

Extensiveness of Teacher Dismissal by Teachers Service Commission in Enhancing Discipline of Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Moshi District

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Abstract: This study explored the role of teacher dismissal in promoting discipline among teachers in public secondary schools in Moshi District, under the guidance of the Theory of Planned Behavior (1985). Using a convergent mixed methods design, the research targeted 65 schools, 65 heads of schools, 1,341 teachers, and 6 District Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) members. From this population, 151 respondents were sampled, including 12 heads of schools, 134 teachers, and 5 TSC members. Sampling was done using probability (simple random and proportional stratified) and non-probability techniques (key informants). Data were collected using questionnaires for quantitative insights and interview guides for qualitative perspectives. Instruments' validity was ensured by experts in the field of education (Planning and Administration) from Mwenge Catholic University. Pilot study included 1 public secondary school, 1 Head of School, 13 teachers and 1 TSC member, totaling 15 respondents. Trustworthiness was ensured through peer debriefing and triangulation. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The involvement of the participants was preceded by signing of consent form, emphasizing the voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any point without consequences. The study found that the dismissal of teachers to a moderate extent contributed to the enhancement of discipline in secondary schools. While dismissal employed by the Teachers' Service Commission sends a strong signal, its effectiveness depends on fairness, communication, and consistency, and must be complemented by supportive strategies such as mentoring, professional development, and positive reinforcement. The study concludes that teacher dismissal by the Teachers Service Commission enhances professional discipline among teachers, serving as a strong regulatory mechanism. Its consequence is particularly to a high extent in aspects where fear of dismissal deters unprofessional behavior, motivates teachers to perform effectively, and reinforces accountability. The study recommends TSC to guide Heads of Schools to establish formal monitoring systems in schools, including scheduled classroom observations, weekly check ins, and documentation of infractions with follow up actions.

Keywords: Dismissal, Discipline, Professional Guidance, Teaching Service.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Professional accountability and ethical service delivery in education rely heavily on sustained teacher discipline. Upholding these professional standards requires institutional oversight, rigorous compliance tracking, and structured disciplinary interventions when misconduct occurs (UNESCO,

2022). This structural focus directly supports Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, Target 4.c, which advocates for expanding the global pool of qualified educators by reinforcing professional benchmarks and institutional support frameworks (UNESCO, 2015). Because educators fundamentally drive both the academic growth and moral development of students, their professional conduct directly

dictates classroom quality, student achievements, and public confidence in school systems. Operationally, teacher discipline manifests through consistent punctuality, ethical behavior, strong classroom organization, and strict compliance with statutory workplace codes (Kariuki & Ngugi, 2021). Recent data from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2022) indicates that global teacher attrition rates nearly doubled from 4.62% in 2015 to 9.06 in 2022, highlighting serious challenges regarding the sustainability of professional discipline and institutional accountability worldwide. Despite the clear importance of these professional standards, educational authorities globally continue to struggle with teacher misconduct, including chronic absenteeism, official negligence, and unethical behavior.

On a global scale, educational systems increasingly utilize formal termination procedures as a decisive regulatory tool to enforce workplace accountability and professional ethics. For instance, school districts across the United States enforce tiered termination protocols for educators who consistently fail performance evaluations or breach ethical conduct rules; these extreme measures are typically preceded by progressive interventions such as written warnings, remediation roadmaps, and targeted mentoring (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Similarly, Singapore's Ministry of Education enforces strict disciplinary protocols where severe ethical infractions result in immediate termination, with the details of such cases documented openly to serve as a structural deterrent and reinforce professional obligations (Tan & Goh, 2022). Empirical evidence demonstrates that when these disciplinary structures are executed with transparency and consistency, they lead to improved classroom management, lower absenteeism rates, and better alignment with professional expectations (OECD, 2021). Nevertheless, teacher misconduct remains a persistent issue globally. Reports from both the National Bureau of Economic Research (2023) and the U.S. Department of Education (2023) reveal ongoing challenges with chronic absenteeism, document falsification, and sexual misconduct, raising critical questions regarding the extent of regulatory bodies in enforcing long term discipline.

Within the African continent, regulatory bodies like South Africa's Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training known as Umalusi play a central role in managing the teaching workforce (Umalusi, 2022). This council monitors compliance with professional codes of conduct, ensuring educators maintain professional integrity, treat learners with respect, and fulfill their administrative obligations within schools (Mokgoro & Khumalo, 2021). When these ethical boundaries are crossed, Umalusi investigates the breaches and applies sanctions ranging from formal suspensions and demotions to complete deregistration to preserve institutional integrity. Even with these active frameworks, research by Adu-Gyamfi and Mensah (2020) indicates that issues like absenteeism, duty

neglect, and unethical choices persist, drawing attention to systemic gaps in how consistently and effectively these continental disciplinary systems operate.

