



Work Ethics and Accountability among Teachers and Administrators in Tanzania Public Primary Schools

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Abstract: *This paper examines work ethics and accountability among teachers and administrators in public primary schools in Tanzania. Its objective was to assess four constructs, namely, perceptions on ethical issues and accountability, ethical issues, prevention measures and reporting systems of unethical behaviours. The study utilized quantitative research approach, involving questionnaires to generate data from 550 teachers and administrators from 279 randomly selected primary schools in mainland Tanzania. Findings indicated that teachers and administrators were impressed with how their schools respond to matters related to ethical issues, reporting ethical concerns and attempts to prevent unethical issues from happening. However, when ethical issues emerged, teachers and administrators felt uncomfortable to communicate with their leaders. On the other hand, promoting work ethics and accountability in schools fosters a positive educational environment that values professionalism and contributes to improved educational outcomes and the overall well-being of students. The study recognized that the opinions given by teachers and administrators might differ, and schools may have unique circumstances that influence the work ethics and accountability of their workforce. Therefore, local context, cultural factors and specific challenges should be taken into reflection when considering further research.*

Key words: *Ethics, accountability, good governance, leadership*

Introduction

Faced with many post-independence challenges of poverty, ignorance, and diseases immediately after independence in 1961, Tanzania recognized that lack of accountability, unethical behaviour and corrupt practices were main challenges to

socio-economic development. Its immediate post-independence developmental efforts focused on curbing ethical violations and enforced accountability in public offices by formulating and implementing several strategies, including institutional and legal frameworks (Nyerere, 1967). Corruption and abuse of public office for private gain hurts the poor Tanzanians, undermines anti-poverty programmes, and threatens prosperity of the country while acting as a big obstacle for Tanzania to achieve its development goals (URT, 2020; CCM Manifesto, 2020).

Among initiatives taken by Tanzania to fight corruption and public office abuses, they ranged from establishment of Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB); endorsement of the PCCB Act of 2007; development and implementation of the Public Service Code of Ethics and Conducts of 2005; and enforcement of the public leadership code of ethics Act of 1995. Other efforts include formation of the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance (CHRGG) in 2001, the Warioba Commission in 1996 as well as establishment of administrative structures and processes with highly holistic together with integrative approaches to address corruption, unethical behaviour, and practices, including bribery, nepotism, embezzlement, and other abuses in the public offices.

Similarly, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training has also taken various internal initiatives to promote integrity and accountability of its employees in the education sector. This takes into account effective leadership with committed and patriotic leaders who lead by examples to improve institutional and employee's integrity as well as ethical behaviours through use of various ethical policies and administrative procedures, including codes of conduct, whistle-blowing policies, job rotations, transfers, terminations, training and screening of applicants on the basis of integrity (Lasthuizen, 2008).

The Tanzania government commits itself, among other things, to strongly fight against corruption and abuses in public offices. Demonstrated leadership in the sixth regime of its government is the heart and soul of positive ethical transformations together with accountability in public institutions, particularly the education sector. The president has been noted saying that the country is undergoing a massive moral decay, and that society should join together in identifying root causes and where they went wrong. The president insists that society can be successful only if they instruct, teach and direct children to understand moral values (Christopher & Sanga, 2023).

However, despite various continued efforts and strategies to combat unethical behaviours and corruption among public servants, challenges related to morals, and

ethics have been a daily reality in public services in Tanzania. Cases of unethical behaviours among Tanzanian primary school teachers have been increasingly reported in recent years. Literature on moral and ethical problems among Tanzanian teachers highlights various forms of teachers' misconduct that prevail in schools. Most studies that were conducted in the 2020s for instance, Betweli, 2020; Matete, 2021; Boniface & Ngalawa, 2021; Malabwa & Mnjokava, 2022; Paschal, 2023, reported several forms of unethical behaviours that exist in schools and other educational institutions. Such behaviours include bullying or harassment, drunkenness, favouritism, sexual abuse, inadequate supervision, unfair grading, misuse of funds, academic dishonesty, and absenteeism.

