

Contribution of Recognition by Heads of Schools on Teachers' Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Hai District, Tanzania

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the contribution of recognition by heads of schools as a form of extrinsic motivation on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Hai District, Tanzania. The study anchored on the Behaviorism Theory. The study employed a convergent design under a mixed-methods research approach. The target population comprises of 30 public secondary schools, 30 heads of schools, 803 teachers, and 1 DSEO. Sampling techniques employed in this study includes: simple random, total population, stratified random techniques to select 9 public secondary schools, 9 heads of schools, 104 teachers, and 1 DSEO. Quantitative data was collected through questionnaires, while qualitative data collected through interviews guide. The study validity was ensured by MWECAU research experts in the field of educational planning and administration. Pilot study was conducted in two public secondary schools. The reliability of the Likert-type questionnaires was established using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with values of .726 for teachers. The trustworthiness of the interview guide was ensured through peer debriefing and triangulation techniques to confirm the findings' credibility. Data analysis was performed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Descriptive data were analyzed using means, frequencies, and percentages, while qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the seven stages outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2023). Ethical considerations included obtaining a research permit, informed consent, and ensuring anonymity and confidentiality during the study. Findings indicate that recognition by school heads through verbal praise, certificates, public appreciation, and leadership roles boost teachers' job performance. The study concluded that recognition given by heads of schools effectively enhances teachers' job performance in public secondary schools. The study recommended that, school heads should consistently acknowledge teachers' contributions through verbal praise, certificates and leadership opportunities.

Key words: *Recognition, Heads of Schools, Job Performance, Public Secondary School*

1. Introduction

Recognition is a key factor in improving organizational productivity and achieving set objectives efficiently. This principle is evident across various sectors, including education, where teachers are primarily responsible for delivering knowledge and supporting students' academic progress (John & Mueni, 2020). Teachers have a significant influence on students' academic achievements through their instructional roles. Thus, recognizing teachers is crucial for enhancing their job performance. Teachers' recognition is described as the internal drive that sustains a teacher's enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment to their profession (Dewaele & Li, 2021). Recognition boosts productivity and efficiency in classrooms, as teachers strive to meet and surpass performance standards. By formally acknowledging and recognize teachers' efforts, educational institutions improve overall job performance and reduce staff turnover (Toropova et al., 2022). Nevertheless, Ogoti and Vumilia (2020) note that teachers in Tanzania face significant motivational challenges that undermine their job performance.

Heads of schools have a critical role in fostering a recognizing environment for teachers (Mnjokava, 2024). As frontline, heads of schools are responsible for acknowledging teachers' achievements through verbal praise, certificates, promotion recommendations, and facilitating access to career development. Their leadership style and support significantly affect teachers' morale, commitment, and performance. Musa and Mkumbo (2021) reported that schools led by proactive heads who motivate teachers experience higher job satisfaction and better instructional outcomes. Conversely, ineffective recognition practices by school heads lead to frustration, low morale, and decreased teacher productivity (Balatero & Bauyot, 2024). Therefore, the role of heads of schools in recognition is fundamental to the quality and efficiency of education delivery in public secondary schools.

Teachers' job performance is regarded as effective when educators fulfill their classroom responsibilities and duties beyond teaching (Warren, 2021). This includes planning and delivering well-prepared lessons, assessing student learning, providing constructive feedback, and maintaining a positive, inclusive learning atmosphere. Comprehensive lesson planning demonstrates a teacher's dedication to offering structured and engaging instruction (Harrison et al., 2020). The ability to adapt teaching methods to diverse learners' needs, engage in continuous professional development, and receive positive feedback from students, parents, and school administrators further reflect strong performance (Deed et al., 2020). Moreover, consistent attendance and punctuality are indicators of a teacher's professionalism and reliability. Thus, teachers' motivation and job performance are interconnected factors crucial for effective teaching practice (Sala, 2023).

In Europe, Petrovic and Krnjaja (2021) conducted a study in Serbia which revealed that teachers who received formal recognition from school leadership exhibited higher levels of job satisfaction, instructional effectiveness, and professional engagement. Conversely, the absence of structured acknowledgment led to demoralization and a decline in teaching quality. Likewise, Müller and Schneider (2022) in Germany found that verbal praise, awards, and career advancement opportunities positively influenced teachers' motivation, promoting innovation and classroom efficiency. These findings highlight recognition as a key extrinsic factor in enhancing teacher performance across European education systems.

In Africa, Tunde and Makinde (2021) investigated the impact of recognition on teacher morale in South Africa and found that schools which regularly acknowledged teachers' contributions experienced fewer cases of absenteeism and stronger curriculum delivery. In a related study, Ncube and Dlamini (2023) reported that a lack of recognition was directly linked to high attrition rates and poor lesson planning among secondary school teachers in Zimbabwe. These results suggest that systematic recognition practices are vital for sustaining teacher motivation and improving academic delivery across African schools.

Within East Africa, Kimani and Mwenda (2022) showed that teachers often neglected lesson preparation and classroom engagement, frequently undertaking non-teaching activities during school hours due to financial constraints. Similarly, Njoroge et al. (2021) found that inconsistent teacher attendance and lack of responsiveness to student needs were major contributors to poor academic achievement, underscoring the importance of effective motivation strategies, particularly recognition, in public secondary schools. Additionally, Omondi and Abdi (2023) in Uganda found that school heads who regularly acknowledged staff efforts, even though simple verbal praise or letters of appreciation, saw improved commitment, punctuality, and instructional delivery among their teachers.

