

The Interplay of Primary School Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Work Performance in Tanzania Public Service Management

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Abstract

This study assessed the influence of job satisfaction on the work performance of primary school teachers in public schools, using Mkuranga District Council as a case study. Mixed method approach was employed in which data were collected from a sample of 120 respondents. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were subjected to content analysis. The findings indicate a strong relationship between job satisfaction and teacher performance, with 97% of respondents reporting that job dissatisfaction adversely affects their effectiveness in public primary schools. The study further reveals that a supportive work environment plays a critical role in enhancing teachers' morale and performance. Key factors influencing job satisfaction include timely and adequate remuneration, a conducive working environment, access to teaching and learning resources, a positive relationship between staff management, and opportunities for professional development. Based on these findings, the study recommends that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) strengthen policies aimed at improving teachers' working conditions, particularly by ensuring competitive salaries and timely payment of allowances. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of sensitising teachers about their professional rights and entitlements through regular workshops and seminars. Beyond financial incentives, the findings emphasise the need for holistic strategies that foster supportive school environments to sustainably enhance teacher motivation and performance in public primary schools.

Keywords: *Job satisfaction, Remuneration, Working Conditions, Work Performance*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A teacher plays a critical role in shaping the future of a nation, which makes understanding their job satisfaction essential for ensuring their continued engagement and effectiveness (Baluyos et al., 2019). Research on job satisfaction and teachers' performance is crucial for school administrators, policymakers, and educators alike, as it helps to identify ways to motivate teachers and improve their productivity (Gana et al., 2016). Satisfied and motivated teachers are more likely to positively influence student learning, while a lack of motivation and job satisfaction can have a detrimental impact on student outcomes. Therefore, it is important for educational leaders to prioritize initiatives that foster teacher motivation and job satisfaction (Kyara, 2015).

Job satisfaction is vital for building teacher commitment and productivity within school systems. Teachers who feel fulfilled in their roles tend to demonstrate greater dedication, which, in turn, enhances their engagement and involvement in the school community (Shila & Sevilla, 2015). This sense of fulfillment not only boosts teachers' morale but also contributes positively to the overall success of the school (Sadasa, 2016). Maqbool (2017) also points out that teacher job satisfaction is closely linked to student achievement, highlighting that improvement in teacher satisfaction and commitment can lead to significant educational advancements.

However, it should be noted that the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher performance is a subject of global interest. Studies have consistently indicated that job satisfaction is positively correlated with better teacher performance. For example, Judge and Bono (2019) found that teachers with higher levels of job satisfaction tend to perform better and are less likely to leave their jobs. In addition, studies like that of Harter et al. (2020) demonstrate that job satisfaction leads to greater employee engagement, productivity, and improved organizational outcomes, which directly impact teacher performance.

In regions such as South Tulare County, California, research shows that high levels of job satisfaction among teachers correlate with improved retention, teaching effectiveness, and student performance (Stoll-Lollis, 2015). Teachers in these schools valued their roles and found fulfillment in the responsibilities associated with their positions. However, satisfaction varied depending on factors like tenure and years of service (Ghavifekr & Pillai, 2016). In Turkey, elementary science teachers generally report high job satisfaction and self-efficacy, but factors like increased class sizes and teaching hours can lead to emotional exhaustion. Nevertheless, aspects such as professional community, peer

collaboration, and autonomy in classroom decisions remain strong predictors of teacher job satisfaction (Stearns et al., 2015).

In Africa, Amponsah-Tawiah and Mensah (2016), Macky & Boxall, (2019), and Mwita (2019) revealed that job satisfaction significantly influenced workers' performance and their intentions to remain in their roles.

