

FACTORS AFFECTING JOB SATISFACTION AMONG PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN TANZANIA: A CASE OF MERU DISTRICT COUNCIL ARUSHA

ABSTRACT

Teachers' job satisfaction is crucial as it directly impacts their attitudes towards teaching, which in turn affects pupil achievement. This study investigates the factors influencing job satisfaction among public primary school teachers in the Meru district. Specifically, it identifies key factors associated with teachers' job satisfaction. The study utilized exploratory and descriptive research designs, involving 100 respondents selected through simple random and purposive sampling methods. Data were collected via questionnaires and interview guides and analyzed using SPSS, with descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency distributions. The results revealed that 76.5% of respondents were dissatisfied with their teaching profession. Contributing factors included low salaries, limited in-service training, promotion issues, poor working conditions, inadequate teaching materials, large class sizes, and challenges in preparing pupil reports. The study concluded that job satisfaction among primary teachers is hindered by several factors, negatively impacting both teachers and pupils. It is recommended that the government improve teachers' working conditions by building spacious staff rooms and classrooms, equipping libraries and laboratories, and ensuring timely promotions. Furthermore, teachers' motivation should be prioritized, with opportunities for professional development through conferences, seminars, and workshops.

Keywords: Job satisfaction, Primary school teachers

INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a crucial role in the education sector, imparting knowledge, attitudes, and skills to pupils. They are integral to the educational system, as their expertise and dedication directly influence pupil outcomes and overall school performance. While facilities and resources are important, they cannot replace the need for well-trained teachers who are motivated and supported. Understanding and addressing factors influencing teachers' job satisfaction is essential for attracting and retaining skilled educators, as dissatisfaction can detract from their effectiveness (Kinyua, 2011).

Job satisfaction is a key factor in organizational effectiveness, as it influences individual performance and broader organizational outcomes (Judge et al., 2020). According to Harris et al. (2019), job satisfaction reflects an individual's emotional connection to their work, shaped by the alignment between their expectations and the realities of the job. Research shows that job satisfaction is influenced by several factors, including the working environment, salary, promotional opportunities, and relationships with colleagues and supervisors (Adigun, 2020; Rodrigo et al., 2022; Sachitra and Silva, 2023). While some researchers, like Sahito & Vaisanen (2020), highlight factors such as collaboration and personal growth, others focus on elements like salary and benefits as crucial for teacher satisfaction.

Studies in various countries, such as Cyprus (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2020) and Malawi (Muchai et al., 2018), indicate that teachers often face challenges with remuneration and working conditions, which can lead to low morale and poor performance. Furthermore, research in Tanzania (Kambuga, 2023; Azaliwa & Casimir, 2016) confirms that teachers are dissatisfied

with their pay, accommodation, and promotional opportunities, impacting their job satisfaction and motivation.

Kinyua (2011) argues that neglecting job satisfaction can undermine the teaching profession, as dissatisfied teachers are less likely to invest in their work. Instead, they may only meet the basic expectations without striving to exceed them. This study aims to examine the factors influencing job satisfaction among public primary school teachers in Meru District, Arusha Region, to better understand how **these factors impact teacher performance and retention.**

METHODOLOGY

The District Education Office of Meru District (Primary Education Department) reported that there are 113 primary government schools with a total of 1,500 teachers. To determine the sample size, a random sampling technique using Slovin's formula was applied. A confidence level of 95% was used, resulting in a margin of error of 0.1.

The sample size was calculated using this formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N * e^2}$$

where:

N = Total population

n = Sample size

e = Error of margin/margin error/error of tolerance (95% given margin error of 0.10)