The government of Tanzania has tried to set various strategies to ensure quality education in public schools including introduction of Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 2014 of the revised edition of 2023. However, Mashala (2019) noted that the implementation of ETP of 2014 has paid much attention to students' enrolment and the construction of infrastructure, while teachers have lots of issues to be dealt with including recognition, professional development opportunities, and promotions. These situations add much pain to teachers' and demotivate them. Teachers who are not acknowledged for their efforts often perceive their work as unnoticed or insignificant, which affects their motivation to improve classroom instruction and student outcomes. Recognition, as an extrinsic motivational factor, serves not only to validate teachers' work but also to reinforce professional identity and commitment (Steyn, 2022). In this regard, the absence of structured recognition systems within Tanzanian public schools raises critical concerns about how this gap may be affecting teacher productivity.

In Tanzania, particularly in Hai District, many public secondary school teachers demonstrate low job performance linked to inadequate extrinsic motivation, including lack of recognition, limited professional growth, and poor financial compensation (Ogoti & Vumilia, 2020). Economic pressures

contribute to late arrivals, insufficient teaching materials, and scarce professional development opportunities (Mashala, 2019; Ephrahem et al., 2022). These conditions diminish teacher morale and commitment, as reflected in a rise in the percentage of Form Four students scoring Division 0 from 9% in 2020 to 15% in 2023 (NECTA, 2023). Teachers in Hai District frequently report that absence of recognition negatively affects their motivation and classroom performance (Helena & Sikawa, 2023). These prompt the need to investigate the contribution of recognition by heads of schools to teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Hai District, Tanzania.

2. Statement of the Problem

Poor job performance among teachers continues to be a pressing problem in public secondary schools in Tanzania, resulting in declining educational quality. Teachers, students, and education stakeholders have expressed growing concerns over ineffective lesson delivery, reduced teacher engagement, and deteriorating academic outcomes. Ephrem et al. (2022) noted that teachers are compelled to engage in non-teaching income-generating activities such as motorcycle transport due to lack of motivation, which detracts from their professional responsibilities. Similarly, Mnjokava (2024) highlighted that lack of recognition from school leadership contributes to low job performance, which in turn undermines classroom performance.

Several studies have been conducted regarding teachers' job performance, including Myeya and Rupia (2022) on working conditions in Bukombe District, Kyangwe et al. (2023) on strategies to enhance teacher performance in Butiama District, and Mbawala et al. (2022) on motivation strategies in Namtumbo District. However, none of these studies has adequately addressed the role of extrinsic motivation specifically recognition given by heads of schools on teachers' job performance in Hai District. Therefore, the current study investigated the contribution of recognition by heads of schools as a form of extrinsic motivation on enhancing teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Hai District, Tanzania.

3. Research Question

This study guided by the following research question:

1. How does recognition by heads of schools contribute to teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Hai District, Tanzania?

4. Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to benefit multiple education stakeholders, including teachers, heads of schools, and education policy makers. For teachers, the study will offer valuable insights into how recognition such as verbal praise, commendation letters, certificates, or other forms of acknowledgment affects their job performance ultimately fostering greater commitment and improved instructional delivery. For heads of schools, the study will provide practical evidence on the role of recognition as an effective tool for teachers morale and performance. Education policy makers will also benefit from the study by gaining insights into how recognition, as a component of extrinsic motivation. Additionally, the study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical data on the relationship between recognition provided by school leadership and teachers' job performance.

5. Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Behaviorism Theory, originally developed by John B. Watson (1913) and later advanced by B.F. Skinner in the 1930s and 1940s. The theory posits that human behavior is learned and shaped through interactions with the environment, specifically through external stimuli and responses. According to this theory, behaviors can be strengthened through positive reinforcement specifically recognition, weakened through punishment, or maintained through negative reinforcement, which involves removing adverse conditions to promote desired actions. Behaviorism focuses strictly on observable and measurable behavior, making it particularly useful for examining external influences like recognition on job performance.

Strength of the Theory

The primary strength of Behaviorism lies in its practicality. It provides a clear and measurable approach for influencing behavior through external reinforcement such as recognition, praise, certificates, and commendation letters. This makes the theory particularly relevant in school settings where heads of schools can directly apply positive reinforcement to encourage desirable teaching behaviors like improved lesson

delivery, punctuality, and classroom management. Its focus on observable outcomes allows for straightforward monitoring of changes in teacher performance in response to specific motivational actions.

Weakness of the Theory

Despite its strengths, Behaviorism has limitations. It largely ignores internal mental processes, such as emotions, personal values, intrinsic motivation, or professional commitment all of which can influence teacher behavior. By focusing solely on external stimuli, the theory may oversimplify complex human behaviors and fail to explain long-term motivation that arises from internal satisfaction, such as a personal sense of accomplishment or moral duty to educate. As a result, Behaviorism may fall short in addressing the deeper psychological factors that contribute to sustained teacher performance.

Application of the Theory

Behaviorism Theory is highly applicable to this study, which examines how recognition provided by heads of schools contributes to enhancing teachers' job performance. Recognition, as a form of positive reinforcement, aligns directly with the theory's emphasis on using external stimuli to promote desired behavior. For example, when school heads acknowledge teachers' efforts through verbal praise, awards, or written commendations, teachers are likely to feel valued and become more motivated to perform effectively. This reinforcement may encourage punctuality, improved instructional planning, and consistent classroom engagement. Additionally, the structured use of constructive feedback or corrective measures can serve as negative reinforcement or mild disciplinary mechanisms to deter under performance. Therefore, Behaviorism provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding how school-based recognition influences teacher motivation and job performance in public secondary schools in Hai District, Tanzania.

6. Empirical Review

The empirical studies are arranged in a systematic way according to theme derived from the research question. The review includes studies conducted at the global level, across Africa, within East Africa, in Tanzania, and the immediate local context. These studies provided a deeper understanding of the problem, as well as insights into research methodologies, data collection tools, and methods of analysis and interpretation. Additionally, the reviewed literature enabled the researcher to identify the existing knowledge gap that the current study aims to address.

