

# The Influence of Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Commitment in Teaching Public Primary Schools in Tanzania

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## Abstract

This study sought to investigate the influence of teachers' job satisfaction and commitment in teaching public primary schools in Tanzania. Teachers were believed to influence the current practice of school performance in many ways and researchers were interested in examining their motivational aspects that influence job performance in urban public schools. The study employed a sample of 60 public primary school teachers of Temeke district in Dar es Salaam, city. The methods used in data collection were interviews, questionnaire and field observations. Thematic and descriptive analyses were used in the study. The findings indicated that school authorities need to develop strategies to deal with the needs of those teachers who experience less job satisfaction and commitment. Further, it showed that a lot of teachers' dissatisfactions were influenced by a number of aspects including 'working hours, teachers' accommodation, teachers' transport and the burden of the student-teacher ratio. The study recommended that school administrators should demonstrate preparedness to address research on a number of issues and present them to the respective authorities including the government for future interventions. Such issues included the consideration of non-monetary forms of support to provide teachers' motivation in their salaries, provision of a mentoring system to support teachers in working conditions, providing housing and transport, improving teachers performance appraisal systems by ensuring adherence to the principles of the Open Appraisal system (OPRAS), establishing plans for training and development plans of employees to enhance their capacity in their career. These issues were considered to be a source of improving teachers' psychological health and a means to recognize and reward their good performance at work.

**Keywords:** Teachers, job satisfaction, teacher commitment, teacher motivation, urban primary schools

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Tanzania and elsewhere, the purpose of universal primary education is ought to yield positive results to students if teachers are adequately satisfied with their job. Teachers have a critical role to play in supporting development activities in the wider community as they are central to the realization of national and international education goals in poverty reduction (Schweisfurth, 2011; Vavrus, Thomas & Bartlett, 2011; Wedgewood, 2007). However, there are growing concerns that teachers in developing countries including Tanzania are increasingly dissatisfied with their job situation which is reflected in the deteriorating teaching performance. The United Republic of Tanzania, URT (1995) noted that teachers have experienced low and irregular salary payments, lack of proper housing, inadequate teaching facilities, low status and limited opportunities for professional development. The policy emphasizes the provision of quality education through curriculum review, improved teacher management, introduction and use of appropriate performance and assessment strategies. Despite this provision of the policy, still teachers' job satisfaction is not well covered to attain their commitment on their job since teaching environment in Tanzania still does not encourage the idea of commitment. After two decades of falling enrollment rates, concerted efforts have now been made to ensure that all children complete primary education and acquire the basic competencies necessary to lead a rewarding and productive life. According to World Bank (2010), the abolition of tuition and other fees in 2001, children enrolment in primary schools in Tanzania has leapt from 58.521 in 2000 to 96.215 in 2004. Teachers have therefore been under the pressure of politicians, parents and communities to deliver quality primary education to all children. As a result of such pressures there have been instances of teachers receiving intimidation of the public and government leaders.

The public education sector in Tanzania is facing a number of human resource problems including employee turnover and lack of commitment and responsibility among its teachers (Sumra, 2005). The current situation of teachers shows that there is a heavy work load in terms of working hours, a lack of an adequate accommodation incentive, a lack of teachers' transport allowance and a large pupil- teacher ratio that contribute to the rising of stress levels among teachers in schools. Hence this leads to job dissatisfaction and a lack of commitment which is a hindrance to the provision of quality education in Tanzania (Sumra, 2005).

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 *The concept of job satisfaction and commitment*

Job satisfaction and commitment have a direct relation between job performances at work. There are issues that

promote job satisfaction that enhance commitment of teachers in the job performance.

