Extensiveness of Problem-Solving Skills by Heads of Schools on Enhancing Teachers' Job Performance In Public Secondary Schools fo Siha District, Tanzania

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Abstract
This study investigated to what extent do heads of schools' problem-solving skills in enhancing teachers' job performance in Public Secondary Schools in Siha District, Tanzania. The Transformational Leadership Theory, by Bernard M. Bass (in the early 1978) guided this study. This study employed a convergent research design under a mixed-methods approach. The study targeted 19 public secondary schools, 19 heads of schools, 316 teachers, and 17 ward secondary education officer totaling 352 individuals. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to select 5 public secondary schools, 5 heads of schools, 95 teachers and 5 Ward Education Officers (WEO), totaling 105 individuals. The study utilized questionnaires and interview guides for data collection. Two educational planning and administration experts from Mwenge Catholic University validated the instruments. A pilot study was conducted in 1 public secondary school from Siha District. The reliability of the Likert-type questionnaires was ensured using Cronbach's Alpha, with values of .870 for teachers. The trustworthiness of the interview guide was ensured through peer debriefing and triangulation. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, and percentages, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. The study adhered to ethical considerations throughout the research process. The study found that heads of schools' problem-solving leadership skills to a high extent contribute to enhancing teachers' job performance in public secondary schools within Siha District, Tanzania. The study concludes that the head of schools' problem-solving skills in managing workload, resolving conflicts, making timely decisions, and encouraging teacher participation are keys to improving teacher performance in Siha District's public secondary schools. The District Education Officer (DEO), Ward Educational Officer (WEO), and Heads of Schools (HoS) should establish a School Leadership Innovation (SLIL).

Keywords: *Problem-Solving Skills, Heads of Schools', Teachers', Job Performance, Contribution.*

1. Introduction

School leadership is recognized as a cornerstone of effective education systems, with heads of schools playing a pivotal role in shaping the performance of teaching staff and the overall learning environment. Enhancing teachers' job performance requires a strategic approach that emphasizes effective leadership practices, including problem-solving competencies, resource management, staff motivation, and a supportive institutional culture (UNESCO, 2023). This focus aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, particularly Target 4.c, which seeks to substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers through improved teacher education and leadership support systems by 2030 (UNESCO, 2015). Since the quality of teaching is a major determinant of student outcomes, the leadership capabilities of school heads especially in identifying, analyzing, and resolving challenges are central to empowering teachers and improving instructional practices. Problem-solving skills among heads of schools encompass the ability to assess institutional issues, make data-driven decisions, manage interpersonal conflicts, and facilitate professional

development (Wangui & Muthoni, 2022). Despite the importance of school leadership in driving teacher effectiveness, schools continue to experience declining teacher morale, poor classroom engagement, and inconsistent instructional delivery due to ineffective leadership responses. Recent findings reveal that in many sub-Saharan African contexts, schools face challenges related to administrative inefficiencies, low teacher motivation, and limited professional support, which ultimately affect education quality (UNESCO, 2021).

In 2021, the U.S. Congress introduced the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Funds Program to improve teachers' job performance by addressing workload stress, investing in professional development, and upgrading school infrastructure (Brooks & Springer, 2023). Similarly, India launched the National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA) under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan in 2023, aiming to enhance teacher competencies, provide continuous training, and boost motivation and instructional effectiveness (Sharma & Pattanayak, 2022). These initiatives target the multifaceted challenges that affect teachers' performance, including poor working conditions, lack of recognition, and limited opportunities for professional growth. Nevertheless, global reports by UNESCO (2022) indicate that about 69 million teachers worldwide face obstacles that impair their job performance, such as heavy workloads, inadequate pay, insufficient teaching resources, and limited professional acknowledgment. These ongoing challenges underscore the necessity for tailored, context-specific interventions to support teachers' capacity to deliver quality education effectively.

In Africa, suboptimal teacher job performance remains a significant barrier to improving education quality and student outcomes. For instance, in Nigeria, more than 60% of public-school teachers report diminished instructional effectiveness linked to poor leadership support, delayed salary payments, and exclusion from decision-making processes (National Union of Teachers, 2022). Likewise, in Kenya, 54% of teachers attribute their reduced job performance to ineffective school leadership, lack of recognition, and restricted career advancement (Teachers Service Commission, 2021). In Malawi, weak instructional leadership correlates with high teacher absenteeism, with over 45% of teachers absent weekly, severely impacting classroom performance (World Bank, 2022). These findings highlight a critical leadership deficit that undermines teacher motivation and effectiveness, threatening efforts to realize Sustainable Development Goal 4's vision of inclusive and quality education.

In Tanzania, efforts to enhance teachers' job performance in secondary schools have included the provision of teaching and learning materials, salary harmonization, teacher recruitment, and construction of staff housing to reduce commuting difficulties. Programs such as the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) and the Teacher Development and Management Strategy (TDMS) have been implemented to professionalize teaching and improve motivation. Despite these measures, challenges persist. Studies in Kongwa District reveal that 59% of teachers feel their professional contributions are insufficiently recognized, and 70% express dissatisfaction with promotion opportunities (Shuma et al, 2022). Similarly, in Meru District, 76.5% of teachers report that low salaries, lack of in-service training, and poor working conditions negatively impact their job performance (Mville and Moshi, 2023). These factors contribute to stress, burnout, and reduced instructional quality, raising concerns about how professional and psychological challenges limit teachers' effectiveness, particularly in foundational education.

