

Socio-Cultural Determinants of Teachers' Attitudes Towards Leadership Effectiveness of Female Head Teachers: Evidence from Public Primary Schools in Morogoro Region, Tanzania

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Abstract: This study focused on socio-cultural determinants of teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in public primary schools in the Morogoro region, Tanzania. The study was informed by social cognitive theory which was introduced by Professor Albert Bandura in 1986. Convergent research design was adopted for this study, where a mixed-research approach was used in this study under pragmatism research philosophy. The targeted population was 6,047 comprising 2,976 teachers, 228 female head teachers, 10 educational officers, 97 educational quality assurance officers and 2,736 school committee members. Questionnaires and interviews were used as data collection instruments in this study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 15 participants for interview while simple random sampling technique was used to obtain 378 participants for questionnaires. Further, on the quantitative side descriptive statistical method was used for data analysis through the scientific package of social sciences version 27.0 while on the qualitative data analysis thematic analysis method was used. On the quantitative side, the findings showed that socio-cultural determinants of teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in public primary schools in the Morogoro region are generally gender stereotypes, patriarchal norms and societal expectations. Further, in the qualitative side, socio-cultural determinants of teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in public primary schools in the Morogoro region are thematically low pointing to gender stereotypes, patriarchal norms and societal expectations. Moreover, the study concluded that, socio-cultural determinants of teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in public primary schools in the Morogoro region are identified as little prevailing in schools headed by female head teachers though the little prevailing situation which has been identified should not be ignored. That being the case, the study recommended that educational practitioners use mass-media to frequently broadcast about gender awareness to teachers as the little negative determinants prevailing in schools may be unconsciously transmitted to other teachers and students. Also it is recommended that educational practitioners try their best to conduct various gender related workshops in schools even once per year. Along the same lines, educational stakeholders continue making implementation of gender-related policies because if they will decelerate, the issue can be transmitted to other teachers and students. On top of that, for any researcher who will be interested to study the related topic, it is recommended that he/she should do the same study at other educational levels like secondary schools, teachers training colleges and universities.

Keywords: Teachers' Attitudes, Female Head Teachers, Leadership Effectiveness, Public Primary Schools.

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I. INTRODUCTION

➤ Background to the Study

Social-cultural determinants of peoples' attitudes towards female leaders have been a matter of concern worldwide. Gender issue is seen as one among the determinants where some people are judging female leadership effectiveness, not only on their professional

competence but also through the lens of gender norms (Bett, 2023; Stewart, 2021; Wang, 2025). In some countries females were regarded as people who cannot lead well as men do because of their gender (Galsanjigmed, 2023; O'Brien, 2023; Tremmel, 2023; Wole, 2024). This means that leading schools were basically associated with males, while females were only considered fit for managing home and marriage responsibilities. Further, schools' leadership responsibilities

were mainly associated with intelligence and masculinity which people thought that these traits are found in males rather than in females (Kabesa, 2023; Mbalilaki, 2022; Tremmel, 2023). In fact, culturally, leadership positions in primary schools have been seen as just for men across many societies all over the world.

Several efforts have been made to determine of peoples' attitudes on female leaders in the world and Tanzania in particular. Beijing Declaration and other platforms such as legal reforms, United Nations-Women, European Union-Women, African Union-Women and various gender reforms and gender focused campaigns such as spotlight initiatives were some of the efforts taken worldwide to minimize forms of violence against females (Abonyi, 2022; Lwamba, 2022). Additionally, the global goal (five) has stood tall for gender equality, encouraging individual actions such as being against gender-harassment, being aware of gender stereotypes, and supporting female mentors.

In the same line Tanzania is actively working towards gender issues and determinants of people's attitudes on female leaders through various efforts like promoting females' participations in decision-making, increasing leadership appointments, enhancing their economic power, addressing harmful social norms and generally 50/50 for gender equality policy (Msafiri, 2023; Opoku, 2024; Rutebeka, 2023; Temu, 2024; UNICEF, 2021). These efforts led to a gradual rise in the number of females appointed as head teachers in Tanzania. However, despite all these advantageous efforts and progress worldwide and in Tanzania particularly, female head teachers are still facing negative perceptions relating to gender-based perceptions, cultural stereotypes and societal expectations which can influence teachers to perceive female leadership effectiveness negatively.