6.1 Contribution of Teachers Recognition by Heads of Schools on Teachers' Job Performance

Recognition by school heads plays an important role in contributing to teachers' job performance. Acknowledging teachers' efforts leads to improved teachers performance. Teachers who feel recognized are more active to their work, which can reduce burnout and increase commitment. Moreover, recognition fosters a positive school climate, promoting collaboration and support. It also encourages professional growth, motivating teachers to pursue development opportunities.

In United State, Smith and Brown (2020) examine how leadership recognition impacts teacher performance in public schools across the United States. The study used a mixed-methods approach, surveying 350 teachers and conducting in-depth interviews with 40 principals. Their findings indicate that both formal (awards, promotions) and informal (praise, acknowledgment in meetings) forms of recognition significantly affect teacher satisfaction and performance. The study provides valuable insights into the role of recognition to teachers' job performance.

In Europe, Zhang and Müller (2020) examined how leadership styles, particularly the recognition provided by school heads, influence teacher motivation and performance in German secondary schools. The study involved a survey of 120 teachers across 10 schools in Berlin and was analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The authors found that teachers' perception of being recognized by school heads was strongly correlated with increased job satisfaction and improved performance, particularly in schools where leaders adopted a transformational leadership style. The study concluded that the recognition of teachers by heads of schools could enhance teacher motivation, leading to improved teaching outcomes. While Zhang and Müller's (2020) study contributes to understanding the role of leadership recognition in teacher performance, it focuses primarily on teachers' perceptions of recognition, with little to capture the broader

dynamics of leadership practices. Therefore, the current study investigated contribution of recognition by heads of schools on teacher's job performance

In Singapore, Lee and Wong (2021) explored the role of principal recognition in enhancing teacher motivation and performance in secondary schools in Singapore. The study used a multilevel analysis, surveying 200 teachers and 50 principals. The research found that recognition by principals, particularly through personalized feedback and professional development opportunities, was linked to higher levels of teacher motivation and performance. Personalized recognition practices, such as acknowledging individual contributions and fostering teachers' professional growth, were especially effective. The study emphasized that transformational leadership practices, where principals actively engage with teachers and foster a supportive work environment, played a key role in the success of recognition efforts. Lee and Wong's study provides a comprehensive look at how principal recognition, especially through personalized feedback and professional development, impacts teacher motivation. The multilevel approach is a strength, allowing for the examination of both individual and school-level factors. However, the study does have little information about the forms of recognition such as monetary incentives, awards, or social recognition differ in their effectiveness. Therefore, the current study investigated the different types of recognition in various school contexts.

In Kenya, Wanyama et al. (2024) conducted a study on the Principal's Role in Recognizing Teacher Performance and Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in Bungoma South Sub-County, Kenya. Using a mixed-methods approach, Simple random sampling technique was used to draw a sample of 272 teachers and 19 principals. Their findings indicated that recognition from school leaders, particularly in the form of public praise and career development opportunities, was positively correlated with teacher job performance. The study emphasized that such recognition contributed to teachers' sense of belonging and professional growth, which, in turn, enhanced teaching effectiveness. While Wanyama et al. (2024) study provides valuable insights into the positive impact of recognition by school heads on teacher performance; it could have more directly focused on the specific mechanisms through which recognition by school leaders influences teachers' performance. Additionally, while public praise and career development are acknowledged as forms of recognition, the study have talked a little about other potential recognition strategies, such as financial incentives or feedback on classroom practices, which may also significantly influence job performance.

In Tanzania Myeya (2022) explored the contribution of working conditions, including the recognition by school heads, to teachers' job performance in Tanzania's Bukombe District. A mixed-methods approach was employed, utilizing both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews. The study found that recognition by school heads, as part of working conditions, significantly enhanced teacher job performance. Teachers who felt recognized were more motivated and demonstrated better teaching outcomes. The researcher recommended that school heads should prioritize recognition and create supportive environments for teachers to improve their overall performance. While Myeya's (2022) study provides valuable insights into how recognition influences teacher performance, it could have explored how recognition is implemented within different leadership styles. A further investigation into the specific ways that recognition is communicated and its alignment with teachers' expectations could provide more nuanced insights into its effectiveness. Therefore, this study investigates on how recognition contribute to teacher's job performance in public secondary schools in Hai District, Tanzania.

7. Summary of Literature Review and Research Gap

Most of studies often focus on general perceptions or leadership styles, lacking detailed exploration of specific recognition strategies or their contextual variations. In Tanzania, researcher such as Myeya (2022) links recognition to improved teacher performance but does not examine how heads of schools implement recognition or its direct effects. Most research outside Tanzania limits its relevance to local conditions, highlighting a contextual gap, especially in Hai District where teacher motivation remains a challenge. Methodologically, many studies rely heavily on quantitative data without qualitative insights from school leaders, limiting understanding of how recognition practices operate. Furthermore, there is a conceptual gap regarding recognition as a distinct extrinsic motivator affecting job performance. This study addresses these gaps by investigating the contribution of recognition by heads of schools on teachers' job performance in Hai District using a mixed-methods approach, enabling a comprehensive and context-specific analysis.

8. Design and Methodology

This study utilized a convergent research design within a mixed methods framework, allowing for simultaneous collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to comprehensively address the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The target population comprised 30 public secondary schools, including 30 heads of schools, 803 teachers, and 1DSEO within Hai District. Following Cohen et al. (2018) guidelines recommending a sample size of 10% to 30% of the population, the sample consisted of 9 public secondary schools, 9 heads of schools, 104 teachers, and 1 DSEO. Data collection methods included questionnaires and interview guide. Prior to the main study, the research tools were pilot-tested in two secondary schools outside the sampled schools to ensure appropriateness. Validity was confirmed through expert review by two specialists from MWECAU in the field of administration and planning who evaluated the instrument content. The reliability of the questionnaires, especially Likert-scale items related to recognition and job performance, was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. To enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative data, transparency in ethical considerations and strict adherence to data collection procedures were maintained. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and means with the aid of SPSS version 27, while qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis. Throughout the research process, ethical standards were rigorously observed, including protecting participant confidentiality, ensuring anonymity, and safeguarding participants from harm, with particular attention to the sensitivity surrounding discussions on recognition and teacher performance.

