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The State of Awareness of the Teaching Profession Act and License Renewal among Teachers in Selected Districts in Lusaka Province, Zambia

Grace Chilando Daka^{1*},  Prof. Issah Mohammed²

¹The Teaching Council of Zambia Box 35700, Lusaka, Zambia.

² Department of Business Education, Faculty of Education, University for Development Studies, P. O. Box TL 1350, Tamale, Ghana, West Africa.

Corresponding Author: Grace Chilando Daka

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore the state of awareness of the Teaching Profession Act and license renewal among teachers in selected districts in Lusaka Province, Zambia. The study employed a quantitative research approach and descriptive research design. The study population consisted of 18,759 individual teachers. The Krejcie and Morgan sample determination table was used to draw a sampling size (S) of 375 from the total population (N) of 18,759. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the relevant authorities. The study employed a self-developed questionnaire to gather data. The study adhered to fundamental research ethics, including participants' anonymity and confidentiality. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the collected data. The findings were that a greater number of the teachers (65%) are aware of the Teaching Profession Act, a very high proportion of the teachers (84.3%) are aware of the license renewal due dates with the Teaching Council of Zambia (TCZ), a significant number of the teachers (77.6%) preferred the payroll mode of payment in renewing their teaching licenses, some of the teachers (45%) believed there is an online license renewal system, which is also accessible to all teachers, an insignificant number of the teachers (35%) agreed that school administration does support the renewal of teachers' professional practice licenses and an overwhelming majority of the teachers (91 %) believe holding a professional license is essential for all teachers. The study recommends that the Teaching Council of Zambia, the teacher unions and the Ministry of Education should work-hand-in hand to ensure there are continuous professional orientation implementations, and policy dissemination to ensure all teachers understand the legal and ethical framework governing their profession and the Teaching Profession Act. The Teaching Council of Zambia should intensify awareness campaigns, provide accessible materials in all schools, and incorporate policy orientation sessions into regular teacher professional development programs.

KEY WORDS: Act, License, Practice, Profession, Renewal, Teaching.

Introduction

For modern societies, for a teacher to transmit knowledge about all spheres of life, skills, and practices, he or she is expected to possess a practicing certificate to increase opportunities, professional development, and personal growth (Abruscato, 2009). A practicing certificate is a valuable asset for teachers seeking to broaden their horizons and make a global impact on education (Kandjeo-Marenga, 2008).

Licensure is the mark of a professional; it is an important requirement for any profession such as the law, medicine, or teaching (Riney, Thomas, Williams, Kelley, 2006). Most countries worldwide require teachers to pass the mandated licensure examination before they are considered highly qualified and eligible for employment as teachers, and be conferred the title of being professional teachers (Riney, Thomas, Williams, Kelley 2006; Aquino & Balilla, 2015). The main purposes for teacher registration and licensing are to ensure teachers systematically acquire up-to-date knowledge, skills, to maintain the professional competencies necessary for today's educators, teach with confidence and pride, and to gain respect and trust from the public (Nakayama et al., 2010).

Again, the introduction of the teacher professional license registration and renewal are a way to assist incompetent teachers to be professionally developed in order to maintain quality at a certain level (Higashiyama & Hara, 2010). For example, in Ghana, stakeholders in education widely support the Ghana Teacher Licensure Examination (GTLE) as a crucial policy that enhances teaching professionalism and advocate for its maintenance and improvement (Addai-Mununkum et al., 2024).

The findings of the study of Alexander and Fuller (2004) indicate that that certified teachers are associated with increased student achievement. Malipot (2014), stressed that teachers who passed the assessments of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards are, on average, more effective teachers in terms of academic achievement, one of the many outcomes of education for which teachers are responsible. Darling-Hammond, (2017), also agreed and found students taught by fully certified mathematics and science teachers had greater gains in student scores than students taught by teachers with emergency, probationary, or no certification.

Research on the effect of certification on teacher performance and competence has been carried out by Koswara and Rasto (2006) which states that the competencies and performance of teachers who have taken professional certification are better than teachers who have not taken professional certification. Thus, teacher certification has a positive impact on improving teacher competency and performance (Koswara, 2006).

