



(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP SUPPORT, PARTICIPATION IN STAFF COMMITTEES AND JOB SATISFACTION OF TEACHERS IN GOVERNMENT-AIDED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MASAKA CITY

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the combined influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees on job satisfaction of teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Masaka City. It was guided by one objective, to assess the combined influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees on teachers' job satisfaction. The study adopted a cross-sectional correlational research design and a quantitative approach supplemented with qualitative data from key informants. A sample of 160 respondents, comprising teachers and headteachers, was drawn from a target population of 296 using Yamane's (1967) formula, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire and an interview guide. Quantitative data were entered into SPSS version 26.0 and analysed using multiple regression, while qualitative data from interviews were analysed thematically. Results revealed that the interaction between perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees had a positive and statistically significant effect on teachers' job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.684$, $t = 9.233$, $p < 0.001$), jointly explaining 46.2% of the variation in job satisfaction (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.462$, $F = 85.247$, $p < 0.001$). Qualitative findings from headteachers corroborated the quantitative results, indicating that leadership support and committee involvement reinforce one another in shaping teachers' satisfaction. The study concluded that perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees are critical, mutually reinforcing determinants of teachers' job satisfaction. It was recommended that school leaders and education stakeholders develop integrated initiatives that simultaneously strengthen leadership support and teacher participation in staff committees, and that periodic evaluations be conducted to monitor their combined effect on teachers' job satisfaction.

Keywords: Perceived Leadership Support, Participation in Staff Committees, Job Satisfaction, Teachers, Masaka City.

1 INTRODUCTION

Teacher job satisfaction is a critical determinant of educational quality worldwide, shaping teachers' commitment, retention, and overall performance in schools (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021). Over time, teacher welfare has been influenced by leadership practices and by the extent to which teachers are involved in institutional governance structures such as staff committees. In the United States and the United Kingdom, education reforms emphasizing accountability and performance monitoring have historically increased teachers' workload, underscoring the importance of supportive leadership and participatory governance in sustaining teacher morale (Hofmans et al., 2023; Ali et al., 2019). Emerging evidence increasingly shows that leadership support and participatory decision-making structures do not act in isolation; rather, they interact to shape how satisfied teachers feel with their work (Karlsson, 2012; Kiprop & Kandie, 2012).

In Africa, teacher job satisfaction has remained a persistent concern, with countries such as Nigeria and Ghana grappling with inadequate remuneration, poor infrastructure, and limited involvement of teachers in school governance (Rashid, 2023; Akuoko et al., 2012). Evidence from Ghana and South Africa indicates that where teachers are excluded from decision-making processes and receive minimal leadership support, disengagement from school goals tends to increase (Kok, Lebusa & Joubert, 2014). Conversely, where leadership support and structured participation through committees coexist, teachers report a stronger sense of ownership and investment in their schools' goals, producing a synergistic effect on satisfaction that neither factor achieves on its own (Scott-Ladd & Chan, 2014; Too, 2009).

In Uganda, teacher job satisfaction has been shaped by the country's changing education landscape. Following the introduction of Universal Primary and Secondary Education, teacher workloads increased substantially, while government initiatives to improve salaries and professional development have had limited effect on overall satisfaction (Larkin et al., 2016; Behrstock-Sherratt & Rizzolo, 2019). According to the Education Service Commission Annual Review Report (2021), approximately 40% of secondary school teachers in Uganda are dissatisfied with their jobs, a situation attributed to inadequate administrative support, limited involvement in decision-making, and weak communication between school leaders and teachers.

At the sub-national level, teacher turnover, absenteeism, and moonlighting remain common among secondary school teachers in Masaka City. The Principal Education Officer's Report (2021) indicates that many teachers teach in more than one school or seek alternative employment due to dissatisfaction with prevailing working conditions, a pattern suggestive of inadequate leadership support coupled with limited participation in school governance and decision-making processes. Anecdotal evidence further shows that some teachers feel excluded from important school decisions and perceive limited recognition from their headteachers and school management committees. While previous studies have separately examined the role of leadership support and teacher participation in shaping satisfaction, there remains limited empirical evidence on how these two factors combine to influence teachers' job satisfaction in government-aided secondary schools, particularly within the Masaka City context. This study, therefore, sought to assess the combined influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees on job satisfaction of teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Masaka City.

