

Motivational antithesis Among Teachers with Upgraded qualifications in Zambia

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Abstract: *This article investigates the paradox of “motivational antithesis” among Zambian primary school teachers who upgraded their qualifications following the Government’s 2015 policy mandating academic upgrading for all serving teachers. While the policy aimed to enhance teacher quality and learner outcomes by leveraging both extrinsic-salary increments and promotions, and intrinsic- professional growth and self-actualization motivators, emerging evidence suggests that upgrading has coincided with declining motivation. Guided by Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and Herzberg’s two-factor theory, the study examined; the extent of qualification upgrading; levels of motivation among upgraded teachers; and the relative influence of extrinsic hygiene factors and intrinsic motivators on job motivation. A cross-sectional quantitative survey was conducted with 100 primary school teachers selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire and analyzed with the aid of SPSS into descriptive and multiple regression results. Major findings reveal that 72% upgraded from certificate to diploma and/or degree, largely through self-sponsorship. Of these 97% had not received the expected salary scale adjustments while only about 3% had been promoted. Mean motivation remained low (3.94 ± 1.79), designating substantial demoralization. Regression analysis ($R^2 = .52$) revealed that intrinsic factors; perceived professional growth ($\beta = .48, p < .001$), sense of achievement ($\beta = .26, p < .001$), and meaningfulness of work ($\beta = .21, p < .001$) constituted the strongest predictors of job motivation, while extrinsic factors (salary increment, promotion status) had little effect, demonstrating that working conditions were insignificant in this instance. These outcomes show a motivational antithesis where a significant individual effort in upgrading, initially fueled by both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, is weakened by institutional failure to fulfill promised and expected extrinsic rewards like realignment of salary, jobs and career paths. Thus, qualification upgrading alone is insufficient to boost teacher motivation but that it may be counterproductive if not combined with timely, transparent salary reforms, merit-based promotion structures, and leadership practices that recognize and utilize upgraded teachers' competencies.*

Keywords: motivation, motivation-antithesis, incentives, qualification-upgrade, teacher

INTRODUCTION

The Government of the Republic of Zambia in 2015 instituted a policy, mandating academic qualification upgrades for all serving primary school teachers. This marked a pivotal intervention aimed at enhancing teacher quality and, by extension, learner outcomes (Kalimaposi et al., 2023; Masaiti & Chita, 2014). Underpinned by motivational theories that emphasize the fulfilment of salient unmet needs, this policy sought to harness both extrinsic and intrinsic motivational drivers such as salary scale upgrade and professional self-actualization to stimulate teacher qualification advancement from certificate to diploma and other higher level qualifications (Amoah, 2020).

Despite the initial surge of enthusiasm and compliance with the policy, the unfolding realities have since engendered a paradoxical phenomenon aptly termed “motivational antithesis”. This denotes a counterintuitive decline in teacher motivation post-qualification upgrade, driven primarily by the failure of the Government to actualize promised extrinsic rewards such as salary scale upgrades, promotions, and improved working conditions (Bleiberg et al., 2025). This disconnect has catalysed a motivational dissonance, where the initial intrinsic drive to improve pedagogical competence and career prospects is systematically eroded by unmet economic and professional expectations.

From a theoretical standpoint, the phenomenon of motivational antithesis can be interrogated through Maslow’s hierarchy of needs framework, which remains relevant in educational motivation discourse (Maslow, 1943; Njobvu & Daka, 2025). While the policy addressed higher-level needs such as esteem and self-actualization through professional development, it concurrently neglected more foundational physiological and safety needs manifested through adequate remuneration and job security. The resultant unmet lower-order needs precipitate dissatisfaction and demotivation, as corroborated by Herzberg’s two-factor theory where hygiene factors (salary, job security) are critical to preventing dissatisfaction (Herzberg, 1966; Njobvu & Daka, 2025).

Empirically, the failure to upgrade salaries and positions for the majority of teachers who have invested personal resources including incurring debts from microfinance institutions to attain higher qualifications, has led to widespread financial strain and psychological distress (Chifuwe et al., 2020; Woldie et al., 2012). This economic strain undermines the conceptualization of teacher qualification upgrades as investments with expected returns, a notion central to human capital theory in educational economics (Bowen & Mills, 2017; Chituta, 2024). The absence of tangible returns attenuates the motivational impetus for continued professional development and negatively impacts teacher morale and performance (Mintrop & Ordenes, 2017; Mgode, 2020).

Therefore, sustained motivation is contingent upon fulfilment of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Thus, stagnation in salary scales and lack of career advancement contravene teachers’ sense of competence and autonomy, thereby diminishing intrinsic motivation despite the initial self-drive to upgrade qualifications. This dynamic is particularly acute in contexts

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such as district levels, where longitudinal studies reveal a marked decline in motivation levels among primary school teachers post-upgrade (BETUZ,2022).

