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Secondary School Administration Strategies for Promoting Students Welfare in Public Secondary Schools in Kibondo District in Kigoma, Tanzania

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Abstract

Students' welfare is increasingly recognized as a prerequisite for quality education because it influences learners' well-being, participation, and academic achievement. However, public secondary schools in rural Tanzania continue to face challenges in implementing effective welfare programmes. This study examined the strategies employed by school administrators in promoting students' welfare in public secondary schools in Kibondo District, Tanzania. Guided by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design. A sample of 150 respondents, comprising 12 school administrators, 38 teachers, and 100 students, was selected using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires, while qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews. The internal consistence of was 0.954 as the Cronbach Alpha obtained for the questionnaire. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and qualitative data were analysed thematically. The findings revealed that the overall implementation of students' welfare strategies was moderate. Guidance and counselling, discussion of welfare issues during staff meetings, teacher involvement in welfare-related decision-making, and responsiveness to students' concerns were the most commonly implemented strategies. However, weak welfare monitoring systems, inadequate health-related support services, insufficient learning resources, and limited parental involvement constrained effective welfare promotion. The study concludes that strengthening welfare policies, improving resource allocation, enhancing guidance and counselling services, and fostering stronger collaboration among schools, parents, and community stakeholders are essential for improving students' welfare and academic achievement in public secondary schools. The findings provide evidence to inform educational policy and strengthen school leadership practices in Tanzania.

Keywords: *school administration, students' welfare, guidance and counselling, public secondary schools, school leadership.*

Introduction

Students' welfare has increasingly become a central concern in educational policy and school leadership because it directly influences learners' academic success, psychological well-being, school attendance, and overall educational development. The concept of students' welfare extends beyond the provision of instructional services to include physical safety, health care, psychosocial support, guidance and counselling, school feeding programmes, adequate learning resources, sanitation facilities, and inclusive learning environments that enable students to realize their full academic potential. Recent global educational reforms emphasize that quality education cannot be achieved unless schools simultaneously address students' welfare needs alongside academic instruction. This position is strongly reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which advocates for inclusive, equitable and quality education supported by safe and supportive learning environments (United Nations, 2024).

Globally, educational organizations increasingly recognize that effective school administration plays a critical role in promoting students' welfare. School administrators are expected to establish welfare policies, coordinate guidance and counselling services, ensure students' safety, mobilize educational resources, collaborate with parents and communities, and create learning environments that support both students' academic achievement and personal development. The Global Education Monitoring Report indicates that schools with effective leadership and comprehensive welfare programmes consistently record better student participation, improved attendance, lower dropout rates and higher academic achievement compared to schools where welfare services receive limited administrative attention (UNESCO, 2024). Likewise, UNICEF (2025) argues that school leadership has shifted from focusing primarily on instructional supervision to adopting holistic approaches that integrate welfare management into everyday school administration.

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Despite growing international attention, students' welfare remains a major challenge in many developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Schools continue to experience shortages of qualified guidance and counselling personnel, inadequate health services, poor sanitation facilities, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teaching and learning resources, and weak collaboration between schools, parents and communities (UNESCO, 2024). These challenges are more pronounced in rural schools where financial constraints and limited government support often undermine the effective implementation of welfare programmes. Consequently, school administrators are increasingly expected to manage students' welfare despite operating under severe institutional and resource limitations.

Within East Africa, governments have introduced various educational reforms aimed at strengthening school leadership and improving students' welfare. Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Tanzania have implemented policies emphasizing school safety, psychosocial support, inclusive education, child protection and learner-centred school management. However, empirical evidence suggests that implementation remains inconsistent across many public secondary schools. For instance, studies conducted in Kenya by Cheruiyot and Chemwei (2021) found that although school administrators recognised the importance of guidance and counselling, shortages of professionally trained counsellors and inadequate welfare resources limited effective service delivery. Similarly, Korugyendo et al. (2024), studying public secondary schools in Uganda, reported that weak collaboration among schools, parents and community stakeholders constrained the implementation of comprehensive students' welfare programmes despite existing government policies.

