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TO ASSESS THE LEVEL OF TEACHERS' AUTONOMY IN PERFORMING DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITIES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract: **This study assessed teachers' autonomy in carrying out delegated responsibilities in public secondary schools in Mlimba District Council, Tanzania. The study used mixed method and descriptive research design. The sample for the study was made up of 62 respondents made up of 49 teachers, 8 Heads of Schools and 5 Ward Education Officers. The teachers were selected by simple random sampling and the Heads of Schools and the Ward Education Officers were selected by purposive sampling. The questionnaires and interview guides were used for data collection and frequencies and percentages for quantitative analysis and thematic analysis for qualitative data. The results showed that teachers in general enjoyed a good level of autonomy when working with delegated tasks, especially in making decisions, implementing delegated tasks more or less independently, and exercising professional autonomy. Some teachers, however, reported limited authority and administrative interference, and there was a strong emphasis placed on accountability for delegated authority. The study found that the level of autonomy of teachers was generally moderate to high, but there was still a lack of autonomy in terms of authority and decision-making. Generally, the study suggests that Heads of Schools needs to enhance the autonomy of their teachers by giving them sufficient autonomy, clear responsibility, appropriate resources, guidance, supervision and feedback.**

Keywords: **Teacher autonomy, delegation, decision-making, leadership, secondary schools.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher autonomy in carrying out delegated responsibilities has become an important aspect of contemporary school leadership because teachers are increasingly expected to participate not only in classroom teaching but also in academic, administrative, disciplinary, co-curricular, and other school management activities. Delegation allows a school leader to share responsibilities and authority with teachers, and autonomy allows teachers to use their professional judgment when carrying out responsibilities delegated to them. Decentralization, distributed leadership and teacher involvement in school management increasingly garner attention in the field of education at the global level. According to OECD (2023), an important role of the school is to be a learning organisation in which teachers are involved in leadership and decision-making, and UNESCO (2024) mentioned that effective educational leadership and teacher participation are some of the characteristics that will boost the quality and effectiveness of education. In a similar manner, studies in China and Saudi Arabia showed that with decentralization, teacher leadership and delegated responsibilities can give teachers more chances to involve in the school management and contribute to the improvement of the school (Alaklabi, 2024; Chen and Zhang, 2024).

Delegation of responsibilities has been seen as a key strategy for enhancing teacher participation and school management in Africa. Koufie-Monney and Leshchii (2023) investigated delegation in secondary schools in Ghana and pointed out its significance in the management of secondary schools. Ndirangu and Mungai (2024) identified that delegation of principals' duties and provision of feedback have an impact on teachers' output in public secondary schools in Kenya. Likewise, Olaifa et al. (2024) determined that delegation fosters greater involvement of teachers in school administration in Nigeria, while Seth and Ntirandekura (2023) noted the role of participatory leadership in school administration in Ugandan secondary school. The results of these studies show that delegation can empower teachers and give them opportunities to take responsibility and to be involved in the development of the school. The level of freedom and authority teachers actually have in delegated tasks, however, is still a significant area of concern that needs to be explored in various contexts of education.

In Tanzania, teacher participation and effective school management are encouraged because of national policies that focus on enhancing school management, school quality and school effectiveness. The Education and Training Policy (2014, revised 2023) aims to support the enhancement of Education Management and Quality of Education in Tanzania (United Republic of Tanzania, 2023). From empirical findings, Amos et al. (2022) concluded that the responsibility delegation in participative leadership positively influence the quality of education in public secondary school in Arusha Region. Furthermore, Mtweve (2025) also studied the role of Ward Education Officers in the management of public secondary schools in the Chamwino District. Furthermore, studies by Mtunge and Jehoash (2025) have investigated leadership strategies and teachers' commitment and job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Tanzania. The studies have offered valuable insights into leadership, delegation and school management, but little research has focused specifically on teachers' autonomy once their responsibilities have been delegated to them, in terms of their decision-making authority, professional judgement, trust and confidence.