9. Findings in Respect to the Research Question

This study was conducted to answer a research question on the contribution of recognition by heads of schools on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Hai district, Tanzania. The study collected information from education stakeholders including teachers, heads of schools and DSEO.

9.1 Recognition by Heads of Schools to Teachers' Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Hai District, Tanzania

The study examined the recognition by heads of schools on teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Hai District, Tanzania. To gather the necessary data, the researcher employed questionnaires administered to teachers, where they were asked to express their level of agreement with specific statements. In addition, interviews were conducted with heads of schools and District Secondary Education Officer (DSEOs) to gain further insights. A five-point Likert scale was used for the teacher questionnaire responses, with the scale defined as follows: 1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Undecided (U), 4 = Agree (A), and 5 = Strongly Agree (SA). The responses were analyzed based on frequencies (F) and percentages (P). To interpret the distribution of responses, the following scale was adopted: $\leq 20\%$ = extreme minority; 21–49% = minority; 50–59% = moderate; 60–69% = majority; 70–89% = very high majority; 90–99% = extreme majority; and 100% = overwhelming majority (Taherdoost, 2019). Furthermore, the interpretation of mean scores followed the guideline by Hashim et al. (2022), where a mean of 1.00–1.89 indicates a very low extent, 3.50–4.29 indicates a high extent, and 4.30–5.00 signifies a very high extent. The summarized responses from teachers are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers (TRs) Responses on Recognition by Heads of Schools on Teachers Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Hai District, Tanzania (n=104)

S/ N	Statement	SD		D		U		A		SA		Mean
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
1	When school heads recognize teachers achievements, encourages them to improve their lesson delivery.	3	2.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	66	63.5	35	33.7	4.25
2	Teachers demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction and performance when their efforts are recognized by the head of the school.	1	1.0	0	0.0	2	1.9	47	45.2	54	51.9	4.47

3	The recognition of teachers hard work by the school heads contributes to a positive working environment, leading to improved job performance.	0	0.0	1	1.0	2	1.9	49	47.1	52	50.0	4.46
4	Teachers perform better in their roles when they receive regular recognition from the school head for their contributions.	1	1.0	4	3.8	0	0.0	46	44.2	53	51.0	4.40
5	Recognition by school heads encourages teachers to take on additional responsibilities and improve their engagement with students.	2	1.9	0	0.0	5	4.8	54	51.9	43	41.3	4.30
6	Teachers feel more valued and motivated to excel in their job when their achievements are publicly recognized by the head of the school.	1	1.0	2	1.9	4	3.8	51	49.0	46	44.2	4.33
7	Recognition from school heads leads to improved relationships between teachers and students, enhancing the overall classroom atmosphere.	0	0.0	1	1.0	3	2.9	45	43.3	55	52.9	4.48
8	Teachers regularly recognized by the school heads show increased dedication and commitment to achieving the school's goals.	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.9	53	51.0	49	47.1	4.45
9	Teachers receive recognition from the head of the school, which are more likely to implement innovative teaching methods in the classroom.	1	1.0	1	1.0	5	4.8	39	37.5	58	55.8	4.46
10	When teachers are recognized by the school heads show greater enthusiasm in their professional development activities.	0	0.0	2	1.9	2	1.9	40	38.5	60	57.7	4.51
Average Mean Scores												4.41

Source: Field Data (2025) 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Undecided (U), 4=Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA), F=frequencies, P=Percentages

Data in Table 1 indicate that an extreme majority (97.2%) of teachers agreed and strongly agreed that when school heads recognize their achievements, it encourages them to improve their lesson delivery, while an extreme minority (2.9%) strongly disagreed. No teachers were undecided. The mean score of 4.25 implies that recognition by school heads boosts teachers' motivation to their teaching performance. The overwhelmingly positive response suggests that acknowledgment of teachers' achievements is a powerful incentive. The minimal disagreement point to individual differences in motivation or prior experiences with recognition. The high mean score reinforces the conclusion that recognition positively impacts lesson delivery. During a personal interview, the researcher recorded the following remarks from Head of School HoS7:

When teachers know that someone is noticing their good work, they feel more confident. In my school, when I praise a teacher who delivered a good lesson or used creative methods, they feel proud and try to keep it up. But if no one says anything even when they do something well they sometimes feel like their effort doesn't matter. So, I always try to recognize even small improvements. It keeps them motivated (HoS7 Personal communication, 28 March 2025).

Similarly, Head of School HoS4 shared the following views:

A simple "well done" after a good class can push them to plan better next time. They feel respected and try new ways to teach. But if we forget to recognize them, some may lose interest or just do the minimum. Not because they don't care, but because they feel like no one notices. So I believe recognition really makes a difference in how teachers teach (HoS4 Personal communication, 21 March 2025).

Information in the interview by HoS7 and HoS4 indicate that recognition from school heads encourages teachers to improve their lesson delivery. HoS7 emphasized that acknowledging teachers' good work especially when they use creative methods boosts their confidence and motivates them to maintain high performance. HoS7 also noted that a lack of recognition can make teachers feel unappreciated, which may reduce their motivation. Similarly, HoS4 stated that even simple praise, like saying "well done" after a good lesson, encourages teachers to plan more effectively and try innovative teaching approaches. Without recognition, teachers may feel unnoticed and become less engaged. This suggests that consistent recognition is a powerful motivator for enhancing teaching quality. The findings of the study are in line with those by Msuya and Mwila, (2023) who affirmed that, recognition and rewards from school heads can significantly improve teachers' performance and motivation, although some studies also highlight potential negative experiences such as stress and feelings of being left out.

