



The Prevailing School Culture that Influences Teachers' Professional Conduct: Evidence from Mbogwe District, Tanzania

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Abstract: *The study examined the prevailing school culture influencing teachers' professional conduct in public primary schools in Mbogwe District, Tanzania. The study was guided by Organisational Culture Theory and employed a pragmatic research paradigm using a convergent mixed-methods design. The study involved 105 participants, comprising 92 teachers selected through simple random sampling and 13 educational administrators selected purposively. Quantitative data were collected using structured questionnaires, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analysed through descriptive statistics and presented in frequencies and percentages, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The findings revealed that the prevailing school culture generally supports teachers' professional conduct. Specifically, 60% of respondents agreed that school leadership encourages open communication, 62% reported regular teacher collaboration, 78% indicated the existence of shared values and beliefs guiding teacher behaviour, 76% reported that the school environment promotes mutual respect, and 82% indicated that school management supports professional development. Qualitative findings from head teachers and education officials largely corroborated the quantitative findings, demonstrating that communication, collaboration, shared values, mutual respect, and professional development contribute to professionalism, accountability, teamwork, motivation, and commitment among teachers. The study concludes that a supportive school culture is an important factor in promoting teachers' professional conduct. It recommends strengthening participatory communication, teacher collaboration, shared professional values, respectful relationships, continuous professional development, and preventive approaches to professional misconduct.*

Keywords: *School culture; Teachers' professional conduct; Organisational culture; Public primary schools; Educational leadership*

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1. Introduction

School culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, norms, traditions, expectations, and everyday practices that shape how members of a school community interact and perform

their responsibilities. It is an important institutional factor in shaping teachers' professional conduct because it establishes what behaviours are encouraged, tolerated, rewarded, or discouraged within the school environment (Deal & Peterson, 2016). A positive school culture characterized by collegiality, mutual respect, collaboration,

accountability, and supportive leadership can encourage teachers to demonstrate commitment to their professional responsibilities and maintain positive relationships with learners and colleagues. Conversely, a school culture in which absenteeism, negligence, disrespect, or other forms of misconduct are tolerated may weaken adherence to professional standards. Thus, understanding school culture is essential for explaining variations in teachers' professional conduct across schools.

Teachers' professional conduct is central to the quality, credibility, and effectiveness of the education system. It encompasses teachers' adherence to professional ethics, punctuality, regular attendance, responsible preparation for teaching, appropriate communication, respect for learners and colleagues, discipline, accountability, and compliance with established professional standards. When teachers consistently demonstrate these behaviours, they create a safe and supportive learning environment and serve as positive role models for learners (Malabwa & Mnjokava, 2022; Mbabazi & Nuwagaba, 2021). In contrast, behaviours such as absenteeism, negligence, inappropriate language, inappropriate relationships with learners, and failure to fulfil professional responsibilities can disrupt teaching and learning and undermine public confidence in the teaching profession (Arnold & Mwila, 2022). Teachers' professional conduct is therefore not determined only by individual commitment or knowledge of professional codes; it can also be shaped by the social and organizational environment in which teachers work.

Despite the importance of professional conduct, teacher misconduct remains a concern in different education systems worldwide. Evidence from the United States, for example, indicates that sexual misconduct by school staff has been reported by a notable proportion of students. The U.S. Department of Education (2018) reported that approximately 10% of public-school students in Grades 8–11 had experienced some form of sexual misconduct by school personnel. Underreporting remains an important concern because victims may fear retaliation, stigmatization, or other negative consequences for reporting misconduct (AAUW, 2021; Lipscomb, 2024). Although sexual misconduct represents one particularly serious form of professional misconduct, the broader concern extends to teachers' adherence to ethical, behavioural, and professional responsibilities within schools.

In Africa, teacher professional misconduct remains a complex challenge that takes different forms, including absenteeism, negligence, substance abuse, and inappropriate relationships with learners, and other violations of professional ethics. In South Africa, for example, an analysis of 474 sexual-offence cases reported to the South African Council for Educators between 2019

and 2022 found that many of the accused were male teachers aged over 40 years, with cases involving behaviours ranging from sexual harassment to inappropriate relationships with learners (Mhlongo & Nkosi, 2025). Similarly, in Ghana, sexual abuse and harassment in schools remain concerns for learner safety and well-being. Evidence from the Tamale Metropolis indicates that sexual misconduct may occur alongside other forms of teacher unprofessionalism, including absenteeism and substance abuse (Doodaa, et al., 2022). These experiences demonstrate that professional misconduct should be understood within the broader school environment, where institutional norms, leadership practices, peer relationships, and accountability mechanisms may influence teachers' behaviour.