#### 2.1.1 Job satisfaction

The concept job satisfaction defined as process of receiving pleasure or positive emotional state that determines job performance experience of an individual (Mitchell & Larson, 1987). Job satisfaction is a result of employee's perception of how well their job provides those things that are viewed as important (Mitchell & Larson, 1987). Luthans (2006) viewed job satisfaction in three important dimensions that include first job satisfaction determined by an emotional response to a job situation. As such it cannot be seen, it can only be inferred. Second job satisfaction that is often determined by how well outcomes meet or exceed expectations. For instance, if organization participants feel that they are working much harder than others in the department but are receiving fewer rewards they will probably have a negative attitude towards the work. Similarly, if they feel that they are being treated appropriately and paid equitably, they are likely to have positive attitudes towards the job. Third job satisfaction represents several related attitudes which are most important characteristics of a job about which people have effective response for example the work itself, pay and promotion opportunities (Luthans, 2006). The concept provides the basis for understanding the factors that lead to employees' beliefs towards job satisfaction and dissatisfaction at their work places.

#### 2.1.2 Job commitment

Commentators of job commitment view it as a process of expressing identity, desire to belong to an organization, and the willingness to show efforts on behalf of the organization (Ivancevich, 2005; Mowday, Porter & Steer, 1982). Job commitment is simply an individual's expression of performance through identification, involvement and loyalty to the organization. It requires voluntary participate to support attainment of organizational ends and interests. Further, job commitment emanates from three sources, namely the instrumental, affective and normative source (Bussing, 2002).

According to Bussing (2002), instrumental commitment focuses on the idea of exchange and continuance. Buitendach and de Witte (2005) view that continuance commitment can be conceptualized as the propensity for employees to feel committed to their organization based on their perceptions of the associated costs of leaving the organization. The perceived cost of leaving may be exacerbated by a perceived lack of alternatives to replace or make up for the foregone investments. Affective commitment emphasizes attachment to the organization; individuals put all their energy into their work, which is not expected of them. It assumes an individual's attitude towards the organization including the strong belief in and acceptance of organizations goals, willingness to exert considerable efforts on behalf of the organization and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday, Porter & Steers 1982). However, the emphasis of normative commitment is on an employee's feelings of obligation to stay with an organization. Normative commitment encompasses an employee's felt obligation and responsibility towards an organization and is based on feeling of loyalty and obligation (Sparrow & Cooper, 2003). Central to the sources of job commitment is to understand issues or reasons of employees' commitment to the organization. Bragg (2002) identifies four issues or reasons that include:

- a) The "*want to*" commitment. The employees come to work with a positive state of mind and are prepared to go the extra mile for the employer and take on extra responsibilities.
- b) The "*have to*" commitment. The employees remain with the company for many reasons one of the reasons is that they cannot find employment elsewhere. These employees have bad attitudes, poor habits and disobey instructions from the management and supervisors.
- c) The "*ought to*" commitment. The employees are the ones who feel obligated to stay with an organization. They believe that it is not appropriate time to leave the job.
- d) The disconnected or uncommitted group of employees. They have no reason to stay with the company and at every opportunity they are on the lookout for new employment. These employees are neither having intention to stay nor have loyalty to the organization.

Understanding these concepts help someone to analyze issues leading to teachers' loyalty at work when fulfilling the duties and responsibilities in schools. In addition the relationship between the concepts provides appropriate measures for decision making related to employees job performance. The relationship between the two concepts of job satisfaction and commitment cannot be separated due to the fact that they depend on each other for organizational achievements. For instance where there is satisfaction, commitment is inevitable and vice-versa. Therefore, concepts provide the research a baseline for uncovering teachers' complements or grudges as far as their work place condition is concerned in terms of salaries, student-teacher ratio, housing, transport and other necessary incentives.

### 2.2 Factors that Ensure Job Satisfaction and Commitment

Sempene, Rieger and Roodt (2002) presented a summary of job dimensions that have been established to contribute significantly to employees' job satisfaction. The dimensions are the work itself, pay, promotions, recognition, working condition benefits and supervision. These job dimensions were postulated to have influence on employees' opinions of "how interesting the work is, how well they are doing, and in general how much they enjoy doing it"

(Mc Cormick & Ilgen, 1985).