Data in Table 1 indicate that an extreme majority (97.1%) of teachers agreed and strongly agreed that teachers demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction and performance when their efforts are recognized by the head of the school, while an extreme minority (1.0%) strongly disagreed and an extremely minority (1.9%) were undecided. The mean score of 4.47 implies that recognition from school leadership contributes greatly to teacher satisfaction and work quality. The near-unanimous agreement highlights the importance of acknowledgment in fostering a motivated workforce. The few dissenting or uncertain responses reflect isolated cases or contextual limitations. The high mean score affirms that recognition leads to enhanced job satisfaction and performance. Through a personal interview, Head of School HoS7 conveyed the following:

I've seen it many times. When I just say "thank you" in front of others, they become more active, more committed, and even happier at work. They feel proud. But if their hard work goes unnoticed, some start feeling tired or unimportant. That can affect their teaching. So I think recognition really helps teachers enjoy their job and do it well (HoS7 Personal communication, 28 March 2025).

During the interview with Head of School HoS4 stated that:

Even small things like mentioning their name in a meeting or giving a certificate can lift their mood. I've seen some teachers grow in confidence just because their effort was noticed. But we must be fair. If some teachers are always recognized while others are ignored, it can bring problems. So yes, recognition improves satisfaction and performance but it must be equal and honest (HoS4 Personal communication, 21 March 2025).

Information in the interview by HoS7 and HoS4 indicate that recognition from school heads enhances teachers' job performance. HoS7 observed that simple acts of appreciation, such as saying "thank you" publicly, make teachers feel proud, more committed, and happier at work. Conversely, lack of recognition can lead to demotivation and fatigue. Similarly, HoS4 emphasized that even modest acknowledgments like mentioning a teacher in a meeting or awarding a certificate can significantly boost confidence and morale. However, HoS4 also stressed that recognition must be fair and inclusive to maintain staff unity and motivation. This underscores the importance of equitable recognition in fostering teacher satisfaction and improved performance. The finding of the study are in line with those by Wanyama et al., (2023) who affirmed that, teachers demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction and performance when their efforts are recognized by school leadership, particularly through transformational leadership styles, achievement recognition, and supportive working conditions.

The study also align with Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964), which emphasizes that individuals are motivated when they believe that their efforts will lead to good performance and that this performance will result in valued rewards. In the school context, when heads of schools recognize teachers'

efforts, it reinforces the belief that their hard work has meaningful outcomes. This recognition not only boosts teachers' motivation but also enhances their job satisfaction, as they feel appreciated and valued. As a result, teachers are more likely to maintain high levels of performance, commitment, and positive attitudes toward their work.

Data in Table 1 indicate that an extreme majority (97.1%) of teachers agreed and strongly agreed that the recognition of their hard work by the school head contributes to a positive working environment, leading to improved job performance, while an extremely minority (1.0%) disagreed and an extreme minority (1.9%) were undecided. The mean score of 4.46 implies that recognition helps create a supportive and productive school culture. The overwhelming positive response underscores the role of appreciation in fostering a positive climate. The very few negative or neutral views may stem from unique personal experiences. The strong mean score confirms the impact of recognition on workplace morale and performance. While speaking with the researcher during a face-to-face interview, HoS3 stated the following:

They are happier and more willing to support each other. In our school, I've seen teachers improve their lessons, help students more, and even assist their fellow teachers just because someone appreciated what they do. But if no one says anything, even when a teacher is working hard, it can make them feel forgotten. So, I believe recognition really helps create a good environment and better performance (HoS3 Personal communication, 20 March 2025).

HoS1 expressed the following during the interview:

It helps build a friendly and respectful environment where teachers feel good about coming to work. When they feel appreciated, they become more focused and improve how they teach. But we also need to be careful not to forget anyone. If some teachers feel ignored, it can make the working environment less positive. So, recognizing everyone's effort is important for keeping the team spirit strong (HoS1 Personal communication, 17 March 2025).

Information in the interview by HoS7 and HoS4 indicate that recognition from school heads contribute to teachers' job performance. HoS7 observed that simple acts of appreciation, such as saying "thank you" publicly or offering small rewards, make teachers feel proud, more committed, and happier at work. Conversely, lack of recognition can lead to demotivation and fatigue. Similarly, HoS4 emphasized that even modest acknowledgments like mentioning a teacher in a meeting or awarding a certificate can significantly boost confidence and morale. However, HoS4 also stressed that recognition must be fair and inclusive to maintain staff unity and motivation. This underscores the importance of equitable recognition in fostering teacher satisfaction and improved performance. The findings of the study are in line with those by Aranguez, (2024) who affirmed that, recognition of teachers' hard work by school heads contributes to a positive working environment, which can lead to improved job performance through increased motivation, supportive leadership, and effective communication, although some studies also highlight challenges such as feelings of being left out and stress.

Data in Table 1 indicate that an extreme majority (95.2%) of teachers agreed and strongly agreed that teachers perform better in their roles when they receive regular recognition from the school head for their contributions, while a minority (3.8%) disagreed and an extreme minority (1.0%) strongly disagreed. No teachers were undecided. The mean score of 4.40 implies that ongoing recognition from school leaders significantly enhances teacher performance. The near-total agreement suggests consistent positive outcomes when appreciation is routine. The few dissenting voices might reflect cases where recognition has been perceived as insufficient or inconsistent. The mean score supports the conclusion that regular recognition leads to better performance. During a face-to-face interview, the DSEO shared the following information with the researcher:

Teachers feel more valued and become more consistent in their duties when they know their efforts are being seen. Recognition doesn't always have to be material it can be a word of appreciation, a note, or mentioning their name during a meeting. These small actions can go a long way. Heads of schools should make sure that they recognize teachers effort which in turn will increase teachers job performance. (DSEO Personal communication, 09 April 2025).