The study thus fills the gap in the empirical and contextual direction because of the desire to examine the level of autonomy that is given to the teachers in the implementation of delegated duties in public secondary schools of Mlimba District Council. Issuing responsibilities without the proper authority and freedom of action can hinder teachers from doing their job well and can lead to continued reliance on Heads of Schools for basic decision making. On the other hand, appropriate autonomy can help teachers to make professional decisions, build confidence, show creativity, solve problems and enhance leadership. The study is thus justifiable because it will generate context-specific evidence of whether teachers after delegating their responsibilities to them are given enough autonomy in the public secondary schools of Mlimba District Council or not. The findings could help support school administrative performance, through improving delegations, teacher empowerment and participatory leadership, by supporting the work of Heads of Schools, Ward Education Officers, District Education Authorities and other education stakeholders.

STUDY OBJECTIVE

The study aimed to assess the extent of teachers' autonomy in carrying out delegated responsibilities in public secondary schools. In particular, the study focused on teachers' decision making freedom, the authority given in relation to delegated responsibilities, opportunities for teachers to share their ideas and suggest changes to the administration, trust from the school leadership, confidence in decision making, and how delegated responsibilities help teachers develop their leadership skills.

THEORETICAL REVIEW: TRANSFORMATION LEADERSHIP THEORY

This study is based on the Transformational Leadership Theory that describes how leaders can affect their followers by encouraging followers to participate, develop followers skills and abilities, take responsibility and contribute to the organization's objectives. The theory applies to the role of the teacher with respect to autonomy since transformational leaders do not only give instructions to followers; they stimulate their followers to show initiative, contribute their ideas, build their professional capacity, and assume responsibility for institution's goals. In a school context, delegation can thus be seen as a leadership process where heads of school assign tasks to their teachers and also give them opportunities to participate, make judgements and decisions. The theory is of particular importance to this study because it offers a structure to analyze if delegated duties are supported by trust, authority, encouragement and job autonomy, which are important factors for teachers to be effective. This theory in turn facilitates an understanding of the relationship between delegation of responsibility and teacher autonomy, particularly in terms of freedom in decision making, participation, confidence, trust and development of leadership.

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2. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher autonomy is a significant part of the effective leadership of schools as it gives teachers opportunities to make decisions, to exercise professional judgment and to take responsibility for activities set before them. Delegation allows school leaders to share responsibility with teachers, and teacher autonomy will dictate teachers' ability to exercise professional judgement and to carry out delegated responsibilities with minimal reliance on school leaders. In recent studies, the relationship between distributed leadership, delegation and teacher autonomy has been proven. Ali et al. (2025) discovered that distributed leadership can contribute to teachers' autonomy by providing opportunities for teachers to take part in leadership and decision-making. Likewise, Özdemir et al. (2024) found that teacher autonomy and empowering leadership are correlated with teachers' affective commitment, and that teacher self-efficacy is an important mediator. Gong (2025) also found that distributed leadership is linked to the teaching innovation in terms of teacher autonomy, teacher collaboration, and teacher self-efficacy. Additionally, Hsieh et al., (2025) have concluded that teacher autonomy also exists as a significant mediational role between distributed leadership and instruction quality. The studies suggest that the delegation of responsibility and distributed leadership goes beyond delegation of responsibility tasks and involves providing a degree of professional opportunity, authority and freedom for teachers to make decisions about their work.

Empowerment, school effectiveness and teacher participation in the school are also associated with teacher autonomy in developing country context. As Alam et al. (2025) reported, distributive leadership and teacher autonomy were factors that led to the effective schools in developing context, which highlighted the importance of designing leadership structures that enable teachers to play a role in school processes. In a similar way, Mangole and Blose (2022) noted distributed leadership as a strategy to enhancing teacher empowerment in secondary schools. Al-Mir et al. (2024) noted that teacher autonomy, agency and empowerment rely on school contexts that provide teachers with the agency and opportunity to make professional judgements and engage meaningfully in learning within school. Furthermore, Ndirangu and Mungai (2024) identified that delegation of responsibilities and feedback from principals affects teachers' work performance in public secondary schools in Kenya. Esia-Donkoh (2022) also looked at the administration of headteachers with respect to the effective performance of teachers in Ghana, and the importance of school leadership practices to support teachers' effective performance. The studies are evidence of the importance of leadership, delegation, feedback and empowerment for the effective performance of the teacher's role. Yet, they offer relatively few clues about the extent of teacher autonomy once responsibilities are delegated to teachers.

