

IMPROVING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE THROUGH TEACHER MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES IN NAKURU NORTH SUB COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

Recently, motivation strategies have been used to encourage teachers to teach with an aim of improving their students' performance in schools. The teacher motivational strategies will be evaluated to check if they impact on learning outcomes among selected schools in Nakuru North Sub County. The question to be answered in the article will be; what are the teacher motivational strategies employed in public secondary schools; and what are their impact on students' learning outcomes as reflected in students performance in national examinations. The target sample was drawn from 18 public secondary schools that have participated in the KCSE for the last 3 years. The study sampled 132 respondents in total comprising eighteen principals and 114 teachers. The study adopted an Ex-post facto design and stratified random sampling technique in the identification and selection of the study sample. Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect data from the selected teachers and the 18 principals of the selected schools. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was used to aid in the processing and analysis of the collected data. Statistical tools used for data manipulation are standard deviation, correlation coefficient and simple linear regression. The data was presented in form of tables, bar graphs and pie-charts. Teachers motivating strategies were found to have influenced students' performance in a positive way in the last three years in the study area. Monetary rewards were identified as an excellent way of rewarding teachers for the good work. Other strategies identified are; giving job security, good salaries equivalent to the job done, freedom to select learning materials, among others mentioned earlier. Therefore, for students to perform well teacher motivation strategies should not be ignored and all efforts need to be put by stakeholders to motivate teachers.

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INTRODUCTION

Stakeholders in the education sector have identified low teacher motivation as one of the factors that contribute to low students' learning outcomes. Various studies (Bennell & Mukyanuzi, 2005; and Bishay, 1996) have shown the importance of teacher motivation to the learning outcomes. Moreover, it is a widely held belief in the private sector that employee motivation raises their efficiency and productivity. In addition to this, researches undertaken have shown that low teacher morale has had adverse effect on students' performance. For instance, Odera (2011) highlighted low teacher motivation as one of the major factors affecting performance in schools. Urwick (2005) found that interest in teacher motivation provides expanded opportunity to apply contemporary motivation theory and research to current and future interventions. To date, however, there has been no systematic focus on the strategies that can influence teachers' motivation and the degree to which teachers' motivation influences their classroom instruction. Such research is essential to clarify the connection between teacher motivation and students' academic performance.

Teacher motivational strategies

In order to motivate teachers, stakeholders such as the governments, school administrators, and NGOs have invested in motivation strategies as they seek to encourage their teachers to play their role effectively and efficiently to help the schools achieve the desired learning outcomes (Bishay, 1996). In Nakuru North sub-county, different schools have adopted different strategies and programs such as tours, rewards to the best performing teachers, promotions, advancement programs, seminars and workshops, and allowances for remedial classes. Mulkeen, Capman & Dejaeghere, (2007) in their research funded by the World Bank in Ghana, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Guinea, and Uganda, identifies conditions of service as one of the teacher motivational strategies that have high impact on teachers' performances. The study found out that teachers in countries such as Ethiopia where teachers teach only one subject should be encouraged to teach an additional subject in order to diversify their knowledge. However, the teachers and policy makers noted that increasing the subjects to more than two subjects would have a negative impact on the teachers' motivation and would reduce their contribution and efficacy. Teachers are demoralized by increase in class size and work-load resulting from

introduction of universal basic Education in low income developing countries (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007).

It has been proven that teachers are motivated through a wide variety of needs; some are highly motivated by money and others by power and motivation (Barb, 2000). Moodley (2011) found that monetary rewards lead to higher motivation and that employees can stay longer in the public sector if their average pay is increased. However, the study also found that some non-monetary rewards have similar effects. Regular payment highly motivates teachers and is one of the most efficient method of motivating them (Ofoegbu, 2004). This is because the essence of working as a teacher is not only to help produce skilled and educated people, but also to meet their financial obligations. The method used to pay teachers should be tailored towards reducing inconveniences that teachers encounter in receiving their payments (Hayden, 1993). For instance the method should not only be quick but also ensure that teachers in rural areas do not have to travel for long distances to get their salaries. Therefore, failure of governments to pay teachers promptly interferes with teachers classroom activities (Ofoegbu, 2010).