Head of School 1 had this to say:

Their confidence grows, and they put more effort into teaching. Lesson planning improves, they manage the class better, and they even start sharing ideas with each other. But I've also learned that if recognition is not done regularly, or if some teachers feel left out, it can cause tension. So I try my

best to notice everyone's efforts, even the small ones (HoS8 Personal communication, 03 April 2025).

Information in the interview by the DSEO and HoS8 indicate that regular recognition from school heads enhances teacher performance. The DSEO noted that teachers become more consistent and feel valued when their efforts are acknowledged, even though simple, non-material gestures like verbal praise or public mention. Similarly, HoS8 observed that recognition boosts teachers' confidence, improves their lesson planning, classroom management, and collaboration. HoS8 also acknowledged that irregular or selective recognition can lead to tension, highlighting the importance of equitable appreciation. This suggests that regular and fair recognition is key to sustaining improved teacher performance. The findings of the study are in line with those by Nzabahimana and Andala, (2024) who affirmed that, Recognition and rewards, in-service training, and remuneration and incentives are significantly correlated with students' academic performance in mathematics.

The study also align with B.F. Skinner's Behavioral Theory, developed in the 1930s and 1940s, which emphasizes that behavior is shaped and maintained by its consequences—particularly through reinforcement. In the school context, when heads of schools provide regular recognition for teachers' contributions, it serves as positive reinforcement that encourages the repetition of desirable behaviors. This consistent acknowledgment motivates teachers to continue performing well in their roles, as they associate recognition with professional satisfaction and success.

Data in Table 1 indicate that an extreme majority (93.2%) of teachers agreed and strongly agreed that recognition by school heads encourages them to take on additional responsibilities and improve their engagement with students, while an extreme minority (1.9%) strongly disagreed and a minority (4.8%) were undecided. The mean score of 4.30 implies that recognition not only motivates teachers but also fosters greater involvement and responsibility in their roles. The dominant positive response suggests that recognition encourages proactiveness. The small number of disagreements and undecided responses may result from varying recognition practices. The mean score confirms the role of recognition in enhancing teacher engagement. During a face-to-face interview, Head of School HoS5 shared the following views:

When a school head recognizes a teacher's dedication whether through verbal appreciation, certificates, or even small incentives it boosts morale. It tells the teacher that their work matters. As a result, I've seen teachers willing to take on extra tasks, like mentoring students or leading clubs, because they feel trusted and valued. But if we don't recognize them, even hardworking teachers may feel discouraged and pull back from doing more (HoS5 Personal communication, 24 March 2025).

Head of School 1 shared the following:

Teachers also spend more time engaging with learners outside the classroom. Recognition makes them feel part of the school's success. But we need to be fair. If some feel ignored, they may say, "Why should I do extra if no one notices?" So I try to show appreciation to all teachers whenever I can, even just with words (HoS2 Personal communication, 18 March 2025).

Information in the interview by HoS5 and HoS2 indicate that recognition from school heads motivates teachers to take on additional responsibilities and engage more actively with students. HoS5 shared that appreciation whether verbal, written, or in the form of small incentives boosts morale and encourages teachers to volunteer for extra roles like mentoring or leading school activities. However, they cautioned that lack of recognition can lead even dedicated teachers to withdraw. Similarly, HoS2 emphasized that recognition fosters a sense of belonging and motivates teachers to engage beyond the classroom. Yet, they also noted the importance of fairness, warning that perceived neglect can reduce willingness to contribute. This suggests that fair and consistent recognition enhances teacher engagement and initiative. The findings of the study are in line with those by Anderson et al., (2022) who affirmed that, recognition by school heads, through leadership and fostering a supportive environment, encourages student engagement and participation, which in turn enhances student wellbeing and educational quality.

Data in Table 1 indicate that an extreme majority (93.2%) of teachers agreed and strongly agreed that teachers feel more valued and motivated to excel in their job when their achievements are publicly recognized by the head of the school, while an extreme minority (2.9%) disagreed and a minority (3.8%) were undecided. The mean score of 4.33 implies that public recognition makes teachers feel appreciated and driven to perform better. The high level of agreement demonstrates the emotional and professional value placed on public acknowledgment. The few who disagreed or were unsure may not see public recognition as

necessary for motivation. The mean score reinforces the idea that public appreciation promotes teacher excellence. The researcher's live conversation with HOS5 revealed that:

When I speak about a teacher's success in front of others maybe during a staff gathering or a school function it makes them feel respected. That kind of attention encourages them to keep working hard and even try new methods in their teaching. But I've also noticed that if recognition is always given to the same few people, others may feel ignored. So I try to appreciate different teachers for different things, even small efforts, so that no one feels left out (HoS5 Personal communication, 24 March 2025).

Head of School 2 stated during our interview:

I usually give praise during morning briefings or school events, and I can see how it lifts their mood. After that, they are more focused, more engaged with students, and even more helpful to their fellow teachers. But it's important to spread that praise around. If only a few names are always mentioned, it may create bad feelings. So I make sure to recognize different teachers at different times to keep everyone encouraged (HoS2 Personal communication, 18 March 2025).

Information in the interview by HoS4 and HoS7 indicate that public recognition from school heads makes teachers feel valued and motivates them to improve their performance. HoS4 noted that acknowledging teachers' successes during staff meetings or school functions boosts their morale and encourages innovation in teaching. However, they also emphasized the need for fairness, pointing out that repeated recognition of the same individuals can lead others to feel overlooked. Similarly, HoS7 shared that public praise during morning briefings or school events noticeably uplifts teachers' spirits, leading to greater focus, engagement with students, and collaboration with colleagues. Both heads stressed the importance of distributing recognition equitably to sustain motivation across the staff. This suggests that public acknowledgment, when fairly applied, enhances teacher morale, performance, and collaboration. The findings of the study are in line with those by Namuwaya and Kyokunda, (2024) who affirmed that, public recognition of teachers' achievements by school leadership significantly enhances their motivation and performance.