Empirical studies elucidated different determinants of attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of females, among them gender stereotype, societal expectations, and patriarchal dominance (Cardona, 2024; Bett, 2023; Mbalilaki, 2022). Additionally, in a narrowing manner, females' dressing ways, intimidations, home responsibilities, love relationships, fear of being victimized, difficulties in solving important issues and economic status impact teachers' attitude on female head teachers (Adam, 2022; Clagon, 2020; Dirzyte, 2024; Mbalilaki, 2022). Teachers' attitudes from different countries have been influenced by various determinants in various parts of the world. In the United States of America for example, the issue of determinants of attitudes on female leaders prevails. Female leaders are still facing negative attitudes based on gender stereotype, unconscious bias and cultural norms that males are fit for leadership positions while females are less capable in playing leadership roles and cannot balance between family roles and work (Eckel, 2020; Harris, 2024; Smith, 2025).

In European countries, for example United Kingdom, Italy and Germany, the issue of gender bias on viewing females as less effective in leading others, mentality of expected behaviors and harassment experience are some of

the issues influencing negative attitudes towards female leadership effectiveness (Hanek, 2022; Harris, 2024; Heursen, 2020; Magnanellis, 2024; Paola, 2024; Straubs, 2024). It shows that the issue of gender stereotype and societal expectations are big determinants of attitudes on leadership effectiveness of female leaders. Also in Asian countries like Japan, China, India, and Saudi-Arabia determinants like gender stereotype, and cultural determinants which make people to perceive females as male's subordinates and for this case females are seen as responsible for family chores and that they cannot balance family issues and leadership roles (Amin, 2021; Islam, 2023; Sinpeng, 2022; Ngelambong, 2025). This means that females are confined to home roles and men are seen as fit enough to lead others.

In the African context, teachers' attitudes on leadership effectiveness were females were associated with gender, economic and socio-cultural aspects. All these related aspects influence teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers. For instance, in South Africa deep patriarchal views and gender stereotype portray females as weak in performing leadership roles (Dyantiyi, 2025; Mathetha, 2025; Mogoai, 2024). Female heads of schools often confront gender biases that question their competence and authority. Additionally, in Zimbabwe gender stereotypes, gender bias, and patriarchal norms are socio-cultural determinants influencing attitudes towards the leadership effectiveness of females that they cannot effectively play leadership roles (Mapupuni, 2024; Mauchi, 2020; Nakamba, 2022). In this reality all these determinants raise negative attitudes towards female leaders and female heads teachers in particular. Similarly, in Nigeria gender-stereotype of associating leadership and masculinity influences society to perceive females as being unable to effectively play leadership roles. In the same line, societal expectations about believing that females have pressure from home and family responsibilities, also influences people to perceive females as creatures who cannot be well committed to performing leadership roles (Braney, 2022; Talabi-Adeniran, 2021). These determinants influence people to perceive females as not well committed in performing school leadership roles.

Likewise, in Egypt there are deep-rooted patriarchal traditions, societal culture and gender-stereotype which influence people to perceive females just as creatures who have to be under the leadership of males (Halim, 2023; Tousson, 2020). Actually in this society women are portrayed as homemakers while males are seen as providers for the family, which means that males are perceived as workers and leaders while women are perceived as people who are to stay at home performing home responsibilities. Correspondingly, in Cameroon gender-stereotype which is prevailing in this society associates leadership with masculine traits, this enforces people to perceive females as not powerful enough to handle the whole situations of performing leadership roles (Garrards, 2025; O'Rourke, 2020). Cultural beliefs may be placing males as superior fitting for leadership positions while females are seen as inferior and so should just be under males.

Identically, in East African Countries, Kenya for instance, gender stereotype influences attitudes towards female leaders as a result females are low graded and perceived as not effective in leadership (Kanai, 2022; Kipngetch, 2022; Pair, 2021). The same scenario existed in the other East African Countries such as Uganda (Mujuni, 2024; Torsu, 2024). Females are seen as creatures who are overburdened by house chores, for that case they cannot lead well while males can. Also in Tanzania as part of the East African countries, females in Tanzania are viewed as inferior to men and primarily responsible for domestic work influencing negative perceptions on their leadership effectiveness (Majani, 2022; Mbalilaki, 2022). In fact gender stereotype and patriarch structures influence perceptions on female leaders that are less confident and less effective in performing leadership roles.