Amid continued challenges of corruption and unethical behaviour and practices in public services, this study, therefore, sought to explore how ethical and accountability issues have been perceived among teachers and administrators in public primary schools. Specifically, the study sought to seek the concerns of teachers and administrators on issues related to ethics and its practices, with an eye towards preventing and reporting systems in Tanzania's public primary schools.

Methodology

This study utilized quantitative research approach. It employed convenience sampling to get 780 teachers and administrators from 279 public primary schools in Mainland Tanzania. It was a convenience sampling with the virtue of selecting respondents based on their accessibility and being readily available for participation. Therefore, respondents who were public primary teachers were purposively chosen among students who enrolled in the Diploma programmes offered by the Institute of Adult Education in its centres of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and campuses. Based on their assigned responsibilities at schools, respondents were further characterized into teachers, school heads, academic/discipline masters/mistresses, and administrators.

The study employed a questionnaire with questions regarding four main constructs used to deal with status and challenges of work ethics and accountability in public primary schools. The constructs included perceptions of ethical issues and accountability; ethical issues; prevention measures; and reporting systems of unethical behaviours. Using the Likert Scale, respondents were required to rate each question as 6 = strongly agree, 5 = agree, 4 = slightly agree, 3 = slightly disagree, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.

A total of 550 questionnaires were returned that gave a response rate of 71 percent. Respondents who volunteered to the survey consented verbally to their participation after being explained about the survey, what their participation would entail, and the associated benefits. The questionnaires were distributed to respondents and collected back when completed. All responses were anonymous.

Data collected for this study were analysed quantitatively. Descriptive statistics was applied to produce frequency distribution tables as well as inferential statistics. Inferential analyses were done by computing pair wise correlation between the four constructs, namely, teachers' perceptions, ethical issues, prevention measures and reporting systems.

The construct of perception dealt with respondents' feelings on implementation of ethical practices and accountability including abuses that indicated the misuse of public office. The construct of prevention is related to how unethical behaviour and practices can be detected as well as avoided and reporting is related to how respondents are likely to report any observed unethical behaviour including abuses in public offices.

Independent *t-tests* were conducted to check whether or not means score of the constructs of teachers' perceptions, preventions, abuses, and reporting by sex is statistically significant. Correlation analysis and independent t-test were done at a 5 percent significance level. Quantitative data were analysed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software Version 21. Results are reported in aggregate form in the following section.

Results

Social and Demographic Data

Majority (64%) of respondents were females from 296 primary schools in mainland Tanzania with the dominant age group, ranging below the age of 35 (Table 1). Most of the participants were teachers (75%) and others were administrators (16%), school heads (7.5%), schools' academic/discipline masters/mistresses (0.5%) and others (1%).

Table 1 Respondents' Demographic Information

Respondents		
Sex	Frequency	Response percent
Female	350	64
Male	200	36
Total	550	100
Age-Category Distribution		
20-25	19	4
26-30	186	34
31-35	150	26
36-40	87	16
41-45	58	11
46+	50	9
Total	550	100
Working Experience in Years		
Less than One year	1	0.2
2-6 years	80	15
7-10 years	221	40
10+	248	45
Total	550	100
Teachers' titles		
Heads of schools	41	7.5
Teachers	414	75
Administrators	88	16
Academic /discipline masters/ mistresses	3	0.5
Others	4	1
Total	550	100

The working age population in Tanzania is large and increases as people aged 15 to 64 years, constituting 53.4 percent compared with 51.9 percent recorded in 2002 (URT, 2022). This proportion of an energetic group of people has the potential and involved in country leadership to manage as well as lead institutions successfully and become positive as contributing members of the country. As females predominated in the study, it is a fact that female teachers represent most of the primary teaching force in Tanzania (Lin *et al.*, 2017). As this study revealed, most of the respondents (85%) had a working experience of more than 7 years in the education sector (Table 1). Respondents represented various job categories, including teachers, school heads, administrators as well as Academic /discipline masters/ mistresses.