Maslows' (1954) hierarchy of need can be used to explain the effectiveness of teacher motivational strategies. Teaching, just like any other job, should meet professionals' needs. Maslow suggested that physiological needs must be satisfied before safety needs, which must be taken care of before love and belonging. Next are esteem needs which must be taken care of before self-actualization. In the context of teaching self-actualization can be understood as personal achievement, a key component of teacher's motivation. Teachers appear to have stuck in the second level because security, stability and protection have become a challenge in their current working conditions (Bennel & Akyeampong, 2007). The model state that higher needs cannot be met before the lower needs have been met as outlined in the Maslow's stair case model of motivation:

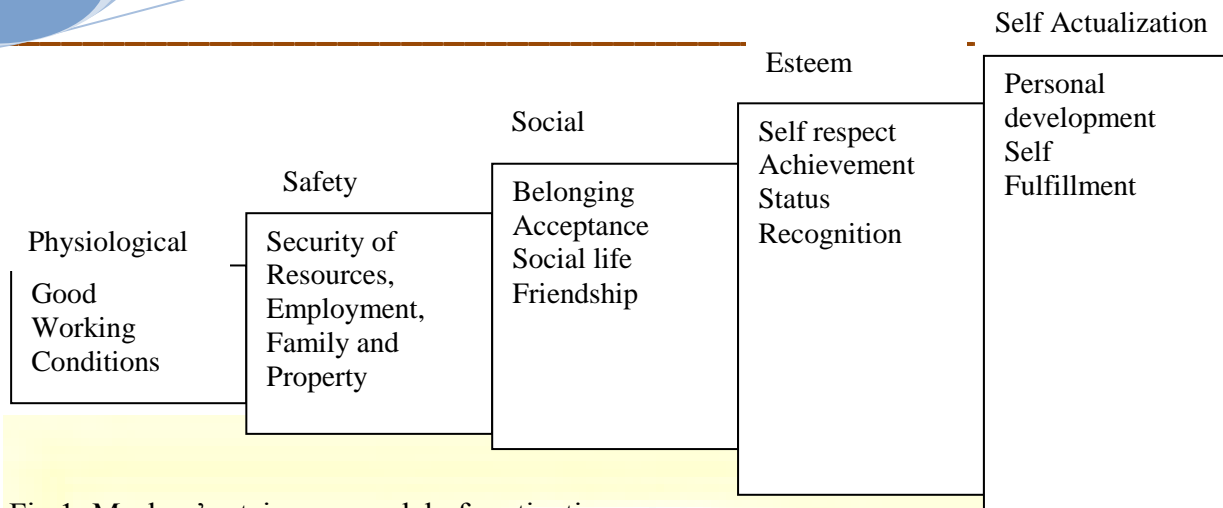


Fig 1: Maslow's stair case model of motivation

Challenges of implementing teacher motivational strategies

The policy on Education for all that increase teachers workload is becoming popular in many countries. According to Guajardo (2011), if the teachers' workload is greater than teachers' motivational support, teacher motivation is threatened. In many developing countries, teachers are increasingly asked to perform a great range of duties including health education, distributing food, giving immunization, taking census data and organizing community development activities. Such demands on teachers require greater motivational support (Ramachadran, 2005). Heavy workload not only impact negatively on teachers effort, but also make teachers resistant to apply new teaching methods (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007).

