

Teacher Motivation Methods and their Impact on Student Academic Performance

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Abstract: The purpose of this publication was to evaluate teacher motivation processes and their impact on student academic performance in public secondary school education. The research was guided by an objective which assessed teacher motivation processes. The study adopted concurrent triangulation research design. The target population for this study was 1493 teachers in 202 public secondary schools in Migori County, Kenya. Simple random sampling was used to get 400 teachers. Data for the study was collected by the use of questionnaires and interview schedules. Validity of questionnaires was tested during the pilot study in schools which were finally not sampled for the study in Migori County. The data collected was summarized and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Inferential statistics was used whereby Mean Standard Scores Standard Deviation, Variance and Skewness were used to assess teacher motivation processes and impact on student academic performance. The research revealed that whereas teachers' tours, institutional meals, refresher courses and involvement in decision making impacted on student achievement; promotion on merit, rewards, incentives, housing and comfortable workload did not impact on academic performance.

Keywords: Motivation, Student performance, Staff Tours, Achievement Rewards, Incentives, Teacher Workload, and Decision Making.

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess teacher motivation methods and their impact on promoting student's academic performance in public secondary school education. The processes assessed were school tours, institutional meals, refresher courses, involvement in decision making, promotion on merit, achievement rewards, work incentives, institutional housing and teaching workload.

Research Objective

The research was guided by objective which assessed teacher motivation processes in secondary schools.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Oxford English Dictionary defines motivation thus: 'A reason or reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way'. In this context, Ogundele (2008) attempted to define teacher motivation as the reasons that set the level at which a teacher is contented with the working conditions and particularly salary. Sinclair, (2008) defined teacher motivation in terms of attraction, retention and concentration. DÖrnyei, and Ushiola, (2011) indicated that there seems to be no consensus in the understanding of teacher motivation. However, DÖrnyei, and Ushiola, (2011) identified 2 dimensions of defining teacher motivation: direction and magnitude of human behaviour by advancing that motivation is linked to reasons that emanate from intrinsic values that teachers choose to teach and sustain teaching. In summary, the above definitions clearly indicate that motivation is either intrinsic or acquisitive in nature.

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Further, research conducted by Guajardo, (2011) in Low Income Countries (LICs) suggested that work motivation refers to the psychological processes influencing individual behavior with respect to the attainment of workplace tasks and goals. Financial motives are likely to be dominant among teachers in LICs where pay and other material benefits are too low for individual and household survival needs. Marques, (2010), supports by advancing that motivation is what people need to perform better and can work if the right person, with right skills, right qualification, right drive, and right experience are placed in charge of the task at hand.

Evidently, a study conducted by Bruns and Luque, (2015) exhibited that there was indication that detailed strategies and methods to improve teacher motivation were weighted strongly towards financial motivations. However, Bruns and Luque, (2015) unveiled that there were very limited evidence of the effectiveness of alternative strategies and approaches. Besides, bonus payments for teachers are also implemented and evaluated as a response to improving teacher motivation in Low and Middle Income Country contexts.

A study conducted by Imberman, (2015) indicated that teacher incentives can be effective if appropriately designed while poorly designed incentives yield little benefits. Policy makers should avoid threshold based incentives. Imberman advocated for system based incentives that are based on incremental improvements in student performance. This would enable teachers focus on holistic learning rather than specific learning.

Similarly, Imberman, (2015) suggests that professional attention given to incentives can effectively improve performance, and incentives based on relative student performance show promise but are yet to be evaluated. Further, the cons for incentives for individual teachers have shown positive and negative impacts. Further, in countries where teachers are paid high salaries, incentives need to be large to elicit results and lastly there is no evidence that incentives could be tied to specific results.

Serve and Bolin, (2012) in their study in United Kingdom revealed that teacher motivation was low due to work burden, poor pay and low influence by society. Parallel findings in other countries confirmed presence of low teacher motivation which was attributed to distinctive factors. The role of motivation arising from comfortable workload, acceptable pay and improved influence on student's academic performance are yet to be established.

Consequently, Alarm and Farid, (2011) in a study noted that motivation methods for teachers are crucial as they affect students directly. This finding is supported by a previous research by Marques, (2010) which determined that teacher motivation methods, satisfaction of teachers and performance are interdependent. Lack of proper management of motivation methods among teachers may lead absenteeism from school. Lack of motivation also causes aggressive behavior towards colleagues and students. Further, notable lack of motivation caused early exit from teaching profession and teacher psychological withdrawal from work. Therefore, poor teacher motivation approaches would also have the same results as lack of motivation.

