

Fostering Employee Engagement through Innovative Leadership: Lessons from Tanzanian Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This article investigated the influence of innovative leadership on employee engagement in Tanzanian public secondary schools. Specifically, the study explored whether innovative leaders could influence organisational commitment and job involvement among employees. Conducted in three regions of mainland Tanzania, the cross-sectional survey adopted a positivist philosophy suitable for hypothesis development. Data was gathered from 386 teachers using structured, closed-ended questionnaires with a 5-point Likert scale. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with AMOS 23 was used for data analysis. The results revealed that innovative leadership significantly enhances both organisational commitment and job involvement among teachers. The study underscores the need for school heads to adopt innovative practices to engage teachers effectively. Social Exchange Theory (SET) is applicable in this context due to the reciprocity observed in teachers' engagement and involvement. It is recommended that leaders in all sectors should innovate to enhance employee engagement, ensuring organisational sustainability and quality service delivery.

Keywords: *Teacher engagement, organisational commitment, job involvement, quality service*

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Introduction

Many organisations have discovered the importance of engaging their employees in recent decades (Kumar, 2021) as it tends to improve individual performance, which results in job satisfaction (Garg & Mishra, 2018). Due to that impression, employees are said to be engaged when they have an inner drive to demonstrate willingly and put extra effort into the work to reach optimal performance (Budriene & Diskiene, 2020). This is because engaged employees help the organisation fulfil its mission and strategy and attain the intended business results as well as

business performance (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2020; Saks, 2017). In addition to that, engaged workers have more creative ideas, and they are more likely to innovate and become entrepreneurial (Gawke et al., 2017; Orth & Volmer, 2017). This results in commitment and dedication to their work roles cognitively, psychologically, and behaviourally (Sanneh & Taj, 2015). Parent and Lovelace (2015) assert that when employees are engaged, it is beneficial for employers and employees, hence motivating employees to use their talents and develop productive relations.

Literature reports that employee engagement leads to good service provision; hence, in order for public service organisations to provide effective and quality services, they need engaged employees in order to achieve the desired performance objectives (Eldor & Gadot, 2013). This experience alerts employers to keep in mind that in good times or bad, workers' engagement should be given a top priority for organisations (Al-Dmour, 2023). Hence, leaders contribute much to the overall success of the organisation in the workplace (Akpaprep et al., 2019). Innovative culture plays a vital role in supporting leaders. Leaders will not perform well if the culture of the organisation does not support them. Therefore, innovative cultures can influence the way managers operate (M.Hazem & Zehou, 2019). Riza et al. (2020) suggest that utilising the innovative leader approach is a remarkable advantage for any organisation in the complex environments of today. This is because leaders who are innovative assist organisational members in adapting to new changes and creative work environments, such as teamwork, collaboration, stimulating conditions, flexibility, and resource utilisation (Dingler & Enkel, 2016).

This argument was supported by Priyashantha (2022), who declared leadership to possess a significant influence on organisational performance. This implies that leadership is the capacity to affect performance and competence and inspire workers within an organisation toward objectives (Supriatna & Zulganef, 2023). Due to the managerial functions of an organisation, leaders ought to be fair and intelligent, giving acceptable directions and instructions in their leadership (Tamimi, 2022). However, Supriyanto (2020) had a different view, declaring that the leadership style does not greatly influence employee performance and that employees can work independently by following the work schedules and adhering to the regular work processes and standards. Consequently, to link innovative leadership and employee engagement, it is vital to determine which kind of leadership maximises employee engagement (Ferrell, 2020). Therefore, employee engagement with the support of innovative leaders remains significant for organisations to preserve their esteemed employees (Chanana & Sangeeta, 2020).

Engaging employees is a challenge in certain organisations despite the importance of innovative leadership and employee engagement (Osborne & Hammoud, 2017). A 2011–2013 survey by Gallup (2013) revealed that 87% of workers worldwide

were disengaged from their jobs, which led to reports that the degree of engagement was low in several countries. According to reports, worldwide engagement has improved recently, rising from 56% to 62%. Retention rates were 40% lower in companies with high engagement scores than in companies with low engagement scores (Gallup, 2019). As to the 2020–2022 Gallup World Poll, the United States of America accounted for 29% of the engagement, Rwanda (10%), Tanzania (11%), India (9%), and the Philippines (30%). According to Schaufeli's (2018) analysis, North-Western European countries demonstrated strong levels of employee engagement when compared to other countries. However, there appeared to be a lack of engagement in developing nations. Akpesiri and Oshilim (2015), for instance, revealed low employee engagement in the public sectors of Nigeria and Uganda. Low employee engagement inhibits retention in Tanzanian workplaces (Mrope & Bangi, 2014).