Impacts of teacher motivation on students' performance

Researchers have agreed that teacher motivation enhance classroom effectiveness and improves standards and quality of education (Benell & Mukyanuzi, 2005; Ofoeghu, 2004; Bishay, 1996). Many studies reveal that motivated teachers are more enthusiastic in controlling and disciplining their students (Fallout, 2010; Benelle, 2003; Frase & Sorenson, 1992). Consequently motivating teachers would enhance pedagogical and management roles, which would translate into effective attainment of educational objectives. According to Rothberg (2004), motivation in the work place ensures that goals are effectively achieved. In schools where there is effective motivation system there is a climate of high expectations in which the staff believe and demonstrate that all student can obtain mastery of the schools' essential curriculum. They also believe that teachers

have the capability to help all students obtain good grades (Lezotte, 2001). Students are motivated by teachers who care about their progress and show enthusiasm (Yara & Catherine, 2011). A motivated teacher naturally motivates his or her students. If the schools and parents focus on the different part of academic motivation and develop meaningful programmes across the home and classroom, possible gains can result (Niebuhr, 1995). Jordan (1986) asserts that high level of motivation among teachers will lead to superior student's achievements. Motivated teachers arouse self esteem among the students and hence making the students to be achievers in school (Peck, fox & Morston, 1977). Bishay (1996) noted that teacher motivation led to job satisfaction hence any strategy that lead to motivation would lead to job satisfaction. Benell & Mukyanuzi (2005) analysis of the Tanzanian situation found that teacher de-motivation had taken place in the country over the past 10 year period. This led to poor performance of students in both primary and secondary schools. They noted that although teacher motivation had been high in the 1990s as reported by the TADGREG and World Bank reports, teacher motivation in the rural areas had reduced. The decline in teacher motivation over this period coincided with schools' poor performances. This indicates that there is a positive relationship between the motivational strategies and performance.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Motivational theories help to understand how individuals are motivated. Motivation has been described as what energizes, directs and sustains behavior (Porter, 2003). Motivation is significant in the life of any organization or system where results are valued; for example in a school. Content theories help in understanding the content of what motivates people while the process theories of motivation examine how individuals are motivated or the process of motivation. Motivational theories considered the will, instincts and drives.

FINDINGS

After the researcher collected data, the following analysis and presentation helped to analyse the data.

Motivational strategies employed by the head teachers

Strategy	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Rank
Monetary rewards	10	22.22	55.5	1

Promotion	9	20.00	50.0	2
Supervisory support	8	17.78	44.4	3
Sponsored tours	7	15.56	38.8	4
Recognition	6	13.33	33.3	5
Seminars and Workshops	5	11.11	27.7	6
Total	45	100.0		

As shown in the above table on the motivational strategies for teachers, ten (22.2%) of the respondents indicated that they give monetary awards while nine (20%) said that they gave promotions, eight (17.78%) said that they gave supervisory support while seven (15.56%) claimed that they sponsored tours and six (13.33%) recognized their input while five (11.11%) were awarded by attending seminars and workshops.

Learning outcomes achieved as a result of motivating teachers

Learning outcomes	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Improved academic performance	12	48.0	48.0	48.0
Improved student's discipline	5	20.0	20.0	68.0
Good interpersonal relationships	6	24.0	24.0	92.0
Enthusiasm	2	8.00	8.00	100
Total	25	100.0	100.0	

On the learning outcomes achieved after motivating teachers under different models of awards, twelve (48%) of the respondents talked of improved performance in academics while 5(20%) said that students became disciplined, six (24%) claimed they had good interpersonal relationship and two (8%) became enthusiastic.

Teacher motivational strategies that lead to higher learning outcomes

Motivational strategy	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Monetary rewards	14	28.0	28.0	28.0
Sponsored tours	8	16.0	16.0	44.0
Seminars and Workshops	5	10.0	10.0	54.0
Supervisory support	6	12.0	12.0	66.0
Recognition	7	14.0	14.0	80.0
Promotion	10	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

After testing teacher motivational strategies that led to higher learning outcomes, fourteen (28%) of the respondents showed that monetary awards led to higher learning outcomes. This was followed by 10(20%) who talked of promotion and eight (16%) said it was because of sponsored tours, seven (14%) talked of recognition and six (12%) said it was because of supervisory support, five (10%) said it was because of seminars and workshops. Thus, seminars and workshops 5 (10%) was the least in yielding results.

