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Professional Development Contributions as a Predictor of Building Confidence among Secondary School Leaders in Kibaha District, Tanzania

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Abstract
This study examined the contribution of professional development to building confidence among secondary school leaders in Kibaha District, Coastal Region, Tanzania. The study was guided by one research objective: to evaluate the role of professional development contributions as a predictor of building confidence among secondary school leaders in Kibaha District. Guided by Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach and an explanatory research design. The study involved 96 respondents comprising 83 secondary school teachers, six head teachers, six Ward Education Officers, and one District Education Officer. Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire, while qualitative evidence was obtained through semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics in SPSS, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. Findings showed positive perceptions of professional development as a mechanism for building leadership confidence. Continuous professional learning recorded the highest mean (M = 4.28, SD = 0.94), with 86.7% of teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing. Mentorship and coaching also received strong support (M = 4.15, SD = 0.97), while professional development was associated with improved confidence in managing school operations, communication, resilience, and decision-making. Interview evidence indicated that training, mentorship, and coaching strengthened practical leadership skills and confidence. However, limited training opportunities, financial constraints, scheduling difficulties, and logistical barriers constrained access. The study concludes that sustained and accessible professional development is an important mechanism associated with leadership confidence among secondary school leaders in Kibaha District. The study recommends strengthening continuous professional learning, mentorship, and coaching opportunities for school leaders.

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INTRODUCTION

School leadership is central to the functioning of educational institutions because head teachers are expected to coordinate teaching and learning, manage staff, allocate resources, implement policy, respond to community expectations, and address school-level challenges. These responsibilities require more than formal authority. They require leaders to possess confidence in their capacity to make decisions, communicate with stakeholders, solve problems, and sustain action under pressure. Professional development provides an important pathway through which school leaders can acquire knowledge, practical skills, reflective opportunities, and professional support needed to strengthen such confidence.

Recent scholarship increasingly treats professional learning as an embedded and continuing component of school leadership rather than as a collection of isolated workshops. Earley (2020) emphasizes that educational leaders learn most effectively when experience is accompanied by supported reflection, coaching, mentoring, peer review, and feedback. A recent systematic review similarly identifies coaching as a professional-learning approach that can strengthen leadership capacity, reflection, communication, adaptability, resilience, and problem solving.

Professional development is particularly important because leadership work is complex and context dependent. School leaders must respond to curriculum reforms, staff issues, resource limitations, accountability requirements, parent expectations, and unexpected crises. Recent research on novice principals found that professional learning can strengthen professional confidence through deeper knowledge, leadership capability, peer learning, mentorship, and clearer understanding of the leadership role.

In Tanzania, professional development is also increasingly discussed in relation to sustained in-service learning and mentorship. Recent Tanzanian research on in-service teacher training highlights mentorship as a mechanism for continued professional learning, while broader evidence indicates that mentoring and coaching can support leadership growth and confidence.

The present study focuses on Kibaha District and specifically examines professional development as one dimension of personal empowerment. The original study identified professional development, self-efficacy, and autonomy as dimensions of personal empowerment; this manuscript intentionally retains only the professional-development objective so that the analysis remains focused and coherent.

Research Problem

Secondary school leaders are expected to make administrative and instructional decisions, manage staff, respond to school challenges, and implement education policies. These responsibilities require confidence and practical leadership competence. However, the availability and accessibility of professional development opportunities may vary, and school leaders may face financial, scheduling, and logistical barriers to participation. The original study found that limited availability of professional development programmes, scheduling conflicts, financial constraints, and logistical challenges could restrict leaders' access to training. At the same time, respondents reported that professional development strengthened decision-making, communication, resilience, and confidence in managing school operations. Although professional development is widely recognized as an important component of educational leadership, context-specific evidence on how continuous learning, mentorship, coaching, workshops, seminars, and in-service training contribute to confidence among secondary school leaders in Kibaha District remains limited. This study therefore examined professional development as a predictor of leadership confidence among secondary school leaders in Kibaha District.

Research Objective

To evaluate the role of professional development contributions as a predictor of building confidence among secondary school leaders in Kibaha District, Coastal Region, Tanzania.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory

The study was guided by Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, which explains how individuals' beliefs about their capabilities influence choices, effort, persistence, and emotional responses (Bandura, 1977, 1986). The theory identifies mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological or emotional states as important sources of self-efficacy.

