

Impact of total employee engagement on primary school pupils' academic achievement in Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

Total employee engagement is a key principle of Total Quality Management (TQM) and is generally perceived to enhance pupils' academic achievement in primary schools. Informed by systems theory, specifically TQM, this cross-sectional study examined the impact of total employee engagement on pupils' academic achievement, while accounting for customer focus and urbanisation contexts, using data collected via a structured questionnaire administered to 68 of 872 primary school teachers. The respondents were selected using stratified sampling. Data analysis entailed SPSS-aided multiple linear regression. The study results indicate that each of the three variables—total employee engagement, customer focus and urbanisation level—had a significant positive contribution to pupils' achievement. Specifically, increases in customer focus and urbanisation level play a significant role in enhancing pupil learning achievement, with $\beta = .225$ (p-value = .002) for customer focus and $\beta = .216$ (p-value = .000) for urbanisation level. Thus, the study recommends policy interventions to enhance further primary school total employee engagement practices, customer focus practices, and urbanisation levels to boost pupils' academic achievement in the Tanzanian context.

Keywords: Customer Focus Context, Pupils' Academic Achievement, Primary School Education, Total Employee Engagement, Urbanisation Level Context

I. INTRODUCTION

Total Quality Management (TQM) strives to foster practices such as customer focus, total employee engagement, continuous improvement, leadership commitment, process efficiency, and quality at the source to ensure quality in line with customer perspectives and needs (Adem & Virdi, 2020). As employees are a critical factor in the successful implementation of the TQM philosophy, this study examines the impact of total employee engagement, a key TQM factor, on pupils' academic achievement in Tanzania, while considering customer focus and the urbanisation context. In fact, Tanzania's Development Vision 2025 aimed to equip people with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to boost productivity and competitiveness, focusing on learner-centred practices (United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 1999), as integral to customer-focused practices that require the total engagement of employees.

The pupils' academic achievement is often described using Bloom's (1956) taxonomy. In cognitive domain objectives, Bloom's (1956) taxonomy has numerous levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) transformed Bloom's taxonomy stages into action levels that entail remembering, understanding, applying, analysing, evaluating, and, finally, creating. This study examined how continuous improvement among teachers enhances pupils' learning outcomes, as measured by gains in Bloom's taxonomy dimensions. Using Anderson and Krathwohl's (2001) approach, the study describes pupils' academic achievement to determine the impact of total employee engagement on it in the context of customer focus and urbanisation in Tanzania. Tanzania's introduction of Big Results Now (BRN) in 2013 improved the Primary School Leaving Examination (PLSE) pass rate from 50.6 per cent in 2013 to 77.5 per cent in 2018, exceeding the target of 75 per cent. In 2024, it increased considerably to 80.87 per cent, according to the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA) results. However, how total employee engagement contributes to such pupils' academic performance in the context of Tanzania remains largely unknown, a gap that has not been examined.

Total employees' work engagement is the positive psychological experience, reflected in emotional, cognitive, and physical involvement in carrying out work enthusiastically and with energy (Meng et al., 2022). Moreover, employee engagement encompasses behaviours that enhance desirable outcomes for customers, employees, and employers alike (Sezen-Gultekin et al., 2021). In this regard, Kigozi and On (2019) proffer that employee involvement, as part of total employee engagement, reflects a positive psychological state characterised by emotional, cognitive, and physical investment in work, expressed through enthusiasm and energy (Meng et al., 2022). Moreover, employee engagement encompasses behaviours that foster desirable outcomes for stakeholders across the educational continuum (Sezen-Gultekin et al., 2021). Kigozi and On (2019) further elucidate that employee involvement within TQM frameworks in educational institutions encompasses collaboration, human resource participation, stakeholder engagement, and active employee participation, alongside continuous improvement practices such as educational enhancement, quality evaluation, partnership development, and training.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

A considerable body of research (e.g., Sudibjo & Riantini, 2023; Wiraka et al., 2025; Rajesh & Pandya, 2024) underscores the critical role of total employee engagement in enhancing pupil learning outcomes. However, specific insights into how total employee engagement influences the academic achievements of primary school pupils in Tanzania remain elusive. Addressing this knowledge gap is essential for developing targeted interventions to elevate educational quality and learner performance.

