



# **ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP CAPACITY IN IMPLEMENTING TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MOROGORO REGION, TANZANIA**

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## **ABSTRACT :**

Teachers' professional development (TPD) is widely recognised as an important mechanism for improving teachers' professional knowledge, instructional practices and capacity to respond to changing educational demands. However, the effectiveness of TPD depends partly on the capacity of school administrators to provide instructional leadership, supervision, motivation, coordination and organisational support. This study assessed the adequacy of administrative leadership capacity in implementing TPD programmes in public secondary schools in Morogoro Region, Tanzania. The study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were collected from 233 teachers using structured questionnaires, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with heads of schools and academic masters/mistresses and documentary review. Quantitative data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The findings showed that administrative leadership capacity was generally adequate. Specifically, 79.0% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that heads of schools provided clear direction for TPD programmes, 75.1% perceived the administrators as having adequate knowledge of TPD programmes, and 76.8% agreed that the administrators demonstrated commitment to continual teacher development. Supervision of TPD was strongly rated ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ), while leadership support for continual professional learning was also positive ( $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ). However, administrators' knowledge of TPD received a comparatively lower mean score ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ). Equity in TPD participation ( $M = 3.82$ ), time allocation ( $M = 3.78$ ) and technological support ( $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) also revealed areas requiring improvement. Qualitative findings indicated that the school heads supported teachers through needs identification, supervision, motivation, ensuring equitable participation and use of available ICT resources; however, financial constraints, inadequate technological infrastructure, huge workload and competing administrative responsibilities limited implementation. The study concludes that school administrators generally possessed adequate leadership capacity to support TPD, but the effectiveness of their leadership was strongly influenced by the institutional conditions in which they operated. The study recommends strengthening school leaders' professional-development competencies, providing dedicated resources for TPD, protecting professional-learning time, improving ICT infrastructure and promoting participatory and instructional leadership practices.

**Keywords:** administrative leadership capacity, instructional leadership, teachers' professional development, school administration

## **1.1 Introduction**

Teachers' professional development (TPD) constitutes an important component of educational improvement because teachers require continual opportunities to update their professional knowledge, pedagogical skills and understanding of changing curriculum and instructional requirements. Professional development increasingly extends beyond short-term workshops to include school-based learning, collaborative inquiry and mentoring, instructional supervision, peer learning and technology-supported professional learning.

However, the availability of TPD opportunities does not automatically guarantee meaningful professional learning. Therefore, the organisational environment within which professional development takes place becomes significantly important. The role of school administrators particularly becomes important because they determine how teachers' professional development is prioritised, organised, supported and monitored within schools.

Administrative leadership capacity, in this study, refers to the knowledge, skills, commitment, experience and organisational competencies that school administrators use to support teachers' professional development. It includes the ability to provide clear direction, identify teachers' professional needs, supervise instructional practice, motivate teachers, facilitate participation, allocate time and resources, encourage continuous learning and respond to

implementation challenges.

The relationship between leadership and professional development is supported by growing international evidence. Kirsten (2020), in a systematic review of research on teacher professional development as a policy instrument, found that professional development is more effective when it incorporates administrators' learning, connects with other policy measures and draws on information from practice. This highlights the importance of considering professional development as an organisational process rather than solely as an individual teacher's prerogative.

More recent research provide significant evidence of the relationship between school leadership and teachers' professional growth. He et al. (2024) found that principals' instructional leadership was associated with teachers' professional development. Similarly, Dorukbaşı et al. (2024) demonstrated that instructional leadership significantly predicted teacher professional learning and instructional practices. These studies suggest that school leaders strongly influence professional learning through creation of enabling organisational conditions that support teachers' engagement with professional knowledge and instructional improvement.

Evidence from African contexts also highlight the importance of leadership competencies. So-Oabeb and du Plessis (2023) found that school leaders require multiple competencies, including communication, interpersonal, administrative, digital and subject-related competencies, to support teachers' professional development. Their findings suggest that leadership for TPD is multidimensional and cannot be reduced to formal administrative authority.

Equally, empirical evidence from Tanzania provides a particularly relevant context. For instance, Chaula et al. (2024) found that school heads' clinical supervision practices contributed to teachers' professional competency development in public secondary schools. Their findings demonstrate that supervision, feedback and professional support can connect school leadership with teachers' classroom improvement.

Additionally, some studies have demonstrated that professional learning can be strengthened when leadership opportunities are distributed within schools. A study by Mwakabenga (2025) found that secondary school teachers demonstrate leadership behaviours in teaching and professional-development activities, although limited recognition and opportunities to exercise leadership constrain the development of teacher leadership.

Despite this growing evidence, a knowledge gap remains concerning the adequacy of administrative leadership capacity specifically for implementing TPD at school level in Tanzania. Much of the existing literature have examined individual aspects of leadership, such as instructional supervision or teacher leadership. However, little attention has been given to the combination of leadership direction, TPD knowledge, commitment, supervision, motivation, equity, time management and technological support as interconnected aspects of school-level administrative capacity.