In Kilimanjaro Region, teacher job performance stands as a cornerstone for educational success in public secondary schools, yet remains undermined by persistent structural and managerial shortcomings. Despite the government's commitment through initiatives like the Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) and the Teacher Development and Management Strategy (TDMS), a troubling gap persists between policy intent and classroom realities. Teachers continue to grapple with minimal recognition, limited opportunities for advancement, and poor working environments factors that inevitably erode their instructional drive and professional commitment (Sospeter and Hassanal, 2022). Critically, these performance barriers are not occurring in a vacuum; they are exacerbated in institutional level which raise concern on the disruption of the core instructional delivery by demotivating teachers, hindering collaboration, and impeding the drive for innovation in pedagogy.

Teachers' job underperformance has increasingly contributed to the decline in students' academic achievement in Siha District. Unlike Moshi Municipality, Moshi District, Mwanga, and Same which have consistently maintained academic resilience, with over 80% of students securing Divisions I to III in the Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE) Siha District presents a worrying trend. Between 2020 and 2023, schools in the district recorded a significant rise in Division 0 results, with Secondary A

increasing from 12 to 31 students and Secondary E from 28 to 51 (NECTA, 2023). This decline is not merely a statistical fluctuation but an indication of teacher underperformance manifested through several indicators, including inadequate lesson preparation, limited use of effective teaching strategies, weak classroom management, and reduced professional motivation. The factors collectively undermine instructional quality, leading to the observed poor student outcomes. The problem is further compounded by leadership challenges that directly affect teachers' work performance. As Kanuti et al. (2024) argue, the effectiveness of the teaching force is inseparable from the quality of school leadership, which is either support or constrain teacher performance. Thus, the persistent underperformance of teachers in Siha District signals a deeper systemic issue that requires scholarly attention. This study is therefore positioned to examine the extent to which school heads' problem-solving skills influence teachers' job performance, with the ultimate aim of generating evidence-based leadership development strategies that restore instructional quality and improve academic outcomes in the district.

2. Statement of the Problem

Teachers' job underperformance in public secondary schools has become a pressing problem of concern in Tanzania, leading to undermining the implications for the quality of education and teachers' job underperformance. The problem is increasingly alarming, especially in Siha district, where stakeholders including school administrators, parents, and education officers have voiced ongoing concerns about ineffective classroom instruction, declining teacher morale, and poor student support. According to Myeya (2022) inadequate recognition and limited leadership guidance contribute to the deterioration of teacher job performance. Kanuti et al. (2024) assert that teacher effectiveness is strongly shaped by the leadership environment within schools, particularly the ability of school heads to respond to daily instructional and administrative challenges through practical problem-solving.

Several studies in Tanzania have examined teachers' job performance in relation to leadership practices. Mlowe and Nyanubi (2022) investigated how teacher motivation shapes performance outcomes, Komba and Kapinga (2023) highlighted the link between professional development and instructional effectiveness, and Nyoni and Kalolo (2021) analyzed the influence of leadership on teacher engagement. While these contributions provide important perspectives on factors affecting teachers' job performance, there remains a critical gap in the literature. Specifically, little is known about the extent to which heads of schools utilize problem-solving skills as a leadership strategy to enhance teachers' job performance an issue that is particularly pressing in low-performing districts such as Siha. In Siha District, academic performance has steadily declined, with a notable increase in Division 0 results from 2020 to 2023. The persistent trends suggest systematic instructional challenges that go beyond teacher-related issues and point possible leadership gaps in effectively supporting and improving teacher performance. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the extent to which heads of schools employ problem-solving skills to enhance teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Siha District, Kilimanjaro Region-Tanzania.

3. Research Question

To what extent do heads of schools' problem-solving skills enhance teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Siha District?

4. Significance of the Study

This study is anticipated to offer valuable contributions to various educational stakeholders. For heads of schools, the findings will provide practical insights into how core problem-solving competencies such as conflict resolution, decision-making, and instructional support enhance teacher job performance, instructional delivery, and overall staff morale. Grounded in leadership and organizational behavior theories, the study underscores how effective leadership behavior fosters a supportive school climate, which is critical for staff motivation and performance. Secondary school teachers will benefit indirectly through improved leadership practices that promote a more collaborative, structured, and supportive working environment. This aligns with transformational leadership theory, which posits that leaders who engage in individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation can positively influence employee performance and job satisfaction.

Students, as the ultimate beneficiaries of effective teaching, are expected to experience improved academic outcomes resulting from heightened teacher motivation, engagement, and pedagogical effectiveness. Ward Education Officers (WEOs) and District Education Officers (DEOs) utilize the study's findings to strengthen leadership training initiatives, implement data-driven supervision frameworks, and design targeted interventions for underperforming schools. For policymakers, this study provides evidence on how school heads' problem-solving skills directly impact teachers' job performance, offering insights to guide the development of leadership-focused education policies. The findings will guide the design of targeted leadership training programs. It will also support fair distribution of educational resources. Overall, the study aims to improve teacher performance and academic outcomes in underperforming districts like Siha. Academically, the study will enrich the body of knowledge by contributing empirical evidence on the influence of school leaders' problem-solving abilities on teacher job performance. It will serve as a foundation for further research in educational leadership, particularly within the Tanzanian context and other similar educational systems in sub-Saharan Africa.

5. Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Transformational Leadership Theory, advanced by Bernard M. Bass in the early 1980s based on the foundational work of James MacGregor Burns (1978), the theory emphasizes the leader's role in inspiring and motivating subordinates to exceed expectations and achieve personal and organizational growth. The theory rests on four key assumptions: (1) transformational leaders intellectually stimulate followers and foster innovation, (2) they offer individualized consideration, addressing each member's unique needs, (3) they set high performance expectations and challenge established norms, and (4) they communicate a compelling vision that drives commitment to shared goals. The theory is its emphasis on motivation and empowerment, which contributes to improved job satisfaction, increased commitment, and higher performance among employees. It encourages leaders to be adaptive and responsive to the needs of their teams, thereby fostering professional growth and organizational innovation. However, a notable limitation lies in its idealism it assumes that all leaders can inspire and influence at a transformational level, which may not hold true in settings where leaders lack the necessary communication skills, emotional intelligence, or strategic foresight. Moreover, over-reliance on the leader's charisma and vision may neglect structural issues or accountability mechanisms, which are also critical for sustained performance.

