

Extent of the Teachers' Involvement in Decision-Making on Curbing Teachers' Absenteeism in Public Primary Schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania

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Abstract: This study investigated the Extent of teachers' Involvement in Decision-Making on Curbing Teachers' Absenteeism in Public Primary Schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania. The study was guided by Teacher Empowerment Theory (1992), while employing a convergent research design under a mixed research method. The target population included 152 public primary schools, 152 headteachers, 1,193 teachers, and 1 District Primary Education Officer, making a total of 1,346. Both Probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to select 15 public primary schools, 15 headteachers, 200 teachers, and 1 District Primary Education Officer (DPEO), thus making a total of 216 respondents. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires, while qualitative data were collected through an interview guide and a document analysis guide. Data collection instruments were validated by three MWECAU research experts from the field of Educational Planning and Administration. A pilot study was conducted in 2 public primary schools not included in the study. The reliability of questionnaires for Likert-type items was ensured using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, while the trustworthiness of qualitative data collection instruments was ensured through triangulation to ensure consistency. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including Simple Linear Regression at a 0.05 (α) significance level, with the aid of SPSS version 27, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically with the aid of NVivo version 15. The researcher adhered to ethical considerations, including a research permit letter, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and avoiding plagiarism throughout the evaluation process. The study found that involving teachers in key school matters such as school improvement planning and participation in school committees significantly enhances teachers' sense of ownership, accountability, commitment, and responsibility toward school activities. The study concludes that teacher participation in decision-making serves as a significant dimension of an empowerment mechanism in curbing teachers' absenteeism but not a major one that enhances teachers' commitment to school responsibilities, due to routine or habitual working practices, staffing constraints, and personal circumstances that reduces positive attitudes toward work, accountability, and teachers' willingness to attend school regularly and remain engaged in their professional duties. The study recommends that primary school leadership in Mufindi District should introduce a structured "Teacher Attendance Accountability Participation Integration System (TAAPIS)" at the school level.

Keywords: Teachers', Involvement, Decision-Making, Curbing, Teachers' Absenteeism.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Quality education is conceptualized as a fundamental human right that must be accessible to all individuals throughout their learning journey. The realization of quality education is intrinsically linked to the consistent presence and active engagement of teachers in the instructional process.

Teachers' attendance constitutes a critical pillar of quality education, as it guarantees continuity in instructional delivery, fosters learner engagement, and enhances overall academic achievement (UNICEF, 2024). Quality education is further anchored in essential elements such as equity and inclusiveness, qualified and empowered teachers, a relevant curriculum, and a supportive school environment. The

elements align with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, particularly target 4.c, which underscores the imperative of strengthening the teaching workforce to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education (UNESCO, 2015). Teacher involvement in decision-making, as one of the central indicators of quality education, reflects the extent to which teachers execute their responsibilities effectively. Despite its significance, UNESCO (2023) reports that teacher absenteeism remains a persistent global struggle, with more than 150 million teachers accounting for over 34% of teachers worldwide being absent from schools during instructional hours, an issue that directly undermines instructional continuity and diminishes teachers' commitment. The alarming statistics raise serious concerns about the stability of teaching environments and underscore the need to investigate how teacher involvement in decision-making effectively enhances teacher attendance (UNESCO 2023).

Globally, the Finnish National Agency for Education (2023) having established the centrality of involving teachers in decision making in order to enhance their attendance put much emphasis on strong collaborative school governance, where teachers actively participate in curriculum planning and school policy decisions, this move has contributed to very low reported absenteeism rates of below 5%. In India, research by the Accountability Initiative (2022) found that approximately 19% of teachers are absent on any given school day, despite formal attendance monitoring systems being in place. In Latin America, studies conducted by the Inter-American Development Bank (2023) indicate that teacher absenteeism rates range from 10% to 20%, particularly in rural and underserved regions. Consequently, it is still unclear whether existing school governance mechanisms, particularly those aimed at involving teachers in decision-making processes, are sufficiently effective in enhancing teacher commitment and reducing absenteeism. Hence, teacher absenteeism is increasingly recognized as a major barrier to effective teaching and learning, requiring strengthened participatory management approaches in schools.

In Africa, efforts to address the issue of teachers' absenteeism have been introduced. A good example is the Ghana where Education Service (2022) highlights the implementation of School Performance Improvement Plans (SPIP), which include teacher participation in decision-making, contributing to improved school accountability in some districts with absenteeism rates exceeding 15%. A monitoring report by the Ghana Education Service (2022) shows that teacher absenteeism remains above 15% in some deprived districts, contributing to low curriculum coverage and poor student performance. Similarly, in Malawi, a report by the Ministry of Education (2023) reveals that irregular teacher attendance is still a major concern, especially in hard-to-reach rural schools. The initiatives portray that, even within the African context where various accountability and school management reforms have been introduced, teacher absenteeism continues to undermine the quality of education delivery. Subsequently, it is still uncertain whether existing participatory governance strategies, including teachers' involvement in decision-making, are sufficiently effective in

strengthening teachers' school attendance. Henceforth, teacher absenteeism in Africa is increasingly recognized as a critical barrier to effective teaching and learning, calling for stronger teacher engagement in school-level decision-making processes.

In Tanzania, the Government came up with the Education and Training Policy of 2014, which was revised in 2023, focusing, among other things, on strengthening provisions for teacher empowerment aimed at enhancing teacher competence, autonomy, impact, status and professional accountability (URT 2023). The revised policy conceptualized teachers' empowerment as the ability of teachers to improve commitment and punctuality. Despite the efforts to professionalize and empower the teaching workforce, teachers' disciplinary violations including teacher absenteeism, remain a serious concern in Tanzania. By-laws, from the Teachers Service Commission Regulations, of 2016 (GN No. 308/2016) explicitly obligate teachers to maintain regular and punctual attendance, as stipulated in Regulation 47(1), which requires every teacher to "report to duty regularly and punctually and to account for any absence." Furthermore, Regulation 48(1)(c) defines absence from duty without leave or reasonable cause for more than five consecutive days as a disciplinary offence. Recent statistics from the national disciplinary records reveal that out of 10,904 cases concluded over five years, 62% were for unexcused absenteeism cases among the teachers (TSC, 2021).