In Tanzania, concerns regarding teachers' professional conduct are also reflected in disciplinary records. According to the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC, 2022), 10,978 disciplinary cases involving teachers were reported across 139 districts between 2016 and 2022. Of these cases, 10,479 had been processed and concluded, while 499 remained at different stages of the disciplinary process. The magnitude of these cases indicates that professional misconduct is not an isolated challenge but a broader concern requiring sustained attention from education authorities and school-level leaders. Although disciplinary mechanisms are necessary for addressing violations, preventing professional misconduct requires more than punitive measures. Attention is also needed to the organizational and cultural conditions within schools that shape teachers' everyday attitudes, expectations, relationships, and professional behaviour.

The situation in Mbogwe District further illustrates the need to examine the factors associated with teachers' professional conduct. Records from the Mbogwe Teachers' Service Commission Office indicate that 113 cases of professional misconduct were recorded between 2019 and 2024. Forgery of academic certificates constituted the largest proportion, with 36 cases (31.86%), followed by absenteeism with 27 cases (23.89%) and professional negligence with 23 cases (20.35%). Insubordination accounted for 16 cases (14.16%), while examination malpractice accounted for four cases (3.53%). Other reported offences included forgery of payment documents, sexual relationships with pupils, alcoholism, and misuse of public funds, each representing smaller proportions of the recorded cases (Mbogwe TSC Office, 2025). The range of offences suggests that challenges in teachers' professional conduct extend beyond a single type of misconduct and may involve ethical, behavioural, administrative, and professional dimensions.

Previous studies in Tanzania have examined teachers' professional conduct in relation to professional codes of

conduct, disciplinary processes, and teacher development initiatives (Shaibu & Mwila, 2025; Rweyemamu & Kamugisha, 2022; Shuma et. al, 2024; Yohanes & Otieno, 2024; Nemes et. al, 2025). However, limited attention has been given to how prevailing school culture, including shared norms, leadership practices, relationships, accountability, and expectations, influences teachers' professional conduct, particularly in public primary schools. This gap provides the basis for the present study, which examines the prevailing school culture that influences teachers' professional conduct in public primary schools in Mbogwe District, Tanzania, to generate evidence to inform school leadership, professional development, supervision, and accountability strategies for strengthening teachers' professionalism.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

The relationship between school culture and teachers' professional conduct has been explained through different theories, and this study was guided by the Organisational Culture Theory developed by Edgar Schein (2010). The theory explains that organisational culture is made up of shared beliefs, values, assumptions, and practices that influence how people behave in an organisation. In schools, culture can affect teachers' professional conduct through school norms, leadership practices, relationships among teachers, and shared institutional values. The theory assumes that culture is learned through socialisation, observation, and participation in daily school activities; shared because members develop common beliefs and assumptions; and influential because these beliefs and values shape people's attitudes and behaviour. It also recognises that school leaders play an important role in creating, maintaining, or changing the culture of the school. One strength of the theory is that it provides a broad understanding of how shared values, beliefs, and norms influence individual and group behaviour. It is also useful in education because it shows how leadership and teamwork can influence teachers' professional behaviour and support accountability, cooperation, and ethical conduct. In addition, the theory helps to identify negative aspects of school culture that may affect teachers' professionalism. However, the theory has some weaknesses as it places too much emphasis on shared culture and, therefore, may not fully consider differences, conflicts, and different views among members of a school. Despite the limitation, the theory is relevant to this study because it helps explain how shared school norms, values, and beliefs influence teachers' behaviour, ethical conduct, and accountability. It also highlights the role of school leadership in creating an environment that can either promote or discourage professional conduct. Furthermore,