In the context of this study, Transformational Leadership Theory is highly applicable in examining how heads of schools' human skills particularly their problem-solving abilities enhance teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Siha District. Transformational school leaders can influence teacher performance by creating an enabling environment that values collaboration, trust, and continuous improvement. Their ability to effectively solve problems, provide instructional guidance, and respond to teachers' needs through empathy and clear communication is essential for boosting motivation, classroom delivery, and professional engagement. This theory supports the premise that when heads of schools model transformational behavior and problem-solving acumen, they contribute meaningfully to elevating teaching quality, thereby improving student learning outcomes and school performance in the long term.

6. Literature Review

This study investigate how heads of schools' problem-solving skills influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools, focusing on their role in addressing instructional and administrative challenges to improve teaching effectiveness, particularly in Siha District, Tanzania.

Özpınar and Arslan (2023) examined the problem-solving abilities of lower secondary school students in Norway using a teacher-based evaluation approach. The study involved a sample of 326 students drawn from different grade levels and backgrounds. The findings revealed that students' problem-solving skills varied significantly across factors such as grade level, gender, and academic performance. The results emphasized the critical role of problem-solving skills in enhancing educational outcomes, though from a learner-centered perspective. The study inform the current study as it highlights the broader importance of problem-solving competencies within educational contexts. However, the focus on students' problem-solving skills differs from the concern of this study, which evaluates the extensiveness of problem-solving skills employed by heads of schools to enhance teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of

Siha District. The current study, therefore, investigated how leadership problem-solving abilities create supportive working environments, foster teacher effectiveness, and improve overall job satisfaction.

Rini et al. (2020) investigated the implementation of School-Based Management (SBM) in Indonesia, focusing on decision-making practices, challenges encountered, and strategies employed to address these challenges. The study involved a sample of 40 schools and examined school committee participation in areas such as defining school missions, managing facilities, staffing, curriculum development, and establishing student-related policies. The findings revealed several challenges, including inadequate parental involvement, weak self-governance, poor coordination, overlapping roles between heads of schools and committees, limited professional development opportunities, insufficient resources, and low levels of understanding of SBM principles. The previous study is relevant to the current study as it highlights the significance of leadership and problem-solving within SBM practices. However, the study narrowly concentrated on administrative challenges and responses while overlooking how such issues affect actual learning outcomes, teacher performance, or student achievement thus missing the broader implications of SBM. The current study, therefore, investigated how the problem-solving skills of heads of schools, as an essential component of SBM, directly influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Siha District.

Akporehe and Asiyai (2023) conducted a correlational survey to examine the relationship between principals' managerial problem-solving skills and teachers' job performance in secondary schools in the Owa communities of Delta State, Nigeria. The study involved a sample of 10 principals and 78 teachers, with data collected using the Principals' Managerial Skills Questionnaire (PMSQ) and the Teachers' Job Performance Questionnaire (TJPQ). The findings identified communication, human relations, and technical skills as key managerial competencies that significantly influenced teacher performance. The study inform the current study as it provides empirical evidence of a positive relationship between school leaders' managerial problem-solving abilities and teachers' job performance. However, its scope was limited as it did not focus specifically on the principals' problem-solving skills or examine their direct impact on teachers' job performance. The current study, therefore, investigated how the problem-solving abilities of heads of schools enhance teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Siha District, employing both qualitative methods and questionnaires to generate deeper insights and practical strategies for strengthening leadership practices, teacher effectiveness, and job satisfaction.

Mboya et al. (2024) investigated teacher professional development (TPD) in emergency contexts across five Eastern African countries Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach and involved a sample of 250 teachers who had participated in TPD activities over the past two years. The findings revealed that teachers benefited most from standardized and on-site TPD models, which enhanced pedagogical skills, classroom management, and familiarity with new instructional approaches. The study inform to the current study as it underscores the importance of continuous professional development in improving instructional effectiveness, especially in complex and resource-limited contexts. However, while the study concentrated on TPD support for teachers, it did not explore how school leaders' problem-solving skills contribute to addressing such challenges and enhancing teacher job performance. The current study, therefore, focused on the problem-solving abilities of heads of schools in Siha District, examining how effective leadership creates enabling conditions that promote teacher performance and job satisfaction.

Chiwamba et al. (2022) examined the effectiveness of instructional supervision by school heads in enhancing teaching and learning performance in public secondary schools in Lindi Region, Tanzania. The mixed-methods study involved a sample of 171 participants, comprising 103 teachers, 57 school heads, and 11 class masters drawn from 57 out of 124 public secondary schools. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and document reviews, with thematic analysis used for qualitative data and descriptive and inferential statistics applied to quantitative data. The findings revealed that although school heads demonstrated a strong understanding of their instructional supervisory roles, they were less effective in actively engaging teachers to develop professional skills. The presence of unresolved conflicts and avoidance behaviors among teachers suggested weak relational and problem-solving approaches by school leaders. The study is informed to the current study as it underscores the need for effective problem-solving skills in leadership to strengthen teacher engagement and performance. However, the study only partially addressed managerial and problem-solving competencies that could resolve such challenges. The current

study, therefore, specifically investigated the problem-solving skills of heads of schools and how these influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools of Siha District, Tanzania.