Haule's (2017) research in the banking sector in Tanzania demonstrated that job satisfaction directly influenced employee retention and organizational performance, a finding that aligns with international literature. However, in the specific context of the Mkuranga District Council, the relationship between job satisfaction and teacher performance is not well understood. Local dynamics, challenges, and opportunities may differ significantly from those in other regions of Tanzania. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring how job satisfaction affects teacher performance in Mkuranga's public primary schools. By doing so, it will offer insights into the specific challenges teachers face and identify strategies to improve their job satisfaction, ultimately contributing to better teaching practices and student outcomes.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation (Herzberg et al., 1959), which distinguishes between hygiene factors and motivators that affect employee job satisfaction and work performance. Hygiene factors, which include salary, organizational policies, supervision, relationships with others, and physical working conditions, do not directly motivate employees. However, if these factors are lacking, they can lead to dissatisfaction and hinder performance. In contrast, motivators, such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, meaningful work, and growth opportunities, are built into the job and directly improve job satisfaction, commitment, and productivity. In educational settings, Herzberg's theory helps explain why simply improving material conditions often does not result in lasting performance gains unless intrinsic motivational factors are also considered. Studies using this framework suggest that after meeting basic workplace standards, intrinsic rewards play a crucial role in influencing teachers' instructional efforts, professional commitment, and retention (Dartey, 2011). However, some critics point out that the theory assumes that all employees have the same needs and does not adequately consider contextual and structural limitations, especially in public sector environments in low-income countries. In these situations, external factors, particularly pay, may act not just as hygiene factors but as key motivators because of their importance in meeting basic needs. Despite the noted criticisms, Herzberg's framework remains useful for examining how both external and internal factors affect teachers' job satisfaction

and work performance in Tanzania's public service system. It thus serves as a solid theoretical base for this study.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Teachers' Working Conditions and Work Performance

A substantial body of knowledge of international and regional research shows that teachers' working conditions are vital for work performance, both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction and commitment. Studies in various educational contexts consistently find that supportive leadership, adequate facilities, manageable workloads, and positive relationships with colleagues boost teacher effectiveness, attendance, and engagement in teaching (Baharuddin, 2021; Wea et al., 2022). In addition to physical conditions, researchers increasingly point out the importance of the social and emotional aspects of the school environment. Evidence indicates that poor relationships, emotional isolation, and weak collaboration among teachers decrease job satisfaction and negatively impact performance (Tabancali, 2016). Studies focused on developing countries also identify poor management, lack of transparency, and political interference as significant sources of dissatisfaction and underperformance among teachers (Sahito & Vaisanen, 2019). Studies across different districts reveal ongoing issues such as inadequate teaching resources, poor housing, long commutes, limited opportunities for professional growth, and heavy workloads (Shonje, 2016; Chikoyo, 2020). These conditions are linked with low morale, increased absenteeism, and lower quality of instruction. Mixed-methods studies show that improvements in housing, teaching materials, and administrative support can significantly boost teacher commitment and student learning outcomes (Idd & Kiwonde, 2022; Myeya & Rupia, 2022). Some studies suggest that non-monetary recognition and respect from peers have a greater influence on teacher performance compared to financial rewards alone (Shambe, 2019). In contrast, research on workplace stress in Tanzanian schools finds that excessive workloads, low pay, and limited promotion opportunities create chronic stress that undermines performance, regardless of intrinsic motivation (Nyakeko et al., 2023). However, many research efforts explore working conditions or performance separately, without adequately examining how job satisfaction affects this relationship, especially in public primary schools. Additionally, research on district-level public service contexts, like Mkuranga District, is scarce, which limits the policy relevance of existing findings.

2.2.2 Teachers' Remuneration and Work Performance

Teacher pay has received considerable attention as a key external factor affecting work performance, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Generally, research shows a positive link between pay and teacher performance, although

the strength and consistency of this relationship differ across contexts. Studies from East Africa highlight that base salaries, overtime pay, and income security programs significantly affect teachers' commitment, attendance, and teaching methods (Kiprop, 2018; Ssegawa, 2019; Zikanga et al., 2021). Importantly, several studies found that income security and predictability impact performance more than merely high salaries, underscoring the value of financial stability. Research indicates that inadequate and poorly structured pay packages lower teacher commitment and encourage teachers to seek additional income, which distracts from their instructional focus (Mbarouk, 2017; Ephrahem et al., 2022). At the same time, these studies note that pay works alongside other factors, including working conditions, leadership quality, and professional development opportunities. However, the connection between pay and performance is not straightforward. Some studies find high performance despite average pay, especially where intrinsic motivation or strong organizational cultures are present (Anumaka et al., 2021). In contrast, data from economically constrained settings indicate that consistently low pay threatens the quality of education by undermining teachers' welfare (Mukomana, 2021). A major limitation of this body of work is its tendency to view pay as a standalone factor in determining performance.