it helps explain how daily routines and social expectations influence teachers' understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Therefore, Organisational Culture Theory provides a useful foundation for examining how school culture influences teachers' professional conduct and for developing interventions that can promote positive behaviour and professional development in public primary schools.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Palomique (2023) investigated the relationship between school culture and teacher work responsibility in public elementary schools in the Philippines. The study employed a quantitative, correlational design, surveying 100 public school teachers to examine how school culture influences teacher accountability. The findings revealed that mutual respect, collective discipline, participative leadership, and collegial collaboration were the dominant features of school culture, which in turn enhanced teachers' sense of duty and professional responsibility. While the study provides valuable empirical insights into the role of school culture in shaping teacher behaviour, it was conducted in a context with relatively well-established administrative structures and cultural norms that support professional conduct. Therefore, its applicability to Settings with limited resources, such as public primary schools in Mbogwe District, may be limited. To address this gap, the current study examined how the prevailing school culture in Mbogwe District influences teachers' professional conduct, providing localised evidence that reflects the unique institutional, social, and cultural factors shaping teachers' behaviour in Tanzanian primary schools.

Astuti, et al., (2020) examined how school culture influences teacher professionalism in public schools in Indonesia. The study employed a quantitative survey of 180 teachers to assess the relationship between cultural elements and professional behaviour. Findings indicated that discipline, teamwork, and strong leadership structures were central components of the prevailing school culture, reinforcing norms that guided teachers' ethical conduct and professional responsibilities. While the study provides valuable evidence on the role of school culture in promoting teacher professionalism, it relies heavily on a quantitative approach, which weakens its findings grounded in teachers' personal experiences. To address this gap, the current study utilised a convergent design within a mixed-methods research approach to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, thereby strengthening the study's findings.

Dağ (2025) investigated the impact of school culture on the development of teachers' professional skills at Ankara Science High School in Turkey. The study employed a

qualitative case study design, selecting a purposeful sample of 10 teachers and collecting data through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Findings revealed that a positive and collaborative school culture significantly enhances teachers' professional skills by fostering innovation, promoting teamwork, and encouraging continuous learning. Leadership practices and peer interactions were also identified as key components shaping teachers' professional behaviours and attitudes. While this study offers valuable insights into the mechanisms by which school culture influences professional development, it relied solely on qualitative data; adding quantitative data could have strengthened the credibility of the study's findings. To fill this gap, the current study employed a mixed-methods research approach to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, thereby enhancing the credibility of the findings.

Agyemang and Aboagye (2025) examined the influence of organisational politics and school culture on teachers' work commitment at senior high schools in Ghana. The study employed a descriptive quantitative design with data collected from 221 teachers using a structured questionnaire. It identified both positive and negative aspects of school culture that affected teachers' commitment: positive elements included fostering commitment among staff and students, collaboration, and effective communication, while negative features, such as limited teaching resources, lack of clear policies, inconsistent enforcement of rules, and a culture that tolerated favouritism and informal power struggles, undermined teachers' work commitment. The findings suggest that school culture, including relational dynamics and organisational norms, significantly shapes teachers' professional engagement and attitudes toward their work. However, the study's focus on senior high schools and its emphasis on organisational politics limit its applicability to primary school contexts where different cultural and institutional factors may influence professional conduct. Therefore, the current study filled this gap by focusing on public primary schools in the Mbogwe district to generate findings applicable to this context.

Ntale and Amos (2024) investigated prevailing organisational culture strategies in public primary schools in Tanzania, using a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design guided by cultural dimensions theory. The study gathered data from teachers, school heads, and School Management Committee chairpersons through questionnaires and interviews, revealing that the organisational culture was generally perceived positively, with strong support for collaboration, shared values, teamwork, and effective communication, all of which foster a sense of belonging and commitment to school goals. However, aspects such as continuous learning and professional development were rated lower, indicating

potential limitations in how school culture supports ongoing teacher growth and quality practice. Although this research provides essential context-specific insights into organisational culture in Tanzanian primary schools, it did not explicitly examine how these cultural elements influence teachers' professional conduct, including ethical behaviour, adherence to professional standards, and professional accountability. To fill this gap, the current study specifically examined the influence of school culture on teachers' professional conduct in the Mbogwe district.

