



Motivational Factors Influencing Teachers' Performance in Secondary Schools in Tunduma Town Council, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT :

This study examined motivational factors influencing teachers' performance in secondary schools in Tunduma Town Council, Tanzania. Guided by Expectancy Theory, the research adopted a mixed-methods approach with a convergent parallel design to explore factors such as remuneration, recognition, working conditions and professional development. Data were collected from 99 teachers via questionnaires and supplemented by semi-structured interviews with headteachers and education officers. Descriptive statistics revealed strong agreement on factors with competitive salaries ($M=4.35$, $SD=0.72$) and recognition ($M=4.28$, $SD=0.75$) ranking highest. Regression analysis showed these factors explained 62% of variance in perceived performance ($R^2=0.62$), with salaries ($\beta=0.31$, $p=0.002$) and professional development ($\beta=0.27$, $p=0.008$) as significant predictors. Qualitative themes highlighted challenges like salary delays and inadequate housing. The study recommends policy interventions to enhance motivational strategies, emphasizing localized approaches to improve teacher efficacy and educational outcomes in resource-constrained settings.

Keywords: Teacher motivation, performance factors, secondary schools, Expectancy Theory, Tanzania

Introduction

Teacher motivation is a critical driver of educational quality, with research underscoring its role in enhancing instructional effectiveness and student achievement across diverse contexts (Lamaro & Akello, 2023; Oyelade & Akinloye, 2024). Motivational factors such as remuneration, professional development and supportive leadership foster teacher commitment, yet systemic challenges like inadequate funding and heavy workloads often undermine these efforts, particularly in developing nations (Hassan *et al.*, 2021; Oli, 2024). In both high-income and low-income countries, addressing these factors is essential for sustaining teacher performance and advancing educational goals, providing a foundation for context-specific analyses in regions like Sub-Saharan Africa.

Teacher motivation significantly contributes to performance in secondary schools, directly impacting instructional quality and student outcomes. In Tanzania, initiatives like the Secondary Education Development Programme aim to bolster teacher efficacy, yet persistent issues such as low salaries and poor working conditions hinder progress (MOEC, 2023; HakiElimu, 2023). Teachers, as implementers of educational policies, translate motivational factors into classroom success, making their examination crucial (Anwar *et al.*, 2021; Saleem *et al.*, 2020). This study focuses on motivational factors influencing teachers' performance in Tunduma Town Council, a border town in Songwe Region characterized by rapid urbanization and resource strains. The socio-economic context of Tunduma, with cross-border trade and population growth, exacerbates challenges like overcrowded classrooms and limited resources, affecting teacher morale (Edward, 2019). Prior research highlights factors like financial incentives and recognition in shaping performance, but gaps remain in localized Tanzanian studies (Bennell & Mukyanuzi, 2005; Sugito *et al.*, 2022). The misalignment between motivational practices and teachers' needs contributes to low performance and absenteeism (Mkumbo, 2012; Emiliana, 2023). This study explores motivational factors influencing teachers' performance, guided by the research question: What motivational factors influence teachers' performance in secondary schools?

Grounded in Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964), which posits that motivation arises from expected outcomes of effort, the study examines how factors like rewards and support drive performance. This framework is apt for Tanzania, where resource constraints require targeted motivational strategies. The study's significance lies in offering insights for policy reforms to enhance teacher motivation and educational quality in similar settings.

Methodology

Study Area

The study was conducted in Tunduma Town Council, Songwe Region, near the Tanzania-Zambia border. As a commercial hub, Tunduma faces unique challenges like rapid urbanization and resource shortages, impacting educational leadership and teacher motivation (Edward, 2019). Figure 1 illustrates the location.