2.2.3 Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Work Performance

The relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and work performance has produced varied findings, reflecting increasing complexity in the field. Many studies indicate a positive relationship, suggesting that satisfied teachers are more engaged, committed, and effective in their teaching (Amin, 2015; Huimin & Taien, 2022; Lima & Allida, 2023). Key aspects of satisfaction identified include promotion opportunities, quality of supervision, work environment, and compensation. Conversely, some studies challenge the idea of a direct link between satisfaction and performance. Research by Cortez et al. (2021) and Cummings (2021) shows that while teachers may report moderate to high job satisfaction, this does not always translate into better performance or improved student outcomes. These findings imply that structural limitations, accountability pressures, and lack of professional autonomy can weaken the connection between satisfaction and behavior in public education. Some studies have taken more integrated approaches, emphasizing the roles of cognitive commitment, job security, and support from the organization (Karkita, 2018; Irene & Michael, 2024). These studies suggest that job satisfaction leads to better performance when teachers feel recognized, treated fairly, and have long-term career stability. Despite these developments, there is still limited empirical evidence from public primary schools in Tanzania, especially research that explicitly addresses how

job satisfaction and work performance interact within public service management systems.

Conceptual Framework

Based on literature Review, Figure 2.1 presents the conceptual framework of the study.

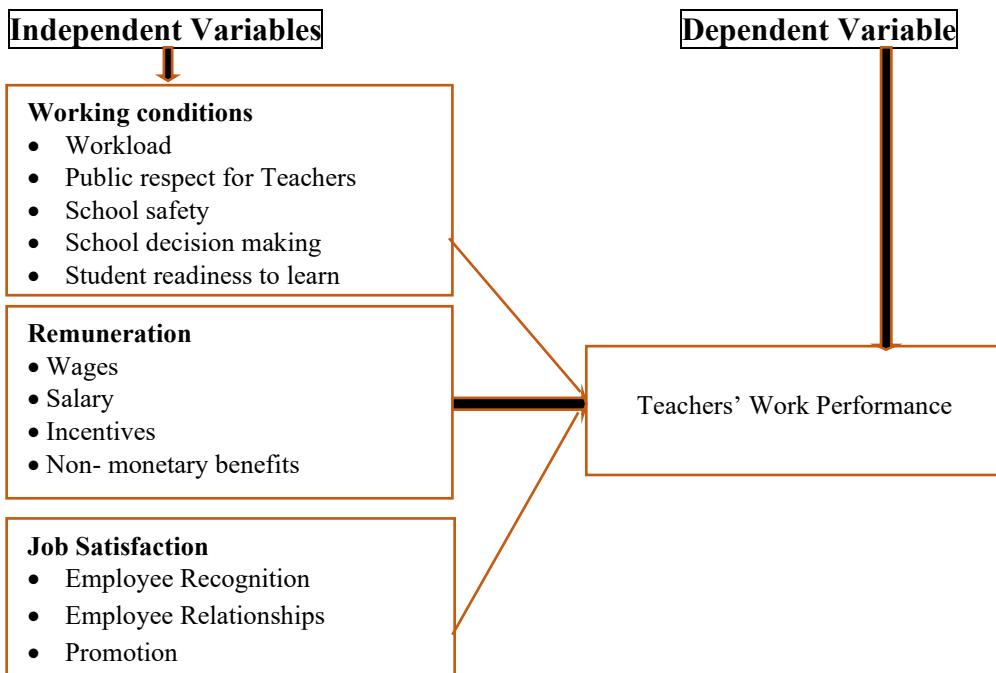


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2024)