Two-factor theory distinguished between Motivators like challenging work, recognition for one's performance, added responsibility, opportunity to do something meaningful, involvement in decision making, sense of importance to an organization that give positive satisfaction arising from intrinsic conditions of the job itself such as recognition, achievement, or personal growth; and Hygiene factors which comprised status, job security, salary, fringe benefits, work conditions, good pay, paid insurance, tours that did not give positive satisfaction or lead to higher motivation. The term hygiene is used in the sense that these are maintenance factors which are extrinsic to the work itself, and include aspects such as company policies, supervisory practices, or wages/salary (Levin, 2010).

Krystle, (2012) noted that intrinsic motivation involves teachers providing choice, enabling students to set goals and investigate their interest and curiosities. Further, the study by Krystle, (2012) exhibited that factors that led to satisfaction included achievement, intrinsic interest in work, responsibility, and advancement. Conversely, according to the same study, factors that caused dissatisfaction were institutional policy, institutional administrative practices, supervision, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, and salary.

In India, a study by Muralidharan, and Sundararaman (2011) offered insights that can be highly effective and far cheaper to implement in developing countries. Teachers were assigned three groups: No incentives, school wide incentives and individual incentives. With an incentive process of not more than US \$100 for school wide incentives and individual incentives, the study found out that there was significant impact on mathematics and language performance from

individual incentives but only 50% smaller impact on group incentives. This showed that individualized incentives were significantly better than group incentives.

A study conducted by Ngibudzi, (2009) in the Republic of Tanzania showed that low motivation among teachers came as a result of poor pay, lack of fringe benefits, lack of bonuses; lack of promotion openings, poor processes and measures, lack of in-service training or professional development and lack of appreciation from employers. The study by Ngibudzi (2009) revealed that teachers differ significantly in their motivation in relation to demographic location of the school. The result further exhibited that teachers in rural areas appear to be more satisfied with social benefits and support from institutional administration than their colleagues in urban areas. Also, the study stated that motivation among secondary school teachers were fragile. Failure to meet teacher needs and expectations such as recognition, performance, better terms, and working conditions of service such as salary resulted into demotivated teachers. The study was insightful on issues of teacher salary which has been debatable because some schools of thought have advanced that money is not a motivator.

An experiment on impact of incentives as a method of motivation conducted in Kenya by Glewwe, Ilias, and Kremer (2010) found out that incentives were positive at improving student performance on incentivized examinations as opposed to non-incentivized examinations. In their study, Glewwe, Ilias, and Kremer randomly assigned schools to an incentive programme that offered prizes to teachers with an up to US \$50 based on average test score performance. The study established that there was notable impact on performance arising from incentivized examinations. Indeed, according to Glewwe et al., (2010), non-financial incentives have also been found to be effective at motivating teachers in Kenya where 'in-kind' prizes like bicycles and motor cycles were linked to student enhanced academic performance.

Also, in Kenya, a study by Wenzare, (2012) suggested that school managers must have proactive motivation approaches for staff and students to enhance academic performance. They are expected to use supervisor-teacher responsive methods by moving away from traditional methods of control and authoritarianism. Indeed, traditional methods of inspection instilled fear on teachers and lowered their morale. Teacher management should therefore be sources of motivation of teachers and students.

Further, a study conducted by Onyambu, (2014) noted that intrinsic motivation that encouraged teachers to work included being recognized, being recognized is a potential for professional growth in school, and a good internal relationship with colleagues. Also, the research by Onyambu, (2014) concluded that when teachers developed good interpersonal relationship with students, there was bound to be improvement in student academic performance. Onyambu, (2014) finally established that ranking high on extrinsic motivators were job security and adequate pay.

To sum up, motivation is a critical factor that determines the general efficiency of an institution. This study therefore assessed motivation methods in Migori County to come up with corrective measures where conceivable and possibly enhance methods that could be positively utilized.

3. DISCUSSION

The variable institutional motivation processes was used in this research to find out whether teachers were motivated to teach and enhance student's academic performance. Several questions were put to teachers to gauge level of motivation among teachers in Migori County. Questionnaire items were used to generate data on role of school tours, institutional meals, promotion based on merit, achievement rewards, incentives, institutional houses, refresher courses, intrinsic interest in work, comfortable teacher workload and involvement in decision making and their impact on student academic performance.