Evidence from Tanzania demonstrates similar challenges. Although the government has strengthened educational access through initiatives such as fee-free basic education and improved school infrastructure, many public secondary schools continue to experience inadequate welfare facilities, overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teaching and learning resources, limited health services, and shortages of professionally trained personnel responsible for students' welfare. Recent studies conducted by Ibrahim, et al. (2026) and Lubawa and Mugane (2024) in Dodoma Region, Khamis et al. (2024). in Tanga Region, and Mwalukisa and Mwila (2025) in Dar es Salaam consistently report that welfare programmes are often inadequately coordinated because of limited financial resources, weak policy implementation, insufficient monitoring systems and inadequate stakeholder collaboration. These studies further indicate that guidance and counselling services are frequently delivered by ordinary teachers rather than professionally trained counsellors, thereby limiting their effectiveness in addressing students' psychosocial and academic needs.

Although previous studies have contributed significantly to understanding students' welfare in Tanzania and other East African countries, important knowledge gaps remain. Most existing studies have primarily focused on individual welfare components such as guidance and counselling, school infrastructure, school feeding programmes, or psychosocial support, with limited attention given to the broader administrative strategies employed by school leaders in coordinating these welfare services. Furthermore, few studies have specifically examined how school administrators integrate various welfare strategies within public secondary schools located in rural districts where institutional and financial constraints are particularly severe. Consequently, little empirical evidence exists regarding the strategies employed by school administrators to promote students' welfare in public secondary schools within Kibondo District. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the school administration strategies for promoting students' welfare in public secondary schools in Kibondo District, Tanzania. Specifically, the study sought to identify the welfare strategies employed by school administrators and provide empirical evidence that may inform educational policy, strengthen school leadership practices, and improve the implementation of students' welfare programmes in Tanzanian public secondary schools.

This study was guided by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Maslow, 1943), which posits that individuals must satisfy their basic physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs to achieve their full potential. In the school context, students are more likely to perform well academically when their welfare needs are met. The theory suggests that school administrators play a crucial role in creating supportive learning environments that enhance students' motivation, participation, and academic success. Therefore, Maslow's theory provides a useful framework for understanding the importance of welfare strategies in promoting students' learning outcomes. The study was also informed by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), which explains that children's development is influenced by interactions within multiple environmental systems, including the family, school, community, and wider society. The theory views the school as an interconnected system in which administrators, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders work together to promote students' welfare. It therefore emphasizes that effective welfare programmes require collaboration, supportive policies, and coordinated efforts among all educational

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stakeholders. This perspective is particularly relevant in examining how school administrators implement strategies that improve students' well-being.

The two theories complement each other in explaining students' welfare. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory explains why students' welfare is essential for effective learning by emphasizing the satisfaction of learners' basic needs, while Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory explains how different stakeholders collaborate to promote students' welfare within the school environment. Together, these theories provide a strong theoretical foundation for examining the strategies employed by school administrators in promoting students' welfare in public secondary schools in Kibondo District, Tanzania.

Methodology

Research Design and Study Area

The study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods research design, whereby quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently, analyzed separately, and integrated during interpretation to provide a comprehensive understanding of school administrators' strategies for promoting students' welfare (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study was conducted in public secondary schools in Kibondo District, Kigoma Region, Tanzania, where challenges related to students' welfare, including inadequate facilities, infrastructure, and support services, remain prevalent.

Population, Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

The target population comprised school administrators, teachers, and students from public secondary schools in Kibondo District, totaling 5,058 individuals (24 administrators, 174 teachers, and 4,860 students). A sample of 150 respondents was selected using purposive sampling for school administrators and simple random sampling for teachers and students. These procedures ensured inclusion of participants with relevant knowledge and experiences regarding students' welfare programmes.

