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The Influence of Participative Decision-Making Practices on Teacher Job Morale in Public Secondary Schools in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania

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Abstract: **The purpose of the study was to assess the influence of Participative decision-making practices on teacher job morale in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania. The study was anchored on the Path-Goal Theory of Leadership and adopted a pragmatic research philosophy using a convergent mixed-methods approach. Data collection methods included questionnaires and interviews among teachers and Heads of School, respectively. The data were analyzed using descriptive and thematic analysis approaches. It was revealed that Participative decision-making practices positively influenced teacher job morale. The involvement of teachers in academic decision-making, policy formulation, academic planning, and collaborative problem-solving enhanced a sense of ownership, recognition, trust, responsibility, and commitment. Additionally, the findings revealed that the value of teachers' opinions by school management and the provision of meaningful participation opportunities in school decisions enhanced teacher motivation, commitment to teaching, job satisfaction, cooperation, and contribution towards school goals. Participative decision-making created an inclusive and supportive working environment, where teachers felt respected, recognized, and viewed as an important partner in school governance. The study concludes that Participative decision-making practices are vital in promoting teacher job morale in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. Meaningful teacher participation in decisions affecting their professional responsibilities could enhance motivation, commitment, job satisfaction, and Participative relations between teachers and school administrators. The study recommends that school management should institutionalize Participative decision-making by involving teachers meaningfully in academic planning, policy formulation, problem-solving and other decisions affecting school activities to enhance teacher job morale.**

Keywords: **Participative decision-making, teacher job morale, participatory leadership, public secondary schools.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Participative decision-making is a significant education leadership strategy that allows teachers to participate in school planning, the implementation of the curriculum, the allocation of resources, and problem-solving. Participative decision-making acknowledges teachers as professionals who possess valuable knowledge and experience to improve school administration and the work environment. When teachers are allowed to participate in decision-making in the school, they may feel more responsible, professionally recognized, and motivated to take the necessary actions. Job morale of teachers is expressed in terms of motivation, enthusiasm, commitment, confidence, and readiness to fulfill their professional duties. However, teachers' job morale might depend on the extent to which school administrators really value teachers' opinions and inform about decisions made. Recent empirical evidence shows that the participation of teachers in decision-making

leads to positive professional experiences such as job satisfaction and commitment (Macha & Mhagama, 2022). Hence, participative decision-making requires further investigation as an administrative practice affecting teachers' psychological and professional experience at work.

In general, across Africa, participative decision-making allows teachers to share their professional knowledge for the purpose of better administration of the school, cooperation, and joint responsibility. Empirical evidence from Kenya and Ethiopia shows that teacher participation in school decisions is connected to job satisfaction (Kiagu & Kingi, 2025; Chala, 2025). However, there is a need for further research to show the relationship between participative decision-making and teachers' job morale, especially motivation and enthusiasm.

In East Africa, participative decision-making allows teachers and school administrators to cooperate in the process of planning, managing responsibilities, and solving problems related to school administration. The evidence obtained in Kenya and Ethiopia demonstrates that teacher participation in decision-making affects job satisfaction positively (Abdi & Gikandi, 2024; Diriba et al., 2022). However, these results might not completely reflect the peculiarities of the Tanzanian educational system, and there is limited evidence concerning teachers' job morale. Further research is required to explore the influence of participative decision-making on teachers' motivation, enthusiasm, and professional commitment.

In Tanzania, participative decision-making allows teachers to participate in decisions about academic programs, teaching responsibilities, school discipline, and resource allocation. Their participation may lead to professional recognition, feeling of ownership, motivation, and commitment. Macha and Mhagama (2022) investigated the participation of teachers in decision-making regarding work performance in public secondary schools in Meru District Council, Arusha. However, there is limited evidence about the relationship between participative decision-making and job morale of teachers. Further research is required to investigate the mentioned relationship in public secondary schools in Tanzania.

In Morogoro Municipality, teachers participate in decisions made in the school by means of meetings and committees; however, communication issues, workload, and lack of opportunities for discussion may limit their participation (Kahekenye & Mwakalinga, 2025). However, available studies have paid attention only to school governance and leadership, but not the influence of participative decision-making on teachers' job morale. Thus, the current study aims at exploring the impact of teachers' participation in school decisions on their motivation, enthusiasm, satisfaction, and professional commitment in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality**.**

2. RESEARCH QUESTION

How does Participative decision-making practices influence teacher job morale in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania?