Teachers' and Administrators' Perceptions on Ethical Issues and Accountability

The construct of perception was set to deal with respondents' feelings on awareness and understanding of ethical behaviours including their practices and accountability

in their workplaces (primary schools). It tried to grasp from a reasonable person as a teacher how far would agree that school and its entire ethical decisions including practices were critical and good ones. Table 2 summarizes results in an ascending order.

Table 2: Teachers' and Administrators' Perceptions on Ethical Issues and Accountability

Perceptions on Ethical Issues and Accountability	% Some Form of Agreement	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Satisfaction with how my school responds to matters related to harassment and discrimination.	85	4.6	1.3
School practices on what they preach when it comes to ethics	76	4.2	1.4
School's ethical rules and practices are effective	70	3.7	1.4
School leaders misuse their position for a personal benefit or others	43	2.5	1.5
School leaders care more about getting job done rather than ethical issues	35	2.8	1.5
You can ignore ethical issues and still get ahead in the schools	18	2.1	1.4

Note: Teachers' perceptions, Mean, and Standard Deviation (6 = Strongly agree, 5 = Agree, 4 = Slightly agree; 3=Slightly disagree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly disagree) in ascending order.

Majority (70%) of respondents reported that their schools' ethical rules and practices were very effective, and more than three-quarters (85%) were impressed with how their schools respond to matters related to ethical issues and abuses (Table 2). A few (18%) numbers of respondents agreed that employees could ignore ethical issues and still get ahead in their work settings (Table 2). A bit over one-third (35%) of respondents indicated that their school leaders cared more about getting the job done rather than ethical issues (Table 2). Slightly over three-quarters (76%) of respondents agreed that their schools and leadership practised what they preached when it came to ethics (Table 2).

The mean score of 2.1 to 4.6 and a standard deviation of 1.3 to 1.5 suggests that there is diversity in teachers' and administrators' perceptions of ethical issues and accountability. The range of mean scores indicates varying levels of agreement or positivity, while the standard deviation suggests a moderate level of variability in these perceptions.

Most of the respondents were significantly satisfied with how their schools responded to matters related to ethical issues. This finding re-affirms continued government efforts to provide awareness and public outreach campaigns as well as

dedication and commitment to fight corruption and curb unethical work behaviours and practices through the establishment of laws and regulations. Comparable results have been presented by some scholars (for example, Mabagala *et al.*, 2012; Mgaiwa & Hamis, 2022).

Ethical Issues and Public Office Abuses

In the context of school management, the construct of ethical issues involved assessing various aspects related to ethical conduct of school employees and potential abuses of their positions. Table 3 presents key findings that contribute to this construct.

Table 3 Ethical Issues and Public Office Abuses

Ethical Issues and Public Office Abuses	% some form of agreement	M	SD
My school recognizes ethical issues when they arise	76	4.4	1.5
Employees in my school misuse official time	30	2.7	1.5
Employees misuse school properties	27	2.5	1.6
Leaders misuse their public positions for personal benefits or others	26		
Employees improperly accept gifts given to them because of their work and status.	24	2.6	1.6

Note: Teachers' perceptions, Mean, and Standard Deviation (6 = Strongly agree, 5 = Agree, 4 = Slightly agree; 3=Slightly disagree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly disagree) in ascending order.

In responding to issues of office abuses, most (76%) of respondents agreed to recognize various ethical issues when they emerged in their schools (Table 3). A bit over a quarter (26%) of respondents reported that their school leaders misused public offices for their personal benefits or others (Table 3). Moreover, only 30 percent of respondents agreed that their fellow employees misused official time for their private-related matters (Table 3). In addition, only 8 out of 10 respondents disagreed that their employees improperly accept gifts given to them because of their work or status (Table 3). Again, almost 8 out of 10 respondents disagreed that leaders misuse their public positions for personal benefits or others (Table 3). On other hand, 8 out of 10 respondents concluded that the schools' employees misused school property (Table 3).