7. Research Gap

The reviewed empirical studies on school leadership and teacher performance reveal notable gaps, particularly regarding the influence of heads of schools' problem-solving skills on teachers' job performance within the Tanzanian secondary education context. Studies conducted in various international settings such as Norway (Özpınar & Arslan, 2023), Indonesia (Rini et al., 2020), and Nigeria (Akporehe & Asiyai, 2023) provide valuable contributions on aspects such as student problem-solving, school-based management, and general managerial competencies. However, their findings remain context-specific and offer limited transferability to the Tanzanian education system, especially in rural public secondary schools like those in Siha District. Moreover, these studies often lack direct focus on school leaders' problem-solving skills as a distinct factor influencing teacher performance. Additionally, many of the reviewed studies address isolated components such as stakeholder collaboration (Rini et al., 2020), professional development during emergencies (Mboya et al., 2024), or supervisory practices (Chiwamba et al., 2022) without exploring how leadership-driven problem-solving strategies impact core indicators of teacher performance, including instructional effectiveness, classroom engagement, and professional motivation. While some acknowledge managerial skills broadly (e.g., communication and human relations), few offer an in-depth analysis of problem-solving as a standalone leadership attribute linked to measurable educational outcomes.

From a methodological standpoint, most of the existing literature employs either qualitative or quantitative approaches in isolation, limiting the depth and breadth of insights. The absence of mixed-methods designs in many studies constrains the ability to capture the complexity of leadership influence within dynamic school environments. Furthermore, limited empirical evidence exists that connects school leadership problem-solving competencies with quantifiable aspects of teacher job performance in the Tanzanian context. This study sought to address the gaps by employing a mixed-methods approach to investigate how heads of schools' problem-solving skills influence teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Siha District, Tanzania. By situating the study within a specific local context and integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, the research aims to generate comprehensive, context-relevant insights that inform school leadership practices, teacher support strategies, and broader education policy interventions.

8. Research Methodology

This study used a convergent research design under a mixed-methods approach, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data sets to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The study targeted 19 public secondary schools, 19 heads of schools, 316 teachers, and 17 ward education officers (WEO), totaling 352 respondents from Siha District. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed to select 5 public secondary schools, 5 heads of schools, 95 teachers, and 5 WEOs, making a total sample of 105 respondents.

The data collection instruments included questionnaires for teachers and interview guides for heads of schools and ward secondary education officers. Two experts in educational planning and administration from Mwenge Catholic University validated these instruments. A pilot study was conducted in 1 public secondary school within Siha District, involving 10 teachers and one head of school to test the instruments' clarity and reliability. The reliability of the Likert-type questionnaires was ensured using a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .870 for teachers. The trustworthiness of the interview guides was ensured through peer debriefing and triangulation methods to guarantee credibility. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies and percentages, employing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27, while qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed through thematic analysis following the seven-stage process outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2023). Ethical considerations, including obtaining informed consent and ensuring respondent confidentiality, were strictly adhered to throughout the research process.

9. Findings and Discussions

This study aimed to examine the extent to which heads of schools' problem-solving skills contribute to enhancing teachers' job performance in public secondary schools in Siha District. To assess respondents'

views, descriptive statistics were used based on the percentage scale developed by Taherdoost (2019), where ≤ 20% represents an extremely small minority, 21–49% indicates a minority, 50–59% is moderate, 60–69% represents a majority, 71–89% is a very high majority, 90–99% is an extremely high majority, and 100% represents an overwhelming majority. Furthermore, mean scores were interpreted using a five-point Likert scale, where 1.00 -1.79 = Very Small Extent, 1.8 – 2.59 = Low Extent, 2.60 – 3.39 = Moderate Extent, 3.4 – 4.19 = Large Extent, and 4.20 – 5.00 = Very Large Extent; following the guidelines of Warmbrod (2024). As detail in the Table 1 below:

Table 1: Teachers Response on the Extent to Which Heads of Schools' Problem-Solving Skills Contribute to Enhancing Teachers' Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Siha District (N = 86).

S/N		VHE		HE		ME		LE		VLE		Mean
		f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
i.	The head of school's ability to find solutions to workload challenges commitment to achieving school goals.	29	33.7	33	38.4	13	15.1	4	4.7	7	8.1	3.85
ii.	The head of school provides timely solutions to problems that arise in the school environments.	26	30.2	34	39.5	12	14.0	6	7.0	8	9.3	3.74
iii.	The head of school's ability to provide solutions during emergencies strengthens confidence in managing duties.	33	38.4	27	31.4	13	15.1	8	9.3	5	5.8	3.87
iv.	The head of school that uses a logical and structural approach to solve problems enhances teachers' confidence in school.	30	34.9	33	38.4	7	8.1	11	12.8	5	5.8	3.84
v.	The head of school who supports teachers in overcoming work related difficulties, improving the overall teachers' job satisfaction	34	39.5	32	37.2	8	9.3	9	10.5	3	3.5	3.99
vi.	Solving conflicts constructively fosters harmony and improving job performance.	38	44.2	35	40.7	4	4.7	5	5.8	4	4.7	4.14
vii.	The head of school encourages teachers to participate in decision making when solving school relating issues.	40	46.5	31	36.0	6	7.0	7	8.1	2	2.3	4.16
viii.	The head of school's effective decision-making in handling complaints motivates teachers to perform better in their roles.	41	47.7	31	36.0	5	5.8	6	7.0	3	3.5	4.17
ix.	The head of school's ensures that resources are effectively located to solve problems affecting teaching and learning.	39	45.3	27	31.4	10	11.6	7	8.1	3	3.5	4.07
x.	The head of school's ability to solve financial constraints positively influences participation in school projects.	36	41.9	33	38.4	12	14.0	3	3.5	2	2.3	4.14
	Grand Mean											**4.00**

Source: Field Data (2025)