3. Methodology

The study employed a convergent research design, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently and analysed separately before being compared and integrated to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. The design was appropriate because it enabled the study to obtain both numerical evidence and detailed views regarding how school culture influences teachers' professional conduct. The study employed simple random and purposive sampling techniques, whereby 92 teachers were randomly selected from nine public primary schools, while 9 heads of schools, 2 Ward Education Officers (WEOs), 1 District Primary Education Officer (DPPEO), and 1 Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) officer were purposively selected, making a total sample of 105 participants. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides. Questionnaires were administered to the 92 teachers to obtain quantitative data, while interviews were conducted with heads of schools, WEOs, the DPPEO, and the TSC officer to obtain detailed qualitative information.

Before data collection, the researcher obtained research clearance and permission from the relevant authorities. Thereafter, the researcher visited the selected schools, explained the purpose of the study to participants, obtained informed consent, administered the questionnaires, and conducted interviews. All collected information was treated confidentially and used solely for research purposes. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS through descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis through coding responses, identifying themes, and interpreting the main ideas related to school culture and teachers' professional conduct. Ethical principles were observed throughout the study by obtaining research clearance and informed consent, protecting participants' privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity through the use of codes instead of names, restricting access to collected information, informing participants of their rights, and obtaining permission before taking photographs.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The study assessed the prevailing school culture that influences teachers' professional conduct in public primary

schools in the Mbogwe District Council. The researcher used a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to collect the data. The quantitative findings are presented in Table 1, and the qualitative findings are presented in themes.

Table 1: Prevailing School Culture that Influences Teachers' Professional Conduct

S/N	Statement	SD		D		N		A		SA	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	School leadership encourages open communication among staff.	9	18.0	8	16.0	3	6.0	12	24.0	18	36.0
2	Teachers collaborate regularly to improve teaching practices.	6	12.0	9	18.0	4	8.0	14	28.0	17	34.0
3	There is a shared set of values and beliefs that guide teacher's behaviour in my school.	3	6.0	3	6.0	5	10.0	20	40.0	19	38.0
4	The school environment promotes mutual respect among teachers and students.	4	8.0	5	10.0	3	6.0	18	36.0	20	40.0
5	Professional development opportunities are supported and encouraged by school management.	3	6.0	4	8.0	2	4.0	19	38.0	22	44.0

Source: Field Data, 2025

Table 1 indicates that the prevailing school culture generally supports teachers' professional conduct. Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that school management supports professional development (82.0%), schools have shared values and beliefs guiding teachers' behaviour (78.0%), the school environment promotes mutual respect (76.0%), teachers collaborate to improve teaching practices (62.0%), and school leadership encourages open communication (60.0%). These findings suggest that professional development, shared values, mutual respect, collaboration, and communication are important cultural practices shaping teachers' professional behaviour. However, the comparatively lower level of agreement on open communication and teacher collaboration indicates the need for school leaders to strengthen participatory communication and teamwork to promote consistent professional conduct among teachers.

The qualitative findings on the prevailing school culture influencing teachers' professional conduct are presented under five key themes: open communication, teacher collaboration, shared values and beliefs, mutual respect, and support for professional development. These themes were examined using questionnaire responses and qualitative evidence obtained through interviews with head teachers and education officials. The presentation integrates both quantitative and qualitative findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of how school culture shapes teachers' professional conduct.

4.1.1 School leadership encourages open communication among staff

The data in Table 1 shows that 60% of respondents agreed that school leadership promotes open communication among staff. This indicates a positive organizational climate where teachers feel comfortable sharing ideas and feedback, which can enhance collaboration and trust, leading to better school performance and morale. To gain further insights, the researcher interviewed head teachers about this communication. One head teacher, coded HT2, shared the following:

In my school, I deliberately create an atmosphere where teachers speak openly without fear. During meetings, every member is encouraged to contribute ideas or raise concerns. This openness has strengthened teamwork, improved trust, and allowed us to solve challenges collectively and more effectively than before (Interview quotes with HT2, 19th October, 2025)

Similarly, when the researcher interviewed the TSC Officer, the officer commented.

From our monitoring, schools where leaders promote open communication tend to operate more smoothly. Teachers feel respected when their views are welcomed, and this reduces conflicts. Open dialogue encourages professionalism, enhances

accountability, and helps us address workplace issues early before they escalate into bigger problems (Interview with TSC, 16th October, 2025).

