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Delegated Leadership in Public Secondary Schools in Temeke Municipality, Tanzania: Practices, Teacher Participation and Delegated Authority

Dotto M Akida[1], Ategwu Patrick Ogar[2], Adam Bago[3]

[1] Education Officer, Ilala Municipality, Tanzania
[2,3] School of Education, St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Email Corrresponding : akida778@gmail.com

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Abstract
This study examined delegated leadership practices in selected public secondary schools in Temeke Municipality, Tanzania, with attention to three closely related dimensions: delegation of responsibilities, teacher participation in school decision-making, and the authority granted to teachers when performing delegated leadership roles. A mixed-methods approach was used to combine numerical patterns from teacher questionnaires with explanatory evidence from interviews and school observations. The field evidence comprised 45 teachers who completed questionnaires and five heads of schools who participated in interviews, giving 50 respondents and a 100% response rate. Quantitative data were summarized using frequencies and percentages, while interview and observation evidence was organized thematically and integrated during interpretation. The findings show that delegation was well established in academic work: 91.1% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that teachers were delegated leadership roles in academic activities. Clear definition of delegated responsibilities received 71.1% positive responses. Teacher participation in decision-making was positive but less pronounced, at 62.2%, with 26.7% neutral responses. Regarding authority, 73.4% reported that department heads were given decision-making authority and 84.4% agreed that school administrations trusted teachers with leadership roles. Interviews and observations confirmed the use of departments, committees, meetings and continuous communication, but also showed that the depth of delegation varied and that some important administrative decisions remained centralized. Interpreted through Distributed Leadership Theory, the findings indicate that leadership can be operationally distributed without being equally distributed at the level of influence and authority. The study concludes that meaningful delegation requires alignment among assigned responsibility, participation in relevant decisions, and sufficient authority to act. It recommends clearer decision boundaries, broader teacher participation, competence-sensitive delegation, leadership development, and stronger institutional support for shared leadership in public secondary schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership in a secondary school is expressed not only through the formal office of the head of school but also through the many decisions, responsibilities and coordination tasks that make teaching and school administration possible. Academic departments must be coordinated, examinations organized, discipline managed, co-curricular activities supervised, meetings conducted and school priorities translated into daily practice. When these responsibilities remain concentrated in one office, leadership can become administratively overloaded and teachers may be treated mainly as implementers. Delegated leadership offers a different arrangement by transferring selected responsibilities and a measure of decision-making authority to teachers and other staff members. Harris (2020) and Spillane (2021) place such shared leadership within a broader understanding of leadership as an organizational practice involving interactions among formal leaders, teachers and the situations in which they work.

Historically, many school systems were organized through hierarchical models in which principals or headteachers retained primary authority and teachers were expected to carry out centrally determined instructions. Bush and Glover (2019) note the continuing importance of formal leadership structures, but contemporary educational management increasingly recognizes that complex school work cannot be sustained effectively by one leader acting alone. The shift toward participatory and distributed forms of leadership reflects a practical need to use professional expertise located throughout the school. Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins (2020) similarly emphasize that successful school leadership is connected to organizational conditions that enable people to contribute to improvement rather than merely comply with direction.

Internationally, delegated and distributed approaches have been associated with professional collaboration, shared accountability and the development of leadership capacity among teachers. Harris (2004) cautions, however, that distribution should not be romanticized: simply allocating tasks does not necessarily constitute meaningful shared leadership. The quality of delegation depends on how responsibilities are defined, whether those receiving them can influence relevant decisions, and whether adequate authority accompanies the work. This distinction is particularly important in schools because a teacher may be named a department head, committee chairperson or programme coordinator while still having limited discretion over decisions required to perform that role.

Across African education systems, decentralization and school-based management reforms have encouraged greater participation by teachers and other stakeholders. The literature cited in the source study reports examples from South Africa, Kenya and other settings where distributed leadership is used to strengthen school governance, collaboration and teacher involvement (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2020; Waweru & Orodho, 2020). At the same time, resource constraints, uneven leadership preparation and ambiguity in roles may limit the extent to which decentralization becomes genuine empowerment. World Bank (2022) similarly situates leadership development and teacher capacity among important conditions for strengthening education systems in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Tanzania, the Education and Training Policy provides a policy environment that supports participation, accountability and stakeholder involvement in educational management (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MoEST], 2014). Yet policy support does not automatically determine what happens within individual schools. The source study notes that teachers may be assigned responsibilities such as subject coordination, academic supervision and discipline management without always receiving equivalent authority or institutional support. This creates an important implementation question: is leadership genuinely shared, or are teachers mainly receiving additional duties within a structure where consequential decisions remain centralized?

