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Contribution of Participatory Decision-Making Practice to Student Teachers' Engagement in Sports Activities in Teachers' Colleges Case Study Morogoro Region, Tanzania

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Abstract: **This study investigated the extent to which participatory decision-making contributes to the engagement of student teachers in sports activities in teachers' colleges in Morogoro Region, Tanzania. The study adopted the Transformational Leadership Theory, which focuses on empowerment, collaboration, motivation, individualization and shared responsibility in organizational activities. A mixed method approach guided by pragmatism philosophical perspective and convergent research design was employed. The study involved 195 tutors, 4 sports coordinators, 4 college principals and 915 student teachers as the population with a sample of 92 student teachers, 59 tutors, 4sports coordinators and 4 college principals drawn from selected teachers' colleges in Morogoro Region. Data were collected using questionnaires for student teachers and semi-structured interviews for college principals. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The combined findings indicated that participatory decision-making practices positively contributed to the engagement of student teachers in sports activities through ownership, responsibility, cooperation, teamwork and continuous participation through the involvement in selecting, planning, suggesting and managing sports activities. The study concludes that meaningful and continuous participatory decision-making practices enhance engagement of student teachers in sports activities. It is recommended that college principals should strengthen sports committees, consultations and feedback systems to enable meaningful involvement of student teachers in sports decisions.**

Keywords: **Participatory decision-making, student teachers, sports activities, student engagement.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Participatory decision-making is becoming increasingly popular in the field of educational leadership because it allows students to contribute ideas, express their opinions and participate in decisions concerning their educational processes. Instead of considering students as passive recipients of the decisions made by institutional leaders and teachers, participatory decision-making approaches treat them as active partners whose contributions can enhance educational programs. Geurts et al. (2024) established that students' participation and co-creation in educational decision-making enhance their confidence, skills, sense of ownership and connection to the educational activities. Thus, meaningful participation goes beyond consultation and requires that students' opinions should shape the decisions.

It is relevant to discuss participatory decision-making in relation to sports activities since the organization of sports requires many decisions related to the types of activities, schedules, competitions, facilities, equipment and teams organization. The participation of student teachers in such decisions may increase their sense of ownership and motivation to participate in sports activities. Recent research shows that the use of student-centered approaches in physical education enhances motivation, cooperation, responsibility and active participation of learners (Zhang et al., 2024). Similarly, Froberg et al.

(2024) emphasize that engagement in physical education involves active participation and not just presence. Thus, the involvement of student teachers in sports-related decisions will create a positive atmosphere and stimulate engagement in sports activities.

This issue is very relevant in teachers' colleges since student teachers are future educators expected to promote physical education and sports activities among school learners. Sports activities provide student teachers with valuable opportunities to develop many skills including teamwork, leadership, communication, responsibility and organizational skills. Lucas et al. (2023) have shown that the experiences obtained in physical education are useful for the development of competencies needed by the student teachers in their future teaching and coaching activities. Thus, the promotion of student teachers' participation in sports activities is very important both for their personal and professional development as well as for increasing their ability to promote sports among future learners.

In Tanzania, the sports activities are a part of the educational process of student teachers in teachers' colleges. According to Simwanza and Paul (2024), participation varies across different sports, with football, netball and basketball attracting relatively high participation and gymnastics, swimming and tennis recording low participation. Simwanza and Paul (2024) also report differences in the perception of student teachers' involvement in planning and assessing sports programs, which indicates that the participation in sports-related decisions is a very important issue in teachers' colleges.

However, despite the evidence mentioned above, little attention has been paid to the specific contribution of participatory decision-making practices to the engagement of student teachers in sports activities in Morogoro Region. In particular, existing research focuses on participation patterns rather than the effects of student teachers' involvement in the planning, organization and evaluation of sports activities. This creates a need to conduct additional research in the context of teacher education in Tanzania.

This study investigates the contribution of participatory decision-making practices to the engagement of student teachers in sports activities in teachers' colleges in Morogoro Region, Tanzania. The focus of the study is on the opportunities given to student teachers to express their opinions, participate in the planning and organization of sports activities, contribute to the decisions related to sports and take responsibility for implementing the decisions.

2. RESEARCH QUESTION

How do participatory decision-making practices contribute to the engagement of student teachers in sports activities in teachers' colleges?