Delegation and decentralization in secondary schools, and teacher participation and leadership practices in these schools has been the subject of increasing studies in Tanzania. The study by Amos et al. (2022) has revealed that delegation of responsibilities in participative leadership has positively impacted the quality of education in public secondary schools in Arusha Region. Ndirangu and Mungai (2024) conducted in Kenya, provide relevant comparative evidence that delegation coupled with feedback can have an impact on teachers' work performance. In the secondary school education sector, educational decentralization and teachers involvement in decision making in secondary schools in Ifakara Town Council, Tanzania was studied by Pius (2024) which was found relevant to teacher participation in school management. The implementation of delegated leadership practices in public secondary schools in Kinondoni Municipality was also investigated by Mshana and Mwila (2026) which recently studied delegation in the Tanzanian school context. The studies highlight the need for delegation and decentralization and participatory leadership in enhancing teachers' involvement in school management. There has been, however, a lack of specific focus on how well the teachers are empowered after delegation of responsibilities, specifically on freedom to make decisions, freedom to execute delegated tasks, professional judgment, and freedom from unnecessary administrative interference.

The literature reviewed thus shows that there is an empirical and contextual gap in terms of teachers' autonomy after delegated responsibility. The current literature mainly focuses on distributed leadership, delegation, teacher involvement, teacher performance, commitment, instructional quality and school effectiveness (Amos et al., 2022; Ndirangu & Mungai, 2024; Ali et al., 2025; Gong, 2025; Hsieh et al., 2025). Some other studies have also shown that empowering leadership and teacher autonomy are critical factors in increasing teacher commitment, self-efficacy and school effectiveness (Özdemir et al., 2024; Alam et al., 2025). However, empirical evidence on how far delegated responsibility goes in granting public secondary school teachers autonomy in Tanzania is limited. The present study therefore seeks to fill this gap by looking at teachers' autonomy in the sense of freedom to make decisions, authority based on delegated responsibilities, influence over the manner in which delegated responsibilities are carried out and responsibility for the results of delegated responsibilities in public secondary schools in Mlimba District Council. This offers evidence on the extent and nature of teacher autonomy and empowerment when it comes to delegation, on a case-by-case basis.

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3. METHODOLOGY

The study used mixed methods research design and descriptive research design. The study population consisted of 62 individuals comprising 49 teachers, 8 heads of schools and 5 Ward Education Officers in Mlimba District Council. The teachers were randomly sampled and the head of schools and the Ward Education Officers were purposively sampled as they had an administrative role. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview guides. The teacher questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data, while interviews with heads of schools and Ward Education Officers (WEOs) were used to collect qualitative data on the issues of delegation, decision making, teacher autonomy and school administrative performance.

The instruments were carefully developed based on the aim of the study and the research questions, and then items in the instruments were reviewed and improved in order to achieve the validity. A pilot study was also carried out prior to the data collection for the main study. The questionnaire was reliability tested to ensure the consistency of the items, and the interview guide was checked for clarity and consistency. The data was quantitative, which was coded and analyzed in SPSS software V. 26 and presented in tables, with a primary use of frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data were analysed thematically by using the ideas and themes that emerged from the participants' responses. The quantitative and qualitative results were then integrated in the interpretation to give a holistic picture of the results.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This objective sought to assess the extent to which teachers had autonomy in carrying out responsibilities delegated to them in public secondary schools in Mlimba District Council. Teacher autonomy was examined in terms of teachers' freedom to make decisions, ability to make independent decisions, freedom to determine how delegated responsibilities were performed, authority to perform assigned responsibilities, and accountability for the outcomes of delegated duties. Teachers were asked to respond to five closed-ended questions, and their responses are presented in Table 1. The quantitative findings were further complemented by interviews with Heads of Schools and Ward Education Officers to obtain deeper explanations of how autonomy was practised in schools.