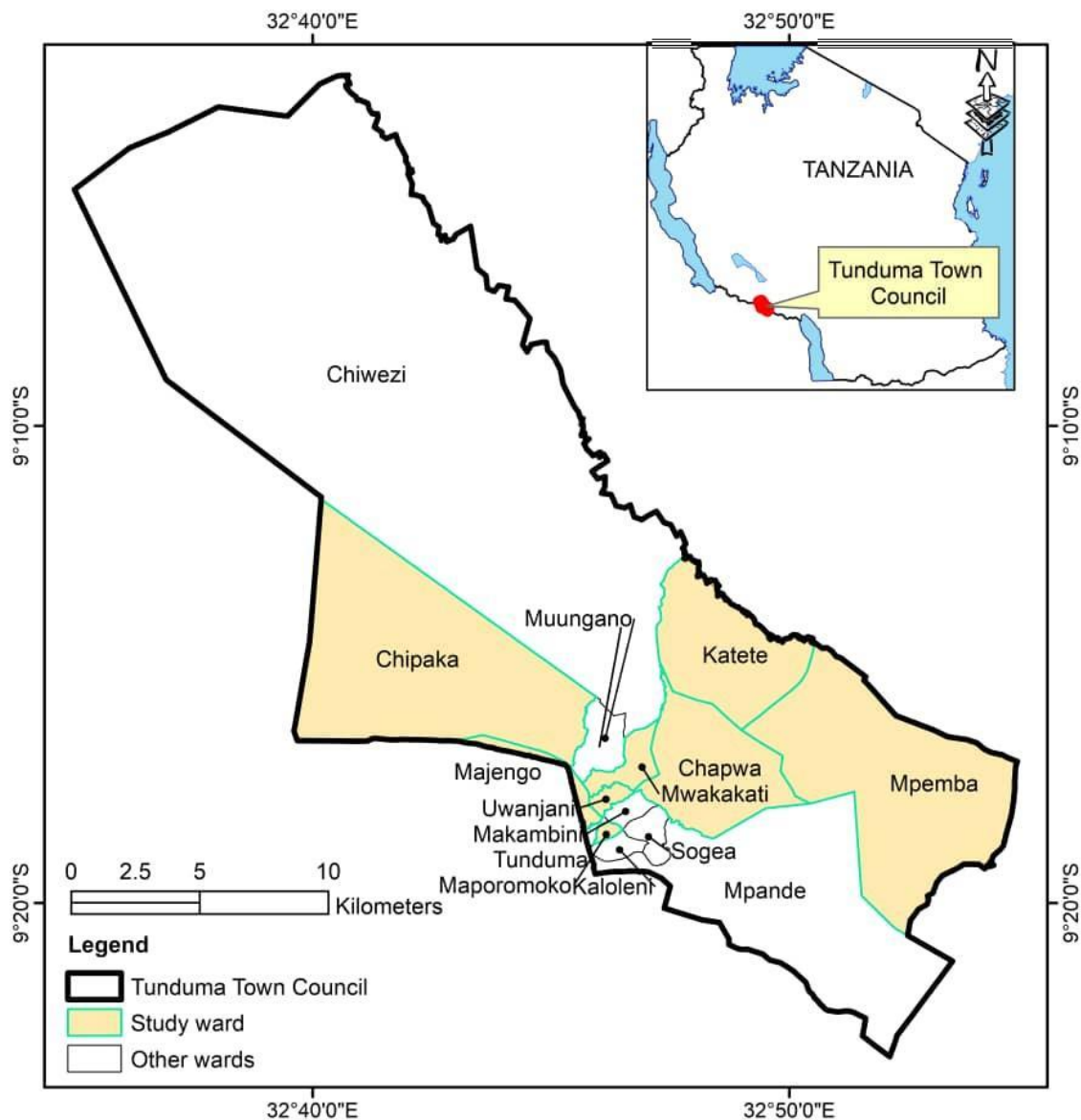


Figure 1: Map of the Location of Tunduma Town Council

Research Approach and Design

A mixed-methods approach with a convergent parallel design was used to comprehensively examine motivational factors (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Quantitative surveys provided breadth, while qualitative interviews offered depth, enabling triangulation for validity.

Population, Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The target population included teachers, headteachers and education officers in public secondary schools. A sample of 99 teachers was selected using purposive and random sampling for diversity in gender, age and experience. Headteachers and officers were purposively sampled for interviews.

Data Collection Methods and Tools

In this study, two complementary instruments were employed: structured questionnaires and semi-structured interview guides. The rationale behind combining these instruments was to integrate both quantitative and qualitative perspectives, thereby producing a holistic understanding of the contribution of motivation to teacher performance in secondary schools within Tunduma Town Council.

While the structured questionnaire facilitated the collection of standardized and measurable data from a broad sample of teachers, the semi-structured interviews allowed for the exploration of deeper insights from headteachers and education officers. Together, these instruments provided both breadth and depth, enhancing the robustness of the study through methodological triangulation (Patton, 2015).