Temeke Municipality provides a useful setting for examining this question. Public secondary schools in the municipality operate within demanding administrative and instructional conditions, including large enrolments, constrained resources and substantial teacher workloads. Under such conditions, delegation can be a practical mechanism for coordinating school work and making use of teachers' professional knowledge. It can also create opportunities for teacher leadership and collective problem-solving. However, its value depends on the form that delegation takes in practice. The present study therefore focused on observable and reported practices rather than assuming that the existence of formal positions itself demonstrates effective delegated leadership.

Statement of the Problem

Although participatory and decentralized leadership is increasingly encouraged in educational policy and scholarship, there remains a practical gap between assigning responsibilities and distributing leadership in a meaningful way. In public secondary schools, teachers commonly serve as heads of departments, committee leaders, coordinators and supervisors of academic or co-curricular activities. These positions suggest that leadership is shared. Nevertheless, delegation may be incomplete when duties are transferred without clear role boundaries, when teachers are consulted only selectively, or when authority to make decisions remains concentrated in the head of school. Such a mismatch can weaken accountability because a person may be held responsible for an outcome without possessing sufficient influence over the decisions needed to achieve it.

The problem is therefore not simply whether delegation exists in Temeke public secondary schools, but how it is practised and how far it extends. Existing literature reviewed in the study discusses delegated or distributed leadership in broad terms and reports potential benefits such as collaboration, teacher motivation and school effectiveness. However, less context-specific evidence is available on the combination of three practical dimensions in Temeke Municipality: what responsibilities are delegated, how far teachers participate in decisions, and what authority they actually receive. Without examining these dimensions together, a school may appear participatory because teachers hold leadership titles even though their influence remains limited. The study addressed this gap by integrating teacher questionnaire responses, heads of schools' accounts and direct observation in selected public secondary schools.

Research Objectives and Research Questions

The general purpose of the study was to examine delegated leadership practices in selected public secondary schools in Temeke Municipality. Specifically, the study pursued three objectives and corresponding questions.

Specific objective	Corresponding research question
To examine how responsibilities are delegated to teachers and staff in selected public secondary schools in Temeke Municipality.	How are responsibilities delegated to teachers and staff in the selected public secondary schools?
To assess the extent of teacher participation in decision-making in school leadership.	To what extent are teachers involved in decision-making processes in school leadership?
To evaluate the authority given to teachers in performing delegated leadership roles.	What authority is given to teachers in performing delegated leadership roles?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review: Distributed Leadership Theory

Distributed Leadership Theory provided the principal lens for interpreting the study. Rather than treating leadership as the property of a single formally appointed individual, the theory directs attention to how leadership work is stretched across people, roles and organizational situations. Spillane (2021) conceptualizes leadership practice as emerging through interactions among leaders, followers and context. Harris (2004, 2020) likewise emphasizes that distributed leadership concerns the ways influence and leadership activity are shared, not merely the multiplication of formal titles. This makes the theory particularly relevant to schools, where departments, committees, subject panels and teacher-led activities create multiple locations in which leadership may occur.

The theory is relevant to the first objective because delegation of responsibility is one visible mechanism through which leadership work can be distributed. When a head of school assigns a teacher to coordinate an academic programme, lead a department or supervise a co-curricular activity, part of the school's leadership work moves beyond the head's office. Yet Distributed Leadership Theory also helps distinguish genuine distribution from simple task allocation. A responsibility can be delegated while the authority required to shape its implementation remains centralized. Consequently, the study considered both the existence of delegated roles and the clarity with which those roles were communicated.