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The current study is guided by the Path-Goal Theory of Leadership, developed by House (1971). This theory explains how leaders influence employees' motivation, satisfaction and performance by providing support, clarifying goals and removing barriers. The Path-Goal Theory is used in the current study in explaining how Participative decision-making practices may influence teacher job morale in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality.

The Path-Goal Theory identifies four leadership behaviors which include: Directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented. The current study focuses on participative leadership behavior, whereby school heads involve teachers in consultation, problem-solving, planning and decision-making in the school. This type of participation could make teachers feel valued and respected, hence enhancing their motivation, commitment, enthusiasm and willingness to perform their duties (House & Mitchell, 1974).

Therefore, the Path-Goal Theory is used in examining how Participative decision-making practices, involving teacher consultation, participation, collaborative problem-solving and involvement in school decisions enhance teacher job morale in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality.

4. REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

Participative decision-making practices are becoming increasingly important in enhancing positive teacher work experiences in public secondary schools. Participative decision-making practices involve teacher participation, consultation, collaborative problem-solving, open communication and involvement in decisions affecting school activities. This may help teachers to feel valued and respected which may enhance their motivation, commitment, enthusiasm and willingness to perform their professional responsibilities.

In Tanzania, Aron and Amos (2024) found out that collective decision-making took place in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. However, the study pointed out the need to enhance instructional leadership and decision-making practices for improved school performance. The findings suggest that though teachers may be involved in school decisions, the level and effectiveness of their involvement may vary from school to school. Similarly, Pallangyo and Mwila (2025) found out that Participative leadership which included participatory decision-making contributed to increased teacher engagement and productivity in public secondary schools in Ilala Municipality. These findings suggest that the involvement of teachers in decision-making enhances professional work experience.

Teacher job morale is also influenced by the degree to which teachers receive support and are allowed to participate in school activities. Venant (2025) found out that communication, administrative support and teacher involvement in decision-making influenced teachers' morale in government secondary schools in Tanzania. This finding suggests that when teachers are allowed to state their opinions and take part in decisions affecting their work, they are likely to develop positive attitudes towards their professional responsibilities. Mwakabenga (2025) also found out that teachers possessed leadership capacities in their professional activities but limited recognition and opportunity to exercise these capacities constrained their contribution to school improvement.

Moreover, Mwita (2026) found out that Participative leadership was associated with higher levels of teachers' job satisfaction in Tanzanian public secondary schools. Though job satisfaction is different from job morale, the above finding indicates the significance of participatory leadership in enhancing teachers' positive work experiences. Thus, Participative decision-making may help to enhance job morale by enhancing teachers' sense of ownership, recognition, belonging, responsibility, and commitment to school activities.

However, there is still a gap in research concerning the specific influence of Participative decision-making practices on teacher job morale. Previous researches have been focusing on collective decision-making, leadership styles, job satisfaction, teacher engagement, productivity or leadership transitions rather than directly examining the influence of Participative decision-making practices on teacher job morale. In addition, some of the research was conducted outside Morogoro Municipality, hence making it difficult to understand the specific situation of public secondary schools in the municipality.

Thus, the current research is specifically interested in the influence of Participative decision-making practices on teacher job morale in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. This review provides a basis for examining how teacher participation, consultation, collaborative problem-solving, communication and involvement in school decisions may influence teachers' motivation, commitment, enthusiasm and willingness to perform their professional responsibilities.

5. METHODOLOGY

A pragmatist research philosophy was adopted together with a mixed-methods approach in order to comprehensively assess the influence of Participative decision-making practices on teacher job morale in public secondary schools (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). A convergent mixed-methods design was used, involving 140 respondents, comprising 130 teachers who provided quantitative data through a questionnaire and 10 Heads of Schools who provided qualitative data through interviews. The study was carried out in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. Quantitative data were coded and analyzed using SPSS, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

The validity was ensured through proper sampling procedures, development of appropriate research instruments, expert review and adherence to research procedures (Kandel, 2020; Rahman, 2020). The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha and the coefficient was 0.896 which exceeded the required level of 0.70 (Trizano-Hermosilla & Alvarado, 2024). Ethical principles were observed throughout the study through obtaining informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity and ensuring that the collected information was used for academic purposes only.

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Participative decision-making practices contribute to teachers' job morale in public secondary schools

This section presents teachers' responses on the influence of Participative decision-making practices on teachers' job morale in public secondary schools. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. Findings show the extent to which teachers feel that Participative decision-making practices influence their motivation, commitment, job satisfaction, and morale.