Table 1: Teachers' Responses on the Extent of Autonomy in Carrying Out Delegated Responsibilities

SN	Statements	Yes F	%	No F	%
1	Do you have the autonomy to make decisions while carrying out delegated responsibilities in your school?	36	76.6	11	23.4
2	Are you allowed to make decisions independently when carrying out delegated responsibilities?	31	66.0	16	34.0
3	Are you free to determine how delegated responsibilities should be carried out without unnecessary interference from the school administration?	25	53.2	22	46.8
4	Are you given sufficient authority to perform the responsibilities delegated to you?	27	57.4	20	42.6
5	Are you accountable for the outcomes of the responsibilities delegated to you?	45	95.7	2	4.3

Source: Field Data (2026)

Teachers Have Autonomy to Make Decisions While Carrying Out Delegated Responsibilities; As shown in Table 1, 36 (76.6%) teachers indicated that they were autonomous to make decisions when carrying out delegated responsibilities while 11 (23.4%) indicated that they were not. The finding shows that a significant majority of teachers were offered opportunities to make judgements in the areas of responsibility given to them. Delegation in many of the public secondary schools in the Mlimba District Council was more than just the passing of duties; it gave the teachers an opportunity to decide on the correct steps to take in their respective domains. But the 23.4% who said they had no such autonomy suggest that delegation was not consistently adopted in the teaching staff and schools.

The findings suggest that teachers with autonomy in decision making could communicate needed solutions to problems arising in their areas of supervision without being overly dependent on the Head of School and other management staff. Such autonomy will ensure timely intervention by the teacher in the matter, especially if the teacher performs duties such as supervising the education process, discipline management, supervising departmental activities, issuing exam schedules, caring for students and carrying out other school duties. It can also push the teacher to use his/her experience and knowledge

while tackling the problem. In this case, delegation is a useful method applied in management, given that the teachers are not only carrying out orders but also making an effort to find the right methods of performing their duties.

The findings of the interviews with the Heads of Schools corroborated the quantitative results. *"Also, evaluation and monitoring is carried out, always teachers are given enough autonomy to perform their responsibilities using creativity and professionalism, while adhering to school rules, guidelines and policies"* (Head of School Interview, 2026).

This response suggests that teacher autonomy was seen as being on the margins of institutions rather than outside of them. The teacher would be delegated to perform the duties as per his/her professional knowledge and creativity, and the school leaders would be responsible for monitoring whether the activities would be carried out as per school policies. From the perspective of a Ward Education Officer, emphasis was placed on teachers being provided with a reasonable degree of autonomy to carry out their responsibilities but following school policies and guidelines.

The result also concurred with Joo (2020) who reported that distributed leadership provides opportunities for teachers to be involved in school leadership and enhances their professional role. Likewise, when leadership is shared, as in Chen and Zhang (2024), teacher participation in professional activities in the school must be increased if teachers are to make more significant contributions. Amos et al. (2022) reported in the Tanzanian context that delegation with participative leadership encourages shared responsibility and collaboration between teachers, albeit some delegated teachers were reported to lack adequate decision-making autonomy. The present finding therefore reveals a relatively better position of the teachers in Mlimba District Council in the sense that 76.6% of the teachers indicated that they had decision making power while a relatively small percentage had the same opportunity.

The finding is aligned with the idea of "individually consider and empower" of Transformational Leadership Theory, where leaders assist the followers to assume responsibility and make judgments and develop their capabilities. Leaders who provide teachers with freedom in the decisions they make in their subject areas enable teachers to become more confident and effective leaders. But autonomy needs to be supported with the right monitoring and oversight. Based on this evidence, it can be concluded that the level of decision-making autonomy among teachers in Mlimba District Council on a general basis was relatively high, although not all teachers experienced it.