In the Morogoro region, as a study area, socio-cultural determinants of attitudes towards leadership the effectiveness of female leaders include gender stereotypes and societal expectations; females are seen as not fit for leadership roles (Makere, 2025; Tenga, 2024). Therefore regarding previous studies, there is little literature on the socio-cultural determinants of teachers' attitudes towards the leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in public primary schools in the Morogoro region. In due regard, this study sought to bridge the gap by identifying socio-cultural determinants of teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in public primary schools in the Morogoro region.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by social cognitive theory which was introduced by Albert Bandura 1986 (Fuente, 2023; Kitsantas, 2025; Mujahidah, 2023; Schunk, 2023; Sincero, 2025). Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory states that learning occurs through observing others, learning new behaviors by watching others (Rugeiero, 2018; Zhai, 2023). Social cognitive theory is based on the concept that learning is affected by cognitive behavioral and environmental factors (McLeod, 2025 and Nickerson, 2025). The theory considers a person's past experiences, which will result in a certain behavioral action which may occur (Basedow, 2023; Lara, 2021). Therefore this means that past experiences may influence to expect certain behavior from people.

Social Cognitive Theory is advantageous as it keeps open that learning occurs through observation and so past experiences may influence society to expect certain behaviors from people (McLeod, 2025; Mujahidah, 2023). This theory has been applied to a wide range of topics, such as personality development and functioning, the understanding and treatment of psychological disorders, organizational training programs, marketing, education and more (Chen, 2021; McLeod, 2025). In contrast, social cognitive theory has its weaknesses such as the tendency to oversimplify human behavior by focusing too much on observable behaviors and environmental factors (Alahmad, 2020). Social cognitive theory is relevant to this study because it is appropriate for studying teachers' attitudes in a sense that it considers

persons past experiences which influence expectations of another person. Also, it is a theory that is appropriate for educational studies, and it has been applied in several educational topics.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literatures highlighted various socio-cultural determinants of attitudes towards the leadership effectiveness of female leaders. Different scholars have studied the influencing determinants of attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female leaders. In North America for example, the study by Smith (2025) revealed that societal norms still favor male leadership, women in authority often face direct or indirect resistance from teachers and giving leadership positions to female teachers is a bit low. This means that there are several determinants which influence teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers such as patriarchal mentalities prevailing in the societies.

A study by Teles *et al.* (2020) uncovered that an un-conducive school environment may influence teachers' attitude towards female leadership effectiveness. This might be the disharmony situation among teachers and teachers with the head teacher which may arise due to class differences among workers. Furthermore, there are different kinds of conflicts between teachers and the head teacher or among teachers themselves. Moreover, teachers may reject different kinds of directives from the head teacher and the head teacher may reject various requests from the teachers, this might be so due to societal expectations of leadership and is to lead.

At the same line, Gurgová *et al.* (2021) revealed that different female behaviors are influencing determinants showing inabilities of leadership in schools. Ways of dressing, ways of communicating, being too emotional, empathetic and social behavior female leaders' daily practices are the determinants that make them be negatively judged in the position of leadership. Deviating from expected professional dressing codes, wearing old low-classic garments, gossips, using emotions as a weapon, and self-forcing to lead like a man influence teachers' negative attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female leaders.

In other situation, male head teachers are more trusted by teachers than female head teachers. A study by Ozcan (2023) exposed that male heads teacher are more trusted as competent, rational decision makers, strong communicators and stricter in the implementation of laws and regulations than female head teachers. Therefore, this situation may influence teachers' attitudes towards female leaders as incompetent to lead other teachers. Additionally, societal biases and stereotypes among female and male teachers make female head teacher being perceived more negatively than their male counterparts. Findings from the study expose that traditional gender roles and lack of masculinity are seen as determinants influencing teachers' attitudes towards female leadership effectiveness.

Among the serious determinants influencing teachers' attitudes on female leaders' effectiveness is relating to women and house chores that husbands' finances all what is needed at home and so a woman is to stay at home raise children and other marriage duties. The study by Ghalia (2023) found that, in Arabian culture women have dedicated their time at home and marriage duties as mother and wife. Consequently, there is a truth that it is the historic gender stereotype view which many societies around the Arabian world had and some still have the view that women are better in doing home responsibilities rather than playing leadership roles. The study evidence indicates that there is a correlation between this kind of attitude and Arabian culture. In the same line, Mridul & Sharma (2024) observed that: the presence of an in-conducive school environment is a determinant of teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers. Teachers may think that the occurrence of an in-conducive environment at school is sourced from the weak leadership of the female head teachers and therefore they can start perceiving her in a negative way.