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopts Transformational Leadership Theory developed by Burns (1978) and further refined by Bass (1985). The theory suggests that transformational leaders motivate and influence their followers through the transformation of their values, attitudes, motivation and commitment in order to achieve common goals. The theory identifies four major dimensions including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Transformational leaders promote vision, collaboration, innovation, empowerment and participation in organizational activities.

The major strengths of the theory include its emphasis on motivation and inspiration that can help student teachers to develop interest and commitment to sports activities. Second, it stresses collaboration and decision-making which allows student teachers to participate in planning and organization of sports activities. Third, the theory emphasizes empowerment and individual development which allow student teachers to play such roles as team leaders or members of sports committees and develop leadership and teamwork skills.

Thus, Transformational Leadership Theory is relevant to the issue of participatory decision-making in sports programs. However, the theory pays little attention to the constraints created by educational institutions such as the lack of facilities, equipment, financial resources and other academic responsibilities which may affect the participation of student teachers in sports activities. Thus, the involvement of student teachers in the decision-making may help to strengthen their participation in sports programs.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

At the global level, Geurts et al. (2024) in America have reviewed the studies on student co-creation and decision-making in education and found that the involvement of students in planning, implementation and reflection increases their skills, confidence, ownership and connectedness. The review also shows that physical education is among the subjects where the

student decision-making is often applied. This means that the opportunities to influence the decisions related to sports activities may help to increase engagement. In addition, Cardiff et al. (2024) in Ireland have examined the student voice in physical education and found that involving learners in decisions concerning their learning makes physical education more meaningful. This means that participatory decision-making practices can become an important mechanism of engagement in sports activities.

In Africa, recent literature shows increasing attention to the student participation in the decisions about educational processes although the links between it and engagement in sports remain unclear. Berti, Grazia, and Molinari (2023) have reviewed 22 whole-school interventions and found that the level of student participation varied from passive involvement to high participation in decision-making roles. This means that the deep involvement increases the opportunities for influencing the school activities. Thus, African educational institutions can increase the participation of students through the move from consultation to decision-making.

In East Africa, there are few studies on participatory decision-making and engagement in sports activities among student teachers. Recently, the student voice, participation and active citizenship in teacher education have received increasing attention. Massao, Sheshe, and Mkenda (2024) have examined active citizenship and gender in Tanzanian teacher education and found that it is important to prepare student teachers to participate actively in social and institutional life. Thus, the participatory practices in teacher education may help to develop future teachers ready to participate actively in collective activities.

In Tanzania, Simwanza and Paul (2024) have examined the participation in sports programs in four teachers' colleges using the data of 393 participants. They found that football, netball and basketball attract relatively high participation, while gymnastics, swimming and tennis have lower participation. Importantly, the study found differences in the perceptions of student teachers' involvement in planning and assessment of sports programs. The authors suggested that there should be more strategies to improve accessibility and organization of the sports programs. This means that the involvement in planning and organizing sports programs can be an important area for increasing participation.

In Morogoro, Kahekenye and Mwakalinga (2024) have examined the participatory decision-making in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality and found that participatory practices are usually applied through meetings and committees. However, the study has been conducted among secondary schools and not teachers' colleges or sports activities. Thus, the gap exists at the contextual level concerning the contribution of participatory decision-making to the engagement in sports activities in teachers' colleges. The present study helps to fill the gap investigating whether the involvement of student teachers in sports-related planning and decision-making increases engagement.

5. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a mixed method approach based on pragmatism philosophical perspective and uses convergent research design. The study involved 195 tutors, 4 sports coordinators, 4 college principals and 915 student teachers as the population. A sample of 92 student teachers was selected using proportionate stratified random sampling, while 4 college principals were selected using census sampling giving a total sample of 96 participants. Questionnaires containing the five-point Likert scale items were administered to student teachers while semi-structured interviews were conducted with college principals. The instruments were specifically developed for assessing the participatory decision-making and student teachers' engagement in sports activities. Quantitative data were analyzed Cronbach's Alpha using SPSS version 20, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

The validity of the instruments was enhanced through the expert review and pilot study, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha which gave the coefficients of 0.809 which indicated acceptable internal consistency (Creswell, 2023). The researchers paid due attention to ethical considerations during the whole research process. Research permission was obtained from the relevant authorities before conducting the data collection and participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study. Participation was voluntary and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participants were also informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any point without penalties. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured by avoiding the use of participants' names and using codes wherever it was necessary. The collected information was used solely for academic purposes and was stored securely.

