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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Tanzania Teachers' Union Motivation Strategies in Promoting Teachers' Professionalism in Public Primary Schools in Nyamagana District, Mwanza – Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the motivation strategies provided by the Tanzania Teachers Union to teachers, which influence teacher's professionalism in public primary in Nyamagana District, Mwanza -Tanzania. The study was guided by Human Capital Theory developed by Gary Becker in 1964. The study adapted a mixed research approach and an embedded design. The study involved 111 participants. Both probability and non-probability sampling were used; stratified and simple random sampling ensured fair representation of male and female teachers, while purposive sampling selected school leaders and TTU officials for their expertise. Data were collected using questionnaires for teachers and semi-structured interviews with key officials. The instruments were validated and reliable, with a correlation coefficient of 0.956, and the reliability of qualitative data was based on trustworthiness. The researcher analysed quantitative data using descriptive statistics with the help of SPSS version 26 and qualitative data were organized into themes and analysed thematically. The findings found that teachers' motivation and professionalism can improve if TTU sets up school-level rewards and recognition to value good work, explains its support efforts more clearly, and lets teachers share their views on what motivates them. It also shows that head teachers should encourage teamwork, peer support, and creativity in schools, even where resources are limited, to keep teachers engaged and motivated. The study recommends to strengthen motivation among teachers and improve professionalism, TTU should implement school-level rewards and recognition programs to appreciate outstanding teachers. These strategies can boost morale and inspire others to improve. Moreover, TTU needs to communicate its motivation efforts more clearly to its members, ensuring teachers understand how they benefit. Teachers should have power in shaping motivation strategies by sharing their preferences and needs. At the school level, head teachers should promote a culture of collaboration, peer support, and creativity, even in resource-limited environments, to keep teachers engaged and motivated.

Keywords: Tanzania teachers' union (TTU); motivation strategies; teachers' professionalism

INTRODUCTION

Teachers' professionalism refers to the ability of educators to uphold and maintain high standards of conduct, skills, and values that contribute to the delivery

of quality education. It goes beyond mere classroom performance and encompasses ethical practice, continuous personal and professional growth, effective classroom management, and a deep commitment to

learners' success (Safira & Alamsyah, 2025). A professional teacher demonstrates not only competence in subject knowledge and pedagogy but also integrity, accountability, and dedication to the moral and social development of pupils (Raj., et al 2021). In this study, professionalism is regarded as the dependent factor because it reflects the extent to which teachers perform their duties with commitment, integrity, and competence in the school environment.

Conversely, the motivation strategies provided by the Tanzania Teachers' Union (TTU) serve as the independent variables. These strategies such as financial incentives, welfare support, recognition of effort, professional training opportunities, and advocacy for improved working conditions play an important role in shaping teachers' attitudes, performance, and sense of belonging within the profession (Othman, 2024). When well implemented, such strategies can enhance teachers' morale, stimulate their creativity, and strengthen their commitment to professional ethics. The connection between these two variables lies in the extent to which effective motivation inspires teachers to maintain high standards of discipline, enthusiasm, and dedication in their teaching duties. In simple terms, motivated teachers are more likely to be professional in their practice, while those who feel unsupported may find it difficult to sustain high performance and integrity. Across the globe, teacher motivation has long been recognised as one of the essential foundations of an effective education system. In the early decades of the 20th century, teacher unions emerged primarily to address issues of job security, equitable pay, and improved working conditions (Macgilchrist., et al 2020). These concerns were critical at a time when teaching was not always seen as a stable or respected profession. As the years progressed, particularly in the mid-20th century, the role of teacher unions began to evolve. They started to focus more on professional development, welfare support, and the overall well-being of teachers, acknowledging that motivation involves more than financial incentives alone (Bascia, 2024).