#### 2.2.1 The Work Itself

The nature of the work performed by employees has a significant impact on their level of job satisfaction (Landy, 1989; Moorhead & Griffen, 2014). The work is viewed as a place where employees draw satisfaction that is interesting and challenging and provides them with status. Greenburg and Baron (2003) add that work itself provides individuals with interesting tasks, opportunities for learning and chance to accept responsibility for example some of most important ingredients that enable workers to be committed include interesting and challenging work, not boring and job that provides status and enhance commitment to workers. However, sometimes giving challenging work to employees may lead to stress and cause poor performance by employees who do not accept challenging work or afraid of losing their reputation.

#### 2.2.2 Pay

Pay refers to the amount of financial compensation that an individual receives as well as the extent to which such compensation is perceived to be equitable. Remuneration and earnings are cognitively complex and multidimensional factors in job satisfaction. Remunerations and earnings such as pay, wages and salaries are recognized to be significant to influence workers to be committed to their work (Greenburg & Baron, 2003). Greenburg and Baron (2003) note that money not only helps people to attain the basic needs but is also an instrument of providing higher level needs. However, employees often see pay as a reflection of how management views their contribution to their organization, hence become committed to the organization.

#### 2.2.3 Promotion

Employees' opportunities for promotion are also likely to exert an influence on job satisfaction (Landy, 1989; Moorhead & Griffen, 2014). However, Robbins (1998) maintains that promotions provide opportunities for personal growth, increased responsibility and increased social status. For example, Drafke and Kossen (2002) postulate that many people experience satisfaction when they believe that their future prospects are good. This may translate into opportunities for advancement and growth in their current workplace or enhance the chance of finding alternative employment. They maintain that if people feel to have limited opportunities for career advancement, their job satisfaction may decrease. Moreover, not all employees wish to be promoted because such promotions are associated with greater responsibility and tasks of a more complex nature of job, for which the individuals may consider themselves unprepared. If employees perceive the promotion policy as unfair, but do not desire to be promoted, they may still be satisfied. Nonetheless, opportunities for promotion appear to have a significant positive correlation with job satisfaction (Tolbert & Moen, 1998).

#### 2.2.4 Working Conditions

Working conditions is another factor that has a moderate impact on the employees' job satisfaction (Moorhead & Griffen, 2014). According to Luthans (2006), if people work in a clean, friendly environment they may find it easier to come to work, if the opposite should happen, they more likely to find it difficult to accomplish tasks. The author maintained that the working conditions are likely to have a significant impact on job satisfaction when the conditions are either extremely good or poor. Greenburg and Baron (2003) related working conditions with the clean and attractive surroundings, lights, good buildings, good working instruments or facilities and conditions that influence individuals to exert skills and efforts on behalf of the organization. The authors assume that working conditions play a critical role in determining the supply of qualified employees and in influencing their decisions about remaining in the profession. In addition, safe environments, strong administrative leadership, collegial cooperation and sufficient learning resources can improve employees' performance, thus enhancing their commitment to the organization and their job satisfaction.

The discussed concepts of the work itself, pay and promotion provide a baseline for the general working conditions essential for developing satisfaction and commitment of teachers on job. If the work is less tiresome, the pay is reasonable to the workers and there are promotion opportunities for career development, in such a situation satisfaction and commitment levels are high and the vice versa is true. Therefore, the satisfaction and commitment concepts are useful in understanding teachers' attitudes towards the work itself, pay and promotion opportunities according to their levels of performance at work places. The present study investigated factors affects teachers' job satisfaction and commitment in public primary schools in Tanzania using Dar es Salaam region as an example. In this regard, the study addressed three research questions that include:

- i. What are the conditions affects teachers' job satisfaction and commitment in public primary schools in Tanzania?
- ii. How job dissatisfaction and lack of commitment of public primary school teachers negatively affects the provision of quality education in Tanzania?
- iii. What are the recommendations/suggestions for the future improvement of teachers' job satisfaction and commitment in public primary schools in Tanzania?