In the African context, the study of Wolle (2024) indicated that the stereotyped view towards female head teacher is one among the determinants of teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers. This means that teachers perceive female head teachers as being busy with marriage and home tasks and so they cannot concentrate on leadership roles. Therefore, associating female leaders with being busy with marriage and home routines influences teachers' attitudes and that female head teachers will be busy with home responsibilities than performing effectively leadership roles.

On the other hand, Nakamba (2022) clarified that, one among the determinants that influence teachers' attitudes on female leadership effectiveness is associated with economic aspects. The study findings indicated that some female head teachers lack funds for developing their education and economic status which makes them look of low value. They cannot even involve themselves in businesses after schoolwork as female teachers colleagues do. In East African context, Afrobarometer Research Network (2024) showed that disharmony situations influence teachers' attitudes on female head teachers' leadership effectiveness. Disharmony kind of environment may grow to a rampant stage due to several gossips between teachers and teachers on the female head teachers, teachers and the head teachers about other teachers and teachers and teachers about other teachers. Actually socio-cultural determinants may influence teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female leaders. These determinants may include cultural history, gender stereotypes, and societal expectations influencing how they view females in the whole issue of leadership.

In Tanzania, gender and socio-cultural issues have been major influencing determinants of societal attitudes on female leadership effectiveness. The study by Mujuni (2024) observed that socio-cultural values influence people to regard females as incapable of leadership roles. As a result, this may influence teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female leaders that females are incapable and so they

cannot lead well. At the same line, Mbalilaki (2022) concluded that gender bias is a major determinant of teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers. The notion of looking at a woman just as a mother and wife not only influences teachers' attitudes that females are better at performing marriage and home duties than performing leadership roles. Therefore, previous studies show that there is little literature about the socio-cultural determinants of teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in public primary schools in the Morogoro region. In due regard, this study sought to bridge the gap by identifying socio-cultural determinants of teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in public primary schools in the Morogoro region.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used convergent research design to help the researcher to undergo quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis and presentation. This research design was powerful for getting a comprehensive understanding of the topic (Craig, 2025). A mixed methods approach was adopted, combining interviews and questionnaires for comprehensive data collection. This method was used in this study to enabled the researcher to collect, analyze and present both qualitative and quantitative data through interviews and questionnaires (Shrestha, 2021).

The study simplified the process of sample size determination by using Kothari's sample size table (Kothari, 2019). The targeted population was 6,047: comprising 2,976 teachers, 228 female head teachers, 10 educational officers, 97 educational quality assurance officers, and 2,736 school committee members (NBS, 2022). So by using Kothari's published table, the sample size was determined to be 378 participant, selected through simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. However, this study used simple random sampling techniques for questionnaires to 378 participants, including 150 teachers, 100 female head teachers, 5 educational officers, 23 educational quality assurance officers, and 100 school committee members. The researcher used this technique since it is unbiased and efficient representation of samples from the targeted population and gave every participant a fair chance of being selected. In the same boat, the researcher used a lottery box to get sample number of the participants needed (Ahmed, 2024). Further, the purposive sampling technique was also used in this study for interview to 15 participants, comprising 5 teachers, 5 female head teachers, 1 educational officer, 2 quality assurance officers, and 2 school committee members. The researcher used this sampling technique to get a deep understanding of the issue under discussion. Additionally, the researcher used her own intelligence and deliberately got proper interview participants (Stratton, 2024).

Questionnaires in the form of three level Likert scale, closed-ended questions were used to collect participants' opinions regarding the studied topic. The researcher distributed the questionnaires to the sample participants at the working places after being granted permission by the

authorities. In the same vein, after the questionnaires had been filled out, then the researcher collected them. The researcher used this kind of data collection instrument because it is good for large samples, facilitates quick data collection process and is nice for attitude studies (Ferrando, 2025). However, on the qualitative side, the researcher used semi-structured interviews through open-ended and probing questions while recording by using tape-recorder. The researcher used this kind of data collection instrument because it allowed the chance of getting rich detailed answers from the participants about the phenomenon (Blackford, 2022). However, the data analysis involved descriptive statistics using SPSS version 27.0 for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data (Dong, 2023).