Today, in many parts of the world, teacher unions continue to act as strong advocates for their members. They work to ensure fair treatment, equitable pay, and the promotion of professional growth opportunities that allow teachers to advance in their careers. Many unions also support initiatives aimed at recognising and rewarding teachers' hard work, while fostering a culture of continuous learning and development (Kraft & Lyon

2024). However, despite these efforts, the level of success varies across countries. The impact of motivational strategies depends largely on how well they are planned, communicated, and executed. Where unions are well organised and supported, their strategies tend to have a positive influence on teacher morale and professionalism. In contrast, where such initiatives are poorly structured or inconsistently applied, they may fail to achieve their intended results, leaving teachers feeling unappreciated and demoralized (Elvira 2020).

In Africa, the issue of teacher motivation remains a persistent challenge that continues to shape the quality of education. Many education systems across the continent are characterised by overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teaching resources, and inadequate remuneration, all of which undermine teachers' job satisfaction and sense of professionalism. These factors create conditions where even the most passionate teachers struggle to sustain enthusiasm and maintain high teaching standards. The problem is not solely financial; it also involves the absence of supportive environments that allow teachers to perform effectively and feel valued for their contributions (Union 2022).

In Kenya, for example, teacher unions have been instrumental in advocating for teachers' welfare, particularly after the introduction of Free Primary Education in 2003. The sudden rise in pupil enrolment placed enormous pressure on teachers, who were required to manage increasingly large classes with limited resources. Unions intervened to ensure that teachers were supported through improved remuneration, access to resources, and representation in policy discussions (Ngigi et al., 2025). Similarly, in Uganda, teacher unions have continued to play an active role under the Universal Primary Education policy. They have persistently called attention to the impact of overcrowded classrooms, poor facilities, and limited professional support on teachers' performance and professionalism (Isabirye, 2025). These examples highlight that teacher motivation is not a luxury but a fundamental requirement for maintaining high standards in education. Without consistent motivation and adequate support, even well-trained teachers can lose their sense of purpose, leading to diminished professionalism and reduced learning outcomes for pupils.

Turning to the Tanzanian context, the Tanzania Teachers' Union (TTU) was established to protect

teachers' rights and improve their welfare. Since its formation, TTU has played an important role in representing teachers' interests, negotiating better salaries, allowances, and working conditions, and advocating for opportunities in professional development. The union has also been involved in offering legal protection against unfair dismissal and other forms of discrimination that teachers may face in their workplaces. These initiatives reflect TTU's recognition that teachers' motivation and welfare are essential to sustaining quality education and maintaining professional standards (Sumuni., et al 2025).

Despite the Tanzania Teachers' Union's commendable efforts, Tanzania's education sector still faces long-standing challenges. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2022), many schools across the country continue to suffer from poor infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, and shortages of essential teaching and learning materials, all of which affect teachers' ability to perform effectively. Although motivation strategies have been introduced, they are not always sufficient or consistently applied, and in some cases, teachers are unaware of them due to weak communication and implementation. As a result, their impact on teachers' professionalism remains limited. True motivation goes beyond financial rewards; it involves creating a supportive environment where teachers feel respected, recognised, and encouraged to develop professionally (Gosori 2023). When such conditions exist, teachers show greater commitment, creativity, and responsibility, leading to improved teaching and learning outcomes. For TTU and other education stakeholders, the real challenge lies in ensuring that motivation strategies are well-structured, consistently implemented, and genuinely reach teachers because the quality and progress of Tanzania's education system depend on motivated and professional teachers (James, 2024).

In Nyamagana District, these challenges are even more pronounced. Teachers in this district face a number of obstacles that weaken their motivation and professional commitment. Large class sizes make it difficult for teachers to give individual attention to pupils, while the shortage of teaching resources hampers their ability to deliver lessons effectively. Many teachers also experience delayed salary payments and a lack of regular professional development opportunities, which collectively lower their morale and job satisfaction. Over time, these difficulties lead to fatigue, frustration, and a decline in professional standards. Teachers who once

demonstrated enthusiasm and creativity in their work may begin to show signs of disengagement due to the absence of strong motivational support (Ali 2024).