Professional development is relevant to this framework because training can provide mastery experiences, mentorship can provide vicarious learning and social persuasion, and coaching can create opportunities for feedback and reflection. When leaders successfully apply newly acquired knowledge to school-management problems, the experience may strengthen their perceived capability and confidence.

The theory also helps explain why professional development may not produce uniform outcomes. If opportunities are inaccessible, irregular, poorly supported, or disconnected from leaders' actual work, leaders may have fewer opportunities to convert training into successful practice. Therefore, the theory was applied together with attention to the institutional conditions identified by participants.

Literature Review

Professional development is widely recognized as an important mechanism for strengthening the knowledge, skills, reflective capacity, decision-making ability, communication, and problem-solving competence of school leaders. At the global level, contemporary scholarship increasingly views leadership development as a continuing process rather than a one-time training event. A recent systematic narrative review of 116 empirical studies found that effective professional development for school principals is shaped by context, supportive professional networks, motivation, self-efficacy, and opportunities for both formal and informal learning, with reported outcomes including stronger leadership practices and greater principal self-efficacy (Hosseingholizadeh et al., 2026). Similarly, Collins, Murphy, and Brown (2025), in a systematic review of coaching in school-leader professional learning, found that coaching can support role clarity, self-efficacy, leadership identity, agency, reflection, resilience, and openness to learning. These findings suggest that professional development contributes to confidence when learning is connected to leaders' actual responsibilities, supported through relationships, and reinforced through reflection and application.

International literature further indicates that continuous professional learning can strengthen leaders' confidence by giving them repeated opportunities to update their knowledge and practise leadership skills. Earley (2020) emphasizes the importance of reflective professional learning in helping educational leaders connect experience with professional growth. Evidence on novice principals also indicates that professional confidence is associated with deeper knowledge, leadership capability, peer learning, and clearer understanding of the leadership role. This suggests that professional development should not be understood simply as attendance at workshops; its contribution depends on relevance, continuity, opportunities for application, and reflection. Such a view is particularly consistent with Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory because successful application of newly acquired knowledge can provide mastery experiences that strengthen perceived capability.

Mentorship and coaching form another important dimension of professional development. Mentoring normally involves sustained developmental support from a more

experienced professional, whereas coaching tends to emphasize focused goals, dialogue, feedback, reflection, and problem solving. International evidence shows that both approaches can support school-leader development. Collins et al. (2025) reported that coaching can create a safe professional space in which leaders reflect on practice, strengthen self-awareness, develop role clarity, and build self-efficacy. Earley (2020) similarly argues that supported reflection can help leaders consider alternative perspectives and improve professional judgement. Porritt (2021) also associated coaching experiences with increased self-awareness, leadership knowledge, leadership skills, and self-efficacy among school leaders. Therefore, mentorship and coaching can be understood as mechanisms through which professional learning is translated into practical leadership confidence.

The literature also connects professional development with confidence in managing school operations and making decisions. School leaders are required to interpret policy, manage staff, allocate resources, resolve conflicts, communicate with stakeholders, and respond to unexpected challenges. Training that develops these practical competencies can provide leaders with knowledge and strategies that reduce uncertainty when handling complex responsibilities. The recent systematic review by Hosseingholizadeh et al. (2026) reported that effective principal professional development is associated with enhanced leadership practices and greater self-efficacy. In this sense, the value of professional development is reflected not only in what leaders learn, but also in their ability to apply what they learn when making decisions and managing school-level problems.

Communication is also an important pathway through which professional development may contribute to leadership confidence. School leaders communicate with teachers, students, parents, district officials, and community stakeholders, and they often have to explain decisions, negotiate disagreements, and advocate for school needs. Professional development in communication, conflict resolution, stakeholder engagement, and leadership can strengthen these capacities. Collins et al. (2025) identify communication, relationship-building, reflection, and relational awareness as important elements within leadership coaching and professional learning. Thus, opportunities to practise communication and receive professional feedback may strengthen leaders' confidence in interpersonal and organizational situations.