Validity of the questionnaires in the quantitative side, was ensured by conducting a pilot study to check content validity, to ensure the questions are clear and really asking what was intended to be asked. The researcher administered the sample questionnaires to the intended participants, allowing them to ask any questions if facing any misunderstanding, ambiguities, errors or repetitions. Thereafter the researcher collected the filled questionnaires from the participants (Kothari, 2019). However, on the qualitative side, the researcher used a member checking technique to validate the interview guide for content validity. The researcher delivered interview guides to the experts in the field for content validity such as removing ambiguities, errors and repetitions (McKim, 2023).

Also, in case of reliability, the researcher used Cronbach Alpha Test through SPSS to test consistency and

stability of the Likert scale questionnaires, reliability of the instruments was confirmed with a Cronbach Alpha score of 0.912 (Izah, 2023). In the same line, the reliability of the interview was also checked through the re-interview reliability technique, the researcher asked the same questions to the same participants at different times. Participants answered similarly and hence the variables were concluded as reliable. The researcher used this technique because it enhances credibility and trustworthiness as a measure that produces consistent results over time (Kothari, 2019).

In addition, the researcher followed research ethics standards set for educational research and the requirements of Tanzania research authorities. Furthermore, during data collection the researcher made sure that force was not used and the participants were openly told about nature and purpose of the study. Moreover, to protect anonymity, the researcher made sure that the names of respondents are not used in data analysis and presentations.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This part introduced findings and discussion. The study focused on socio-cultural determinants of teachers’ attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in public primary schools in the Morogoro region, Tanzania. The findings indicate that there are various socio-cultural determinants of teachers’ attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in public primary schools in the Morogoro region, Tanzania as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 Socio-Cultural Determinants of Teachers’ Attitudes Towards Leadership Effectiveness of Female Head Teachers (n=378), Responses in Frequency (F) and Percentage (%)

S/N	Statements	A		UD		D	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Stereotyped views affect perceptions of female head teachers’ leadership capabilities	60	16	17	4.5	301	79.5
2	Marriage responsibilities influence teachers’ attitudes, indicating a shift in perceptions	30	7.9	43	11.3	305	80.8
3	Influence of female head teachers’ behaviors	37	9.9	32	8.3	309	81.8
4	Impact of dress on teachers’ attitudes	35	9.5	39	10.3	304	80.2
5	Economic status and leadership perception	18	4.8	33	8.6	307	81.2
6	Intimidation and female leadership	35	9.5	40	10.6	303	79.9
7	Selection procedures and teachers trust	37	9.7	37	9.7	304	80.6
8	Victimization and leadership effectiveness	60	16	44	11.7	274	72.3
9	Misbehavior and professionalism	49	13	35	9.3	394	77.7
10	Problem-solving capabilities of female leaders	68	18	43	11.5	267	70.5

Key: A=Agree UN=Undecided D=Disagree

Source: Field Data (2025)

Data from Table 1 shows that 79.5% of the participants disagreed that stereotyped views affects perceptions of female head teachers’ leadership capabilities. This implies that stereotyped views towards the leadership capacity of female head teachers influence teachers’ attitudes towards female head teachers in the Morogoro region public primary schools though 16% of the participants who agreed cannot be

ignored. The findings from the questionnaires point to the reply of face-to-face interview with one among the participants who contributed that:

Some years back, female head teachers were viewed as people who cannot be effective and efficient in the implementation of leadership roles. This kind of stereotypical

view greatly influenced subordinates to have negative attitudes towards female head teacher. However, these days, several people in society and teachers in particular have decreased having negative attitudes towards female head teachers in such a way. To me I label a female head teacher as a person who can lead well because I have worked with five (5) female head teachers to date. Now I have come to the conclusion that women are capable of leadership.

However, Wolle (2024) and Tabassum (2021) also go along with the contemporary study that one of the determinants of teachers' attitudes towards female head teachers is the stereotyped view on females' leadership capability. The findings are also supported by the studies of Choge (2025) and Pair (2021) that gender stereotypes influence attitudes towards female leaders as a result females are viewed as incapable in playing leadership roles. However, the findings are supported by social cognitive theory that a stereotyped person's past experiences may influence expectations of female head teachers. This means that according to the stereotypical past experiences teachers found themselves viewing females as people who are not capable in performing leadership roles though in Morogoro the situation has changed.