The finding is consistent with Ali et al. (2025), who found that distributed leadership enhances teacher autonomy by providing opportunities for teachers to participate in leadership and decision-making. Likewise, Özdemir et al. (2024) identified teacher autonomy and professional judgement as the results of empowering leadership, and Gong (2025) found that teacher autonomy, teacher collaboration, and teacher self-efficacy were the factors contributing to teaching innovation in distributed leadership. Hsieh et al. (2025) also found that teacher autonomy is a key factor in the relationship between distributed leadership and instructional quality. The studies corroborate the current finding that delegation is more meaningful if the teacher is provided with opportunities to make decisions and use his or her professional knowledge. Amos et al. (2022) found in Tanzania that delegation under participative leadership contributes to shared responsibility and the participation of teachers, but some teachers were not provided with enough decision-making power. Likewise, Pius (2024) noted that decentralization is one way of promoting teachers' involvement in decision making in secondary schools in Tanzania.

The finding is also supported by Mshana and Mwila (2026), who examined delegated leadership practices in Tanzanian public secondary schools and emphasized the importance of implementing delegation within school leadership. As a group, these studies suggest that the effective delegation of authority should be accompanied by opportunities for teacher participation in decisions about delegated authority. In the context of Transformational Leadership Theory, giving teachers decision-making opportunities means they are empowered, they have the opportunity to exercise professional judgement and they are more accountable and responsible. However, the qualitative results indicated that autonomy needs to be combined with institutional guidelines, monitoring and accountability. Thus, while most of the teachers in Mlimba District Council had some degree of decision-making autonomy, the 23.4% who indicated otherwise suggests a need for more uniformity in providing the same decision-making authority to the teachers given delegated duties.

Teachers Are Allowed to Make Independent Decisions When Performing Delegated Responsibilities; Again, the results in Table 4.8 indicate that 31 (66.0%) teachers said they could make independent decisions when performing delegated responsibilities, whereas 16 (34.0%) teachers said that they could not make independent decisions when performing delegated responsibilities. This finding indicates that about two thirds of the teachers had a certain degree of autonomy in the execution of delegated duties. However, there was a relatively high percentage of teachers who indicated that they were

not allowed to make independent decisions, which indicates that delegation was not always linked to the teacher's authority in some of the schools. Therefore, responsibility was delegated to teachers but not necessarily to the same degree.

The qualitative findings were consistent with this. One Head of School said teachers were given freedom to do what they could in their academic departments and other areas where they performed assigned duties but that this freedom was to be within the scope of the school's goals and rules. The Head, explained that the teacher could plan and make the decision regarding teaching and learning in his/her department without seeking approval for each activity. This meant that school leaders acknowledged the need to empower teachers to apply their professional knowledge while keeping the school headed.

A Ward Education Officer reinforced this position by stating that: *"Teachers are given a reasonable level of autonomy to perform their duties while adhering to school policies and guidelines."*

This qualitative evidence is important because it explains why some teachers could report autonomy while others could still experience limitations. Independence was not viewed as unrestricted freedom; rather, it was exercised within established school rules, guidelines and expectations. Such an approach can help schools balance professional autonomy with accountability.

This qualitative evidence is significant because it is able to provide a rationale for why some teachers might feel autonomous but others might feel constrained. Independence was not seen as free from rules, guidelines and expectations; rather, it was within the rules of the school. This can assist schools to achieve the balance between professional autonomy and accountability.

This is in line with Ali et al., (2025) that found that distributed leadership gives teachers opportunities for leadership and decision-making in improving their autonomy. Similarly, it is also related to Özdemir et al. (2024) who linked empowering leadership with teacher autonomy and professional judgment. Furthermore, Gong (2025) revealed that the distributed leadership was linked to teaching innovation in terms of teacher autonomy, teacher collaboration, and teacher self-efficacy, and Hsieh et al. (2025) demonstrated the importance of teacher autonomy in the relationship between distributed leadership and instructional quality. Amos et al., (2022) in the Tanzanian context found that delegation under participative leadership positively influences teachers' participation and shared responsibility, however, not all delegated teachers were given enough decision-making power. The current finding is also consistent with this: 66.0% of the teachers could make independent decisions, whereas 34.0% could not, which means that the process of transfer of responsibility was not always matched by an equivalent transfer of authority. Independent decision making is related to teacher empowerment, trust and opportunities to exercise professional judgement from the viewpoint of Transformational Leadership Theory. Thus, delegated duties must be matched by suitable decision making and decision making authority and reasonable guidance and institutional standards and accountability for school leaders.