1.2 Research Objective

The research objective of this study, therefore, was to determine the impact of total employee engagement on primary school pupils' academic achievement in the context of customer focus and urbanisation in Tanzania.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study is grounded in Systems Theory, originally proposed by Trist and Bamforth (1951), which views an organisation as an open system of interrelated and interdependent parts coordinating to achieve a common purpose. In the context of education, a system is defined as an interdependent group of people (such as head teachers, teachers, and non-teaching staff) and processes that work toward the goal of student success (Langley et al., 2009). Within this framework, Total Quality Management (TQM) serves as a guiding philosophy. TQM emphasises that quality is achieved through the "total" engagement of every employee in continuous improvement and a customer-focused approach (Duran & Mertol, 2021). This theoretical perspective suggests that breaking down departmental barriers and fostering cross-functional teams are essential for implementing TQM practices effectively, ultimately enhancing pupils' academic achievement.

Furthermore, TQM, as a quality management philosophy, aims to ensure quality for customers through the total engagement of all employees in customer focus and continuous improvement practices. The adjective 'total' implies embracing quality in all integrated parts and each employee of the organisation system to enhance mutual co-operation of everyone in the organisation to meet the needs of customers effectively through a continuous improvement process (Conti, 2003). In fact, Deming (1986) emphasised the need to break down barriers between departments to enhance cross-functional teams that can greatly help implement TQM practices effectively. Consequently, in education, TQM implies that the quality of education can be achieved effectively if all employees (including the head teacher, teachers, and non-teaching staff) of an educational institution are actively engaged in a customer-focused approach (Weis, 2021).

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Employee engagement and institutional performance

Empirical evidence consistently supports the link between employee engagement and organisational success. For instance, in Kenya, Kariuki and Mbugua's (2018) analysis of the roles of teacher professional development utilised a parallel mixed-methods approach, surveying 197 teachers from public primary schools and 144 from private institutions. The study's findings indicated that active participation in collaborative professional development significantly enhances educators' teaching skills. Moreover, Mukolwe (2019) examined the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) principles and their effects on pupils' academic achievement in primary schools in Teso North sub-county, revealing that each TQM principle had a positive and statistically significant influence on academic performance. Qualitative thematic analysis further revealed a lack of advocacy for shared academic visions among head teachers and government officials. It noted that schools that emphasised teamwork achieved better performance on national examinations.

Similarly in Kenya, Wiraka et al. (2025) utilised structured questionnaires to analyse the impact of employee engagement on teacher performance in private primary schools in Kajiado County, grounded in Kahn's Employee Engagement Theory, concluding that employee engagement positively and significantly influences teacher performance, accounting for 29 per cent of the variance in school performance outcomes. The research advocates for comprehensive engagement strategies by school management to empower initiatives and foster collaborative work environments, ultimately optimising school performance.

In Pakistan, Nadim et al. (2021), who investigated the influence of employee engagement on teachers' job satisfaction, underscored its significance as a principal determinant of job satisfaction, noting that this relationship is contingent on factors such as tenure, position, and personal expectations. The study highlighted that the prevailing organisational culture plays a pivotal role in fostering employee engagement among academic staff in the region. In a complementary study, Rajesh and Pandya (2024) employed descriptive research methods, using convenience sampling to examine the dynamics of workplace relationships, and found that positive interpersonal relationships foster cooperation, trust, and engagement, leading to enhanced productivity and reduced employee turnover costs, thereby steering organisations towards common objectives. Moreover, studies show that engagement is a key driver of job satisfaction, often motivated by organisational culture, perceived support, and the meaningfulness of work. In Indonesia, for example, Sudibjo and Riantini (2023), who examined the determinants of work engagement among private school teachers using PLS-SEM, found that perceived organisational support and meaningful work were each significantly and directly associated with teachers' work engagement.