Among regions in Tanzania, Iringa Region emerged as one of the leading hotspots for absenteeism cases, with more than 90 teachers reported to be absent in their schools. The statistics underscore persistent lapses in teachers' accountability, professional responsibility and institutional oversight (Juma and Stonier 2023). The high incidence of unauthorised absence in contravention of statutory provisions raises serious concerns about teaching stability and instructional provision quality in public primary schools. In 2020, the Government of Tanzania advanced participatory governance by promoting teacher involvement in decision-making, improving working conditions, and strengthening accountability mechanisms to enhance teacher attendance and professional performance (Vuje et al. 2025). Vumilia and Okendo (2020) argue that effective teacher empowerment through involvement in decision-making enhances teachers' confidence, professional skills, and sense of ownership, which in turn promotes regular attendance and improves instructional quality in primary schools. Contempt, the efforts, and teacher absenteeism continue to be a persistent challenge in public primary education, where Iringa region stood as a leading region with 42.2%, followed by Dar es Salaam (36.7%), Mwanza (33.1%), and then Kigoma with 25% in 2025.

In Iringa Region, the government has made efforts to involve teachers in decision-making by providing them with adequate teaching and learning materials, besides creating conducive teaching environments, allowing teachers to feel comfortable and supported in their professional duties (Magava, 2021). Despite the interventions, teachers'

attendance remains a significant alarm, with numerous cases of absenteeism reported at the workplace, as illustrated in Table 1. The data indicate fluctuations in absenteeism over

the five years, highlighting the need for targeted strategies to address teachers' presence and commitment in schools.

Table 1 Number of Teachers Held Accountable for Absenteeism in Iringa Region from 2020 to 2024

Year Districts	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Mufindi	12	16	11	41	48
Mafinga TC	0	1	0	3	2
Iringa DC	1	0	0	6	0
Iringa MC	3	0	0	0	1
Kilolo	3	1	2	4	2

Source: Tanzania Service Commission, (2024)

Table 1 clearly illustrates the growing challenge of teacher absenteeism in public primary schools in Iringa Region from 2020 to 2024, where Mufindi District appears to be leading, followed by Kilolo, Iringa DC, Mafinga TC, and then Iringa DC, where Mufindi DC reveals an increasingly concerning trend despite ongoing government efforts to improve school conditions. The data show that absenteeism cases rose sharply from only 12 teachers in 2020 to 16 teachers in 2021, before fluctuating to 11 cases in 2022 and rising again to 41 in 2023 and later on 48 cases in 2024, which has led to 91% of them being dismissed due to absenteeism. This persistent pattern of irregular attendance highlights a deeper underlying problem that goes beyond the provision of adequate teaching materials and conducive school environments (TSC, 2024). Although, the government has invested in improving school infrastructure and resources, the efforts appear insufficient in curbing absenteeism without addressing internal motivational and empowerment factors among teachers. The trend exposes critical gaps in teacher accountability, punctuality, and an increase in the pupil-teacher ratio, which has gone up to 1:67, far beyond the government benchmark of 1:45, within the district in 2024 (URT, 2024). Consequently, this study sought to investigate the contribution of teachers' involvement in decision-making in curbing teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania.

➤ *Statement of the Problem*

Teachers' absenteeism has become a persistently problem in public primary schools across Tanzania, undermining the quality of teaching and learning. Despite government efforts to strengthen teacher management and improve school performance, pupils continue to lose valuable instructional time due to frequent teacher absences (Bayeke et al. 2024). Parents, pupils, school committees, local authorities and other education stakeholders have voiced growing concern that absenteeism disrupts lesson continuity and contributes to declining academic outcomes among primary school learners. The Tanzania Service Commission (2024) shows that Mufindi District is particularly affected, with absenteeism cases rising from 12 in 2020 to 48 in 2024, indicating a growing concern about teacher accountability. This trend is further compounded by the dismissal of 91% of the implicated teachers, which has contributed to an inflated pupil-teacher ratio of 1:67, far above the national benchmark of 1:45 (URT 2024).

Various studies have been conducted on teacher's empowerment in Tanzania, including those by Kamugisha et al. (2024), who examined the linkage between teacher autonomy and teachers Absenteeism towards primary school pupils' academic performance, Masanjukila et al. (2024), who investigated the impact of teacher Absenteeism on school effectiveness, and Brian (2023), who assessed teachers' absenteeism on performance among English teachers in public primary schools. However, among the reviewed studies, none has comprehensively examined the contribution of teacher involvement in decision-making to teachers' attendance in public primary schools. Therefore, the current study investigated the extent to which teachers' involvement in decision-making enhances curbing of teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania.

➤ *Research Question*

This study was guided by the following research question;

- To what extent does the involvement of teachers in decision-making effectively enhance the Curbing of Teachers' Absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania?

➤ *Research Hypothesis*

The current study was guided by the following research hypothesis;

- H_a: Teachers' involvement in decision-making has a statistically significant prediction on the level of curbing teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania.

➤ *Significance of the Study*

The study is expected to be of significance to various educational stakeholders in Tanzania. Public primary school teachers in Mufindi District are likely to gain insights into how their involvement in decision-making processes contributes to reducing absenteeism by fostering a sense of ownership, responsibility, and commitment to school activities. Headteachers would benefit from evidence-based information on the importance of participatory leadership practices in enhancing teacher attendance, accountability, and workplace motivation. Ward Education Officers, School Quality Assurance Officers, and District Education Officials

are expected to utilize the findings to strengthen school management practices that promote teacher engagement and regular attendance. Policymakers and educational planners are likely to gain empirical evidence to guide the development and implementation of policies that encourage teachers' participation in school decision-making as a strategy for improving teacher commitment and reducing absenteeism. Academically, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on participatory school management and teacher attendance in public primary schools, while also serving as a reference for future researchers interested in teacher involvement, school governance, and educational effectiveness. Consequently, the study enriches the theoretical understanding of teacher empowerment by providing evidence from a developing-country setting, thereby broadening the applicability of the Teacher Empowerment Theory beyond the contexts in which it was originally developed.

➤ *Theoretical Framework*

This study is grounded in the Teacher Empowerment Theory developed by Short and Rinehart (1992), which posits that teachers' effectiveness and professional commitment are strengthened when they are actively involved in school decision-making processes, granted autonomy in instructional practices, provided opportunities for professional growth, and recognized for their contributions. The theory assumes that when teachers participate in decision-making regarding school governance, instructional planning, and administrative matters, they develop a stronger sense of ownership, responsibility, and accountability toward their duties. This empowerment enhances intrinsic motivation, job satisfaction, and professional commitment, which may ultimately influence positive workplace behaviors such as regular attendance and reduced absenteeism. In the context of this study, the theory explains how participatory decision-making can serve as a motivational mechanism that encourages teachers to be more present and actively engaged in their instructional responsibilities in public primary schools.

➤ *Strengths of the Teacher Empowerment Theory*

The Teacher Empowerment Theory emphasizes participatory decision-making and autonomy as central drivers of teacher motivation, responsibility, and organizational commitment. By involving teachers in school-level decisions such as planning, policy implementation, and instructional strategies, the theory promotes a sense of ownership and professional respect, which enhances job satisfaction and reduces withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism. It also highlights the importance of professional development and recognition, which strengthen teachers' self-efficacy, instructional competence, and adaptability to changing educational demands (Ahrari et al., 2021). Overall, the theory provides a strong foundation for understanding how participatory practices can improve teacher engagement and school effectiveness.