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative research methods were used to

gather the respondents' opinions, ideas, feelings and emotions towards their job satisfaction and commitment. Quantitative research methods were used to obtain data in numerical form and presented them in forms of tables and graphs. Quantitative and qualitative methods were to gather information that could respond to the research questions. This study was conducted in Temeke district of Dar es Salaam region and it involved a sample of 60 teachers in public primary schools including 24 males and 36 females. A simple random sampling technique was used to obtain 60 teachers. The sampling technique was used to obtain 6 wards of Temeke urban among 30 wards in the area. From each of these wards, one school was selected in which 6 female teachers and 4 male teachers were represented in sample.

The study used semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and field observations to gather information. In this study semi-structured interviews helped the researcher to gain in-depth understanding about the respondents' internal experiences on matters of teachers' working hours, teachers' accommodation, and teachers' transport, teachers' relationship with the school administration, student-teacher ratio and teachers' opportunity for career development. The questionnaires enquired a series of questions on teachers' time in service, teachers' opportunity for career development, teachers' transport and teachers' working hours. Moreover the questionnaire used to gather information on teachers' level of satisfaction in relation to their salary and student-teacher ratio as well as the role played by the government on teachers' dissatisfaction. Another method involved the researcher's direct observations of documents, work environment and respondents practices- without questioning the respondents during data collection. The direct observation by the researcher was used to collect data on the actual teachers' working hours, teachers' accommodation status, teachers' means of transports, and teachers' relationship with the school administration and student- teacher ratio. Qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis in which main themes were grouped based on respondents' data. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively with the help of MS - Excel computer software and presented in frequencies and percentages and finally organized them in different forms including tables and graphs for easier interpretation.

#### **4.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

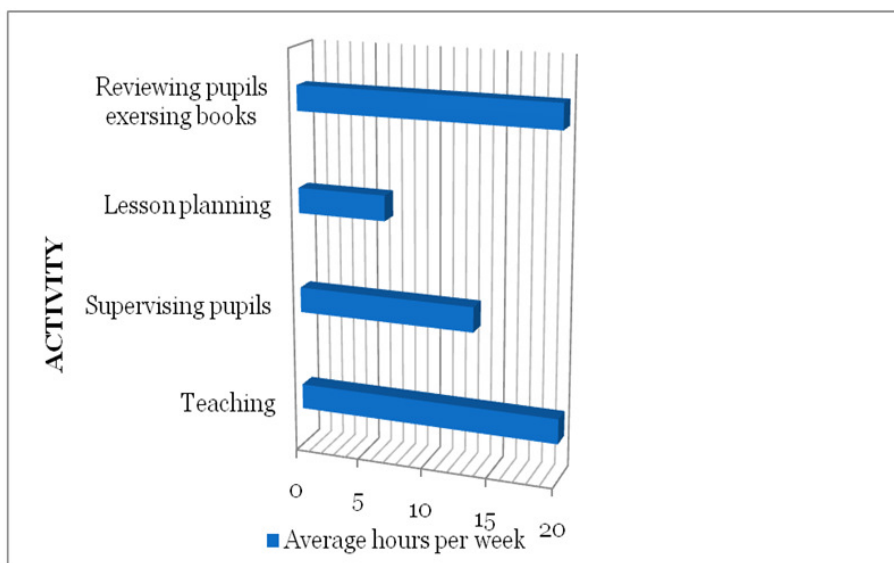
The study presented the conditions that affect teachers' job satisfaction and commitment in teaching public primary schools, the ways in which job dissatisfaction and lack of commitment negatively affects teachers in the provision of quality education as well as the suggestions to be taken by authorities to improve teachers' job satisfaction and commitment in public primary schools in Tanzania.

##### ***Teachers' satisfaction level of working conditions***

Working conditions play a critical role in determining the recruitment of qualified employees and influencing their decisions to remain in the profession. This may either determine recruitment capacities through attracting potential applicants into the organization and encourage workers' retention within the organization if working conditions are good or discourage potential workers coming in and more so encourage turnover if the working conditions are poor. Findings presented a number of issues regarding teachers' satisfaction levels of working conditions including work load, accommodation, distance travelled from home to school, work relationships, exposure to opportunity for teachers' training development and their salary satisfaction levels.