In East Africa, national service commissions are turning to employment termination to curb persistent behavioral issues and absenteeism within public schools. The Teachers Service Commission in Kenya, for example, removed over 3,000 educators from its professional register between 2017 and 2023 due to chronic absenteeism, exam fraud, and ethical violations, while simultaneously upgrading school-level monitoring and rolling out performance appraisal software to track accountability. Meanwhile, the Rwanda Education Board has tightened its oversight through unannounced school inspections and rigorous enforcement of code regulations, which has driven an increase in behavioral related suspensions and dismissals (Niyonzima & Musafiri, 2021). Yet, despite these rising enforcement statistics and administrative reforms, regional disciplinary systems still grapple with balancing punitive sanctions against preventive professional support to secure lasting behavioral improvements.

Mirroring these regional dynamics, Tanzania has enacted deliberate regulatory updates to tighten disciplinary oversight across its teaching workforce. Operating under the Teachers' Service Commission (URT) Regulations of 2016, local disciplinary bodies are legally bound to follow the precise steps outlined in Regulation 2, Regulation 11(1)(i), and Part III, ensuring that all disciplinary inquiries remain transparent, legally sound, and protective of fundamental labor rights (URT, 2016). These statutes require authorities to balance the severity of an infraction against an established grid of penalties, while cross referencing broader national laws concerning corruption, cybercrime, economic sabotage, and national security. Despite these legal frameworks, documented infractions have grown significantly. Annual data shows that dismissals tied to misconduct hit critical levels, jumping from 1,402 cases in 2021 to 1,801 cases in 2022, with behavioral infractions eventually accounting for roughly 68% of all employment terminations within the education sector.

To navigate these administrative hurdles, the government introduced the Teachers' Disciplinary and Appeals Guidelines (Edition No. 1 of 2017) to streamline the administrative and legal workflows of disciplinary cases. Designed to protect the professional integrity of public education, these guidelines enforce accountability standards aligned with broader public service laws. The enforcement structure cascades across multiple operational tiers, binding TSC national headquarters, assistant secretaries, district committee members, and secondary school principals (Shaibu & Mwila, 2025). Specifically, Regulation 12(2)(4) of the Teachers' Service Commission Act (Cap. 448) empowers the TSC to apply severe disciplinary actions including formal dismissal, demotions, salary reductions, and the freezing of annual increments in response to gross misconduct. Yet, institutional challenges persist (URT, 2017). Between 2020 and 2024,

Tanzania registered 701 teacher terminations, peaking at 229 cases in 2022 alone. Notably, the Kilimanjaro region carried the heaviest burden, accounting for 21% of all educators implicated in these disciplinary actions, emphasizing the need to review how these frameworks influence local accountability.

The most prevalent offenses in Kilimanjaro include absenteeism, professional negligence, and inappropriate relationships with students, which not only disrupt instructional quality but also erode public trust in the teaching profession. A localized spatial analysis indicates that Moshi District Council (Moshi DC) serves as the primary geographical hotspot for disciplinary infractions. While Moshi DC registered 5 cases in 2020, its annual infraction rate expanded exponentially to 10 cases in 2023 and spiked sharply to 22 cases in 2025 accounting for 53.65% of all regional infractions recorded in that single year. This localized concentration of misconduct within Moshi district directly justifies the geographic scope of this study. The sharp upward trend, particularly in the years 2023, 2024 and 2025 points to systemic operational challenges in the local school monitoring systems. This data highlights the urgent need to evaluate how effectively the Teachers Service Commission applies employment dismissal as a structural regulatory tool to curb misconduct in public secondary schools; therefore, the current study examined the extensiveness of teacher dismissal by Teachers' Service Commission in enhancing discipline of teachers in public secondary schools in Moshi district.

➤ *Statement of the Problem*

Teachers' indiscipline continues to undermine the quality of education delivery in Tanzania's public schools. Despite, government policy efforts, education stakeholders, have raised concerns regarding recurrent behaviors such as absenteeism, negligence of instructional duties, and unethical relationships with students, which have disrupted learning and eroded public confidence in the teaching profession. The situation is particularly alarming, as statistical records reveal escalating disciplinary cases: between 2016 and 2020, more than 7,000 teachers were given notice from service due to misconduct, while from 2020 to 2024, Kilimanjaro Region alone accounted for 21% of all national indiscipline cases, with Moshi District Council contributing nearly half of the regional cases (TSC Reports, 2020–2025). The figures reflect not only the magnitude of teacher indiscipline but also the systemic challenges in enforcing professional accountability. Several studies have attempted to address this issue, such as Yohanes and Otieno (2022) examined the procedures followed in administering disciplinary measures and their influence on teachers' conduct. Similarly, Yasin et al. (2023) and Omollo et al. (2022) explored the use of warnings and reprimands by heads of schools as strategies to enhance teacher discipline in public secondary schools. While the studies provide important insights into disciplinary mechanisms, there is a need to address the extensiveness of disciplinary measures such as demotion, dismissal, reduction in salary, and stoppage of

salary increments as enforced by the Teachers' Service Commission on enhancing teachers' discipline. Therefore, the current study sought to investigate the extensiveness of teacher's dismissal by Teachers' service commission in enhancing discipline of teachers in public secondary schools in Moshi District, Tanzania.