The second objective concerns participation in decision-making. Distributed leadership implies that teachers are not only recipients of assignments but contributors to sense-making, planning and decisions. Staff meetings, departmental discussions and consultation can create such participation. Their presence, however, does not guarantee equal influence. The proportion of neutral responses in the present findings therefore becomes theoretically meaningful: it suggests that participation may depend on school context, the type of decision, or the teacher's formal role. The theory allows this variation to be interpreted as uneven distribution rather than as a simple yes-or-no condition.

The third objective concerns delegated authority. Authority matters because responsibility without discretion can create nominal rather than substantive leadership. When department heads are trusted to make decisions within their areas, delegated roles become more operationally meaningful. Conversely, when major decisions are retained centrally, leadership is only partly distributed. The study therefore uses the theory to examine a continuum extending from assignment of work, through participation in deliberation, to authority for action. This integrated reading supports the article's later argument that responsibility, voice and authority should be aligned if delegation is to function as shared leadership.

Distributed leadership also has limitations. Shared leadership can generate role conflict, uncertainty and accountability problems when boundaries are poorly defined. Harris (2004) warns against assuming that all forms of distribution are automatically beneficial. Formal accountability remains important, particularly in public institutions where heads of schools retain statutory and administrative responsibilities. For that reason, the present study does not interpret decentralization as the removal of formal leadership. Instead, it examines whether formal leadership creates structured space for teachers to contribute while preserving clarity about who is responsible for which decisions.

Empirical Review

Delegation of Responsibilities in Educational Institutions

The literature reviewed in the source study consistently presents delegation as a mechanism for extending leadership capacity beyond the school head. Adebayo (2019) links delegated leadership with school effectiveness in Nigerian public schools, while Kimaro (2020) and Mushi (2020) provide Tanzanian discussions of delegated leadership, teacher job

satisfaction, challenges and opportunities. Across these studies, a recurring proposition is that delegation can improve coordination and ownership when teachers understand their assignments and receive support to carry them out. Departmental and committee structures are particularly important because they create routine organizational channels through which responsibilities can be allocated.

Delegation nevertheless involves more than distributing workload. If responsibilities are unclear, teachers may duplicate work, avoid accountability or experience conflict over boundaries. Clear communication is therefore a central condition. The source study's emphasis on meetings, notices, departmental discussions and follow-up reflects this concern. From a management perspective, clarity connects responsibility to expected outcomes; from a distributed-leadership perspective, communication also allows teachers to understand how their work contributes to wider school goals. This dual function makes role definition an important indicator of the quality, not merely the presence, of delegation.

Teacher Participation in Decision-Making

Teacher participation in decision-making is frequently presented as a means of strengthening ownership and professional commitment. Waweru and Orodho (2020) discuss leadership practices and teacher performance in Kenya, while Ngcobo and Tikly (2020) examine distributed leadership in South African schools. The broader literature cited in the source study suggests that consultation, collaborative planning and shared discussion can improve communication and enable school decisions to draw on teachers' classroom knowledge. Participation can also support implementation because teachers are more likely to understand the rationale behind decisions in which they have had an opportunity to contribute. Participation, however, varies in depth. Being informed about a decision is different from being consulted, and consultation is different from having meaningful influence over the final choice. Staff meetings may therefore function either as genuine decision spaces or mainly as communication channels. This distinction is important for interpreting the present study. A majority positive response indicates that teachers experience some participation, but the sizeable neutral group signals that participation may not be consistent across decisions or schools. The empirical question is consequently not only whether meetings occur, but how teachers experience their opportunity to shape school leadership.

Authority Given to Teachers in Delegated Roles

Authority is the practical capacity to act within an assigned leadership role. Educational leadership literature emphasizes that empowerment becomes credible when responsibility is accompanied by discretion, resources and administrative backing. Harris (2020) and Spillane (2021) both support attention to the practice of leadership rather than formal labels alone. In the school setting, this means examining whether a head of department can make decisions within the department, whether a committee leader can coordinate agreed activities, and whether teachers trusted with programmes can act without seeking approval for every routine matter.

At the same time, delegated authority is rarely unlimited. Public school heads remain accountable for institutional compliance and performance, so some strategic and administrative decisions will appropriately remain centralized. The relevant issue is proportionality: teachers need enough authority to accomplish delegated work, while school heads retain oversight of decisions for which they are formally accountable. The present study's observation that authority varied among schools is therefore not interpreted as a simple failure of delegation. It points instead to different local balances between control, trust and professional discretion.