This gap is particularly important in public secondary schools, where administrators must balance instructional leadership with multiple administrative responsibilities and operate within resource-constrained environments. Therefore, this study assessed the adequacy of administrative leadership capacity in implementing TPD programmes in public secondary schools in Morogoro Region, Tanzania.

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## 2.1 Theoretical Perspective

### 2.1.1 Instructional Leadership Theory

This study was guided by Instructional Leadership Theory (ILT), particularly the framework associated with Hallinger and Murphy. The theory conceptualises school leadership based on three broad functions: defining the school mission, managing the instructional programme and promoting a positive school learning climate.

The theory is relevant to this study because TPD is fundamentally connected to teaching and learning. School administrators influence professional development when they identify instructional priorities, coordinate teachers' professional learning, supervise classroom practice, provide feedback, motivate teachers and create conditions that encourage continuous professional learning. Therefore, the theory was handy in interpreting the adequacy of school leadership in its performance of TPD related matters.

In this study, instructional leadership is reflected through several dimensions of administrative capacity. Firstly, school leaders are expected to provide clear direction regarding professional development priorities. Secondly, they require sufficient knowledge of TPD to identify professional needs and connect teachers with appropriate learning opportunities. Thirdly, they should supervise and motivate teachers to apply professional learning. Fourthly, they should create enabling organisational conditions that ensure equitable participation, adequate time allocation and access to technological resources.

The theory therefore provided useful lens for interpreting the extent to which school administrators possess and exercise the competencies necessary to translate TPD practices and opportunities into school-level professional learning.

Despite its appropriateness to the focus of this study, the theory has a limitation. Its emphasis on the role of the school principal may understate the delegated leadership roles and teacher agency. Contemporary professional learning increasingly involves collaboration among principals, academic leaders, heads of departments and teachers. The findings of the present study, therefore, extend the interpretation of instructional leadership by recognising the contribution of Academic Masters/Mistresses and teachers themselves to professional development.

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### 3.1 Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-methods research approach and a convergent parallel design. The mixed-methods approach was selected because administrative leadership capacity involves both measurable perceptions and contextual leadership experiences. Data collected through questionnaires enabled the researcher to establish patterns in teachers' perceptions, while interviews and documentary review provided explanations on how administrators actually supported TPD. The convergent parallel design allowed quantitative and qualitative evidence to be collected and analysed separately before being integrated during interpretation. This enhanced the credibility of the findings through triangulation.

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## 4.1 Discussion

### 4.1.1 Leadership Direction, TPD Knowledge and Commitment

The findings demonstrated generally a positive perception of school administrators' leadership capacity. Regarding leadership direction, 184 respondents (79.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that heads of schools provided clear direction for implementation of TPD programmes. The item recorded a mean of 3.87 (SD = 1.13). The proportion of the positive responses was higher in Council B (85.1%) than in Council A (70.7%). Nevertheless, 13.7% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed while 7.3% were neutral, indicating that leadership direction was not experienced uniformly across all the study schools.

The qualitative findings provided further explanations to bolster the findings from quantitative data. School administrators reported that professional-development priorities were identified through staff and departmental meetings, teachers' instructional challenges, curriculum requirements and classroom supervision.

One head of school explained that teachers' professional-development priorities were identified through discussions on teaching challenges, curriculum changes and observations from classroom supervision. The administrator then guided teachers to take training in appropriate seminars, workshops or further training opportunities.

Similarly, an Academic Master reported that administrators guided teachers to take training that addressed specific instructional difficulties and encouraged those who attended training to share the acquired knowledge with their colleagues.

These findings, therefore, demonstrated that leadership direction was not limited to announcing the available TPD activities and opportunities. Rather, school leaders attempted to connect professional learning with teachers' instructional needs.

Additionally, the study findings indicated that the school administrators' knowledge of TPD received a mean of 3.85 (SD = 1.05), with 75.1% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing that administrators possessed adequate TPD knowledge. Although this represented a generally positive assessment, its score was the lowest of the three aspects of leadership: direction, knowledge and commitment indicators. This finding is significant because effective TPD leadership requires administrators to understand teachers' professional development sufficiently to be able to identify teachers' needs, select appropriate opportunities and align TPD with school priorities.

The third indicator of the adequacy of school leadership concerned the commitment to continual teacher development. 76.8% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that school administrators demonstrated commitment to ensuring continual teacher development, producing a mean score of 3.91 (SD = 1.06).

Overall, the three indicators demonstrate a favourable assessment of the school administrative leadership capacity, although the results also revealed areas that required further strengthening.

### 4.1.2 Supervision, Motivation and Continuous Professional Learning

Supervision emerged as one of the strongest aspects of administrative leadership capacity. Supervision of TPD by the Academic Masters/Mistresses recorded a mean score of 4.03 (SD = 0.93). This meant that school-level instructional supervision provided an important mechanism through which

professional development was connected with teachers' daily classroom practice.