➤ *Weaknesses of the Teacher Empowerment Theory*

Despite its strengths, the theory assumes that all teachers have equal willingness, capacity, and readiness to participate

in decision-making processes. In practice, differences in experience, confidence, workload, and professional training may affect the extent to which teachers benefit from empowerment initiatives. Some teachers may feel overwhelmed by decision-making responsibilities, leading to stress, reduced efficiency, or resistance to participatory approaches (Chui et al., 2025).

➤ *Relevance of the Teacher Empowerment Theory to the Study*

The Teacher Empowerment Theory is highly relevant to this study because it provides a conceptual framework for examining how teachers' involvement in decision-making processes influences the curbing of absenteeism in public primary schools. The theory explains that when teachers are engaged in school governance and instructional decisions, they develop stronger commitment, accountability, and motivation, which are essential for consistent attendance and active participation in teaching activities. In the context of Mufindi District, Tanzania, where challenges such as heavy workloads, limited resources, and varying supervisory support exist, the theory offers a useful lens for assessing whether participatory decision-making can effectively enhance teacher attendance and reduce absenteeism, thereby improving overall school performance.

II. REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

This section presents a review of empirical studies, organized around this theme aligned with the study's research question. The review examines research conducted at global, African, East African, Tanzanian, and local levels, providing insights into teacher empowerment in decision making, attendance, and classroom teaching practices. In addition, the reviewed studies highlight research methodologies, data collection and analysis techniques, and identify existing knowledge gaps that the current study seeks to address.

➤ *The Extent to which Involving Teachers in Decision-Making Processes Enhances the Curbing of Absenteeism in Primary School*

Teachers' involvement in decision-making is widely recognized as a critical factor in fostering a sense of ownership, responsibility, and professional accountability, which can positively influence their attendance and engagement in instructional activities. Such involvement enables teachers to actively contribute to school-level planning, curriculum implementation, and classroom management, thereby enhancing key professional competencies and commitment to their duties.

Hall and Lambert (2023) conducted a study in the United States to examine the influence of teachers' involvement in school decision-making and its influence on reducing teacher absenteeism in public primary schools. The study employed a mixed-methods design, combining structured questionnaires administered to teachers and school administrators with follow-up interviews to gain deeper insights into participatory management practices. The findings revealed that schools with higher levels of teacher participation in decision-making, particularly in areas such as

timetable planning, workload distribution, and school policy formulation, recorded significantly lower rates of teacher absenteeism. The previous study informs the current study on the importance of teacher involvement in decision-making as a mechanism for improving commitment and attendance. Yet, it primarily focused on general school management in the United States, with limited attention to absenteeism-specific interventions and insufficient consideration of public primary school contexts in developing regions. The current study addresses the gap by examining the extent of teachers' involvement in decision-making on curbing teacher absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania.

Tatsi et al. (2024) examined the extent to which teachers' involvement in school decision-making influences their attendance in public basic schools in Korea. Using a descriptive survey design, the study sampled 450 teachers through stratified random sampling and collected data using a reliable questionnaire (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.85). Findings showed that teachers who were involved in decisions related to resource allocation and professional development demonstrated higher levels of commitment, improved punctuality, and more consistent attendance, while teachers excluded from decisions regarding hiring and school improvement displayed lower attendance motivation. However, although the study links decision-making involvement to teacher commitment, it provides little explicit examination of how such involvement directly affects attendance within primary school settings or in African contexts. The current study bridged this gap by assessing the extent to which involving teachers in decision-making processes enhances their attendance in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania.

Samsuri et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study in Indonesia to examine teachers' involvement in instructional decision-making and its influence on their commitment to professional responsibilities, including attendance. Using purposive sampling, data were collected from 10 teachers through interviews and classroom observations and analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that teachers actively participated in decisions related to teaching procedures based on their own professional knowledge, strengthened their sense of responsibility, improved punctuality, and encouraged consistent attendance because they felt ownership over instructional processes. The study demonstrated that meaningful involvement in decision-making enhances teachers' professional commitment and daily work discipline. However, while the study offers rich qualitative insights from the Indonesian context, it provides limited quantification on the extent of teacher involvement nor examine how such participation specifically influences attendance patterns in African and Tanzanian primary school settings. The current study therefore fills this gap by assessing the extent to which teachers' involvement in decision-making processes contributes to improved attendance among public primary school teachers in Mufindi District, Tanzania.

Kiprop (2021) conducted a mixed-methods study in Kenya to assess the effect of teacher participation in decision-

making on teachers' work commitment, particularly attendance and punctuality. The study involved 474 teachers from 24 public Primary schools, with data analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The findings revealed that teachers who were more involved in decision-making reported higher levels of attendance, greater punctuality, and stronger work discipline, whereas limited involvement contributed to irregular attendance and reduced commitment to daily school activities. Although the study demonstrated a link between participation in decision-making and attendance, with a little examination of the specific dimensions of decision-making (such as involvement in academic planning, resource allocation, or school policy formulation) that most strongly influence teachers' attendance behaviours. The current study fills this gap by determining the dimensions of decision-making (such as involvement in academic planning, resource allocation, or school policy formulation) that most strongly influence teachers' attendance behaviours in Mufindi District, Tanzania.

Macha and Mhagama (2022) conducted a mixed-methods study in Meru District Council, Arusha, Tanzania, to examine how teachers' participation in school decision-making influences their work commitment, particularly attendance and punctuality. Data were gathered from teachers, heads of schools, WEOs, and the DEO through questionnaires and interviews, and analyzed using SPSS and content analysis. The study found that teachers who actively participated in decision-making demonstrated improved attendance, greater punctuality, and stronger adherence to school duties, as involvement increased their sense of ownership, accountability, and commitment to daily responsibilities. However, although the study established a positive relationship between decision-making participation and overall work performance, it provided little justification specifically for analyzing how different decision-making dimensions (such as involvement in scheduling, workload distribution, or school operational planning) influence teacher attendance behaviours. The current study addressed this gap by examining the extent to which participation in decision-making processes enhances the attendance of public primary school teachers in Mufindi District, thereby offering focused evidence for improving teacher accountability and daily presence in schools.