In Uganda, a strong positive correlation between perceived organisational support and teacher work engagement emerged. Musenze et al.'s (2020) survey covering 1,619 primary education teachers across 132 schools revealed a strong positive correlation between perceived organisational support and work engagement.

Finally, in Australia, engaged individuals have been shown to improve organisational performance even during times of crisis, as Whitsed et al.'s (2025) study exploring the relationship between employee engagement and organisational performance in developed economies. The study further emphasised the psychological and behavioural factors involved. Their results suggested that engaged employees possess the capacity to rejuvenate and enhance organisational performance, particularly in times of crisis.

2.2.2 Customer Focus and Academic Outcomes

Customer focus is a primary principle of TQM that guides all other improvement goals. In education, this involves a learner-centred approach in which students are actively engaged in the learning process. Research in the U.S. (e.g. Weis, 2021) indicates that a customer-focused approach helps schools identify and meet student needs, thereby improving academic achievement and satisfaction. Indeed, other factors influencing the quality of primary education must not be overlooked. Customer focus, identified as a fundamental principle in TQM, is crucial as it guides other TQM practices relating to improvement direction and goals (Weis, 2021). Therefore, understanding the impact of total employee engagement on pupils' academic achievement necessitates consideration of a customer-focused context (Sfakianaki, 2019). This approach encompasses a learner-centred perspective, actively engaging students in their learning processes and affording them opportunities to demonstrate their acquired competencies (Ishemo, 2021). Mittal and Jung (2024) conducted a theoretical and empirical study in the United States, employing interviews with school leaders alongside a survey of 10,644 parents, and concluded that a customer-focused approach enables primary schools to identify and address customer needs effectively, thereby enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty, as well as academic achievement.

2.2.3 Urbanisation and Tanzanian Context

Asim et al. (2019) study demonstrated that primary schools equipped with adequate physical facilities yield higher learning outcomes. In a comparative analysis, urban schools averaged about 75 per cent in performance, compared to 61 per cent for rural schools, even after controlling for variables such as water access and pupil numbers. Indeed, in Tanzania, contextual factors such as urbanisation significantly influence educational quality. Moreover, local research in Dar es Salaam highlighted that school authorities must develop strategies to address low job satisfaction and commitment among public primary school teachers, thereby improving educational outcomes. Moreover, Abdu and Nzilano (2018) investigated the theme of commitment in teaching across public primary schools in Tanzania, using an array of data collection methods—including interviews, questionnaires, and thematic analyses—from 60 urban public schools in the Temeke district. Their findings emphasise the need for school authorities to cultivate environments conducive to enhanced commitment within the teaching profession.

2.3 Research Gap

Although engagement is crucial for learning achievement, a specific gap exists in the Tanzanian context. Current literature has not yet examined the impact of total employee engagement on pupils' academic achievement specifically

through the combined lenses of customer focus and urbanisation levels in Tanzania. This study addresses this gap by investigating these variables within the unique environment of Tanzanian primary schools.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Approach

This study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design in Missenyi District, Kagera Region, Tanzania. The district was selected because it presents meaningful variation in urbanisation levels, teachers' workplace practices, and customer focus across public and private primary schools (The United Republic of Tanzania Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [URT-MoEST], 2025). An explanatory research design was used (Creswell, 2014) because the study sought to examine the extent to which total employee engagement predicts pupils' academic achievement, while considering contextual conditions, namely customer focus and urbanisation. Since the study aimed to assess the *impact/relationship* between variables, regression analysis and use of SPSS were justified as appropriate for estimating statistical effects within a quantitative framework.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Missenyi District, located in the northwestern corner of Tanzania within the Kagera Region. Missenyi was purposively appropriate for the study because it contains differences in school-related contextual factors—specifically urbanisation, employee practices, and customer focus—between public and private primary schools (URT-MoEST, 2025). These contextual differences helped the researchers justify including these variables in the regression analysis.

3.3 Target Population

The target population consisted of 872 primary school teachers. Teachers were selected because they have direct experience with continuous improvement activities and with assessing pupils' academic achievement, making them suitable respondents for measuring the study variables.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.4.1 Sample size

A sample of 68 teachers was selected. This number was justified because it exceeds the minimum recommended sample size for regression analysis of 50 (VanVoorhis & Morgan, 2007), thereby improving the adequacy of statistical inference for the planned analyses.