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a mixed-method case study design to assess the interplay between job satisfaction and work performance among public primary schools' teachers in Mkuranga District Council, Coast Region, Tanzania. The district was purposively selected due to its strategic importance in primary education delivery, the predominance of government-owned primary schools, and persistent challenges related to teacher working conditions and limited staff development opportunities. The target population comprised 173 respondents, including primary school teachers, district- and ward-level education administrators, and representatives from non-governmental organizations involved in education-related programs. A total sample of 124 respondents was determined using Yamane's formula at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Simple random sampling was applied to select NGO respondents to

minimize selection bias, while purposive sampling was used to select primary school teachers and key education officials, namely the District Pre- and Primary Education Officer, Academic Officers, Ward Education Officers, and a Statistical Logistics Officer, based on their professional roles, experience, and access to relevant institutional information. Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale to measure dimensions of job satisfaction and work performance, while semi-structured interviews were conducted with education administrators to capture managerial and contextual perspectives. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics to assess the interplay between variables, whereas qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis to identify recurrent patterns and explanatory insights. Integration of quantitative and qualitative findings enhanced the robustness and credibility of the results through triangulation. Ethical approval was obtained from relevant authorities, informed consent was secured from all participants, and confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the study.

3.1 Validity and Reliability

Ensuring the validity and reliability of research findings is fundamental to upholding the integrity and credibility of a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). In this research, which explored the influence of job satisfaction on the work performance of primary school teachers in public schools within the Mkuranga District Council, several strategies were implemented to enhance the reliability and validity of the results. As noted by Amupanda (2023), a measurement tool is deemed valid when it accurately assesses the intended construct. To ensure the validity of this study, the content of the research instruments was thoroughly reviewed, and the scales were systematically evaluated in relation to the research objectives. Additionally, Duke et al. (2020) highlight that research instruments are considered reliable when they consistently yield stable results over time. In this study, test-retest reliability was applied to evaluate the consistency of the instruments. Furthermore, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was employed to assess the suitability of the data for factor analysis. The KMO value was found to be 0.763 (76.3%), which exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.5, indicating that the data met the required standard for reliability.

Table 1: Validity

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.763
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	247.853
Approx. Chi-Square	
Df	210
Sig.	.038

Source: Field data (2024)

The study's reliability was determined using the Cronbach's alpha formula ($\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} (1 - \frac{\sum \sigma}{\sigma})$); Where σ^2 = variance of one test item. Other variables are identical to the KR-20 formula. The reliability statistics show that the Cronbach's alpha values for all factors exceed the threshold, suggesting that the internal consistency of the conceptual framework of the scale is reliable, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Reliability Statistics

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Job satisfaction factors	8	0.643
Teacher performance factors	9	0.732
Relationship between job satisfaction and teacher performance	6	0.631
Strategies for improving job satisfaction	5	0.873

Source: Field data (2024)

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Teachers' Working Conditions and Work Performance

The first objective of the study examined how teachers' working conditions influence their work performance in public primary schools under the Mkuranga District Council. The findings indicate that teachers' performance is shaped by a combination of structural, managerial, and relational workplace conditions, rather than by any single factor in isolation. As summarized in Table 3, respondents most frequently identified job security, participatory decision-making, and positive working relationships as central influences on their professional performance. These were followed by school heads' supervision, workload, promotion opportunities, and access to professional training. The distribution of responses highlights the multidimensional nature of teachers' working environments and underscores that performance is embedded in both institutional arrangements and everyday professional interactions. Job security emerged as the most salient factor influencing performance. Within the Tanzanian public service context, secure employment appears to provide teachers with psychological stability and professional assurance, enabling sustained commitment to instructional responsibilities. Teachers who perceive their employment as stable are more likely to invest time and effort in lesson preparation, learner assessment, and classroom management, whereas uncertainty may discourage long-term professional engagement. Also, teachers highlighted the importance of supportive supervision by the heads of schools and involvement in school-level decision-making. These findings suggest that teachers perform more effectively when schools operate as collaborative

professional communities rather than as strictly hierarchical organizations. Qualitative evidence from district education officials reinforces these findings. One academic officer noted that while the government continues to improve teachers' working environments, significant challenges persist:

"The government, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, is making efforts to improve teachers' working conditions. However, there are persistent challenges such as heavy workload, inadequate housing, shortages of teaching and learning materials, limited training opportunities, and delayed career progression. Teachers' performance largely depends on how well these working conditions are planned and managed." (Academic Officer, Mkuranga District Council, July 2024).