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The findings are presented in the following table. ***Teachers' Responses on style of Participative decision-making practices (n=130)***

N	STATEMENT	SD		D		U		A		SA		MEAN
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	The head of school involves teachers when making important academic decisions.	12	(9.2)	4	(3.1)	3	(2.3)	64	(49,2)	47	(36.2)	4.00
2	Teachers are given opportunities to contribute ideas before school policies are finalized.	7	(5.4)	6	(4.6)	8	(6.2)	65	(50.0)	44	(33.8)	4.02
3	Participatory decision-making in my school increases my commitment to work.	3	(2.3)	4	(3.1)	9	(6.9)	62	(47.2)	52	(40.4)	4.20
4	School management values teachers' opinions during staff meetings.	5	(3.8)	6	(4.6)	6	(6.4)	61	(46.9)	52	(40.0)	4.15
5	Participative decision-making increases my morale to teach.	3	(2.3)	2	(1.5)	1	(8)	56	(45.1)	67	(51.5)	4.25
6	I feel valued when I participate in school decision-making.	2	(1.5)	4	(3.1)	1	(8)	56	(45.1)	67	(51.5)	4.40
7	Participation in decisions increases my commitment to teaching.	2	(1.5)	5	(3.8)	4	(3.1)	64	(49.2)	55	(42.3)	4.27
8	School leadership encourages collaborative decision-making.	9	(6.9)	4	(3.1)	1	(8)	65	(50.0)	51	(39.2)	4.12
9	Teacher input is considered in academic planning.	1	(8)	8	(6.2)	6	(4.6)	72	(55.4)	43	(33.1)	4.14
10	Involvement in decision-making improves my job satisfaction	1	(8)	5	(3.8)	8	(6.2)	65	(50.0)	51	(39.2)	4.25

Key: SD: Strongly Disagree **D:** Disagree **U:** Uncertain **A:** Agree **SA:** Strongly Agree

***Note*:** Field Data, 2026

6.1 The Head of School Involves Teachers in Making Important Academic Decisions

The data indicates that 64 (49.2%) teachers agreed and 47 (36.2%) strongly agreed that heads of school involve teachers in important academic decisions. The mean score was 4.00. The finding indicates that teachers take part in decisions regarding the implementation of the curriculum, lesson planning, examinations, improvements of school, and other teaching matters. Participation in the process of making decisions increases teachers' sense of responsibility, ownership, trust, cooperation, and commitment to school goals.

The qualitative results confirmed the findings of the survey. Additional information obtained from HOS during face-to-face interviews also supports the finding. The HOS stated that:

"Important academic decisions are made collaboratively rather than individually. Teachers are actively involved because they have direct experience in teaching. Their opinions received during meetings and consultations help to identify the existing challenges and find the best way to solve them. Participatory decision-making increases teachers' sense of ownership, cooperation, and commitment and, consequently, improves the performance of the school."(HOS B, May 19, 2026).

The finding indicates that participation of teachers in academic decisions creates a sense of ownership and strengthens their commitment to school programs. The finding is consistent with Kahekenye and Mwakalinga (2023), who found that teachers' participation in school decision-making increases professional recognition, motivation, cooperation, and commitment. The finding is also supported by Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971), which underlines the importance of participative leadership for increasing motivation and performance of employees.

6.2 Teachers Are Given Opportunities to Contribute Ideas Before School Policies Are Finalized

The data indicate that 65 (50.0%) teachers agreed and 44 (33.8%) strongly agreed that they are given opportunities to contribute ideas before school policies are finalized. The mean score was 4.02. The finding demonstrates that the process of consultation allows teachers to use their professional knowledge and classroom experience, which helps to formulate realistic policies and increases ownership, cooperation, and commitment to their implementation.

The finding indicates that the participation of teachers before policies are finalized helps to reduce resistance of teachers because they perceive these policies not as those imposed on them but as developed collaboratively. The finding also indicates that the participatory approach increases teachers' responsibility and commitment to school policies.

The finding is consistent with Emmanuel and Onesmo (2025), who found that participatory leadership increases teachers' professional commitment and job morale by involving teachers in teaching and learning decisions, academic planning, and school development programs. Therefore, teacher consultation helps to formulate realistic policies and increases their commitment to implementation.

6.3 Participatory Decision-Making Increases My Commitment to Work

The data indicate that 62 (47.2%) teachers agreed and 52 (40.4%) strongly agreed that participation in decision-making increases their commitment to work. The mean score was 4.20. The finding indicates that participation of teachers in decision-making increases their sense of ownership, responsibility, accountability, and dedication to school responsibilities.