With the exception of the mean score of 4.4 attributed to the statement addressing the school's recognition of ethical issues when they arise, the remaining Likert scale items exhibit an average mean score ranging from approximately 2.5 to 2.7. This

means respondents generally agreed with the school's recognition of ethical issues, but their opinions were less uniformly positive on other aspects related to ethical considerations in the school.

Several studies indicated that unethical practices like misuse of public positions, time, property and cases of corruption as well as abuse hurt poor people and undermine government efforts toward sustaining the middle-income status and achieving sustainable development goals by 2030, including the right to access quality education (Awinia, 2019; Transparency International, 2020; Malabwa & Mnjokava, 2022; Paschal, 2023; Wangamati *et al.*, 2022,). The positive feedback and higher ratings of teachers reaffirm efforts of the government to create values and positive minds in the public sector.

Reporting on Ethical Issues and Misuse of Public Offices

Reporting on ethical issues and misuse of public offices related to how respondents were likely to report any observed unethical behaviour and practices in their schools.

Table 4: Reporting on Ethical Issues and Misuse of Public Office

Reporting on Ethical Issues and Misuse of Public Office	% some form of agreement	M	SD
I would rather submit complaints or express ethical concerns anonymously	89	4.4	1.7
My school follows up seriously on ethical concerns that are reported by employees	77	4.4	1.5
I would feel comfortable to report ethics violations	75	4.5	2.1
Employees can talk with school leaders about ethical problems without fear of having their counts held against them	62	3.7	1.6
Employees are comfortable delivering bad news to their leaders	41	3.0	1.7
My school leaders retaliate for reporting or complaining about something illegal	30	2.6	1.6

Note: Teachers' perceptions, Mean, and Standard Deviation (6 = Strongly agree, 5 = Agree, 4 = Slightly agree; 3=Slightly disagree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly disagree) in ascending order.

Majority (77%) of respondents agreed that their schools followed up seriously on ethical concerns that were reported by employees, while 62 percent of respondents reported having free space where employees could talk with their leaders about ethical problems without fear from having their counts held against them (Table 4). In another vein, it is disheartening that more than half (59%) of respondents said that employees would not be comfortable delivering openly bad news to their

leaders when it comes to ethics violations, although 75 percent were comfortable reporting ethics violations and public office abuses (Table 4). Only close to a third (30%) of respondents indicated that their school leaders would retaliate for reporting or complaining about something unethical (Table 4). Majority (89%) respondents were comfortable to submit complaints or express ethical concerns anonymous (Table 4). On average, respondents gave a mean score of 2.6 to 4.7 to the Likert scale items which expresses support for the statements with a moderate level of variation among participants, as indicated by the moderate standard deviation of 1.3 – 1.5.

The study indicated strong desire, courage, and patriotism among respondents to speak against while striving to combat unethical behaviour and abuse of public offices in the work settings as provided under the Public Service Code of Ethics and Conducts of 2005. This takes into consideration the equation of strengthening and adherence to transparency, integrity, and responsible patriotic leadership for the betterment of Tanzanians.

Prevention of Unethical Practices in Schools

Prevention of unethical practices is related to how unethical practices can be detected as well as avoided. Table 5 summarizes key findings from this construct.

Table 5 Prevention of Unethical Practices in Schools

No	Prevention of Unethical Practices in Schools	% some form of agreement	M	SD
	My school makes a serious attempt to detect ethics violation	73	4.5	3.3
	Employees who are caught violating ethics are disciplined	73	4.7	2.9
	My school works hard to prevent harassment and discrimination	71	4.6	2.1
	My school follows up seriously on ethical concerns that are reported by employees/public	70	4.5	3.3
	Senior officials in my school are less likely to be disciplined for violating ethical standards than other employees	52	3.4	1.6

Notes: Teachers' perceptions, Mean, and Standard Deviation (6 = Strongly agree, 5 = Agree, 4 = Slightly agree; 3=Slightly disagree, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly disagree) in ascending order.

