

Influence of Teacher Motivation to Academic Performance of Pupils in Primary Schools in Kenya

Elizabeth N. Nyakundi^{1,*}, Pamela A. Raburu², Michael O. Okwara²

¹PhD Student, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, Bondo, Kenya
²Senior Lecturer, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, Bondo, Kenya

Abstract This study investigated the influence of teacher motivation to the academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Nyamira South Sub-County. The population of study was 147 head teachers and 836 teachers in Nyamira South Sub-County. Stratified sampling was used to get a sample of 84 teachers and 15 head teachers. A mixed method design was adopted for this study that used qualitative and quantitative approaches in collecting and analyzing data concurrently. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the teachers while an interview schedule collected from head teachers. Quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistic was used to describe and summarize the data in form of frequencies and percentages. Pearson correlation analysis was used to establish the relationship between the independent and dependent variable with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The correlation analysis established a positive but weak ($r = .439$; $p = .000 < .05$) correlation between teacher motivation and pupils academic performance. Qualitative data from the interview was analyzed using thematic approach. Data was coded and themes analyzed as they emerged. Analyzed data were then merged for presentation and discussion. The study concluded that the teacher motivation had a significant influence to academic performance of standard eight pupils in K.C.P.E. The study recommended that teachers should be given better motivation in terms of salaries, letters of recommendations and promotions. The results obtained may help the government and the community to make necessary changes and improvements so as to improve the education performance in the sub county.

Keywords Teacher, Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Academic Performance

1. Introduction

Primary education in some developing countries has expanded to the extent that it reaches nearly all school age children. In Kenya, the introduction of Universal (Free) primary education program in the public schools in January 2003 by the government of Kenya (GOK) has raised the total primary school enrolment from 5.99 million to about 8.5 million children which is a tremendous improvement so far. (Economic Survey, 2009). The Government of Kenya has also employed and posted trained teachers in these schools. However, pupils in these schools continue to perform poorly in the national examination. Secondary school placement and to some extent admission depend on performance of Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination in standard eight (Michael, Miguel and Rebecca 2004). The marks a student achieves in K.C.P.E determines which

secondary schools they will join. Those who score 350 marks and above have the privilege of joining National schools and top performing County schools where they are assured of passing very well in K.C.S.E. On the other hand those who score below 300 marks can only join Sub-County secondary schools where the majority of the students score grade c and below. Most pupils in Nyamira South Sub County has an average mean score of 220 for the last nine years, (see Table 1.1) and end up in the local schools where they do not pass highly and therefore cannot join competitive careers in future.

When parents take their children to school, their main objective is that they will get education that would prepare them for future to enable them compete in the globe for the available job vacancies. In order for the children to achieve this education, three factors have to work together that is, the school, the parents and the pupils. According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2014), any education system is as good as its teachers, since teachers matter most in respect to student learning achievement. The burden of success of Kenya's quest to expand breadth of the necessary skills will heavily depend on teachers' availability to teach those skills. Teachers play important role in enabling Kenya achieve the

* Corresponding author:

Elizabethnyakundi49@yahoo.com (Elizabeth N. Nyakundi)

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objective of education for all in 2020 (UNESCO, 2014). Currently teacher quality in Kenya measured by attendance and practices in the classroom is deplorable. Another issue about teachers that affects learning is absenteeism. Teacher absenteeism has been a big problem in Kenya particularly in public primary schools according to UWEZO learning assessment report of 2016 which shows that on average 12 per cent of teachers are absent from school during unannounced visits. Teacher absenteeism from the class stands at 42.2% in primary schools meaning that 40 000 out of 280 060 did not teach when expected to do so (World Bank, 2013). Therefore the biggest challenge is the teachers who are in school but not in class teaching and those in class but not teaching.