➤ *Demonstration of Research Gap*

The reviewed studies on teachers' involvement in decision-making and its influence on teacher attendance and absenteeism conducted globally, across Africa, and within Tanzania highlighted the importance of participatory governance, leadership styles, and teacher empowerment in improving commitment and reducing absenteeism (Tajeddin & Bolouri, 2023; Samsuri et al., 2023; Tatsi et al., 2024; Kiprop, 2021; Macha & Mhagama, 2022). However, many of these findings are context-specific and have limited applicability to Tanzania's rural educational settings, particularly in districts such as Mufindi, where working conditions, supervision systems, and resource availability differ significantly. Knowledge-wise, several studies focused on isolated aspects of decision-making, such as instructional

participation (Samsuri et al., 2023) or resource allocation decisions (Tatsi et al., 2024), without examining their combined influence on teacher absenteeism, which is essential for understanding the overall effect of participatory management in schools. Methodologically, most studies employ either qualitative or quantitative designs, limiting comprehensive triangulation of findings and reducing insight into how decision-making participation interacts with attendance behaviour in real school contexts. Moreover, studies by Kiprop (2021) and Macha & Mhagama (2022) examine teacher participation and work commitment broadly, but provide limited evidence on how specific decision-making dimensions collectively influence absenteeism in primary schools. The current study addresses these gaps by employing a mixed-methods approach to investigate the extent to which teachers' involvement in decision-making processes curbs teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study used a convergent design under a mixed research methods, collecting qualitative and quantitative data to comprehensively understand the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The target population included 152 public primary schools, 152 headteachers, 1,193 teachers, and 1 District Primary Education Officer, making a total of 1,346. Both Probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to select 15 public primary schools, 15 headteachers, 200 teachers, and 1 District Primary Education Officer (DPEO), making a total of 216 respondents. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires, while qualitative data were collected through an interview guide and a document analysis guide. Data collection instruments were validated by three MWECAU research experts from the field of Educational Planning and Administration. A pilot study was conducted in 2 public primary schools which were not included in the study, with 20 teachers and 2 headteachers. The reliability of questionnaires for Likert-type items was determined using

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, yielding an $\alpha = 0.895$, while the trustworthiness of qualitative data collection instruments was ensured through triangulation to ensure consistency. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including Simple Linear Regression at a 0.05 (α) significance level, with the aid of SPSS version 27, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically with the aid of NVivo version 15. The study adhered to ethical considerations, including a research permit letter, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and avoidance of plagiarism throughout the evaluation process.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study examined the extent to which involving teachers in decision-making processes enhances the curbing of absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania. Data were collected using a five-point Likert scale where 1 = Very Low Extent (VLE), 2 = Low Extent (LE), 3 = Moderate Extent (ME), 4 = High Extent (HE), and 5 = Very High Extent (VHE), with F representing frequencies and P representing percentages. In line with Joshi et al. (2015), responses of "Very Large Extent" and "Large Extent" were combined to represent a high extent, while "Very Low Extent" and "Low Extent" were grouped to indicate a low extent. The "Moderate Extent" category was treated as neutral. Interpretation of mean scores was guided by Ongoro and Mwangoka (2019), whereby mean values of 1.00–1.69 indicate a very low extent, 1.70–2.49 low extent, 2.50–3.29 moderate extent, 3.30–4.19 high extent, and 4.20–5.00 very high extent of teacher involvement in decision-making in curbing absenteeism. Similarly, percentage interpretation followed Taherdoost (2022), where $\leq 19\%$ represents an extremely minority, 20–39% a minority, 40–59% a moderate proportion, 60–79% a majority, and 80–100% a very high majority of respondents. A detailed presentation of findings on the extent of teacher involvement in decision-making and its contribution to reducing absenteeism is provided in Table 2.

Table 2 Teachers' Response on the Extent to which Involving Teachers in Decision-Making Processes Enhance the Curbing of Absenteeism in Primary School (n = 152)

S/N	Statement	VLE		LE		ME		HE		VHE		M
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
	Teachers' involvement in curriculum planning enhances regular attendance at school.	7	4.6	4	2.6	20	13.2	65	42.8	56	36.8	4.05
	Teachers' participation in timetable scheduling improves consistency in attending lessons.	0	0.0	2	1.3	8	5.3	54	35.5	88	57.9	4.50
	Teachers' involvement in decisions related to resource allocation reduces absenteeism.	2	1.3	4	2.6	20	13.2	58	38.2	68	44.7	4.22
	Teachers' participation in student discipline decision-making improves timely reporting to duty.	2	1.3	2	1.3	9	5.9	60	39.5	79	52.0	4.39
	Teachers' involvement in school improvement planning encourages remaining on duty during official working hours.	1	0.7	1	0.7	10	6.6	66	43.4	74	48.7	4.39
	Teachers' participation in school decision-making committees enhances commitment to scheduled school activities.	1	0.7	1	0.7	9	5.9	57	37.5	84	55.3	4.46

Teacher's involvement in the management of extracurricular activities improves consistency in school attendance.	3	2.0	1	0.7	15	9.9	60	39.5	73	48.0	4.31
Teacher's having a voice in performance appraisal decisions helps minimize unexcused absences.	0	0.0	2	1.3	11	7.2	60	39.5	79	52.0	4.42
Teacher's involvement in budget-related decision-making enhances adherence to school attendance regulations.	0	0.0	3	2.0	21	13.8	58	38.2	70	46.1	4.28
Teachers' participation in the formulation of attendance-related policies improves overall consistency in school presence.	1	0.7	5	3.3	6	3.9	76	50.0	64	42.1	4.30
Grand Mean											4.34

Source: Field Data, (2026)

Data in Table 2 indicate that a majority (79.6%) of teachers rated to a high extent that teachers' involvement in curriculum planning enhanced regular school attendance. An extremely minority (7.2%) of the teachers rated it at a low extent (VLE and LE), while a minority (13.2%) of teachers rated it at a Moderate Extent (ME), the mean score of 4.05, indicates a high extent level of enhancement of regular school attendance through teachers' involvement in curriculum planning. This implies that when teachers are involved in curriculum planning, they develop a sense of ownership and responsibility toward school programs, which motivates them to attend school regularly and actively participate in teaching activities. During a face-to-face interview, Headteacher "A" explained that:

Teachers' involvement in curriculum planning does have some influence on attendance, but the effect is not always direct or strong in practice. In some cases, teachers participate in planning meetings. However, I have observed that those who actively contribute in planning tend to show slightly better commitment because they feel more included in school decisions, although absenteeism is still influenced by other factors such as workload and personal challenges (Interview HT A; 27/02/2026).

In the same vein, the District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) "A" added that:

Curriculum planning involvement can improve teachers' sense of responsibility, but it is not a standalone solution to absenteeism. Some teachers participate in planning sessions but do not necessarily translate that involvement into consistent attendance due to external pressures like financial constraints or family responsibilities. Still, where schools strengthen participatory planning, there is often a moderate improvement in engagement and punctuality, even though the impact varies across teachers and contexts (Interview DPEO A; 23/3/2026).