Data in Table 1 indicate that an extreme majority (96.2%) of teachers agreed and strongly agreed that recognition from school heads leads to improved relationships between them and students, enhancing the overall classroom atmosphere, while an extreme minority (1.0%) disagreed and a minority (2.9%) were undecided. The mean score 4.48 implies that teacher recognition has a ripple effect on classroom dynamics and student engagement. The strong agreement reflects the positive influence of recognition on teacher-student interactions. The minor dissent or indecision may reflect differing perspectives on how recognition translates to classroom behavior. The high mean score confirms that recognition enhances classroom atmosphere and relationships. The researcher during a face-to-face interview with the HOS4 had this to say:

This positive energy often spreads to the classroom. Teachers who feel appreciated are more patient, they smile more, and they connect better with their students. It creates a friendlier classroom where students feel safe and respected. I believe when the teacher is in a good mood, students can sense it and that makes learning easier and more enjoyable (HoS4 Personal communication, 21 March 2025).

Head of School 7 emphasized that:

I have noticed that students respond better to teachers who feel supported. There's more respect in the room, and fewer discipline issues. A motivated teacher sets the tone for the whole class. Recognition helps build that motivation, and in turn, helps create a calm and focused classroom environment (HoS7 Personal communication, 28 March 2025).

Information in the interview by HoS4 and HoS7 indicate that public recognition from school heads makes teachers feel valued and motivates them to improve their performance. HoS4 noted that acknowledging teachers' successes during staff meetings or school functions boosts their morale and encourages innovation in teaching. However, they also emphasized the need for fairness, pointing out that repeated recognition of the same individuals can lead others to feel overlooked. Similarly, HoS7 shared that public praise during morning briefings or school events noticeably uplifts teachers' spirits, leading to greater focus, engagement with students, and collaboration with colleagues. Both heads stressed the importance of distributing recognition equitably to sustain motivation across the staff. This suggests that public acknowledgment, when fairly applied, enhances teacher morale, performance, and collaboration. The findings of the study are in line with those by Jiang et al., (2022) who affirmed that, recognition from school heads, through fostering positive teacher-student relationships, can enhance classroom engagement, student

satisfaction, and overall classroom atmosphere, leading to improved academic and social-emotional outcomes.

Data in Table 1 indicate that an extreme majority (98.1%) of teachers agreed and strongly agreed that teachers regularly recognized by the school head show increased dedication and commitment to achieving the school's goals, while a minority (1.9%) were undecided. No teachers disagreed. The mean score of 4.45 implies that consistent recognition from school leadership promotes a strong sense of purpose and dedication among teachers. The overwhelming agreement suggests that recognition aligns teacher efforts with institutional objectives. The few undecided responses may indicate uncertainty about the long-term impact of recognition. The mean score supports the view that recognition drives commitment to school goals. The researcher during a face-to-face interview with the HOS4 expressed the following views:

They feel part of the school's mission, and they do more to help us reach our targets. I've noticed that recognized teachers are often the ones staying behind to support students or help organize school programs. Recognition builds trust between the teacher and the head, and that trust turns into action. Without it, some teachers may lose energy or just stick to the basics without going the extra mile (HoS9 Personal communication, 04 April 2025).

Head of School 6 had this to say:

In my view, recognition makes a big difference. When teachers are praised regularly even in small ways they become more focused on the school's goals. They start to take ownership, like the success of the school is their personal responsibility. They work harder, they cooperate more, and they even guide others. I've seen this many times. But when there's no recognition, some teachers just do their part and go home. So I try to make appreciation part of our school culture (HoS6 Personal communication, 26 March 2025).

Information in the interview by HoS9 and HoS6 indicate that regular recognition from school heads fosters increased dedication and alignment with school goals among teachers. HoS9 observed that teachers who are acknowledged often go beyond their routine duties, such as staying after school to support students or assist in organizing programs. This recognition builds trust and motivates teachers to contribute more actively. Similarly, HoS6 noted that consistent praise, even in small forms, inspires teachers to take ownership of the school's success. Recognized teachers tend to work harder, collaborate better, and support their peers. Both school heads emphasized that recognition cultivates a sense of purpose and personal investment in school objectives, reinforcing the idea that regular appreciation strengthens teacher commitment. The findings of the study are in line with those by Sapo and Bihonegn, (2024) who affirmed that, recognition and rewards for teachers are positively associated with increased dedication, commitment, and performance in achieving school goals.

Data in Table 1 indicate that a very high majority (92.3%) of teachers agreed and strongly agreed that teachers who receive recognition from the head of the school are more likely to implement innovative teaching methods in the classroom, while an extreme minority (2.0%) disagreed and a minority (4.8%) were undecided. The mean score of 4.46 implies that recognition encourages creativity and pedagogical innovation among teachers. The strong positive response illustrates that appreciation fosters professional growth and experimentation. The few negative or neutral responses might reflect caution or skepticism toward innovation. The mean score affirms that recognition supports the adoption of new teaching practices. The following views were recorded from the DSEO during the interview:

Recognition builds trust and shows teachers that their efforts are respected. This makes them more willing to take risks and use different methods, like group work, projects, or technology in class. When heads of schools let teachers feel supported, they are not afraid to be creative, and this often leads to better student learning (DSEO Personal communication, 09 April 2025).

Head of School 6 shared the following:

Recognition really helps teachers become more creative in their teaching. When their efforts are noticed, they feel encouraged to try different approaches. Teachers who once followed the same routine begin using more student activities or real-life examples in lessons. It makes the class more interesting and helps students learn better. So yes, recognition pushes teachers to bring fresh ideas into the classroom (HoS5 Personal communication, 24 March 2025).