Further, figures from Table 1 convey that 80.8% of the participants disagreed that marriage responsibilities influence teachers' attitudes, indicating a shift in perceptions. This means that marriage responsibilities influence teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in the Morogoro region public primary schools though 7.9% of the participants who agreed should not be excluded. The findings from the quantitative data relate to the face to face interview with a participant who had this to say:

Not me at all having such gender stereotypical mentality but a few teachers are still have such stereotypic attitudes that female head teachers are better figures for marriage and home responsibilities, which means that females cannot lead well other teachers. They believe the role of leading others is fit for men. They use holy books to justify their comments and beliefs.

➤ *Another Participant Added that*

Female head teachers are good in performing leadership roles but I think some people may perceive them in a negative way due to factors like maternal issues such as pregnancy complications and maternal leave so here a female can be in a situation of not being able to perform leadership roles for like five to six months. On top of that there is also the lactation period which is seen as a challenge and determinants of teachers' attitudes on female head teachers.

These findings are supported by Wolle (2024) that marriage responsibilities and home duties are determinants affecting females' leadership effectiveness. Similarly Amin (2021) and Sinpeng (2022) concur with the findings that gender stereotypes and societal expectations prevailing in the societies have an attitude that females are male's subordinates and that they are responsible for family chores and so they

cannot be effective in playing leadership roles. However, the findings are supported by social cognitive theory that for a long time teachers have the mentality that females are for marriage responsibilities and home duties and so they cannot perform well in leadership roles. This implies that previously society perceived females as people who are more fit for marriage and home duties though currently this notion has changed to a great extent.

Also, statistics from Table 1 displays that 81.8% of participants felt that female head teachers' behaviors do not significantly impact teachers' attitudes. This implicates that female head teachers' behaviors influence teachers' attitude towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in the Morogoro region public primary schools though 9.9% of participants agreed that female head teachers' behaviors influence leadership effectiveness. Qualitative data supports this, with participants noting confidence and ethical treatment of subordinates. These participants had the following to say:

I am confident, treating my subordinates well and I am respecting myself with good professional and ethical behaviors. I treat my subordinates very well my subordinates without favoring this one and disfavoring the other or backbiting any one among my subordinates in this school.

➤ *Another Interview Participant Cemented that*

As you can see, I am 57 years old. To be very frank and open without favoring any gender, among the heads of schools who happened to lead me, leadership effectiveness of female head teachers have changed a lot. Previous years according to gender stereotype females were labeled as creatures who are indiscipline and cannot abide well to professional ethical behaviors and so they cannot be effective in playing leadership roles. Contrary, females who are given a chance to lead appear to have good behavior abiding to professional ethics and being effective in playing leadership roles.

The study of Vasasova *et al.* (2021) have similar findings that female behaviors are contributing determinants showing incapability of leadership in schools. However, the findings implies that female behaviors may influence people to perceive female head teachers as incapable in performing leadership roles though currently the situation has changed.

Withal, figures in Table 1 exhibit that 80.2% of participants disagreed that the dress influences attitudes. This implies that teachers' attitudes on female head teachers are influenced by how female head teachers dress. However, 9.5% of the participants agreed that teachers' attitudes on female head teachers are influenced by how female head teachers dress, this percent cannot be ignored. This implies that teachers' attitudes towards female head teachers are influenced by how female head teachers dress. This may be because some female head teachers may be not dressing properly according to the ethical professional dressing guidance for public civil servants. However, the findings are not far to the information given by one among participants from face to face interview, who contended that:

Some years back teachers and the communities in general were generally perceiving females as people who cannot behave well to fit the female head teacher leadership position. Unethical dressing styles of some women invite love relationships, irrespective laughing, and gossips which may raise a big worry from the society and teachers in particular that females can be good in leadership. But recently, surprisingly female head teacher dressing styles is no longer a big issue influencing teachers' negative attitudes towards them as most of them wear decently according to professional ethics.

Similar results were found in Vasasova *et al.* (2021) according to with the modern study that the way female leaders dress can influence subordinates' attitudes towards them in a negative way. However, the findings are supported by the social cognitive theory that the society has an experience of females wearing min-skirts, transparent clothes, short tops, short-sleeve blouses and so they were expecting even female head teachers can do the same while in the leadership position. Therefore, this means that previously teachers had that attitude that female head teachers can dress unprofessional but as time goes on most teachers are positively perceiving female head teachers because most of them are dressing professionally.