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6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study has sought to investigate the contribution of participatory decision-making practices to the engagement of student teachers in sports activities in teachers' colleges. Table 1 presents the data. Table 1.

Shared Decision Making and Student Teachers Engagement in Sports Activities

STATEMENT	PARTICIPANT	RESPONSES										MEAN
		N		R		S		RG		O		
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
College leaders involve tutors when preparing schedules for inter-class or inter-college sports competitions.	TR	0	0	9	15.3	8	13.6	19	32.2	23	39.0	3.95
	SR	1	1.1	6	6.6	15	16.5	41	45.1	28	30.8	3.98
Student teachers are asked to give opinions before specific sports games or events are selected for the semester.	TR	1	1.7	8	13.6	14	23.7	23	39	13	20	3.66
	SR	1	1.1	2	2.2	18	19.8	45	49.5	24	26.4	4.33
Student teachers participate more actively in sports when they are involved in planning sports events and competitions.	TR	0	0	5	8.5	4	6.8	17	28.8	33	55.9	4.32
	SR	2	2.2	6	6.6	17	18.7	34	37.4	32	35.2	3.97
The college administration conducts meetings with tutors and student teachers to discuss challenges facing sports activities.	TR	1	1.7	11	18.6	12	20.3	14	23.7	21	35.6	3.73
	SR	4	4.4	9	9.9	12	13.2	36	39.6	30	33.0	3.87
Tutors' recommendations are included when deciding the dates, rules, or organization of sports activities.	TR	0	0	7	11.9	8	13.6	26	44.1	18	30.5	3.93
	SR	4	4.4	5	5.5	16	17.6	42	46.2	24	26.4	3.85
Student teachers show greater interest in sports activities when their suggestions are accepted and applied by college leaders.	TR	0	0	2	3.4	9	15.3	18	30.5	30	50.8	4.29
	SR	1	1.1	3	3.3	9	9.9	35	38.5	43	47.3	4.27
Participatory leadership encourages student teachers to cooperate during team training and sports competitions.	TR	0	0	4	6.8	7	11.9	22	37.3	26	44.1	4.19
	SR	1	1.1	5	5.5	5	5.5	39	42.9	41	45.1	4.25
Student teachers who serve on sports committees help improve coordination and teamwork during sports events.	TR	0	0	2	3.4	7	11.9	25	42.4	25	42.4	4.24
	SR	1	1.1	4	4.4	6	6.6	34	37.4	46	50.63	4.32
Cooperation among the Principal, Sports Coordinator, tutors, and student teachers improves the organization of sports activities in the college.	TR	0	0	3	5.1	9	15.3	19	32.2	28	47.5	4.22
	SR	3	3.3	3	3.3	7	7.7	36	39.6	42	46.2	4.22
Involving student teachers in decisions related to sports activities encourages them to participate consistently throughout the academic year.	TR	2	3.4	3	5.1	6	10.2	18	30.5	30	50.8	4.20
	SR	1	1.1	3	3.3	8	8.8	46	50.5	33	36.3	4.18

Key. SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Undecided, D=Disagree and SD=Strongly Disagree, **TR** =Tutors, **SR**=Students, **n** = number of respondents: **TR' n** = 59 and **SR'n** = 91

Source: Field Data (2026)

As seen from the data presented in Table 1, 59.0% of tutors agreed that student teachers were allowed to express opinions prior to the selection of specific sports games or events in the semester, while 23.7% were neutral and the mean score was

3.66. On the contrary, 75.9% of student teachers agreed with the same statement, while 19.8% were neutral and the mean score was 4.33. These data prove the discrepancy in perceptions of tutors and student teachers in terms of the extent of student involvement in the selection of sports activities. From the data presented above, it becomes evident that student teachers consider themselves more involved in the decision making concerning the selection of sports activities compared to tutors. Thus, the findings prove that student teachers highly perceive the decision-making as the practice in colleges. The result indicates that the involvement of student teachers in the decisions concerning sports games and events can give them a feeling of involvement in the program. The interviews with one College Principal have provided the following information:

Before we organize the sports program, we normally take into consideration the views and suggestions of student teachers. They can express their ideas in the form of suggestions to their representatives and through discussions with the Sports Coordinator and we can decide which activities would be appropriate (College Principal 1, 2026).