Table 1: Sample size

S/N	Group of respondents	Population	Required number
1.	Secondary school administrators	24	12
2.	Teachers	174	38
3.	Students	4,860	100
	Total	**5,058**	**150**

Source: Field Data, 2026

Data Collection Tools and Procedures

Data were collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides. The Cronbach alpha for the questionnaire was 0.954 for the questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered to teachers and students to collect quantitative data on the strategies employed by school administrators in promoting students' welfare, while semi-structured interviews were conducted with school heads to obtain in-depth qualitative information. The use of multiple data collection instruments enabled triangulation of findings and enhanced the credibility of the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

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Prior to the main study, the research instruments were reviewed by research experts to establish content validity and were pilot-tested to improve clarity and reliability (Cohen et al., 2018). After obtaining ethical clearance and permission from the relevant educational authorities, the researcher visited the selected public secondary schools in Kibondo District to collect data. Questionnaires were administered personally to respondents and collected immediately after completion, while face-to-face interviews were conducted with school heads at their respective schools. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently in accordance with the convergent parallel mixed-methods design to facilitate integration during data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Results

The study examined the secondary school strategies employed by school administrators in promoting students' welfare in public secondary school. Data were collected through interviews and questionnaire. Thematic analysis and descriptive statistical analysis were adopted for interpreting data into meaningful information

Table 2: tools return rate

Research tool	Sampled respondents	Those who participated	Return rate (%)
Questionnaire for teachers	38	38	100%
Questionnaire for students	100	100	100%
Overall return rate	138	138	100%

Source: Field Data, 2026

A total of 138 questionnaires were completed and returned, representing a 100% questionnaire response rate. Additionally, 12 sampled interview participants were successfully interviewed, yielding 8% interview response rate. These response rates were considered adequate for data analysis and enhanced the credibility and reliability of the study findings (Holtom et al., 2022; Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

Table 3 Demographic Information of Respondents

Respondent Category	**Male f (%)**	**Female f (%)**	**Total**
Students	42 (42%)	58 (58%)	100
Teachers	16 (42.1%)	22 (57.9%)	38
School Administrators	7 (58.3%)	5 (41.7%)	12
Total	**65 (43.3%)**	**85 (56.7%)**	**150**

Work experience	**Teacher's f (%)**	**Administrator's f (%)**	**Total**
1 – 5 years	7 (18.4%)	3 (25%)	10
6 – 10 years	20 (52.6%)	5 (41.7%)	25
Above 10 years	11 (29%)	4 (33.3%)	15
Total	**38 (100%)**	**12 (100%)**	**50**

Class Level	**Male f (%)**	**Female f (%)**	**Total**
Form I	10 (40%)	15 (60%)	25

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Form II	12 (48%)	13 (52%)	25
Form III	8 (32%)	17 (68%)	25
Form IV	12 (48%)	13 (52%)	25
Total	**42 (42%)**	**58 (58%)**	**100**

Source: Field Data, 2026

The demographic findings indicate that the study involved a balanced representation of respondents by gender, work experience, and class level. Most respondents had 6–10 years of work experience, while students were adequately represented across all class levels. This diversity enhanced the credibility and representativeness of the study findings.

Table 4: School Administration Strategies for Promoting Students' Welfare in public secondary schools (N= 150)

Item Statements	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Students' welfare issues are discussed in staff meetings	138	3.67	1.43	High
Guidance and counselling are adequately supported	138	4.12	1.03	High
Adequate teaching and learning resources are provided	138	2.89	1.24	Moderate
Teachers are involved in welfare-related decision making	138	3.51	1.18	Moderate
School administration listens to students' concerns	138	3.40	1.42	Moderate
Safe and secure school environment is ensured	138	3.22	1.27	Moderate
Administration collaborates with parents	138	2.82	1.32	Moderate
Access to health-related support services is ensured	138	2.49	1.32	Moderate
Mechanisms for identifying welfare challenges exist	138	2.17	1.20	Low
Collaboration with community stakeholders	138	3.19	1.31	Moderate
Welfare needs are regularly monitored	138	2.47	1.49	Moderate
Clear welfare policies are implemented	138	2.75	1.56	Moderate
Availability of basic welfare facilities is ensured	138	2.95	0.89	Moderate
Guidance and counselling are effectively organized and supervised	138	3.32	1.20	Moderate
Welfare-related support services are organized	138	3.27	0.99	Moderate
Overall Mean	**138**	**3.15**	**1.25**	**Moderate**

Source: Field Data, 2026

The quantitative findings presented in Table 4.2.1 indicate that the overall implementation of strategies employed by school administrators in promoting students' welfare was moderate (Overall Mean = 3.15, SD = 1.25). This suggests that although schools have established several welfare strategies, their implementation remains inconsistent across the sampled secondary schools. Among all the strategies assessed, adequate support for guidance and counselling received the highest rating (M = 4.12, SD = 1.03), followed by discussion of students' welfare issues during staff meetings (M = 3.67, SD = 1.43). These findings indicate that guidance and counselling and welfare discussions through administrative meetings are the most commonly practiced approaches used by school administrators to support students' welfare. Likewise, teachers' involvement in welfare-related decision making (M = 3.51, SD = 1.18) and

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school administration listening to students' concerns (M = 3.40, SD = 1.42) also received relatively favourable ratings, suggesting moderate efforts to involve both teachers and students in welfare matters.