Independent decision-making is related to Transformational Leadership Theory, which involves empowering followers instead of over-controlling them. If teachers are granted permission to make decisions that are appropriate, then they may build their professional confidence, problem-solving, and leadership capacity. Thus, teachers in Mlimba District Council had moderate to relatively high level of autonomous decision-making, with a need for consistency in ensuring that all assigned responsibilities are matched with meaningful decision-making opportunities.

Teachers Are Free to Determine How Delegated Responsibilities Are Carried Out Without Unnecessary Administrative Interference; The results in Table 4.8 show that 25 (53.2%) teachers agree that they are free to determine how delegated responsibilities should be carried out without unnecessary administrative interference, while 22 (46.8%) disagree. This was lower than the other four autonomy indicators, with many teachers having some autonomy over decision making processes, but almost half having their assignments interfered with by their administration in determining how their assigned responsibilities are to be carried out. The finding, therefore, indicates that teacher autonomy was there but it was not fully realized at all schools in Mlimba District Council.

This is explained by the qualitative findings. One Ward Education Officer reported that teachers were provided a "fair amount of autonomy" but to work within school policies and guidelines. This can be interpreted as an attempt to give direction and support in order to be compliant, but not necessarily with the aim of preventing teachers from taking professional decisions. But too much involvement can limit the effectiveness of delegation if teachers have to again ask permission to do things that are routine.

Another Head of School described the teachers having autonomy to plan and implement activities and make decisions within their specific duties, with the school administration carrying out follow-up and monitoring. This means that monitoring was perceived as not being at odds with autonomy. The same interview evidence reveals that teachers were able to plan, schedule and run departmental and class activities with little supervision and that school leaders monitored progress and gave feedback.

This finding aligns with the study findings of Özdemir et al. (2024) who correlated empowering leadership with teacher autonomy and highlighted the need for providing conditions for teachers to make professional judgments. In the same way, Ali et al. (2025) noted that distributed leadership contributes to teacher autonomy through opportunities for leaders to involve teachers in leadership and decision making. Furthermore, Al-Mir et al. (2024) highlighted the need for supportive conditions, which allow teachers to have agency and professional judgement, in order to promote teacher autonomy and empowerment. Within the Tanzanian context, the results indicated that delegation in participative leadership facilitates teacher engagement and co-responsibility, but has some limitations in terms of teachers' decision making authority where teachers' decision making power may be constrained by delegation. Similarly, Mshana and Mwila (2026) offer up-to-date information on delegated leadership in Tanzanian public secondary schools. The result is in line with the Transformational Leadership Theory that places emphasis on the need to strike a balance between teacher empowerment and guidance, monitoring and accountability. Too much administration can demean the whole concept of delegation, but a little can be a very good thing. Thus, 46.8% who cited administrative interference suggests that school leaders must build trust and establish delegated roles with greater trust for teachers to have greater autonomy in deciding on the appropriate way to carry out routine delegated tasks.

The findings also impact the Transformational Leadership Theory. Transformational leadership is when leaders enable followers to contribute to the organization through their knowledge and skills. Delegation can become less developmental and empowering if leaders maintain control over all aspects of the implementation of it. The finding that 46.8% of teachers had experienced administrative interference, therefore, indicates an area which needs improvement. It is important for school leaders to know when to supervise and when to interfere. Effective delegation means that teachers are enabled to make decisions as to how best to undertake the routine delegated tasks, with leaders offering guidance, monitoring and feedback if required.

In general, the results showed that teacher autonomy in carrying out delegated responsibilities was not high. A small majority of teachers felt free to do so in this area, but nearly as many felt that they had administrative interference, suggesting that there is a need for more trust and clarity. This is especially significant when the responsibility is formally delegated if not experienced by the teachers in autonomy.