In addition, statistics in Table 1 show that 81.2% of the participants disagreed that economic status influences attitudes while 4.8% agreed. This means that in the study area economic status of female head teachers being an influencing determinant for teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness on them is not very high. This may be because most of educated teachers are now focusing more on leadership capabilities than economic status. However, this finding is not far to the information given by one among participant from face-to-face interview, who had this to say:

Some Tanzanian civil servants who are couples are staying separate and unfortunately enough the one who goes everywhere with children and other dependents is a female. The female carries a heavy burden on the family, so she openly looks bankrupt financially and with an unsettled mind. Sometimes she can even start to uncover her challenges to some of the subordinates, and start selling some small businesses like sweets, burns, small cakes and the like for this case her subordinates will start looking down on her and at the end whenever she gives them some orders they will not even care about doing them.

The study of Nakamba (2022) and Stranb (2024) coincide with the present study that economic status is an influencing determinant for female leaders being perceived in a negative way. Nevertheless, the findings from the study are aligned with the social cognitive theory that the past experience that people have on females is that most of them are low economically and so they are expected not to be effective in performing leadership roles. This means that formerly teachers had the mentality that the economy of most of females is low so they will be busy thinking and exposing their problems hence difficult in performing leadership roles.

Additionally, data in Table 1 unveil that 79.9% disagreed that intimidation influences attitudes while 9.5% agreed. This implies that intimidation being an influential determinant for teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers is not very high. This might be because these female head teachers know how to use some leadership techniques in tackling intimidations that come on them from teachers. However, in an in-depth interview from one of the participants commented that:

At the first time, when I was appointed to be a head teacher, I faced different kinds of intimidation from the teachers and society around, they aimed at discomfort and threaten me as a female. I thank God that I stood firm and tackled all kinds of intimidation. As I am talking to you right now, it is my tenth year since being in this position, not only in this school but in three different schools and things are going well.

However the related findings were found in the study of Mridul (2024), which uncovered that intimidations can influence teachers' negative attitudes to female leaders. In the same vein, Braney (2022) and Talabi-Adeniran (2021) support that the patriarchal dominance in society which associates leadership with masculinity makes an open room for society to intimidate female leaders. Despite that, the findings conform to the social cognitive theory that, according to experience, females face several intimidations and so they are expected to shake in performing leadership roles. That is to say, earlier on female head teachers were really threatened by several intimidations faced from subordinates and the community around, and so made them not be stable in performing leadership duties. The situation made teachers not trust female head teachers in leadership positions though contemporary female head teachers who are trusted by teachers that are effective in leadership.

Selection procedures for female head teachers are perceived as fair by most teachers. Statistics in Table 1 present that 80.6% of participants disagreed that selection procedures influence teachers' attitudes, while 9.7% of the participants agreed. This implies that trust in the selection authority has increased, changing perceptions of female leadership, that is historical biases about female qualifications are diminishing. This might be because teachers have trust on the authority which deals and is responsible with selection of female head teachers. However, in a similar vein, the study of Ahmed & Al-Dhuwaih (2021) concurs with the recent study that recruitment and selection procedures of female head teachers is influencing determinants of teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers. This means that once a time teachers thought that females were given leadership positions just as a favor and not for qualification and so they cannot be effective in leadership but currently this mentality is changing into positive.

Furthermore, data in Table 1 unveil that 72.3% of the participants disagreed that victimization influences attitudes, while 16% agreed. This implies that the attitudes of teachers that victimization is an influencing determinant towards

leadership effectiveness of female head teachers is currently not in high rate. The situation is like this probably because most female head teachers are resilient and do not fear victimization from teachers and society at large. In an in-depth interview, one of the participants cemented:

I have been a female head teacher for nearly seven years now. What I can say is that we as females do face tougher situations in the journey of climbing to the top due to systemic barriers like societal stereotype attitudes that question females' leadership capabilities. These challenges can threaten female head teachers and feel like being victimized and as a result, if this head teacher is not firm can end up performing low in her leadership.

However, these findings are supported by Mbilishaka *et al.* (2023), which indicate that fear of being victimized is a source of subordinates' attitudes towards female leaders. They add that many female leaders are in a suspicious mood of being victimized by the subordinates and the society around the school which may result in them being fired from their positions. The social cognitive theory agrees with the findings that formerly teachers experienced female heads of schools being victimized by mistreatments and bullying from subordinates and the community around, and so expecting that females cannot be stable in performing well leadership roles.