Teacher registration and licensure systems vary significantly across jurisdictions, with substantial differences in awareness levels among practitioners. For example, in Japan, the Teaching License Renewal System, which required all teachers to complete at least 30 hours of training in university courses for renewal every 10 years, was implemented in 2009 (Chapple, 2023). In South Africa, educators must register with the South African Council for Educators (SACE) before appointment to a teaching post, which is a mandatory requirement under professional standards (Ndayeni, 2024).

In the Philippines, the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) mandates valid professional licenses for educators, with specific requirements outlined in the Civil Service Commission's Omnibus Rules on Appointment (Philippines, Department of Education, cited

in Aquino & Balilla, 2015). In New Zealand, the Teaching Council manages practicing certificates valid for three years (Alcorn, 2013). The system operates through the Hapori Matat platform where teachers complete applications.

In Zambia, the Education Reform in 1977 noted that there was no professional body as such for teachers. The Zambia Ministry of Education (1996) attests that the role of the Board would be to set and maintain the highest professional's standard among teachers in the interest of the teachers themselves. This policy was actualised in 2013 when the Teaching Professional Act no 5 of 2013 was enacted by parliament. This is the foundational Legal document outlining teacher registration and licensing requirements in Zambia which led to the establishment of the Teaching Council of Zambia which officially became operational in 2015.

In this vain, the Teaching Council of Zambia embarked on professionalising Teaching in Zambia as stipulated by the Teaching Profession Act No. 5 of 2013 whose functions include: Registration of Teachers; Regulation of professional conduct of teachers; Development, promotion and enforcement of internationally comparable teaching profession practice standards; Investigate allegation of professional misconduct; Collaboration with relevant unions on condition of teachers and remuneration of teachers; Provision of the forum for communication and exchange of views on matters relating to the teaching profession (Zambia, MOE, 1996)

The renewal cycle for teaching licenses varies considerably across jurisdictions. In Philippine, the connection between renewal date awareness and successful timely renewal has been demonstrated in educational administrative systems. Research on quarterly reporting systems in schools showed that before digital system implementation, only 25% of teachers submitted required documentation on schedule (Calderon et al. 2014). While not directly about license renewal, this pattern suggests that awareness of deadlines significantly impacts compliance rates among educators.

From July 1, 2025, teachers in New Zealand will complete applications through Hapori Matat, and the system automatically applies a credit to the application, leaving a zero balance (Dymock et al. 2018). This represents a significant innovation in reducing administrative burden and ensuring equitable access to renewal processes. The United States demonstrates variable models: in Minnesota, teachers renew through the Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board's online system, with schools providing District Verification forms (Alexander et al. 2016).

Payment mechanisms for professional license renewal vary globally, with increasingly diverse options available to practitioners. In New Zealand, the government announced in May 2025 that fees and levies for practising certificates issued or renewed between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2028, would be paid by the government itself (Dymock et al. 2018). This approach eliminates direct payment burdens for individual teachers during the specified period.

In Nigeria, research on pharmacists' professional license renewal preferences provides valuable insights applicable to teaching professions. Among 313 respondents, 88.5% indicated preference for online payment methods (Ozano. 2013). In Nigeria, A critical finding revealed that 48.6% of respondents who did not renew licenses cited high renewal costs as the primary barrier, while 24.3% cited cumbersome processes (Ozano. 2013).

This data underscores that payment preferences cannot be separated from affordability concerns. School-based payroll deduction systems could address these concerns by spreading costs and integrating

renewal payments within existing salary administration (Ozano, 2013).

The challenge of linking multiple fees (registration, professional development, association membership) with renewal creates administrative complexity that particularly affects teachers in resource-constrained settings (Ozano, 2013).

The role of school administration in facilitating teacher license renewal remains underdeveloped in the research literature, though related institutional support research provides insights. A study on quarterly reporting systems in Philippine schools demonstrated that when institutions provided clear timelines and system training, compliance improved dramatically from 25% on-time submission to 100% (Alexander et al. 2016).