Consequently, various countries launched programmes to engage their workforce. For instance, the public sector in Indonesia attempted to engage its workforce by offering fair compensation packages (Guhanandan & Panchanatham, 2018). The Ugandan public sector used a similar tactic by providing its workers with competitive pay (Kayindu et al., 2020). This strategy was also used in the United States to foster a favourable attitude about teaching by offering fair compensation. Although a comfortable setting was provided to relieve teachers of tension, their level of participation did not improve (Knoster, 2016). Similarly, the Tanzanian government employed similar strategies to improve work conditions, career development, merit-based performance appraisal, and attractive compensation, which resulted in on-time promotions. Still, teacher turnout remained low (Nyamubi, 2017). There was low integrity, high absenteeism, and teachers changing schools even after only a brief period of employment (Aziz et al., 2017). This raises questions about the teachers' commitment to the workstations and their participation in the teaching-learning process.

Despite the government's efforts to provide reasonable remuneration, career development, performance appraisal systems, timely promotion and improving work conditions for public secondary school teachers, the provided services were not satisfactory due to societal complaints and unsatisfactory student performance (Lufunyo, 2015; Mosha, 2011). There was high absenteeism and low integrity of teachers in their workstations (Mdee & Thorley, 2016; Matto, 2017). This situation creates questions and leaves a gap in the literature concerning employee engagement in the public sector (Broughton & Ikram, 2012), especially in public secondary schools.

According to Osborne and Hammoud (2017), creative teams are built with the aid of innovative leadership, which inspires workers to put in a lot of effort for the

benefit of the organisation. This is because knowledge is innate to each individual. It is typically stimulated inside an organisation based on the leadership's capacity to assign and manage resources (Teece, Peteraf & Leih, 2016). Soken and Barnes (2014) provided evidence for the idea that acceptable behaviours that either promote or inhibit involvement are reflected in leadership practices. Consequently, workers' positive engagement with employers and the organisation is a result of leaders' innovative behaviour (Weng et al., 2010).

Unlike earlier research, which connected leadership to idea generation, financial and operational performance and employee engagement, this study looks specifically at whether innovative leadership affects employee engagement in public secondary school teachers. Contextually, the current research is being undertaken in a developing country, notably in public secondary schools. In contrast, most previous studies were carried out in private organisations and in high-income countries. Thus, the study intends to investigate the degree to which leaders, particularly heads of schools in public secondary schools, engage their teachers through innovative leadership. Employee engagement in private and developed countries may differ from that in developing countries. The results of the study can be used to inform various stakeholders, such as administrators of educational institutions, scholars, and policymakers, when making decisions. Therefore, the study aims to examine the influence of innovative leadership on employee engagement, particularly in public secondary schools.

Two concepts serve as the study's guiding hypotheses:

H1: Innovative leadership positively influences employees' organisational commitment

H2: Innovative leadership positively influences employees' job involvement

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts Social Exchange Theory (SET) as a common theory in social studies and among the most powerful and popular theories for considering workplace conduct (Davlembayeva & Alamanos, 2023). Its foundation lies on assumptions like reinforcement mechanisms, exchange mechanisms, reciprocity, social structures and social capital elements to motivate employees (Blau, 2017; Foa & Foa, 1980; Thibaut & Kelly, 2017; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). SET in this study provides a theoretical explanation as to why teachers are more or less engaged in their work and their schools. The theory is based on trusting others to reciprocate and believes in maintaining exchange relationships with others with the expectation of getting rewards (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). It assumes that two parties exchange with each other in order to accomplish outcomes that could

not be achieved by an individual on their own (Lawler & Thye, 1999) and that the exchanges would cease if they seemed not to benefit the two parties (Blau, 1964). When teachers receive appropriate treatment, such as encouragement, recognition, praise and innovative goals from the head of the school, they will feel the need to reciprocate and repay their schools. This repayment can be achieved through a greater level of engagement in their work (Kahn, 1990), and they feel obliged to go deeper into their role performance through hard work and commitment to their schools (Saks, 2006). If the school administrators do not offer fair treatment to the teachers, they will not feel a need to reciprocate positively with the organisation, and hence, low engagement.

