



Headteachers' Perceptions of Transformational Leadership in the Management of Public Primary School Committees' activities in Dodoma City

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Abstract: Transformational leadership is widely recognized as a critical approach for enhancing school effectiveness by empowering stakeholders, strengthening collaboration, and improving governance in educational institutions. However, despite its recognized importance, limited empirical evidence exists on the perceptions of headteachers on transformational leadership in the management of public primary school committee activities in Dodoma City. This study was guided by Transformational Leadership Theory. A qualitative research approach was employed, using interviews and document review. Data was analyzed thematically. The study's findings revealed that transformational leadership practices enhance school committee performance by improving participation in decision-making, accountability and transparency, commitment and responsibility, teamwork, and collective problem-solving. However, challenges such as limited training opportunities, inadequate incentives, and resource constraints were identified as barriers to fully effective committee performance. The study concludes that transformational leadership plays a significant role in strengthening school governance and enhancing the effectiveness of school committees in public primary schools in Dodoma City. It recommends strengthening leadership training, improving capacity-building programs for school committees, and ensuring consistent implementation of participatory governance policies to enhance school effectiveness and accountability.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Primary school Committees, Tanzania

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1. Introduction

This section presents the background of the study and discusses statement of the problem on the perception of headteachers on transformational leadership in the context of public primary school committee activities in Dodoma City, Tanzania.

Effective school leadership is widely recognized as a key driver of school improvement, strengthening teaching and learning, and ensuring stakeholders' participation in

educational management (Leithwood, 2020). Good school-based management depends on leaders who can manage both internal operations and the school's interactions with external stakeholders, including parents, community actors, and local educational authorities (Bush, 2021). To promotes the effective functioning of school committees and governance structures, school leaders must intentionally apply leadership approaches that build the capacity of those committees and coordinate their activities. In recent decade transformational leadership approach has emerged as an effective style for mobilizing

teams, articulating a shared vision, and driving school-level change (Heenan *et al.*, 2023; Eze, 2024).

Studies show that transformational leadership practices such as inspiring a compelling vision, providing intellectual stimulation, and empowering staff are associated with improved teacher motivation, more positive school culture and stronger stakeholder engagement when linked to coherent school improvement strategies (Heenan *et al.*, 2023; Putri *et al.*, 2024). Generally, embedding transformational leadership within school-based management structures supports school committees to move from administrative compliance toward collaborative, goal-oriented action that advances institutional outcomes.

Globally, transformational leadership in education has changed from being a promising theory to a pragmatic priority for systems trying to recover and reform after COVID-19. Recent syntheses emphasize the importance of effective leaders' roles in change management, data-driven improvement, and fostering innovation (Heenan, Lafferty & McNamara, 2024; UNESCO, 2024). Research highlights transformational practices inspire compelling vision, building staff capacity and supporting instructional improvement. However, the effectiveness of identified transformation leadership practices is largely effective when combined with clear management routines, professional development and system supports (Heenan *et al.*, 2024; UNESCO, 2024).

In China, a study by Zhang, Liu, and Wang (2025) involving 453 elementary school teachers examined the influence of principals' transformational leadership on teacher job performance. The study found that leadership dimensions such as idealized influence and inspirational motivation significantly enhanced teachers' instructional commitment, professional collaboration, and overall performance. The authors concluded that transformational leadership enables school leaders to motivate teachers toward collective educational goals and recommended strengthening leadership development programmes for school principals (Zhang *et al.*, 2025).

Similarly, Putri, Suryadi, and Kurniawan (2024) conducted a study in Indonesian public schools to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher innovation. Their findings indicated that transformational leadership practices encouraged creativity, strengthened teacher commitment, and improved collaborative school cultures, particularly when school leaders promoted shared vision and participatory decision-making. The study emphasized that transformational leadership contributes to sustainable school improvement by fostering professional learning

communities and stakeholder engagement (Putri *et al.*, 2024).