Administrative support structures require multiple components: system access, training provision, deadline communication, and troubleshooting assistance. (Nikolayeva et al. 2021). This suggests that administrative gatekeeping of professional development choices reduces engagement. In South Africa, SACE requires schools to support teacher registration processes, yet documented support structures vary considerably. Schools must ensure teachers understand registration requirements before appointment, but ongoing renewal support remains less formalized (Nakayama et al., 2010).

School administration support proves particularly critical in under-resourced contexts. Research on work-integrated learning in South African universities revealed that institutions without adequate guidance and structured support experienced significantly lower completion rates (Jakparudin, 2018).

Problem Statement

Despite the significance of teacher license registration and renewal in the education system worldwide, there are concerns about 28,623 unlicensed teachers representing 47.2% as non-compliant practitioners. There are also concerns regarding the low renewal rates and recertification among teachers in Lusaka province. This paper, therefore, explores the state of awareness of the Teaching Profession Act and license renewal among teachers in selected districts in Lusaka Province, Zambia. The paper is organized as follows: Section One deals with the theoretical framework, the study methodology is discussed in Section Two, Section Three presents the results and discussions, and Section Four discusses the recommendations and conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Human Capital Theory (HCT), advanced by Gary S. Becker and Theodore W. Schultz (1974). The HCT provides a strong conceptual foundation for understanding policies and practices related to teacher licensing, professional registration, and continuous certification. Becker's (1992) seminal work, *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education* (1964), emphasized that education and training have economic value because they enhance the knowledge, skills, and productivity of individuals. Teixeira (2014) and Schultz (1961) further expanded this view, arguing that investment in human capital is essential for national development and improved labour force performance.

In the context of teacher professional licensing, HCT is particularly relevant because registration, awareness creation, certification, and renewal are forms of strategic human capital investment. This is because individual teachers make educational or professional development decisions based on rational evaluation of costs and

benefits. Applied to this study, teachers' willingness to register, maintain awareness of licensing requirements, and renew their certificates depends on whether they perceive professional licensing as beneficial for their career progression, employability, and professional legitimacy.

HCT posits that investments in human capital—such as licensing, continuous professional development (CPD), and credential upgrades—yield returns through enhanced productivity. Teacher certification, therefore, becomes a mechanism that improves teaching competence, instructional quality, and ultimately learner outcomes (Scully, 2017; Osiobe, 2019). The theory assumes that the labour market rewards increased productivity with appropriate incentives (Teixeira, 2014; Schultz, 1961). Within education systems, licensed teachers are often accorded higher professional recognition, job security, promotion opportunities, and salary differentiation, which further motivates compliance with registration and renewal requirements.

Fourth, HCT emphasizes that systematic investments in skills, training, and professional standards contribute to improved organizational and national productivity (Nyenwe, 2020). For the teaching profession, mandatory registration, structured renewal processes, and continuous training—as required by teacher licensing frameworks—enhance teacher efficiency, accountability, and instructional effectiveness (Mwesiumo, 2020)

Thus, Human Capital Theory provides a strong basis for understanding why governments and teacher regulatory bodies invest in teacher licensing systems. Raising awareness of licensing requirements ensures that teachers understand the importance of maintaining valid certification, while renewal processes reinforce continuous skills upgrading (Teixeira, 2014; Schultz, 1961). Licensing becomes not only a regulatory requirement but also a developmental strategy that strengthens teacher professionalism and enhances the quality of education. By framing teacher licensing as an investment rather than a bureaucratic requirement, HCT highlights how registration awareness, certification, and renewal contribute to improved teacher performance and broader educational development (Becker, 1992).

Research Methods

This study employed a quantitative research approach and descriptive design. The study population consisted of 651 individuals as a collection of characteristics on which the study sample was drawn (Dwivedi et al., 2020; Liu et al. (2020). The sample drawn in turn served as the foundation for drawing generalizations regarding the overall population (Singh & Masuku, 2014). The Krejcie and Morgan sample determination table was used to draw a sample size of 375 out of the 18,759 teacher population (Kafue District teacher population is 1,648, Luangwa District teacher population is 563, and Lusaka District teacher population is 16,548), where the total teacher population (N) was established and looked up in the Krejcie and Morgan sample determination table, followed by selecting the corresponding sampling size (S) of 375 from the total population (N) of 18,759. The study employed a self-developed questionnaire to gather data. Permission to conduct the study was sought from the relevant authorities. The study adhered to fundamental research ethics, including participants' anonymity and confidentiality (Paliwal & Singh, 2021). Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the respondents' data.