Organizational and administrative inefficiencies compound the motivational challenges. Government's fiscal constraints, economic downturns, and bureaucratic inertia have delayed or derailed the implementation of promised incentives, creating a credibility gap between policy pronouncements and actual practice (ZANEC, 2010; BETUZ, 2016). Teacher unions have consistently advocated for the fulfilment of salary adjustments and promotions, nevertheless systemic bottlenecks persist which perpetuate teacher dissatisfaction and low work productivity (The Rainbow Newspaper, 2020; Baluyos, 2019).

The paradoxical motivational antithesis among Zambian teachers encapsulates a complex interplay of unmet extrinsic and intrinsic needs within a constrained socio-economic context. The phenomenon underscores the criticality of holistic policy implementation that synchronizes qualification upgrade mandates with robust, timely incentive structures and career progression frameworks. Without addressing foundational motivational needs, the policy risks eroding teacher morale, undermining educational quality, and perpetuating the very challenges it sought to resolve.

Statement of the Problem

The 2015 policy initiative by the Government of the Republic of Zambia mandating the upgrading of academic qualifications for all serving teachers was a strategic response aimed at professionalizing teaching and enhancing educational outcomes (Kalimaposo et al., 2023). The policy was grounded in motivational theories emphasizing the fulfilment of salient needs both extrinsic (salary increments, promotions) and intrinsic (professional growth, self-actualization) to stimulate teachers' pursuit of higher qualifications (Moon, 2013). However, despite widespread compliance and initial enthusiasm, emerging empirical evidence reveals a paradoxical decline in motivation among teachers' post-qualification upgrade, a phenomenon aptly designated as "motivational antithesis."

Motivational antithesis is characterized by a discordance between the anticipated and actual rewards following fulfilment of the set conditions in this case qualification upgrade. While teachers invested considerable personal resources, including loans from microfinance institutions, to enhance their qualifications (Chifuwe et al., 2020; Woldie et al., 2012), the expected extrinsic returns: increased salaries, promotions, and improved work conditions have largely failed to materialize (Bleiberg et al., 2025). From a motivational theoretical standpoint, this gap highlights critical shortcomings in addressing basic psychological and economic needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs elucidates that higher-order motivations (esteem, self-actualization) cannot be sustained without satisfaction of foundational physiological and safety needs, which in this context translate to adequate remuneration and job security (Njobvu & Daka, 2025). Consequently, the erosion of extrinsic rewards precipitates a decline in intrinsic motivation, disrupting the motivational continuum essential for sustained teacher engagement and professional growth.

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Thus, stagnation of salary scales and absence of clear career pathways progression undermine teachers' competence and autonomy that negatively affect motivation metrics (BETUZ,2022). This demotivation is compounded by systemic organizational inefficiencies, fiscal constraints, and bureaucratic delays that hinder the timely implementation of promised incentives, thereby fostering mistrust and dissatisfaction among educators (ZANEC, 2010; BETUZ, 2016; The Rainbow Newspaper, 2020).

The implications of this motivational antithesis are profound. Teacher demotivation not only compromises individual well-being but also adversely affects pedagogical effectiveness, learner achievement, and broader educational quality (Mintrop & Ordenes, 2017; Mgone, 2020). The persistence of this problem signals a critical gap in policy implementation and highlights the need for comprehensive strategies that integrate economic, psychological, and organizational dimensions to restore teacher motivation.

This situation necessitated a comprehensive investigation into the interplay between motivational theories and the socio-economic realities of teachers in Zambia. Addressing this knowledge gap is critical to designing holistic incentive frameworks and implementation strategies in order to restore teacher motivation, enhance professional development, and ultimately improve educational quality.

Research Objectives

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the extent of qualification upgrading among teachers;
2. To determine levels of motivation among teachers with upgraded qualifications, and
3. To examine the extent to which extrinsic hygiene factors and intrinsic motivators influence teachers job motivation after qualification upgrade.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What is the extent of teacher qualification upgrade in selected schools?
2. What is the level of motivation among teachers with upgraded qualifications in selected schools?
3. To what extent do extrinsic hygiene factors and intrinsic motivators influence teachers job motivation after qualification upgrades?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher qualification upgrading is widely conceptualised as a central pillar of teacher professional development, aimed at strengthening pedagogical competence, instructional quality, and educational outcomes. It includes both formal and informal in-service pathways such as certificate-to-diploma and diploma-to-degree programmes are intended to enhance teachers' academic credentials, pedagogical knowledge, and professional status (Gnawali, 2010; MoE, 1996). In Zambia, these efforts have been institutionalised through initiatives such as the Fast Track Teacher Education Programme, designed to systematically upgrade

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unqualified and underqualified teachers and build a more highly qualified teaching force as a foundation for quality education and national development (Ministry of Education, 2014; Zambia Daily Mail, 2017).