Given that, N = 1500 and e = 0.10

$$n = \frac{1500}{(1 + 1500 * 0.10^2)}$$

A total of 100 respondents were selected from Meru District, including 92 teachers and six school heads, along with one District Education Officer (DEO) and one District Secretary of the Teachers Service Department (TSD). The respondents were chosen using purposive and random sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was employed to select the DEO and TSD officer based on their roles and expertise in teacher job satisfaction. Simple random sampling was used to select the 98 teachers and school **heads, who play key roles in teaching, supervision, and assessment. Primary data were collected through interviews and structured questionnaires, while secondary data were gathered through document reviews. The questionnaire data were analyzed using descriptive statistics,** while document data were analyzed through content analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The study analyzed the demographic characteristics of respondents, including age, gender, education level, and work experience. As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents (59.2%) were aged between 36 and 45 years, while 40.8% were between 26 and 35 years. This suggests that older teachers may experience higher job satisfaction compared to younger ones. This finding is consistent with a study by Kemunto, Raburu, and Bosire (2018) in Kenya, which found a strong correlation between age and job satisfaction. Additionally, Chamundeswari

(2013) highlighted that younger employees often have higher expectations, which may not always be met by their employers.

Table 1: *Frequency distribution of respondents by demographic characteristics*

Age of respondents	Frequency	Percent
26-35	40	40.8
36-45	58	59.2
Total	98	100
Gender of respondents		
Male	36	36.7
Female	62	63.3
Total	98	100
Marital status		
Married	50	51
Single	45	45.9
Widow	3	3.1
Total	98	100
Educational background		
Certificate	42	42.9
Diploma	36	36.7
Degree	20	20.4
Total	98	100
Teaching experience		
<1 yrs	6	6.1
1 – 5	24	24.5
6 – 15	60	61.2
16-25	8	8.2
Total	98	100
Income level of respondents		
350,000 - 450,000	30	30.6
450,001 - 550,000	40	40.8
550,001 - 650,000	19	19.4
650,001 - 750,000	7	7.1
750,000+	2	2.0
Total	98	100.0

Source: *Field data* (2024)

Table 1 shows that 63.3% of the teachers were female, while 36.7% were male. Although female teachers made up the majority, both genders reported similar concerns. The higher proportion of female teachers may be linked to greater job satisfaction at the primary level compared to their male counterparts. In terms of marital status, 51% were married, 45.9% were single, and 3.1% were widowed.

Regarding academic qualifications, 42.9% of the respondents held certificates, 36.7% had diplomas, and 20.4% had bachelor's degrees. This suggests that most teachers held certificates and could be easily satisfied in their roles. However, those pursuing further education were less

satisfied with their jobs and might consider leaving the profession due to dissatisfaction. The data also reveals that 61.2% of teachers had between 6 to 15 years of experience, 24.5% had 1 to 5 years, 8.2% had 16 to 25 years, and 6.1% had less than a year of teaching experience. These findings indicate that a significant proportion of teachers (69.4%) have substantial experience, which, according to Koustelios (2011), correlates with higher job satisfaction, particularly concerning pay and supervision. Similarly, Chamundeswari (2013) found that employees with more experience tend to report greater job satisfaction.

Finally, Table 1 shows that 40.8% of teachers earned between 450,001 to 550,000 Tshs, followed by 19.4% earning between 350,000 to 450,000 Tshs. The rest earned varying amounts, with the majority (71.4%) earning between 350,000 to 550,000 Tshs.

Variable affecting primary school teachers' job satisfaction

Table 2 indicates that certain factors had a greater impact on teachers' job satisfaction than others. Specifically, teachers reported low satisfaction with their jobs due to issues related to salaries and remuneration, as well as poor physical working conditions. Additionally, factors such as the promotion system and the availability of teaching and learning resources also influenced teachers' overall job satisfaction.

Table 2: *Factors contributing to job satisfaction*

Measures of Job satisfaction	Rank
Monthly salary and remunerations	1
Physical working environment	2
The promotion process and procedure	3
Teaching and learning materials	4
Training	5

Source: *Field data (2024).*

The interview with the TSD leader revealed that many teachers experienced low job satisfaction because they felt their jobs did not help them achieve their life goals or improve their quality of life. Additionally, the study's findings align with research conducted in China by Kinyua (2023), which found that the length of teaching experience influenced job satisfaction. Kinyua's study suggested that job satisfaction increased with years of service, as older teachers tend to adjust their expectations to align more closely with reality, resulting in higher satisfaction.

Factors associated with public primary school teachers' job satisfaction

Salary

Teachers were asked to assess their level of satisfaction with various statements regarding salaries and remuneration, as presented in Table 3.