Findings

The findings of this study are presented according to the research question that guided the study, which is: What is the state of Awareness of the Teaching Profession Act and License Renewal among Teachers in Selected Districts in Lusaka Province, Zambia?

The objective of the study was also to explore the state of Awareness of the Teaching Profession Act and License Renewal among Teachers in Selected Districts in Lusaka Province, Zambia. To measure this objective, data were collected from teachers using a questionnaire. The data were analysed descriptively and the results represented in Figures 1-6.

Figure 1: Awareness of the Teaching Profession Act

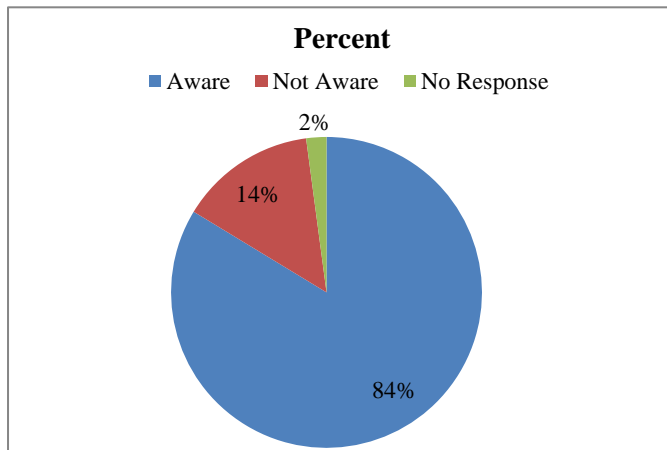


Figure 1 above illustrates the extent to which teachers are aware of the Teaching Profession Act. A majority of teachers (84%) indicated they are aware of the Act, some (14%) reported being not aware, and a small proportion (2%) stated they are not aware at all. The relatively high awareness level may be due to efforts by the Teacher Councils, unions, or education service directorates to sensitize teachers about the Teaching Professional Act and regulations through workshops, circulars, and staff meetings.

Conversely, teachers in rural or deprived areas might have limited access, explaining the partial or lack of awareness, or there may be delays in cascading policy information, resulting in uneven levels of awareness of the Teaching Profession Act across districts. Also, teachers who are less active and less engaged in professional networks or associations may have less exposure to discussions about the Teaching Professional Act and regulations. To confirm these findings, in South Africa, Walker (2011) mentioned that professional registration is a prerequisite for employment, yet many educators demonstrate insufficient awareness of the specific requirements and renewal procedures.

Figure 2: Awareness of License Renewal Dates

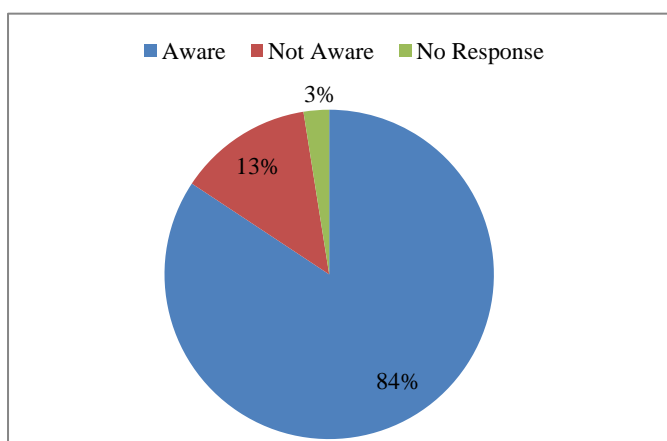


Figure 2 shows the level of awareness of the license renewal due dates with the Teaching Council of Zambia (TCZ) and their awareness of the license renewal due dates. The findings indicate a very high proportion (84.3%) who are aware of when their teaching license is due for renewal. A very low proportion (13%) of the teachers are not aware when their teaching license is due for renewal while an insignificant number (3%) did not respond to whether they are aware or not aware of when their teaching license is due for renewal. To corroborate these findings, Oubibi, (2024) mentioned that teacher professional registration and renewal are mechanisms for professional teacher development. However, awareness campaigns about renewal deadlines and specific requirements remain a challenge in many African contexts.