This observation highlights the gap between policy intentions and school-level realities, particularly in resource-constrained in public education settings. From a theoretical perspective, these findings align with organizational environment factors that distinguish between technical conditions (such as tools, infrastructure, and workload) and the human environment (including leadership practices, collegial relationships, and decision-making processes). The prominence of human and governance-related factors in this study suggests that leadership quality and institutional culture are particularly influential in shaping teacher performance. The findings are consistent with earlier studies by Ahiri et al. (2023), who demonstrated that supportive teaching environments enhance job satisfaction and performance, while Chisaka and Gichinga (2018) emphasized the combined influence of work environment, leadership, and compensation on teacher effectiveness.

Table 3: Responses from Public Schools Teachers on Working Conditions

Variable	Frequency (n=120)	Percent (%)
Job security	26	22
Workload	16	13
Good working relationships	20	17
School heads' supervision	19	16
Participative decision making	21	17
Promotion opportunities	12	10
Teachers' training	6	5
Total	120	100

Source: Field data (2024)

4.2 Teachers' Remuneration and Work Performance

The second objective explored the role of remuneration in shaping teachers' job satisfaction and work performance. The findings in Table 4 indicate that

remuneration influences performance primarily through its effects on morale, professional commitment, and occupational well-being. Nearly half of the respondents reported that remuneration enhances teacher morale, while others associated it with increased commitment to work, reduced occupational stress, and lower absenteeism. These results suggest that adequate compensation supports teachers' emotional and psychological engagement with their work, thereby contributing indirectly to improved performance. However, the findings also indicate that remuneration alone is insufficient to sustain high levels of performance. While adequate pay motivates teachers and reduces dissatisfaction, it does not fully compensate for challenges such as excessive workload, limited instructional resources, or constrained opportunities for professional growth. This interpretation is supported by insights from district-level administrators.

The District Pre-Primary and Primary Education Officer explained:

“Public school teachers are paid according to a standardized public service salary structure designed to ensure equity. Compared to previous periods, remuneration has improved, although it remains dependent on the national budget and salary scales.” (DPPEO, Mkuranga District Council, July 2024)

The standardized salary system promotes fairness but limits flexibility in recognizing individual performance differences. This reflects a broader tension in public service management between equity and performance-based incentives. These findings support the argument that effective reward systems should integrate both financial and non-financial incentives. Sardjana *et al.* (2019) similarly observed that compensation influences employee productivity, but its effectiveness depends on how it is combined with recognition, appraisal, and supportive working conditions. Accordingly, Richardson *et al.* (2018) underscore that recognition serves as a potent motivator, fulfilling teachers' psychological need to feel valued and appreciated.

Table 4: The Effects of Teachers' Remuneration on their Work Performance

Variable	Frequency (n=120)	Percent (%)
Increase morality among the teachers	59	49
Commitment on working	34	28
Decrease work-related stress	20	17
Reduce teachers' absenteeism	7	6
Total	120	100

Source: Field data (2024)

4.3 Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Work Performance

The third objective examined the relationship between teachers' job satisfaction and work performance. The findings in Figure 2 reveal a strong perceived