The qualitative findings converged with these quantitative results by revealing that guidance and counselling is the principal strategy employed in schools. One school administrator explained: *"Students who have disciplinary problems or poor academic performance are usually referred to teachers for guidance and counselling. This is one of the main strategies we use to try to support them."* (Interview with school administrator 1 in 23rd March, 2026). Similarly, another respondent from another school stated: *"The main strategy is guidance and counselling, although in most cases it is conducted by teachers who are not professionally trained."* (Interview with school administrator 2 in 23rd March, 2026). These responses reinforce the quantitative findings by showing that although guidance and counselling is widely practiced, its effectiveness is constrained by the shortage of professionally trained personnel.

The quantitative findings further showed that students' welfare issues discussed in staff meetings recorded a high level of implementation (M = 3.67, SD = 1.43). The qualitative data supported this finding. One school administrator reported*: "We invite students to participate in staff meetings so that we can listen to their concerns directly."* (Interview with school administrator 3 in 23rd March, 2026) Likewise, a teacher from another school added: *"Our administration organizes students' baraza where welfare issues are openly discussed."* (Interview with teacher 1 in 23rd March, 2026). These responses indicate that participatory meetings provide opportunities for students to communicate their welfare concerns directly to school management.

Although some welfare strategies were moderately implemented, the findings also revealed several weaknesses. Quantitatively, mechanisms for identifying students with welfare challenges received the lowest mean score (M = 2.17, SD = 1.20), indicating a low level of implementation. Similarly, access to health-related support services (M = 2.49, SD = 1.32), regular monitoring of students' welfare needs (M = 2.47, SD = 1.49), clear welfare policies (M = 2.75, SD = 1.56), and collaboration with parents (M = 2.82, SD = 1.32) were all rated at a moderate level with relatively low mean scores.

The qualitative findings confirmed these weaknesses. For example, one teacher explained: *"Honestly, I do not see much support from the school administration concerning students' welfare. We still lack enough learning facilities, and there are no clear welfare policies that are implemented by the head of school."* (Interview with teacher 2 in 23rd March, 2026) Another school administrator from another school stated: *"How can we fully support students' welfare without adequate resources and sufficient government support? We have no health services, no trained guidance and counselling personnel, inadequate learning facilities, and no school fence to ensure students' safety."* (Interview with school administrator 4 in 24th March, 2026) These responses demonstrate that inadequate facilities, limited health services, shortage of professional counsellors, and absence of clear welfare policies continue to hinder effective welfare promotion.

The findings also revealed moderate implementation of community collaboration (M = 3.19, SD = 1.31). The qualitative data illustrated how some schools attempt to strengthen external support despite existing challenges. One administrator reported*: "We encourage community members to contribute teaching and learning materials, especially laboratory equipment."* (Interview with school administrator 5 in 24th March, 2026) Another administrator added: *"I convene school board meetings to discuss students' welfare and involve education stakeholders whenever possible."* (Interview with school administrator 6 in 24th March, 2026) Furthermore, parental involvement emerged as another welfare strategy, although respondents reported inconsistent participation. *"Our administrators encourage parents to contribute towards school meals, although parental participation is inconsistent."* (Interview with teacher 4 in 24th March, 2026)

The quantitative and qualitative findings consistently indicate that guidance and counselling, staff meetings, teacher participation, and stakeholder involvement are the major strategies employed by school administrators in promoting students' welfare in public secondary schools. Also, both datasets reveal persistent limitations related to inadequate welfare policies, insufficient health services, weak monitoring systems, inadequate learning facilities, shortage of trained counselling personnel, and limited parental support. Overall, the findings suggest that while schools have established several welfare initiatives, the implementation of comprehensive students' welfare programmes remains moderate, requiring stronger institutional support, improved resource allocation, and more systematic welfare management mechanisms.