Within Africa, recent scholarship increasingly recognizes the importance of contextualized transformational leadership approaches. Kirezi and Peeraer (2023), through an analysis of school leadership development initiatives in Rwanda under the African Centre for School Leadership programme, found that integrating Ubuntu-oriented leadership values strengthened collaboration, community participation, and instructional leadership practices in schools. Likewise, VVOB (2024) reported that school leadership coaching programmes implemented in Rwanda and other African countries improved school management effectiveness, accountability, and teacher support mechanisms. These studies suggest that transformational leadership in African contexts is most effective when combined with community values, continuous professional development, and supportive institutional structures.

African education actors are translating global lessons into regionally relevant leadership agendas. For instance, frameworks such as the African Centre for School Leadership and the Education Commission emphasize contextualized leadership development (including "Ubuntu" or community-oriented competencies), school leader coaching, and strengthening middle managers to sustain foundational learning gains (Kirezi *et al.*, 2024; Education Commission, 2023). Evidence summaries from low- and middle-income countries show that targeted programs to improve school management and leadership produce small but meaningful improvements in learning, especially when interventions include follow-up coaching, accountability mechanisms, and incentives aligned to school priorities (VVOB, 2024).

In Tanzania, contemporary studies continue to reveal the potential of transformational leadership in improving school governance while highlighting persistent implementation challenges. Mlowe and Mushi (2024), in a study conducted in Morogoro Region, found that transformational leadership practices among primary school headteachers enhanced teacher motivation, participatory decision-making, and community engagement, although resource constraints and inadequate training limited their effectiveness. Similarly, Mollel, Komba, and Mtebe (2025), in a study conducted in Kilimanjaro and Arusha regions, reported that school leaders who embraced collaborative and transformational practices strengthened school committee participation and accountability mechanisms, thereby improving school development initiatives. However, the authors observed that limited leadership training and weak institutional support continued to undermine the sustainability of these gains.

School committees in public primary schools in Tanzania were established as part of decentralization reforms implemented across Africa, aimed at improving governance efficiency and making educational policies more responsive to marginalised local community needs (Cabral, 2011). As shown by Mtuli (2020), in Tanzania, the establishment of school committees emerged from the decentralization policy introduced in 1972 (United Republic of Tanzania (URT), 2015). Through these reforms, responsibilities for managing and administering education and training were entrusted to Local Government Authorities (LGAs), school heads, and educational institutions. Decentralization in Tanzania empowered these committees to plan and make decisions regarding school development, procure educational materials, and supervise construction and maintenance projects (URT, 2015).

The Education Act No. 1 of 2018 provides clear legal guidance for the establishment and composition of school committees in public primary schools across Tanzania. The Act stipulates that each committee shall comprise nine (9) members, including the head teacher (serving as secretary), the academic teacher, two teachers, and five parents or guardians elected from the local community, whose children are enrolled at the school. The chairperson must be one of the parent members to ensure community ownership and representation in decision-making (URT, 2018). These committees are mandated to prepare and approve school development plans, manage and monitor the use of school funds, oversee student welfare and discipline, and mobilize community resources for improving school infrastructure and learning conditions (URT, 2018).

Transformational leadership has increasingly been recognized in Tanzania's education sector as an effective strategy for promoting participatory governance, accountability, and school improvement. This leadership style emphasizes building the capacity of school committees through motivation, collaboration, creativity, and shared vision (Komba & Nkumbi, 2021; Mlowe & Mushi, 2024). Within the framework of the Education and Training Policy (ETP) 2014 and its 2023 edition, as well as the Education Act No. 1 of 2018, transformational leadership provides a foundation for improving community engagement and effective school management (URT, 2018; MoEST, 2023). However, there is limited empirical research in Tanzania, particularly in Dodoma City, examining how transformational leadership supports the school committees' activities in achieving educational objectives. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by exploring the role of transformational leadership in enabling school committee to effectively perform their duties in public primary schools in Dodoma City.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In Tanzania, primary school committees were established to strengthen participatory governance and improve school management at the grassroots level. The government has implemented several initiatives to enhance the quality of primary education, including the construction of classrooms, improvement of infrastructure such as electricity and water supply, the provision of free education, the employment of teachers, the distribution of teaching and learning materials, and the increase of management allowances for head teachers to oversee school performance and development (URT, 2015; MoEST, 2023). Despite these efforts, several challenges persist among public primary school committees in Dodoma City, including weak participation, poor strategic planning, limited communication, low commitment, and inadequate community involvement in school affairs (Mbise, 2017; Mosha, 2022). These shortcomings have continued to undermine school improvement and the effective implementation of educational policies. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the perception of headteachers on transformational leadership in the context of public primary school committees' activities in Dodoma City, with a focus on improving participation, collaboration, and accountability in school management.