To ascertain level of motivation in secondary schools in Migori County, several indicators were put to test. They were whether schools involved in school tours, whether schools offered free institutional meals, whether teachers witnessed promotions based on merit, whether Board Of Managements (BOM) organized incentives in terms of achievement rewards, whether schools had institutional houses to improve round the clock supervision of students, whether refresher courses were supported, whether teachers had intrinsic interest in work, whether teachers were given comfortable workload and whether teachers were involved in decision making.

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Teachers gave their views and data on Table 1 were generated: there was column on valid respondents, column on Mean Standard Score of their responses Standard Deviation (SD) of responses from the Mean Standard Score, Variance and column for Skewness of responses. The output showing secondary school motivation processes were summarized. Whereby 400 teacher respondents gave their responses on indicators of teacher motivation and their impact on academic performance in secondary school education.

At a scale of 1-5 involving: Very True (VT), True (T), Somehow True (ST), Not True (NT) and Not True at All (NTA) the respondents were given the opportunity to indicate their views. The result were summarized as indicated below.

Table 1: School Motivators

Motivation Processes in Schools					
	<i>f</i> <i>students</i>	<i>MSS</i>	<i>Standard</i> <i>Deviation (SD)</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>Skew-ness</i>
<i>Tours</i>	400	2.39	1.229	1.511	0.590
<i>Institutional Meals</i>	400	2.45	1.348	1.816	0.686
<i>Merit Promotion</i>	400	3.07	1.319	1.739	-0.077
<i>Achievement Rewards</i>	400	3.31	1.396	1.948	-0.197
<i>Work Benefits/Incentives</i>	400	3.11	1.841	2.192	-0.012
<i>Institutional housing</i>	400	3.29	1.447	2.093	-0.212
<i>Attending Refresher Courses</i>	400	2.53	1.291	1.668	0.663
<i>Intrinsic interest in work</i>	400	3.16	1.416	2.061	-0.010
<i>Comfortable Teacher workload</i>	400	3.18	1.743	2.170	-0.093
<i>Involvement in decision making</i>	400	3.07	1.421	2.018	-0.60

Source: SPSS Data Analysis 2021

In Table 1 teachers were given chance to respond whether tours for teachers were organized in their schools, the responses showed a Mean Standard Score of 2.39 Standard Deviation (SD) of 1.229, variance of 1.511 and Skewness of 0.950. With a Mean Standard Score of 2.39 and a positive skew of 0.950, it was noted that teachers in the sampled schools went for tours. This research did not consider destinations of these tours. This output supported findings by Jabuya (2010) conducted in a study in Uriri Sub County showed that starting point for teacher motivation had already been established by schools whereby tours for teachers are witnessed; though the level was low.

In addition, in Table 1 teachers were given chance to respond whether institutional meals were existing in schools, Table 1 showed a Mean Standard Score of 2.45 Standard Deviation (SD) of 1.348, variance of 1.816 and Skewness of 0.686. With a Mean Standard Score of 2.45 and a positive skew of 0.686, it was noted that teachers in sampled schools witnessed institutional meal programmes. This research did not assess quality of such meals.

Further, teachers were given chance to respond whether promotions based on merit were evidenced in schools. Table 1 showed a Mean Standard Score of 3.07 Standard Deviation (SD) of 1.319, variance of 1.735 and Skewness of -0.077. With an average Mean Standard Score of 3.07 and a Skewness of -0.077, it was noted that teachers in sampled schools did not witness promotion of teachers based on merit. Promotion of teachers were not based on teacher performance excellence. This finding supports a study conducted by Barasa, (2015) which found out that there was low level of motivation of teachers arising from promotions. Teachers felt demotivated despite regular updates on emerging issues on the curriculum. Teachers were further demotivated because they felt that some of the promotions were unfair.

Teachers were also given opportunity to respond whether achievement rewards were given in schools. Achievement rewards are gifts given after students have accomplished secondary education and the results are used to appreciate teachers. Evidently, the analysis showed a Mean Standard Score of 3.31 for achievement rewards and Standard Deviation (SD) of 1.396, variance of 1.948 and Skewness of -0.197. With a Mean Standard Score of 3.31 and a Skewness of -0.197, it was noted that teachers in sampled schools did not witness achievement rewards. This view agrees with a study conducted by Nyantika, (1996) on factors leading to poor performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) which showed that lack of rewards for teachers to boost their morale were to blame for poor performance in KCSE.