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Discussion

The findings indicate that the implementation of school administration strategies for promoting students' welfare was moderate, suggesting that although school administrators recognize the importance of students' welfare, implementation remains inconsistent because of institutional and resource constraints. Guidance and counselling, staff meetings, and teacher involvement emerged as the most frequently used strategies, while welfare monitoring, health services, and policy implementation remained relatively weak. These findings imply that welfare management in public secondary schools is still more reactive than preventive.

The findings support Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Maslow, 1943), which emphasizes that learners' basic physiological, safety, and psychological needs should be met to facilitate effective learning. Similarly, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) explains that students' welfare depends on interactions among schools, families, communities, and government agencies. The moderate level of parental and community collaboration found in this study suggests that effective welfare promotion requires stronger partnerships among these stakeholders rather than relying solely on school administrators.

The findings are consistent with previous empirical studies. UNESCO (2024) reported that effective school leadership promotes students' welfare through guidance and counselling, learner participation, and collaborative decision-making. Likewise, UNICEF (2025) emphasized that comprehensive welfare systems improve students' well-being and school engagement. Similar findings have been reported in East Africa. In Tanzania, Ibrahim, et al. (2026) and Lubawa and Mugane (2024) found that guidance and counselling remains the most common welfare strategy despite limited resources, while Khamis et al. (2024) reported that collaboration among schools, parents, and communities strengthens students' psychosocial support. In Kenya, Cheruiyot and Chemwei (2021) also observed that participatory school leadership improves students' welfare, although shortages of professionally trained counsellors reduce programme effectiveness.

Overall, the findings suggest that school administrators employ several important strategies to promote students' welfare, particularly guidance and counselling, participatory meetings, and stakeholder involvement. However, improving students' welfare requires stronger policy implementation, increased investment in welfare services, professional training for school personnel, effective monitoring systems, and stronger collaboration with parents and community stakeholders. Such interventions are likely to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of welfare programmes in public secondary schools.

Despite these positive practices, qualitative evidence also revealed significant challenges that limited the effectiveness of welfare promotion. Respondents consistently reported inadequate learning facilities, limited health services, lack of professionally trained counsellors, weak implementation of welfare policies, and insufficient monitoring of students experiencing welfare difficulties. Participants further noted that collaboration with parents and community stakeholders existed but remained inconsistent because of limited parental participation and inadequate external support. These findings complement the quantitative results, particularly the low ratings for welfare monitoring, health services, and policy implementation.

Overall, the integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence demonstrates that school administrators primarily promote students' welfare through guidance and counselling, participatory meetings, teacher involvement, and collaboration with stakeholders. However, the effectiveness of these strategies is constrained by inadequate resources, insufficient professional capacity, weak welfare policies, limited health services, and inconsistent parental participation. The convergence of both data strands therefore suggests that while welfare promotion has become an important administrative function, its implementation remains moderate and requires stronger institutional support, increased resource allocation, and more systematic welfare management

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that public secondary schools in Kibondo District employ several strategies to promote students' welfare, particularly guidance and counselling, staff meetings, teacher participation, and stakeholder engagement. However, the overall implementation of these strategies remains moderate due to inadequate welfare policies, weak

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monitoring systems, limited health-related support services, insufficient learning resources, and inconsistent parental involvement. The findings suggest that strengthening institutional support and stakeholder collaboration is essential for improving the effectiveness of students' welfare programmes in public secondary schools.

Recommendations of Study

Recommendations for School Administrators. School administrators should strengthen the implementation of welfare policies by establishing effective monitoring systems and expanding guidance and counselling services through professionally trained personnel.

Recommendations for the Government and local education authorities. The government, through local education offices, should allocate adequate financial and material resources to improve welfare facilities, health-related support services, and teaching and learning resources in public secondary schools.

Recommendations for Parents and community stakeholders. Parents and community members should actively collaborate with schools in planning and implementing students' welfare programmes to ensure sustainable support for learners.

Recommendations for Further studies. Future studies should examine the effectiveness of specific students' welfare interventions in improving learners' well-being and academic outcomes across different educational contexts in Tanzania.

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