Theoretically, upgrading is grounded in human capital and professionalisation discourses. Human capital theory posits that investment in teachers' education should generate higher productivity and improved learning outcomes, thereby justifying both state and individual investment in further qualifications. Professionalisation discourses link upgrading to enhanced occupational status, greater autonomy, and stronger professional identity (Bartlett, 1990; Maggioli, 2003). Within curriculum reform, bodies such as the Committee on Teacher Education Policy (COTEP, 1996) assume that higher-level training better equips teachers to implement learner-centred, competency-based pedagogies that foster critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and learner autonomy.

Recent empirical work, however, challenges the assumption of a straightforward, positive relationship between upgrading and teacher motivation or effectiveness. Global and regional studies indicate that higher formal qualifications do not automatically translate into improved classroom practice or higher motivation in the absence of conducive systemic and school-level conditions. For instance, OECD's TALIS 2018 data show that although teachers with higher qualifications often report greater self-efficacy, their job satisfaction and motivation remain strongly mediated by school climate, leadership, workload, and recognition, rather than qualifications alone (OECD, 2019). Recent World Bank and UNESCO analyses of low- and middle-income countries similarly find that teacher education and credentials are only weakly associated with student learning when not accompanied by improvements in accountability, support, and school conditions (World Bank, 2018; UNESCO, 2016, 2020).

Within sub-Saharan Africa, post-2015 empirical studies increasingly document this misalignment. Research in countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana and Nigeria shows that in-service upgrading and continuous professional development (CPD) can enhance content knowledge and pedagogical awareness, but motivational gains are often muted or short-lived when teachers face stagnant pay, scarce promotion prospects, and poor working environments (Akyeampong et al., 2013; Hardman et al., 2015; Moon, 2017). These findings resonate with earlier work by Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) but underscore that the structural constraints they identified persist, despite substantial investments in upgrading.

In Zambia specifically, studies highlight a similar paradox. Mulenga (2014) reports that teachers who upgraded from certificate to diploma or degree levels expressed heightened expectations of improved remuneration, status, and career advancement. However, many experienced continuing frustration and demotivation when these expectations were not met. More recent union reports and press accounts (ZNUT, 2017; Lusaka Times, 2021) corroborate this pattern, indicating ongoing complaints by upgraded teachers about pay disparities, delayed salary adjustments, and limited promotion opportunities. Although up-to-date Zambia-specific empirical work remains relatively sparse in peer-reviewed outlets, available evidence aligns with regional trends: formal upgrading, without systemic alignment, produces a "motivational antithesis" in which enhanced qualifications coexist with enduring or intensified demotivation.

Remuneration, Economic Realities and the Limits of Upgrading

Monetary compensation is a foundational extrinsic motivator, particularly in contexts where teachers struggle to meet basic physiological and security needs (Chandan, 2010). In Zambia, as in many low- and middle-income countries, salary remains central not only to material well-being but also to perceptions of professional worth. However empirical evidence consistently shows that upgraded qualifications have not translated into predictable, proportionate salary increases.

Mulenga's (2014) Zambian study found that many teachers with upgraded qualifications continued to be paid on scales designed for lower qualifications, often for extended periods, producing feelings of injustice and status incongruity. This is reinforced by reports and ministerial data pointing to delayed regrading, inconsistent implementation of salary structures, and unresolved anomalies between teachers' substantive qualifications and their pay (Lusaka Times, 2021; ZNUT, 2017). Comparative studies in East and West Africa similarly show that qualification upgrading often yields only modest or delayed financial returns, especially where wage bills are constrained and teacher deployment is politicized (Bashir et al., 2018; Moon, 2017).

Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory helps explain the motivational implications of this pattern. Pay and related economic benefits operate primarily as hygiene factors: their inadequacy produces dissatisfaction, even if improvements do not automatically create high motivation (Chandan, 2010). Recent empirical analyses from African settings confirm that low and irregular pay, lack of allowances, and unpaid arrears are among the strongest predictors of teacher dissatisfaction and attrition intentions (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Bashir et al., 2018). When teachers holding upgraded qualifications perceive no reliable, timely financial return on their investment in further study, the extrinsic incentive for upgrading is weakened and can even become a source of resentment (Chandan, 2010).

The expectancy theory further clarifies this dynamic: when teachers see a weak or arbitrary link between effort (upgrading), performance, and valued outcomes (salary, allowances), the subjective value of upgrading declines. Post-2015 empirical work on teacher motivation in Africa repeatedly highlights this disjuncture between policy promises and lived economic realities, underscoring that qualification upgrading alone cannot offset systemic problems of low and inequitable remuneration.