3.4.2 Sampling techniques

A stratified sampling approach was applied, where teachers were drawn from relevant strata based on school-context differences (e.g., school ownership and/or location/urbanisation levels). Within each stratum, participants were selected using random sampling and/or convenience sampling, depending on availability and accessibility. This stratified approach was justified because the study's regression analysis required respondents from different contextual categories, consistent with the study area's variation in urbanisation and school type (URT-MoEST, 2025).

3.5 Data Collection Methods

3.5.1 Instrument and procedure

Data were collected in 2024 using a structured questionnaire (Appendix I). Before data collection, authorisation was obtained from the District Executive Director (DED), ensuring permission to approach teachers and collect data ethically and administratively.

3.5.2 Sources and construction of questionnaire items

The questionnaire included demographic items; measures of pupils' academic achievement; measures of customer focus and urbanisation level; and measures of total employee engagement in primary school settings. Demographic and contextual items were developed based on prior studies and national references (Asim et al., 2019; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Lyengemekeja, 2016; URT-MoEST, 2025). Items for total employee engagement were developed using existing engagement-related studies appropriate to primary education settings (Sfakianaki, 2019; Caraan & Caraan, 2023).

3.5.3 Validity and reliability testing

Before applying constructs in regression analysis, the instruments were tested for content validity, assessed by two experts (one in education and one in management) as recommended by Schindler (2022), and reliability, assessed

using Cronbach's alpha, with all constructs showing values above 0.7 (Lyengemekeja, 2016; Schindler, 2022). These steps were justified to ensure that the constructs measured by the questionnaire were both relevant to the study and internally consistent, thereby strengthening the credibility of the regression results.

3.6. Data Analysis Procedures

3.6.1 Data preparation

After collection, the completed questionnaires were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Data cleaning (e.g., checking for missing values and coding consistency) was performed to ensure accuracy before analysis.

3.6.2 Linear regression

Because the study aimed to determine the impact/predictive effect of total employee engagement on pupils' academic achievement, the data were analysed using linear regression. This choice was justified by the quantitative and explanatory nature of the study design: linear regression is appropriate for estimating the relationship between one key predictor (total employee engagement) and an outcome variable (pupils' academic achievement), and for testing whether the predictor has a statistically significant effect.

3.6.3 Regression model specification and interpretation

In the linear regression procedure, the outcome variable (pupils' academic achievement) was regressed on the predictor(s), including contextual factors identified in the study (customer focus and urbanisation level), consistent with the research's explanatory objective. Regression output was used to determine: the direction of the relationship (positive/negative effect), the strength of the relationship (regression coefficients), and whether the observed effects were statistically significant (e.g., significance values as reported in SPSS).

3.6.4 Pre-regression validity and reliability checks

Before applying the constructs in regression, the study assessed content validity (expert review by one education expert and one management expert, following Schindler, 2022), and reliability (internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha, with values above 0.7 as the acceptable threshold, consistent with Lyengemekeja, 2016; Schindler, 2022). These steps were justified to ensure that the questionnaire measures were sufficiently dependable for inclusion in regression analysis.

3.6.5 Regression-related justification

Because the study aimed to determine the impact of total employee engagement on pupils' academic achievement, regression analysis was appropriate. The sampling decisions (sample size above the regression minimum) and the inclusion of contextual variables (customer focus and urbanisation) support the study's explanatory goal.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

In developing this study, a thorough methodology was created, focusing on key ethical steps and safeguards to maintain integrity and respect for participants. First, before starting data collection, the researchers secured approval from the District Executive Director (DED). This essential step ensured compliance with local administrative procedures, providing a solid base for the research. To gather insights from teachers, a structured, teacher-oriented questionnaire was used. This method was selected for its ability to reduce intrusion, allowing educators to reflect on their practices and assessments without the pressure of direct student testing. The researchers also emphasised the importance of validating and testing the instrument's reliability. These steps are crucial for minimising misleading data and protecting the validity of the results. Additionally, informed consent was obtained from all teachers, making sure they were aware of their participation. Participation was voluntary, and teachers could withdraw at any time. Measures to ensure anonymity and confidentiality were implemented to protect participants' identities. The ethical commitment extended to preventing any harm or coercion. Finally, secure data storage and access controls were implemented to manage all collected information responsibly and uphold high ethical standards throughout the research.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

The findings of this study are systematically structured to evaluate the relationship between specific organisational factors and educational outcomes in Tanzanian primary schools.