➤ *Research Question*

To what extent does the teacher dismissal by the Teachers' Service Commission enhance discipline among teachers in public secondary schools in Moshi district?

➤ *Significance of the Study*

This study is significant to TSC officers, teachers, policy, theory, and the body of knowledge by providing insights on the extensiveness in which teacher dismissal by the Teachers' Service Commission enhances discipline among teachers in public secondary schools in Moshi District. For TSC officers, it highlights gaps in enforcing dismissal procedures, handling appeals fairly, and keeping transparent disciplinary records, leading to strengthened accountability and improved decision making. Teachers benefit by understanding the seriousness of dismissal as a disciplinary measure, which increase awareness of expected standards of conduct, promote professionalism, and reduce repeated cases of indiscipline. The study informs the Education and Training Policy (2014, version 2023) on how dismissal as a measure influences discipline management and whether more supportive strategies should accompany punitive actions. The study also contributes to theory by extending the application of bureaucratic perspectives in examining rule enforcement, accountability, and procedural fairness within teacher discipline systems. Finally, it enrich the body of knowledge by offering empirical evidence on the effectiveness of dismissal as a strategy for enhancing teacher discipline, serving as a reference for policymakers, practitioners, and future researchers seeking to improve education governance and teacher management.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to examine the extensiveness of teacher dismissal as a strategy for enhancing discipline among teachers. TPB, as proposed by Ajzen (1991), declare that human behavior is primarily driven by behavioral intentions, which are influenced by three interrelated constructs; attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

The assumptions of the Theory of Planned Behavior include the idea that human behavior is rational and driven by intention, which is influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. It assumes that individuals weigh the potential outcomes and social influences before deciding to engage in a behavior. Additionally, the theory assumes that behaviors are under volitional control, meaning individuals have the capability to decide and act upon their

intentions. The assumptions make TPB a valuable framework for understanding and predicting behaviors, including those related to adherence to teachers' guidelines in educational settings.

Applying this theory to the educational context, teachers' disciplinary conduct can be analyzed through their attitudes toward dismissal policies, whether they perceive such measures as justifiable, effective, or punitive. Subjective norms encompass the perceived expectations from peers, school leadership, and the wider educational system regarding acceptable professional behavior. Perceived behavioral control reflects teachers' confidence in their ability to maintain discipline and avoid violation of codes of conduct that could lead to dismissal, considering both personal agency and institutional constraints. By integrating TPB into the study, the study aims to uncover the TSC, Heads of Schools (HoS) and teachers' responses to disciplinary policies. This theory provides a structured approach to assess whether dismissal practices serve as a deterrent to indiscipline or whether they may accidentally foster resistance, fear, or disengagement among educators.

➤ *Strengths of the Theory*

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a widely recognized model in psychology and social sciences that aims to predict and understand human behavior. One of its strengths lies in its comprehensive approach to behavior prediction through the integration of three key determinants: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The Theory of Planned Behavior is flexible and applicable in different cultural and social contexts. The model has been validated and adapted across diverse populations and behaviors, highlighting its universal relevance. Moreover, the TPB offers practical implications for interventions and behavior change programs by identifying specific factors that can be targeted to modify behavior. This makes it a valuable tool for policymakers, educators, and health practitioners seeking to design effective strategies to promote desirable behaviors (Rizzo and Columna 2020).

➤ *Weakness of the Theory*

The TPB relies on self-reported data, which may not always accurately reflect actual behavior due to social desirability biases or discrepancies between intentions and actions. Additionally, the model assumes that individuals have rational control over their behaviors and may not fully account for external factors such as environmental influences or subconscious processes that can affect behavior (Bošnjak et al. 2020).

➤ *Relevancy of the Theory to the Study*

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is relevant to this study because it explains how teachers' attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence their disciplinary conduct. When the Teachers Service Commission

(TSC) enforces dismissal for serious misconduct, it shapes teachers' attitudes toward compliance, reinforces subjective norms by signaling that indiscipline is socially and professionally unacceptable, and strengthens perceived behavioral control by reminding teachers that adherence to rules is within their control to secure job security. Thus, dismissal as a disciplinary measure aligns with TPB by influencing teachers' intentions and actual behaviors, ultimately enhancing discipline in public secondary schools.

III. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

The empirical studies are thematically organized based on the research questions and cover global, African, East African, Tanzanian, and local contexts. They provide a detailed understanding of the problem, research methods, and data collection and analysis techniques.

➤ *Extent to which Dismissal of Teachers Enhances their Discipline in Secondary Schools*

This part presents a review of empirical studies on the Extent to which Dismissal of Teachers Enhances their Discipline in Secondary Schools in Moshi District to identify gaps related to focus, methodology and context.

Ingersoll and Rossi (2023) examined the relationship between teacher dismissal policies and professional discipline focusing in rural public secondary schools in **United States**. The study used a quantitative approach that relies on secondary analysis of large scale, nationally representative survey datasets (e.g., the Schools and Staffing Survey, Teacher Follow Up Survey, and National Teacher Principal Survey). The results concluded that while dismissals are not a standalone solution, when applied within a transparent and consistently enforced framework, they reinforce discipline and professional accountability among teachers. The study presents strong evidence that transparent dismissal policies reinforce teacher discipline and accountability. The study leaves Tanzanian contextual realities unexplored, creating space to examine how formal dismissal mechanisms shape teacher behavior and accountability in Tanzanian secondary schools.

Estrada and Lombardi (2024) investigated the effect of strong dismissal protections on teacher turnover and productivity in Chile's public school system. The research employed a regression-based design and analyzed data from randomly selected teachers, particularly those near an experience threshold. The findings revealed that dismissal protections reduced teacher turnover by 25% within the first two years, especially among teachers with very low or very high baseline performance. The study concluded that dismissal protections stabilize the teaching workforce in the short term, this provides valuable evidence on retention and productivity perspectives. The study provides valuable evidence on retention and productivity using only a simple random

sampling technique, which falls under probability sampling, with little assessment of how dismissals contribute to improved teacher discipline. This gap provided the rationale for the current study, which focused on how formal dismissal mechanisms enhanced discipline and accountability in Tanzanian secondary schools, using a mixed methods approach to capture both quantitative evidence and qualitative perspectives.

Kaponda et al. (2021) examined how teacher indiscipline was managed in urban secondary schools in Zambia. The study adopted a qualitative phenomenological design involving 38 participants, including school administrators and education officers, with data analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that dismissals of teachers were often related to absenteeism, partisan politics, alcohol use, and sexual misconduct, while administrators faced challenges such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, limited managerial skills, and fear of disciplining politically connected teachers. The study concluded that the management of teacher indiscipline is constrained by systemic weaknesses despite dismissals being a frequent outcome. However, the study provides perspectives solely from administrators without adequately capturing the views of teachers themselves, limiting the understanding of how dismissals influence discipline. To fill the gap, the current study integrated both administrators' and teachers' perspectives and employed a mixed-method approach to provide a more comprehensive assessment of dismissal as a disciplinary measure.

Wambugu and Githae (2021) examined the effectiveness of disciplinary measures implemented by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) in promoting professional conduct among public secondary school teachers in Kenya. The research adopted a descriptive survey design, collecting data through questionnaires and interviews from principals and teachers, and analyzed the results using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings revealed that disciplinary measures such as warnings, salary stoppage, interdiction, and dismissal influenced teacher behavior by acting as deterrents against misconduct. The study highlights that while disciplinary measures are effective, their application raises concerns over fairness, transparency, and consistency. The study offers useful evidence on the deterrent effect of disciplinary measures but highlights procedural weaknesses that may undermine their effectiveness. To fill the gap, the current study investigated whether dismissals in Tanzania's secondary schools effectively enhance discipline while considering the role of fair and consistent implementation.

Msuya and Kimweri (2023) examined strategies employed by public secondary school head teachers in Tanzania to restrain teacher misconduct. The research adopted a qualitative case study design and involved 10 purposively selected head teachers from urban schools. Data were collected through interviews and analyzed thematically. The findings revealed that common strategies included warnings, reprimands, inspections, attendance registers, discipline committees, and guidance and counseling. The study provides useful insights into disciplinary practices while placing little emphasis on dismissal as a specific strategy and excludes the perspectives of teachers themselves. To fill the gap, the current study focused on both heads of schools and teachers in public secondary schools in Tanzania, employing a mixed-method approach to specifically assess the extent to which dismissal enhances teacher discipline by triangulating both perceptions and experiences from the respondents.