Research Gap

The literature establishes the potential value of distributed and delegated leadership, but four gaps justified the present study. First, a contextual gap remained because much of the evidence cited in the study came from settings outside Temeke Municipality. Leadership practices are shaped by school structures, administrative traditions and local working conditions, making direct examination necessary. Second, a conceptual gap existed because responsibility, participation and authority are often discussed separately even though they operate together in everyday leadership. Third, a methodological gap remained where conclusions about delegation relied on a single source of evidence. The present study combined teacher questionnaires, interviews with heads of schools and observation. Fourth, an implementation gap existed between policy support for participatory management and evidence of how far leadership was actually shared within schools. By examining the three dimensions together, the study provides a more differentiated account of delegated leadership in selected Temeke public secondary schools.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach and Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach because the research questions required both an estimate of the pattern of teachers' responses and an explanation of how delegation operated in school practice. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) describe mixed methods as the intentional integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence to develop a more complete understanding of a research problem. In this study, teacher questionnaires supplied structured quantitative evidence, while interviews and observations provided contextual explanation. The strands were interpreted together rather than treated as unrelated datasets.

The design was descriptive and cross-sectional. It documented delegated leadership practices as they were reported and observed during the fieldwork period. This design is appropriate for describing patterns in responsibility delegation, participation and authority, but it does not establish a causal effect of delegated leadership on teacher performance or student outcomes. For that reason, the article deliberately uses terms such as practices, participation, authority and contribution rather than claiming an experimentally demonstrated impact.

Study Setting, Participants and Sampling

The study was conducted in selected public secondary schools in Temeke Municipality, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The final field evidence used in the findings consisted of 45 teachers and five heads of schools, for a total of 50 respondents. Teachers completed questionnaires, while heads of schools participated in interviews. The source methodology describes probability-based selection for teachers and purposive selection for school leaders because the latter held positions that gave them direct knowledge of delegation and school management. The article reports the achieved field sample because it is the sample on which the presented findings are based.

Respondent category	Targeted	Responded	Response rate
Teachers - questionnaire	45	45	100%
Heads of schools - interviews	5	5	100%
Total	50	50	100%

Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Three forms of evidence were integrated in the final analysis: structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and observation checklists. The questionnaire measured teachers' views using response categories ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Interviews

enabled heads of schools to explain how responsibilities were allocated, how teachers were involved in decisions, and how authority was granted. The observation checklist focused on visible leadership arrangements, including departmental heads, teacher participation in meetings, communication channels, teacher leadership of academic or co-curricular activities, administrative support and the extent to which leadership roles extended beyond the head of school.

Data collection followed institutional and school-level permission procedures. Participants were informed about the study and participated voluntarily. Questionnaires were administered to teachers, interviews were conducted with heads of schools, and observations were undertaken in the selected schools. The use of several methods strengthened the study by allowing reported teacher perceptions to be compared with leaders' explanations and with organizational practices visible during school visits.

Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness

The source study describes expert review and pilot testing as strategies for improving instrument quality. Supervisors and educational experts reviewed the instruments for relevance and clarity, while pilot testing in a school with similar characteristics but outside the main sample was used to identify ambiguous items. Carmines and Zeller (1979) provide the broader measurement rationale for attending to validity and reliability. For the qualitative strand, credibility was strengthened through consistent interview procedures, careful recording and transcription, and comparison of interview evidence with questionnaire and observation findings.

Triangulation was particularly important because delegated leadership contains both formal and experiential dimensions. A school may formally have department heads, for example, but teachers may differ in whether they perceive those roles as carrying meaningful authority. By comparing questionnaires, interviews and observations, the study could identify convergence as well as areas where positive formal arrangements coexisted with uneven experience. This does not eliminate self-report limitations, but it makes the interpretation less dependent on any single respondent group.

Data Analysis and Ethical Considerations

Quantitative questionnaire data were summarized using frequencies and percentages and presented in tables. Qualitative interview material was analyzed thematically by identifying recurring ideas concerning delegation, communication, participation, trust and authority. Observation evidence was then used to confirm, qualify or contextualize those patterns. Integration occurred during interpretation, where numerical results were read alongside interview statements and observed practices.