Research by Biseko (2020) found that teachers in Nyamagana often struggle to prepare lessons effectively, maintain discipline, and apply modern teaching strategies, largely because of limited institutional support and inadequate motivation. Although TTU continues to offer some form of assistance, including advocacy and welfare support, many teachers still feel undervalued and under-supported. The sense of neglect and lack of recognition for their efforts contributes to low morale, making it difficult for teachers to uphold professionalism consistently. This situation underscores the critical need to examine how TTU's motivation strategies influence teachers' professionalism in Nyamagana District.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

This study was guided by the Human Capital Theory developed by Gary Becker in 1964. The theory stresses that investing in people brings economic benefits by raising productivity and performance. It shows that individuals possess different skills and abilities, which can be strengthened through education and training (Leoni, 2025). Businesses and institutions are encouraged to value and invest in their workforce, as human capital represents the demand for labour and its contribution to the economy, while human resources reflect the actual number and qualifications of workers (Grigorescu., et al 2021). By allocating resources to education and training, individuals become more efficient and their overall economic value increases, which in turn drives both professional growth and wider development.

From this perspective, the Tanzania Teachers' Trade Union plays a vital role in promoting continuous professional growth and better working conditions. By supporting policies that encourage ongoing training, mentorship, and education, the union helps teachers to improve their skills and performance in public primary schools. This process not only strengthens professionalism and raises teaching standards but also improves student outcomes and the quality of education overall. Human Capital Theory therefore underlines that sustained investment in teachers' skills, motivation, and well-being is essential for advancing teacher professionalism and securing long-term educational and economic progress in Tanzania.

Empirical Review

Husin (2020) studied how teachers' unions in Malaysia recruit, select, and promote teachers. This study mainly used online sources because there is limited research. The research highlighted that teachers' unions have successfully influenced the government to prioritize job promotions for their members, often irrespective of their qualifications. This has led to instances where teachers without a university degree are promoted over those with higher qualifications, such as a bachelor's or a PhD. For example, many school managers in primary schools are former College Qualified Teachers (CQTs), who receive special treatment from the Ministry of Education, which the same group influences. The promotion process is often based on supervisor recommendations rather than merit, with little emphasis on meritocracy. The study concluded that teachers' unions in Malaysia have secured better promotion opportunities for CQTs, allowing them to rise above their graduate colleagues in terms of promotion, seniority, and salary. However, while the study emphasizes promotion motivation in the workplace, it does not examine how such promotion influences teachers' professionalism. Therefore, the research collected data directly from participants through questionnaires and interviews to explore how the motivation provided by the Tanzania Teachers' Union affects teacher professionalism.

Symeonidis and Stromquist (2020) examined the status of teachers and the function of teacher unions in the Czech Republic's new professional environment. Two of the most current teacher status reports, which were based on a global survey directed at leaders of teacher unions and other educational groups, were analyzed by the study using a survey and secondary data analysis. The results brought to light alarming patterns that impact teacher status, including growing accountability through outside oversight, a lack of government initiatives to raise teacher professionalism, the growth of privatization, and low unionization. The reorganization of the teaching profession made it clear that teacher unions' goals and practices needed to be updated. The study did not look at how teacher union motivation affects teacher professionalism, even though it concentrated on the role of teacher unions in modern professionalism. To investigate the relationship between teacher professionalism and the motivation offered by the Tanzania Teachers Union, this study employed direct data gathering procedures, such as questionnaire and interviews. In Ethiopia, Berhanu and

Sabanci (2019) researched factors influencing teachers' motivation and the strategies principals use to enhance motivation among primary school teachers. The study employed a holistic multiple-case design, involving two principals and six teachers, with data collected through semi-structured interviews that were validated for reliability. The results showed that teachers considered factors like the school environment, salary, living conditions, and fairness in incentives major motivators, while principals focused on salary-related factors. Both teachers and principals agreed that approaches such as cash rewards, free resources, gifts, and supportive ideas were motivators. Principles also emphasized the importance of open communication and participatory decision-making. The study used small sample size, which is limited in size and generalizability. The current study addressed this gap by including a larger sample of 8 school heads, 5 WEOS, 86 teachers, 8 TTU representatives to comprehend better how motivation from the Tanzania Teachers Union influences teacher professionalism.