Campbell and Michael (2007) found a significant relationship between pupils' academic performance and motivation of teachers. A study by Orji (2014) in Nigeria found that teacher motivation provides the desire in students to learn as they are encouraged to learn, to express themselves through answering questions, taking part in both individual and group assignments. However a study by the New York City department of education providing incentives to teachers based on school performance involving student achievement, improvement and learning environment did not increase student achievement in any statistically meaningful way. Due to conflicting outcomes from different researchers, the current study was conducted.

1.1. Research Methods

A mixed method approach was adopted for the present study which Creswell & Plano-Clack (2011) explained that its central premise is to use better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. This study employed a mixed method approach using both quantitative and qualitative methods because the two methods were used to extend the breadth, depth and range of inquiry thereby producing hybrid results. The results from one method were used to develop the other. The location of study was Nyamira South Sub-County of Nyamira County, Kenya. Nyamira South Sub-County is in Nyamira County found in the former Nyanza province. It covered all the 147 Primary schools both

the private academies and public or government sponsored primary schools. Nyamira South Sub-County was chosen as the location of the study because of its continued poor performance (below average, less than 250 marks) of standard eight pupils in K.C.P.E. since 2009. The population of the study comprised of 145 head teachers and 843 teachers in 15 schools in Nyamira south sub- county. The teachers who taught class eight the previous year were used due to their experience in handling examination class while the head teachers of those schools were used since they are the drivers of their respective schools and therefore knew everything going on there.

The study used stratified sampling technique. The population was classified into six educational zones and purposive sampling done to give a required number of schools from each zone. This ensured the presence of key sub-groups within the sample and increased representativeness as it ensured that each unit or stratum is adequately represented in the sample, (Frankline, 2014). This gave a Sample of 15 head teachers and 84 teachers.

Instruments used in this study to collect data were interview schedule and questionnaire. Interview schedule was used to collect data from head teachers and a questionnaire from teachers. Validity of instruments was determined by two experts while Reliability of the instruments was determined through piloting using split half method. An instrument was designed in such a way that there are two parts. Subject scores from one part are correlated with scores from the second part. Splitting the items of the test in halves so that the two subjects are parallel, correlating the scores of one half of the test with scores of the other half and finding the reliability of the test as the correlation between the two parallel tests. The Cronbach gave a figure of 0.794 which was above the recommended reliability of 0.6 which indicated satisfactory internal reliability (Patton, 2009). Quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data was analyzed thematically.

1.1.1. Result Analysis

Table 1.1. Response percentage on teacher motivation

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I had a strong desire to become a teacher.	56.5	17.4	1.4	10.1	14.5
I did not get enough exam points to go to other careers.	43.5	14.5	0.0	24.6	17.4
Funding was readily available for teacher training.	40.6	24.6	2.9	20.3	11.6
Teachers at my school are de- motivated.	56.5	23.2	1.4	7.2	11.6
Teachers at my school are highly motivated	10.1	8.7	1.4	10.1	69.6
Teachers at my school have knowledge and skills to do their jobs well	75.4	20.3	1.4	0.0	2.9
Teachers' absenteeism is not a problem at my school.	60.9	23.2	0.0	2.9	13.0
Teachers at my school come to school on time	66.7	21.7	0.0	7.2	4.3
My pay as a teacher is satisfactory	6.0	3.0	0.0	4.5	86.6
Teachers at my school are respected in the society	9.4	25.0	0.0	31.3	34.4

It is generally held opinion that performance of student is associated to the level of motivation of teachers. Teachers have the biggest influence on the success and flaws of students' academic performance because their teaching motivations are instrumental in helping the learners learn. However, teachers' motivation may be aroused by either intrinsic or extrinsic stimuli, both of which are important in directing and regulating the learner's behaviors towards attainment of the desired goals. In exploring the teachers' level of intrinsic motivation constructs; statements were drawn relating to concepts which were important constituents of teacher motivation measurements. The teacher respondents were presented with a set of statement on teachers' motivation. They were Likert-scaled item type questions, in which the teacher respondents choose from 5-point score. From the respondents' responses, the researcher computed percentage frequencies as shown in Table 1.1.