Table 3: *Teachers rating their level of satisfaction with the salary*

Name of the school	Are you satisfied with the present salary		Total
	Yes	No	
USA primary school	7 (7.1%)	9 (9.2%)	16 (16.3%)
Tuvaila Primary School	7 (7.1%)	10 (10.2%)	17 (17.3%)
Chemchem Primary School	6 (6.1%)	11 (11.2%)	17 (17.3%)
Ngarenanyuki Primary School	5 (5.1%)	11 (11.2%)	16 (16.3%)

Maji ya Chai Primary School	7 (7.1%)	9 (9.2%)	16 (16.3%)
Leganga Primary School	6 (6.1%)	10 (10.2%)	16 (16.3%)
Total	38 (38.8%)	60 (61.2%)	98 (100.0%)

Source: Field data (2024).

The results in Table 3 indicate that 61.2% of respondents are dissatisfied with their current salary, while 38.8% are satisfied. Additionally, qualitative data from the interviews were used to further analyze and understand the impact of salary on primary school teachers' job satisfaction. One of the teachers from Ngarenanyuki Primary School reported:

“In comparison with other professional groups, teachers’ low pay is a major cause of teacher dissatisfaction. There is a general feeling among teachers that even when starting salaries could be comparable, those moving into other fields such as medicine, telecommunication, commerce or agriculture could achieve bigger salaries. There is indeed a sense of frustration to teachers that their qualifications and skills.”

A previous study on teacher job satisfaction in Tanzania, conducted by Muchai, Makokha, and Namusonge (2018), found that teachers were dissatisfied with their salaries. The study revealed that low salary satisfaction significantly contributed to teachers' intentions to leave the profession. While this study does not advocate for extraordinary salaries, it emphasizes the need for compensation that covers basic living expenses, such as food, healthcare, housing, education for teachers’ families, transport, and utilities. Inadequate pay forces many teachers to seek secondary income through private tutoring and other activities (Kambuga, 2023), which negatively affects both their teaching performance and the quality of education provided to pupils.

Level of satisfaction with promotion

The data for each school, as presented in Table 4, indicate that 17 teachers (17.3%) received promotions, while 81 teachers (82.7%) did not. Teacher promotions occur every three years, in which they move to a new salary scale that includes an updated salary.

Table 4: Level of job satisfaction with promotions

Name of the School	Are you comfortable with promotion opportunities?		Total
	Yes	No	
Usa Primary school	3 (3.1%)	14 (14.3%)	17 (17.3%)
Tuvaila Primary School	5 (5.1%)	12 (12.2%)	17 (17.3%)
Chemchem Primary School	5 (5.1%)	11 (11.2%)	16 (16.3%)
Ngarenanyuki Primary School	2 (2.0%)	15 (15.3%)	17 (17.3%)
Maji ya Chai Primary School	2 (2.0%)	14 (14.3%)	16 (16.3%)
Leganga Primary School	0 (0.0%)	15 (15.3%)	15 (15.3%)
Total	17 (17.3%)	81 (82.7%)	98 (100.0%)

Source: Field data (2024).

Interviews with the DEO officer revealed challenges in teacher promotions, though the government is addressing salary payments in groups, with resolutions expected in due time. A document review indicated that promotions include annual salary increments and a salary grade upgrade every three years.

The review highlighted that grade promotions may serve as a stronger status indicator than salary increments. Lumsden (2016) emphasized that promotions are a key organizational reward, fostering motivation among employees. However, some teachers perceived favoritism in the process. Evidence from Tanzania (Thirkildsen, 2010) shows that many teachers face prolonged stagnation in the same rank for over five years. Similarly, Reynolds (2014) found that delayed grade adjustments result in experienced and highly educated teachers being placed in the same category as less-experienced colleagues, leading to demotivation among deserving candidates.