1.3 Study's objective

The objective of this study was to explore how headteachers perceive transformational leadership in the management of public primary schools committee activities in Dodoma City.

2. Literature Review

This section reviews empirical studies related to headteachers perception on transformational leadership and school committee effectiveness, drawing evidence from global, African, and Tanzanian contexts to inform the study. It covers both the empirical studies, and theoretical review.

2.1 Empirical Literature Review

Across the globe, research has examined how school leaders understand and conceptualize transformational leadership, revealing both common interpretations and context-specific variations in how its principles are applied in educational settings. For example, Heenan *et al.* (2024) investigated the enactment of transformational leadership among primary school leaders in Ireland. Their findings showed that many principals describe transformational leadership in practical terms, such as inspiring a shared vision, fostering collaboration, and empowering staff. The

study concludes that transformational leadership is more commonly understood as a practical approach to leadership rather than a strictly theoretical concept, and it recommends targeted professional development to strengthen leaders' conceptual clarity (Heenan *et al.*, 2024).

Similarly, a qualitative study by Liu and Hallinger (2018) which was conducted in China explored how principals enact transformational leadership in primary schools and how these practices influence teachers' professional commitment. The purpose of the study was to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' and school leaders' experiences of transformational leadership within their school contexts. Using a qualitative case study design that involved interviews and document analysis, Liu and Hallinger (2018) found that transformational leadership behaviours consisted of vision-building, individualized support, and professional encouragement, these behaviours enhanced teachers' sense of purpose, motivation, and commitment to instructional improvement. Liu and Hallinger (2018) concluded that transformational leadership fosters a supportive school culture that strengthens teacher engagement, but emphasized that its effectiveness depends on contextual factors such as school environment and leadership capacity. Liu and Hallinger (2018) recommended continuous professional development to help principals effectively translate transformational leadership principles into practice.

Furthermore, Karema and Mutilu (2024) examined how headteachers understood and applied different leadership styles, including transformational leadership in public primary schools in Ganze Sub-County, Kenya. The findings revealed that many headteachers interpreted transformational leadership as emphasizing individualized support, staff development, and collaborative practices within the school. It was also found that such leadership practices contributed positively to teacher effectiveness and pupil academic outcomes, although the impact varied depending on contextual factors such as school resources and implementation strategies. Karema and Mutilu (2024) established that headteachers who demonstrated stronger transformational leadership tendencies were more likely to foster supportive and participatory school environments. In conclusion, Karema and Mutilu (2024) suggested that there is urgent need to strengthening leadership capacity through professional development to enhance the effective application of transformational leadership in primary schools in Kenya.

In a similar vein, Lopez, Kirezi and Peeraer (2024), conducted a study under the auspices of the African Centre for School Leadership as part of the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report background research. The study examined leadership competencies in Ghana, Kenya, and

Zambia exploring how transformational leadership is conceptualized within local contexts. Lopez *et al.* (2024), postulates that many leaders interpreted leadership practices by blending global principles such as empowerment, vision-building, and collaboration with African cultural values rooted in Ubuntu, emphasizing community engagement, inclusivity, and shared responsibility. Lopez *et al.* (2024) study concluded that contextual and cultural factors significantly shape how transformational leadership is understood and enacted in African school settings. The authors recommended the development of culturally responsive leadership training programs (Lopez *et al.*, 2024). However, the study focused broadly on leadership competencies, therefore governance structures such as school committees or formal decision-making bodies were not examined.

In Tanzania, Kayombo, Matete and Suru (2026b), study on the "Implementation of Transformational Leadership Style in Primary Schools in Tanzania", explored how headteachers and teachers understand and apply transformational leadership. The findings indicate that headteachers commonly associate the approach with empowerment, collaboration, and motivation. Nevertheless, community involvement was found to be weak, highlighting the need for stronger capacity building and stakeholder engagement. Kayombo *et al.* (2026b) recommend enhanced training to deepen leaders' understanding of transformational leadership concepts. Despite these insights, the study did not examine how such interpretations influence specific governance practices, such as the functioning of school committees.