The findings of the study show that the teachers in Nyamira South Sub-County were generally having moderate levels of motivation. This was evident in their response as indicated in Table 4.4, where more than half (56.5%) of the teacher respondents strongly felt that most of the teachers in their schools were de motivated and a significant majority (69.6%) of the teacher respondents strongly disagreed with the researcher's assertion that teachers in schools in Nyamira Sub-County were highly motivated. It was established from the findings of the study that although majority of the teachers joined teaching profession because they liked it, another significant proportion of the teachers did not have the desire to become a teacher but later joined it as a source of employment, as the last resort. This was reflected by nearly a quarter (24.6%) of respondents who were in disagreement with the statement that they had strong desire to become teachers. This was a significant proportion of teachers who are in the profession but are only in it as a source of income and not for the love of the job. However, 73.9% (strongly agreed: 56.5%; agreed: 17.4%) of the teachers insinuated that they had a strong desire to become a teacher. This means that teachers in Nyamira South Sub-County have intrinsic motivation and therefore their pupils should be performing better than what they are doing. This is contrary to what Achan (2010) found in his study that intrinsic motivation was found to motivate teachers to a very small extent.

It came out from the study findings that majority of teachers in Nyamira South Sub-County became teachers because they did not meet the academic requirements for other better courses. This was confirmed by 43.5% of the teacher respondents who strongly agreed that he/she did not get enough examination points to merit going to other careers. In addition, 14.5% of the respondents also supported that line of argument by simply agreeing to the statement. However, 24.6% and 17.4% of teacher respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with the statement that most teachers joined the profession because they did not meet the examination qualifications to go into

the other courses. In addition to the issue of low grade that denied most teachers opportunity to do other courses, the finding of this study show that cost of training as a primary school teacher compared to other well paid or highly placed professions was rather low, hence could easily be raised by most people. Nearly two thirds (65.2%) of the teachers who participated in the study agreed that funding was readily available for teacher training. Only 11.6% of them denied that statement and 2.9% were undecided on the matter. This concurs with what Ngala (2009) found that teacher quality affects the academic performance of pupils. Furthermore Wasanga, Noor and Ngala (2010) found similar results in their study that pupils' low achievement was due to poor subject mastery by teachers. Despite all these, three quarters (75.4%) and a fifth (20.3%) of the teachers strongly agreed and agreed respectively that most teachers in Nyamira South Sub-County schools have appropriate knowledge and skills to do their job well. Only negligible proportion (2.9%) of the teachers had divergent opinion and argued that some teachers exhibited lack of appropriate skills and knowledge as teachers. Mose (2015) concurs with this study as the study found that high performing schools had all trained teachers while schools with poor performance had hired some teachers who were not trained. On the same note, more than four out of five (84.1%) of the teachers confirmed that teacher absenteeism was not a problem at their schools and only 13.0% of the teachers said that, to some extent, lateness was a problem among the teaching staff. This fact was further supported by 85.4% of the teacher respondents who were in agreement (strongly agree: 66.7%; agree: 21.7%) that teachers at their schools always come to school on time. This indicated that there was some reasonable level of motivation among the teachers.

In agreement to the generally held opinion that teachers are underpaid, a significant proportion (86.8%) of the teachers who took part in this study strongly disagreed to the researchers' assertion that their pay as teachers was satisfactory. Only less than one out of ten (9.0%) of the teacher respondents concurred with the statement that teachers pay was satisfactory. This concurs with Glass (2011) who found that teachers are motivated more by economic motivators than altruism (need to help others). This means that teachers in Nyamira South sub-county are not motivated by the salary they get to work hard and hence the poor performance of pupils in the primary schools. On the same line Orji (2014) found similar results in his study that teachers in Nigeria yearned to be paid salaries comparable to other professions for them to live with dignity and stop engaging in other jobs leading to absenteeism.