The high awareness rate of the license renewal date of (84%) demonstrates a strong level of compliance with professional registration requirements and a generally good understanding of license management among teachers in Zambia. Also, the high awareness of renewal due dates suggests that the Teaching Council of Zambia has effectively enforced the registration policy and communicated its importance to teachers. The awareness rate also shows how teachers understand that renewal of a license is mandatory for practicing and for maintaining professional legitimacy. The high awareness of renewal due dates may stem from ongoing sensitization campaigns by TCZ through circulars, workshops, and reminders sent via schools or district education offices.

The small proportion of teachers (13%), and (3%) who are unaware of their renewal due dates may be due to limited access to communication channels, transfer delays, or inadequate follow-up from school administrators. Teachers in rural or remote areas might also face information flow challenges. In New Zealand, Alcorn (2013) concurs these findings by stating that the Teaching Council manages practicing certificates valid for three years, though awareness of expiration dates and renewal deadlines among the teaching workforce remains inconsistent.

Figure 3: Payment preferences for license renewal

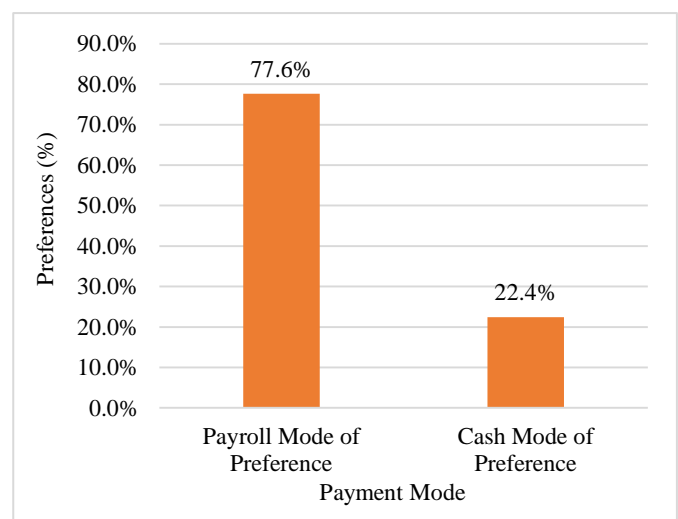


Figure 3 illustrates teachers' preferred mode of payment to the Teaching Council of Zambia (TCZ) for the renewal of their licenses. A large majority (77.6%) of teachers preferred the payroll mode of payment in renewing their licenses, while cash payments are still preferred by a smaller portion, 22.4%, mainly due to issues of convenience and delays in salary deductions. This pattern suggests that while most teachers understand the renewal process, preferences in payment methods reflect practical experiences and administrative

realities.

It is important to reason that payroll deductions are automatic and reduce the need for teachers to make manual payments or travel to pay centers. Payroll mode of payment allows gradual payment through salary processing, which is easier on teachers' finances compared to lump-sum cash payments. Payroll systems provide an official record of payment, giving teachers confidence that their fees are properly credited to TCZ. Preference for Cash Payment of (22.4%) by teachers allows instant confirmation of payment, avoiding delays sometimes associated with payroll systems. Teachers in rural or newly posted areas might prefer paying cash directly to maintain control over the process and ensure their renewal is not delayed by administrative bottlenecks.