Innovative Leadership and Employee Engagement

The importance of innovative leadership has been considered imperative in some studies as it leads to organisational success through innovative leaders (Alharbi, 2021; Alsolami et al., 2016; Muttaqin, 2022). So, innovative leadership refers to strategies and principles that combine different leadership philosophies to persuade and inspire staff to develop innovative goods, services, and ideas (Anand & Saraswati, 2014). Hence, the performance of the organisation and its employees depends on innovative leadership and culture (Supriatna & Zulganef, 2023). For that reason, leaders are said to be innovative when they apply innovative ideas in managing their subordinates by providing challenging tasks, encouraging risk-taking, and praising the employees when they perform well. As a result, utilising the innovative leader approach is a tremendous benefit for any company in today's challenging environments (Riza et al., 2020). Şen and Eren (2012) added that innovative leadership is determined by the application of innovative approaches, tools, processes, or concepts to address specific customer needs and discover answers to both immediate and long-term issues. Direct encouragement and setting innovative goals for the employees lead to improvement in their innovative behaviour (Riza et al., 2020). The implication is that leaders who positively consider both workers' and organisational needs increase employees' engagement (Saks, 2006).

Aman-Ullah et al. (2022) examined the moderating influence of innovative leadership on the relationship between human capital and organisational performance. Human capital was measured in terms of capacity, knowledge and skills. The results indicated that innovative leadership weakens the strength of the relationship between human capital knowledge and organisational performance. However, innovative leadership does not undermine or moderate the relationship between human capital capacity and skills in organisational performance. This study was also supported by Supriatna and Zulganef (2023), who contend that innovative leadership plays an important role in facilitating employees' performance so as to respond to some external challenges. Therefore, the more helpful the boss's leadership style and organisational culture are,

the more supportive the organisation's innovative work style and employee performance will be. The findings also coincide with previous research (Naguib & Naem, 2018; Prameswari et al., 2020; Zuraik & Kelly, 2019).

Additionally, employee performance is considerably influenced by innovative work behaviour. This was supported by Şen and Eren (2012), who found that global challenges such as hunger, corruption, poverty, lack of quality, inequality, health, unemployment, corruption, terrorism, wars, population growth and environmental destruction can be solved through radical changes rather than incremental changes through innovative leadership. Moreover, during Covid- 19 pandemic, employers supported their workers who were working from home during the lockdown by assigning challenging jobs to reduce psychological distress, sending motivational e-mails and using employees' creativity during that idle time (Kumar, 2021). Therefore, the exercise of engaging workers to perform their normal official duties when they were at home was a good example of innovative leadership. Contrary to these studies, the present study examines the direct influence of innovative leadership on employee engagement. This means that the aim is to find out whether the presence of innovative leaders can influence or motivate teachers to engage well in their teaching activities and be attached to their schools.

Innovative Leadership and Organisational Commitment

Organisational commitment (OC) is the situation where a worker is attached to the working station by being committed and maintains his permanent membership with the organisation without leaving (Greenberg & Baron, 2008). Bierema (2016) also added that organisational commitment refers to an emotional sense developed by a closer relationship between employees and employers. Normally, employees are committed to the organisation depending on the inputs they receive from the employers, and this impacts the relationship between the two parts. This commitment reflects the organisation's values, attitudes, loyalty and beliefs. Roncesvalles and Gaerlan (2021) found that employees with high organisational commitment perform their jobs more satisfactorily and productively. To prove this statement, Sutiyatno, Santoso and Susilo (2022) found that innovative leadership influences organisational culture, and organisational culture influences teacher engagement through commitment to their schools. Therefore, human resource managers in any organisation play a major role in making sure that the workers' environment, worker welfare and job satisfaction are esteemed, which results in strengthening employees' organisational commitment (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Innovative Leadership and Job Involvement