On the issue of respect from the society, although a reasonable proportion of teachers felt that the society accord the teachers' appropriate respect, a significant majority of them disagreed. From Table 4.4, the summary of teachers responses show that about two thirds (65.7%) of the respondents had a perception that teachers at their school were not respected well by the society, only 9.4% and 25.0% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively

to the statement that the society respect teachers. This is supported by Achando (2016) who found that one of the teaching environments that demoralized teachers was lack of respect from the community.

To measure the level of personal motivation of teachers in the profession, summary statistics of the responses showing mean, standard deviation and standard error was computed on the teacher questionnaire measuring their level of motivation, as shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2. Ranking on scores of items of personal motivation

Item	Statistic N	Mean (%)	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
Teachers at my school have knowledge and skills to do their jobs well	69	91.3	2.4	19.6
Teachers at my school come to school on time	69	84.8	3.3	27.5
Teacher absenteeism is not a problem at my school.	69	79.0	4.1	34.5
Teachers at my school are de motivated.	69	76.4	4.2	34.8
I had a strong desire to become a teacher.	69	72.8	4.6	38.0
Funding was readily available for teacher training.	69	65.6	4.4	36.9
I did not get enough exam points to go to other careers.	69	60.5	4.9	41.0
Teachers at my school are respected in the society	69	30.1	3.0	24.8
Teachers at my school are highly motivated	69	19.9	4.2	35.0
My pay as a teacher is satisfactory.	69	9.3	3.3	26.8
Overall Level of Motivation		59.0	3.8	31.9

Table 1.2 shows that the average level of personal motivation of the teacher on the profession was at a mean of 59.0%, standard deviation of 31.9 and standard error of 3.8. The highest level of motivation score was on knowledge and skills in the job (Mean=91.3, SD=19.6 and SE=2.4), while the least factor of motivation or the lowest score was in teachers' pay (Mean=9.3, SD=26.3 and SE=3.3).

The other aspect of motivation that was established by the finding of this study was the ones through the external sources. This was mainly done by the head teachers. The forms of motivation found include cash awards, presents, salary and remunerations, and provision of meals/refreshments among others.

All (100%) of the head teachers who participated in the study indicated they motivate their teachers and pupils. However their forms of motivation varied from one head teacher to the other and from one school to the other school. The type of school also influenced the form of motivation to the teachers. The analysis of head teachers' response revealed the types of motivation they used most frequently.

Table 1.3 shows the summary of forms of motivations used by the head teachers in Nyamira South Sub-County.

Table 1.3. External motivation of teachers

Motivation Type	Frequency	Percentage
Awards/Prizes	7	50.0%
Meals/Refreshments	3	21.4%
Salary/Remuneration	2	14.3%
Other	2	14.3%

The findings of study show that awards and prizes formed the bulk of the types of motivations used in the schools in

Nyamira South Sub-County. Awards/Prizes appeared 50.0% in the choice of form of motivation. It was revealed that head teachers awarded teachers to recognize their excellence in a different field. It was established that awards in schools were often signified by trophies and certificates for the teachers. The findings of the study show that some awards could carry a monetary prize given to the teachers or just simply a public acknowledgment of excellence, without any tangible token or prize. It emerged from the findings of the study that prizes were also given to publicize noteworthy or exemplary behaviour, and to provide incentives for improved outcomes and competitive efforts among both teachers and pupils. However, these awards are only given once during prize giving day and are very small tokens like blankets and thermos flasks which are not enough for a teacher who has worked hard for a whole year. On the other hand those who do not get the awards may get de motivated and refuse to work hard hence the continuous poor performance.