Qualitative findings also supported the results of the survey. Additional information obtained from HOS during face-to-face interviews helped to confirm this finding. The HOS stated that:

"Involving teachers in the process of decision-making increases teachers' sense of responsibility and accountability. When teachers are involved in the process of decision-making, they feel a sense of ownership and are more committed to implementing the decisions that have been made. This process increases teachers' dedication to school goals and increases cooperation with school administration and school performance."(HOS D, May 18, 2026).

This statement confirms that participation makes teachers feel that they are partners in school management. The finding is consistent with Katunzi and Lyamuya (2024), who found that supportive and Participativeleadership practices increase teachers' motivation, ownership, commitment, and morale.

6.4 School Management Values Teachers' Opinions During Staff Meetings

The data indicate that 61 (46.9%) teachers agreed and 52 (40.0%) strongly agreed that school management values their opinions during staff meetings. The mean score was 4.15. The finding indicates that teachers are provided with opportunities to share their ideas, discuss challenges, participate in solving problems, and make decisions.

The qualitative findings also supported the results of the survey. Additional information obtained from HOS during face-to-face interviews also helped to confirm this finding. The HOS stated that:

"Staff meetings are a platform where teachers can freely share their opinions, ideas, and concerns. Many school decisions are based on the opinions of teachers expressed during these meetings."(HOS, May 19, 2026).

This finding indicates that valuing teachers' opinions promotes recognition, trust, teamwork, and cooperation between teachers and school leaders. It is consistent with Emmanuel and Onesmo (2025), who found that recognition of teachers' professional knowledge and their involvement in governance increases cooperation, transparency, trust, and professional commitment.

6.5 Participative Decision-Making Increases My Morale to Teach

The data indicate that 56 (45.1%) teachers agreed and 67 (51.5%) strongly agreed that Participative decision-making increases their morale to teach. The mean score was 4.25. This finding shows that there is a very positive relationship between Participative decision-making and teachers' morale. Teachers become more motivated and enthusiastic when their opinions are valued, and they are involved in the process of making decisions.

Qualitative findings supported the results of the survey. Additional information obtained from HOS during face-to-face interviews helped to confirm this finding. The HOS observed that:

"Teachers become more motivated when their opinions are valued and taken into consideration in the process of decision-making. Participatory leadership fosters the sense of inclusion, unity, and mutual respect between school staff members. As a result, teachers are more willing to perform their job effectively and commit to school goals."(HOS J, May 19, 2026)

This finding shows that inclusion, recognition, and ownership increase teachers' attitude to teaching. The finding is consistent with Katunzi and Lyamuya (2024), who found that Participative and supportive leadership increases teachers' motivation and morale. The finding is also supported by Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971), which emphasizes the importance of supportive and participative leadership for improving employees' motivation.

6.6 I Feel Valued When I Participate in School Decision-Making

The data indicate that 56 (45.1%) teachers agreed and 67 (51.5%) strongly agreed that participation in school decision-making makes them feel valued. The mean score of 4.40 is the highest among all indicators and demonstrates a very positive perception. Participation of teachers in the process of decision-making increases their sense of belonging, professional recognition, respect, and appreciation.

This finding demonstrates that when school leaders involve teachers in the process of decision-making and value their ideas, teachers feel that they are important members of the school community. This feeling increases teachers' motivation, commitment, cooperation, and job morale.

The finding is consistent with Kahekenye and Mwakalinga (2023), who found that participation of teachers in the process of school decision-making increases professional recognition and appreciation, which subsequently increases motivation and work performance. Therefore, participation of teachers is an important mechanism for increasing professional value and job morale.

6.7 Participation in Decisions Increases My Commitment to Teaching

The data indicate that 64 (49.2%) teachers agreed and 55 (42.3%) strongly agreed that participation in school decisions increases their commitment to teaching. The mean score was 4.27. The finding demonstrates that participation in decisions increases teachers' sense of responsibility, ownership, enthusiasm, and commitment to professional duties.

The finding shows that when teachers participate in decisions that affect their work, they are more likely to view themselves as important stakeholders rather than mere implementers of administrative decisions. Participation also increases teachers' trust, professional recognition, cooperation, and willingness to support school initiatives.

The finding is consistent with Emmanuel and Onesmo (2025), who found that participatory leadership increases teachers' professional commitment through their involvement in teaching and learning activities, academic planning, school improvement, and administrative decisions. The finding is also supported by Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971), which shows that shared decision-making increases employees' motivation, responsibility, and commitment to organizational goals.