In the same study, Kayombo, Matete and Suru (2026b) found that headteachers in Tanzania link transformational leadership to improved teacher engagement, collaboration, and pupils' academic performance through supportive supervision and participatory management. Similarly, Kayombo *et al.* (2026a) identified transformational leadership as a dominant style among primary schools in Tanzania, where it is associated with improved teacher cooperation and overall school performance. However, its effectiveness was constrained by challenges such as inadequate training and limited resources. Complementing these findings, Sitawa (2022) assessed learning-centred leadership in private primary schools in Temeke District, Dar es Salaam. The study revealed a weak but context-dependent relationship between leadership practices, including transformational behaviours, and pupils' academic performance, suggesting that school environment and resource availability significantly shape leadership outcomes.

2.2 Theoretical review

This study was guided by the Transformational Leadership Theory. In this study, the theory explored how headteachers inspire, motivate, and develop followers to improve public primary schools' committees' activities.

2.2.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory was first introduced by Burns (1978), who introduced the concept in his book *Leadership*. Later, the theory was expanded by Bass (1985), particularly in relation to organizational leadership. Burns conceptualized transformational leadership as a process through which leaders and followers elevate one another to higher levels of motivation, morality, and performance. Bass (1985) further developed the theory by identifying four key dimensions: Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

The theory is widely applicable in educational settings due to its strong emphasis on vision, ethical leadership, and capacity building. It promotes shared goals, enhances intrinsic motivation, encourages innovation, and supports individual development qualities essential for improving collaboration and effectiveness within school committees.

3. Methodology

This section describes the methodology used in this study. It explores the study's design, sampling procedures, tools used to collect data, and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study employed an exploratory case study design within a qualitative research approach. The design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to explore, the perception of headteachers on transformational leadership practices on the performance of public primary school committees in public primary schools in Dodoma City, as an area where limited empirical evidence exists. According to Yin (2018), an exploratory case study design is suitable when a phenomenon is not well understood and when the researcher seeks to generate insights rather than test existing theories.

3.2 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

3.2.1 Sampling procedures

Sampling procedures refer to the systematic process used to select a subset of participants from the target population to represent the entire population in a research study

(Kumar, 2011). In this study, a non-probability sampling approach, specifically purposive sampling, was used to select participants.

3.2.2 Sample size

The sample size for this study was determined using the principles of qualitative exploratory case study research. According to Creswell and Poth (2018) and Patton (2015), qualitative studies prioritize information-rich participants who can provide detailed and meaningful insights into the research problem rather than focusing on large statistical samples. Four (4) headteachers from four public primary school selected from four different ward in Dodoma City, were selected because they were responsible for implementing leadership practices and coordinating school committee activities at the school level.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

According to Creswell and Poth, (2018) data collection methods refer to the techniques and procedures used by researchers to obtain information required to answer research questions. In this study, interviews, and document review were used to collect data. These methods enabled the researcher to gather participants' views, opinions, and experiences concern headteachers perception on transformational leadership in the context of public primary school committee activities in Dodoma City.

3.3.1 Interview

Interviews were used as the primary method for collecting in-depth empirical data relevant to the study objectives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the District Primary Education Officer, Ward Education Officers, and headteachers to gather detailed information on transformational leadership, collaboration with school committees, decision-making processes, and challenges in school management. This method allowed flexibility for probing emerging issues and obtaining rich explanations from participants (Patton, 2015).

All interviews were conducted face-to-face in Kiswahili to enable participants to express their views comfortably and clearly. Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, was audio-recorded, and later translated and transcribed for analysis. This approach facilitated the collection of rich and authentic data on leadership practices and school committee activities.

3.3.2 Document Review

Document review was used to complement data obtained

from interviews by providing objective and verifiable information related to school committee operations and leadership practices. According to Creswell (2014), documents are important sources of secondary data because they represent official records that exist independently of the research process.