Quantitative data came from structured questionnaires with Likert-scale items (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree) assessing factors like salaries, professional development, recognition, environment, leadership and student success. Semi-structured interviews with five headteachers and officers

explored contextual insights. Instruments were pilot-tested for clarity.

Data Analysis

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis instruments were employed. Quantitative data, gathered primarily through structured questionnaires, was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 30). This software facilitated both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, including regression analysis, to establish relationships between teacher motivation and performance. On the other hand, qualitative data, collected through semi-structured interviews with headteachers and education officers, was analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns, categories and themes. This dual approach ensured methodological complementarity, allowing the study to capture both measurable trends and contextual insights.

Results

Demographic Profile

Respondents (N=99) were predominantly male (52%), aged 30–40 years (38%), with over six years' experience (78%), reflecting a seasoned, middle-aged sample (MoEST, 2022). Table 1 summarizes demographics.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Teachers

Demographic Category	Percentage (%)	Number of Teachers
Gender		
Male	52%	52
Female	48%	47
Age		
20-30 years	22%	22
30-40 years	38%	38
40-50 years	28%	28
50+ years	12%	12
Professional Experience		
1-5 years	22%	22
6-10 years	32%	32
11-15 years	24%	24
16+ years	22%	22

Demographic characteristics influenced perceptions of motivational factors. The male majority (52%) may emphasize financial incentives, as studies suggest gender differences in prioritization (Raman *et al.*, 2022). Experienced, middle-aged teachers (78% >6 years) likely value professional development, aligning with high ratings for training (M=4.12) and indicating a preference for factors enhancing long-term efficacy (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

The demographic characteristics of the teachers in the study, including a slight male majority (52%), a predominant middle-age group (38% aged 30-40 years) and substantial professional experience (78% with over six years), play a significant role in shaping their perceptions of motivational factors, which in turn influence their overall performance in secondary schools in Tunduma Town Council, Tanzania. For instance, the higher proportion of male teachers may heighten the emphasis on financial incentives like competitive salaries, as gender differences often lead males to prioritize remuneration more strongly, potentially driving greater effort and commitment when such needs are met. Meanwhile, the experienced and middle-aged cohort tends to value professional development opportunities, such as training programs, which align with their long-term career goals and enhance instructional efficacy, leading to improved classroom performance and reduced absenteeism. These demographic influences underscore the need for tailored motivational strategies that account for gender, age and experience to optimize teacher motivation and educational outcomes in resource-constrained settings.

Motivational Factors Influencing Teachers' Performance

Motivational factors, derived from surveys, include competitive salaries, professional development, recognition, working environment, supportive leadership and student success. These encompass financial, intrinsic and extrinsic elements critical to performance. Table 2 summarizes means and SD. Teachers showed strong agreement on factors, with competitive salaries (M=4.35, SD=0.72) and recognition (M=4.28, SD=0.75) highest, indicating their perceived impact. Professional development (M=4.12, SD=0.80) and environment (M=4.05, SD=0.82) followed, with moderate variability. Regression analysis explained 62% of variance in performance ($R^2=0.62$, Adjusted $R^2=0.59$, $F(6,92)=24.15$, $p<0.001$), with salaries ($\beta=0.31$, $p=0.002$) and professional development ($\beta=0.27$, $p=0.008$) as predictors.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Motivational Factors

Factor	Mean	SD
Competitive salaries	4.35	0.72
Professional development	4.12	0.80
Recognition	4.28	0.75
Working environment	4.05	0.82
Supportive leadership	3.98	0.85
Student success	3.92	0.88

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Motivational Factors on Performance

Predictor	B (Unstd.)	Std. Error	β (Std.)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.52	0.22		2.36	0.020
Competitive salaries	0.29	0.09	0.31	3.22	0.002
Professional development	0.25	0.09	0.27	2.78	0.008
Recognition	0.22	0.10	0.24	2.20	0.031
Working environment	0.18	0.08	0.20	2.25	0.027
Supportive leadership	0.15	0.07	0.18	2.14	0.035
Student success	0.12	0.07	0.14	1.71	0.090