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics: Study Profile and Model Summary

- **Sample Size (N):** Based on the reported 67 degrees of freedom (df) and three independent variables, the study analysed data from 71 observations.
- **Explanatory Power (R^2):** The model explains 53.9% of the variation in pupils' academic achievement, suggesting a moderate-to-strong fit for the included variables.
- **Model Reliability:** The Standard Error of the Estimate is 0.475, and the model shows no multicollinearity, as all Variance Inflation Factors (VIF) are well below the threshold of 5 (ranging from 1.024 to 1.293).

Variable Indicators and Measurement Scale

To broaden the presentation, the “descriptive” nature of these variables is defined by the following indicators:

- **Dependent Variable: Pupils' Academic Achievement**
 - Measured through **Bloom's taxonomy**, focusing on three specific cognitive levels: the ability to **create, explain, and remember** information.
- **Independent Variable 1: Total Employee Engagement**
 - Assessed via internal organisational factors: **teamwork, cross-departmental collaboration, and leadership engagement**.
- **Independent Variable 2: Customer Focus**
 - Measured by the **effectiveness of teaching strategies** and the **speed of problem-solving** within the school.
- **Independent Variable 3: Urbanisation Level**
 - Categorised into **Rural** and **Middle** segments to compare geographic impacts on performance.

Comparative Impact of Predictors

The standardised beta coefficients (Std Beta) allow for a descriptive comparison of which factors most strongly influence achievement:

1. **Urbanisation Level (0.522):** The strongest predictor in the model ($p < .001$).
2. **Customer Focus (0.315):** A significant contributor ($p = .002$).
3. **Employee Engagement (0.197):** A significant but comparatively smaller impact ($p = .045$).

4.1.2 Regression analysis results

The results from the regression analysis conducted in SPSS, with the dependent variable being pupils' academic achievement and the independent variables being total employee engagement, customer focus, and urbanisation level, are reported in Table 1. The coefficient of determination (R-Square) indicates that 53.9 per cent of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the three independent variables. Also, the model shows no multicollinearity, as the VIFs of all independent variables are less than 5. Furthermore, the F value of 24.91 with $df = 67$ and a significance level of $p = .000$ indicates that the regression model is a significant fit for explaining the impact of the three independent variables on pupils' achievement. Table 1 presents the regression analysis results:

Table 1

Regression Analysis Results

Pupils' achievement as the dependent variable	Beta	Std. Error	Std Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity	
						Tolerance	VIF
Independent variables:							
(Constant)	1.546	.357		4.328	.000		
Total employees' engagement	.189	.092	.197	2.048	.045	.779	1.284
Customer focus	.225	.069	.315	3.258	.002	.773	1.293
Urbanisation level	.216	.036	.522	6.074	.000	.977	1.024

Note: R-Square = 0.539; Standard error of the Estimate = 0.475; F = 24.91, $df = 67$, Sig = .000; The determinant is significant at 0.05

The supporting context revealed that increases in customer focus and urbanisation level play a significant role in enhancing pupil learning achievement, with $\beta = .225$ (p -value = .002) for customer focus and $\beta = .216$ (p -value = .000) for urbanisation level.

The study defines its framework through one dependent variable—pupils' academic achievement—and three independent variables: total employee engagement, customer focus, and urbanisation level. The study explores the relationship between various independent variables and pupils' academic achievement, which is the dependent variable. Pupils' academic achievement is evaluated through the lens of Bloom's taxonomy, focusing on their abilities to create, explain, and remember the information they've learned.