Additionally, when one of the ward education officers was asked to say,

In many schools I supervise, open communication encouraged by leadership has significantly improved staff cooperation. Teachers freely share ideas, and leaders respond constructively. This transparency reduces misunderstandings, increases motivation, and enables the entire teaching team to work together to solve problems and improve learning outcomes (Interview with WEO3, 16th October, 2025).

Moreover, the DPPEO commented on this.

Schools that encourage open communication among staff demonstrate stronger management practices. Teachers feel comfortable raising concerns, and leaders address them promptly. This openness fosters trust, improves information flow, strengthens relationships, and contributes significantly to better coordination, effective planning, and overall improvements in academic performance across the district (Interview with DPPEO, 16th October, 2025).

The findings indicate that open communication promoted by school leadership enhances the school environment by fostering trust, teamwork, accountability, and effective policy implementation. Quantitative and qualitative findings show that 60% of staff agreed that their leaders encourage open dialogue, while interviews highlighted inclusive meetings and respectful engagement as important practices. These practices reduce conflicts, strengthen collaboration, and create opportunities for teachers to express concerns and participate in school decision-making. The finding is consistent with Palomique (2024), who identified communication and collaboration as important dimensions of school culture that enhance teachers' work responsibility, and Ntale and Amos (2024), who found that effective communication, teamwork, and shared values strengthen teachers' commitment and sense of belonging in Tanzanian public primary schools. Similarly, Astuti et al. (2020) argued that positive school culture provides shared norms and values that guide teachers' professional behaviour, while Agyemang and Aboagye (2025) found that effective communication and collaboration strengthen teachers' commitment. In contrast, unclear policies and inconsistent communication can undermine professional engagement. Dağ (2025) further demonstrated that a collaborative school culture and positive professional relationships support teachers' professional development and workplace behaviour. These

findings are also supported by Komari et al. (2024), Plaku and Leka (2025), and Khan et al. (2023), who emphasised the contribution of effective communication, supportive leadership, and positive organisational relationships to teamwork and teacher performance. From the perspective of Organisational Culture Theory, open communication reinforces shared norms and values that guide behaviour and create a supportive environment in which teachers feel secure to express their views. Therefore, open communication is a critical element of school culture for promoting professionalism, collaboration, accountability, and overall school effectiveness.

4.1.2 Teachers collaborate regularly to improve teaching practices.

Table 1 shows that 78% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that teachers regularly collaborate to improve teaching practices. This indicates that most teachers actively collaborate, enhancing teaching quality through idea sharing, peer support, and problem-solving. Such practices foster a positive professional culture, boosting teacher motivation and accountability, and ultimately benefiting both educators and students. One of the headteachers, coded HT4, shared insights on this collaboration,

Teachers at our school frequently meet to plan lessons, share teaching strategies, and support one another. This collaboration has improved the quality of instruction and student engagement significantly (Interview with HOS5, 16th October, 2025)

Additionally, the TSC Officer had this to say

Schools where teachers collaborate regularly show higher professional standards. Sharing experiences and strategies allows teachers to address challenges collectively and enhance classroom effectiveness (Interview with TSC, 16th October, 2025).

Similarly, one of the WEO2 had this to comment.

During my school visits, I notice teachers discussing lesson plans, evaluating each other's approaches, and suggesting improvements, which strengthens teaching practices across the school (Interview with WEO3, 16th October, 2025)

Furthermore, the DPPEO had this to say

Collaboration among teachers has become a common practice in many schools. Teachers share knowledge, refine methods, and support each other, leading to more consistent and effective teaching outcomes district-wide (Interview with DPPEO, 16th October, 2025)

The findings indicate that regular teacher collaboration positively influences teaching and learning, as 78% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that teachers collaborate to improve teaching practices. Interviews with head teachers, TSC officials, WEOs, and the DPPEO confirmed that teachers engage in joint lesson planning, share instructional strategies, evaluate teaching approaches, and solve classroom challenges collectively. These practices foster professional growth, teamwork, trust, motivation, and improved instructional quality. According to Organisational Culture Theory, shared values and norms promote teamwork, knowledge sharing, and continuous improvement, thereby strengthening professional relationships and organisational effectiveness. This finding is consistent with Komari et al. (2024), Plaku and Leka (2025), and Khan et al. (2023), who found that collaborative school cultures enhance teacher performance, professional development, instructional quality, and learner outcomes.