The documents reviewed in this study included school committee meeting minutes, school development plans, financial reports, training records for school committee members, and official lists of school committee members. These documents provided useful information regarding decision-making processes, participatory planning, financial accountability, and capacity-building activities within schools. Additionally, document review helped the researcher verify and support information obtained from participants during interviews. The fact that documents provided recorded evidence, they strengthened the credibility of the study and allowed the researcher to explore the extent to how headteachers perceive transformational leadership practices were reflected in school committee governance processes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.4 Data Analysis

Qualitative data collected through interviews and document reviews were analysed using thematic analysis, guided by the procedures outlined by Creswell & Poth (2018). The analysis began with data familiarization, where all audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, and the researcher repeatedly read the transcripts and reviewed the documents to gain a deeper understanding of the information collected. The second phase involved systematic coding, where meaningful units of information related to the research objectives were identified and assigned specific codes. These codes were then compared and grouped together to form preliminary themes that reflected common patterns in participants' views and experiences of headteachers perception on transformational leadership and school committee activities. In the third phase, the themes were reviewed and refined by examining their relevance and consistency with the coded data and the entire dataset. This step ensured that the themes accurately represented the data and addressed the objectives of the study.

The themes were then clearly defined and named to capture their meaning and contribution to understanding the headteachers perceptions of transformational leadership in enhancing school committee activities. The final stage involved interpreting the themes and linking the findings with existing literature to explain how leadership practices influence the functioning of school committees in public primary schools in Dodoma City.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to established ethical standards in research to protect the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants (Kothari, 2018). All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their rights as participants. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences. Informed consent was obtained from each participant before the data collection process began. Confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy were strictly maintained throughout the study.

4. Results and Discussion

The following sections present and discuss the study's findings.

4.1 Headteachers' perceptions and Interpretations of Transformational Leadership

The findings from interviews and document review revealed that headteachers and education in Dodoma City interpret transformational leadership as a multidimensional approach focused on collaboration, motivation, and school improvement. Five themes emerged.

4.1.1 Transformational leadership as participatory decision-making

The findings revealed that headteachers, consistently described transformational leadership as involving teachers and school committee members in decision-making processes. During the interview, one head teacher explained:

"...it is about engaging teachers and committee members in discussions, ensuring that all voices are heard before decisions are made, though I am not formally trained in transformational leadership principles".
(Headteacher A, 23.2.2026)

This quote suggests that some headteachers view transformational leadership as involving participatory decision-making, which is partly consistent with Burns' (1978) transformational leadership theory, that emphasizes leaders inspiring and engaging followers through collaboration. The implication is that a lack of formal understanding may limit the full application of transformational practices, potentially affecting school committee motivation and strategic goal alignment.

Similarly, Headteacher B in School B described leadership as fostering collaboration among staff and school committees to achieve academic goals. The head teacher stated that:

"I believe in encouraging teachers and committee members to share ideas openly, discuss challenges, and plan solutions together, ensuring every member participates in school improvement activities". (Interview with Headteacher B, 24.2.2026)

The quote above, demonstrates that practical experience contributes to an implicit understanding of transformational leadership. Research by Yaqoob *et al.* (2026) supports that participatory leadership increases teacher engagement and enhances school performance. The implication is that training could formalize these practices to strengthen leadership outcomes. This was also anchored by another headteacher who explained that:

"I cooperate and involve myself with school committee members in decision-making, but many lacks formal training on transformational leadership principles and rely on personal experience to guide practices". (Headteacher B, 24.2.2026)

This statement means that transformational leadership encourages cooperative efforts. This was supported by the findings from school documents, such as meeting minutes, which also confirmed evidence of participatory planning meetings. Further indicating that, transformational leadership is understood as a shared governance. These findings align with the Education and Training Policy (2014) of Tanzania, which promotes decentralization and community participation in school governance through school committees. Additionally, this finding echo finding of a study which was conducted by Bush and Glover (2014). Bush and Glover (2014) assessment on the role of school leadership in primary education and found that participatory leadership enhances stakeholder engagement and improves school effectiveness.

4.1.2 Transformational leadership as a motivation

The findings indicate that headteachers perceive transformational leadership as strongly associated with motivating teachers and school committee members to take ownership of school goals. They emphasized encouragement, recognition, and shared responsibility as key motivational tools. During the interview, headteacher A explained:

"It is concerned with motivating teachers by recognizing their contributions, celebrating achievements together during school events, and encouraging teamwork through shared meals and group discussions to reinforce commitment and responsibility". (Headteacher A, 23.2.2026).