Professional development may further strengthen resilience and adaptability. Educational leaders operate in changing environments characterized by policy reforms, resource limitations, staff challenges, emergencies, and shifting community expectations. Continuous learning can expose leaders to new problem-solving approaches, coping strategies, and examples of how other leaders respond to difficult circumstances. The global literature reviewed by Collins et al. (2025) links professional coaching with resilience, reflection, self-awareness, and adaptation, while Hosseingholizadeh et al. (2026) emphasizes the importance of context-sensitive professional development and supportive organizational conditions. These findings indicate that professional learning can help leaders develop the confidence required to respond constructively to changing circumstances.

African literature provides an important contextual bridge between global evidence and the Tanzanian setting. Studies of educational leadership in African countries generally show that professional development, mentoring, leadership support, and opportunities for practical learning are important for strengthening school-management capacity. However, the contribution of professional development can be constrained by limited resources, unequal access to training, heavy workloads, and differences in institutional support. These contextual conditions are important because professional development cannot strengthen leadership confidence effectively when opportunities are irregular, inaccessible, or disconnected from leaders' actual responsibilities.

Within Tanzania, professional development has increasingly been associated with the continuing development of education professionals and school leaders. Mwakabenga (2025), for example, examined mentorship within in-service teacher training in Tanzania and

highlighted mentorship as a continuing professional-learning mechanism involving teachers, school leaders, heads of schools, education coordinators, and quality assurance personnel. Tanzanian literature also points to the importance of leadership development, professional support, and capacity building in strengthening school effectiveness. Nevertheless, access to professional development may be affected by funding limitations, scheduling difficulties, transport costs, shortages of facilitators, and the availability of training opportunities. These challenges make it necessary to examine not only whether professional development exists, but also whether it contributes to confidence in the actual work of school leaders.

At the local level, the need for such evidence is particularly relevant in Kibaha District, Coastal Region, where secondary school leaders operate within the practical realities of managing staff, implementing curriculum requirements, allocating limited resources, responding to parents and communities, and handling school-level challenges. The original Bizoza study found strong teacher perceptions that continuous professional learning contributed to leadership confidence, with the highest mean recorded for continuous professional learning ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.94$). Mentorship and coaching also received strong support ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 0.97$), while professional development was associated with confidence in managing school operations, communication, and resilience. Interview evidence further indicated that training and mentorship provided practical guidance for decision-making and helped leaders respond to difficult situations. At the same time, respondents identified limited training opportunities, financial constraints, scheduling difficulties, and logistical barriers as factors that restricted access to professional development.

Taken together, the literature shows a progression from broad international evidence on professional learning and leadership confidence to African and Tanzanian evidence on contextual constraints and finally to the specific situation of secondary school leaders in Kibaha District. Although previous studies demonstrate the relevance of professional development, mentorship, coaching, communication training, and continuous learning, there remains a need for context-specific evidence on how these contributions are associated with confidence among secondary school leaders in Kibaha District. This gap provides the basis for the present study, which focuses specifically on the role of professional development contributions as a predictor of building confidence among secondary school leaders.

Empirical gap: Existing literature provides substantial evidence that professional development can strengthen school-leader knowledge, skills, self-efficacy, decision-making, communication, and resilience. However, much of the international evidence is drawn from contexts with different institutional arrangements from Tanzania, while Tanzanian evidence has not sufficiently focused on the specific relationship between professional development contributions and confidence among secondary school leaders in Kibaha District. The present study addresses this contextual gap by examining teachers' perceptions together with interview evidence from head teachers and education officers.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach and an explanatory research design. The study was conducted in Kibaha District, Coastal Region, Tanzania. The target population consisted of 96 respondents: six head teachers, one District Education Officer, six Ward Education Officers, and 83 secondary school teachers. The sample comprised all 96 respondents. Stratified sampling, simple random sampling, and purposive sampling were used according to respondent category. Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire, while qualitative evidence was obtained through semi-structured interviews with head teachers, Ward Education Officers, and the District Education Officer. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS through descriptive statistics. Qualitative data were analysed thematically. The use of both sources enabled triangulation between teachers' perceptions and

participants' explanations. The findings reported below are organized around the single research objective. Each theme begins with a summary table, followed by interpretation of the quantitative evidence, supporting interview evidence, an explanation of what the interview evidence implies, and discussion with relevant scholarship and Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Findings

The objective was to evaluate the role of professional development contributions as a predictor of building confidence among secondary school leaders in Kibaha District. The quantitative findings showed consistently positive perceptions across five indicators. Continuous professional learning recorded the highest mean (M = 4.28, SD = 0.94), followed by mentorship and coaching (M = 4.15, SD = 0.97), confidence in managing school operations (M = 4.12, SD = 1.03), resilience (M = 4.08, SD = 1.06), and communication confidence (M = 4.02, SD = 1.12). The original study reports these results directly.