IV. DEMONSTRATION OF RESEARCH GAPS

The reviewed empirical studies on teacher dismissal and discipline highlight gaps at the conceptual, contextual, and methodological levels. The study from Chile (Estrada & Lombardi, 2024) focused on dismissal protections for workforce retention outcomes but paid limited attention to how dismissals directly enhance teacher discipline, revealing a conceptual gap. Similarly, research conducted in Zambia and Kenya (Kaponda et al., 2021; Wambugu & Githae, 2021) explored disciplinary practices and administrative perspectives but placed less emphasis on teachers' own views, leaving a contextual gap in understanding how dismissals influence discipline in secondary schools within the Tanzanian setting. Methodologically, most studies, such as the one by Kaponda et al. (2021), relied heavily on a purely qualitative approach or narrow case studies that excluded triangulation across diverse respondents, exposing a methodological gap in generating comprehensive evidence. This study addressed these gaps by specifically investigating the extent to which the dismissal of teachers by the Teachers Service Commission enhances discipline in public secondary schools in Moshi District, integrating both administrators' and teachers' perspectives through a mixed-method approach to provide a triangulated understanding.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a convergent design under a mixed-method approach, collecting qualitative and quantitative data to comprehensively understand the research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The target population was 65 public secondary schools, 65 heads of schools, 1,341 teachers, and 6 TSC District Committee members. A sample of 12 heads of schools, 134 teachers, and 5 TSC committee members, totaling 151 participants, was involved in this study. The research instruments for data collection included questionnaires for teachers and interview guides for heads of schools and TSC Committee Members. A pilot study was conducted in 1 public secondary school in Moshi District, consisting of 13 teachers 1 head of school, 1TSC member representing 10% of the sample size, totaling 15 respondents. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires, whereas qualitative data were gathered using interview guides. The data collection instruments were validated by experts from Mwenge Catholic University specializing in educational planning and administration.

VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study sought to investigate the extent to which dismissal of teachers enhances their discipline in secondary schools. Data were collected using questionnaire and interview guides. A five-level Likert scale was utilized for data analysis, with VLE =1, Very Low Extent; LE = 2, Low Extent; ME=3, Moderate Extent; HE = 4, High Extent; and VHE = 5, Very High Extent. The frequency and percentage distribution of responses were categorized as follows: ≤ 20=extreme minority; 21-49=minority; 50-59=moderate; 60-69=majority; 70- 89=very high majority; 90-99=extreme majority; and 100=overwhelming majority (Habibpour et al, 2009). Table 2 presents the responses of teachers on the extent to which dismissal of teachers enhances their discipline in secondary schools.

Table 2 Teachers' (TRs) Responses on the Extent to which Dismissal of Teachers Enhances their Discipline in Secondary Schools (N = 128 Teachers)

	VLE		LE		ME		HE		VHE		M
	F	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	
i. Teacher dismissal promotes accountability among staff.	4	3.1	27	21.1	32	25.0	44	34.4	21	16.4	3.39
ii. The threat of dismissal encourages adherence to school policies.	0	0.0	92	71.9	15	11.7	13	10.2	8	6.3	2.50
iii. Firing of teachers leads to improve discipline of other teachers in schools	1	0.8	90	70.3	15	11.7	14	10.9	8	6.3	2.51
iv. Teachers are motivated to perform well when dismissal is a possibility.	3	2.3	13	10.2	26	20.3	48	37.5	38	29.7	3.82
v. Dismissal acts as a deterrent for unprofessional behaviour.	6	4.7	9	7.0	26	20.3	47	36.7	40	31.3	3.82
vi. The dismissal process is transparent and fair.	0	0.0	7	5.5	102	79.7	13	10.2	6	4.7	3.14
vii. Dismissal policies are effectively communicated to all staff.	1	0.8	5	3.9	103	80.5	10	7.8	9	7.0	3.16
viii. Fear of dismissal negatively impacts teacher morale.	4	3.1	11	8.6	31	24.2	48	37.5	34	26.6	3.75
ix. Dismissal contributes to a positive learning environment for students.	0	0.0	92	71.9	10	7.8	14	10.9	12	9.4	2.57
x. There are better ways to enhance discipline than through dismissal.	3	2.3	10	7.8	20	15.6	40	31.3	55	43.0	4.04
Grand Mean											3.27

Source: Field Data, (2025)

Mean Score Range: 1.00 – 1.79= Very Low Extent, 1.80 – 2.59= Low Extent, 2.60 – 3.39= Moderate Extent, 3.40 – 4.19= High Extent, 4.20 – 5.00= Very High Extent (Boone & Boone, 2012)