Moreover, misbehavior among female head teachers is decreasing, positively affecting teachers' attitudes. Figures in Table 1 show that 77.7% disagreed that misbehavior influences attitudes, while 13% agreed. This means that the issue of female head teachers practicing misbehaved activities is decelerating. It seems that most of female head teachers are adhering to professional guidelines. In the past misbehavior impacted perceptions, but improvements are noted. However, in an in-depth interview with one of the participants said:

I have been a quality assurance educational officer for a long time and in fact I have visited a lot of primary schools and in specific met with a lot of head teachers. To be honest some years back female head teachers were doing several misbehaved activities which influenced teachers to perceive them in a negative way. Currently most female head teachers are trying their best to do disciplined behavioral activities as professionals.

However, these findings are supported in the study by Ball *et al.* (2024) which unveiled that misbehavior activities related to stereotypical female traits is influencing determinants for teachers' attitudes on female leaders. They add that, this resulted in a discouragement of appointing female teachers to be head teachers. However, social cognitive theory aligned with the findings that previously teachers had an experience of seeing female teachers doing misbehaved activities at school and so expecting female head teachers to not fit for leadership roles. This implicated that female teachers and female head teacher were engaging in misbehaved activities such as selling small businesses at school, using phones too much, knowingly or unknowingly

creating staff classes, going with their own infants and toddlers at school and going to the market during work hours. Therefore these misbehaved activities forces teachers to perceive female head teachers as figures who are not effective in performing leadership roles.

On top of that, female head teachers are increasingly seen as problem solvers. Information in Table 1 shows that 70.5% disagreed that female head teachers face difficulties in solving important issues while 18% agreed. This means that the issue of female head teachers having difficulties in solving important issues is of low rate. This may be due to trainings and workshops have helped improve problem solving skills. Uniformly, one of interview participants had this to add:

You know, for many years females were viewed as people who cannot solve important issues because they were normally facing difficulty in solving them, especially at working places. According to the experience I have had since I was initially employed as a teacher, female head teachers and females in general are recently really changing in this region. They are now viewed as figures who are just capable and effective in solving difficult issues. They may face some small difficulties but I have seen them know how to overcome and come out with good results.

Additionally, in the same line of the study by Kanai (2022) concurs with the recent study that female leaders are insufficient in-terms of thinking and solving important issues at the work place. Similarly, the study of Garrards (2025) and Michael (2023) supports that gender stereotypes, societal expectation and patriarchal dominance in societies may influence societal attitudes that females face difficulties in solving important difficult issues at working places. This means that the mentality of associating men with leadership may force teachers to view female head teachers as leaders who face difficulty in solving important issues at the work place. However, the social cognitive theory conforms with findings that previously females were seen as creatures who have difficulties in solving difficult issues and teachers expected to see female head teachers performing worse in school leadership. Thus, female difficulty in solving difficulty issues was among the influencing determinants of teachers' attitudes towards female leaders but recently this determinant has low weight.

VI. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

On the quantitative side, the study showed that socio-cultural determinants of teachers' attitudes and leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in public primary schools in the Morogoro region are generally gender stereotypes, patriarchal norms and societal expectations. Further, in the qualitative side, socio-cultural determinants of teachers' attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in public primary schools in the Morogoro region are thematically low pointing to gender stereotypes, patriarchal norms, and societal expectations.

VII. CONCLUSION

Based on the study findings, this study concluded that social-cultural determinants of teachers' negative attitudes towards leadership effectiveness of female head teachers in public primary schools in the Morogoro region are identified as prevailing less in schools headed by female head teachers though the little prevailing situation which has been identified should not be ignored.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That being the case, the study recommended that educational practitioners use mass-media to frequently broadcast about gender awareness to teachers as the little negative determinants prevailing in schools may be unconsciously transmitted to other teachers and students. Also it is recommended that educational practitioners try their best to conduct gender related workshops for teachers even once per year. Along the same line, educational stakeholders continue making implementation of gender related policies because if they will decelerate, the issue can be transmitted to other teachers and students. On-top of that, for any researcher who will be interested in conducting the related study, it is recommended that the researcher conduct the same study at other educational levels such as secondary schools, teachers' training colleges, and universities.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

We, Nestoria Kabula Mtenga, Daniel Mkude and Eugenia Wandela, hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of this manuscript.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

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