Ethical safeguards included informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity and the right to withdraw. Participants' names were not used in the reporting of findings; interview extracts were identified through codes such as HT1 and HT2. Information was used for academic purposes. These measures protected participants and supported open discussion of school leadership practices.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Teacher Respondents

The teacher sample was predominantly female and professionally experienced. Of the 45 teachers, 38 (84.4%) were female and seven (15.6%) were male. More than half, 24 (53.3%), were aged 41-50 years, while 14 (31.1%) were aged 31-40 years. Twenty-four teachers (53.3%) had more than 15 years of teaching experience. In terms of qualification, 36 (80.0%) held bachelor's degrees, seven (15.6%) held diplomas and two (4.4%) held master's degrees. These characteristics indicate that most questionnaire responses came from teachers with substantial

experience of school organization and leadership routines. Demographic variables were used to describe the respondent base rather than to infer differences between groups, since the study did not report inferential tests by gender, age, experience or qualification.

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	7	15.6
Gender	Female	38	84.4
Age	Below 30	6	13.3
Age	31-40	14	31.1
Age	41-50	24	53.3
Age	Above 50	1	2.2
Experience	Below 5 years	5	11.1
Experience	6-10 years	9	20.0
Experience	11-15 years	7	15.6
Experience	Above 15 years	24	53.3
Qualification	Diploma	7	15.6
Qualification	Bachelor's degree	36	80.0
Qualification	Master's degree	2	4.4

Objective One: Delegation of Responsibilities to Teachers and Staff

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Positive
Teachers are delegated leadership roles in academic activities	20 (44.4%)	21 (46.7%)	3 (6.7%)	1 (2.2%)	0	91.1%
Delegated responsibilities are clearly defined	11 (24.4%)	21 (46.7%)	9 (20.0%)	4 (8.9%)	0	71.1%

The strongest quantitative result in the study concerned the delegation of academic leadership roles. Forty-one of 45 teachers, representing 91.1%, agreed or strongly agreed that teachers were delegated leadership roles in academic activities. Only one respondent disagreed. This pattern indicates that delegation was not an exceptional event in the selected schools; it formed part of ordinary academic organization. The finding is consistent with the existence of departmental heads, subject coordination and teacher-led school activities observed during field visits.

The second item produced a more qualified result. Thirty-two teachers (71.1%) agreed or strongly agreed that delegated responsibilities were clearly defined, while nine (20.0%) were neutral and four (8.9%) disagreed. The difference between the 91.1% positive response for receiving leadership roles and 71.1% for clarity is analytically important. It suggests that schools may be more successful at allocating work than at ensuring that every delegated role is understood with equal precision. In management terms, this can affect accountability; in distributed-leadership terms, ambiguity can weaken the interaction between formal assignment and effective practice.

Interview evidence reinforced the quantitative pattern. Heads of schools described delegation through departmental structures, staff meetings, committees and continuous communication. One head explained: "I communicate school goals through staff meetings held at the beginning of every term and during departmental meetings. I also use WhatsApp groups and written notices to remind teachers about important expectations" (HT1). Another emphasized that "Regular communication helps everyone understand their responsibilities" (HT2). These accounts show that delegation was embedded in communication routines rather than treated as a one-time instruction.

Observation provided an additional layer of evidence. All five schools had departmental heads with assigned responsibilities, teachers participated in meetings, communication channels were visible, and teachers led academic or co-curricular activities with administrative support. However, only two schools showed broader delegation of leadership responsibilities beyond the head of school. This qualification is significant because it reveals a distinction between delegated tasks within established structures and wider distribution of leadership influence. The finding therefore supports Harris's (2004) caution that the presence of multiple leadership roles should not automatically be equated with deep distribution of leadership.

Taken together, the three evidence sources show convergence on the existence of delegation but also variation in its depth. The quantitative result establishes that teachers commonly receive academic leadership roles; interviews explain the mechanisms through which those roles are communicated; and observations reveal that wider distribution is stronger in some schools than others. This pattern is broadly compatible with Harris (2020) and Spillane (2021), who treat leadership as practice distributed through organizational interactions. It also aligns with the source study's cited African and Tanzanian literature, where delegation is associated with collaboration and school effectiveness but remains dependent on local structures and leadership support (Adebayo, 2019; Mushi, 2020).