Figure 4: Online Renewal System and Accessibility

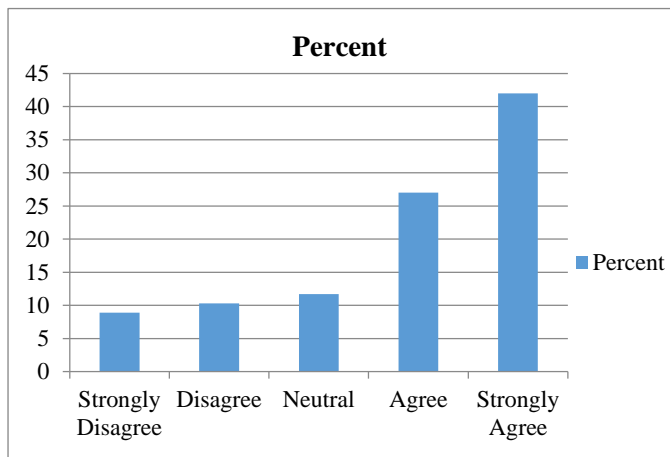


Figure 4 illustrates teachers' perceptions of the Teaching Council of Zambia's (TCZ) online license renewal system and accessibility. The findings reveal a mixed response among teachers: Some of the teachers (45%) strongly agreed that there is an online license renewal system, and it is also accessible, a smaller portion of the teachers, (30%) agreed to the statement, (15%) were neutral to the statement, (7%) disagreed to the statement, while, (3%) strongly disagreed that the Teaching Council of Zambia's (TCZ) has an online license renewal system, and it is also accessible. The results might suggest that while the digitalization of the renewal process has improved efficiency for many teachers, digital literacy and infrastructure limitations continue to hinder universal accessibility. The results might also suggest that many teachers appreciate the convenience and time-saving nature of the online system, as it eliminates the need for travel to physical offices. The system likely offers faster processing, digital receipts, and easier record management, which enhances user satisfaction.

Figure 5: School Administration Support to Teachers in License Renewal

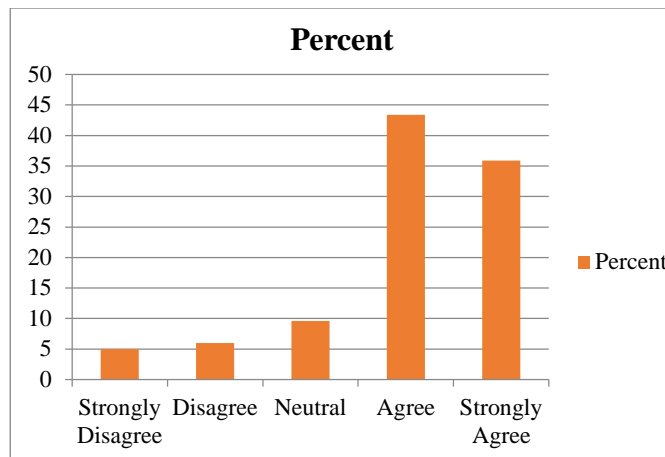
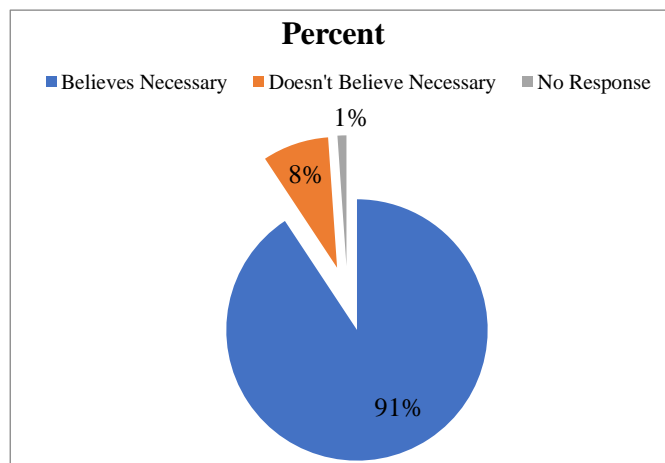


Figure 5 presents teachers' views on the role of school administration in supporting the renewal of professional practice licenses. The data revealed that some of the teachers (35%) strongly agreed that school administration does support the renewal of teachers' professional practice licenses, about (35%) of them agreed to the statement, (8% of the teachers were neutral, (7%) disagreed, while an insignificant number of the teacher (5%) strongly disagreed that school administration does support the renewal of teachers' professional practice licenses. These results suggest that school leadership plays a crucial role in promoting professional compliance and sustaining teachers' awareness and commitment to license renewal requirements. The school administrators are also likely to take an active interest in professional compliance, reminding and guiding teachers about renewal deadlines. To confirm these findings, Alexander et al. (2016) claimed a study on quarterly reporting systems in Philippine schools demonstrated that when institutions provided clear timelines and system training, compliance in registration and renewal improved dramatically from 25% on-time submission to 100%.

