



Original Article

## Teachers' Perceptions on the Impact of Teachers Union on Improvement of Teachers' Living Conditions in Morogoro Municipality

Celcius Raphael Ndulu<sup>1\*</sup> & Dr. Joachim Mwami, PhD<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jordan University College, P. O. Box 1878, Morogoro-Tanzania.

\* Author for Correspondence ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0678-6695>; Email: [celciusndulu@gmail.com](mailto:celciusndulu@gmail.com)

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The paper examined the teachers' perceptions of the impacts of teachers' unions on the improvement of teachers' living conditions in Morogoro Municipality.

**Keywords:**

*Teachers,  
Perception,  
Union,  
Living Conditions.*

This study used a mixed approach where a descriptive survey was used in the collection of information from the respondents through questionnaires and interviews. Data analysis was done both thematically and using descriptive statistics by using the SPSS version 20 program. The study revealed that the teachers' union has not fully managed to improve the living condition of its members in Morogoro as was thought before. The response of the teachers' union to the problems and complaints of teachers is poor, and therefore most of the teachers are living in poor conditions despite their 02% monthly contribution to the entire union. The study further revealed some areas that need to be improved for the future benefit of the union members. These include the building of houses for teachers in Morogoro Municipality, improving health issues by building large hospitals for teachers in Morogoro Municipality, improving transport for teachers, and hardship allowance for Teachers should also be provided in Morogoro Municipality. The union also must ensure that water and electricity bills in the constructed houses for teachers are settled and scholarships for further studies as well as in-service training are given priority for teachers in Morogoro Municipality. The study recommends that the unions have to ensure that there is always an organic link between the unions and members at the grassroots. To this end, the participation of members in various trade union matters is of paramount importance. Union members should know exactly what is going on within the union. Furthermore, unions need to expand their image and convince the workers that they can deliver remarkable services to the expectations of their members.

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## INTRODUCTION

Tanzania, as elsewhere in the world, responds to the fact that any education with acceptable learning outcomes can only be attained if teachers are adequately motivated. Teachers have a significant role to perform in supporting development activities in the wider community (Putnam and Borko, 2000). In short, teachers are central to the realization of ambitious national and international education and poverty reduction goals. However, there are growing concerns that teachers in Tanzania, as in other developing countries, are increasingly demotivated by their union, which is reflected in the deteriorating teaching performance and learning outcomes. The 1995 Education and Training Policy for example noted that in Tanzania, teachers had experienced low and irregular salary payments, lack of proper housing, inadequate teaching facilities, low status, and limited opportunities for professional development processes (Davidson, 2007). Poor incentives also make most of the qualified and experienced teachers to be interested in working in the rural areas.

However, Kerr (2006) reported that the majority of teachers in schools in Tanzania are suffering from various challenges. One among them is concerned with payments. Teachers are entitled to be paid salary, leave allowances and arrears when they get a promotion. Teachers' payment problem emerged

since the government started to implement Structural Adjustment Programme (SAPs) conditions ties, particularly in the mid of 1980s. Prior to the implementation action of SAPs conditional ties, teachers were paid salaries, leave allowances, transport allowance, rent allowance and teaching allowance. One of the conditional ties imposed by the World Bank and IMF through SAPS was the reduction in public spending on social services including education, at all levels (Brock-Utne et al., 2006). The reduction of public social services affected teachers' payments positively which eventually led to great challenges for teachers such as rent allowance, motivation, transport allowance and teaching allowances which were no longer provided again.

Lyimo (2014) conducted a study to investigate teachers' pay in Tanzania and realized that teachers are earning less than what is required for their human survival. On the other hand, Bakahwemama (2010) and Davidson (2007) pointed out the issue of teachers' payment is one of the factors which motivate teachers to work effectively.

Moreover, the initiatives of Education Training Policy (ETP) in 1995, Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) in 2001 and Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) in 2002 aimed to assist in offering formal education for Tanzania children, improving the

teaching and learning environment and improving teacher's motivation (Mungure, 2009). Generally, the structure of teachers' payment shares most of the pervasive characteristics of public sector payment systems in developing countries. In particular, formal education and professional education mainly determine salary levels. The salary scales for both primary and secondary school teachers are often very flat with very small salary increments awarded on the basis of seniority or experience, with little or no link with actual job performance (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007).