Leadership support for continual professional learning also received a positive mean of 3.93 (SD = 1.04). This demonstrates that administrators were not merely facilitating teachers' attendance at TPD activities. They also encouraged teachers to continue learning, receive professional support and improve instructional practices.

The qualitative evidence from interviews further indicated that administrators encouraged teachers to apply the knowledge acquired from professional development in their professional practice as well as share their experiences with their colleagues. Furthermore, supervision reports also provided significant evidence of classroom observation and feedback.

The findings, therefore, suggest that supervision operated as a bridge between professional development participation and classroom application. Nevertheless, the results also revealed some variation in teachers' experiences. A minority of the respondents disagreed or remained neutral regarding leadership support. This suggests that supervisory and motivational practices were not implemented with exactly the same intensity across all schools.

#### **4.1.3 Equity, Time Allocation and Management of TPD Participation**

This study further sought to determine whether school administrative leadership capacity had the ability to ensure that teachers had equitable opportunities to participate in professional development. The findings showed that 72.1% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that school leadership ensured equal opportunities for teachers to participate in TPD. The mean was 3.82 (SD = 1.08).

The qualitative evidence indicated that the school administrators distributed opportunities among all the teachers rather than repeatedly selecting specific individuals. One head of school confirmed this by saying that different teachers were given opportunities to attend seminars and workshops so that professional development would not be restricted to a small group.

Nevertheless, the results also indicated that the aspect of ensuring equity was not reported by all the respondents. A total of 16.7% of respondents were neutral and 11.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This suggests that some teachers still perceived differences in access to professional-development opportunities in some schools.

Time allocation was the weakest indicator within this dimension. 68.7% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that administrators allocated sufficient time for TPD, while 19.7% were neutral and 11.6% disagreed or strongly disagreed. The mean was 3.78 (SD = 1.03). The qualitative evidence explained this result whereby the school administrators described the difficulty of balancing TPD with teaching responsibilities, tight school timetables and other duties. For instance, one head of school explained that TPD activities were organised around the school timetable as much as possible since the teachers still had teaching responsibilities that could not simply be suspended.

This finding demonstrates that time was not merely a scheduling issue. It represented a structural condition that significantly influenced the quality of professional learning.

The findings further indicated that management of challenges associated with TPD implementation was rated more positively than the other leadership aspects. 76.4% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that school leaders effectively managed the challenges associated with TPD implementation, scoring a mean of 3.90 (SD = 1.06). Qualitative evidence supported this by indicating that administrators used flexible arrangements, internal communication, staff meetings and knowledge sharing to minimise the effects of TPD-related challenges.

#### **4.1.4 Technological Support for Professional Development**

Technology has increasingly become an important component in teachers' professional development because it enables them to access professional information, online training, digital teaching materials and communication networks.

In this study, the results showed that technological support received an overall mean of 3.77 (SD = 1.09). Council B recorded a slightly higher mean (M = 3.83, SD = 1.09) than Council A (M = 3.70, SD = 1.08). This finding indicates that technological support was generally positive but less developed than some other dimensions of administrative leadership. Qualitative evidence confirmed that teachers actually used available computers and internet facilities to search for teaching materials, access information of their profession and participate in online learning.

Despite the positive indication, the administrators reported shortages of computers and unreliable internet connectivity. An Academic Master noted that inadequate computers and unreliable internet connectivity made it difficult for teachers to access online training and professional materials.

The findings, therefore, reveal a dual state of technology use. On the one hand, ICT expanded the opportunities for continuous professional learning beyond reliance on traditional workshops. On the other hand, inadequate infrastructure created unequal access to professional learning across the study schools. Therefore, owing to its critical role in TPD, there was a need to enhance technological infrastructure in schools.

## 5.1 Conclusion

Conclusively, the findings demonstrated that school administrative leadership capacity for implementing Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) programmes in public secondary schools in Morogoro Region was *adequate*. School administrators demonstrated their leadership capacity through providing direction for TPD, showing commitment to teachers' continual professional learning, supervising professional development activities, motivating teachers and managing challenges associated with TPD implementation. These findings suggest that school-level leadership plays an important role in translating professional development programmes into meaningful opportunities for teachers' professional learning and instructional improvement.

However, the adequacy of administrative leadership capacity was not uniform across all dimensions. Administrators' knowledge of TPD, time allocated for professional learning, offering equitable access to development opportunities and technological support revealed some areas requiring further strengthening. The findings further indicated that school leadership effectiveness is influenced not only by administrators' individual competencies but also by organisational conditions, particularly availability of resources, ICT infrastructure, teachers' workload and allocated time for professional learning.

Therefore, *effective and sustainable implementation of TPD requires a combination of competent instructional leadership and supportive institutional conditions*. Strengthening the professional-development competencies of school administrators should consequently be accompanied by adequate resources, improved technological infrastructure, dully allocated time for professional learning and effective school-level mechanisms for supporting and monitoring teachers' professional development.

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