The study revealed that teachers in Nyamira South Sub-County are not motivated to work hard and hence the poor performance of the pupils. The head teachers should give more monetary motivators. Levit (2007) contrasts this by saying that the teachers' incentives may have unintended consequences like explicit cheating, teaching the test at the expense of general learning and gives a negative impact on student performance. This means that a teacher will use all ways to make his or her students to pass so as to get the financial rewards promised. This has been the case in Kenyan primary and secondary schools which have made the Ministry of Education through the Kenya National Examinations Council to put up stringent measures in trying to curb examination cheating including closing schools during the entire examination period (KNEC 2016).

The head teachers also recognized that meals and refreshments could also be used as a way of motivating teachers. It was established that 35.7% of the head teachers confirmed that they used meals/refreshment to motivate their teachers. Majority of the head teachers said they provide their teachers with break-time tea, sometimes with evening tea. 35.7% of the head teachers also said they occasionally give free lunch to their teachers to encourage them not to leave school to search for meals during lunch break as would waste time.

Our school provides free lunch and break tea to the teachers when funds are allow, but when there are no funds the money from FPE is depleted the teachers have to contribute for the meals which does not augur well with them. HT 5.

Only one head teacher of a public primary school said that he provides teachers with free accommodation with water and electricity as well as medical attention if one or family member falls sick while in school and this ensure that they are motivated to stay in school longer than the official time.

We have constructed houses for teachers and majority, 11 out of 18, reside in the school compound with free water and electricity, free medical attention for the whole family and this means they have more time to attend to pupils. HT. 10

On the same note, salary and remunerations were used to motivate the teachers as was indicated by 21.4% of the head teachers who took part in the study. This was most prevalent in private schools where the head teachers/school proprietors increased salaries for their staff who registered good performance in class. However, in some public primary schools, because the salaries are paid by the government, teachers are not motivated by the salary as 86.6% strongly disagreed with the statement that my pay as a teacher is satisfactory. Teachers in Kenya are known to go on strike demanding better pay and other working conditions. Even as this study was going on teachers were on strike in the month of September 2015 demanding a pay increase of 50-60% which was awarded to them by the industrial court. Teachers only returned to teach after their salary was withheld and were threatened with the sack. This concurs with Orji (2014) who found that teachers were motivated to interact with pupils for better performance by the salary they are paid and that they yearned to be paid like other professions that had similar qualifications. This concurs with what Gitonga (2012) found that there was a strong relationship between remuneration of teachers and school performance.

The study hypothesis that stated, there is no statistically significant relationship between teacher motivation and academic performance was tested by computing the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The teachers' score which were calculated from the ten itemed 5- likert scaled statements, was used as an independent variable and the teachers' subject mean scores was used as the dependent variable. The findings of the study established $r = .439$ $p = .000 < .05$. This revealed that there was a positive but weak correlation between teachers motivation pupils academic performance. Since the $p (.000)$ was less than .05

the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternative hypothesis was accepted that stated that, there is a statistically significant relationship between teacher motivation and pupils' academic performance.

2. Conclusions

This study concluded that the teachers' motivation influences the academic performance of pupils. Teachers are not motivated by the salaries they earn since teachers in private schools earn very low salary and their pupils do better in national examinations. Teachers in the public schools earn better than those in private schools but their pupils do not perform well.

The type of motivation given to teachers is tokens or awards during prize giving days that are held after the K.C.P.E results are out. Teachers may be discouraged that promotions are not pegged on their output to the pupils' performance. The study recommended that better motivation strategies should be used so as to make the teachers work harder mainly in the public schools. This could be done by giving teachers letters of recommendations or certificates whenever they teach and their pupils perform well. This should be done in all classes and not only in class eight. Herzberg revealed this when he said that workers should be given motivators like recognition and letters of recommendation that would lead to growth and advancement that people find intrinsically rewarding (Herzberg 1923). Promotion of teachers should be basically based on the work performance of the teacher revealed by how his pupils perform in class and not automatic promotion from one job group to another after teaching for a number of years.

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