

REWARD-BASED MOTIVATION STRATEGY AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KIPKOMO SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to assess the influence of reward-based motivation strategy on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Kipkomo Sub-County, Kenya. It adopted a descriptive survey research design, with a target population of 597 persons. The sample size of 234 persons was determined using the Krejcie & Morgan Table (1970) for determining sample sizes. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides. The instruments were validated by experts in the area of study. Reliability of the instruments was determined through a pilot study where Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (r) of the questionnaires was found to be 0.79, which implied that the instruments were reliable. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in tables. Qualitative data was analyzed under common themes and presented in narratives. The study established reward-based motivation strategy influence students' academic achievement in public secondary schools. It was therefore recommended that for enhanced students' academic achievement, school Principals, school administration, policy makers and other stakeholders should consider using reward-based motivation strategy to improve students' academic performance.

Keywords: Reward-based motivation strategy, students' academic achievement, public secondary schools

INTRODUCTION

Motivation is the driving force behind an activity, and the word “motivation” is derived as of the Latin verb “movers,” meaning “to move” (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2019). The motive of a person cannot be ascertained until that person acts or physically moves (Mifflin, 2019). To increase performance and production, several nations throughout the world have increased teacher motivation. Strong academic attainment is a result of the enhanced performance and productivity that comes from well-motivated teachers. In general, strong coordination, efficient communication, and generally enhanced and sustained instructor motivation are prerequisites for high performance (Kukla-Acevedo, 2018). Paul (2014) contends that although each nation has its own method or approach of motivation, there are several strategies to increase teacher motivation throughout south Asia and Africa. Despite this, he contends that numerous instances of under-motivated instructors working in low-income nations in public secondary schools, leading to job unhappiness and poor motivation. However, motivation has been found to be extremely strong on the rare times that school officials as well as teachers have been, queried directly about it.

In reward-based management, strategies and procedures are developed as well as put into action with the intention of rewarding employees fairly, equally, and consistently to maintain the organization’s ability to fulfill its strategic objectives. According to Armstrong (2016), it is focused on both monetary and non-monetary incentives that encompasses the ideologies, regulations, strategies, and procedures that businesses employ to create and sustain their reward systems. A reward system includes financial incentives like base salary, bonuses, commissions, as well as working overtime, which together make up total compensation. A reward system may also include non-cash components, such as recognition, appreciation, a work-life balance, a positive work environment, and possibilities for professional advancement. A key component of human resource motivation is the rewards system. Anything done to encourage teachers to be content, devoted, as well as joyful at work would help students, parents, including society, benefit immensely from their efforts. This is known as teacher motivation (Ofoegbu, 2018). Scholars have differing opinions about whether incentives should be, connected to performance. Others concur that incentives and performance are related, while some think that prizes are not necessary to find performance.

A reward system can also reduce absenteeism, as strategic reward intervention could effectively decrease students’ absenteeism (Beralde, M. 2019). Moreover, many teachers express positive perceptions toward the reward system. A study elicited that all teachers agreed that reward have positive influence on students’ learning. Those teachers found that rewards help establish a positive learning atmosphere, increase students’ participation, and realize learning goals. Furthermore, the study justified that students are happy to receive reward from their teacher, and those rewards motivated them to study harder. When they got rewards, they not only got recognition from teachers, but also obtained positive feedback that encouraged them to inspire their spirits. Overall, reward system is advantageous in increasing students’ motivation, fostering healthy learning habits, and promote students’ developmental growth. By applying reward systems like behavioral charts or small toys to students, teachers could achieve their teaching goals efficiently. Therefore, reward system is a powerful tool to develop students’ abilities. Importantly, the appropriate use of reward systems can help students reach their potentials. Moreover, reward systems have different functions toward students in different ages, and for students in different ages, teachers tend to use distinctive categories of reward systems. For primary schoolers, reward systems can shape their appropriate behaviors, help them generate happy feelings like a sense of pride and achievement, and increase their self-esteem. In addition, they are more likely to be motivated by external rewards like toys or stickers. But for middle school and high school students, rewards are more likely to boost their academic performance and external motivations (Maria, 2014). Moreover, they are more likely to be spurred by internal or intangible rewards like happiness caused by their good exam scores.

A regular working person’s entitlement to basic pay is also one of its driving benefits. According to Akuoko (2021), pay and benefits helped instructors perform better. The primary wage factors were salary sufficiency, motivation, and satisfaction. Omenge (2017), who found that salaries and pay not only increase job satisfaction but also inspire teachers to report to work each day, further examined this. One incentive for tracking includes overtime pay. It is based on working outside of the allotted working hours. This was developed in the academic setting to guarantee students' dedication, covering of the course, and increased, supervision time. Remedial courses or tuition is the new names for it. Most secondary and elementary schools in Kenya are still operating despite the ministry of education's instruction to burn tuition (Daily Nation, April 16, 2018). It is nevertheless an additional source of revenue for instructors. Cash for scores is another financial motivator. To encourage the instructors, the board of management frequently offers cash prizes for high-test results of the major exam. The major goal is to inspire students, and test results are used as a gauge of a class, school, or subject's proficiency. Kingdon and Teal (2017) suggested that most schools that employ the strategy likely to outperform those who do not, with an extra pay based on scores as a motivational element.

