



Supportive Leadership and Psychological Safety of Teachers in Secondary Schools in Kayunga District, Uganda

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Abstract

Psychological safety is increasingly recognised as an important factor in promoting teachers' wellbeing, collaboration, and effectiveness in schools. In secondary schools, head teachers' supportive leadership practices may influence the extent to which teachers feel psychologically safe in their work environment. Therefore, this study investigated how head teachers' supportive leadership influenced psychological safety of teachers in secondary schools in Kayunga District, Uganda. Specifically, the study examined the influence of supportive leadership in terms of empowerment, inspiration, fair treatment and recognition on psychological safety of teachers. Using the quantitative approach, the study employed correlational research design. Data were collected from a sample of 209 teachers using self-administered questionnaire. Using structural equation modelling (SEM), recognition, inspiration and fair treatment had a positive significant influence on psychological safety of teachers. However, empowerment had a positive but statistically insignificant influence. The study concluded that empowerment does not fundamentally influence teachers' psychological safety in secondary schools in Uganda, fair treatment plays a significant role in enhancing teachers' psychological safety, inspirational leadership significantly promotes psychological safety among teachers, and recognition is necessary to enhancing psychological safety among teachers. The study recommended that head teachers should strengthen empowerment-oriented leadership practices, ensure fair treatment in handling of teachers, deliberately adopt inspirational leadership practices, and institutionalise teacher recognition systems that consistently acknowledge teachers' efforts and contributions. The study provides practical insights for school administrators and education policymakers on leadership practices that can improve overall school environment, strengthening teachers' psychological safety.

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Introduction

The concept of psychological safety in workplaces refers to the mutual conviction that the work environment offers a psychologically safe atmosphere for interpersonal risks, including voicing concerns and asking questions, without being punished for doing so (Silva et al., 2025). The term "psychological safety" was coined by Rogers (1954) to refer