Data in Table 1 indicate that very high majority (72.1%) of teachers were of the view that, to a high extent, the head of school's ability to find solutions to workload challenges contributes positively to achieving school goals. Additionally, extremely small minority (15.1%) of teachers rated it at a moderate extent, while an extremely small minority (12.8%) of teachers rated it at a low extent. The mean score of 3.85 also falls within the high extent category on the item. This suggest that teachers widely recognize the importance of school heads' problem-solving skills in managing workload-related issues as a critical leadership competency that supports instructional delivery, reduces stress, and improves teaching morale. Teachers' positive responses reflect that when school leaders actively address staffing gaps, timetable overloads, and task distribution challenges, they foster a work environment that is balanced, productive, and goal-oriented. During a face-to-face interview with Head of School 3, the following was stated:

"Managing workloads fairly is one of the main things I focus on. When teachers feel that duties are not balanced, their motivation drops. I always listen to complaints and make necessary adjustments so that

we all move toward the same school goals (Head of School 3, Personal Communication, 14th March 2025)

Furthermore, Head of School 3 added that; *"Sometimes the challenge is limited staff, but I try to prioritize critical tasks and redistribute responsibilities so no one feels overwhelmed. It requires constant communication and flexibility"* (Head of School 3, Personal Communication, 14 March 2025).

Additionally, WEO 1 had this to say; *"One challenge in our schools is when teachers are overwhelmed and there is no action from the head. But the schools with good leadership those that address workload issues show better performance and more teacher satisfaction"* (WEO1, Personal Communication, 15 March 2025)

In addition, WEO1 observed that; *"Effective workload management is a key indicator of leadership quality in schools. Leaders who are proactive in resolving such issues often maintain higher teacher morale and reduce absenteeism"* (WEO1, Personal Communication, 15 March 2025).

Information from both Head of School 3 and WEO 1 affirms the importance of school leadership in addressing internal challenges, particularly workload distribution. Head of School 3 emphasized active listening and equitable task assignment, while WEO 1 linked effective leadership to positive performance outcomes and job satisfaction. The findings align with Transformational Leadership Theory, particularly the component of individualized consideration, where leaders respond to staff needs and foster a supportive environment. By addressing workload challenges, heads of schools exhibit problem-solving acumen that not only boosts morale but also promotes long-term goal achievement. The data, supported by interview responses, show that the ability of heads of schools to resolve workload-related problems significantly enhances teacher motivation and job performance. This leadership attribute is a critical driver of instructional quality and overall school success in Siha District.

Data in Table 1 indicate that a majority (69.7%) of teachers were of the view that, to a high extent, heads of schools provide timely solutions to problems that arise in school environments. An extremely small minority (14.0%) rated it at a moderate extent, while extremely small minority (16.3%) rated it at a low extent. The mean score of 3.74 also falls within the high extent category on the item. This suggests that most teachers appreciate the responsiveness of school heads in handling arising issues in a timely and structured manner. Timely problem-solving by school leaders ensures continuity in teaching and learning, minimizes classroom disruptions, and reinforces trust among staff members. Teachers' positive ratings on this item reflect their recognition that swift leadership intervention during crises such as disciplinary matters, resource shortages, or conflicts prevents escalation and ensures a stable and focused school environment.

During a face-to-face interview, Head of School 2 shared the following:

> Problems happen often conflicts between students, teachers needing replacements, delays in resources. But my job is to act quickly. Teachers feel secure when they know I will respond fast and fairly to any concern, when they see prompt action taken, it builds confidence that leadership is attentive and dependable (Head of School 2, Personal Communication, 14 March 2025)

Further elaborating, Head of School 2 added: *"In one case, a science teacher suddenly went on sick leave. I immediately adjusted the timetable and reassigned periods to another qualified teacher. That kind of immediate response avoids learning gaps and shows teachers I'm committed to supporting them"* (Head of School 2, Personal Communication, 14 March 2025).

In addition, Ward Executive Officer 3 had this to say;

> Delays in decision-making weaken confidence among staff. But the schools that do well have heads who respond without procrastination. Quick action maintains school order and boosts teacher morale. We often observe that proactive leaders experience fewer complaints and higher cooperation from their staff (WEO 3, Personal Communication, 16 March 2025)

Also, WEO 3 further remarked that: *"In my supervisory visits, I have noticed that schools with reactive heads face more disruption, while those led by prompt decision-makers maintain a consistent teaching routine and have fewer operational bottlenecks"* (WEO 3, Personal Communication, 16 March 2025).

The insights from both Head of School 2 and WEO 3 affirm that timely leadership response to challenges within the school environment is instrumental in building teacher confidence and organizational efficiency. This suggests that school heads' ability to provide timely solutions to school-related challenges which enhances teachers' sense of stability, job satisfaction, and overall professional engagement. This leadership behavior, rooted in transformational practices, contributes positively to sustaining high performance and continuous improvement in public secondary schools in Siha District. Head of School 2

emphasized prompt intervention to reassure staff, while WEO 3 highlighted the relationship between timely decisions and school orderliness. These findings align well with Transformational Leadership Theory, particularly the dimension of idealized influence and inspirational motivation, whereby leaders serve as dependable role models and inspire staff by demonstrating decisiveness, care, and proactive management. When school leaders address emerging issues swiftly, they reinforce a culture of accountability, reliability, and shared commitment. Furthermore, the findings resonate with those of Wartenberg et al. (2023), who noted that in Kenyan secondary schools, the effectiveness of leadership in resolving school-based challenges promptly was closely associated with improved teacher satisfaction, reduced absenteeism, and increased instructional time. This further supports the assertion that school heads' responsiveness is a vital leadership trait for fostering a conducive teaching and learning environment.