The result demonstrates that the participation in the planning of sports activities can occur in formal and informal ways. The result further indicates that college leadership perceives student teachers as the stakeholders who can provide views that will help in the planning of sports activities. The implication is that if student teachers are given the chance to participate in the planning of sports activities, they will develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for such activities. The finding was further verified by the statement of one Sports Coordinator, who said:

We ask student teachers what kind of sports they are interested in before we prepare the program for the semester. Such suggestions are important because they are the participants of the activity. If the sports suggested by students will be reflected in the sports program, it will be easier for us to mobilize them for training and sports competitions because they will feel that their views have been taken into account (Sports Coordinator 1, 2026)

The result indicates that the participation in planning of activities can increase the relevance and attractiveness of sports programs. It appears that students are more likely to identify with the sports activities if they believe that their preferences have been considered. The implication is that the high level of agreement is justified. The finding further indicates that the process of decision-making is not only an administrative but also the tool for developing a sense of ownership and commitment of students to the activities. The finding is consistent with the ideas stated by Harris (2023) who argues that the participatory and distributed leadership provides the possibility for members of the educational organizations to participate in the decision-making concerning their activities. The implication is that the involvement of student teachers in the planning of sports games and events gives them the opportunity to influence the activities that are directly linked with their involvement. The implication is that the participatory decision-making can develop the sense of ownership and make the sports program more responsive to the preferences of students and thus foster their continued involvement. Therefore, the findings indicate that teachers' colleges should develop mechanisms through which student teachers can regularly participate in planning of the selected sports activities. Data in Table 1 indicate that 84.7% of tutors agree that the student teachers are more actively involved in the sports activities when they are involved in the planning of sports events and competitions, while 6.8% are neutral and 8.5% disagree. The mean score was 4.32. As for student teachers, 72.6% agree with the same statement, while 18.7% are neutral and 8.8% disagree and the mean score was 3.97. Thus, the findings indicate that the majority of both tutors and student teachers perceive the involvement of student teachers in the planning of sports events and competitions as the important determinant of active participation in sports activities. The findings were further supported by the interview with one College Principal who explained that:

We involve student representatives in the planning of sports events because their participation can help us to understand what they expect from such events. Students can provide views concerning the organization, timing and kinds of sports which should be included in the program. When students participate in the planning of events, they become more ready to support the implementation of the program (College Principal 2, 2026).

The findings indicate that the participation of students in the planning process does not only consist of the expression of opinions but also includes the involvement in the decision-making process concerning the organization and implementation of the sports events. The findings further indicate that the participation can develop the sense of responsibility among student teachers because they become contributors to the activities and not the recipients of the decisions of the college management. It follows that the involvement in the planning of the activities can strengthen the sense of ownership and make students ready to support sports programs.

The findings were further supported by the statement of one Sports Coordinator who said: Student teachers who participate in the planning of sports events become more active because they feel responsible for the success of the events. They assist with organizing the teams, communication with other students and preparation for sports competitions (Sports Coordinator 2, 2026).

It follows that the participation in the planning process influences the engagement through the development of the sense of responsibility and understanding. The finding indicates that the students who are involved in the planning process can also assume the practical responsibility during sports events, thus strengthening their engagement through more than just participation as athletes. The implication is that the participatory decision-making not only fosters participation but also can stimulate the development of leadership among student teachers. The finding is supported by Harris (2023), who argues that the participatory and distributed forms of leadership are able to develop the collective responsibility through the creation of the opportunities for the members of the organizations to participate in the decision-making and implementation processes. Participation increases the sense of ownership because individuals become more attached to the decisions that they made. The finding indicates that the involvement of student teachers in the planning of sports events and competitions will develop their commitment to sports activities because they will become the contributors to the activities. It follows that the opportunities for the participation of students in sports planning should be expanded rather than limited to the administrators and sports personnel. It appears that the findings indicate that the involvement of student teachers in the planning of sports events and competitions contributes to their active participation in sports activities. The interviews further revealed that participation promotes responsibility, ownership, coordination and commitment to sports activities. Therefore, the findings indicate that teachers' colleges should improve the process of participatory planning by involving student teachers in the planning of sports calendars, selection and organization of competitions, allocation of responsibilities and evaluation of sports events that have been already conducted.