1.1 Problem statement

Ideally, teachers in government-aided secondary schools are expected to experience high levels of job satisfaction arising from supportive school leadership and active participation in school decision-making processes through staff committees. When these two factors work together, teachers are more likely to be motivated, committed to their duties, and willing to contribute effectively to the achievement of school goals, with high job satisfaction generally associated with improved performance, reduced absenteeism, and greater retention.

However, despite the importance of this combined effect, several reported cases of teacher dissatisfaction continue to exist in Uganda's secondary schools. According to the Principal Education Officer's Report (2021), many teachers are not contented with their working conditions, citing inadequate administrative support and limited involvement in decision-making, alongside frequent intentions to seek employment elsewhere. This has been attributed partly to the level of leadership support provided by school administrators and the extent to which teachers are involved in staff committees and school governance structures, contributing to low morale among teachers in secondary schools.

Evidence from school inspection reports indicates that schools characterized by both supportive leadership and inclusive management practices tend to register higher levels of teacher satisfaction, since teachers feel valued, respected, and involved in school affairs. Nevertheless, increasing cases of teacher dissatisfaction continue to be reported in government-aided secondary schools, including those in Masaka City. While previous studies have examined leadership support and staff committee participation as separate predictors of teacher satisfaction, there is limited empirical evidence on their joint or interactive effect on job satisfaction among teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Masaka City. It was therefore necessary to conduct this study to assess the combined influence of perceived

leadership support and participation in staff committees on job satisfaction of teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Masaka City, thereby addressing a key knowledge gap.

1.2 General objective of the study

To assess the influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees on job satisfaction among teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Masaka City. The specific objective was to assess the combined influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees on teachers' job satisfaction.

1.3 Justification of the study

The study was justified by the continued reports of teacher dissatisfaction in government-aided secondary schools in Masaka City despite considerable stakeholder investment in teacher welfare programs (Education Service Commission, 2021; Principal Education Officer's Report, 2021). Although prior research has established that perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees each relate individually to teachers' job satisfaction (Liu et al., 2021; Adams & Green, 2020), most studies have examined these two factors separately, leaving limited empirical evidence on how they combine or interact to shape satisfaction outcomes (Karlsson, 2012). This gap is particularly pronounced in Masaka City, where dairy of empirical work has focused on the two predictors in isolation rather than jointly. This study was therefore necessary to generate localized empirical evidence on the combined effect of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees on job satisfaction, to guide headteachers, the Ministry of Education and Sports, and district education officials in designing integrated interventions, rather than fragmented single-factor strategies, for enhancing teacher satisfaction, performance, and retention in government-aided secondary schools.

1.4 Significance of the study

The study is significant to different stakeholders as follows;

Headteachers: The study provides headteachers with insight into the importance of combining leadership support with structured teacher participation in staff committees, rather than relying on either strategy in isolation, in enhancing teachers' job satisfaction in their respective schools.

Teachers: The study provides teachers with useful information on how the interaction between leadership support and their participation in staff committees shapes their overall level of job satisfaction, which may guide their engagement with school governance structures.

Ministry of Education and Sports and District Education Officials: The findings may help the Ministry and district education officials design integrated policies, guidelines, and support systems that jointly strengthen leadership practices and teacher participation structures, rather than addressing them as isolated concerns, in order to enhance job satisfaction among teachers in government-aided secondary schools.

2 METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in government-aided secondary schools in Masaka City, Uganda. Masaka City has only six government-aided secondary schools, all of which were included in the study through census sampling, since all schools had an equal chance of being included, thereby minimizing selection bias.

A cross-sectional correlational research design was adopted, employing a quantitative approach supplemented with qualitative data from key informants to provide contextual explanations. This design enabled the researcher to establish the statistical pattern between perceived leadership support, participation in staff committees, and teachers' job satisfaction at a single point in time (Orodho, 2015).