To address the problem of teachers and education in the country, some national efforts and strategies have been put in place; for example, in the years 1999, 2005 and 2010 the government implemented Salary/Pay Reform, which aimed at increasing salaries among the servants (Mutahaba, 2005). Tanzania Teachers' Union (TTU) was established as among the efforts to address the problems facing teachers. It was hoped that TTU would help teachers to get their rights, particularly increased salaries and other incentives in order to retain them at work. TTU was expected to change the social status of teachers in Tanzania by defending their rights.

Anangisye (2009) noted that in Tanzania, teachers and the teaching profession have low status today than during the colonial days and up to a few years after independence. Also, Anangisye revealed that the generality of the teaching view, second chooser's view, and undesirable working and living conditions accounted for the low status of teachers and the teaching profession. Tanzania's teachers' union has been there to defend the rights of teachers in the country (Anangisye, 2009). Teachers' union vision is to become an organization with the highest efficiency in uniting teachers and handling various grievances affecting members, striving for better working conditions and the welfare of teachers and being on the front line in advocating for and protecting the status and dignity of the teaching profession and quality education for all.

The union also has a mission of improving, advocating for and protecting the status and dignity of the teaching career and making sure that quality education is accessible to every Tanzanian child and adult (Tong & Han, 2019). To facilitate this, members have been paying a monthly membership fee to help the teachers union to run the union's business every day. To the best of my knowledge, the study will focus on assessing teachers' perception of the impact on their welfare and whether it benefits teachers due to the fact that many complaints have been raised by some of the teachers' union members that the monthly membership fee is not fully benefiting the members or it is not used for the interest of the members. Some of the members believe that the current poor living standard of the members of the union is a justification that the union is not fully solving the members' problems. With this fact, there is a need to generate data in order to inform the public imperially about the perception of the impacts of teacher's trade union on the welfare of its members by taking inference from Morogoro Municipality

### **Objective of the Study**

To examine the teachers' perceptions on the impacts of teachers' unions in the improvement of teachers' living conditions in Morogoro municipality

### **METHODS**

This study was conducted in Morogoro Municipality; the case study was in public secondary schools. The mixed approach was employed for the study, whereby 92 respondents were used for the study. Data were collected by using questionnaires and interviews. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data.

### **FINDINGS**

The study sought to examine the perception of teachers on the impact of teachers' unions on the improvement of teachers living conditions in

Morogoro Municipality. The findings for this study are based on the responsiveness of the teachers' union towards members' problems and complaints. The study is also interested to know the responsiveness of TTU towards members' problems and complaints.

**TTU Takes up and Responds to Members' Grievances Seriously**

The interest of the study was to examine the teachers' perception of leaders of TTU in discharging their duties as expected. To collect relevant data, the study used questionnaires with open and closed-ended questions. In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to show their conviction on whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement given to them. The findings showed that 54% of the respondents agreed that the union is responsive to members' problems and complaints and, therefore, the union positively affects the living condition of its members by

responding effectively to the problems and complaints of the members.

On the other hand, 10% of the respondents disagreed that the teachers' union is not responsive to members' problems and complaints and, therefore, it is not improving the living conditions of teachers in Morogoro Municipality. 24% of respondents don't understand whether the union was responsive to members' problems and complaints and therefore they were not sure about the contribution of the teachers' union in Morogoro Municipality. 2% of respondents strongly disagree that the union is responsive to members' problems and complaints; these respondents are in the position that the teachers' union is improving the living condition of members in Morogoro Municipality. While 10% of respondents strongly agreed that the union was responsive to members' problems and complaints and, therefore, they are sure and they believe that the teachers' union has been improving the living condition of its members.

**Table 1: The Union Takes up and Responds to Members' Problems and Complains Seriously**

Response	Frequency	Per cent
Strongly agree	9	10
Agree	50	54
Don't know	22	24
Disagree	9	10
Strongly disagree	2	2
Total	92	100.0

During the interviews with teachers who are members of TTU, it was revealed that the members had a positive perception of TTU as its leaders were responsive and accountable to teachers' grievances very seriously and attending them accordingly. One of the members of TTU had this to say:

*Our union is a very responsive union to its members. There are so many teachers who have been in trouble for a long time, but the teachers' union provided legal services to the teachers and was released from the central police.*

The other member of TTU emphasized:

*Teachers' Union has been doing its best by defending the rights of its members so as to live a happy life while working efficiently.*

Based on the findings, it was learned that the union is responsive to members' problems and complaints. This percentage is strong enough to conclude that the union is responsive. Most workers joined trade unions with the expectation of being protected from exploitation and believing that trade unions are the voice of workers and that their

problems and complaints can be solved through them. These findings are in line with those of Mpangala (2006), that noted the hard work of TTU, stating that the union was effective in responding to their workplace problems and complaints were significantly important.