Information in the interview by the DSEO and HoS5 indicate that recognition from school leadership encourages teachers to adopt innovative teaching methods. The DSEO highlighted that recognition builds trust and respect, which empowers teachers to take instructional risks such as using group

work, technology, or project-based learning practices that enhance student engagement and outcomes. Similarly, HoS5 observed that teachers become more creative and dynamic when their efforts are acknowledged. They shift from routine teaching to incorporating student-centered activities and real-life examples, making lessons more engaging. Both respondents emphasized that recognition fosters a supportive environment that inspires innovation and continuous improvement in teaching practices. The findings of the study are in line with those by Sapo and Bihonegn, (2024) who affirmed that, innovative teaching approaches significantly improve the quality of education for prospective secondary teachers, leading to increased engagement, improved critical thinking, and enhanced adaptability in classroom settings.

The study also align with Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964), which emphasizes that individuals are motivated to take action when they believe their efforts will lead to good performance and that such performance will result in meaningful rewards. In the school context, when heads of schools recognize teachers for their contributions, it strengthens the teachers' belief that their innovative efforts in the classroom will be acknowledged and appreciated. This recognition increases their motivation to try new and creative teaching methods, as they see a clear link between innovation, performance, and valued outcomes.

Data in Table 1 indicate that an extreme majority (96.2%) of teachers agreed and strongly agreed that when they are recognized by the school head, they show greater enthusiasm in their professional development activities, while an extremely minority (1.9%) disagreed and an extreme minority (1.9%) were undecided. The mean score of 4.51 implies that recognition stimulates teachers' interest and involvement in continuous learning. The widespread agreement shows that acknowledgment boosts enthusiasm for growth. The few dissenting or uncertain responses may reflect external barriers to professional development. The very high mean score confirms that recognition promotes active participation in developmental initiatives. The researcher during a face-to-face interview with the HOS3 had this to say:

Teachers feel encouraged to grow because someone values what they do. It builds confidence and pushes them to take professional development seriously. A teacher who feels supported is more likely to attend workshops, ask questions, and try to learn new things (HoS3 Personal communication, 20 March 2025).

Head of School 7 said that:

Recognition shows them that they are on the right track, and this makes them want to do even better. When teachers feel appreciated, they don't hold back — they get more involved, they ask to attend seminars, and they apply what they learn in school (HoS7 Personal communication, 28 March 2025).

Information in the interview by HoS3 and HoS7 indicate that recognition from school heads plays a vital role in increasing teachers' enthusiasm for professional development. HoS3 noted that when teachers feel valued, their confidence grows, which encourages them to actively engage in learning opportunities such as workshops and new teaching strategies. This sense of support motivates them to continuously improve. Similarly, HoS7 emphasized that recognition assures teachers they are progressing well, which drives them to pursue even more growth. Appreciated teachers are more eager to attend seminars, participate in training, and apply newly acquired skills in their classrooms. Both perspectives highlight that recognition fosters a culture of continuous professional development and learning among teachers. The findings of the study are in line with those by Zhang, (2024) who affirmed that transformative leadership positively influences teacher professionalism through recognition for social esteem at the individual and school levels.

Generally, the grand mean score of all items of 4.41, indicating an extreme majority agreement among teachers that Recognition done by Heads of Schools on effectively enhance Teachers Job Performance in Public Secondary School in Hai District, Tanzania. This high average mean score suggests that most teachers believe that recognition by heads of schools contributes positively to their motivation and overall job performance. This is a good indicator that the recognition system is viewed favorably and is likely considered effective by the majority of teachers in their professional commitment and productivity in public secondary schools. The findings of the study are in line with those by Mchome (2023), who affirmed that recognition by Heads of Schools, through both formal and informal means, contribute to teachers' job performance in secondary schools. The findings also align with Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964), which posits that individuals are motivated to act based on their belief that their efforts will lead to good performance, and that this performance will result in meaningful rewards. In the context of public secondary schools in Hai District, Tanzania, when heads of schools recognize teachers for their efforts, they are

reinforcing the connection between teachers' hard work, improved performance, and positive outcomes. Recognition, as a form of reward, boosts teachers' expectancy that is, their belief that their efforts will indeed lead to successful teaching practices and student engagement. Furthermore, the instrumentality aspect of Vroom's theory comes into play, as teachers believe that their improved performance will be noticed and rewarded, leading to continued job performance. The valence, or value, of this reward whether intrinsic, like feeling appreciated, or extrinsic, like a promotion or bonus further motivates teachers to their job performance, thus benefiting the overall educational environment.

10. Conclusion of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusion was drawn:

Recognition by heads of schools effectively contribute to enhance teachers' job performance in public secondary schools. The study revealed that verbal praise, certificates, public appreciation, and leadership roles boost teachers' morale, motivation, and commitment. However, the study also uncovered several negative aspects. It was found that inconsistent, selective, or irregular recognition practices led to feelings of neglect, demoralization, and reduced motivation among some teachers. Some educators expressed frustration when recognition was concentrated on a few individuals, creating perceptions of favoritism and lowering team morale. Additionally, a lack of fairness in the distribution of recognition sometimes resulted in strained professional relationships and reduced collaborative spirit

11. Recommendations for Action

To improve teachers' job performance through recognition, school heads should consistently acknowledge teachers' contributions through verbal praise, certificates, and leadership opportunities. Recognition should be timely, inclusive, and public to boost morale and motivation. Schools should create a culture of appreciation that values teacher effort and innovation, promoting a collaborative and positive working environment.

12. Recommendations for Further Studies

Heads of schools should recognize teachers which in turn will Further studies should be done to explore how limited financial resources affect the effectiveness of extrinsic motivation strategies in public secondary schools. Investigate the causes and consequences of unequal or inconsistent recognitions in schoolsbring positive impact to teachers job performance.

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