Objective Two: Teacher Participation in Decision-Making

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Positive
Teachers participate in school decision-making	11 (24.4%)	17 (37.8%)	12 (26.7%)	5 (11.1%)	0	62.2%

Teacher participation in decision-making received a positive but more moderate assessment than responsibility delegation. Twenty-eight of the 45 teachers (62.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that teachers participated in school decision-making. Five (11.1%) disagreed, while 12 (26.7%) selected the neutral category. The neutral proportion is large enough to matter. It indicates that although participation is present, teachers do not experience it with the same consistency as the delegation of academic roles.

Heads of schools described participation through staff meetings, departmental meetings, consultation and collaborative discussion. HT2 explained: "I usually explain school goals during academic meetings and encourage teachers to ask questions whenever they need clarification. Regular communication helps everyone understand their responsibilities." HT1 similarly stated: "I encourage open communication, active listening, and regular meetings. Teachers are free to share ideas and concerns without fear." These statements present participation as an open communicative process and suggest that school leaders recognize the value of teacher voice.

Observations confirmed that teachers participated in staff meetings in all five schools and that communication channels between teachers and administrators were evident. Nevertheless, the questionnaire results prevent an overly broad conclusion that participation was equally meaningful for every teacher. Meetings can provide access to information and opportunities for discussion, but the study did not measure the degree to which teacher suggestions determined final decisions. The most defensible interpretation is therefore that participatory mechanisms existed, while the extent of influence varied across respondents and schools.

This result adds nuance to Distributed Leadership Theory. Leadership may be distributed through responsibility even when participation in decision-making is less widely experienced. The difference between 91.1% positive responses for delegated academic roles and 62.2% for decision participation indicates that distributing work is easier than distributing influence. This is one of the study's most important integrated findings. It suggests that school leaders seeking deeper delegated leadership should move beyond consultation as

communication and create structured opportunities for teachers to contribute to decisions connected to the responsibilities they are expected to implement.

The finding is consistent with literature emphasizing the relationship between participatory leadership, professional commitment and collaborative school cultures. Ngcobo and Tikly (2020) discuss distributed leadership in school settings, while Waweru and Orodho (2020) link leadership practices to teacher performance. The Temeke evidence contributes a local qualification: participation is not absent, but neither is it uniform. A distributed-leadership perspective therefore requires attention to whose voice enters which decisions and at what stage of the process.

Objective Three: Authority Given to Teachers in Delegated Leadership Roles

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Positive
Department heads are given authority to make decisions	8 (17.8%)	25 (55.6%)	9 (20.0%)	3 (6.7%)	0	73.4%
School administration trusts teachers with leadership roles	14 (31.1%)	24 (53.3%)	5 (11.1%)	1 (2.2%)	1 (2.2%)	84.4%

The third objective examined whether delegated responsibility was accompanied by authority. Thirty-three teachers (73.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that department heads were given authority to make decisions, while nine (20.0%) were neutral and three (6.7%) disagreed. A still larger proportion, 38 teachers (84.4%), agreed or strongly agreed that the school administration trusted teachers with leadership roles. These results indicate a generally supportive environment for teacher leadership, while also showing that perceived trust is somewhat stronger than perceived decision authority.

The distinction between trust and authority deserves attention. Trust is relational: school administrators may believe that teachers are capable and responsible. Authority is structural: it concerns whether teachers can actually make decisions within defined boundaries. The 11-percentage-point gap between positive ratings for administrative trust (84.4%) and department-head decision authority (73.4%) suggests that positive relationships do not always translate into equivalent decision discretion. This does not imply that heads of schools should surrender all authority; rather, it indicates a need for clearer alignment between the confidence placed in teachers and the decisions they are authorized to make.

Interview evidence supports this interpretation. Heads of schools reported that teachers who demonstrated competence, commitment and accountability were entrusted with responsibilities such as coordinating academic activities, leading departmental meetings and supervising programmes. HT1 stated: “Teachers who demonstrate commitment and competence are entrusted with leadership responsibilities and are allowed to make decisions within their areas of responsibility.” This shows that authority was commonly conditional on professional credibility and was bounded by the teacher’s assigned area.