The information from the interviews indicates that teachers' involvement in curriculum planning contributed to enhancing regular school attendance among teachers. According to Headteacher "A", teachers who actively participate in curriculum planning tend to demonstrate better commitment and attendance because they feel included in school decision-making processes, although absenteeism is still influenced by other factors such as workload and personal challenges. Similarly, the District Primary

Education Officer (DPEO) "A" explained that participatory curriculum planning strengthens teachers' sense of responsibility and engagement, though its effectiveness in reducing absenteeism differs depending on individual and contextual conditions.

During document analysis, the identified document from School "A" (18/04/2026), particularly the school meeting minutes, revealed that teachers who regularly participated in curriculum planning meetings also attended school activities more consistently and fulfilled follow-up responsibilities assigned during meetings. However, some attendance records indicated that a few teachers continued to demonstrate irregular attendance despite their involvement in curriculum planning activities due to external challenges such as financial constraints and family responsibilities. The results tally with Teacher Empowerment Theory (1992), which emphasizes that involving teachers in decision-making processes enhances their sense of ownership, responsibility, and commitment to school activities. The theory maintains that empowered teachers are more motivated to participate actively in school responsibilities, including regular attendance. The results imply that although curriculum planning involvement contributes positively toward reducing absenteeism, its effectiveness depends on the integration of additional motivational, administrative, and welfare support strategies within schools. The results also correlate with the study conducted by Tajeddin and Bolouri (2023), who found that teachers' involvement in school decision-making improves to a low extent the commitment, motivation, and responsibility toward school activities.

Data in Table 2 further show that a very high majority (93.4%) of teachers rated to a high extent that teachers' participation in timetable scheduling improved consistency in attending lessons. An extremely minority (1.3%) reported a low extent, while an extremely minority (5.3%) indicated a Moderate Extent (ME). The mean score of 4.50 indicated a very high extent of improvement in lesson attendance consistency through participation in timetable scheduling. This implies that involving teachers in timetable preparation creates favorable and manageable teaching schedules that encourage punctuality and regular lesson attendance. The information gathered during the interviews was in line with that from the questionnaire response from the Headteacher "C" during a face-to-face interview, who explained that;

Timetable scheduling is often a sensitive issue because it affects teachers differently depending on their workload and subject allocation. When teachers are not involved, some feel overloaded or unfairly assigned, which sometimes leads to complaints or reduced motivation to attend certain lessons. However, when they participate in scheduling, there is usually better acceptance of the timetable, although it does not eliminate absenteeism because other personal and institutional factors still exist (Interview HT C; 03/03/2026).

Similarly, Headteacher “H” added that:

Allowing teachers to participate in timetable preparation has helped in reducing conflicts related to lesson allocation, but it is not always smooth. Some teachers still prefer certain days or periods, and it is not always possible to satisfy everyone. Even so, involvement in scheduling tends to improve punctuality and lesson attendance moderately because teachers feel they have at least some controls over their workload, even though challenges of staffing shortages sometimes force adjustments later (Interview HT H; 5/03/2026).

The information from the interviews further indicated that teachers’ participation in timetable scheduling contributed to improved acceptance of workload distribution and enhanced consistency in lesson attendance. According to Headteacher “C”, timetable scheduling is a sensitive issue because it affects teachers differently depending on workload and subject allocation, and when teachers are not involved, some perceive the allocation as unfair or excessive, which may reduce motivation and lead to irregular attendance of some lessons. Likewise, Headteacher “H” emphasized that participatory timetable preparation reduces conflicts related to lesson allocation and improves punctuality because teachers feel a sense of ownership over their workload, although staffing shortages and individual preferences sometimes limit the full effectiveness of the process.

Also, document analysis of School “C” timetable records and attendance registers (3/3/2026) showed that teachers who participated in timetable preparation demonstrated better punctuality and more consistent lesson attendance compared to periods where timetable decisions were made solely by school management. However, some records also indicated occasional timetable adjustments caused by staffing shortages, which affected consistency in lesson attendance among a few teachers. The results are in line with those by Tajeddin and Bolouri (2023), who emphasized that participatory leadership practices improve teacher morale, reduce dissatisfaction, and enhance commitment to instructional responsibilities. The finding aligns with the Teacher Empowerment Theory (1992), which shows that involving teachers in decision-making processes strengthens their sense of ownership, responsibility, and commitment toward school activities. The findings confirmed that teachers who participated in timetable scheduling demonstrated improved punctuality and lesson attendance consistency, although institutional challenges such as staffing shortages limited the effectiveness of participatory scheduling in eliminating absenteeism.

Moreover, data in Table 1 reveal that a very high majority (82.9%) of teachers rated to a high extent that teachers’ involvement in decisions related to resource allocation reduced absenteeism. An extremely minority (3.9%) of teachers reported a low extent, while a minority (13.2%) of teachers indicated a Moderate Extent (ME), the mean score of 4.22, connotes that to a very high extent involvement in resource allocation decisions reduced teachers absenteeism. This implies that teachers become more committed to their duties when they are involved in decisions concerning the distribution and utilization of school resources. Moreover, Headteacher “B” during a face-to-face interview explained that, *“Involving teachers in decisions about resource allocation has some positive influence on attendance, especially because it reduces complaints about the unfair distribution of teaching materials”*. (Interview HT B; 27/02/2026).

Similarly, the District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) “A” added that, *“Teachers’ participation in resource allocation decisions can improve transparency and reduce dissatisfaction within schools. However, its effect on absenteeism is indirect. In some schools, teachers are involved, but resource shortages still persist, which limits the practical impact of their involvement”*. (Interview DPEO A; 23/3/2026).

The information from the interviews further indicated that involving teachers in resource allocation decisions contributed to improved transparency and a more cooperative school environment, which moderately enhances attendance. According to Headteacher “B”, involving teachers in resource allocation decisions helps to reduce complaints related to unfair distribution of teaching materials, which positively influences attendance. Likewise, the District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) “A” emphasized that although teachers’ participation in resource allocation improves transparency and reduces dissatisfaction, its effect on absenteeism remains indirect because resource shortages continue to exist in many schools despite teachers’ involvement. On the other hand, document analysis from school meeting minutes and resource allocation records in School “B” (18/03/2026) denote that although teachers participated in budgeting and allocation discussions, the school still experienced shortages of teaching materials and delays in resource distribution, which continued to affect teachers’ morale and attendance in some cases.