This shows that motivational practices are embedded in social and relational interactions, which is consistent with Bass's (1999) transformational leadership principle of inspirational motivation. The implication is that such strategies can enhance commitment, improve collaboration, and increase stakeholder engagement in school management activities. Another headteacher, B in School B, noted:

"It is about focusing on acknowledging teachers who improve student results and committee members who actively support school projects, which encourages continued dedication and fosters a positive school culture". (Headteacher B, 24.2.2026)

The headteacher's statement above reflects the importance of reward and recognition in reinforcing desired behaviours, aligning with previous studies that found acknowledgment of effort strengthens motivation and school governance (Leithwood *et al.*, 2020). The implication is that structured recognition can drive performance improvements and inspire innovative ideas. Another headteacher, C in School C, provided a view about personal engagement with committee members to address individual needs and concerns. The participant insisted that,

"I take time to speak privately with committee members to understand challenges, provide guidance, and maintain confidentiality, which builds trust and encourages active participation in school programs". (Headteacher C, 25.2.2026).

This quote aligns with transformational leadership literature emphasizing individualized consideration, showing that addressing personal needs enhances commitment and accountability (Northouse, 2022). The implication is that tailored support can reduce disengagement and strengthen collaborative school management. This was also evident from documented school reports which indicated that regular motivational

meetings and performance discussions were aimed at improving school outcomes.

This finding is consistent with Day, Gu, and Sammons's (2016) study on school leadership and effectiveness in primary education contexts in England, which revealed that transformational leadership enhances intrinsic motivation and professional commitment among staff. Similarly, in Simiyu Region Tanzania, a study which was conducted by Kahyoza (2023) found that headteachers who practiced supportive and motivational leadership improved teacher engagement and school committee participation. The current study extends these findings by showing that motivation in Dodoma City primary schools is not limited to teachers but also extends to school committee members through structured engagement.

4.1.3 Transformational leadership as a vision building

The findings from the interview and document review revealed that transformational leadership is understood by the headteachers as the ability to develop and communicate a clear school vision focused on academic improvement, infrastructure development, and community participation. Headteacher D in School D explained:

"Motivation is given by linking tasks to the school's vision, appreciating those who contribute to improving student success, and promoting teamwork between teachers and committee members during school initiatives".
(Headteacher D, 26.2.2026).

The quote above demonstrates that motivation tied to shared goals promotes collective responsibility and strategic alignment. Research by Hallinger (2011) supports that goal-oriented recognition enhances performance and engagement. The implication is that schools emphasizing goal-driven motivation are more likely to achieve higher student outcomes and effective committee participation. This was supported by document analysis of school development plans, which confirmed the existence of shared vision statements developed in collaboration with school committees. This idea aligns with the findings of Pont *et al.* (2019), who found that school leaders in OECD primary education systems use vision-setting to align stakeholder efforts toward school improvement goals. However, unlike OECD contexts where visioning is highly institutionalized, the present study shows that in Dodoma City, vision-building is still largely dependent on head teachers' leadership capacity and engagement with school committees.

4.1.4 Transformational leadership as a collaborative problem-solving

The findings revealed that headteachers interpret transformational leadership as a collaborative process of jointly addressing school challenges with school committees, particularly in areas such as infrastructure shortages, teacher absenteeism, and limited financial resources. One headteacher explained:

"When challenges arise, I do not decide alone; we sit together with the school committee to identify solutions, especially on issues like classrooms and desks".
(Headteacher D, 26.2.2026).