Observation confirmed that departmental heads carried leadership responsibilities in all selected schools and that teachers coordinated academic and co-curricular activities. At the same time, some important administrative decisions remained centralized at the level of the head of school. This finding illustrates partial distribution: teachers can exercise real authority within operational domains while strategic or high-stakes decisions remain centralized. Such an arrangement may be appropriate where formal accountability requires head-of-school approval, but it becomes problematic if teachers are held responsible for outcomes without sufficient control over the decisions that shape those outcomes.

The finding therefore extends the analysis beyond a simple centralized-versus-decentralized dichotomy. Distributed leadership in the selected schools appeared layered. Routine and professional decisions could be distributed through departments and teacher leadership roles, while some administrative authority remained concentrated. Spillane's (2021) practice perspective helps explain this pattern because leadership is produced through interactions among formal leaders, teachers and organizational situations rather than through a single permanent transfer of power. Harris (2020) similarly supports attention to the practical conditions under which distributed leadership operates.

Integrated Discussion: Responsibility, Voice and Authority

When the principal quantitative indicators are considered together, a clear gradient emerges. Positive responses were highest for delegation of academic leadership roles (91.1%), followed by administrative trust in teachers with leadership roles (84.4%), department-head decision authority (73.4%), clarity of delegated responsibilities (71.1%), and teacher participation in school decision-making (62.2%). This pattern is more informative than any item considered alone. It suggests that selected schools are comparatively comfortable distributing responsibilities and expressing trust, but less consistent in distributing decision influence and clarifying the boundaries within which delegated leaders can act.

The article interprets this pattern through three linked elements: responsibility, voice and authority. Responsibility concerns the work or outcome entrusted to a teacher. Voice concerns the opportunity to participate in decisions relevant to that work and to wider school leadership. Authority concerns the legitimate discretion to act within the delegated role. Meaningful delegated leadership requires these elements to be reasonably aligned. Responsibility without voice can turn teachers into implementers of decisions made elsewhere; responsibility without authority can create accountability without control; authority without clarity can generate role conflict. The Temeke findings show that all three elements were present, but not at equal strength.

This framework also explains why the observation results matter. Formal departmental heads were visible in every school, yet broader leadership distribution beyond the head of school was observed in only two schools. The existence of formal positions therefore provides organizational infrastructure for delegation, but local leadership practice determines whether that infrastructure becomes a wider culture of shared influence. In this sense, the study supports a view of delegated leadership as a continuum rather than a binary condition. Schools can be strongly delegated in academic coordination while remaining selectively centralized in administrative decision-making.

The findings should not be interpreted as evidence that delegated leadership caused improvements in teacher performance or student achievement. The study was descriptive and cross-sectional, and the reported quantitative analysis used frequencies and percentages. Its contribution lies instead in showing how delegated leadership was organized and experienced in the selected schools. Future causal claims would require designs that measure outcomes over time and account for alternative explanations. Maintaining this distinction strengthens the credibility of the present article and keeps its conclusions within the evidence actually collected.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study concludes that delegated leadership is an established feature of the selected public secondary schools in Temeke Municipality, particularly in the distribution of academic leadership responsibilities. Teachers commonly serve in roles through departments, committees and school programmes, and school administrations generally demonstrate trust in their capacity to lead. Communication through staff meetings, departmental meetings, notices and follow-up discussions supports the execution of delegated work. These practices create an

organizational basis for collaboration, accountability and the use of teachers' professional expertise.

At the same time, delegation is uneven in depth. Teacher participation in decision-making received the lowest positive rating among the principal indicators, and observation showed that some important administrative decisions remained centralized. The study therefore concludes that the presence of delegated responsibilities should not be treated as sufficient evidence of fully distributed leadership. The quality of delegation depends on whether responsibilities are clear, whether teachers have a meaningful voice in relevant decisions, and whether adequate authority accompanies the duties assigned to them.