1. Theme One: Continuous Professional Learning Strengthened Leadership Confidence

Indicator	Mean (M)	SD	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
Continuous professional learning contributes significantly to leadership confidence	4.28	0.94	86.7

The table shows that continuous professional learning received the highest rating among the professional-development indicators. The mean of 4.28 and the 86.7% agreement/strong agreement indicate that teachers strongly perceived continuing learning as a mechanism for building leadership confidence. This suggests that confidence was associated with repeated opportunities to learn rather than dependence on a single training event.

The quantitative finding was supported by interview evidence from head teachers. Head Teacher 3 explained that leadership and school-management training provided practical skills that could be applied in daily administration and that the training changed the leader's approach from uncertainty to greater assurance when dealing with staff conflicts and curriculum changes. This interview evidence provides an experiential explanation for the high quantitative rating.

The interview implies that continuous professional learning contributes to confidence when learning is translated into practical competence. In other words, the confidence described by participants was not presented simply as a feeling; it was linked to the ability to understand leadership principles and apply them to real school problems. This is consistent with Bandura's concept of mastery experience, where successful performance strengthens beliefs about personal capability.

The finding is supported by Earley (2020), who emphasizes that leaders learn more effectively when professional experience is accompanied by structured reflection, coaching, mentoring, and feedback. It is also consistent with recent research showing that professional learning can strengthen school leaders' knowledge, capabilities, peer learning, and professional confidence.

The finding further agrees with the recent systematic review of school-leader coaching, which describes professional learning as a process through which leaders can develop skills, knowledge, adaptability, resilience, communication, and problem-solving capacity. Thus, the present finding extends the literature by showing that, in Kibaha District, participants particularly emphasized continuous learning as a route through which confidence becomes practically useful in school administration.

2. Theme Two: Mentorship and Coaching Strengthened Decision-Making Confidence

Indicator	Mean (M)	SD	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
Mentorship and coaching strengthened leaders' decision-making skills	4.15	0.97	82.0

The table indicates strong agreement that mentorship and coaching contributed to leaders' decision-making confidence. The mean score of 4.15 and 82.0% agreement/strong agreement show that respondents viewed relational professional support as an important component of leadership development.

The quantitative evidence was strongly supported by Head Teacher 5, who explained that mentorship from experienced education officers provided a roadmap for handling difficult situations and reduced the feeling of navigating leadership challenges alone. The participant specifically linked mentorship with increased confidence in making difficult decisions, especially where resources were limited.

The interview implies that mentorship strengthened confidence through guided learning, access to experienced models, and reassurance during difficult decisions. It also implies that leadership confidence may develop socially rather than exclusively through individual experience. The mentor becomes a source of practical knowledge, feedback, encouragement, and an alternative perspective when the leader encounters a difficult problem.

This interpretation is supported by Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory because vicarious experiences and social persuasion are among the sources through which efficacy beliefs can develop. It also agrees with Earley (2020), who identifies coaching and mentoring as important mechanisms for supported reflection and decision-making.

The finding is further supported by research on mentoring for school administrators, which identifies mentoring and coaching as important areas of leadership development and emphasizes the importance of competent mentors and sustained developmental relationships. Recent research also reports positive effects of mentoring and coaching on school leaders' professional development. The implication is that professional development policies in Kibaha District should not rely only on workshops; they should create continuing mentorship and coaching relationships.

3. Theme Three: Professional Development Improved Confidence in Managing School Operations

Indicator	Mean (M)	SD	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
Professional development improved confidence in managing school operations effectively	4.12	1.03	82.0

The table demonstrates that 82.0% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that professional development improved leaders' confidence in managing school operations. The mean score of 4.12 indicates a generally positive perception. This suggests that professional development was perceived as having practical value for administrative leadership.