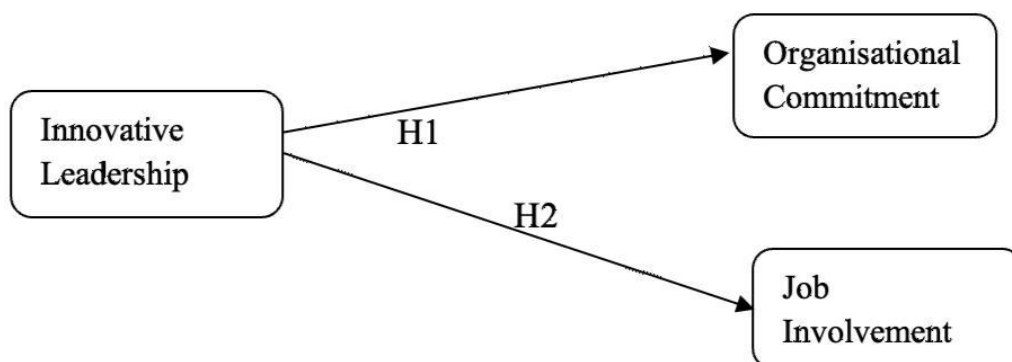
Job involvement is defined as the degree to which a person psychologically identifies with and is related to the work motivation that a person has with a job (Ambekar et al.,

2016). Here, there is internalisation of values about the work or the importance of work according to the individual. It is believed that employees are involved in their jobs when the organisation socialises them through a clear understanding of the values, abilities, behaviours and social knowledge vital for an organisational role and participation as a member (Ambekar et al., 2016). When employees are committed to their jobs, there is an assurance that an organisation will possess members who are more emotionally engaged, dedicated, persevering, intrinsically motivated, proactive, and willing to make extraordinary efforts to achieve the objectives and increase their performance. Job involvement increases employees' happiness and health, enjoyment in performing tasks, life contentment, and improvement in work and family issues (Omar et al., 2018).

Figure 1

A Conceptual Model

Innovative Leadership Employee Engagement



Source: Saks (2006)

Methodology

Using a cross-sectional research approach, the study investigated how innovative leadership affects teachers' engagement in Tanzanian public secondary schools that have embraced positivism. This means the researcher uses observable facts that allow for generalisation (Remenyi et al., 1998); as a result, experiments, scientific methods and quantitative approaches are utilised in conjunction with a deductive approach to test hypotheses (Neuman, 1997). Therefore, only observable phenomena can generate reliable data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The unity of analysis and inquiry are the public secondary school teachers. A sample size of 386 teachers was drawn at random from a population of 87,493 secondary school teachers across 26 regions on the Tanzanian mainland (PORALG, 2017).

Closed-ended structured questionnaires were employed to acquire data. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS 23 was used since it was acceptable for the study and allowed for distinct associations for each set of dependent variables.

Measures

Independent variable was measured by innovative leadership adopted from (Teece, Peteraf & Leih, 2016; Wang et al., 2013). Employee engagement as a dependent variable was divided into organisational commitment and job involvement adopted (Bai & Liu, 2018; Schaufeli et al., 2006). To ensure reliability, internal consistency was measured by Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha was suggested by (Creswell, 2012) to be 0.8 and above. However, a Cronbach's alpha that is greater than 0.7 was acceptable for internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). Therefore, innovative leadership had a Cronbach's alpha $\alpha = 0.87$, organisational commitment $\alpha = 0.91$ and job involvement $\alpha = 0.88$. Hence, the instruments used were reliable enough for the study as the values were within an acceptable range. Construct Reliability (CR) was used to measure the overall reliability of a set of items loaded on a latent construct. Values should range between zero and one. Thus, values that are greater than 0.70 reflect good reliability. Values that range between 0.60 – 0.70 are also acceptable if other indicators of the construct's validity are good (Hair et al., 2010). The study indicated a good CR as all the constructs were greater than 0.8, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1

Reliability and Validity Tests

Variable	AVE	Construct Reliability	Alpha Coefficient
Innovative Leadership	0.67	0.8589	0.871
Organisational Commitment	0.60	0.8167	0.911
Job Involvement	0.61	0.8249	0.881

Validity was also tested to explain the degree to which the tool measures what it was supposed to test (Healy & Perry, 2000). Model evaluation was measured by convergent validity. Convergent validity was used to show a relationship between construct measures. It was assessed by the Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Convergent validity is therefore attained when every item in the measurement associates well with the supposed theoretical construct with standardised regression weights for reflective indicators of 0.70. However, 0.60 is also considered to be a satisfactory level (Henseler, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2015). In testing validity, convergent validity for innovative leadership was 0.67, organisational commitment was 0.60, and job involvement was 0.61. Hence, all of them were within the acceptable values of > 0.60 .