Promotion, Career Progression and Professional Stagnation

Promotion and career advancement function as both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, signaling recognition, status, and expanded responsibility, often accompanied by higher pay (Gimagan, & Gutierrez, 2025). In many national policy documents, including Zambia's, higher qualifications are explicitly linked to improved prospects for promotion into senior teacher, head of department, or school leadership roles. However, empirical studies reveal persistent gaps between policy rhetoric and practice.

In Zambia, Mulenga (2014) found that upgraded teachers frequently remained in the same posts and salary grades for prolonged periods despite meeting formal criteria for promotion. In the

recent past, union position papers and anecdotal accounts indicate that promotion processes are perceived as slow, non-transparent, and sometimes influenced by patronage or political considerations rather than merit (ZNUT, 2017). Comparable patterns have been documented across sub-Saharan Africa: studies in Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda show that promotion systems are often poorly aligned with qualification frameworks and performance appraisals, leading to widespread perceptions of unfairness and professional stagnation (Akyeampong et al., 2013; Moon, 2017).

From a motivational perspective, the absence of clear, meritocratic career ladders undermines expectancy and equity. Teachers who undertake qualification-upgrading in anticipation of career progression often experience cognitive dissonance when promotions fail to materialise, with negative effects on morale and organisational commitment. Recent empirical work using mixed-method designs in African contexts suggests that teachers' decisions to remain in or leave the profession are strongly influenced by perceived career dead-ends, even more so when they hold advanced qualifications that could be valued in alternative sectors (Bashir et al., 2018).

From a professionalization lens, this disconnect indicates a failure to embed upgraded qualifications within a coherent career architecture. Without differentiated roles, specialised posts, or leadership tracks explicitly tied to higher qualifications, upgrading risks being reduced to a formal credential with limited functional meaning in school systems. The motivational consequences are two-fold: the instrumental value of upgrading declines, and upgraded teachers experience a weakening sense of professional agency and progression.

Working and Living Conditions as Structural Constraints

Working and living conditions form a critical structural backdrop to teacher motivation. Empirical research across sub-Saharan Africa consistently demonstrates that poor infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms, limited teaching and learning materials, and lack of basic amenities significantly erode teacher morale and job satisfaction (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Bashir et al., 2018). These conditions are especially acute in rural and remote schools, where upgraded teachers are often deployed or retained.

Although Zambia-specific post-2015 peer-reviewed studies are limited, national reports and regional comparative work indicate that many Zambian schools continue to face shortages of textbooks, inadequate classroom space, and insufficient access to electricity, water, and sanitation. Recent World Bank and UNESCO analyses show that such conditions not only impede effective teaching and learning, but also moderate the impact of teacher upgrading: teachers trained in learner-centred and resource-intensive methodologies struggle to implement them in severely constrained environments (World Bank, 2018; UNESCO, 2016, 2020).

Teachers' intrinsic motivation depends on the satisfaction of basic psychological needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Empirical studies in comparable African contexts reveal that when teachers cannot enact what they learned in upgrading programmes due to large classes, lack of materials, or rigid timetables, their sense of competence and agency is

undermined (Hardman et al., 2015). When they are isolated in remote areas with poor housing and limited social support, their sense of relatedness also suffers. Upgrading of qualification, under such conditions, can paradoxically sharpen teachers' awareness of what good practice entails while highlighting their inability to realise it, contributing to frustration and burnout.

The living conditions particularly housing, transport and access to basic services amplify these dynamics. Recent African studies show that rural posting policies and inadequate housing or hardship allowances are major sources of demotivation and attrition, especially among younger and better-qualified teachers (Bashir et al., 2018). When upgrading does not translate into improved postings, allowances, or living conditions, it does little to address these core structural determinants of motivation.

Empirical Insights and Contextual Gaps

Studies from Kenya (Alugchaab, 2011), South Africa (Ravhudzulo, 1997), Indonesia (Kusumawardhani, 2017), Zambia (Njobvu & Daka, 2025) and other contexts provide valuable insights into factors influencing teacher motivation and qualification upgrading. However, these studies exhibit limitations in scale, scope, or contextual relevance to Zambia. For instance, Alugchaab (2011) focused on factors causing low motivation but did not examine the utilization of upgraded qualifications or their motivational impact within Zambia's socio-educational milieu. Similarly, Kusumawardhani's (2017) work on secondary education certification programs does not address primary education dynamics or triangulate data sources as comprehensively as needed.

The current discourse identifies critical knowledge gaps regarding the extent to which upgraded qualifications are utilized in the Zambian education system in primary schools, the status of teachers concerning promotion and recognition, and the resultant levels of motivation. These gaps underscore the need for localized, contextually nuanced research that holistically examines the triadic relationship between qualification upgrading, professional utilization, and motivational outcomes.