Overall, considerable number (90%) of respondents agreed that strategies applied to curb public office abuses were highly effective (Table 5). Close to three-quarters (73%) of teacher respondents indicated that their schools made serious attempts to detect ethics violations and other misuse of public office as well as prevent harassment and discrimination (Table 5). Some of the reported forms of unethical

behaviours exist in schools include bullying, drunkenness, favouritism, sexual abuse, unfair grading, misuse of funds, and absenteeism (Betweli, 2020; Boniface & Ngalawa, 2021; Malabwa & Mnjokava, 2022; Paschal, 2023). Moreover, 73 percent of respondents agreed that their schools followed up seriously on ethical concerns that were reported by the employees/ public. (Table 5).

In addition, slightly over half (52%) of respondents reported that senior officials (leaders) in their schools were likely to be disciplined for violating ethical standards compared to other employees while about three-quarters (73%) agreed that employees who caught violating ethical standards are disciplined (Table 5). A large number (71%) of respondents further reported that their schools were working hard to prevent the happening of school violations (Table 5).

The mean score of 3.4 to 4.7 suggests that respondents generally hold a positive view or agreement regarding the prevention of unethical practices in schools, as indicated by the higher mean scores. However, the moderate to relatively high standard deviation (1.6 to 3.3) suggests responses are spread out to some extent, indicating variability in opinions among respondents.

Analysis of Correlation of Scale of Constructs

The pairwise correlation analysis was also conducted to identify degree of closeness between the mean of the scale of constructs. Both correlations were positive but weak because the correlation coefficients are less than 0.5 as shown in Table 6. However, all pairs were statistically significant at a 5 percent alpha level ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$), except for the correlation between preventing and ethical issues [$p\text{-value} > 0.05$] Table 6].

Table 6: Correlation Analysis between Constructs

	Perception	Reporting	Abuses	Preventing
Perception	1.0000			
Reporting	0.3035*	1.0000		
Ethical Issues	0.3510*	0.1749*	1.0000	
Preventing	0.1969*	0.1739*	0.0351	1.0000

Independent Sample t-Tests

The independent t-test was conducted to compare means of four constructs by sex as well as for school. Based on the school, as shown in Table 7(a), only the reporting construct was shown to be statistically at a 5 percent significant level ($p\text{-value} = 0.001$). This means they differ in terms of reporting style. Other construct

perceptions (p-value= 0.702), ethical issues (p-value= 0.054) and prevention (p-value= 0.833) showed to be statistically insignificant at a 5 percent alpha level (Table 7a). This means that perceptions, ethical issues, and prevention do not differ based on school.

Table 7(a): Equality of Means for Constructs by Schools

t-test for Equality of Means by Schools							
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Perceptions	-.386	36.893	.702	-.05097	.13203	-.31851	.21656
Reporting	-3.623	43.815	.001	-.39757	.10973	-.61875	-.17640
Ethical Issues	-1.986	38.432	.054	-.40492	.20391	-.81757	.00772
Preventing	-.212	39.447	.833	-.03849	.18119	-.40484	.32786

Another comparison was made to identify if the mean constructs differ by sex of respondents and results are presented in Table 7(b). To check this, the independent t-test was conducted to compare significant differences in the means of four constructs by sex. Based on sex, all constructs' perceptions (p-value= 0.637), reporting (p-value= 0.362), ethical issues (p-value= 0.537) and preventing (p-value= 0.236) showed to be statistically insignificant at 5 percent alpha level (Table 7b). This means that all four constructs do not differ based on the variable sex.

Table 7(b): Equality of Means for Constructs by Sex

t-test for Equality of Means by sex (Male & female)							
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Perceptions	-.472	362.203	.637	-.03063	.06489	-.15825	.09698
Reporting	-.912	482.135	.362	-.06855	.07513	-.21618	.07907
Ethical Issues	-.618	489.947	.537	-.06468	.10458	-.27015	.14080
Preventing	1.187	273.960	.236	.14453	.12173	-.09512	.38418

Cross-Tabulation

Within cross-tabulation analysis, comparison was made between respondents' feelings on ethical behaviours and accountability in the schools versus their official titles (job categories). Their responses in frequencies and percentages in brackets are presented in Tables 8(a) and (b). Analysis revealed similarities in opinions and emphasis across titles with high frequencies observed among teachers who were the majority. Most of the responses showed that schools have effective ethical rules and practices, and their leaders were highly concerned with ethical issues by practicing what they preach and using their public position(s) for the benefit of themselves and others. On the other hand, employees recognized ethical issues when they arise and use properly the school's official time.