Data in Table 1 indicate that a majority (69.8%) of teachers were of the view that, to a high extent, the head of school's ability to provide solutions during emergencies strengthens their confidence in managing duties. An extremely small minority (15.1%) of teachers rated it at a moderate extent, while another extremely small minority (15.1%) rated it at a low or very low extent. The mean score of 3.87 falls within the high extent category. The results suggest that teachers generally trust the heads of schools to provide timely and effective responses during emergencies whether those emergencies are related to student behavior, safety threats, or logistical challenges like power outages or sudden teacher absences. The ability of a school leader to act decisively in critical moments is viewed as an essential leadership trait that helps teachers remain focused and feel supported in the execution of their duties. This level of responsiveness not only mitigates disruptions but also instills a sense of security and stability across the school.

During a face-to-face interview, Head of School 1 shared the following comments;

Emergencies can happen at any moment. If you wait too long or don't act clearly, everyone gets confused. I always step in quickly so my staff can feel calm and know that the situation is under control. That kind of trust helps everyone do their part confidently (Head of School 1, Personal Communication, 14 March 2025)

Head of School 1 further added:

I recall when a fire broke out in the kitchen area. I immediately implemented the safety protocol, contacted emergency services, and relocated students to a safe zone. Teachers later told me they felt protected and better able to resume lessons knowing someone was in charge (Head of School 1, Personal Communication, 14 March 2025).

Additionally, WEO 5 remarked that;

Heads of schools must be the first responders in any crisis. Whether it's safety or infrastructure breakdown, the ability to coordinate quickly determines how the school recovers. Teachers rely on that leadership. Schools with strong heads rarely let emergencies spiral out of control *(WEO 5, Personal Communication, 16th March 2025)*

The views from both Head of School 1 and WEO 5 indicate the importance of leadership presence and problem-solving acumen during emergencies. Their testimonies support the premise that when school heads respond swiftly and strategically to urgent issues, they reinforce teachers' confidence, enhance preparedness, and minimize stress. This contributes to improved job performance and organizational resilience. The findings align with Transformational Leadership Theory, especially the dimension of individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation, where leaders not only address the unique needs of their team members but also model critical thinking in challenging scenarios. By leading effectively during emergencies, transformational heads of schools promote a culture of responsiveness, trust, and calm decision-making, which helps sustain school performance during periods of uncertainty. Moreover, these findings are supported by Bush and Azlan et al., (2024), who noted that school leaders who exhibit problem-solving competencies in crisis management are more likely to cultivate teacher confidence, reduce stress levels, and maintain operational continuity during disruptions. This reinforces the view that school leadership during emergencies is not only about logistical coordination but also about building psychological safety among teachers and students.

Data in Table 1 indicate that a very high majority (73.3%) of teachers rated, to a high extent, that heads of schools that use a logical and structural approach to problem-solving enhance teachers' confidence in the school environment. An extremely small minority (8.1%) of teachers rated it at a moderate extent, while an minority (18.6%) of teachers rated it at low extent. The mean score of 3.84 also falls within the high extent category on this item. The results imply that most teachers recognize that when school heads

adopt a systematic and well-reasoned approach in addressing challenges, it instills a sense of stability, fairness, and predictability in the school setting. Teachers tend to feel more confident and motivated when problems are tackled transparently and decisions are made through clearly defined procedures rather than impulsive or biased actions. This structured leadership approach fosters trust, reduces conflicts, and contributes to a professional working environment.

During a face-to-face interview, Head of School 4 emphasized that; *"Teachers observe how you handle issues. If your decisions appear random or unfair, it lowers morale. I always explain the process and involve others where possible, so even when the outcome isn't perfect, they understand the rationale behind it"* (Head of School 4, Personal Communication, 14 March 2025)

In a supporting remark, the same Head of School added that; *"when there's a disciplinary issue, I don't act alone. I involve the discipline committee, get reports, and communicate outcomes. That way, no one feels victimized, and staff respects the decisions more."* (Head of School 4, Personal Communication, 14 March 2025)

In addition, WEO 2 remarked that; *"Heads of schools who solve issues using structured approaches like forming committees, following procedures, or consulting stakeholders face fewer complaints. Teachers work better when they know the system is not about favoritism but logic and process"* (WEO 2, Personal Communication, 16 March 2025)

WEO 2 further elaborated that; *"One of the best-performing schools in my ward uses weekly management briefings. That structure means issues are flagged early and resolved collectively. It's a model we encourage others to emulate."* (WEO2, Personal Communication, 16 March 2025)

The reflections from Head of School 4 and WEO 2 underscore the value of structured leadership in problem-solving. Their insights show that logical reasoning and procedural fairness contribute to teachers' trust in school management, thus enhancing motivation, job satisfaction, and collective accountability. The results are closely linked to Transformational Leadership Theory, especially the element of intellectual stimulation, where leaders encourage rational analysis and evidence-based decision-making. A logical and structured approach not only reduces emotional tension but also inspires professional behavior and innovation among staff. Such leaders act as role models for problem-solving, promoting fairness and building institutional integrity. This resonates with the findings by Alzoraiki et al. (2023), who emphasized that effective school leader who model rational and transparent leadership foster teacher confidence, organizational commitment, and improved school outcomes. The consistent application of logical approaches in decision-making strengthens the overall school culture and minimizes resistance to change.

Data in Table 1 indicate that a very high majority (76.7%) of teachers rated, to a high extent that heads of schools that support teachers in overcoming work-related difficulties improve overall teacher job satisfaction. An extremely small minority (9.3%) of teachers rated it at a moderate extent, while an extremely small minority 14.0% rated it at low or very low extent. The mean score of 3.99 falls within the high extent category. The results suggest that most teachers highly value school heads that actively support them in navigating challenges such as heavy workloads, lack of teaching resources, or classroom management issues. When leaders show concern and offer practical assistance, it increases teachers' morale, reduces stress, and promotes a sense of belonging and professional fulfillment. This kind of leadership builds trust and emotional resilience, which are key ingredients for long-term job satisfaction and teacher retention.