The target population comprised 296 respondents, consisting of 290 teachers and six headteachers in the six government-aided secondary schools in Masaka City. A sample size of 176 respondents (170 teachers and 6 headteachers) was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 5% margin of error. Teachers were selected using census sampling, in which all teachers in each of the six schools had an equal chance of participating, while headteachers were purposively selected because of their unique knowledge of school leadership and governance processes. Out of the 176 targeted respondents, 160 (91%) successfully completed and returned the questionnaires, a response rate considered highly satisfactory for analysis (Amin, 2005).

Data were collected using a self-administered structured questionnaire for teachers and a semi-structured interview guide for headteachers. Questionnaire items were anchored on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) and measured perceived leadership support, participation in staff committees, and teachers' job satisfaction. The interview guide focused on headteachers' views on how leadership support and staff committee

participation jointly influence teachers' job satisfaction, providing qualitative data that complemented and triangulated the quantitative findings.

The instruments were reviewed by the supervisors and three independent experts, yielding a Content Validity Index of 0.90, which exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.7 (Sekaran, 2003). Reliability was established through a pilot test involving four respondents who did not participate in the main study, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.837, above the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Amin, 2005).

Data analysis for this paper focused exclusively on the combined-influence objective. Quantitative data were coded and entered into SPSS version 26.0, and multiple regression analysis, using an interaction term computed from perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees, was conducted to determine their combined influence on teachers' job satisfaction. Qualitative data from headteacher interviews were analysed using thematic content analysis and presented in narrative form to complement the quantitative results.

3 STUDY RESULTS

3.1 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n = 160)	Percentage (%)
Age	Below 30 years	9	5.0
	30–39 years	76	48.0
	40–49 years	62	39.0
	50 and above years	13	8.0
Education	Diploma	95	59.0
	Degree	56	36.0
	Post graduate	7	4.0
	Masters	2	1.0
Years of teaching	Less than a year	19	12.0
	2 years	26	16.0
	3 years	42	26.0
	Above 3 years	73	46.0
School type	Boarding only	2	1.0
	Day only	32	20.0
	Boarding & day	126	79.0

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The results show that the majority of respondents (48.0%) were aged 30–39 years, followed by 39.0% aged 40–49 years, while only 5.0% were below 30 years, indicating that most teachers were mature, experienced adults. Regarding education, 59.0% of respondents held a diploma, 36.0% held a degree, and the remainder held postgraduate or master's qualifications, suggesting that respondents were sufficiently literate to meaningfully assess leadership support, committee participation, and job satisfaction. Concerning teaching experience, 46.0% of respondents had taught for more than three years, yet job satisfaction remained low, underscoring the magnitude of the problem among secondary school teachers in government-aided schools in Masaka City despite considerable teaching experience. Most respondents (79.0%) taught in schools that combined boarding and day facilities, followed by day-only schools (20.0%).

3.2 Combined influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees on teachers' job satisfaction

To determine the combined influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees on teachers' job satisfaction in government-aided secondary schools in Masaka City, a multiple regression analysis was conducted using an interaction term computed from the product of the two predictor variables. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.381	0.115	–	20.644	0.000
Interaction Term (Leadership support × Committee participation)	0.096	0.010	0.684	9.233	0.000

R = .684; R Square = 0.468; Adjusted R Square = 0.462; F = 85.247; Sig. = .000; Dependent Variable: Teachers' job satisfaction.
Source: Primary data, 2025

The results indicate that the combined influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees explains 46.2% of the variation in teachers' job satisfaction in government-aided secondary schools in Masaka City (Adjusted R Square = .462). This implies that the remaining 53.8% of the variation in teachers' job satisfaction is attributable to other factors not considered in this study.

The model was statistically significant ($F = 85.247$, $p < .001$), indicating that the combined influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees significantly predicts teachers' job satisfaction. The regression results further revealed a positive and significant effect of the interaction term ($\beta = .684$, $t = 9.233$, $p < .001$) on teachers' job satisfaction, suggesting that a one-unit increase in the combined influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees leads to a 0.684-unit increase in teachers' job satisfaction in government-aided secondary schools in Masaka City.