As seen from the data presented in Table 1, 81.3% of tutors agree that the student teachers show higher interest in sports activities when their suggestions are accepted and applied by college leaders, while 15.3% are neutral and 3.4% disagree and the mean score was 4.29. As for the results of the survey of student teachers, 85.8% agreed with the same statement, while 9.9% were neutral and 4.4% disagreed and the mean score was 4.27. The findings indicate the strong similarity of perceptions among tutors and student teachers because both groups of respondents demonstrated the high level of agreement and even identical mean scores. It means that the participatory leadership becomes more effective when the students can see that their involvement leads to practical changes in the organization of sports activities. The finding was supported by the statement of one College Principal who explained that:

We encourage student teachers to submit their suggestions concerning sports activities. If the suggestion is practical and fits in the program of the college, we will try to apply it. If the students will realize that their suggestions lead to real changes in the program, they will show more interest in supporting the program because they will feel that their voice is heard by the administration (College Principal 3, 2026).

The finding indicates that the acceptance of students' suggestions can establish the link between the student voice and institutional action. The result indicates that it is not necessary to accept all the suggestions but to consider them seriously and inform the students about the decision taken. The implication is that the participation of students in the process of decision-making is more effective when it leads to the visible institutional response. The finding was further corroborated by the statement of one Sports Coordinator who said: Students will be more willing to participate in sports when they understand that their suggestions will be taken seriously.

Sometimes they make suggestions concerning the changes in the kind of sports, training arrangements or scheduling of the competition. If the administration takes these suggestions into account and makes corresponding changes, the students become more cooperative and active because they understand that they are involved in the decision-making process (Sports Coordinator 3, 2026).

The findings indicate that the acceptance and application of suggestions can influence the cooperation and participation of students. It follows that the interest of students in the program can increase when there is the direct link between suggestions and decisions. It means that college leaders should not merely collect the suggestions of students but respond to them by informing students how these suggestions affected the planning and implementation of sports activities. The findings are supported by Harris (2023), who states that participatory forms of leadership contribute to the sense of ownership and collective responsibility of organization members who have meaningful opportunities to influence decision-making. It

means that the college leadership should provide the feedback mechanisms for student teachers to understand how their suggestions contributed to the sports planning and implementation. The results further indicate that this relationship is quite strong for both respondent groups. It enhances the interpretation that the responsiveness of the student teachers to the decisions of the college leadership was not an isolated perception of students but it is also perceived by tutors. Low level of disagreement further supports the finding. It follows that the findings indicate that the acceptance and application of suggestions of student teachers increase their interest and involvement in the sports activities. It is further indicated that there is high agreement between tutors and student teachers in this matter. The interviews further reveal that responsiveness to students' suggestions increases their cooperation, sense of ownership, and commitment. Therefore, the findings indicate that teachers' college leaders should develop mechanisms for receiving, evaluating and responding to the suggestions of student teachers concerning sports activities.

As seen from the data presented in Table 1, 84.8% of tutors agree that the student teachers who are members of sports committees help in the improvement of coordination and teamwork during sports events, while 11.9% are neutral and 3.4% disagree, and the mean score was 4.24. As for the survey of student teachers, 87.4% agreed with the same statement, while 6.6% were neutral and 5.5% disagreed and the mean score was 4.32. The findings indicate that there is a high level of agreement between tutors and student teachers concerning the role of the participation of student teachers in sports committees in improving coordination and teamwork. It means that the involvement of student teachers in sports committees can transform them from passive participants in the process of decision-making into active partners in the management and implementation of sports programs. The low levels of disagreement between tutors and student teachers This finding indicates that the vast majority of respondents clearly perceived the role of student teachers who served on the sports committees. It follows that sports committees were used as the practical mechanism for increasing the participation of student teachers in the process of decision-making and improvement of organization of sports activities. The finding was supported by the statement of one College Principal who said:

Student teachers who are members of the sports committees help the college in the organization of the sports activities. They provide information to other students, help to coordinate teams and inform about challenges in sports activities. Such participation makes it easier for the administration and Sports Coordinator to understand what is going on among the students (College Principal 2, 2026).