Kuja et al. (2022) looked at the strategies used by trade unions in Kenya to improve teacher benefits and their impact on teacher welfare in Nairobi City County's public secondary schools. Targeting 2,236 instructors, the study used a descriptive survey approach. Based on data collected through an interview guide, most teachers agreed that unions significantly affected their welfare payments. The survey also found that teachers were satisfied with the union's approaches to welfare issues, and these benefits positively impacted their productivity. This study, which focused on trade union strategies regarding teachers' benefit, informed the current research on how motivation from the Tanzania Teachers Union influences teacher professionalism in public primary schools.

Mollel and Otieno (2022) studied labor union activities and their impact on teacher performance in public secondary schools in Tanzania Arusha District Council. The study combined quantitative and qualitative data using a convergent parallel mixed method design to provide a thorough analysis. Researchers gathered data through questionnaires, structured interviews, and document reviews. The report indicated that the Tanzania Teachers Union (TTU) engaged in collective bargaining to secure pay raises, promote job security, and protect teachers' rights. The research also showed that a lack of job promotions demotivated teachers, while a supportive work environment had a positive effect. The study recommended that teachers fully

support their union, as its strength lies in membership solidarity. Although the study demonstrated how the TTU motivated teachers regarding job security, defending rights, and collective bargaining, it did not explore how these motivations contribute to teachers' professionalism. The research examined how motivation provided by the Tanzania Teachers' Union influences teacher professionalism in public primary schools.

Kiangi et al. (2021) looked into how trade union advocacy and collective bargaining affected the effectiveness of teachers in Tanzania's Same District's public secondary schools. 43 school heads and 767 instructors participated in the study, which used a convergent design. Interview guides and questionnaires were used to gather data. Since the unions were not involved in reforms meant to improve teachers' performance, the study found that collective bargaining and union pushing did not affect teacher efficiency. According to the study, teachers should receive frequent training from unions to assist them in dealing with the difficulties they face daily. The study examined how Tanzania Teachers' Union-provided incentive impacts teacher professionalism in public primary schools by focusing on primary school teachers, since the previous study concentrated on secondary school teachers and the impact of collective bargaining.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a mixed research approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, with greater emphasis on qualitative data to gain deeper insights (Taherdoost, 2022). An embedded research design was adopted, where qualitative findings supported and explained quantitative results (Creswell & Creswell,

2023). The target population included 2,554 participants: 2,370 primary school teachers, 18 Ward Education Officers, one City Pre- and Primary Education Officer, 3 TTU leaders, 81 TTU representatives, and 81 head teachers. Both probability and non-probability sampling were used; stratified and simple random sampling ensured fair representation of male and female teachers, while purposive sampling selected school leaders and TTU officials for their expertise. Data were collected using questionnaires for teachers and semi-structured interviews with key officials. Validity was ensured through expert review, and reliability through split-half testing and qualitative trustworthiness measures. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 26, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis, with codes grouped into themes and supported by participants' quotes to highlight findings and implications.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Reliability Test

The reliability coefficient shows that the 28-item scale used in the study is highly reliable, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.956, which reflects excellent internal consistency among the items. All 86 responses were valid and included in the analysis, with no cases excluded due to missing data, ensuring the results are based on complete information. This high level of reliability suggests that the items consistently measure the same underlying construction, making the instrument suitable for further analysis and interpretation.

Before the question on professional development initiatives, teachers were asked to describe if they are members of the Tanzania Teachers Union.