Figure 6: Importance of Teacher Professional Practice Certificate



Interpretation of Figure 5: Importance of Professional Practice Certificate. Figure 5 illustrates teachers' perceptions of the value and importance of possessing a professional teaching license. The results show that an overwhelming majority (91 %) of teachers believe that holding a professional license is essential for all teachers, and insignificant numbers of teachers (8%), and 1%) did not respond or do not believe that holding a professional license is essential for all teachers. This finding indicates that most teachers recognize the teaching license as a crucial symbol of professional identity, credibility, and accountability within the education sector. It also

suggests that a professional license provides teachers with a sense of dignity and pride, reinforcing teaching as a respected and specialized profession rather than a general occupation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, while many teachers are aware of the Teaching Profession Act, there remains a significant proportion who have limited or no knowledge of it. There is a high level of professionalism and compliance among teachers regarding awareness of license renewal. However, the few who are unaware of their renewal due dates highlight the need for more consistent reminders. Most teachers are knowledgeable about the renewal process and favor payroll deductions as a convenient and affordable payment method. The majority of teachers recognize and appreciate the efficiency of the TCZ online renewal system, but digital literacy challenges and inadequate internet infrastructure remain key barriers to equitable access. School administration plays a pivotal role in motivating and facilitating teachers' renewal of their professional practice licenses. Strong leadership, effective communication, and a culture of professional accountability within schools significantly contribute to teachers' compliance with the Teaching Council of Zambia's licensing requirements. Most teachers highly value the professional practice certificate, viewing it as an essential component of their professional identity and a guarantee of teaching quality and credibility. Teachers' responses reflect a strong understanding that a valid teaching license not only legitimizes their profession but also enhances public trust, career development, and professional accountability.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Teaching Council of Zambia, the teacher unions, and the Ministry of Education should work together to ensure there are continuous professional orientation implementations and policy dissemination to ensure all teachers understand the legal and ethical framework governing their profession and the Teaching Profession Act. The Teaching Council of Zambia should intensify awareness campaigns, provide accessible materials in all schools, and incorporate policy orientation sessions into regular teacher professional development programs.

The Teachers' Council of Zambia should assist all teachers to go through the licensing and registration process so they are better informed about the Teaching Profession Act, which governs their professional status and ethical standards. Teachers in rural and urban, or well-resourced schools, should be assisted by the teachers' council to have better access to policy documents and professional development programs aimed at contributing to greater awareness of the Teaching Profession Act.

The Ministry of Education of Zambia and the Teaching Council of Zambia need to organize seminars and professional meetings where teachers are motivated to understand that registering and renewing of license with the Teaching Council of Zambia (TCZ) is a prerequisite for employment, promotion, or salary processing. Failure to register or renew the license could result in job insecurity or administrative challenges. The TCZ should institute more consistent reminders, digital notification systems, and regular orientation sessions to ensure compliance checks to help teachers keep track of their renewal timelines across all districts. Peer influence and professional networks should be used by teachers to share information about renewal deadlines among colleagues. Peer discussions and union communications should also be encouraged to contribute to sustaining high awareness levels.

It is recommended that the Teaching Council of Zambia should enhance the efficiency, transparency, and timeliness of payroll-based payments to encourage full adoption. The Ministry of Education should work with TCZ to increase exposure to digital platforms and access to the online license renewal system, especially among younger or urban-based teachers, which may contribute to this positive assessment. The Ministry of Education should assist teachers in rural or peri-urban areas to have access to computers and ICT training to facilitate their transition to online processing and license renewal. School administrators should assist teachers in accessing online platforms, organizing collective renewal sessions, or liaising with district offices to streamline the process. The administrators should coordinate renewal efforts collectively, creating a sense of teamwork among teachers. Teacher unions and educational authorities should consistently emphasize the importance of professional licensing in meetings, workshops, and policy documents.

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