The results contrast with Teacher Empowerment Theory (1992), which assumes that involving teachers in decision-making processes automatically strengthens commitment, responsibility, and professional engagement. In the current study, despite teachers’ involvement in resource allocation decisions, absenteeism was not completely reduced because structural challenges such as inadequate resources and financial limitations persisted within schools. The results contrast with the study conducted by Tatsi et al. (2024), which reported that participatory leadership practices significantly improve teacher commitment and reduce negative workplace behaviours. However, participation in resource allocation decisions only moderately improved attendance because

external institutional and economic challenges continued to influence absenteeism. The findings imply that teacher involvement in resource allocation decisions alone is insufficient to fully address absenteeism unless accompanied by adequate school resources and supportive working conditions.

Additionally, data in Table 1 indicate that a very high majority (91.5%) of teachers rated to a high extent that teachers' participation in student discipline decision-making improves timely reporting to duty. An extremely minority (2.6%) reported a low extent, while an extremely minority (5.9%) indicated a Moderate Extent (ME), with a mean score of 4.39 indicating a very high extent of improving timely reporting to duty through participation in student discipline decision-making. This implies that involving teachers in disciplinary matters strengthens accountability and responsibility, which enhances commitment to reporting at school on time. During a face-to-face interview, Headteacher "A" explained that;

Involvement of teachers in student discipline decisions does help to some extent in improving their punctuality, because when a teacher takes part in handling discipline cases, he or she becomes more aware of school rules and daily routines. However, it is not always easy because disciplinary issues can increase teachers' workload, especially when cases require follow-up after teaching hours. This sometimes makes teachers tired or even delays them from attending other duties on time (Interview HT A; 27/02/2026).

Similarly, Headteacher "C" added;

Teachers' participation in student discipline matters is useful in maintaining order in school, but its effect on reporting time is not the same for all teachers. Some teachers take it seriously and become more responsible, while others still see discipline as mainly for heads of schools or discipline masters (Interview HT C; 03/3/2026).

The information from the interviews further indicated that teachers' participation in student discipline decision-making contributed to improved punctuality and responsibility among teachers, although the effect is not uniform across all schools. According to Headteacher "A", involvement in student discipline matters increases teachers' awareness of school rules and daily routines, which helps improve punctuality and commitment to school duties. However, Headteacher "A" further explained that disciplinary responsibilities sometimes increase teachers' workload, especially when follow-up of cases extends beyond teaching hours, which leads to fatigue and delays in attending to other responsibilities on time. Likewise, Headteacher "C" emphasized that although participation in discipline matters helps maintain order and responsibility in schools, some teachers still perceive discipline management as mainly the responsibility of heads of schools or discipline masters, limiting the overall effectiveness of participation in improving punctuality.

Moreover, during document analysis of discipline committee records and attendance registers in School "G" (09/04/2026), it has been shown that cases where teachers assigned disciplinary follow-up responsibilities experienced delays in completing other school duties due to increased workload pressures. The results tally with the studies conducted by Samsuri et al. (2023), who found that participatory leadership practices improve teacher responsibility, morale, and commitment toward school activities. The findings align with Teacher Empowerment Theory by Short and Rinehart (1992), which argues that involving teachers in decision-making processes strengthens their sense of ownership, accountability, and commitment toward school responsibilities. In this study, teachers who participated in student discipline decisions demonstrated improved awareness of school routines and better reporting behaviour. The findings imply that teachers' participation in student discipline decision-making contributed to improved punctuality and responsibility, although its effectiveness depended on balanced workload distribution and supportive school management practices.

Also, data in Table 1 show that a very high majority (92.1%) of teachers rated to a high extent that teachers' involvement in school improvement planning encourages them to remain on duty during official working hours. An extremely minority (1.4%) reported a low extent, while an extremely minority (6.6%) indicated a Moderate Extent (ME). The mean score for this item is 4.39, indicating a very high extent of encouraging teachers to remain on duty during working hours through involvement in school improvement planning. This implies that participation in planning school development activities promotes teachers' commitment and sense of belonging within the school environment. During a face-to-face interview, Headteacher "E" explained that:

Involvement of teachers in school improvement planning has some effect on attendance behaviour, especially staying at school during working hours. When teachers participate in planning discussions, they tend to feel that they are part of school decisions, so they are less likely to leave school early without permission. However, in practice, this is not always consistent because some teachers still attend meetings but later leave school for personal reasons or other unofficial duties (Interview HT E; 03/03/2026).

In the same vein, the District Primary Education Officer (DPPEO) "A" added that:

Teachers' participation in school improvement planning improves discipline in terms of remaining on duty, but it is not a guarantee. In some schools, teachers who are involved in planning are more responsible during working hours, but in others the effect is minimal due to weak follow-up and personal commitments. So, it helps to some extent, but schools still experience cases of teachers leaving early or being absent despite being involved in planning (Interview DPPEO A; 23/03/2026).

The information from the interviews further indicates that teachers' involvement in school improvement planning

has a slightly consistent influence on teachers' duty attendance behaviour. According to Headteacher "E", participation in school improvement planning makes teachers feel included in school decision-making processes, which reduces tendencies of leaving school early without permission; however, it was noted that some teachers still leave school for personal or unofficial reasons despite being involved in planning processes. Also, the District Primary Education Officer (DPPEO) "A" emphasized that although participation in planning can improve discipline and presence during working hours, its effect is not guaranteed across all schools due to weak follow-up mechanisms and personal commitments of teachers, which still result in cases of early departure or absenteeism.

During document analysis of School Improvement Plans (SIPs), staff meeting minutes, and attendance registers in selected school "N", 17/03/2026 it was noted that schools with active teacher participation in improvement planning generally recorded better adherence to working hours, as teachers involved in planning activities were more consistently present during official school time compared to those with minimal participation. However, the same records also indicated isolated cases where teachers participated in planning meetings but still left school early or were intermittently absent, particularly during periods of personal or external engagements. This demonstrates that although participatory planning contributes to improved duty attendance, it did not fully eliminate non-compliance with working hours.

The results are in line with a study conducted by Kiprop (2021), who found that teacher participation in school improvement processes strengthens organizational commitment, responsibility, and professional accountability, leading to improved attendance behaviours. However, the findings also reveal a limitation of the theory in practice, as external personal and institutional factors reduced the consistency of this motivational effect across all teachers. The findings suggest that teachers' involvement in school improvement planning contributes positively to remaining on duty during working hours, although its effectiveness is moderated by individual and contextual challenges.

Likewise, data in Table 1 reveal that a very high majority (92.8%) of teachers rated to a high extent that teachers' participation in school decision-making committees enhances commitment to scheduled school activities. A very small minority (1.4%) reported a low extent, while a very small minority (5.9%) indicated a Moderate Extent (ME). The mean score of 4.46 indicates that to a very high extent, commitment to scheduled activities was enhanced through participation in school committees. This implies that teachers who participate in decision-making committees were more motivated to fulfill assigned responsibilities and adhere to planned school activities. Likewise, Headteacher "J" during a face-to-face interview explained that, *"When teachers are involved in school decision-making committees, there is usually better awareness of what has been planned and agreed upon. This sometimes improves their commitment to*

scheduled school activities such as meetings, teaching programs, and other duties" (Interview HT J; 16/03/2026).