Interview evidence from Head Teacher 3 supported this result. The participant explained that training in school management and leadership equipped the leader with practical skills that were applied daily and increased confidence in decision-making. The participant also described a change in handling complex issues such as staff conflicts and curriculum changes.

The interview implies that professional development contributed to confidence by reducing uncertainty about how leadership responsibilities should be handled. When leaders understand principles, procedures, and possible responses to school-management problems, they may feel more prepared to act. The evidence therefore suggests a pathway from professional knowledge to practical application and then to perceived confidence.

This finding is consistent with Porritt (2021), whose study found that coaching experiences among school leaders were associated with increased knowledge, understanding, leadership skills, self-awareness, and self-efficacy. It also agrees with recent research on novice principals, where professional learning was linked with increased confidence in management, communication, and decision-making.

From the perspective of Bandura's theory, the result can be understood as evidence that professional development may create mastery experiences. Leaders who learn and then successfully manage real school problems may develop stronger beliefs in their ability to perform leadership tasks.

4. Theme Four: Professional Development Strengthened Communication Confidence

Indicator	Mean (M)	SD	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
Workshops and seminars enhanced communication confidence with staff and students	4.02	1.12	75.9

Although communication recorded the lowest mean among the five indicators, the mean of 4.02 and 75.9% agreement/strong agreement still indicate a positive perception. The result suggests that workshops and seminars were perceived as contributing to leaders' ability to communicate confidently with staff and students.

Interview evidence from WEO 2 supported the quantitative finding. The Ward Education Officer explained that leaders who had undergone communication and leadership training were more articulate and confident when interacting with teachers, parents, and district officials. The participant further connected improved communication with respect from staff and community members.

The interview implies that communication confidence may be reinforced through social interaction. When leaders are able to articulate ideas clearly, advocate for their schools, and receive positive responses from stakeholders, these experiences may strengthen their confidence in subsequent interactions. The evidence therefore shows that communication is not only a technical skill but also part of the social experience through which leadership confidence is reinforced.

Another Head Teacher described how workshops on conflict resolution and stakeholder engagement changed the way the leader listened and responded to teachers and parents. The participant associated this change with reduced tension and increased confidence in managing relationships.

This finding is supported by recent scholarship on coaching, which identifies communication and relational awareness among the areas that can be strengthened through reflective professional learning. It is also consistent with Earley's (2020) emphasis on supported reflection and feedback as mechanisms through which leaders improve professional practice.

5. Theme Five: Professional Development Strengthened Resilience and Adaptability

Indicator	Mean (M)	SD	Agree/Strongly Agree (%)
Professional development increased resilience in handling school challenges	4.08	1.06	80.8

The table shows that 80.8% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that professional development increased leaders' resilience in handling school challenges. The mean of 4.08 indicates a generally positive perception. The finding suggests that professional development contributed not only to technical competence but also to leaders' capacity to remain effective when facing difficult conditions.

The quantitative evidence was supported by the District Education Officer, who explained that school heads who participated in continuous professional development appeared more resilient when facing resource shortages, policy changes, and unexpected crises. The participant linked this resilience to coping mechanisms and problem-solving strategies gained through training.

A Ward Education Officer also explained that leaders who had received crisis-management and emergency-preparedness training were more confident in responding to difficult circumstances. The interview evidence therefore provides a practical explanation for the quantitative perception of resilience.

The interview implies that professional development can build resilience by preparing leaders before challenges occur. Rather than responding to every new situation without prior knowledge, trained leaders may draw on previously learned strategies and experiences. This interpretation is consistent with Bandura's theory because successful coping experiences can strengthen perceived capability and future confidence.

The finding agrees with recent literature emphasizing adaptability, resilience, communication, and problem-solving as important outcomes of professional learning and coaching for school leaders. It also supports the broader argument that professional learning is more effective when it is connected to leaders' real work and reflective practice.