Teacher motivational strategies and learning outcomes

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
There is a strong positive relationship between teacher motivational strategies and students' learning outcomes	18	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	18	100.0	100.0	

As per the outcomes of the strategies tested on higher motivators, all the respondents indicated that there was a positive relationship between teacher motivational results and students' learning outcomes.

Influence of teachers' motivational strategies and learning outcomes in the last three years

Item	Mean	Rank
Monetary rewards for job well done	8.8	1

Promotion on merit	8.5	2
Advancement opportunities	7.9	3
Opportunities for attending seminars and workshops	6.8	4
Recognizing individual efforts	6.7	5
Providing supervisory support	6.4	6
Increased responsibilities	6.4	7
Sponsored tours to luxurious sites	6.2	8
Consultation in decision making	6.0	9
Provision of learning materials and facilities	5.8	10
Involvement in selecting teaching materials	5.8	11
Assigning challenging tasks	5.7	12
Get together parties	5.6	13

The researcher tested the influence of teacher motivational strategies and the outcomes for the last three years in the study area. The results presented in the above table show that monetary rewards for job well done gave the best results with a mean score of 8.8, followed by promotion on merit (8.5), advancement opportunities (7.9), opportunities for attending seminars and workshops (6.8), recognizing individual efforts (6.7), providing both supervisory support and increased responsibilities (6.4), sponsored tours to luxurious sites (6.2), consultation in decision making (6.0), provision of both learning materials and involvement in selecting teaching materials (5.8), assigning challenging tasks (5.7) and get together parties (5.6) respectively.

Whether teachers appreciate the motivation given to them

Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very much	3	16.7	16.7	16.7
Sometimes	6	33.3	33.3	50
Rarely	7	38.9	38.9	88.9
Not at all	2	11.1	11.1	100
Total	18	100.0	100.0	

The researcher also wanted to establish whether teachers appreciate motivating steps taken for them and according to the results, seven (38.9%) of the respondents indicated their teachers rarely appreciate the motivation given to them while six (33.3%) said that sometimes teachers appreciated, three (16.7%) said they appreciated so much and two (11.1%) said they never appreciated.

Challenges of implementing teacher motivational strategies

Item	Mean	Rank
Lack of resources to support motivational programs	8.7	1
Inadequate learning materials and facilities	8.6	2
Different economic levels of teachers	8.6	3
Heavy workload among the teaching staff	8.2	4
Poor interpersonal relationship among the teachers	8.0	5
Poor relationship between the teachers and school administration	7.8	6
Constant transfers of teachers	7.7	7
Lack of time to carry out meaningful supervisory support	6.8	8
Low morale due to poor terms of employment	6.7	9
Frequent policy changes in education sector	5.9	10

On the challenges of implementing teacher motivation strategies, lack of resources to support motivational programs was ranked first with a mean score of 8.7 followed by lack of adequate learning materials and facilities together with different economic levels of teachers having a mean score of 8.6, heavy workload among teaching staff 8.2, poor interpersonal relationship among teachers 8.0, poor relationship between teachers and school administration 7.8, constant transfer of teachers 7.7, lack of time to carry out supervisory support 6.8, low morale due to poor terms of employment 6.7, frequent policy changes in education sector 5.9.

Relationship between teacher motivation strategies and academic performance

Independent Variable	Depended Variable	
		KCSE Results
Teacher motivation strategies	Pearson Correlation	.212
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.178
	N	80

The researcher then tested as to whether there is a significant relationship between teacher motivation strategies and student's performance. The Pearson's correlation coefficient between teacher motivation strategies and the students' academic performance was 0.212. This means that there is a weak positive correlation between the teacher motivation strategies and the students' academic performance as exhibited by the KCSE results. Thus the motivational strategies employed by the head teachers are good as they bring positive results but need to be improved to make the relationship stronger.