### Areas to Improve to Ensure Teachers' Improved Standard of Living

**Table 2: Areas in Which Teachers' Union Can Help to Improve the Living Standard of Teachers in Morogoro Municipality**

Main Themes from the Respondents
Building houses for teachers in Morogoro Municipality
Improving Health Issues by Building large Hospital for teachers in Morogoro Municipality
Improving transport for teachers
Hardship allowance for Teachers should be provided in Morogoro Municipality
The union must ensure that water and electricity bills for teachers are settled by the employers
Scholarship and in-service training must be encouraged for teachers in Morogoro Municipality

The findings show that there is a number of important aspects that need to be attended to for the effective operation of TTU. These aspects touched the real life of the Tanzanian teacher, which, when attended to, the teacher can live a happy life. These aspects include housing, health, transport, hardship allowance, electricity bills and training. During the interviews with the TTU members, it was revealed that the expectation of the members was that the union had to improve the standard of its members by touching on the aspects that are directly related to the day-to-day life of the teachers. One of the interviewees said:

*If the teachers' union want to improve the living standard of the teachers in Morogoro Municipality must focus on how to improve health services to teachers, the union may decide to build a large hospital in Morogoro which will benefit the members of the union. The health of teachers is what makes them productive; therefore, if this is implemented, then the union can directly positively affect the living standard of teachers in Morogoro.*

Through interviews with the members of TTU, the study probed opinions on how to improve the union so as to improve the standard of living of its members. The members were asked to disclose the areas in which the teachers' union can help to improve the living standard of teachers in Morogoro Municipality. The findings are summarized in the following *Table 2*.

It was revealed in the study, however, that in Morogoro Municipality, the teachers were suffocating and feeling difficulties from the lack of housing, transport, electricity, and health. In this regard, the teachers' union has not managed to establish such kind of services for its members, therefore, it becomes very difficult for the teachers to get free health care for the benefit of the future of education in Tanzania.

The other interviewee related the improved standard of living of teachers with their concentration and being focused on working to discharge their duties effectively. It was revealed that when some areas are improved by TTU, the members are likely to concentrate on work rather than spending much time attending to their individual errands instead of spending that time at work. One of the interviewees said:

*Many teachers here in Morogoro have been using a lot of money from their small or limited salaries to pay for houses. This issue has brought difficulty for teachers to mobilize their income throughout the year. If possible, let the union*

*build houses for teachers in Morogoro Municipality special for teachers. This will help teachers to mobilize their money or income for investment and not for paying rent every month or year. Let the houses be free for teachers.*

Other respondents suggested that

*Hardship allowance should be provided to teachers to cover some of the costs they incur, particularly for the teachers living very far from the school. Hardship allowance may motivate teachers in Morogoro to love their duties when they are at school.*

Another respondent said that

*Water bills and electricity bills for teachers can also be settled by the employer through the influence that teachers' unions can put in place to convince the employer to pay these bills as a motivation for teachers.*

In connection with the other respondents, the other respondent said that:

*Teachers need to be updated, particularly in their areas of concentration. Many teachers in Morogoro Municipality have not participated in different scholarship programs or even in-service training for many years since their first appointment in public service. I encourage the teachers' union to help teachers go to training for the better future of our students.*

The implication of the findings is that the members of TTU had difficulties in their day-to-day life. These difficulties were caused by poor housing, poor health, poor transport, and inaccessibility of power (electricity) on which their life depended most. To improve the standard of living, the union was demanded to attend to the issues that could help them to enjoy a happy life. This means that TTU is obliged to do things that are directly touching on the lives of its members instead of designing and

implementing big projects that do not touch directly on the life of its members.

## CONCLUSION

Of utmost significance to the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of trade unionism in Tanzania as workers' representations based on the perceptions of their members. Critical areas of measuring the effectiveness of trade unions were examined, such as the union's ability to share information with its members, the responsiveness of trade unions towards members' problems and complaints; the employer's attitude towards unions and the general performance of the trade unions as to fulfil its objectives as worker's representation.

In light of the above, it can be concluded from this study that members of the Teachers' Union have a positive perception of the effectiveness of the Teachers' Union as a worker's representation and do represent its members. But there is a problem in areas of communication and keeping the members up to date on what is really going on within the union. This has been a major concern for members who think that they are being marginalized by the union executive, and many think that the executives do pursue their own interests at the expense of its members. This has in fact, made them reluctant to show interest in union activities.

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