Theoretical framework

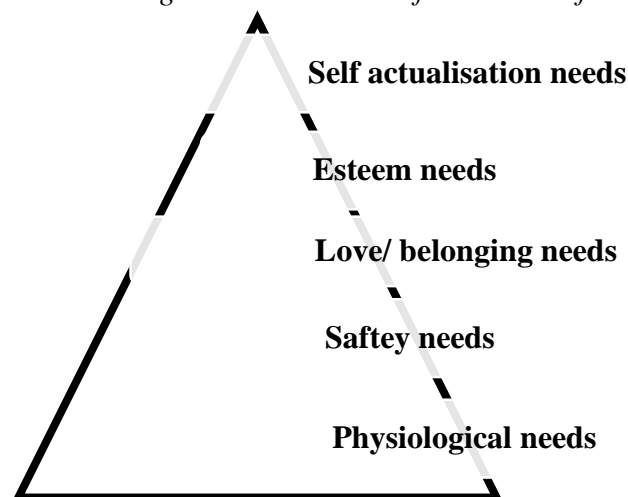
The theoretical framework of this study is grounded primarily in Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory (Maslow, 1943), which posits that human needs are arranged in a hierarchical order of importance, ranging from basic physiological needs to the highest level of self-actualization. According to Maslow, individuals seek to fulfill lower-level needs such as food, safety, and belonging before progressing to higher-level needs including esteem and self-fulfillment. In the context of this study, the theory provides a lens to understand the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational dynamics among primary school teachers upgrading their qualifications. At the foundational level, teachers' motivation to comply with policy directives is driven by the threat to meeting basic and safety needs if they fail to upgrade. However, the pursuit of qualifications beyond what is mandated reflects a drive to satisfy higher-order needs such as esteem and self-actualization. The theory also explains the observed decline in motivation after qualification attainment without corresponding promotion or salary increase,

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reflecting an antithesis where unfulfilled needs lead to diminished morale and work engagement.

Complementing Maslow's framework, the Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory further elucidates these motivational patterns by distinguishing between hygiene factors (extrinsic elements such as salary, promotion, and working conditions) and motivators (intrinsic factors such as achievement, recognition, and personal growth). The study's findings resonate with Herzberg's perspective, whereby the absence or inadequacy of hygiene factors such as promotion and salary increments post-qualification results in dissatisfaction and demotivation, despite the presence of intrinsic motivators. Together, these theories underscore the complex interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic drivers in shaping teacher motivation, highlighting the necessity of addressing both to sustain high morale and job satisfaction. Here, the human needs are arranged in a hierarchy of importance in five steps as shown in the Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Theoretical framework of the study



Source: Maslow, 1945

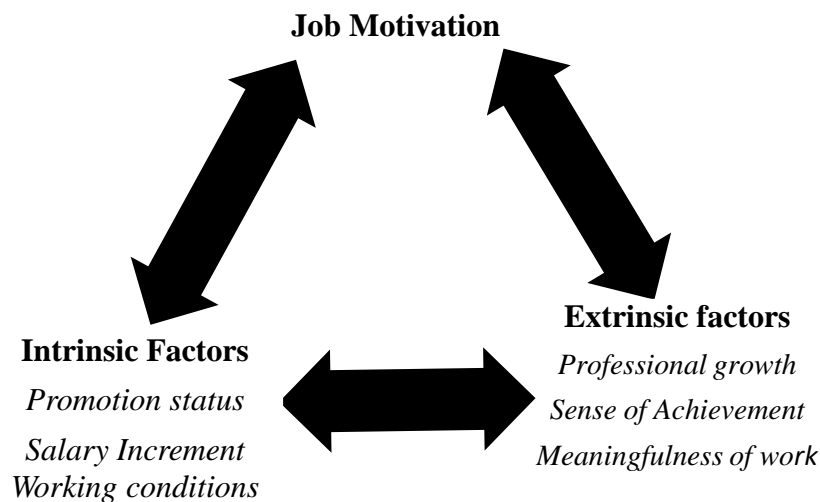
Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shown below in Figure 2 aligns closely with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory by illustrating how teacher qualification upgrading intersects with motivation and job outcomes. From Maslow's perspective, teachers' efforts to upgrade qualifications reflect a progression toward fulfilling higher-level needs such as esteem and self-actualization, as they seek recognition, achievement, and personal growth beyond basic job security. However, when upgraded qualifications do not translate into promotion or salary increments, lower-level needs related to safety and financial security remain unmet, leading to frustration and decreased motivation.