On the other hand, total employee engagement serves as one of the independent variables. This engagement is assessed through indicators such as teamwork, cross-departmental collaboration, and leadership engagement in the

educational environment. Moreover, the research considers contextual variables that also act as independent variables. These include customer focus, which is measured by the effectiveness of teaching strategies and the speed at which problems are solved within the educational framework. Furthermore, urbanisation level is categorised into different segments, namely rural and middle, to understand its impact on academic achievement. Together, these dimensions provide a comprehensive view of how employee engagement and contextual factors—urbanised vs non-urbanised—might influence pupils' academic performance.

Overall, the regression analysis confirms that total employee engagement, customer focus, and urbanisation level collectively determine pupil performance. The model successfully accounts for 53.9% of the variation in academic achievement, offering a comprehensive view of the factors driving student success. Ultimately, the data suggest that academic outcomes are the product of a dynamic interaction between internal institutional engagement and broader contextual factors, specifically the efficacy of teaching strategies and the geographical infrastructure represented by urbanisation levels.

4.1.3 Systematic Results and Study Objectives

Overall, the study findings highlight a multifaceted relationship between school organisational dynamics, environmental context, and student outcomes. By examining the interplay between employee engagement, customer focus, and urbanisation, the research identifies several key drivers of academic success. The results are delineated in the subsequent subsections as follows:

Impact of Total Employee Engagement

The study confirms that total employee engagement is a significant positive driver of pupils' academic achievement. In broader educational literature (external to the sources), this aligns with the concept of “teacher efficacy” and “organisational commitment,” suggesting that when staff members are deeply invested in their roles and the school's mission, their performance directly translates into improved student learning outcomes. While the source establishes this positive link, it also indicates that engagement does not act in a vacuum but is part of a larger ecosystem of factors.

Role of Customer Focus in Education

The research identifies **customer focus** as another significant contributor to pupil success. This reflects a shift in educational management towards a service-oriented model, where students and parents are viewed as “customers” whose needs and satisfaction are central to school operations. Literature on the marketisation of education (external to the sources) often argues that such a focus encourages schools to be more responsive, accountable, and high-performing. The source supports this by demonstrating that a strong orientation toward “customer” needs positively influences academic results.

Urbanisation and Environmental Context

The level of **urbanisation** emerged as a critical factor, showing a strong positive correlation with academic achievement. Urban environments often provide unique advantages, such as proximity to diverse resources, better infrastructure, and higher population density, which can foster a more competitive and enriched educational landscape. The study suggests that the geographic and socio-economic context of a school—specifically its urban status—plays a major role in shaping the academic trajectory of its students.

Comparative Analysis of Influences

Although all three factors are essential, their relative influence varies:

Urbanisation Level: This factor has the **strongest impact** on achievement, suggesting that the external environment and its associated resources may be the most dominant predictor of success in this context.

Customer Focus: This is the second most influential driver, underscoring the importance of school management strategies and service delivery.

Employee Engagement: Interestingly, while engagement is a significant and positive influence, it has the **smallest relative impact** among the three variables studied.

In short, the study suggests that although internal staff commitment (engagement) is vital, the broader organisational strategy (customer focus) and the external environment (urbanisation) may have an even more profound effect on driving academic achievement in urban educational settings.

Discussion

The findings largely align with existing research while filling a specific geographic and contextual gap. In concurrence, the positive correlation between employee engagement and achievement supports findings by Sudibjo and Riantini (2023), Wiraka et al. (2025), and Rajesh and Pandya (2024). Specifically, the results echo Wiraka et al. (2025), who found that engagement explains significant variance in school performance in Kenya. The significant role of urbanisation aligns with Asim et al. (2019), who noted that urban schools in Tanzania typically achieve higher learning

outcomes than rural ones. Moreover, the impact of customer focus corroborates Mittal and Jung (2024), who found that customer-focused approaches in the U.S. improve academic achievement.