It follows that sports committees provide an important channel of communication and coordination between college leadership and student teachers. The findings indicate that student members of the committee can become the medium for information exchange between administration and students and provide information about the challenges in sports activities. The finding corroborates high level of agreement and means that the involvement of students in the committees can improve communication and coordination and increase students' participation in the decision-making process. The finding was further supported by the statement of one Sports Coordinator who said:

Members of the student sports committee are very useful during sports events. They assist in the organization of the teams, communication of the schedules, mobilization of students and ensure that participants understand what is expected of them. Since they work with other students, they can easily coordinate them and promote teamwork during training and competitions (Sports Coordinator 4, 2026).

The findings indicate that their participation can help in the communication, mobilization and coordination of student teachers. The result further indicates that the participation of students in the process of leadership can promote teamwork because committee members work with their peers and promote cooperation among them. It follows that sports committees provide the opportunity for student teachers to develop leadership and teamwork skills and at the same time contribute to the effective organization of sports activities. The finding is supported by Harris (2023), who argues that distributed and participatory leadership provide the opportunity for different members of the organization to share responsibilities for leadership and contribution to the collective outcomes. It means that the sports committees allow to involve students in the sharing of responsibility for the organization and coordination of sports activities. The implication is that the involvement of students in sports committees can enhance teamwork, communication and sense of ownership of sports programs. Therefore, the findings indicate that teachers' colleges should formalize student sports committees and provide them with defined responsibilities

Data in Table 1 indicate that 81.4% of tutors agree that participatory leadership promotes the cooperation of student teachers during team training and sports competitions, while 11.9% are neutral and 6.8% disagree and the mean score was 4.19.

Similarly, 88.0% of student teachers agreed with the same statement, while 5.5% were neutral and 6.6% disagreed and the mean score was 4.25. The findings indicate that the majority of tutors and student teachers perceive participatory leadership as the important factor in the promotion of cooperation during training and sports competitions. The findings suggest that if college leaders allow students to participate in planning and decision-making, students develop the strong sense of responsibility for success of team activities. It follows that participation in the process of decision-making can go beyond administration and influence the behavior of students during sports activities. This result was backed up by an interview with one of the College Principals who stated:

We encourage students to participate in planning and discussion of sport activities since the cooperation will become easier when the students are aware of their role in the whole process. As they participate in decision-making processes, it becomes easier for them to cooperate, support the team and to comply with the decisions made during planning (College Principal 4, 2026). They understand their roles and are able to cooperate. Student leaders can help their fellow students in understanding the schedule and can help them cooperate in teams (Sports Coordinator 3, 2026).

Thus, the result shows that participation in organizational decision-making process can influence practical cooperation at sport activities. In addition, the result illustrates that participation of students helps to understand their roles and encourages them to support each other. It means that participative leadership can create such conditions when the student teachers are willing to cooperate since they understand the purpose of sport activities and their organization.

This result agrees with the findings of Harris (2023) who found out that distributed leadership creates opportunities for participation of the members of educational institutions into the leadership processes and the sharing of the responsibility for the results of their collective actions. It means that participative leadership creates opportunities for the student teachers to participate in the planning and organization of sport activities and hence helps to cooperate during training and competitions. Hence, it can be concluded that participative leadership processes can help to create a cooperative environment in the field of sports activities. Therefore, the result proves that participative leadership influences the cooperation of student-teachers in sports activities. The results have shown that participation in planning and decision-making processes increases the understanding of roles and commitment to team actions. Therefore, the findings imply that teacher colleges should apply participative leadership in planning, organizing and evaluation of sports activities.

The information provided in Table 1 reveals that 79.7% of tutors agree that cooperation between the Principal, Sports Coordinator, tutors and student teachers is beneficial for organizing sports activities in the college, 15.3% of tutors are neutral and 5.1% of tutors disagree with the above-mentioned point, with the average score of 4.22. In the same way, 85.8% of student teachers agreed with the statement, 7.7% of them were neutral and 6.6% of students disagreed with the above-mentioned point, with the average score of 4.22. The findings revealed the high level of agreement between both tutors and student teachers regarding the idea that cooperation among the college stakeholders makes organizing of sports activities easier. The difference might be caused by the direct experience of student teachers in sport activities when the cooperation between the principal, Sports Coordinators and tutors can directly affect communication, scheduling, training and competitions. It means that the leadership of the college should give more opportunities for tutors to participate in the organization of sports activities. The finding is supported by an interview with College Principal who said:

The sports activities cannot be organized effectively by one person or one department. The principal is responsible for providing the overall leadership, the Sports Coordinator organizes the technical side of things, the tutors help student teachers and the students participate in the process of implementation. When all these parties cooperate and work together, it becomes easier to prepare the schedule, organize teams and solve the challenges that occur during the sport activities (College Principal 1, 2026).