Table 8 (a) Cross-tabulation of Teachers' Title against Perception of Ethical Issues and Accountability

Variable	Teachers' Tittles					Total
	Teacher	HoSchool	Administrators	Acad/Discipline Master	Other	
Overall opinion on ethical rules and practices						
Too strict and limiting	52 (65.8%)	5(6.3%)	21 (26.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.3%)	79 (100%)
Very effective	317 (76.8%)	30 (7.3%)	60 (14.5%)	3 (0.7%)	3 (0.7%)	413 (100.0%)
Too lenient	7 (63.6%)	1 (9.1%)	3 (27.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	11 (100.0%)
Ineffective	37 (80.4%)	5 (10.9%)	4 (8.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	46 (100.0%)
I can ignore ethical issues and still get ahead in my school						
Strongly disagree	180 (75.6%)	18 (7.6%)	36 (15.1%)	1 (0.4%)	3 (1.3%)	238 (100.0%)
Disagree	153 (76.1%)	15 (7.5%)	31 (15.4%)	2 (1.0%)	0 (0.0%)	201 (100.0%)
Slightly disagree	11 (84.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (7.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (7.7%)	13 (100.0%)
Slightly agree	23 (74.2%)	1 (13.2%)	7 (22.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	31 (100.0%)
Agree	30 (66.7%)	6 (13.3%)	9 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	45 (100.0%)
Strongly agree	17 (77.3%)	1 (4.5%)	4 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	22 (100.0%)
My leaders care more about getting job done rather than ethical issues						
Strongly disagree	85 (76.6%)	7 (6.3%)	17 (15.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.8%)	111 (100.0%)
Disagree	150 (75.0%)	17 (8.5%)	30 (15.0%)	3 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	200 (100.0%)
Slightly disagree	33 (73.3%)	4 (8.9%)	8 (17.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	45 (100.0%)
Slightly agree	12 (75.8%)	6 (6.3%)	17 (17.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	95 (100.0%)
Agree	57 (78.1%)	5 (6.8%)	11 (15.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	73 (100.0%)
Strongly agree	17 (65.4%)	2 (7.7%)	5 (19.2%)	0 (0.0%)	7.7%	26 (100.0%)
My school practices what it preaches when it comes to ethics						
Strongly disagree	34 (77.3%)	3 (6.8%)	6 (13.6%)	1 (2.3%)	0 (0.0%)	44 (100.0%)
Disagree	40 (76.9%)	2 (3.8%)	8 (15.4%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.8%)	52 (100.0%)
Slightly disagree	27 (75.0%)	6 (16.7%)	3 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	36 (100.0%)
Slightly agree	71 (82.6%)	2 (2.3%)	11 (12.8%)	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.2%)	86 (100.0%)