In-service training

The study examined teachers' opportunities for in-service training as shown in Table 5 since their initial employment, revealing limited access across the surveyed schools. In Usa Primary School, only 7 teachers (7.1%) attended training, while 10 (10.2%) did not. Similarly, in Tuvaila Primary School, 6 teachers (6.1%) participated, whereas 11 (11.2%) did not. Chemchem Primary School had 6 teachers (6.1%) who received training, while 10 (10.2%) missed the opportunity. In Ngarenanyuki Primary School, 7 teachers (7.1%) attended, while 10 (10.2%) did not. Maji ya Chai Primary School had an equal split, with 8 teachers (8.2%) attending and 8 (8.2%) missing out. Lastly, in Leganga Primary School, only 5 teachers (5.1%) received training, while 10 (10.2%) did not. Overall, the findings indicate that 59 teachers (60.2%) across all surveyed schools had not attended any in-service training, highlighting a significant gap in professional development opportunities.

Table 5: *Level of job satisfaction with training*

Name of the School	Have you ever attended in-service training as a teacher?		Total
	Yes	No	
Usa primary school	7 (7.1%)	10 (10.2%)	17 (17.3%)
Tuvaila Primary School	6 (6.1%)	11 (11.2%)	17 (17.3%)
Chemchem Primary School	6 (6.1%)	10 (10.2%)	16 (16.3%)
Ngarenanyuki Primary School	7 (7.1%)	10 (10.2%)	17 (17.3%)
Maji ya Chai Primary School	8 (8.2%)	8 (8.2%)	16 (16.3%)
Leganga Primary School	5 (5.1%)	10 (10.2%)	15 (15.3%)
Total	39 (39.8%)	59 (60.2%)	98 (100.0%)

Source: Field data (2024).

Interviews with school heads revealed that only a few teachers had the opportunity to attend in-service training, primarily those teaching Science and English. The TSD leader explained that due to limited government funding, training was prioritized for subjects facing the most significant challenges, particularly Science and English. Similarly, the DEO of Meru District

stated that since 2010, only a few training sessions had been conducted, with priority given to Science and English teachers, as well as school heads, due to financial constraints.

Research underscores the significance of in-service training in maintaining teaching quality. Osaki (1996) emphasized that without regular training, teachers risk falling behind in subject knowledge and pedagogical skills. Akinbode (1996) found that in Nigeria, in-service training played a critical role in enhancing job commitment. Teachers who had previously exhibited low professional commitment became more motivated and demonstrated improved performance after receiving training.

Aitken (2004) reported that the Education Review Office (ERO) in New Zealand conducted a nationwide study on in-service training, assessing its management and effectiveness in informing government policies. The study highlighted numerous benefits, including enhanced teacher performance, which directly contributes to improved pupil achievement. Additionally, in-service training was identified as a key mechanism to help schools address various challenges. Unlike pre-employment training, in-service training impacts all practicing teachers, providing immediate and widespread improvements in the effectiveness of the teaching workforce.

Physical working environment

Teachers were asked to assess how working conditions influence their job satisfaction, as shown in Table 6. The findings from the six selected schools indicate that 36 teachers (36.7%) found the working conditions satisfactory, while 62 teachers (63.3%) rated them as unsatisfactory. These results suggest that poor working conditions are a significant concern for many teachers in the Meru District.

Table 6: Teachers rating their level of satisfaction with working conditions

Name of the School	Are you satisfied with the working conditions?		Total
	Yes	No	
Usa primary school	6 (6.1%)	11 (11.2%)	17 (17.3%)
Tuvaila Primary School	3 (3.1%)	14 (14.3%)	17 (17.3%)
Chemchem Primary School	1 (1.0%)	15 (15.3%)	16 (16.3%)
Ngarenanyuki Primary School	6 (6.1%)	11 (11.2%)	17 (17.3%)
Maji ya Chai Primary School	10 (10.2%)	6 (6.1%)	16 (16.3%)
Leganga Primary School	10 (10.2%)	5 (5.1%)	15 (15.3%)
Total	36 (36.7%)	62 (63.3%)	98 (100.0%)

Source: Field data (2024).

Interviews with school heads confirmed that teachers were working under poor conditions. The main challenges cited included a shortage of essential facilities such as housing and staff rooms,

as well as a lack of basic services like healthcare, electricity, markets, and water. These factors made the teaching profession less attractive in the area.