The answer proved that the collective responsibility, which requires the participation of different stakeholders. The answer revealed that each stakeholder performs particular, but complimentary role in order to guarantee proper organization of sport activities. The finding supported the high level of agreement between both tutors and student teachers. It implies that the leadership of the college should create the system of cooperation and communication between the Principal, the Sports Coordinator, tutors and student teachers. The finding is further supported by the answer of the Sports Coordinator who said:

Good cooperation between the administration, tutors and students can make the sports activities easier to coordinate. For instance, the administration can give guidance and support, tutors can help mobilize students, while students can help to organize teams and communicate with each other. With the help of such cooperation, such problems as delay, bad communication and lack of understanding of responsibilities can be avoided. (Sports Coordinator 2, 2026).

The finding proved that the cooperation is important in terms of practical efficiency of sports organization. The finding proved that the cooperation improves the communication and clarifies the responsibilities of participants. The answer revealed that the student teachers are not only beneficiaries of sports programs but they can also contribute to their implementation. It means that the joint responsibility can improve both the organization of sports activities and students' commitment to these activities.

The finding agrees with the Transformational Leadership Theory, especially such concepts as idealized influence, inspirational motivation and individualized consideration. According to Transformational Leadership Theory, the goal of the leaders is to build collective commitment to the achievement of common organizational goals. It means that the cooperation among college stakeholders reflects the collective commitment to the development and implementation of sports activities. Using idealized influence, the leaders of the college can demonstrate the importance of cooperation by actively cooperating with Sports Coordinators, tutors and student representatives rather than managing sports activities independently. Thus, the leaders set the example of cooperative behavior, which can be followed by other members of college. The findings proved that the collaboration promotes better communication, clarifies responsibilities, improves coordination and helps in solving challenges. Thus, the findings implied that teachers' colleges should develop the structure of collaboration among the Principal, Sports Coordinator, tutors and student teachers in planning, implementation and evaluation of sports activities.

7. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Overall, the findings revealed that participatory decision-making practices make an important contribution to student teachers' engagement in sports activities. Student teachers demonstrated greater engagement when they were involved in sports committees, encouraged to cooperate during sports activities, given the opportunity to express their suggestions and supported to participate consistently. Evidence from college principals further confirmed that student teachers are engaged in sports activities through consultation, representation, planning, and participation in sports committees. These findings suggest that participatory decision-making fosters ownership, responsibility, cooperation, and commitment among student teachers, thereby increasing their engagement in sports activities.

The findings are consistent with recent international evidence showing that student voice, choice, agency and participation in decision-making can strengthen engagement in physical activity and educational activities. In relation to Transformational Leadership Theory, the findings demonstrate the importance of empowerment, collaboration and shared responsibility. College principals who create opportunities for student teachers to influence sports-related decisions can foster ownership, responsibility, cooperation and sustained engagement.

8. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that participatory decision-making practices positively contribute to student teachers' engagement in sports activities in teachers' colleges in Morogoro Region. Meaningful participation in decisions concerning sports programs strengthens student teachers' sense of ownership, responsibility, and commitment to sports activities.

The study further concluded that participatory decision-making practices should be institutionalized as an integral part of sports program management in teachers' colleges. Providing student teachers with meaningful opportunities to influence decisions can enhance engagement and support the development of effective and sustainable sports programs, consistent with the principles of empowerment, collaboration, and shared responsibility emphasized by Transformational Leadership Theory.

9. RECOMMENDATION

Participatory decision-making increases student teachers' engagement in sports activities, college principals should institutionalize participatory decision-making in sports program management by providing student teachers with meaningful opportunities to participate in the planning, organization, implementation, and evaluation of sports activities. This will strengthen their sense of ownership, responsibility, and commitment to sports programs.

Teachers' colleges should also strengthen structures that facilitate student participation in sports decision-making, particularly student sports committees and regular consultation between college management and student teachers. These structures should ensure that students' views are considered in sports-related decisions and promote collaborative and sustainable management of sports programs.

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