Teachers Are Given Sufficient Authority to Perform Delegated Responsibilities; In terms of authority to perform delegated responsibilities, 27 (57.4%) teachers indicated that they had adequate authority to perform delegated responsibilities, and 20 (42.6%) indicated they did not. (Table 4.8) While most reported being given enough authority, the difference between the two groups was not much, indicating that sometimes, transfers of responsibility were not matched by transfers of authority. This is significant because effective delegation involves not only delegating tasks, but also delegating teacher autonomy to carry out these tasks.

The evidence from the interviews backs this up. When delegation of responsibilities took place, it was due to the teachers' qualifications, experience, competence, commitment and interests and responsibilities were well explained and regularly monitored by a Ward Education Officer. This view implies that the amount of authority given to teachers was related to their competencies and the type of responsibility.

The finding aligns with the study by Amos et al. (2022) which has shown that delegation in public secondary schools in Tanzania can enhance shared leadership and involvement of teachers, with some cases where responsibility was delegated without accompanying decision-making. This is similar to the current result, with 57.4% of teachers feeling they had sufficient delegated responsibilities, and 42.6% feeling they did not, meaning there is still a need to consider the gap between delegated responsibilities and authority. The result is also similar to Özdemir et al. (2024), who linked empowering leadership to teacher autonomy, and highlighted the need to make space for teacher professional judgement. Likewise, Ali et al. (2025) discover that distributed leadership can boost teacher autonomy by providing chances for teachers to engage with leadership and decision-making. Pius (2024) also emphasizes the need for decentralization to enhance the role of teachers in decision-making in Tanzania. Given the context of Transformational Leadership Theory, this act of giving power

to teachers shows trust and empowerment and gives them the opportunity to showcase their knowledge and skill in taking on delegated tasks. Thus, school leaders need to ensure that authority is proportionate to assignments to ensure that teachers are not unduly relying on school leaders to make routine decisions. Transformational Leadership Theory viewpoints state that giving authority is a way of showing trust in followers, which facilitates them in using their knowledge and skills. Thus, school leaders must ensure that teachers have authority that is reasonably commensurate with their responsibilities. If this doesn't happen, teachers could be reliant on school leaders to make decisions on a day-to-day basis, which hinders the effectiveness of delegation.

Teachers Are Accountable for the Outcomes of Delegated Responsibilities; The strongest finding in Table 4.8 is regarding accountability, as teachers are held accountable for the outcomes of delegated responsibilities. Outcomes of delegated responsibilities to teachers were reported as being accountable for by 45 (95.7%) teachers and 2 (4.3%) teachers not. This means there was a strong sense of responsibility within delegation arrangements in the schools studied. This finding reflects the autonomy that was granted to the teachers with some variation, but that they were still expected to be held accountable for the outcome of the work they were asked to do.

This is well supported by the qualitative evidence. *Delegation is better, he said, because there will be more accountability because the responsibilities are shared with other staff members and teachers have to do the assigned work and participate in school activities. Likewise, evidence from the interviews showed that delegated responsibilities were effectively monitored and followed up.*

This finding agrees with Amos et al. (2022) who reported that delegation in participative leadership can enhance teachers' shared responsibility and accountability in public secondary schools in Tanzania. It is also in line with Ndirangu and Mungai (2024) who emphasized on the need for delegation and provision of feedback in determining the performance of teachers, which means that the accountability is enhanced when there is delegation accompanied by follow up and feedback for teachers. In the same way, Gourvennec et al (2024) showed that shared responsibility among teachers is key; Ezeaku and Umeh (2026) explored the relation between principals' delegation of functions and teachers' job commitment, which confirms the need for responsibility-sharing among principals and teachers. In the context of Transformational Leadership Theory, accountability relates to teacher empowerment because teacher empowerment involves giving teachers responsibilities, but not only that, but also holding them responsible for the results. The high level of accountability reported (95.7%) thus means that delegation was strongly correlated with responsibility for results in Mlimba District Council, but further accountability should be accompanied by appropriate authority, resources, guidance and professional freedom so that teachers can be held accountable for their responsibilities they are appropriately empowered to carry out.