The District Education Officer (DEO) also acknowledged the challenging work environment, noting that most schools were located in remote areas where the local community held a negative attitude toward education. Additionally, a lack of parental and community support further demoralized teachers and contributed to job dissatisfaction.

Similarly, the TSD leader admitted that teachers in Meru District, like those in other parts of Tanzania, faced limited access to social services and physical infrastructure. Research by Orodho & Waweru (2013) emphasizes that a positive work environment is crucial for increasing employee satisfaction, reducing turnover, and fostering a high-performance workforce.

Presence of enough teaching and learning materials

Respondents were asked to assess their job satisfaction based on the availability of teaching and learning materials in schools. As summarized in Table 7, findings revealed a severe shortage of essential resources, including books, dusters, manila cards, chalk, and charts. Many teachers and pupils were forced to share the limited books and desks available. Additionally, computers for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) were largely absent in most of the primary schools surveyed, further hindering effective teaching and learning.

Table 7: *Teacher's ratings of their level of job satisfaction with teaching and learning materials*

Name of the School	Presence of enough teaching and learning materials		Total
	Yes	No	
Usa primary school	6 (6.1%)	11 (11.2%)	17 (17.3%)
Tuvaila Primary School	4 (4.1%)	13 (13.3%)	17 (17.3%)
Chemchem Primary School	1 (1.0%)	15 (15.3%)	16 (16.3%)
Ngarenanyuki Primary School	7 (7.1%)	10 (10.2%)	17 (17.3%)
Maji ya Chai Primary School	9 (9.2%)	7 (7.1%)	16 (16.3%)
Leganga Primary School	6 (6.1%)	9 (9.2%)	15 (15.3%)
Total	33 (33.7%)	65 (66.3%)	98 (100.0%)

Source: Field data (2024).

As shown in Table 7, more than half of the teachers surveyed, equivalent to 66.3%, expressed dissatisfaction with their teaching jobs due to the lack of teaching and learning materials in their schools. Teachers provided various opinions on how the availability of such resources affected their morale and overall teaching performance. One teacher from Tuvaila Primary School commented on the **impact of inadequate materials on their teaching experience:**

“In my school, one book is shared by 5 to 10 pupils”.

The researcher observed significant shortages of classroom resources. Many pupils were forced to sit on the floor, and teachers had to use pieces of cloth to wipe the chalkboard in the absence of dusters. There was also a shortage of tables and chairs, with one school having only 21 chairs instead of the required 48. In some schools, teachers and pupils took turns using the limited furniture, while other classes had pupils seated on the floor. Additionally, some schools lacked access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities, and those not

connected to the national electric grid faced further challenges. These shortages severely impacted the teaching and learning experience.

CONCLUSION

Job satisfaction among primary school teachers was significantly impacted by several factors, which in turn affected both teaching quality and pupil learning outcomes. Key factors such as inadequate salary, limited promotion opportunities, poor physical working conditions, lack of in-service training, and shortages of teaching and learning materials contributed to teachers' dissatisfaction. Without the necessary resources and support to maintain their professional standards, teachers were demotivated, leading to decreased job performance and overall morale.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations are proposed to address the challenges faced by teachers. The government should prioritize improving teachers' working conditions by constructing spacious staff rooms and classrooms, as well as ensuring that libraries and laboratories are well-equipped. Teacher promotions should be conducted under established guidelines to ensure fairness and transparency. Schools must also place greater emphasis on motivating teachers, making them a priority within the education system. Additionally, the government should provide teachers with opportunities for continuous professional development, including attending conferences, seminars, and workshops to update their skills and knowledge. Since many schools in Meru District are located in remote areas, the government is encouraged to introduce incentives, such as hardship allowances, to retain and motivate teachers working in these locations. Finally, teachers should make effective use of available teaching and learning resources to enhance their ability to deliver quality education to pupils. These steps will help create a more supportive environment for teachers and improve the overall quality of education in the district.

COMPETING INTERESTS DISCLAIMER:

Authors have declared that they have no known competing financial interests

OR non-financial interests OR personal relationships that could have appeared

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