Multivariate assumptions

SEM was applied as a data analytical technique for testing hypotheses. Different multivariate assumptions were performed before testing the hypotheses. This was preceded by observing missing data, outliers, normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There were no missing data in the data set. Outliers were checked by using both univariate and multivariate outliers. Univariate outliers were examined by using $Q3+2.2(IQR)$ and $Q1-2.2(IQR)$. Multivariate outliers were detected by using SPSS Mahalanobis distance (Mahalanobis D2), and six out-of-range values were detected. Still, they were not deleted from the data set due to their minimal impact in detecting the significant influence during data analysis. Normality for all variables revealed a fairly bell-shaped normal distribution curve portrayed on the histograms. This indicates that data was fairly and normally distributed. Linearity was presented by using P P Plots where the results showed a concentration of values in a straight line. This indicates that there is a constant unit change of employee engagement for a constant change of innovative leadership. Lastly, homoscedasticity was presented by scatter plots where the dispersion of employee engagement values indicated a relatively equal at each value of the predictor variable (innovative leadership), and hence, there was no problem with homoscedasticity.

Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed before testing hypotheses so as to make sure that data would fit well with the study. For a model that fits data, the standardised regression weight of each item should be above 0.50, and the squared multiple correlations of each item should be above the 0.40 cut-off point, as recommended by Wolfenbarger and Gilly (2003). Chi-Square and degree of freedom (CMIN/DF) should be less than 5 (Bollen, 1989; Ullman, 1996), the Goodness of fit index (GFI) should be > 0.90 (Byrne, 2010), the Adjusted Goodness of fit index (AGFI) should be > 0.80 (Chau & Hu, 2001), Comparative fit index (CFI) should be > 0.90 (Hair et al., 2010) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) should be < 0.08 (Hoe, 2008).

Therefore, innovative leadership had 11 items (LEI1-LEI11) before confirmatory factor analysis. Items with poor factor loadings were deleted, and 3 items (LEI4, LEI6 and LEI8) were retained for further analysis. Through modification indices, a model fit was attained where CMIN/DF was 1.133, GFI was 0.984, AGFI was 0.972, CFI was 0.998, and RMSEA was 0.019. As explained earlier, for a model that fits data well, the standardised regression weight of each item should be above 0.50, and the squared multiple correlations of each item should be above 0.40 cut-off point. With these results, there is no doubt that the data as model fit indices were in the recommended values.

Employee engagement with its sub-divisions of organisational commitment and job involvement attained the following results in CFA: Organisational commitment with 10 items (OC1-OC10) had initial results as follows: CMIN/DF was 4.650, GFI was 0.920, AGFI was 0.875, CFI was 0.939, and RMSEA was 0.099. To obtain better results, items with poor factor loadings were deleted and remained with 3 items (OC4, OC7 and OC8) for further analysis. Model fit indices yield the following: CMIN/DF was 1.999, GFI was 0.969, AGFI was 0.948, CFI was 0.986, and RMSEA was 0.052. All these indices were within the recommended values and, hence, fit the model well.

Initially, job involvement had 10 items (JOI1-JOI10) with the following indices: CMIN/DF was 24.407, GFI was 0.551, AGFI was 0.295, CFI was 0.613 and RMSEA was 0.251. These results did not illustrate a model fit. Hence, through modification indices, items with poor standardised regression weights and squared multiple correlations were deleted and remained with 3 items (JOI2, JOI3 and JOI5) that yielded the following results: CMIN/DF was 2.233, GFI was 0.993, AGFI was 0.985, CFI = 0.974 and RMSEA = 0.058. Therefore, these values fit well for further analysis.