In the Transformational Leadership Theory, accountability is considered to go hand in hand with empowerment. Transformational leaders do not just allow followers to be free; they also set standards for them and make them feel, "I am responsible for the outcome. This very high level of reported accountability, therefore, suggests that the delegation in Mlimba District Council was linked with a high level of outcome expectations with regards to responsibility. But there must be the right balance of responsibility and authority, resources, and professional autonomy. Increase in accountability of teachers without giving them enough authority to undertake tasks can lead to a misbalance in delegating.

The results suggest that the teachers in public secondary schools in Mlimba District Council generally had positive but not uniform autonomy in performing the delegated tasks. The highest level of satisfaction was in terms of accountability for delegated tasks, with 95.7% of teachers indicating they felt they were held accountable for delegated tasks, followed by autonomy in decision making (76.6%) and independent decision making (66.0%). Less teachers said that they had enough authority (57.4%) or enough freedom from unnecessary interference from administration (53.2%). The qualitative results confirm this trend: teachers were provided with sufficient autonomy to make use of their professional knowledge and creativity in their teaching within school policies, guidelines and monitoring systems.

The result is consistent to Amos et al. (2022) who established that delegation in participative leadership can foster shared responsibility and accountability among teachers in public secondary schools in Tanzania. It is also related to Ndirangu and Mungai (2024) who highlighted the role of delegation and giving feedback to the teachers in impacting their work performance. In a similar fashion, Gourvennec et al. (2024) pointed out that teachers should take an active role with shared responsibility, while Ezeaku and Umeh (2026) investigated the level of job commitment among teachers based on principals' delegation of functions. In the context of Transformational Leadership Theory, accountability goes hand-in-hand with empowerment as teachers are given a responsibility and are expected to be accountable for the results. The overall findings

indicate that teachers experienced overall generally positive but varying levels of autonomy with accountability being the highest (95.7%), followed by autonomy to make decisions (76.6%) and freedom from unnecessary administrative interference (53.2%), while independent decision making (66.0%) and sufficient authority (57.4%) were comparatively lower. Qualitative evidence was also consistent with teachers being provided with reasonable autonomy in implementation of professional knowledge and creativity in the context of school policies, guidelines and monitoring arrangements. Hence, there is a need to balance the accountability, authority, resources, and professional autonomy in effective delegation; otherwise, effective delegation may be undermined if teachers are held accountable but lack authority and freedom.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study concludes that the academic, administrative, disciplinary, co-curricular and other responsibilities delegated to the teachers of the public secondary schools of Mlimba District Council is wide ranging, which is based on their qualifications, years of experience, competence, commitment and workload. Decision making is also highly participatory among teachers as they are involved in staff meetings, departmental meetings, and school committees and consultations, thereby sharing responsibility and communicating. The extent of participation may be different, however, for different decisions and leadership practices. However, in some cases there is a lack of authority and administrative involvement for teachers. The quality of delegation also has positive impacts on the performance of school administration, which includes coordination, decision making, communication, accountability and efficiency, and reduces school head workload. But factors like workload, lack of resources, lack of skills and unwillingness to do more can diminish its effectiveness. Hence, clear responsibilities, appropriate authority, proper resources, supervision and continuous support are needed for effective delegation.

Recommendations

Teachers should continue to be delegated academic, administrative, disciplinary and co-curricular duties based on their qualifications, experience, competence, interests and workload, as delegated by the Heads of Schools. Job descriptions, resources and professional training should be sufficient to allow teachers to effectively carry out delegated duties. Heads of Schools should also increase the involvement of teachers in decision making by staff meetings, departmental and school committee meetings, and encourage open dialogue to allow teachers to voice their opinions and recommendations.

Heads of Schools should provide delegated responsibilities with adequate authority and decision making freedom, and minimize nuisance administrative interventions. Continue to give guidance, supervision and feedback regularly to ensure accountability and build teachers' confidence. Schools should be supported by schools, District Education Authorities, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and other stakeholders through proper staffing, resources, capacity building and policies that will support participatory and empowering leadership in schools. These measures would enhance delegation and coordination, as well as communication, decision making and school administration overall.

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