During a face-to-face interview, Head of School 1 stated that;

> I make it a point to sit down with teachers when they're struggling whether it's about performance, discipline, or personal challenges. Sometimes just listening helps, but where I can act like adjusting duties or providing materials I do it immediately. Teachers need to feel seen and supported (Head of School 1, Personal Communication, 14 March 2025)

Head of School 3 also echoed similar sentiments, stating that; *"Being available and responsive to teachers' daily struggles creates a culture of care. When they know you'll stand by them in difficult times, they feel empowered to give their best in class."* (Head of School 3, Personal Communication, 14th March 2025)

Additionally, WEO 5 remarked that;

> In schools where heads are supportive, you hardly hear teachers complain. They perform well, come to work early, and even go the extra mile. It's about creating an environment where teachers feel appreciated and not left to suffer in silence *(WEO 5, Personal Communication, 16th March 2025)*

Moreover, WEO 4 added that; *"Supportive school leadership builds loyalty. Teachers stay longer and are more dedicated when they know their challenges are not ignored. Even in tough environments, good leadership makes a difference."* (WEO4, Personal Communication, 16th March 2025)

The insights from Head of School 1 and WEO 5 highlight how emotional support and practical assistance from school heads enhance job satisfaction. Their responses reflect that a caring leadership approach helps foster a positive school climate and promotes teamwork and professional loyalty. The results aligns with the Transformational Leadership Theory, particularly the element of individualized consideration, which emphasizes that effective leaders respond to the unique needs of each staff member. Leaders who demonstrate empathy and provide targeted support are more likely to cultivate motivation, reduce burnout, and inspire long-term professional engagement. Moreover, this finding resonates with Tarigan and Nurmiati (2024), who reported that supportive school leadership significantly improves teacher satisfaction, performance, and retention. Their study found that when teachers feel emotionally and professionally supported by their school leaders, they are more likely to invest effort in their teaching and remain committed to the school's vision.

Data in Table 1 indicate that a very high majority (84.9%) of teachers rated, to a high extent, that solving conflicts constructively fosters harmony and improves job performance. An extremely small minority (4.7%) rated it at a moderate extent, while an extremely small minority (10.5%) of teachers rated it at a low extent. The mean score of 4.14 clearly places this item in the high extent category suggesting that teachers strongly believe in the importance of constructive conflict resolution as a core aspect of effective school leadership. When heads of schools address conflicts promptly and fairly whether between teachers, students, or within departments it reduces tension, builds a collaborative spirit, and promotes a focused and productive working atmosphere. Teachers are more likely to feel respected, heard, and motivated in such environments, which ultimately enhances their job performance.

During a face-to-face interview, Head of School 4 commented that; *"Conflicts are unavoidable, but what matters is how we resolve them. I encourage open dialogue and fairness. I've found that when teachers trust the process, they remain cooperative even after disagreements"* (Head of School 4, Personal Communication, 14 March 2025)

Additionally, WEO 2 shared that;

Some heads delay addressing conflicts, and that worsens the situation. But those who step in early and listen to all sides calmly usually manage to maintain a stable school environment. That kind of leadership is appreciated by both teachers and parents (WEO 2, Personal Communication, 16th March 2025)

In addition, WEO 2 shared that;

Some heads delay addressing conflicts, and that worsens the situation. But those who step in early and listen to all sides calmly usually manage to maintain a stable school environment. That kind of leadership is appreciated by both teachers and parents (WEO 2, Personal Communication, 16 March 2025)

The insights from both Head of School 4 and WEO 2 affirm that school leaders' ability to manage interpersonal or professional disputes directly impacts harmony and teacher productivity. Effective conflict resolution strategies build a school culture grounded in fairness, open communication, and mutual respect. This finding aligns with the Transformational Leadership Theory, specifically the aspect of idealized influence, where leaders model ethical and constructive behavior. Leaders who handle conflicts with integrity set the tone for staff behavior, trust-building, and shared problem-solving. Furthermore, the finding resonates with Ingersoll & Li et al., (2022), who found that unresolved workplace conflicts are among the leading causes of teacher dissatisfaction and attrition. Constructive conflict resolution reduces staff turnover, strengthens team cohesion, and improves overall school effectiveness.

Data in Table 1 indicate that a very high majority (82.5%) of teachers were of the view that, to a high extent, the head of school encourages teachers to participate in decision-making when solving school-related issues. In contrast, an extremely small minority (10.4%) rated this at a low or very low extent, while only extremely small minority 7.0% rated it at a moderate extent. The mean score of 4.16 falls within the high extent category, suggesting that most teachers acknowledge and value inclusive leadership practices exercised by school heads. This implies that in many public secondary schools in Siha District, heads of schools foster a participatory decision-making culture that empowers teachers to contribute meaningfully to institutional problem-solving. Such engagement enhances collective responsibility, boosts morale, and

promotes a sense of ownership among staff, thereby strengthening school governance and instructional quality.

During a face-to-face interview, Head of School 1 had the following to say;

> I believe that involving teachers in decisions builds trust. I always invite them to planning meetings or when challenges arise. When teachers contribute their views, the solutions we develop tend to work better because they feel part of the process (Head of School 1, Personal Communication, 15th March 2025)

Additionally, Ward Executive Officer 4 (WEO 4) shared that; *"Schools with inclusive leadership experience fewer disputes and smoother operations. Heads of schools who involve staff in resolving issues gain more cooperation and shared commitment. Participation leads to better follow-through and teacher satisfaction"* (WEO 4, Personal Communication, 18 March 2025)

The perspectives shared by both Head of School 1 and WEO 4 affirm that inclusive decision-making builds a cooperative school climate where teachers are more engaged and effective. Teachers' involvement in decisions enhances their sense of value and aligns individual efforts with broader institutional goals. The findings align with Transformational Leadership Theory, particularly the components of intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, which emphasize the importance of engaging staff in critical thinking, collaborative problem-solving, and recognizing each member's potential contribution. By encouraging participatory leadership, heads of schools foster a culture of shared governance that enhances teacher performance and professional fulfillment. This outcome resonates with the study by Rozalinda and Zebua (2024), which found that school leaders who involve teachers in decision-making processes enhance institutional commitment and drive better educational outcomes. This reinforces the notion that empowering teachers through shared leadership directly contributes to improved school performance and teacher motivation.