##### ***Time spent by teachers working at work place***

Teaching workload had several dimensions including the amount of time spent working, hours spent on teaching and the number of students in each class. The amount of time a teacher devotes to his work or her job is partly self determined reflecting not only on what the school expected of them but also the teachers' efficiency, enthusiasm and commitment. This research revealed that teachers worked for an average of 15.13 hours extra per week. Teachers spent more time (20 hours/week) on teaching followed by reviewing pupils' exercise books (19.96 hours/week), lesson planning the least time (16.78 hour/week), and meaning that the least time was spent on lesson preparation, as figure 1 shows.



**Figure 1. Teachers' in time spending**

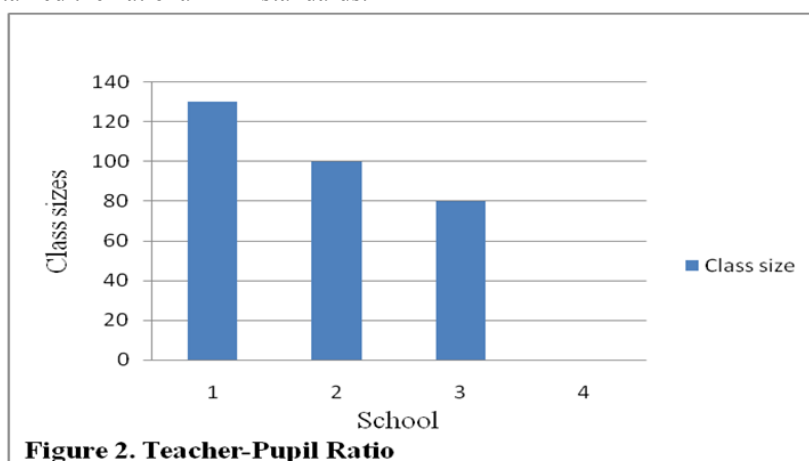
Source: Field survey, June 2016

Figure 1 shows how working more than the required hours has impacted on teachers' training program. One teacher had the following remarks:

Teachers are supposed to allocate adequate time for lesson planning which includes preparing ourselves for the next classes. This ensures proper delivery and ensures pupils' understanding; however this is not the case as the classes I teach are overcrowded. Therefore, this means I have to allocate more time for reviewing pupils' exercise books and supervising them and spend less time on lesson planning. (A male teacher in 'B' school).

***Pupil-Teacher ratio-(PTR)***

PTR is a proxy indicator for measuring education quality. It measures the average number of pupils in a teacher's classroom during a period and represents an important indicator of the working conditions of teachers. It indicates whether a large class size makes teachers stressful. It is a measure of efficiency and gives a picture on easiness or difficulty on pupil learning. According to the URT (1995), the PTR for Primary School level is 45:1 which is against the current findings that indicated an average PTR of 100:1, as Figure 2 indicates. This implies that the country has not attained the national PRT standards.



**Figure 2. Teacher-Pupil Ratio**

The majority of teachers expressed their views that a small class size is desirable to allow pupils to be attentive and responsive to their teachers during classroom interaction. Further, they made a caution that the increase in enrolment rates makes it difficult for some pupils to meet their teachers personally or the teachers to know the problems and behavior of some students who need support. One teacher asserted:

In my class I have 130 pupils, the only thing I can do is to teach them as a class. There is no time for me to attend to each pupil's learning difficulties. You know children learn at different paces so if you do not assist slow learners they are likely to become failures. More over the situation does not favor us to accomplish our duties efficiently. (A female teacher in 'A' school).

Some teachers have devised means of coping with the increasing number of pupils by focusing on the

brightest pupils and leaving the slow learners behind, hence encouraging labeling of students in learning, exclusive education. Such a strategy is against the universal primary education policy on education for all and the right to education. UPE emphasizes on inclusive education in addressing illiteracy challenges. More so, the pupil-teacher ratio corroborates with Ngidi and Sibaya (2002) conclusion that poor physical conditions including overcrowding of pupils in the classes overworks teachers and reduces their morale in teaching.