Therefore, the findings suggest that when school leaders provide adequate support and teachers actively participate in staff committees, teachers are more likely to experience higher levels of job satisfaction. This underscores the importance of fostering supportive leadership practices alongside encouraging teacher involvement in school governance as complementary strategies for enhancing job satisfaction among teachers.

When headteachers were asked about the combined influence of leadership support and staff committee participation on job satisfaction, they emphasized that both factors work together to enhance satisfaction. One headteacher noted that “when leadership support is combined with active committee participation, teachers feel fully part of the school system” (HT1), while another observed that “job satisfaction is highest when teachers are both supported by administration and involved in decision-making structures” (HT2). Other headteachers asserted that “these two factors reinforce each other; support alone is not enough without involvement in committees” (HT3), and that “teachers become more satisfied when they see that leadership values their input and also gives them roles in committees” (HT4).

4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Combined influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees on teachers' job satisfaction

This study assessed the combined influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees on teachers' job satisfaction among secondary school teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Masaka City. Findings indicate that the combined influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees explains 46.2% (Adjusted R Square = .462) of the variation in teachers' job satisfaction in government-aided secondary schools in Masaka City.

The finding that perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees jointly account for 46.2% of the variation in teachers' job satisfaction offers important insights into the factors that contribute to a positive work environment for educators. This substantial proportion of explained variance indicates that both leadership dynamics and collaborative engagement play critical roles in shaping teachers' perceptions of their professional satisfaction.

Leadership support is a vital component in cultivating an environment conducive to job satisfaction. According to Liu et al. (2021), teachers who perceive strong support from their leaders are more likely to report higher levels of job satisfaction, as such support fosters an atmosphere of trust and encouragement that enhances motivation and

commitment. The relational dynamics between leaders and teachers significantly shape how educators perceive their work environment and their overall sense of fulfilment.

Moreover, participation in staff committees has been shown to enhance teacher engagement and satisfaction, as documented by Adams and Green (2020). When teachers are given a voice in decision-making processes, they tend to feel more valued and respected within their communities, a sense of agency that can mitigate feelings of isolation and burnout, thereby contributing to increased job satisfaction.

The combined influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees underscores the synergistic effect of these two factors. As noted by Chen et al. (2022), when supportive leadership practices are paired with collaborative participation opportunities, teachers are more likely to experience a well-rounded sense of fulfilment in their jobs. This indicates that fostering leadership support alone may not be sufficient; rather, it must be complemented by structures that promote active teacher involvement in governance and decision-making in order to maximize job satisfaction. This is consistent with the view that participation in staff committees and perceived leadership support have a synergistic effect on teacher job satisfaction, such that teachers who feel both empowered to contribute to decision-making and supported by their leaders are more likely to experience higher levels of satisfaction (Karlsson, 2012; Kiprop & Kandie, 2012).

5 CONCLUSION

In relation to the study objective, the findings established that the combined influence of perceived leadership support and participation in staff committees on teachers' job satisfaction was 46.2% among secondary school teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Masaka City. These findings point to the importance of both perceived leadership support and active participation in staff committees as critical, mutually reinforcing determinants of job satisfaction among teachers. Fostering an environment where these two elements are prioritized together, rather than in isolation, can lead to significantly improved teacher satisfaction and a more positive school climate.

Study recommendations

School leaders and education stakeholders should develop integrated initiatives that strengthen both leadership support and committee participation simultaneously. For instance, headteachers could facilitate regular meetings in which staff committees address school-wide challenges, fostering collaboration and enabling teachers to feel directly supported by their leaders. Education authorities should also conduct systematic evaluations to assess the effectiveness of combined leadership-support and staff-committee-participation initiatives on teachers' job satisfaction, using the resulting evidence to fine-tune these approaches and ensure they continuously meet teachers' needs, thereby reinforcing a positive school culture and improving educational outcomes.

STATEMENTS ON COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

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Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all teacher and headteacher respondents after explaining the study's purpose, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

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