On the other hand, the study's results reveal a divergence while making a significant contribution. To begin with, although previous studies such as Nadim et al. (2021) and Musenze et al. (2020) focused on job satisfaction or organisational support, this study provides unique evidence by examining the simultaneous impact of engagement, customer focus, and urbanisation in Tanzania's primary school context. Moreover, the study results highlight that while engagement is crucial, it must be supported by customer-focused practices and consider the physical/social context of urbanisation to be fully effective in boosting Tanzanian pupils' academic success.

The regression analysis indicated that, in the context of rising customer focus and urbanisation levels, total employee engagement has a positive and statistically significant impact on pupils' academic achievement, with a significance level of 0.05 ($\beta = .189$, $p\text{-value} = .045$). This finding is corroborated by various studies (Sudibjo & Riantini, 2023; Wiraka et al., 2025; Rajesh & Pandya, 2024; Mittal & Jung, 2024). Additionally, the results showed that although the standardised impact of total employee engagement (standardised $\beta = .197$) is significant, it is the smallest among customer focus (standardised $\beta = .315$) and urbanisation level (standardised $\beta = .522$).

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

On the whole, the study results indicate that total employee engagement plays a crucial role in enhancing pupils' academic achievement, particularly within the evolving context of increased customer focus and urbanisation in Tanzania. As urbanisation progresses, the educational environment is influenced by various factors, including the need for schools to adapt to changing community demographics and expectations. To effectively boost pupils' academic performance, it is essential for primary schools in Tanzania to cultivate practices that prioritise customer focus—not only towards students and parents but also toward the broader community stakeholders. This entails engaging teachers, administrative staff, and support personnel in meaningful ways that foster a shared commitment to education. Developing customer-centric strategies could involve initiatives such as regularly communicating with parents about their children's progress, incorporating community feedback into school policies, and fostering an inclusive atmosphere where all stakeholders feel valued and heard. As urbanisation continues to shape the educational landscape, implementing these practices will be critical in ensuring that maximum employee engagement translates into tangible academic success for pupils.

5.2 Recommendations

Consequently, primary education regulators, managers, leaders, policymakers, and the government in Tanzania can enhance the learning process and improve pupils' academic achievement through total employee engagement by developing policies and strategies that focus on customer needs and address urbanisation levels.

Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that they do not have any known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS AND STATISTICS

Teachers' demographics

Demographic	Respondents' group	Total members	Percent
Sex	Male	37	54.4
	Female	31	45.6
Age	Youth age (18-34 years)	32	47.0
	Adult age (35 years and above)	36	53.0
Education	Below degree level	54	79.4
	Degree and above	14	20.6
School Ownership	Public (government)	50	73.5
	Private	18	26.5
Urbanization	Rural	21	30.9
	Middle	29	42.7
	Urban	18	26.5
Total	Sample size	68	100%

Pupils' achievement items

Customer focus items	Mean	STD	Cronbach's Alpha
Pupils in the primary school are creative.	3.49	1.03	.865
Pupils in the primary school perform well in examinations.	3.91	1.05	
Pupils in the primary school investigate things effectively.	3.51	1.09	
Pupils in the primary school remember what they learn well.	3.78	.96	
Pupils in the primary school can explain well what they have learned.	3.76	.98	
Pupils in the primary school apply what they have learned effectively.	3.93	.94	
Pupils in the primary school make good decisions.	3.71	.93	
Pupils in the primary school are motivated to learn more.	4.10	.78	
Mean of pupils achievement	3.89	.95	

Total engagement items construct

Customer focus items	Mean	STD	Cronbach's Alpha
All workers like to work as a team in other departments.	3.97	1.01	.748
Teachers collaborate with pupils in major decisions affecting pupils.	4.01	.94	
Department leaders let workers from other departments collaborate	3.85	.97	
Workers from different departments collaborate well	3.81	1.07	
All school leaders collaborate well with each school worker.	4.07	.94	
Mean of total workers engagement	4.14	.71	

Customer focus items

Customer focus items	Mean	STD	Cronbach's Alpha
Teachers use teaching strategies that each pupil enjoys.	3.91	1.08	.742
School workers solve each pupil's problem quickly.	3.87	1.06	
Mean of customer focus	3.89	.95	