The quote above indicates that leadership is exercised through shared responsibility rather than authority, reflecting a shift from traditional hierarchical leadership to participatory governance. It suggests that head teachers recognize the value of collective input in generating practical and contextually relevant solutions, which strengthens ownership among committee members. Another headteacher emphasized:

"Even on teacher absenteeism, we involve the committee to discuss causes and agree on ways to improve accountability". (Head teacher B, 24.2.2026)

The quote above highlights that collaborative problem-solving extends beyond physical resources to include professional and administrative challenges. The involvement of committees in such matters enhances transparency and accountability, suggesting that transformational leadership fosters a culture of openness and shared monitoring within schools. Also, a headteacher from school A added:

"Sometimes resources are not enough, but through discussions with the committee, we can agree on priorities and mobilize support from the community".
(Headteacher A, 23.2.2026)

The headteacher's statement above reflects the practical reality of resource constraints in public primary schools and demonstrates how transformational leadership facilitates collective prioritization and community engagement. It underscores the role of school committees as critical partners in mobilizing local support, thereby bridging gaps left by limited government funding. This is supported with the data from document review further confirms that school committee meetings frequently included agenda items on collective problem-solving, budget prioritization, and community resource

mobilization, indicating that this practice is institutionalized within school operations. These findings are consistent with the Education and Training Policy (2014) of Tanzania, which emphasizes decentralization, community participation, and shared responsibility in school management through school committees. The policy encourages schools to involve local stakeholders in planning, resource mobilization, and problem-solving, which aligns closely with the collaborative practices observed in this study. The findings also corroborate previous empirical studies. For instance, Ngalawa *et al.* (2025), in a study conducted in Iringa and Arusha Regions on primary school governance, found that transformational leadership enhanced school committee involvement in addressing operational and resource-related challenges.

Similarly, Masanyiwa (2023), study which was conducted in Geita Region, examining school committee participation in development projects, reported that collaborative leadership practices improved joint problem-solving and project implementation. Despite that the study confirms that collaborative problem-solving is widely practiced, it also reveals that its effectiveness is constrained by limited resources and varying levels of capacity among committee members. This suggests that although transformational leadership provides a strong foundation for collective action, its full potential depends on adequate support systems, training, and resource availability.

Generally, the findings demonstrate that transformational leadership in Dodoma City public primary schools is strongly characterized by inclusive and participatory problem-solving practices, which enhance accountability, ownership, and school improvement efforts, while also highlighting the need for strengthened institutional support to sustain these practices.

4.1.5 Transformational leadership as a supportive supervision

The findings revealed that supportive supervision emerged as a central manifestation of transformational leadership among headteachers, enabling school committee members and teachers to enhance their knowledge, skills, confidence, and active engagement in school governance and management processes. The findings indicate that headteachers provide personalized guidance, mentorship, recognition, and support to school committee members and teachers in order to strengthen their competence, confidence, and participation in school governance and management activities. Headteachers viewed transformational leadership as a process of continuous guidance, supervision, coaching, and capacity building that empowers school committees to perform their responsibilities effectively and contribute meaningfully to school development. Through regular interactions,

constructive feedback, and encouragement, headteachers fostered a collaborative environment that promoted shared responsibility, improved decision-making, and enhanced the overall effectiveness of school governance structures. During the interview, headteacher A in School A explained:

"I usually meet with committee members and teachers individually to discuss their roles, address the specific challenges they face, and guide them on possible solutions. I also recognize their efforts during meetings so that they feel appreciated, motivated, and confident to continue supporting school development activities effectively". (Headteacher A, 23.2.2026)

The above quotation shows that personalized guidance and recognition encourage school committee members and teachers to perform their duties effectively and confidently. Such leadership practices strengthen commitment, participation, and accountability among stakeholders while improving cooperation between school leaders and governance structures. Other studies support these findings show that transformational leaders demonstrate individualized consideration by paying attention to the unique needs of staff, mentoring them, and providing personalized support that enhances motivation and performance (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Northouse, 2022). This leadership behaviour strengthens teacher commitment, collaboration, and professional growth in school. Additionally, headteacher B in School B explained that individualized consideration includes providing professional support and recognizing the efforts of teachers and committee members in improving school performance and student learning outcomes.

"I try to support each teacher and committee member based on their strengths and the areas they need improvement. When we notice progress, such as better student performance or successful school activities, I make sure to appreciate their efforts, so they feel encouraged to continue working hard". (Headteacher B, 24.2.2026)

The headteacher's comment above suggests that providing tailored support and recognizing achievements strengthens professional development and commitment among school stakeholders. Such leadership practices motivate teachers and committee members to participate actively in school activities and contribute to improving educational outcomes. These findings align with the work of Berkovich

and Bogler (2021) which found that school leaders who provide individualized attention and professional support improve staff engagement, commitment, and performance within educational institutions.

