations implement targeted interventions. These interventions should include capacity-building programs focused on enhancing both moral reasoning and emotional intelligence among Heads of Schools and teachers.

This study primarily explored the strategies used by HoSs and the challenges they face in enhancing teachers' commitment, with a specific focus on morality. Future research could investigate how teachers perceive the impact of moral degradation on student academic performance and the broader educational environment.

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