#### **Availability of accommodation to teachers**

This study revealed that out of 1440 Primary school teachers who are currently employed by Temeke Municipal Council, only 101 (7%) teachers have been provided with accommodation and the rest 1339 (93%) teachers have not been provided with accommodation. The findings suggested that where teachers cannot live near the school, they are likely to spend a lot of time travelling from home to school. Such a small proportion for accommodation arrangements, the majority of teachers interviewed expressed their dissatisfaction with regard to the situation. As one teacher explained:

I cannot afford to rent a decent house as my salary is too low. Renting a decent house in this city could cost my whole monthly salary. I just live in a leaky house with my four kids and when it rains at night, occasionally, I miss a sleep which affects my performance at work. I suggest the government to solve the housing problem for us teachers. (A female teacher in 'C' school).

Moreover, the study has revealed that the school houses available were not only a few but also the majority of them were too small to accommodate teachers with their families. The findings corroborates with Greenburg and Baron (2003) assertion regarding an inflexible influence on teachers level of job commitment due to a feeling that the government is not putting enough efforts on improving teachers' working conditions. Above all the assertion justifies the argument that public primary teachers are not satisfied with the government's efforts to provide them with accommodation services.

#### **Distance from home to school**

This study reported that teachers in Temeke area travel by own means an average distance of two kilometers, - with a minimum of one kilometer to a maximum of ten kilometers - to school. The distance covered by teachers from home to school is one of the burden facing public primary school teachers. However, the transport issue is one of the most important services that could influence performance teachers working in big cities including Dar es Salaam. As one teacher from B school recommended I live at Mwenge, where I have to board two buses to reach the school, therefore I wake up ... [early] at 5.00 am daily. It is really tiresome. This recommendation provides clues regarding teachers' frustration and testifies Luthans's (2006) conclusion that if people work in a friendly environment they will find it easier to come to work and if the opposite happens, they will find it difficult to accomplish their tasks.

#### **Opportunity for career development**

The study attempted to assess the status of opportunities for teachers' self-advancement in the district revealed that 75% of teachers had never received any type of training for the past 5 years. It revealed that only 25% of the teachers had the opportunity for training in that period specifically in science subjects, store management and HIV/AIDS counseling indicating that some other areas of specialization were not considered. 8% of teachers were either very satisfied or just satisfied with their monthly salaries and 90% of teachers indicated that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their monthly salary. This is what Armstrong (2008) acknowledges that an organizational commitment could be harnessed through the opportunity for self-advancement among individuals. Nevertheless, the findings suggest a poor achievement of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training Policy which requires teachers to receive an average of 10 days of in-service training a year (United Republic of Tanzania - URT, 1995). Table 1 illustrates the extent to which teachers' opportunities to training are considered in the studied area.

**Table 1: Teachers' opportunity for self training**

Variable	Number of teachers	Percentage
Not received any training	45	75%
Received science subject training	6	10%
Received store management training	1	1.70%
Received HIV/AIDS counseling training	8	13.30%

Source: Field survey, June 2016

#### **Teachers' relationship with school administration**

It was observed from the findings that most of the teachers had a good relationship with their supervisors. For example, there was a good interaction between the heads of schools and teachers as there was no teachers' fear to meet their supervisors and generally the freedom of expression appeared to be high teachers and school heads. Therefore the study indicated that there seemed to be no problem related to teachers' relationship with their school administration in the district which reflected Armstrong's (2008) assertion that commitment is enhanced if managers can gain the confidence and respect of their teams.

### **Teachers' level of income satisfaction**

Furthermore, the results reported that teachers on their level of satisfaction with their salaries showed that only 8% of the teachers were either very satisfied or just satisfied with their monthly salaries while the rest 90% were either very dissatisfied or dissatisfied or neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. The findings reflected Greenburg and Baron's (2003) assertion that pay, wages, and salaries have a significant influence on workers' commitment. Table 2 indicates the rates of teachers' satisfaction levels with monthly salary.