Table 1. Reliability test for teachers' data

Case Processing Summary				Reliability Statistics	
Cases	Valid	N	%	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
	Excluded	0	0.0		
	Total	86	100.0		

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Source: Field Data (2025)

In order to assess the motivation strategies provided by the Tanzania Teachers' Union (TTU) that influence teachers' professionalism, questionnaires were

administered to teachers and interview to WEOs, the CPPEO, TTU leaders, and TTU school representatives. Table 2 presents the questionnaire findings on this.

Table 2 presents responses from teachers regarding their perceptions of the Union's motivational strategies.

Each statement is rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree).

Table 2. Teachers' responses to motivation strategies provided by the tanzania teachers union to teachers to influence professionalism (n 86)

S/N	Statements	1		2		3		4		5	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	The Union's motivational strategies have increased my job satisfaction.	17	19.8	25	29.1	9	10.5	12	14	23	26.7
2	Recognition from the Union encourages me to maintain professionalism.	11	12.8	28	32.6	8	9.3	16	18.6	23	26.7
3	Financial incentives from the Union have positively influenced my performance.	14	16.3	28	32.6	7	8.1	13	15.1	24	27.9
4	The Union provides adequate support to help teachers stay motivated.	14	16.3	28	32.6	12	14	13	15.1	19	22.1
5	The motivation strategies of the union are aligned with teachers' real needs.	15	17.4	32	37.2	13	15.1	8	9.3	18	20.9
6	I feel more committed to my profession because of the Union's support.	15	17.4	29	33.7	9	10.5	8	9.3	22	25.6

Key: 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree

Source: Field Data (2025)

The Union's motivation strategies have increased my job satisfaction

Out of 86 teachers, 17 (19.8%) strongly disagreed and 25 (29.1%) disagreed, totaling 48.9% with negative views. Only 9 teachers (10.5%) were neutral, while 12 (14%) agreed and 23 (26.7%) strongly agreed, totaling 40.7% with positive responses. This shows that while some teachers feel satisfied with the Union's motivational strategies, many are not fully convinced of their impact. Besides, an interview was conducted with respondents and they showed that:

From what I see, the motivational efforts by TTU, like recognition or occasional support, help some teachers feel appreciated, but they are inconsistent. Many teachers still feel their efforts go unnoticed, especially regarding job satisfaction. Motivation depends more on individual school leadership than a union strategy (Interviewee E, June 2025).

This suggests that while TTU's strategies may positively impact some teachers, the lack of consistent implementation across schools weakens the overall effect on teacher satisfaction and morale. To foster professionalism, TTU may need to standardize and expand motivation efforts to reach all teachers equitably. This corresponds with Sumuni et al. (2025),

who stated that TTU has a low impact on ensuring job satisfaction among public secondary school teachers, due to poor working conditions, low salaries, limited professional development, and lack of teacher involvement in decision-making. This implies that strengthening TTU's structure and role in policymaking could significantly enhance its ability to improve teachers' job satisfaction and advocate more effectively for their professional needs.

Again, the Interviewee added that:

We try to motivate teachers by recognizing their efforts during meetings and sharing union updates, but there are limits to what we can do without strong support from higher authorities. Some teachers appreciate these efforts, but others feel it is not enough to make a real difference in their work environment (Interviewee 8, June 2025).

This response highlights that while school-level TTU representatives try to support and recognize teachers, limited resources and support from the broader union structure reduce the overall impact. Strengthening coordination between local and national TTU structures could help make motivation strategies more meaningful and widespread. This is supported by human capital theory, which states that consistent investment in professional support and recognition enhances

teachers' productivity and job satisfaction. They shows that without strong institutional support, local efforts remain fragmented, and the full potential of teachers as human capital is not realized, ultimately affecting overall educational outcomes.