In the same strain, Headteacher "F" added that:

Teachers who serve in school committees tend to show relatively better participation in scheduled activities compared to those who are not involved. This is because they understand the importance of what has been planned. Nevertheless, the level of commitment is not always the same among all teachers, as some remain irregular in attending certain activities even after being part of decision-making structures, especially when there are competing duties in and outside school (Interview HT F; 03/03/2026). The information from the interviews further indicates that teachers' participation in school committees contributes to improved awareness and commitment, although the effect is not fully consistent across all teachers. According to Headteacher "J", involvement in school decision-making committees enhances teachers' understanding of agreed plans, which sometimes improves their participation in scheduled activities such as meetings, teaching programmes, and other school duties. Similarly, Headteacher "F" noted that some teachers still show irregular attendance even after participating in committees, particularly when they face competing duties inside and outside school.

During document analysis of school committee minutes and activity implementation reports in school "K" (10/03/2026) it was ensured that teachers who actively participated in decision-making committees were more consistently involved in scheduled school activities compared to non-committee members, although occasional absences were still recorded during peak workload periods or when personal obligations arose. This indicates that while committee participation improves engagement and awareness, it does not fully guarantee uniform commitment to all scheduled school activities. The results are in line with a study conducted by Macha and Mhagama (2022), which found that teacher participation in school governance structures enhances commitment, accountability, and engagement in school programmes. However, the findings also show that external constraints such as workload and personal responsibilities moderate the extent to which participation translates into consistent commitment. The finding indicates that teachers' participation in school decision-making committees enhances commitment to scheduled school activities, although its effectiveness is influenced by contextual and individual factors.

To complement the quantitative results, teachers were asked an open-ended question to provide additional views on other ways in which involving teachers in decision-making processes contributes to curbing absenteeism in public primary schools. The purpose was to capture experiences and perspectives that could not be fully reflected in the structured questionnaire responses. The responses revealed that teachers perceived participation in decision-making as enhancing their commitment, motivation, accountability, and sense of ownership of school activities, which collectively influence regular attendance. The findings are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 Open-Ended Responses Among the Teachers on Other Ways Involving Teachers in Decision-Making Processes Enhance the Curbing of Absenteeism in Primary School

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		n	Percentage (%)	
	Participation in school governance structures	76	74.5	76.0
	Engagement in planning and selecting professional development programs	11	10.8	11.0
	Contribution to developing and enforcing teacher attendance policies	7	6.9	7.0
	Participation in conflict resolution and disciplinary decisions	8	7.8	8.0
	Total	102	100.0	102.0

Source: Field Data, (2026)

Data in Table 3 indicate that a very high majority (76.0%) of teachers' responses show that participation in school governance structures is one of the major ways through which involving teachers in decision-making processes enhances the curbing of absenteeism in primary schools. An extremely minority (11.0%) of teachers' responses indicated engagement in planning and selecting professional development programs, while an extremely minority reported contribution to developing and enforcing teacher attendance policies (7.0%) and participation in conflict resolution and disciplinary decisions (8.0%). The findings imply that involving teachers in various school decision-making processes strengthens their sense of ownership, accountability, motivation, and commitment to school responsibilities, which ultimately contributes to reducing absenteeism and improving regular attendance in public primary schools.

The findings from the teachers further suggest that when teachers are actively engaged in school governance structures, they are more likely to feel responsible for school outcomes and therefore demonstrate higher levels of commitment to attendance and duty performance. However, engagement in specific areas such as professional development planning, attendance policy formulation, and disciplinary decision-making is perceived as less dominant in influencing absenteeism reduction, although still relevant in strengthening professional responsibility and behavioural discipline among teachers.

The findings are in line with empirical studies by Samsuri et al. (2023), which emphasize that teacher participation in school governance strengthens organizational commitment, shared responsibility, and professional accountability, thereby improving attendance behaviours. However, the findings also suggest that governance participation has a stronger perceived influence compared to other forms of decision-making involvement, indicating variation in the effectiveness of different empowerment dimensions. The finding correlates with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1994), which supports these findings by explaining that autonomy and relatedness foster intrinsic motivation, leading teachers to internalize responsibility for school attendance and performance. The finding implies that while multiple forms of decision-making involvement contribute to reducing absenteeism, participation in school governance structures is perceived as the most influential pathway in enhancing teachers' commitment and attendance in primary schools.

Generally, the grand mean score of 4.34 indicates that involving teachers in decision-making processes provided a very high contribution to curbing absenteeism in primary schools. Substantial contributions were seen in such as involvement in curriculum planning, timetable scheduling, resource allocation decisions, student discipline management, school improvement planning, and school governance structures and committees, all of which collectively strengthen teachers' ownership, accountability, motivation, and commitment to school responsibilities. The interview and documentary evidence further show that when teachers are actively involved in decision-making processes, they demonstrate improved awareness of school expectations, a stronger sense of responsibility, and increased commitment to remain on duty and attend scheduled school activities. However, inconsistencies in implementation, workload pressures, staffing shortages, and personal obligations constrain the full effectiveness of these empowerment practices in eliminating absenteeism, pointing to other ways, such as Participation in school governance structures and engagement in planning and selecting professional development programs, as a major way to curb teachers' absenteeism in the school.

➤ Hypothesis Testing

This section presents the simple linear hypothesis analysis used to test the study's hypothesis regarding the relationship between teachers' involvement in decision-making and the curbing of teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania. The corresponding alternative hypothesis (H_a) stated that there is a statistically significant relationship between teachers' involvement in decision-making and the level of curbing of teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania. Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine whether the observed relationship was statistically significant. Simple linear regression analysis was employed to assess the strength, direction, and significance of the relationship between the variables.

This section presents the analysis used to test the hypothesis on the relationship between teachers' involvement in decision-making and the curbing of teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania. Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine whether a significant relationship exists between the variables. Simple linear regression analysis was employed to assess the strength, direction, and significance of this relationship. The results provided an objective basis for determining whether

teachers' participation in decision-making contributes to reducing absenteeism in public primary schools.