Further, the Herzberg's theory complements this by distinguishing between intrinsic motivators such as the satisfaction derived from professional development and competence improvement and extrinsic hygiene factors like salary and promotion. The absence or delay of these extrinsic rewards despite qualification upgrading creates dissatisfaction and

demotivation, which manifest as absenteeism, poor work performance, and high attrition. Together, these theories explain how unmet extrinsic needs can undermine the positive motivational impact of intrinsic growth, highlighting the necessity for both recognitions through career advancement and personal fulfillment to sustain teacher motivation effectively.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework



Source: Author :2025

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a cross-sectional quantitative survey design to explore occurrence of motivational antithesis among primary school teachers who upgraded their qualifications in Zambia. Using records from the District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) of Livingstone, stratified random sampling by school type and location yielded a sample of 100 teachers with upgraded qualification from certificate to diploma and/or degree. Data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire measured on 5-point Likert scale. Further, the data was analyzed with the aid of SPSS and descriptive, correlations, and multiple regression analysis to examine the relative influence of extrinsic hygiene factors and intrinsic motivators on motivation. Content and construct validity were ensured through expert review and exploratory factor analysis; internal consistency was confirmed via Cronbach's alpha.

FINDINGS

The extent of teacher qualifications upgrade

Findings reveal a rapid qualification upgrade curve within the shortest possible time.

Table 1: Teacher qualification upgrade

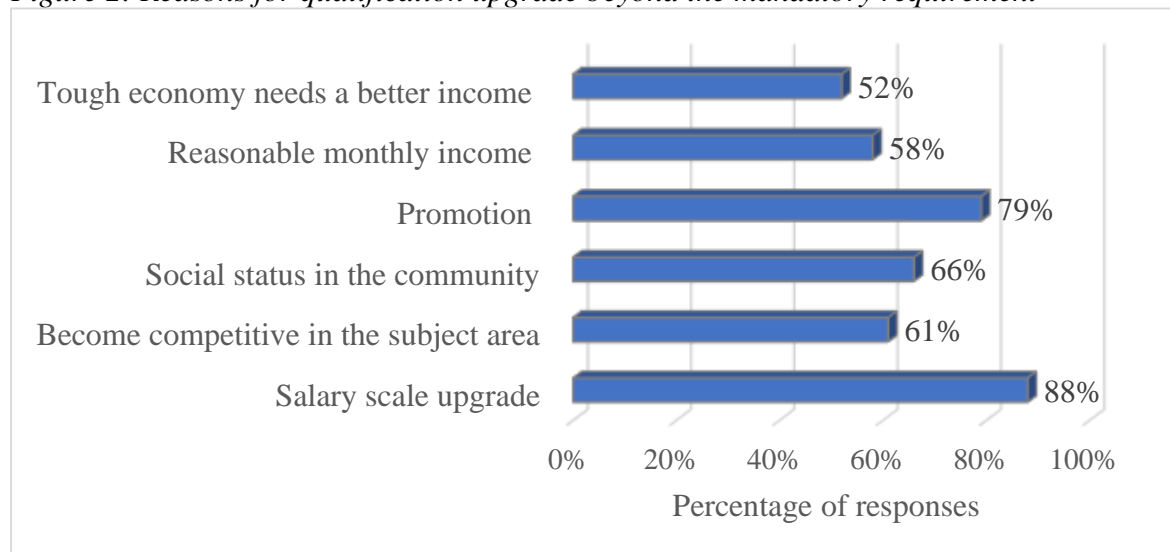
Percentage of respondents (n=100)	
Yes	72
No	28
Total	100

Source: Field data, 2025

The results in Table 1 reveal that 72% of teachers have upgraded their qualifications, indicating strong engagement in professional development. However, 28% have not, which may point to challenges faced in pursuit of the same. This trend highlights the importance of continuous learning in improving quality of teaching, while also suggesting the need to address perceived barriers.

Motivation for qualification upgrade

Figure 2: Reasons for qualification upgrade beyond the mandatory requirement



Source: Field data, 2025

The findings in figure 2 reveal that substantial majority of teachers pursued qualification upgrade beyond the mandatory diploma level. This could be primarily driven by extrinsic incentives such as anticipated salary upgrade (88%) and promotions (79%). Also, social recognition and professional identity could motivate this cohort, with 66% pursuing enhanced status among peers and communities, while a significant proportion (61%) is driven by intrinsic desire to upskill and maintain competitiveness within their subject domain.