Recognition from the Union encourages me to maintain professionalism

Regarding recognition from the union, 11 teachers (12.8%) strongly disagreed, 28 (32.6%) disagreed, and 8 (9.3%) were neutral. On the positive side, 16 (18.6%) agreed and 23 (26.7%) strongly agreed, meaning 45.3% felt recognized and encouraged by the Union. This indicates that nearly half of the teachers feel that Union recognition supports their professionalism, though about 45.4% still held a neutral and negative view. This reflects the broader concern raised by (Akiba et al., 2023) who found that despite teachers' essential role in society, they often experience a lack of appreciation, poor compensation, and general undervaluation. The findings in this study reinforce that reality recognition from teacher unions, while present for some, remains inconsistent and insufficient for many. This implies that when recognition is lacking, teachers may feel demoralized, undervalued, and less committed to maintaining high standards of professionalism. From a human capital theory perspective, this lack of non-financial motivation undermines the development and retention of skilled educators, ultimately affecting educational quality and system-wide performance.

Financial incentives from the Union have positively influenced my performance

For this statement, 14 teachers (16.3%) strongly disagreed, 28 (32.6%) disagreed, and 7 (8.1%) were neutral. Meanwhile, 13 (15.1%) agreed and 24 (27.9%) strongly agreed. So, 43% responded positively, but a slightly higher 48.9% responded negatively. This shows a divided opinion, with many teachers not seeing the financial incentives as effective. This indicated that TTU has not been effective. One of the interviewees provided that:

Honestly, I have not seen the TTU do much to help teachers get better at their jobs. They talk about salary increases, which is fine, and they help when there are teacher problems. However, they do not set up workshops, create ways for teachers to share good ideas, or even give awards to great teachers. It feels like they work at a very high level, far from what teachers

need every day to be more professional (Interviewee 3, June 2025).

This suggests that TTU is perceived as largely disconnected from the practical, daily needs for teachers' professional development. This implies that while the TTU addresses fundamental issues like salaries and disputes, it fails to implement proactive strategies that directly enhance teaching quality and foster a culture of continuous improvement at the grassroots level. These findings are disputed by Berhanu and Sabanci (2019), who insisted that teachers considered factors like the school environment, salary, living conditions, and fairness in incentives to be major motivators, while principals focused on salary-related factors. Both teachers and principals agreed that strategies such as cash rewards, free resources, gifts, and supportive ideas were effective motivators.

The Union provides adequate support to help teachers stay motivated

In this case, 14 teachers (16.3%) strongly disagreed, 28 (32.6%) disagreed, and 12 (14%) were neutral. On the positive side, 13 teachers (15.1%) agreed, and 19 (22.1%) strongly agreed. Overall, 37.2% agreed, but 48.9% disagreed, suggesting that many teachers feel the support from the Union is not enough to keep them motivated. These findings align with Kuja et al. (2022), who observed that trade unions had a notable impact on welfare payments, as reported through interviews. However, while financial and welfare support may be present, the perceived lack of motivational support points to a gap between union services and teachers' professional expectations. Likewise, human capital theory, sustained motivation and professional support are crucial investments that enhance workers' productivity and value. When unions fail to support motivation adequately, they risk underutilizing the potential of their members. In the long term, this weakens professional growth and reduces the return on investment in human capital for individual teachers and the broader education system.

Motivation strategies by the Union are aligned with teachers' real needs

This statement received the highest percentage of disagreement: 15 teachers (17.4%) strongly disagreed, and 32 (37.2%) disagreed, making a total of 54.6% negative responses. 13 teachers (15.1%) were neutral, and only 8 (9.3%) agreed, and 18 (20.9%) strongly agreed. This shows that more than half of the teachers believe the Union's motivational strategies do not match

their needs. These responses resemble the interviews conducted with the Interviewee, whereas most of them said that:

From what I have observed and heard from my staff, many teachers feel that the Union's motivation strategies are too general and do not reflect their challenges. While some appreciate the financial incentives, others feel unsupported and unrecognized in meaningful ways. There is clearly a disconnect between what is provided and what teachers genuinely need to stay motivated (Interviewee, June 2025).