Data in Table 2 indicate that 50.8% of teachers were of the view that, to a high extent, teacher dismissal promotes accountability among staff. A minority (25.0%) of teachers rated it at a moderate extent, while another minority (24.2%) rated it at a low extent. The mean score of 3.39 also falls within the moderate extent category on this item. This suggests that while dismissal is perceived as a mechanism

capable of reinforcing accountability among teachers, there are still a significant proportion of respondents who remain uncertain and unconvinced of its extensiveness. Data suggest that teacher dismissal serve as a deterrent against professional misconduct, but its overall efficacy depends on consistent, transparent, and fair implementation. Ensuring due process in dismissal cases strengthen accountability, reduce resistance,

and enhance the credibility of disciplinary systems in schools. During a face-to-face interview, Head of School 2 shared the following;

In our school, when teacher had to be dismissed due to repeated unprofessional conduct, we noticed a clear shift in the behavior of other staff. However, it is crucial that the process is entirely transparent and well-documented. Any hint of favoritism or arbitrariness tends to create resentment and demotivation, which undermines the intended effect. Teachers are very attentive to how disciplinary actions are executed, and this influences their sense of accountability and professional responsibility. (HoS2 Personal communication, 11th July 2025)

- *Similarly, a Teachers' Service Commission member (TSCm3) explained:*

Teacher dismissal is an important tool for maintaining discipline, but it must be consistently applied across all schools. We have seen cases where inconsistent enforcement led some teachers to feel protected and above the rules, which weakens the overall disciplinary system. Only when policies are clear, fair, and consistently implemented do dismissals serve as a real deterrent against misconduct. (TSCm3 Personal communication, 10th Nov 2025)

The responses from HoS2 and TSCm3 indicate that teacher dismissal is recognized as a potentially effective mechanism for enhancing accountability, but its success is highly dependent on transparency, fairness, and consistent application. HoS2 emphasizes that even a single case of perceived unfairness can erode staff trust and reduce compliance, while TSCm3 highlights that uniform enforcement strengthens credibility and fosters collective responsibility. The results resonate with the study by Wambugu and Githae (2021), who found that dismissal, among other disciplinary measures, acted as a deterrent against misconduct but whose effectiveness depended on fairness and consistency in implementation. The findings also align with Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which posits that individuals' intentions and actions are influenced by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Since reinforcing negative attitudes toward misconduct, strengthens norms that discipline is socially and professionally expected, enhances teachers' perceived control in adhering to ethical standards, thereby promoting teachers' disciplined behavior in schools.

Data in Table 2 indicate that very high majority (71.9%) of teachers were of the view that the threat of dismissal encourages adherence to school policies only to a low extent while an extreme minority (16.5%) of teachers were of the view that it encourages, to a high extent. Moreover, an extreme minority (11.7%) of teachers rated it at a moderate extent. The mean score of 2.50 also falls within the low extent category on the item. This suggests that most teachers perceive the threat of dismissal as a relatively weak tool in

influencing compliance with school policies. The findings imply that while dismissal has symbolic weight as the most severe sanction, its threat alone does not necessarily motivate teachers to consistently adhere to professional and institutional regulations. Instead, teachers rely more on intrinsic motivation, professional values, or alternative positive reinforcement measures to comply with school rules. During a faceto face interview, Head of School 5 noted that;

In my experience, the mere threat of dismissal rarely changes teachers' behavior. Most of them understand it as the ultimate punishment, but because actual dismissals are rare and involve long bureaucratic procedures, the threat itself loses its force. Teachers tend to follow school policies more when they see positive examples from colleagues, or when they feel genuinely valued and supported by the administration, not simply out of fear of losing their job. (HoS5 Personal communication, 18th July 2025)

- *Similarly, a Teachers' Service Commission member emphasized:*

The threat of dismissal is not very effective because teachers know it is not easy to implement. Legal processes, appeals, and administrative reviews make it a last resort, not an immediate consequence. What seeing working better is building a culture where teachers take pride in their profession and internalize the importance of following policies. Fear alone cannot sustain discipline for long. (TSCm4 Personal communication, (12th Nov 2025)

The responses from HoS5 and TSCm4 suggest that the threat of dismissal, though symbolically powerful, is not practically effective in promoting adherence to school policies. The results imply that sustainable policy adherence is better achieved through supportive, value-driven leadership and intrinsic motivation rather than relying on dismissal threats as a deterrent. HoS5 stresses that positive reinforcement and supportive leadership are stronger motivators, while TSCm4 underscores the bureaucratic limitations that weaken the immediacy of dismissal threats. The results contrast with Estrada and Lombardi (2024), who found that dismissal protections in Chile stabilized the workforce, implying that dismissal mechanisms had indirect impacts on teacher conduct. The findings echo the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which suggests that teachers' discipline is shaped by their attitudes toward professional conduct, the social expectations set by peers and administrators, and their perceived ability to comply with ethical standards. Thus, dismissal functions not only as an external control but also as a factor influencing teachers' intentions and behavior through these psychological determinants.