Level of motivation among teachers who upgraded qualifications

This study employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (coded 2) to Strongly Disagree (coded 5) to gauge motivational responses across eight key items. An interval deviation scale (1.0 to 6.0) was devised to categorize motivation levels into High, Very High, Neutral, Low, and Very Low bands, facilitating precise quantitative analysis through calculation of means and standard deviations. This methodological approach aligns with established practices in motivation research (Likert, 1932; DeVellis, 2017) and enabled the identification of significant motivational deficits despite academic advancement. The levels of motivation among the teachers were based on the 8 items indicated in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Level of motivation among teachers with upgraded qualification

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
1	Teachers who have upgraded their qualifications and are motivated	4.15	5.20
2	Teachers are motivated because the benefits are seen in terms of salary upgrade	3.76	1.31
3	Teachers with upgraded qualification promoted to teach higher grades in secondary school in line with their new qualification	3.91	1.31
4	Teachers with upgraded qualifications with right salary scales and notches	3.93	1.36
5	Teachers' salary scale raised after qualification upgrade	3.78	1.32
6	Teachers still with low salary scales after qualification upgrade	3.85	1.28
7	Teachers not utilizing their upgraded qualification and are still motivated	3.95	1.26
8	Teachers who got promoted after upgrading their qualifications	4.17	1.24
9	<i>Summated Average Scores</i>	<i>3.94</i>	<i>1.79</i>

Source: Field data, 2025

Findings in Table 2 reveal a generally high degree of motivation, with a summated average score of 3.94 (SD = 1.79). Thus, teachers who have upgraded their qualifications report being motivated scored the highest mean of 4.15, indicating a strong intrinsic drive linked to professional development. Promotion following qualification upgrades (mean = 4.17) also significantly correlates with motivation, suggesting career advancement is a critical factor.

Although motivation is positively influenced by salary-related factors such as benefits seen in salary upgrades (mean = 3.76), appropriate salary scales and notches (mean = 3.93), and salary scale increments post-upgrade (mean = 3.78), there remains a noteworthy perception of

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insufficient salary adjustments (mean = 3.85). Interestingly, teachers who are motivated despite not fully utilizing their upgraded qualifications score a mean of 3.95, reflecting a complex motivational landscape that includes factors beyond immediate job role changes.

Extent to which extrinsic hygiene factors and intrinsic motivators influence teachers job motivation

Table 3: Multiple Regression predicting Teachers' Job Motivation from Extrinsic and Intrinsic factors

Dependent variable: Overall Job Motivation

<i>Predictor Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<i>Salary increment (%)</i>	0.012	0.004	.20	3.00	.003
<i>Promotion status</i>	0.25	0.09	.18	2.78	.006
<i>Working conditions (physical resources)</i>	0.08	0.05	.07	1.60	.111
<i>Professional growth (perceived)</i>	0.40	0.06	.48	6.67	< .001
<i>Sense of achievement</i>	0.22	0.05	.26	4.40	< .001
<i>Meaningfulness of work</i>	0.18	0.05	.21	3.60	< .001

Model Summary: $R^2 = .52$, $Adjusted R^2 = .50$, $F(6, 243) = 43.5$, $p < .001$

Source: Field data, 2021

The findings in Table 3 reveal that intrinsic and extrinsic factors collectively explain a substantial 52% of the variance in teachers' overall job motivation, with the model exhibiting strong statistical significance ($F(6, 243) = 43.5$, $p < .001$). Intrinsic motivators, particularly perceived professional growth ($\beta = .48$, $p < .001$), show the most robust and significant positive association with job motivation. Additional intrinsic factors such as sense of achievement ($\beta = .26$, $p < .001$) and meaningfulness of work ($\beta = .21$, $p < .001$) also exert moderate to strong positive effects, educators. On the contrary, extrinsic factors such as salary increment ($\beta = .20$, $p = .003$) and promotion status ($\beta = .18$, $p = .006$) contribute positively but with minor impact. Also, working conditions, despite a positive relationship ($\beta = .07$), do not significantly predict motivation ($p = .111$).

DISCUSSION

The empirical evidence from Zambia's Livingstone District reveals a significant and complex dynamic in teacher motivation linked to professional qualification upgrades. A substantial 72% of primary school teachers actively pursued higher credentials, predominantly through self-sponsorship. This reflects agency strong intrinsic motivation grounded in personal and professional aspirations for pedagogical improvement and alignment with national educational goals. This intrinsic drive aligns with the self-determination theory of Deci and Ryan (2020) which underscores autonomy and competence as fundamental motivators in career development. Nevertheless, this intrinsic commitment is critically undermined by systemic failures in extrinsic motivational mechanisms, including inadequate financial incentives, limited career advancement, and insufficient professional recognition. These findings resonate with extant research emphasizing the essential role of extrinsic rewards in sustaining motivation, particularly in resource-limited contexts (Guo et al., 2021; Njobvu & Daka, 2025). The resulting motivational paradox is stark: despite considerable personal investment and a moderate overall motivation level (mean = 3.94), teachers experience frustration and diminished job satisfaction due to institutional failure to transform qualification upgrades into tangible professional and economic benefits. The high expectations for salary increments (88%) and promotion (79%) are largely unmet, generating cognitive dissonance that erodes motivation (Kim & Park, 2023).