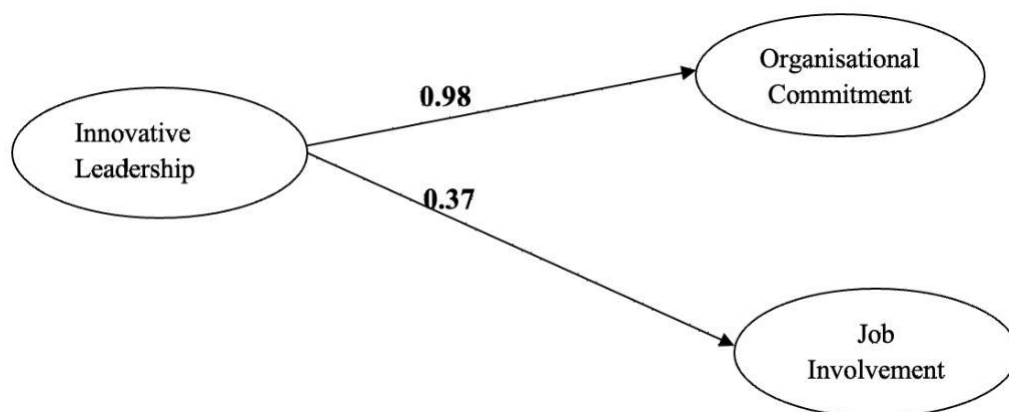
Analysis and Results

Hypothesis testing

Two hypotheses were developed: H1: Innovative leadership positively influences employees' organisational commitment, and H2: Innovative leadership positively influences employees' job involvement. To attain model fit, the following model fit indices were recommended where CMIN/DF should be < 5 , GFI should be > 0.90 , AGFI should be > 0.80 , CFI should be > 0.90 , and RMSEA should be < 0.08 . The goodness of fit indices was assessed, and obtained the following results: CMIN/DF was 2.807, GFI was 0.928, AGFI was 0.892, CFI was 0.971, and RMSEA was 0.070. Therefore, the values indicated a good model fit. The model that suggests the influence of innovative leadership and employee engagement is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Structural Model Indicating the Influence of Innovative Leadership and Employee Engagement



Source: Field data (2020)

The hypothesised model indicates that both hypotheses have a significant influence on employee engagement.

Table 2

Hypotheses Testing Results

Path		Estimate	Standard Error	Critical Ratio	p-value	Standardised Estimates
OC	<--- LEI	.986	.080	12.301	***	0.988
JOI	<--- LEI	.330	.052	6.375	***	0.371

Source: Field data (2020)

*** means it is significant at 0.001

The results illustrate that innovative leadership has a positive significant influence on both organisational commitment and job involvement for employees. Both hypotheses were supported as H1 indicates that innovative leadership has a positive significant influence on OC with a β coefficient of 0.98 and p-value of 0.001. H2 also suggests that innovative leadership has a positive significant influence on job involvement with a β coefficient of 0.37 and a p-value of 0.001. With these results, it is clear that innovative leaders play a major and significant role in engaging their employees, particularly teachers, in the organisation as well as the tasks assigned to them.

Discussion of the Findings

The study's findings indicate that innovative leadership has a significant influence on employee engagement, as shown by the application of social exchange theory. As explained earlier, SET provides a theoretical explanation as to why employees are more or less engaged in their work and their organisation (Saks, 2006).

H1: Innovative Leadership positively influences employees' Organisational Commitment

Innovative leadership positively influences employees' organisational commitment. This hypothesis prediction reveals a significant influence on engaging teachers through commitment to their schools. This is a clear implication that teachers get innovative support from the school administrators who are the heads of schools, particularly Headmasters and Headmistress, as well as other educational practitioners. Innovative leaders can stimulate or arouse innovative behaviour among employees and be more attached to their workstations; in this case, it is a school. Teachers maintain a permanent membership with their schools depending on the treatment they get from the head of the school; hence, reciprocity comes here. This was supported by Kurtessis et al. (2017), who suggested that leaders are supposed to create a supportive environment for the workers and ensure employees' welfare and satisfaction with their jobs. All these factors related to the conducive working environment, employees' welfare and job satisfaction proved to strengthen employees' organisational commitment (Kurtessis et al., 2017). This means that teachers will stop moving from one school to another or working on moonlighting activities outside the school. The outcome is total attachment to the workstation, which might have a greater impact on students' performance. Supriatna and Zulganef (2023) were not far from others, as their study supported the importance of innovative leaders in engaging employees so as to cope with the external challenges they face. A slightly different study but related to the present research declares that benevolent leaders positively influence employees' commitment to the organisation (Grego-Planer, 2022). At the same time, they bring positive changes to the whole community. Sutiayatno et al. (2022) conquered with the former researchers as it was declared that innovative leadership influences organisational culture and teacher commitment.