Subsequently, teachers were given questionnaire items to respond whether work benefits/incentives were given to teachers in schools. Work benefits/incentives are gifts given during school programmes to improve delivery. Table 1 showed a Mean Standard Score of 3.11 Standard Deviation (SD) of 1.841, variance of 2.192 and Skewness of -0.012. With a Mean Standard Score of 3.11 and a Skewness of -0.012, it was noted that teachers in sampled schools did not witness achievement rewards/incentives. Their salaries were also not commensurate with their input in enhancing academic performance.

Additionally, In Table 1 teachers were given chance to respond whether they were given opportunity to attend refresher courses, the table showed a Mean Standard Score of 2.53 Standard Deviation (SD) of 1.291, variance of 1.668 and Skewness of 0.663 with a Mean Standard Score of 2.53 and a Skewness of 0.663, it was noted that institutional managers in sampled schools had given teachers opportunity to attend refresher courses.

Besides, teachers were given questionnaire items to gauge whether they were self- motivated; the table showed a Mean Standard Score of 3.16 Standard Deviation (SD) of 1.416, variance of 2.061 and Skewness of -0.010. With a Mean Standard Score of 3.16 and a Skewness of -0.010, it was noted that teachers in sampled schools had no intrinsic interest in work.

In addition, teachers were given opportunity to respond whether teachers in schools were given comfortable workloads as prescribed by government policy. Table 1 showed a Mean Standard Score of 3.18 Standard Deviation (SD) of 1.743, variance of 2.170 and Skewness of -0.093. With a Mean Standard Score of 3.18 and a Skewness of -0.093, it was noted that teachers in the sampled schools did not have comfortable workload as prescribed in policies. However, the analysis did not consider whether the teachers were overloaded or underutilized.

Equally, teachers were also given opportunity to respond whether they were involved in decision making in schools. Table 1 showed a Mean Standard Score of 3.07 Standard Deviation (SD) of 1.421, variance of 2.018 and Skewness of -0.60. With a Mean Standard Score of 3.07 and a Skewness of -0.60, it was noted that teachers in sampled schools were not involved in decision making.

Alternatively, respondents who were principals were interviewed and gave the following summarized comments as insights on motivation processes in secondary schools in Migori County (County no 44) in Kenya, East Africa.

Motivation is important not only to teachers but even to students in secondary schools. Teachers are motivated through incentives and rewards, tours, institutional meals and involvement in decision making. However, motivation of teachers through institutional processes is challenging because the government through its policies has put laws and regulations to curb unnecessary monetary burden to parents and support institutions. (Principals Summarized Comments)

Principal respondents reiterated that motivation is crucial in secondary school education. The respondents noted that there are some acceptable methods that schools can use to motivate teachers. The respondents mentioned rewards, tours, meals and involvement in management of school as important motivators for teachers. On the other hand respondents showed that the government does not approve extra expenditure in schools to enable school principals to embark on teachers and students motivation.

4. FINDINGS

The findings showed that whereas Institutional Tours for teachers, institutional meals, attending refresher courses, and involvement in decision making were motivation indicators evidenced in schools; the rest of the indicators comprising promotion based on individual teacher merit, achievement rewards (incentives), work incentives, institutional housing and comfortable workload were not evidenced in schools. Out of the 10 indicators, only four had positive impact on teachers while the remaining six were not proactively utilized hence did not impact on student academic performance.

This finding supports views by Jordan (2006) who revealed that incentives for teachers in the Public Education System that may enable them to perform well are frequently weak due to sanctions. The study further agrees with a study by Wenzare, (2012) which proffers responsive motivation methods by moving away from traditional methods of control and authoritarianism to more dynamic approaches.

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Also, the study agrees with Glewwe, Ilias, and M. Kremer (2010) who found out that incentives had positive at improving student performance. Despite Onyambu, (2014); Bruns and Luque, (2015); confirming that ranking high on extrinsic motivators were job security and adequate pay, this study showed otherwise. Further, this study agreed with a study by Ngibudzi, (2009) which showed that low motivation among teachers came as a result of poor pay, lack of fringe benefits, lack of bonuses; lack of promotion opportunities, poor processes and procedures, lack of in service training or professional development; lack of appreciation from employer. Motivation, is therefore an impediment in achievement of academic excellence in Migori County.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that tours, institutional meals, attending refresher courses and involvement in decision making were crucial in schools and should be exploited by both institutional managers and teachers to enhance student academic performance. Also, the study concluded that measures be put in place to streamline merit based promotions for teachers, enhance rewards/incentives by supporting individualized achievement rewards, ensure comfortable workload and guarantee that most teachers are housed in schools.

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