association between these constructs, with most respondents indicating that higher job satisfaction corresponds with improved professional performance. Teachers who reported greater satisfaction also reported stronger commitment, increased instructional enthusiasm, and greater willingness to support learners beyond formal teaching hours. These results suggest that job satisfaction functions as a central mediating mechanism through which working conditions and remuneration influence performance outcomes. Importantly, not all dimensions of job satisfaction appeared equally influential. Satisfaction related to career advancement opportunities, access to teaching resources, and recognition of performance was more closely associated with improved performance than satisfaction derived solely from interpersonal relationships. This suggests that instrumental and growth-oriented factors play a particularly important role in shaping professional effort within public primary schools. School administrators confirmed that teacher performance is commonly assessed through indicators such as student learning outcomes, teaching commitment, collaboration with leadership, and engagement in additional academic support activities. These performance dimensions are inherently motivational, reinforcing the importance of satisfaction as a driver of effectiveness. These findings align with existing literature by Lamaro and Okello (2024), who found that higher job satisfaction is associated with better teaching outcomes, while Dunifa and Ilham (2023) emphasized the role of satisfaction in enhancing primary school teachers' performance. Bayulos et al. (2019) further demonstrated that satisfied teachers are more likely to create positive and productive classroom environments, which ultimately benefit student learning. In a similar vein, Wang (2021) noted that teachers who feel that there are clear and accessible paths to professional development within their roles are more likely to be motivated and engaged.

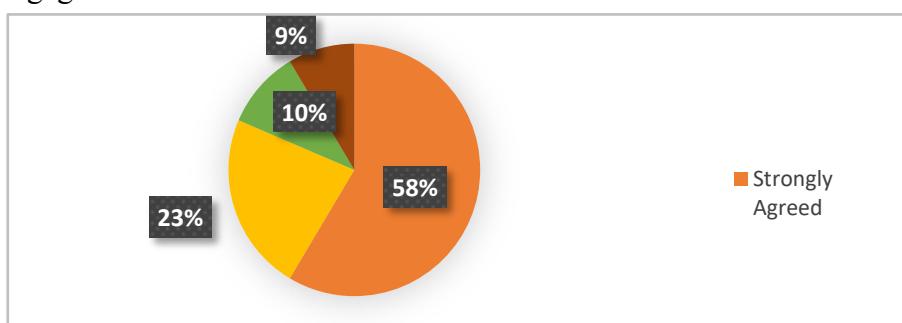


Figure 2: The Significant Relationship between the Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Work Performance

Source: Field data (2024)

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, several policy- and practice-oriented recommendations are proposed to enhance teachers' job satisfaction and work performance within Tanzania's public primary school system. First, the study recommends that the Government of Tanzania, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and its affiliated departments, strengthen efforts to improve teachers' working conditions comprehensively and sustainably. Particular attention should be given to ensuring that remuneration, allowances, and other employment benefits are not only adequate but also disbursed in a timely and transparent manner. Delays or inadequacies in salaries and allowances were found to undermine teachers' morale and weaken their commitment to professional responsibilities. Beyond remuneration, the Ministry should prioritize improvements in workload management, availability of teaching and learning resources, access to housing where feasible, and structured opportunities for professional development and career progression. Addressing these interconnected dimensions would contribute to a more supportive work environment, thereby enhancing teacher motivation, accountability, and performance.

Second, the study recommends that teachers' unions play a more proactive role in strengthening teachers' awareness and understanding of their rights and entitlements. This can be achieved through regular capacity-building initiatives such as workshops, seminars, and targeted communication forums that inform teachers about employment conditions, remuneration structures, allowances, and promotion procedures. By improving teachers' knowledge of these issues, unions can empower their members to engage constructively with education authorities and school leadership. In addition, teachers' unions should continue to advocate for improved working conditions through evidence-based dialogue with policymakers, ensuring that teachers' concerns are effectively represented in education sector reforms.

Third, the study recommends that public primary school teachers themselves adopt a broader and more holistic perspective on job satisfaction and professional performance. While remuneration is an important determinant of motivation, the findings indicate that teacher performance is also strongly influenced by non-monetary factors such as positive relationships with colleagues and school leadership, supportive supervision, access to adequate teaching facilities, and opportunities for professional growth. Teachers are therefore encouraged to actively engage in collaborative practices, participate in school-level decision-making, and pursue continuous professional development where opportunities exist. Cultivating a professional mindset that values both intrinsic and extrinsic

sources of motivation can enhance teachers' effectiveness and resilience, even within challenging institutional contexts.

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