4.1.3 There is a shared set of values and beliefs that guide teacher behaviour in my school.

Data from Table 1 show that 78.0% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a shared set of values and beliefs guides teacher behavior in their school. This indicates a cohesive value system that shapes professional conduct, promoting consistency, accountability, and ethical behavior among staff. Such unity fosters teamwork, reduces conflicts, and improves the school climate, leading to enhanced teaching, better relationships, and a more stable learning environment, ultimately supporting academic and organizational success. When asked about shared values, Headteacher HT1 shared their perspective;

In our school, teachers understand and uphold core values such as respect, professionalism, and commitment to students. These shared beliefs guide how they interact with colleagues and learners, ensuring consistent and ethical behaviour in all school activities (Interview with HT1, 16th October, 2025)

Similarly, the TSC Officer commented that

We observe that teachers in schools with common values maintain high professional standards. Shared beliefs about teaching and learning guide their decisions and conduct, promoting accountability and a positive learning environment (Interview with TSC, 16th October 2025).

Additionally, one of the WEO5 had this to say

During school visits, teachers act according to agreed-upon principles. These shared values create harmony, reduce conflicts, and ensure that teaching practices are consistently aligned with

school expectations (Interview with WEO, 16th October, 2025)

Moreover, the DPPEO had this to share

Teachers in our district who share professional values and beliefs demonstrate integrity, cooperation, and commitment. These shared norms guide their daily behaviour, supporting both effective teaching and a positive school culture (Interview with DPPEO, 16th October, 2025).

The findings indicate that shared values and beliefs guide teachers' professional conduct by promoting professionalism, ethical behaviour, accountability, mutual respect, collaboration, and commitment to student learning. These findings are consistent with Palomique (2024), who found that equity, communication, and collaboration strengthen teachers' work responsibility, and Astuti et al. (2020), who established that shared school values and norms promote teacher professionalism. Similarly, Ntale and Amos (2024) found that shared values and teamwork strengthen teachers' commitment to school goals in Tanzanian public primary schools, while Dağ (2025) showed that common values and collaborative school cultures enhance teachers' professional development and teamwork. Agyemang and Aboagye (2025) also found that positive organisational values and collaboration strengthen teachers' commitment. From the perspective of Organisational Culture Theory, these findings demonstrate that shared values create common norms that guide behaviour and strengthen teachers' professional relationships, accountability, and commitment to teaching and learning.

4.1.4 The school environment promotes mutual respect among teachers and students

Data from Table 1 indicates that 76% of respondents agreed that the school environment promotes mutual respect between teachers and students. This indicates a positive climate for respectful interactions, fostering strong relationships, reducing conflicts, and enhancing students' safety and belonging. Mutual respect enhances classroom management, encourages communication, and boosts student participation, while also improving teachers' professional satisfaction and collaboration. One headteacher, coded HT2, shared insights on this topic,

In our school, mutual respect is a core principle. Teachers model respectful behaviour, and students respond positively. This has created a calm, supportive learning environment where everyone feels valued (Interview with HT2, 16th October, 2025)

Additionally, one TSC Officer commented that;

We observe that schools with strong professional culture foster respectful interactions. Teachers treat students with dignity, and students behave respectfully in return, which enhances discipline and learning (Interview with TSC, 16th October, 2025).

Similarly, one of the WEOs had this to say

During my visits, I see teachers listening to students' views and students responding respectfully. This mutual respect reduces conflicts and contributes to a peaceful school atmosphere (Interview with WEO4, 16th October, 2025).

Furthermore, the DPPEO had this to say

In many schools, respectful communication between teachers and learners is evident. Such an environment builds trust, improves relationships, and supports better academic performance (Interview with DPPEO, 16th October, 2025).