The study exposes that social recognition and professional identity are key motivational factors, with 66% of teachers seeking enhanced status within their peer and community networks, and 61% driven by intrinsic desires to maintain competence and competitiveness. This multifaceted motivational profile aligns with Maslow's hierarchy of needs and social identity theory which emphasizes the importance of esteem and belonging (Haslam et al., 2022). However, the failure to satisfy foundational extrinsic needs as evidenced by the 97% of teachers that lacked salary adjustments and only 3% received promotions, contradicts Maslow's premise that sustainable higher-order motivation depends on the reliable fulfillment of basic needs (Chifuwe et al., 2020; Chituta, 2024; Mulenga, 2014). In addition, Herzberg's two-factor theory elucidates this dilemma by distinguishing hygiene factors (salary, promotion, working conditions) from motivators (achievement, recognition, responsibility). The Zambian context exposes profound hygiene deficiencies: promised salary and promotion reforms remain largely unfulfilled amid bureaucratic inertia, limited positions, and politicized appointments (ZNUT, 2017; Mendoza et al., 2022). Thus, the alluded to systemic failures not only preclude job satisfaction but actively diminish intrinsic motivation, creating a "motivational antithesis" that undermines the initial professional commitment to qualification upgrading.

In addition, it is pragmatic that motivators are only partially engaged. This is based on the fact that although, some teachers reported enhanced professional confidence and alignment with pedagogical demands which is consistent with literature linking upgrading to self-efficacy, many face role incongruence, remaining confined to primary teaching despite qualifications for secondary education (ECZ, 2019). This misalignment deprives teachers of recognition and

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responsibility essential for sustained motivation. And by so doing, leaving their enhanced skills underutilized. The study outcome from the regression analysis substantiates these theoretical insights. Therefore, intrinsic motivators: perceived professional growth, sense of achievement, and meaningfulness of work exert the strongest positive influence on overall motivation, overshadowing extrinsic factors like salary increment and promotion status. Working conditions show no significant predictive power. These findings align with recent work emphasizing the primacy of intrinsic motivation for educator engagement and well-being (Deci et al., 2017; Gu & Day, 2022; Van den Broeck et al., 2021). Crucially, when hygiene needs are unmet, intrinsic motivation suffers, as teachers who invest heavily in upgrading nevertheless receive stagnant salaries and limited recognition report low motivation, consistent with Herzberg's assertion that poor hygiene can neutralize motivators. This pattern echoes broader sub-Saharan African evidence linking inadequate extrinsic rewards to weakened retention and performance (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2020; Mwesigwa et al., 2021).

Therefore, from the above perspective, educational implications are profound. Thus, teacher motivation is directly associated with instructional quality and student outcomes (Mwesigwa et al., 2021). Zambia's policy mandating qualification upgrades risks exacerbating demotivation and inequities unless paired with coherent salary reforms, transparent career pathways, and responsive leadership. Unmanaged migration of upgraded teachers to secondary posts may further destabilize foundational education, underscoring the need for strategic workforce planning.

Overall, these findings advocate for integrated, context-sensitive policy reforms that simultaneously address extrinsic hygiene factors and nurture intrinsic motivators. Sustainable teacher motivation and retention hinge on coherent salary structures, equitable promotion systems, role realignment, and genuine professional recognition, thereby transforming qualification upgrades from symbolic milestones into catalysts for educational excellence and equity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This article has presented the motivational paradox experienced by Zambian teachers with upgraded qualifications from certificates to degrees. Study outcomes reveal that while 72% of teachers pursued higher qualifications driven by aspirations for career advancement, improved remuneration, curriculum demands, professional competence, and social status, 97% of these have not experienced corresponding salary scale adjustments or promotions. Key barriers include non-existence of established payroll structures for degree-level positions for primary school teachers, limited availability of vacancies, systemic inequities such as corruption, nepotism, and political patronage, as well as delayed retirement ages. Consequently, motivation levels among these teachers remain low and are exacerbated by misalignment between qualifications and job assignments and slow administrative processes.

Based on the research findings, the following strategic recommendations are proposed to address the motivational dissonance among teachers with upgraded qualifications in Zambia:

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- i. The Government of the Republic of Zambia, through the Ministry of Education, should prioritize and expedite the systematic implementation of salary scale upward adjustments for teachers who have attained higher qualifications.
- ii. The Government, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, should formulate and enact a comprehensive policy framework to regulate and standardize the qualification upgrading process.
- iii. The Ministry of Education should undertake reforms to decentralize or technologically optimize the Payroll Establishment and Management Control (PEMC) system to accelerate the salary upgrade process.
- iv. Given the complexity and multifaceted nature of the motivational antithesis observed, a large-scale, longitudinal research initiative is recommended.

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