This highlights a critical gap between the Union's intentions and teachers' experiences. It suggests that for motivation strategies to be effective, they must be more inclusive and responsive to teachers' professionalism. Addressing this disconnect is essential for improving job satisfaction, commitment, and teacher morale. Thus, as supported by Kiangi et al. (2021), teachers should receive frequent training from unions to assist them in dealing with the difficulties they face daily. This aligns with Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes the need for continuous investment in employees' skills and well-being to maximize their productivity and value. Providing regular, targeted training and support through unions can bridge the gap between policy and practice, enhancing teachers' capabilities, motivation, and long-term professional growth.

I feel more committed to my profession because of the Union's support

About the statement concerning commitment in the profession, 15 teachers (17.4%) strongly disagreed, 29 (33.7%) disagreed, and 9 (10.5%) were neutral. Only 8 teachers (9.3%) agreed, and 22 (25.6%) strongly agreed, meaning just 34.9% felt more committed because of the Union's support. On the other hand, 51.1% did not feel that this support strengthened their professional commitment. Moreover, one of the interviewees also revealed that:

Honestly, I cannot name any specific things the TTU has done to help my teachers be more professional. They collect money from teachers and sometimes help with transfers or disagreements. But they do not give us tools for training, or set up mentorship, or even give awards for excellent teaching. No, we have not seen that. My teachers mostly have to help themselves or get a little help from the district

education office. The union seems just to protect teachers when there is trouble, not push them to be excellent. We often feel they are far from our daily efforts to teach well (Interviewee 8, June 2025).

The Interviewee highlights that the TTU is primarily perceived as a reactive body for protection and conflict resolution, rather than a proactive force driving teacher professional development and excellence. This indicates that the union is missing crucial opportunities to foster a continuous improvement and recognition culture that would directly enhance teaching quality and motivation in primary schools. However, as stated by Kuja et al. (2022), trade unions significantly impacted their welfare payments, according to data collected through an interview guide. Additionally, teachers were satisfied with the unions' approaches to welfare issues and these advantages positively affected their productivity. This shows that there is a need for TTU to improve their strategies in enhancing teachers' professionalism.

Nonetheless, teachers were given open-ended questions to provide strategies provided by TTU to motivate them. The majority of teachers revealed that there have not been any strategies that TTU has used to motivate teachers in their professionalism. Besides, other teachers stated that TTU has provided different motivational strategies provided by TTU for their professional growth. They include advocacy for better terms of employment, encouragement of professional development activities, protection of teachers' rights and job security, recognition and awards for excellence, and involvement in educational policy making.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study explored the motivation strategies provided by the Tanzania Teachers' Union (TTU) and how these influence teachers' professionalism in Nyamagana District. The findings showed that although TTU has made efforts to support teachers through initiatives such as advocacy for their rights, financial incentives, and recognition of effort, many teachers still view these measures as limited and inconsistent. They felt that the support provided does not fully address their real challenges, leaving many with low morale and little enthusiasm for professional growth. While financial rewards such as salary increments and allowances are valued, the study found that true motivation also depends on non-financial factors like recognition, access to regular training, and professional guidance.

Many teachers observed that TTU tends to focus more on salary negotiations than on professional development, with few opportunities for training or mentorship to help teachers cope with new educational demands.

The study suggests that TTU should broaden its focus and play a more active role in promoting teachers' professional growth alongside its traditional functions of advocacy and protection. Better communication between the union and its members is essential so that teachers are well informed about available support and can take full advantage of it. TTU is encouraged to design strategies that respond directly to teachers' real needs by conducting regular assessments and giving teachers a stronger voice in education reforms. Recognition programmes that celebrate teachers' achievements, along with welfare initiatives such as health and housing support, could greatly improve morale and job satisfaction. Moreover, providing regular training and mentorship would help teachers strengthen their skills and confidence. Overall, the study concludes that motivation goes beyond financial rewards requires a balanced approach that combines both material and professional support. By doing so, TTU can enhance teachers' professionalism, raise their commitment, and improve the quality of education in Nyamagana and beyond.

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