➤ Tests of Normality

Before conducting inferential statistical analyses, it was important to assess whether the study data met the assumption of normality. Tests of normality help determine whether the distribution of variables approximates a normal distribution,

which is a key requirement for the application of parametric statistical techniques such as Simple Linear Regression. In this study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were used to examine the normality of the variables related to the study. The results of the normality tests guided the researcher in determining the appropriateness of applying parametric analyses in hypothesis testing, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Tests of Normality

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic	df	Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	df	Sig.
Involvement in Decision-Making	.121	10	.200	.956	10	.462

Source: Field Data, (2026)

As presented in Table 4, the normality test results using both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests indicate that the data for teachers' involvement in decision-making is normally distributed. The Shapiro-Wilk test shows a significance value of $p = .462$, which is above the 0.05 threshold, while the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test also reports a significance value of $p = .200$, which is greater than 0.05. These results confirm that the variable does not significantly deviate from a normal distribution. Therefore, the assumption of normality is met, justifying the use of parametric statistical techniques, particularly simple linear regression analysis, in examining the relationship between teachers' involvement in

decision-making and the curbing of teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania.

➤ Model Summary

This section presents the model summary of the simple linear regression analysis used to determine the predictive power of teachers' involvement in decision-making on curbing teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania. The model summary provides insight into how well teachers' involvement in decision-making explains variations in teacher absenteeism behaviour. Table 5 gives the model summary;

Table 5 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.961 ^a	.923	.902	.16781

Source: Field Data, (2026)

a. Predictor: (Constant), Involvement in Decision-Making

The model summary presented in Table 5 indicates a very strong relationship between teachers' involvement in decision-making and the curbing of teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania. The correlation coefficient ($R = .961$) demonstrates a very strong positive relationship between teachers' involvement in decision-making and reduced absenteeism, implying that increased participation in decision-making is closely associated with improved teacher attendance behaviour. The R Square value of .923 indicates that approximately 92.3% of the variation in teachers' absenteeism is explained by teachers' involvement in decision-making, showing a very high explanatory power of the model. Furthermore, the Adjusted R Square value of .902 confirms that the model remains strong even after adjustment for sample size, indicating that the predictive strength is reliable and not

overstated. The Standard Error of the Estimate (.16781) is relatively low, suggesting that the model provides accurate predictions of teachers' absenteeism behaviour with minimal error. Overall, the findings confirm that teachers' involvement in decision-making is a strong predictor of curbing absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania.

➤ Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

This section presents the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results, which assess the overall significance of the regression model. Specifically, it determines whether the independent variable, involvement in decision-making, has a statistically significant influence on the dependent variable, curbing teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania.

Table 6 ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	5.047	1	1.262	44.807	.001 ^b
Residual	.422	151	.028		
Total	5.470	152			

Source: Field Data, (2026)

a. Dependent Variable: Curbing Teachers' Absenteeism

b. Predictor: (Constant), Involvement in Decision-Making

Table 6 presents the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results used to determine whether teachers' involvement in decision-making significantly predicts the curbing of teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania. The results show that the regression sum of squares is 5.047 with 1 degree of freedom, while the residual sum of squares is 0.422 with 151 degrees of freedom, giving a total sum of squares of 5.470. The mean square for regression is 1.262 compared to 0.028 for the residual, indicating that the variation explained by the model is substantially higher than the unexplained variation. The calculated F-value is 44.807 with a significance value of .001, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This indicates that the regression model is statistically significant and provides a good fit for the data. Therefore, the findings confirm that teachers' involvement in decision-making has a significant effect on curbing teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania.

➤ Regression Test (Coefficients)

This section presents the coefficients of the regression model to determine the individual contribution of each

teacher's involvement in decision-making toward predicting the level of curbing teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania. The coefficients indicate the strength and direction of the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable when the effects of other variables are held constant. The results are presented in Table 7;

Table 7 Simple Linear Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-.977	.395		-2.470	.026	-1.819	-.134		
	Decision-Making Involvement	.345	.067	.388	5.133	.001	.201	.488	.901	1.110

Source: Field Data, (2026)

Table 7 presents the regression coefficients used to determine the extent to which teachers' involvement in decision-making influences the curbing of teachers' absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District, Tanzania. The results show that the unstandardized coefficient for decision-making involvement is $B = .345$ with a standard error of .067, indicating a positive relationship between teachers' participation in decision-making and reduced absenteeism. The standardized beta value ($\beta = .388$) further confirms that decision-making involvement has a moderate positive effect on curbing teachers' absenteeism. The t-value of 5.133 with a significance level of .001 ($p < 0.05$) indicates that the relationship is statistically significant. Additionally, the confidence interval (95% CI = .201 to .488) does not include zero, reinforcing the significance of the predictor. The tolerance value (.901) and VIF (1.110) indicate that there is no multicollinearity problem in the model.

Then, the findings imply that increased involvement of teachers in decision-making processes significantly contributes to reducing absenteeism in public primary schools in Mufindi District. This suggests that when teachers are engaged in school-level decisions, they develop a stronger sense of ownership, responsibility, and commitment to their duties, which enhances their attendance behavior. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_0), which stated that teachers' involvement in decision-making has no significant

influence on curbing teachers' absenteeism, was rejected, confirming that decision-making involvement is a significant predictor of teacher attendance in the study area.

Furthermore, the study found that teachers' involvement in decision-making processes makes a statistically significant contribution to curbing absenteeism, as evidenced by a grand mean score of 4.34 and a significance value of $p = 0.001$ ($p \leq 0.05$), indicating a very high contribution. The findings demonstrate that involving teachers in key school matters such as curriculum planning, timetable scheduling, resource allocation, student discipline management, school improvement planning, and participation in school committees enhances teachers' sense of ownership, accountability, commitment, and responsibility toward school activities. Evidence from interviews and open-ended responses further revealed that participation in school governance structures and engagement in planning professional development programmes strengthen teachers' attachment to their schools and encourage regular attendance. The findings suggest that when teachers are actively engaged in decisions affecting their professional work and school operations, they become more committed to fulfilling their duties and less likely to be absent from school, although challenges such as workload pressures, staffing shortages, and personal obligations limit the full effectiveness of these empowerment practices.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the research concludes that teacher participation in decision-making serves as a significant dimension of an empowerment mechanism on curbing teachers absenteeism but not a major one that enhances teachers' commitment to school responsibilities, due to routine or habitual working practices, staffing constraints, and personal circumstances that reduces positive attitudes toward work, accountability, and teachers' willingness to attend school regularly and remain engaged in their professional duties.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

Based on the conclusion, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education, Regional and District Education Offices, and school leadership in Mufindi District introduce a structured "Teacher Attendance Accountability–Participation Integration System (TAAPIS)" at the school level. This system should formally link teachers' participation in decision-making to their attendance records through a rotating "Decision-Making Responsibility Schedule," where each teacher is assigned specific governance roles (example curriculum planning, timetable review, resource allocation monitoring) on a termly basis, and their participation is recorded alongside attendance data in a unified school performance dashboard.

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