The overall conclusion is that delegated leadership in the selected schools is best described as established but partial. Leadership work is distributed, especially at operational and academic levels, while influence and authority remain more selective. This pattern is not inherently dysfunctional because formal heads retain legitimate accountability. The management challenge is to establish a deliberate balance in which central oversight does not unnecessarily restrict professional discretion and delegated responsibility does not exceed delegated authority.

Recommendations

Heads of schools should strengthen the alignment between responsibility and authority. Every substantial delegated role should have clear expectations, decision boundaries and reporting arrangements. Where possible, these should be communicated in writing and reinforced through departmental meetings so that teachers know which decisions they can make independently, which require consultation and which remain the responsibility of the head of school.

Teacher participation should extend beyond routine information sharing. Schools should create regular opportunities for teachers, including those without formal leadership titles, to contribute to decisions affecting teaching, school programmes and professional working conditions. Staff and departmental meetings should therefore be used not only to communicate decisions but also to gather proposals, discuss alternatives and explain how collective input informs final decisions.

Delegation should remain sensitive to competence, experience and specialization, as reported by the heads of schools, but it should also be developmental. Emerging teacher leaders should be given supported opportunities to coordinate activities, lead small projects and learn from experienced department heads. This can broaden the leadership base without compromising accountability.

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and PO-RALG/TAMISEMI should strengthen practical leadership-development support for heads of schools, heads of departments and teachers. Training should address delegation, participatory decision-making, communication, accountability, role clarification and the management of shared authority. Policy guidance should make clear that effective delegation involves not only assignment of tasks but also appropriate decision space and institutional support.

School management committees should support transparent and participatory leadership practices. Their oversight should encourage realistic workloads, clear responsibilities and administrative backing for teachers who take on leadership roles. At school level, periodic review of delegated roles can help identify where responsibilities have expanded without corresponding authority or where decision processes remain unnecessarily centralized.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

The study makes a contextual contribution by providing evidence on delegated leadership from selected public secondary schools in Temeke Municipality. Much of the

literature reviewed in the source study discusses distributed or delegated leadership at national, regional or international levels. The Temeke findings show how these ideas are expressed through concrete school practices such as departments, committees, meetings, communication routines and teacher-led academic or co-curricular activities. This local evidence is useful because the form of distributed leadership depends on organizational context.

Conceptually, the study contributes the integrated interpretation of responsibility, voice and authority. Existing discussions can treat delegation as the transfer of duties, participation as a separate democratic practice, and authority as a question of empowerment. The present findings show why these dimensions should be read together. The positive-response gradient demonstrates that a school can distribute responsibility more widely than decision influence. The resulting idea of partial distribution helps explain why formal teacher leadership may coexist with selective centralization.

The study also contributes methodologically by triangulating questionnaire, interview and observation evidence. Teacher perceptions identified the strength of each dimension; heads of schools explained the mechanisms used to delegate and communicate; observations showed the visible organizational structures and the limits of wider distribution. The convergence among these sources supports the conclusion that delegation exists, while their differences prevent an overly simplified claim that leadership is equally shared in every school.

For Distributed Leadership Theory, the study offers a practical refinement: distribution should be assessed not only by counting leadership roles but by examining the relationship among assigned work, participation in decisions and authority for action. In the selected schools, leadership was distributed operationally but remained selectively centralized in some administrative domains. This finding supports a layered view of distributed leadership and provides a basis for future studies to test the responsibility-voice-authority framework in other municipalities, private schools and other educational institutions.

Limitations and Areas for Further Research

The findings are limited to selected public secondary schools in Temeke Municipality and should not be generalized automatically to all schools in Tanzania. The quantitative evidence is descriptive and based on 45 teacher questionnaires, while the qualitative strand includes five heads of schools and school observations. The study did not test causal relationships between delegated leadership and teacher job performance or student achievement. In addition, some findings concern participants' perceptions, which may differ from behaviour over longer periods.

Future research should examine challenges affecting delegated leadership in other municipalities and regions, investigate relationships between delegated leadership and teacher job performance, and explore possible links with student academic performance and broader school effectiveness. Comparative studies involving private schools could establish whether governance structures influence the balance among responsibility, voice and authority. Longitudinal or explanatory designs could also examine whether changes in delegated authority are followed by measurable changes in organizational or instructional outcomes.

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