Agree	169 (72.5%)	22 (9.4%)	41 (17.6%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	233 (100.0%)
Strongly agree	73 (73.7%)	6 (6.1%)	19 (19.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.0%)	99 (100.0%)
My school practices what it preaches when it comes to ethics						
Strongly disagree	34 (77.3%)	3 (6.8%)	6 (13.6%)	1 (2.3%)	0 (0.0%)	44 (100.0%)
Disagree	40 (76.9%)	2 (3.8%)	8 (15.4%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.8%)	52 (100.0%)
Slightly disagree	27 (75.0%)	6 (16.7%)	3 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	36 (100.0%)
Slightly agree	71 (82.6%)	2 (2.3%)	11 (12.8%)	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.2%)	86 (100.0%)
Agree	169 (72.5%)	22 (9.4%)	41 (17.6%)	1 (0.4%)	0 (0.0%)	233 (100.0%)
Strongly agree	73 (73.7%)	6 (6.1%)	19 (19.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.0%)	99 (100.0%)
My leaders misuse their position for personal benefits to themselves or others						
Strongly disagree	67 (74.4%)	6 (6.7%)	17 (18.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	90 (100.0%)
Disagree	122 (76.7%)	11 (6.9%)	23 (14.5%)	1 (0.6%)	2 (1.3%)	159 (100.0%)
Slightly disagree	46 (70.8%)	7 (10.8%)	10 (15.4%)	1 (1.5%)	1 (1.5%)	65 (100.0%)
Slightly agree	73 (69.5%)	7 (6.7%)	23 (21.9%)	1 (1.0%)	1 (1.0%)	105 (100.0%)
Agree	64 (79.0%)	6 (7.4%)	11 (13.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	81 (100.0%)
Strongly agree	42 (84.0%)	4 (8.0%)	4 (8.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	50 (100.0%)

Table 8 (b) Cross-tabulation of Teachers' Title against Ethical Issues and Public Office Abuses

Variable	Teachers' Tittle					Total
	Teacher	HoS	Administrators	Acad/Discipline Master	Other	
Employees in my school misuse official time						
Strongly disagree	101 (75.9%)	7 (5.3%)	24 (18.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.8%)	133 (100.0%)
Disagree	133 (73.5%)	14 (7.7%)	31 (17.1%)	2 (1.1%)	1 (0.6%	181 (100.0%)
Slightly disagree	54 (78.3%)	7 (10.1%)	7 (10.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.4%)	69 (100.0%)
Slightly agree	57 (72.2%)	6 (7.6%)	16 (20.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	79 (100.0%)
Agree	48 (78.7%)	4 (6.6%)	7 (11.5%)	1 (1.6%)	1 (1.6%)	61 (100.0%)
Strongly agree	20 (76.9%)	3 (11.5%)	3 (11.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	26 (100.0%)

Employees in my school recognize ethics issues when they arise						
Strongly disagree	30 (78.9%)	3 (7.9%)	5 (13.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	38 (100.0%)
Disagree	45 (75.0%)	4 (6.7%)	9 (15.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.3%)	60 (100.0%)
Slightly disagree	22 (66.7%)	6 (18.2%)	5 (15.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	33 (100.0%)
Slightly agree	55 (78.6%)	4 (5.7%)	10 (14.3%)	1 (1.4%)	0 (0.0%)	70 (100.0%)
Agree	149 (71.6%)	16 (7.7%)	40 (19.2%)	2 (1.0%)	1 (0.5%)	208 (100.0%)
Strongly agree	113 (80.1%)	8 (5.7%)	19 (13.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.7%)	141 (100.0%)

Discussion

Work ethics and accountability are crucial aspects of the professional conduct of teachers and administrators in educational settings. They both contribute to effective functioning of schools, quality of education, and overall development of pupils. As the findings indicated most of the respondents were significantly impressed with how their schools respond to matters related to ethical issues and misuse of public offices. This implies that they were contented with the way the schools and their members conducted professionally as well as fulfilling their responsibilities. Such satisfaction could stem from various factors related to the school's ethical standards, transparency, and accountability of its staff including leadership.

Contrary to what respondents provided, less has been documented about the latest measures taken to improve work ethics and accountability in Tanzania's public primary schools. However, there are commonly employed general strategies to enhance work ethics in educational settings such as offering continuous training and professional development programmes for teachers to enhance their skills including professionalism; establishing a clear as well as comprehensive code of conduct for both teachers and students; engaging parents and local communities in educational initiatives; enhancing effective leadership at school and district levels; and ensuring that schools have adequate infrastructure together with resources. These strategies have been featured in the National Five-Year Development Plan [2020/2021 to 2024/2025 (URT, 2021) and in the Education and Training Policy of 2014 (URT, 2014)] and also, the ruling party election manifesto of 2020 (CCM Manifesto, 2020).