$R^2=0.62$, Adjusted $R^2=0.59$, $F(6,92)=24.15$, $p<0.001$

In the study conducted in Tunduma Town Council, Tanzania, motivational factors significantly influence teachers' performance in secondary schools, as outlined in the section on "Motivational Factors Influencing Teachers' Performance." Competitive salaries ($M=4.35$, $SD=0.72$, $\beta=0.31$, $p=0.002$) strongly enhance commitment and instructional effectiveness by alleviating financial stress, though salary delays, as noted in interviews, reduce morale and increase absenteeism. Professional development ($M=4.12$, $SD=0.80$, $\beta=0.27$, $p=0.008$) boosts performance by equipping teachers, especially the experienced majority, with skills that improve teaching quality and career satisfaction. Recognition ($M=4.28$, $SD=0.75$, $\beta=0.24$, $p=0.031$) fosters morale and effort through rewards, counteracting demotivation from poor conditions. The working environment ($M=4.05$, $SD=0.82$, $\beta=0.20$, $p=0.027$) supports performance when conducive, but issues like overcrowded classrooms hinder productivity. Supportive leadership ($M=3.98$, $SD=0.85$, $\beta=0.18$, $p=0.035$) enhances motivation through guidance and trust, promoting a positive school culture. Conversely, student success ($M=3.92$, $SD=0.88$, $\beta=0.14$, $p=0.090$) has a weaker influence due to socio-economic barriers, inconsistently boosting morale only when tangible achievements occur, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address contextual challenges.

Discussion of Findings

The findings reveal that high ratings for competitive salaries align closely with existing research in Tanzania, where remuneration serves as a primary motivator for teachers, enhancing commitment and reducing financial-related demotivation (Bennell & Mukyanuzi, 2005; Naziah et al., 2020). Recognition similarly exerts a strong influence, mirroring studies that demonstrate how rewards and acknowledgments boost morale and instructional effort (Mugala & Kabeta, 2023). In contrast, weaker factors such as student success diverge from some international contexts, like those in Nepal, due to socio-economic barriers in Tunduma that limit visible achievements and their motivational impact (Khanal & Phyak, 2021), underscoring the need for context-specific strategies.

In Tunduma's rapidly urbanizing environment, these motivational factors are amplified by local challenges, including heavy workloads, housing shortages and resource constraints, which necessitate targeted improvements in financial incentives and working conditions to sustain teacher performance (Mosha, 2018). Supportive leadership emerges as particularly vital in such border regions, providing essential guidance and emotional support amid systemic limitations, as supported by regional studies (Lamaro & Akello, 2023). Overall, these insights highlight the interplay between motivational elements and contextual factors, offering a foundation for policy enhancements to address gaps and promote educational quality.

Contextual Implications

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Within Tunduma's unique context as a border town influenced by cross-border trade and population influx, the primary motivational factors competitive salaries, recognition and professional development play a pivotal role in mitigating performance declines stemming from overcrowded classrooms and limited resources, as evidenced by high regression coefficients for these elements in the study. Salaries, in particular, address financial hardships exacerbated by economic pressures in commercial hubs like Tunduma, aligning with findings that remuneration directly correlates with reduced absenteeism and heightened commitment in Tanzanian secondary schools.

Recognition and professional development further enhance teacher efficacy by fostering a sense of value and skill enhancement, countering demotivation from poor working environments, which are intensified by urbanization; this is amplified by recent research on ethical leadership in Tunduma, where supportive behaviors significantly boost motivation and performance in similar resource-strained settings. Supportive leadership and improved working conditions, though moderately influential, are crucial for sustaining morale amid socio-economic barriers that weaken the impact of student success as a motivator, consistent with studies highlighting contextual adaptations in Sub-Saharan African border areas (Edward, 2019; Kingira & Muammer, 2010).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study found that multiple motivational factors significantly contribute to teachers' performance in secondary schools within Tunduma Town Council. Factors included job security, professional development opportunities, supportive leadership, financial incentives and student engagement. Among these, job security and student success had the highest influence, indicating that both stability and a sense of impact are central to motivation. The regression analysis confirmed that these factors collectively explained 62.3% of the variation in teacher performance. This supports Expectancy Theory, which argues that motivation is driven by the expectation that one's efforts will lead to desirable outcomes. Teachers are more likely to perform well when they perceive that their work is valued, supported and leads to meaningful results.

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