Teacher motivational strategies

Item	Mean	Rank
Monetary reward for job well done	8.4	1
Job security	8.2	2
The amount of salary for the job	8.2	3
Freedom to select learning teaching materials	7.7	4
Opportunities for attending seminars & Workshop	7.2	5
Involvement in decisions making	6.9	6
Sponsored tours	6.8	7
Teachers promotion policies	6.8	8
Teachers relationship with the school administration	6.6	9
Availability of learning teaching materials	6.5	10
Recognition by the school administration	6.4	11
Principals' supervisory support	5.8	12
Average class size i.e. number of students per class	5.8	13
Advancement opportunities	5.6	14
Assigning challenging tasks	5.6	15
Overall school environment	5.4	16
Teaching work load	5.2	17
Non- monetary rewards	4.1	18
Increased responsibilities	4.0	19

Lastly, it was significant for the researcher to highlight the existing teacher motivation strategies in the study area. The findings revealed that monetary rewards was an excellent way of rewarding teachers for the good work with a mean score of 8.4 followed by giving job security and right salary for the job (8.2), freedom to select learning materials (7.7), being given opportunities to attend workshops and seminars (7.2), being given a chance to make decisions (6.9). Sponsoring tours and teaching promotional policies (6.8) also contributed to motivation together with improving teachers relationship with the administration (6.6), making learning and teaching materials available (6.5), teachers being recognized by school administration (6.4), being given principal supervisory support and having an average class size (5.8), being given opportunity to advance and being assigned challenging tasks (5.6). Other motivational factors include having good school environment (5.4), average teaching work load (5.2), non monetary rewards (4.1) and having more responsibilities (4.0).

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The objective of the study was premised on identifying the teacher motivational strategies and their impact on students' performance in selected public secondary schools within Nakuru North Sub-county. From the results obtained concerning strategies used to motivate teachers, ten (22.2%) of the head teachers indicated that they give monetary awards while nine (20%) said that they gave promotions, eight (17.78%) said that they gave supervisory support while seven (15.56%) claimed that they sponsored tours and six (13.33%) recognized their input while five (11.11%) were awarded by attending seminars and workshops.

From the responses by the teachers, monetary rewards was indicated as being an excellent way of rewarding teachers for the good work with a mean score of 8.4 followed by giving job security and right salary for the job. Freedom to select learning materials (7.7%), opportunities to attend workshops and seminars (7.2%), and a chance to make decisions (6.9%). Sponsoring tours and teaching promotional policies (6.8%) also contributed to motivation together with improving teachers relationship with the administration (6.6%), making learning and teaching materials available (6.5%), teachers being recognized by school administration (6.4%), being given principal supervisory support and having an average class size (5.8%), being given opportunity to advance and being assigned challenging tasks (5.6%). Other motivational factors include

having good school environment (5.4), average teaching work load (5.2%), non-monetary rewards (4.1%) and having more responsibilities (4.0%).

CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be reached:

From the responses by the head teachers, concerning strategies used to motivate teachers monetary awards, promotions, supervisory support, sponsored tours, recognizing teacher efforts, and allowing them to attend seminars and workshops motivated teachers. These factors were found to have influenced students' performance in a positive way in the last three years in the study area. Monetary rewards were identified as an excellent way of rewarding teachers for the good work. According to Barb (2000), the most important motivator to the teacher is money, which can be in form of salaries, allowances, wages, bonuses, duty allowances and other monetary rewards. However, some studies have shown that not all teachers are motivated by financial rewards as evidenced by 53% of teachers studied saying incentives, 50% position and 30% saying compliments, which is consistent with Moodley (2011) that teachers who are not motivated by financial rewards, can also be encouraged with non-financial rewards. Other strategies identified are; giving job security, good salaries equivalent to the job done, freedom to select learning materials, among others mentioned earlier were identified as producing best results as reflected on students performance. It was also found that motivating teachers has a direct impact on the students' outcome and results of the national examination. Teachers were found to appreciate motivational strategies applied to them. Therefore, for students to perform well teacher motivation strategies should not be ignored and all efforts need to be put by stakeholders to motivate teachers. This study therefore concludes that although public secondary school teachers are motivated by both financial and non-financial rewards for their inputs money rewards is not only the most useful motivator but also the most appropriate one if the best strategy to ensure its sustainability is applied.

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