Data in Table 2 indicate that a majority (68.0%) of teachers perceived, to a high extent, that dismissal serves as a deterrent for unprofessional behavior. A minority (20.3%) of teachers rated it at a moderate extent, while an extremely

minority (11.7%) of teachers rated it at a low extent. The mean score of 3.82 also falls within the high extent category on the item. This suggests that most teachers recognize dismissal as an effective disciplinary measure that discourages misconduct and reinforces adherence to professional norms. Data underscore the importance of punitive measures in strengthening accountability, where the threat of dismissal compels teachers to uphold professional ethics and maintain discipline within schools. However, it also implies that reliance on dismissal alone not fully promote intrinsic motivation; instead, it should be complemented by supportive mechanisms such as mentorship and capacity building to ensure long-term behavioral change. During a face-to-face interview, Head of School 6 emphasized that;

In my school, teachers are very cautious when they know that dismissal is a possible outcome of repeated unprofessional behavior. For example, cases of absenteeism and negligence reduce significantly once the rules are clearly communicated and consistently enforced. Teachers become more serious with their duties because nobody wants to risk losing their job. But I believe fear alone is not sustainable; teachers also need mentoring and encouragement so that discipline becomes part of their values, not just a reaction to threats. (HoS6 Personal communication, 21st July 2025)

- *As well, a Teachers' Service Commission member 3 (TSCm) added the following hints;*

We have observed that when dismissal is enforced fairly, it sends a strong signal to other teachers and helps to restore order in schools. It shows that professional codes are not negotiable. Still, we also notice that compliance driven only by fear is short-lived. That is why, alongside disciplinary measures, we recommend professional development programs that build teachers' capacity and remind them of their noble role in shaping society. (TSCm3 Personal communication, 10th Nov 2025)

The responses from HoS6 and TSCm3 demonstrate that while dismissal is an effective deterrent to misconduct, its strength lies more in compelling external compliance than in fostering internalized professional commitment. HoS6 highlighted how enforcement of dismissal rules reduced absenteeism and negligence, yet stressed the need for mentorship to sustain discipline. Similarly, TSCm3 underlined dismissal's value in restoring order but warned that discipline anchored only in fear is unsustainable without complementary support structures. The results ring with Kaponda et al. (2021), who found that dismissals in Zambia were often applied in cases of absenteeism, alcohol abuse, and sexual misconduct, though constrained by bureaucratic inefficiencies. The findings bring into line with Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which suggests that teachers' intentions to adhere to professional standards are influenced by their attitudes toward disciplinary consequences, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control. Observing colleagues being dismissed can shape teachers' attitudes and

intentions, thereby encouraging compliance with ethical and professional expectations.

Data in Table 2 indicate that a very high majority (79.7%) of teachers perceived to a moderate extent that the dismissal process is transparent and fair. An extreme minority (14, 9%) of teachers rated it at a high extent, while an extreme minority (5.5%) of teachers rated it at a low extent. The mean score of 3.14 falls within the moderate extent category for this item. This suggests that while teachers acknowledge some level of fairness in the dismissal process, most perceive room for improvement in terms of transparency and procedural clarity. Data suggest that the effectiveness of dismissal as a disciplinary measure is not only determined by its implementation but also by teachers' perception of fairness. Ensuring transparent procedures, clear communication of policies, and impartial application of rules strengthen trust in the system and enhance compliance. During a face-to-face interview, Head of School 4 noted that;

Dismissal process works best when every step is communicated clearly and documented. Teachers want to see that the reasons are genuine and that there is no favoritism. I once had a case where a teacher was dismissed for repeated absenteeism, but because we had issued written warnings and followed all the procedures, the rest of the staff accepted the decision without resistance. But when processes are unclear, it creates suspicion and reduces trust in the administration (HoS4 Personal communication, 14th July 2025).

- *Similarly, a Teachers' Service Commission member 5 emphasized by adding that;*

Transparency is what makes dismissal an effective disciplinary tool. If teachers feel that the process is biased and politically influenced, then the outcome backfires and lowers morale. In our Commission, we always insist that cases are heard, evidence is presented, and the teacher is given the right to respond. This way, even if the decision is dismissal, other teachers view it as fair and are more likely to comply with regulations because they know justice has been done. (TSCm5 Personal communication, 18th Nov 2025)

The responses from HoS4 and TSCm5 illustrate that fairness and procedural clarity are critical in determining how teachers respond to dismissal decisions. HoS4 highlighted how proper documentation and consistent communication reduce resistance and maintain trust, while TSCm5 underlined the importance of due process in sustaining morale and ensuring compliance. The results resonate with Betweli (2020) similarly found that while Tanzanian head teachers employed a range of strategies to curb indiscipline, limited emphasis on communication and teacher involvement weakened compliance. The findings also align with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985), which emphasizes that individuals' compliance with rules is shaped by their attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