Another headteacher from School C highlighted mentorship and coaching as important strategies.

"I guide committee members by clearly explaining their responsibilities and coaching them on managing school projects and making informed decisions. I also encourage them to develop new skills so they can participate confidently in discussions and contribute effectively to school governance processes".
(Headteacher C, 25.2.2026).

The statement above demonstrates that, mentorship and coaching enhance the leadership capacity of school committee members and enable them to participate effectively in decision-making processes. Such practices contribute to sustainable school governance and strengthen institutional leadership within the school community. These findings are in line with Northouse's (2022) study findings purporting those transformational leaders empower followers by mentoring them, developing their leadership potential, and encouraging them to take greater responsibility in organizational activities. It further corresponds with Bass (1985), study that emphasized individualized consideration as a core dimension of transformational leadership, focusing on mentoring and personal development. In Tanzania, Komba and Nkumbi (2021) found that head teachers who provided guidance and individualized support enhanced committee engagement in school governance activities. The present study corroborates these findings but further highlights that in Dodoma City, such support is uneven across schools, depending on leadership capacity and administrative support structures.

Generally, the findings demonstrate that headteachers in Dodoma City interpret transformational leadership as a multi-dimensional practice combining participation, motivation, visioning, collaboration, and capacity building. These practices basis on transformational leadership theory, strongly align with Tanzanian education decentralization policies, particularly the Education and Training Policy (2014) and school governance frameworks that emphasize participatory management through school committees.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study explored the perception of headteachers on transformational leadership in the context of public primary school committees' activities in Dodoma City, with a focus on improving participation, collaboration, and accountability in school management.

The study suggests that headteachers perceive and interpret transformational leadership as a participatory and collaborative leadership approach that emphasizes involvement of teachers and school committee members in decision-making processes. In the same manner, they associate it with motivation, vision building, and problem-solving. However, this understanding is largely based on practical experience rather than formal training, which results in partial or inconsistent application of transformational leadership principles across schools.

Generally, the study concludes that while transformational leadership significantly enhances school committee effectiveness, its full potential can only be realized when supported by systematic capacity-building, adequate resources, and strong institutional support systems.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen transformational leadership practices and enhance the effectiveness of school committees in public primary schools in Dodoma City.

5.2.1 Recommendations for Policy

First, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), in collaboration with Local Government Authorities (LGAs), should establish institutionalized and continuous capacity-building programmes for headteachers and school committee members.

Second, Ward Education Officers and District Education Officers should conduct regular follow-up visits, provide professional guidance, and establish accountability mechanisms that promote active participation of school committees in planning, budgeting, and monitoring school activities.

Third, the government should ensure adequate and timely allocation of financial resources to support school committee operations and capacity-building activities. Adequate funding will enable school committees to carry out their responsibilities effectively, including monitoring development projects, participating in planning processes,

and mobilizing community support for school improvement initiatives.

5.2.2 Recommendations for Practice

First, headteachers should strengthen participatory leadership practices by ensuring that school committee members are actively involved in all major school activities, including strategic planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring of development projects.

Second, headteachers should prioritize effective communication and motivational practices to strengthen collaboration among stakeholders. Regular meetings, transparent sharing of information, constructive feedback, and public recognition of members' contributions can improve trust, commitment, and accountability.

Third, schools should develop internal mechanisms for strengthening the competencies of committee members through mentoring, coaching, peer learning, and experience-sharing sessions.

5.2.3 Recommendations for Further Research

First, researchers should undertake quantitative and mixed-methods studies to complement the qualitative findings of this study. Such approaches would enable the measurement of relationships between transformational leadership practices and specific indicators of school performance, including student achievement, teacher commitment, resource utilization, and organizational effectiveness, thereby generating more generalizable evidence.

Second, future research should explore the role of Local Government Authorities in supporting school leadership and governance and conduct comparative studies across different regions of Tanzania. Such studies would provide a deeper understanding of contextual factors influencing transformational leadership implementation and assist policymakers in designing interventions that address local governance challenges and strengthen school committee effectiveness.

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