Data in Table 1 indicate that a very high majority (83.7%) of teachers were of the view that, to a high extent, the head of school's effective decision-making in handling complaints motivates teachers to perform better in their roles. In contrast, an extremely small minority (10.5%) rated this at a low or very low extent, while extremely small minority (5.8%) rated it at a moderate extent. The mean score of 4.17 also falls within the high extent category, indicating that most teachers recognize complaint resolution as a significant leadership trait that influences teacher morale and job commitment. This suggests that when school heads handle complaints efficiently and fairly whether related to teaching conditions, interpersonal conflicts, or administrative concerns they promote a sense of justice, transparency, and professional dignity. Teachers' strong agreement with this item reflects the view that responsive and accountable leadership cultivates trust and improves teachers' work performance.

During a face-to-face interview, Head of School 5 stated that;

> When a teacher comes to me with a complaint, I don't ignore it. I take time to listen and act quickly. If leaders dismiss or delay, staff feels unvalued. But when we resolve issues fairly, teachers become more engaged in their work (Head of School 5, Personal Communication, 16 March 2025)

Further emphasizing this, Ward Education Officer 2 (WEO 2) noted that; *"One of the key traits of successful school heads is their ability to handle grievances effectively. Teachers respect leaders who act with fairness. It reduces tension and improves staff performance across the board."* (WEO 2, Personal Communication, 18th March 2025)

In support of this, Ward Executive Officer 2 (WEO 2) added that; *"One of the key traits of successful school heads is their ability to handle grievances effectively. Teachers respect leaders who act with fairness. It reduces tension and improves staff performance across the board* (WEO 2, Personal Communication, 18 March 2025)

The input from both Head of School 5 and WEO 2 confirms the importance of decision-making and grievance redress in promoting teacher motivation and school harmony. When heads of schools act promptly and equitably in resolving complaints, they signal respect for teacher concerns and strengthen organizational cohesion. The findings are consistent with Transformational Leadership Theory, particularly the components of individualized consideration and idealized influence, where leaders are attentive to the needs and concerns of staff and serve as ethical role models. Effective complaint resolution demonstrates empathy, fairness, and accountability qualities that inspire teachers to remain committed and perform at higher levels. Moreover, the results resonate with the findings of Kipng'etich and Ahmed (2021), who emphasized that complaint-handling mechanisms in Kenyan secondary schools significantly influenced teachers' job

satisfaction and retention. The study highlighted that when school leaders are responsive to teacher grievances, they reduce workplace stress and increase productivity an observation echoed by teachers in Siha District.

Generally, the study found that heads of schools' problem-solving leadership skills contribute to enhancing teachers' job performance to a high extent in public secondary schools within Siha District, Tanzania. This was evidenced by teachers' high extent ratings on specific leadership actions such as promptly identifying and addressing school challenges, resolving complaints fairly and transparently, involving teachers in decision-making processes, efficiently allocating scarce resources, and providing practical support to overcome work-related difficulties. However, inconsistencies in the application of the problem-solving strategies sometimes limited their overall impact. Delays in decision-making, occasional lack of transparency, and insufficient involvement of all staff members in problem-solving processes were mentioned as barriers that reduced trust and lowered teacher motivation in certain instances. The problem-solving practices were implemented through timely interventions such as adjusting workloads, mediating conflicts, and coordinating resource distribution, which helped maintain a balanced and supportive working environment. The grand mean score of 4.00 reflects strong teacher agreement that such proactive and structured problem-solving by school heads fosters motivation, collaboration, and professional commitment. Interview data further illuminated these findings, with school leaders describing how they actively listen to teacher concerns, convene relevant stakeholders, and apply fair procedures to resolve issues, thus creating a climate of trust and psychological safety.

10. Conclusion

Based on the finding, the study concluded that heads of schools' problem-solving skills in managing workloads, resolving conflicts, making timely decisions, and encouraging teacher participation have, to a high extent, enhanced teacher performance in public secondary schools in Siha District. However, inconsistent application of the skills and resource limitations still moderately hinder their full impact, although the leadership competencies improve teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment, ultimately leading to better instructional quality and student outcomes.

11. Recommendation

Based on the conclusion the District Secondary Education Officer (DEO), Ward Education Officer (WEO), and Heads of Schools (HoS) should establish a School Leadership Innovation Lab (SLIL). This collaborative platform whether physical or virtual would convene these key actors regularly to identify school challenges, co-create innovative solutions, and pilot new approaches focused on improving teacher motivation, workload management, and overall job performance. The DEO office would coordinate the lab, providing access to resources, expertise, and monitoring the impact of innovations for potential scaling across the district.

Additionally, WEO should establish regular leadership forums for sharing challenges and solutions, coupled with a simple digital platform for real-time issue reporting and peer support. Introducing a peer mentorship program should provide hands-on guidance for less experienced leaders, while on-the-job simulation training can build decision-making confidence. Additionally, implementing structured teacher feedback systems will promote accountability and continuous improvement. Finally, training heads of schools in resource mobilization and equitable distribution will help address workload imbalances and optimize available support, creating a more effective and collaborative leadership environment.

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