Data in Table 2 indicate that a high majority (80.5%) of teachers perceived, to a moderate extent, that dismissal policies are effectively communicated to all staff. An extreme minority (14.8%) of teachers rated it at a high extent, while an extreme minority (4.7%) rated it at a low extent. The mean score of 3.16 falls within the moderate extent category for this item. This suggests that while teachers recognize some level of communication regarding dismissal policies, most perceive that the dissemination and clarity of these policies are wanting. Effective communication is critical for the successful implementation of disciplinary measures, as it ensures that all staffs are aware of expectations, procedures, and consequences. When teachers are well-informed, they are more likely to comply with policies, reducing incidences of indiscipline. During a face-to-face interview, Head of School 5 noted that;

In our school, dismissal policies are mentioned during meetings, but the problem is that they are not always explained in detail. Some teachers know the rules exist but they are not fully clear about the steps involved when one is accused of misconduct. I believe if policies were outlined in writing and shared to every teacher; confusions would be avoided and staff will understand the seriousness of these measures. Lack of clarity sometimes creates unnecessary fear or rumors among teachers. (HoS5 Personal communication, 17th July 2025)

- *In line with this, a Teachers' Service Commission member 2 added by saying that;*

From the Commission's perspective, the challenge we often see is that schools assume teachers already know the policies, but in reality, communication is not consistent. Policies are there, but if they are not emphasized regularly, teachers only realize the details when a case arises. What we encourage is continuous sensitization, through workshops and staff circulars, so that teachers don't just hear about dismissal policies as a threat but as a transparent process, hence, strengthening discipline without creating mistrust. (TSCm2 Personal communication, 6th Nov 2025)

The reflections from teachers, HoS5 and TSCm2 highlight that effective communication of dismissal policies is not just about mentioning them but about providing clarity, consistency, and regular reminders. Head of school 5 emphasized that lack of detailed explanation can cause confusion and fear among teachers, while TSCm2 underscored that continuous sensitization builds trust and reinforces discipline. The results resonate with Betweli (2020) who found that while Tanzanian head teachers employed a range of strategies to curb teacher's indiscipline, limited emphasis on communication and teacher involvement weakened compliance. The findings further correlate with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985), which posits that individuals' actions are influenced by their attitudes and perceived control meaning that when teachers clearly

understand dismissal policies, they are more likely to comply willingly, thereby enhancing discipline in schools.

Generally, the study revealed that the dismissal of teachers to moderate extent contributed to the enhancement of discipline in secondary schools, as reflected in a grand mean score of 3.27. Nevertheless, teachers acknowledged that dismissal, when administered through transparent and equitable procedures, served as an important deterrent to unprofessional behavior. Moreover, it was recognized as a mechanism that motivated improved performance and strengthened accountability. However, dismissal alone does not significantly improve adherence to policies or foster lasting discipline, since threats of dismissal are often perceived as bureaucratic, inconsistently applied, and unsustainable as a source of motivation. Interviews with heads of schools and Teachers' Service Commission Members confirmed that while dismissal sends a strong signal, its extensiveness depends on fairness, communication, and consistency, and must be complemented by supportive strategies such as mentoring, professional development, and positive reinforcement. A unique finding that emerged was the widespread perceptions that fear based motivation derived from dismissal is fragile and cannot replace intrinsic professional values; a perspective underscored in both interviews and teachers' experiences results.

VII. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, this study concludes that the dismissal of teachers enhances discipline in public secondary schools only to a moderate extent. While actual dismissals serve as an essential institutional tool for enforcing staff accountability and removing extreme professional deviance, the operational threat of dismissal is an ineffective strategy for inducing daily policy compliance. This inefficiency stems from long bureaucratic procedures, legal appeal stages, and a lack of immediate execution, which cause the threat to lose its psychological weight among staff. Ultimately, punitive actions and fear based governance are inferior to intrinsic professional values, positive peer signaling, and supportive institutional leadership. For dismissals to successfully serve as a legitimate structural deterrent, the Teachers' Service Commission must ensure that enforcement mechanisms are transparent, uniformly applied, and completely free from administrative bias.

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

Based on the findings, the study recommends that the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) streamline its administrative review processes to eliminate bureaucratic delays and implement a standardized, transparent disciplinary matrix that ensures fair and consistent policy enforcement. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and school administrators should shift from punitive, fear based governance toward supportive, value driven leadership models

that foster intrinsic professional motivation, positive peer signaling, and comprehensive counseling. Finally, TSC should encourage school heads to maintain meticulous, objective documentation of teacher conduct to preserve institutional credibility, while the TSC should institutionalize regular policy communication seminars to ensure full awareness of professional standards across all secondary schools.

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