Meanwhile, oversight institutions like the Ethics Commission, Anti-Corruption Agency, Public Service Commission, Police Force, and Auditor General's Office are continually educating, preventing, and sanctioning corrupt behaviour and practices among the teaching force in the primary education sub-sector (Mabagala *et al.*, 2012; Kabarata, 2023). Some measures so far have been introduced to discipline teachers in public services including enforcing the professional Code of Ethics and Conduct, Acts and Regulations together with recent transformation of the School Inspectorate Department renamed as School Quality Assurance Department. Other efforts are from the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC). The TSC sets teachers' conduct and code of ethics including responsibilities for all ethical concerns and disciplinary actions of teachers (Lawrent, 2022; Kabarata, 2023).

Responding to reporting ethical concerns and misuse of public office, most respondents agreed that their schools seriously followed up on reported cases, had free space to report, and preferred anonymous reporting. However, they would not be comfortable delivering openly to their leaders. According to Kelsall *et al.*, (2005), there are several reasons why individuals might feel uncomfortable openly delivering ethical issues to their leaders in the workplace. Such reasons can be influenced by organizational culture that does not prioritize open communication or transparency, significant power imbalance between themselves and their leaders, fear from reprisal, and ineffective reporting mechanisms. Other given reasons were lack of whistle-blower protections, significant power imbalance between themselves and their leaders, lack of trust, as well as reluctance to expose themselves to potential conflict or emotional distress.

In prevention of unethical practices, respondents agreed that strategies applied to curb unethical behaviours were highly effective, and schools attempted to prevent the occurrence of violations. These strategies and attempts encompass values, behaviours and attitudes that guide the conduct of teachers, students, and staff within the educational environment. However, other studies found the nature of the teaching force in primary schools in Tanzania has a significant high-level spread of corruption and unethical work behaviour and practices. Some examples of unethical practices that have been reported include engaging in sexual relations with pupils and fellow workers, mistreating students, unfair grading, inadequately listening and advising students, absenteeism, embezzlement of funds and being dishonest to authorities (Youze *et al.*, 2014; Betweli, 2020; Matete, 2021; Paschal, 2023).

Improving work ethics and accountability by imparting good leadership traits is likely to yield multiple benefits and forge trust, collegiality, and credibility of school managers to improve the relationships between teachers and their leaders and, it is likely to give better support for teaching career sustainability and growth (Matete, 2021). Tanzania is committed to achieving Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDG-2030) and so, should make sacrifices and higher costs of giving the best in the public sector. It is the right moment for the national leadership to develop a new breed of workforce by creating a conducive and supportive work environment, facilitating the teachers' continuous professional development, as well as emphasizing on teaching of moral and professional ethics in the teacher education programmes.

Conclusion

Work ethics and accountability are integral components of a successful as well as sustainable education system. Teachers and administrators through commitment to ethical principles and being held accountable for their actions, contribute significantly to development including success of pupils and overall effectiveness of schools. Similarly, this study supports the contention as the teachers and administrators commented that they were significantly impressed with how their schools responded to matters relating to ethical issues including misuse of public offices, having clear and accessible channels for reporting ethical concerns and attempting to prevent unethical issues from happening. However, when ethical issues emerged, teachers and administrators felt uncomfortable communicating with their leaders due to several factors such as a lack of clear guidelines or policies and fear of repercussions. This uncertainty and anxiety require a collaborative and proactive approach while fostering a culture of open communication in schools. On the other hand, promoting strong work ethics and accountability among teachers and administrators in Tanzania's public primary schools is essential for fostering a positive educational environment that creates a culture that values professionalism, ethical behaviour, and accountability, contributing to improved educational outcomes and overall well-being of students.

Recommendations

It is important to recognize that opinions of teachers and administrators might differ due to their diversity of experiences across urban as well as rural environments and when individuals reflect the complexity and subjectivity of issues inherent in them. In addition, schools may have unique circumstances that influence work ethics and accountability of their workforce. Therefore, local context, cultural factors, and specific challenges should be taken into contemplation when considering further details of this study area.

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