H2: Innovative Leadership positively influences employees' Job Involvement

This hypothesis also proves to have a significant influence on engaging teachers through involvement in the teaching task. Innovative leaders are the key pioneers in motivating employees to perform their tasks well. In relation to this study, heads of schools and other educational practitioners play an important innovative role in engaging teachers to be involved well in their teaching activities. Teachers'

involvement in their jobs is evidenced by working with extended time apart from the normal working hours, teachers' willingness to help slow learners for extra hours or remedial classes, providing enough exercises to the students and making sure that they are marked. In addition to that, provisions of enough assessments for the students enable teachers to have a clear evaluation of their students as well as the effectiveness of the teaching pedagogy. This will be enabled through different types of evaluations given to the students, such as formative, diagnostic, and summative evaluations. The outcome of those evaluations, which is students' performance, is an indicator of teachers' involvement in the teaching task.

Malik and Rana (2016) concurred with the present study as they declared that leadership styles influence teachers' job involvement in Punjab. However, their measurement was slightly different in terms of leadership styles and their influence on job involvement. At the same time, the present study focuses on innovative leadership and its influence on employee engagement. In addition to that, this study goes beyond Malik and Rana's (2016) study by broadening the dependent variable, which is engagement in terms of both organisational commitment and job involvement. Total employee engagement occurs when there is employees' organisational commitment and job involvement (Saks, 2006). Moreover, innovative leaders help organisations build a creative team that helps to motivate employees to work hard for the organisation's positive outcomes (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Therefore, teachers repay their schools by performing their duties well and maintaining attachment to the workstation.

Similarly, studies by Grego-Planer (2022), Sutiayatno et al. (2022), Supriatna and Zulganef (2023), Omar et al. (2018), and Malik and Rana (2016) align with the current research. However, investigations into the influence of innovative leadership on employee engagement remain limited. Thus, it is crucial to encourage employees, particularly teachers, by assigning challenging tasks and promoting innovative activities that enhance their ability to act innovatively, effectively perform their teaching duties, and address students' problems. This stems from the assumption that knowledge resides within individual employees' minds, and its activation depends on the innovative leaders they have (Teece, Peteraf, & Leih, 2016). The present study addresses this knowledge gap by demonstrating that innovative leadership significantly influences employee engagement, particularly in terms of organisational commitment and job involvement.

Conclusions and Theoretical Implications

The study concludes that teachers' engagement is greatly impacted by innovative leadership. Innovative goals that are demanding and motivating and show gratitude for their teachers' excellent work can be achieved by leaders who possess sufficient innovation. All of these encourage teachers to put in long hours and a lot of effort

into their teaching-learning process. There will be fewer transfer cases when teachers are dedicated to the schools. Teachers' dedication to the schools, this study shows that they are patriotic and willing to defend the reputation of their workstations. By working overtime without getting paid, coming up with creative solutions to student's challenges, and using cutting-edge teaching techniques, teachers demonstrate a high level of engagement with their work. The outcome is that the students perform well. This downplays the complaints made by parents and the public at large about the poor performance of students.

In contrast to earlier research by Mosha (2011), Lufunyo (2015), Knoster (2016), and Aziz et al. (2017), which found poor teacher involvement, the current study yields different results. This may be a result of the complicated and ever-changing nature of human behaviour. Engaging teachers is another benefit of innovative leadership. Furthermore, the study clearly demonstrates the deployment of SET in Tanzanian public secondary schools. Heads of schools that employ creative strategies inspire their staff to give back by being dedicated to and involved in the teaching-learning process, thereby leading to engagement.

This study suggests practically that the kind of leaders an organisation has, particularly creative leaders, affects employee engagement. Thus, leaders across all industries must adopt an innovative approach to motivate their workforce, which includes those who render services to the public. It is the type of service provider, particularly public secondary school teachers, that determines whether the service is good. Teachers' participation impacts students' performance, thereby producing a future generation of creative individuals.

For various policymakers in the public and commercial sectors, this study is essential. These policies may include those related to retirement, training, motivation, and promotion. Employee engagement increases when workstation attachment and commitment result from well-implemented policies. Academicians and researchers can both benefit from the study's findings. Subsequent research endeavours may involve investigating employee involvement in private secondary schools or doing a comparison analysis between public and private secondary schools. Research can also be done in the health sector because it has been said in the literature that health and education are the two areas where public sector efficiency is measured. As a result, this study is not comprehensive.

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