6. Theme Six: Limited Access Constrained the Contribution of Professional Development

Reported barrier	Evidence from participants	Implication
Limited availability of training	Some leaders received information too late to register	Reduced continuity of professional learning
Scheduling conflicts	Training sometimes coincided with school activities	Leaders could miss professional learning opportunities
Financial constraints	Registration and travel costs were difficult for some schools/leaders	Unequal access to capacity-building
Inadequate funding and facilitators	District-level resource constraints limited coverage	Not all leaders benefited equally

Logistical constraints	Travel and implementation challenges affected participation	Sustainability of professional development was weakened

The table shows that participants identified structural barriers alongside the positive contribution of professional development. Head Teacher 2 reported that some leaders learned about workshops too late and that training sometimes conflicted with school activities. Head Teacher 6 identified registration and travel costs as financial barriers. The District Education Officer confirmed inadequate funding, limited facilitators, and logistical constraints and noted that not all school leaders benefited equally.

The interview evidence implies that the contribution of professional development depends partly on access. A leader cannot benefit from a programme that is unavailable, unaffordable, poorly scheduled, or inaccessible. The interviews therefore qualify the positive quantitative findings: professional development was perceived as useful, but its contribution could be uneven because opportunities were not equally available to all leaders.

This finding is supported by recent literature emphasizing the need for sustained, context-sensitive professional learning and attention to the organizational conditions surrounding coaching and leadership development. It is also consistent with the Tanzanian emphasis on sustained in-service learning and mentorship rather than isolated training events.

The finding therefore suggests that increasing the number of professional development programmes alone may not be sufficient. Education authorities also need to consider timing, funding, accessibility, facilitator availability, and continuity. This interpretation is consistent with the original study's recommendation that professional development should be continuous and sustained, with mentorship and coaching components and adequate financial support.

Taken together, the findings show a consistent pattern across the quantitative and qualitative evidence. Continuous professional learning received the highest quantitative rating; mentorship and coaching were strongly associated with decision-making confidence; professional development was linked with confidence in managing school operations; communication training was associated with greater confidence in stakeholder interactions; and professional development was perceived to strengthen resilience. Interview accounts supported each of these dimensions by explaining how training, mentoring, coaching, practical application, feedback, and exposure to experienced professionals contributed to confidence.

The findings are broadly consistent with Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory. Professional development can create mastery experiences when leaders apply new skills successfully; mentorship can provide vicarious experiences and social persuasion; communication and conflict-resolution training can create successful interpersonal experiences; and resilience training can help leaders develop confidence in coping with challenging circumstances. The theory therefore provides a useful explanation of the mechanisms through which professional development may contribute to leadership confidence.

At the same time, the findings show that confidence development is embedded in institutional conditions. Financial constraints, scheduling conflicts, limited facilitators, late information about training opportunities, and logistical barriers restricted access. This means that professional development should be viewed as an interaction between individual learning opportunities and organizational support rather than as an intervention affecting leaders independently of their working environment.

Because the study used descriptive quantitative evidence and a cross-sectional design, the results should be interpreted as evidence of perceived contribution and association rather than as proof that professional development caused changes in leadership confidence. This caution is important because the original study itself identifies the cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data as limitations.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that professional development was an important perceived contributor to building confidence among secondary school leaders in Kibaha District. Continuous professional learning received the strongest support, while mentorship and coaching were particularly important for decision-making. Professional development was also associated with confidence in managing school operations, communication, resilience, and adaptation to challenges. Interview evidence consistently supported the quantitative findings and showed that leaders linked confidence to practical knowledge, guidance from experienced professionals, improved communication, and successful handling of difficult situations. However, access barriers limited the consistency and equality of professional development opportunities.

Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Education and district education authorities should strengthen continuous professional development programmes for secondary school leaders and avoid relying mainly on one-time workshops.
2. Structured mentorship and coaching should be incorporated into leadership development so that school leaders receive continuing practical guidance, feedback, and opportunities for reflection.
3. Professional development should prioritize practical leadership areas identified in the findings, including decision-making, school management, communication, conflict resolution, problem solving, crisis management, and resilience.
4. District authorities should reduce financial and logistical barriers by improving information about training opportunities, planning training schedules around school responsibilities, and providing adequate support for participation.
5. Professional development programmes should be evaluated not only by attendance but also by participants' opportunities to apply new knowledge, reflect on practice, receive feedback, and demonstrate improved leadership competence.
6. Future research should examine professional development and leadership confidence across several Tanzanian districts and use longitudinal or stronger analytical designs to assess changes in confidence over time.

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