6.8 School Leadership Encourages Collaborative Decision-Making

The data indicate that 65 (50.0%) teachers agreed and 51 (39.2%) strongly agreed that school leadership encourages collaborative decision-making. The mean score of 4.12 demonstrates a high level of agreement. The finding indicates that school leaders involve teachers in discussions, problem-solving, planning, and decision-making processes rather than making decisions independently.

Qualitative findings supported the results of the survey. Additional information obtained from HOS during face-to-face interviews also helped to confirm this finding. The HOS stated that:

"Most school matters are discussed collaboratively to ensure that different perspectives are considered in the process of decision-making. Collaborative decision-making helps to find better solutions, promote transparency and foster teamwork among staff members."(HOS C, May 18, 2026).

This finding indicates that collaborative decision-making not only improves the quality of decisions but also promotes transparency, teamwork, and positive relationships between teachers and school leaders. The finding is consistent with Kahekenye and Mwakalinga (2023), who found that Participative participation promotes teamwork, shared responsibility, teacher commitment, and job morale.

6.9 Teacher Input Is Considered in Academic Planning

The data indicate that 72 (55.4%) teachers agreed and 43 (33.1%) strongly agreed that their input is considered in academic planning. The mean score was 4.14. The finding indicates that teachers participate in annual school planning, implementation of the curriculum, scheduling of lessons, examination planning, remedial programs, and other academic activities.

The finding indicates that participation of teachers in the process of academic planning provides valuable information for the school leaders because teachers' classroom experience helps to develop realistic and context-specific academic plans. Their participation also creates collective responsibility and ownership, which increases commitment of teachers to implementation of academic plans.

The finding is consistent with Mpangala (2024), who found that participative leadership increases teachers' motivation through their involvement in decision-making and professional development. The finding is also supported by Path-Goal Theory (House, 1971), which states that participative leadership increases employees' sense of ownership, competence, motivation, and commitment.

6.10 Involvement in Decision-Making Improves My Job Satisfaction

The data indicate that 65 (50.0%) teachers agreed and 51 (39.2%) strongly agreed that participation in decision-making increases their job satisfaction. The mean score was 4.25. The finding indicates that participation in decision-making makes teachers feel respected, valued, trusted, and involved in school governance, which increases their job morale and commitment.

Qualitative findings supported the results of the survey. Additional information obtained from HOS during face-to-face interviews helped to confirm this finding. The HOS stated that:

“Involvement of teachers in the process of decision-making increases their job satisfaction because teachers feel respected, valued and trusted by school administration. When teachers are involved in the discussion of their ideas and opinions, they develop a greater sense of belongingness and commitment to the school. Positive relations between teachers and school administration increase job morale and improve performance.”(HOS E, May 19, 2026).

These findings show that respect, trust, recognition, and participation improve job satisfaction and job morale of teachers. The finding is consistent with Emmanuel and Onesmo (2025), who found that participatory leadership increases ownership, professional commitment, trust, collegial relationships, and job morale. Overall, the findings indicate that the practice of Participative decision-making positively influences teachers' job morale by improving participation, recognition, ownership, commitment, collaboration, and job satisfaction.

7. CONCLUSION

The study investigated the influence of Participative decision-making practices on teacher job morale in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. The findings show that Participative decision-making positively influences teachers' job morale. Participation of teachers in academic decisions, policy formulation, academic planning, staff discussions, and collaborative problem-solving increases their sense of ownership, recognition, trust, responsibility, and commitment to professional responsibilities. The findings also show that when teachers are given an opportunity to share their views and their opinions are valued during the process of school decision-making, they feel respected and appreciated as important members of the school community. This meaningful participation increases their motivation, commitment to teaching, job satisfaction, cooperation, and willingness to support school goals.

Therefore, the study concludes that Participative decision-making is an important school leadership practice for enhancing teachers' job morale in public secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. Meaningful involvement of teachers in decisions that affect their professional responsibilities creates a supportive working environment and increases teachers' positive attitude and commitment to school activities.

8. RECOMMENDATION OF THE STUDY

Based on the conclusion that the practices of Participative decision-making positively influence teachers' job morale through promotion of teachers' sense of recognition, ownership, commitment, job satisfaction, and motivation, the study recommends that Heads of Schools should implement the practices of Participative decision-making through constant involvement of teachers in academic planning, policy formulation, problem-solving, and other decisions that affect school activities.

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