Table 2. Teachers' satisfaction levels

<b>Ratings</b>	<b>Number of teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very dissatisfied	25	41%
Dissatisfied	26	43%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	6%
Satisfied	5	8%
Very satisfied	0	0%
Total	60	100%

### **5.0 CONCLUSIONS**

Findings indicated that the working experience of teachers volunteered to participate in this research ranged between 2 to 35 years. The majority of the respondents (64%) had the experience of 10 years or less in the teaching profession, 26% of the respondents had the experience between 11 to 20 years and 10% of the respondents had teaching experience between 21 to 35 years. The findings implied that the researcher dealt with respondents who are familiar with their working environment and truly an experienced worker is reliable to provide adequate information on matters pertaining to job satisfaction and commitment. The study revealed teachers worked for an average of 15.31 hours per week, the average pupils- teacher ratio was 100:1; with the minimum ratio of 80:1 and maximum ratio of 130:1. Out of 1440 primary school teachers, only 101 teachers (7%) were provided with accommodation and the rest 1339 (93%) had no accommodation. Teachers without accommodation travelled by own means an average distance of two kilometers - with a minimum of one kilometer to a maximum of ten kilometers - to school. The majority of teachers appeared to have good relationship with their school administration. The study concludes that several challenges have contributed to low levels of satisfaction among teachers. Among these are teachers' attitude regarding their pay, working conditions and opportunity for career development. These appear in three aspects, namely the low monthly salaries that are unable to meet their basic needs; the inadequate opportunity and capacity for teachers' career development - a few number of teachers received in-service training; there is lack of transport and accommodation support as well as the increased teacher workload due to the undesirable Pupil-Teacher ratio (PRT). Many teachers expressed concerns about their workload, as they felt they had many teaching periods and big classes to attend to. However, the study revealed that the relationship between the teachers and their administrations was not a problem as the teachers harmoniously interacted with their heads of school and hence enhancing teachers' job satisfaction and commitment on this aspect. The majority of the teachers emphasized on their ambitions to join higher learning institutions to study courses other than education that they believe is more paying and have better working conditions.

The study recommends that school authorities need to develop strategies to deal with the needs of those teachers who experience less job satisfaction and commitment. With attention to this, school administrators should demonstrate preparedness to address research on a number of recommendations for future intervention as suggested as follows:

- a) The government of Tanzania should consider non-monetary forms of support to provide teachers' motivation in addition to salaries and cash payments. This could be in form of in-service training to support teachers' in their tasks and provide necessary motivation. In addition, provision of a mentoring system to support teachers and improvement of working conditions by providing housing and necessary school teaching facilities. The teachers' accommodation problem should be given its due attention through the introduction of a well designed rental and affordable loan scheme for teachers.
- b) Furthermore, more efforts should be devoted in improving teachers' performance appraisal systems by upholding and ensuring adherence to the existing Open Appraisal system (OPRAS). This could be done by ensuring the devising of a mechanism for dialogue between the appraiser and the appraised. This is likely to improve performance than a system of staff appraisal which is closed. Employee performance appraisal should serve as a tool for identification of the employees' training needs, where performance appraisal should serve as a means to an end and not an end itself.
- c) Training and development plans for employees should be developed and implemented to enhance their performance capacity. This would enable employees to perceive appraisal as a useful tool in their career and a source of a healthy psychological contract.
- d) More still, meaningful performance appraisal should provide a means to recognize and reward good

performance including performance related pay, salary progression guided by performance or a non-pay reward should be used as a positive reinforcement in order for employees to buy into the imperatives of OPRAS.

- e) This study has explored factors leading to public primary school teachers' job satisfaction and commitment. It has however, not used many statistical methods to establish the causal and direction of relationships between variables used for the study. Therefore, future research work should focus on the investigation of those variables in relation to teachers' working conditions especially urban public primary schools in Tanzania.

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