The findings indicate that mutual respect is an important component of school culture, strengthening teacher–student relationships, reducing conflicts, and promoting safety, belonging, and engagement. These findings are supported by Palomique (2024), who found that positive school culture characterised by inclusivity, communication, and collaboration strengthens teachers' responsibility, and Astuti et al. (2020), who established that positive school values and norms promote teacher professionalism and responsible behaviour. Similarly, Ntale and Amos (2024) found that shared values, teamwork, and effective communication foster a sense of belonging and commitment among teachers in Tanzanian public primary schools, while Dağ (2025) showed that collaborative and supportive school cultures improve teachers' professional relationships and practices. Agyemang and Aboagye (2025) further demonstrated that positive organisational relationships and collaboration strengthen teachers' commitment, whereas negative cultural practices can undermine professional engagement. From the perspective of Organisational Culture Theory, these findings suggest that mutual respect becomes a shared norm that guides interactions and promotes trust, cooperation, and professional conduct. Therefore, fostering respect and positive interpersonal relationships within schools is essential for creating an inclusive learning environment and improving teaching and learning outcomes.

4.1.5 Professional development opportunities are supported and encouraged by school management.

The data in Table 1 show that 82% of respondents agree or strongly agree that school management supports professional development opportunities. This indicates

strong backing for continuous learning and skill development, which fosters teacher motivation, confidence, and instructional quality. It also encourages a culture of lifelong learning and collaboration, allowing for innovative teaching practices. One headteacher, HT4, shared insights on this support when asked about it;

Our management ensures that teachers attend workshops, seminars, and training programs. We encourage continuous learning because it strengthens teaching skills and improves overall school performance (Interview with HT4, 16th October 2025)

Similarly, the TSC Officer had this to say

We see strong support from school leaders who actively recommend teachers for professional development. They understand that investing in teachers' growth enhances competence and accountability (Interview with TSC, 16th October, 2025).

Additionally, one of the WEO1s had this to say

During school visits, I observe that leaders motivate teachers to participate in training. They provide information, guidance, and follow-up support to ensure professional development is taken seriously (Interview with WEO1, 16th October, 2025).

Furthermore, the DPPEO had this to say

School management in our district prioritises professional development. They allocate time and resources to help teachers upgrade their skills, which contributes to better teaching and improved student outcomes (Interview with DPPEO, 16th October, 2025).

The findings indicate that school management actively supports teachers' continuous professional development through workshops, training, seminars, and other capacity-building opportunities, which enhance teachers' competence, motivation, confidence, collaboration, and instructional quality. This finding is supported by Ballenas et al. (2023), Yang and Weng (2023), and Rochaendi and Ma'mun (2024), who found that organisational learning, managerial support, shared values, and supportive leadership promote teachers' professional growth and performance. It is also consistent with Dağ (2025), who found that a positive school culture encourages continuous learning, professional development, collaboration, and improvement of teachers' professional skills. Similarly, Ntale and Amos (2024) found that collaboration, shared values, and teamwork are important features of school culture, although continuous learning and professional

development were comparatively weaker, suggesting the need for stronger institutional support. In the same vein, Astuti et al. (2020) further established that positive school culture contributes to teacher professionalism by strengthening professional values and practices. From the perspective of Organisational Culture Theory, these findings demonstrate that when school management values and supports professional learning, continuous development becomes an integral part of school culture, encouraging teachers to improve their competencies, adopt effective practices, and uphold professional standards. Thus, sustained management support for professional development is essential for strengthening teacher professionalism and improving teaching and learning outcomes.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concludes that the prevailing school culture has an important influence on teachers' professional conduct in public primary schools in Mbogwe District. The findings demonstrate that the school culture is generally supportive, particularly through professional development opportunities, shared values and beliefs, mutual respect, teacher collaboration, and open communication. These cultural practices contribute to professionalism, accountability, teamwork, motivation, ethical behaviour, and commitment to teaching responsibilities. However, the comparatively lower levels of agreement regarding open communication and teacher collaboration suggest that these areas require further strengthening. Therefore, establishing and sustaining a positive school culture through supportive and participatory leadership is essential for promoting teachers' professional conduct and improving school effectiveness.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that:

1. School leaders enhance open communication through regular staff meetings, feedback mechanisms, and platforms for participatory decision-making, allowing teachers to express ideas and concerns.
2. Teacher collaboration should be promoted via joint lesson planning, peer coaching, and professional learning communities to foster knowledge sharing. School management must involve teachers in setting ethical standards and expectations for professional conduct, while encouraging positive teacher-student interactions.
3. Continuous professional development should be expanded through training, workshops, and mentoring on ethics and instructional practices. Finally, school leaders should focus on preventive measures for professional misconduct by fostering a supportive culture and offering constructive feedback, rather than relying solely on disciplinary actions.

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