Recognition was among the non-monitory motivations that the study evaluated. The employment of emotional motivating elements is a common approach for people to impact motivation. Recognition awakens the human being’s emotional core and makes one feel superior to others. Praise, team building, and advancement all help with this. This motivates one to improve to boost their confidence, noticed and feel satisfied (Munga, 2018). The performance of the topic or the school is also impacted by the employee's surroundings. The student’s aptitudes, the school’s policies, the labs, the library, and other facilities are all part of the teacher’s immediate surroundings (Oyowo, 2018). They are the exterior features that

have an impression upon the teacher's instruction. The research assesses teacher's workspace, living situation, as well as workload to gauge the work atmosphere. Whereas Ofoegbu (2018) contends that awards increase classroom effectiveness.

As teachers continuously use rewards in the teaching context, students could develop reward addiction. It means that after repetitious exposure to rewards, students become reliant on them and may not perform well if teachers stop giving rewards. This kind of addiction has several negative effects. For example, a 2018 study revealed that reward addiction would increase students' sensitivity to punishment. By implementing path analysis on the model constructed by several factors of reward overdose and allergy to punishment, researchers discovered that the reward overdose variables tremendously and positively affected students' level of fear to punishment. Consequently, the level of students' dependence on reward had a positive correlation with students' level of allergy to punishment. The higher the addiction to reward, the more intense students' reaction to punishment. The obvious outcome of increasing sensitivity to punishment is that students' self-esteem is damaged when they are punished. Another harmful impact of reward addiction is losing control. While gaining rewards from teachers, students feel delighted, and because they become dependent on rewards, they will become out of control in exchange for the transient feeling of pleasure created by reward systems (Aypay A. 2018). The addiction will be intensified if the feeling of losing control continues, so students will fall into a vicious cycle. Additionally, most parents hold an opposing attitude toward the reward system in the classroom because it brings increasingly competing pressure and inhibits intrinsic motivation. Some parents state that reward system produces competing pressures, which causes children to be anxious and "become overly critical" to themselves. The behaviour charts or colour charts let students compete and rank the performance of different students. Once students are behind others, and they do not earn rewards, they may feel grieved and become afraid of not getting rewards in the future. This exerts huge pressure on students and may destroy students' confidence. Another reason parents demurring reward system is that it impedes the development of intrinsic motivation (Kowalski J. M., Froiland M. J. 2018).

Salary or payment of base pay is considered one of the most important obligations owed by an employer to employees. Akuoko (2012) carried out a study in Ghana on teacher motivation and quality education. The findings showed that improving teachers' salaries and allowances was a good way of motivating teachers to be more committed to their work. Chelangat (2014) also carried out a study on reward system and performance of board employed teachers in public secondary schools in Chepalungu District. The findings revealed that most schools used either negotiation or merit to award basic salary to board employed teachers in Chepalungu District. Further findings indicated that most of the board employed teachers consider the award of basic salary as equitable and that basic salary offered acts as a motivating factor to board employed teachers. Teacher performance can be increased through increased salaries as shared by Ondiwa, Okibo, Nyang'au, Mabeya and Nyamasege (2014) who says that a rise in salary by 1% causes a rise in teacher performance by 49.1%. Mutua (2015) share the same sentiments. The author opines that salary increment enhances employee performance.

Overtime payment is related to manual tasks as well as staff employee in all cadre of management. Task allocated on holidays like Christmas among other special days hold a larger overtime including odd working hours. Kassim (2011) asserts that payment of overtime work makes the staff work smarter if not harder, making productivity and effectiveness increase. According to Ondiwa, Okibo, Nyang'au, Mabeya and Nyamasege (2014), overtime appreciation of teacher's efforts is a direct motivator for them to work harder and efficiently. Gatere (2015) carried a study in Kikuyu sub-county, Kenya, on performance-based rewards on teacher commitment. The finding of the study clearly showed that the benefits of performances-based rewards like performance pay bonus were found to increase productivity, engagement with students, and collegiality with administration and attracting abled teachers. Where basic salary offered was found to be insufficient, teachers appreciated the award of overtime payment.

Siringa (2011) carried out a study in Lakipia County on Motivational factors affecting work performance. The findings on personal development showed that if an advancement opportunity was offered to teachers between the ages 35-50 years, they would feel motivated, then there would be a corresponding change in work performance. Further findings indicated that if teachers were recognized then there would be a corresponding change in work performance. Chebet (2015) carried out a study on performance-based rewards to teachers in private primary schools in Kasarani Sub-County, Nairobi. The results indicated that ultimately influences of performance can arise at multiple levels and not necessarily based on extrinsic factors but also intrinsic factors. Further findings indicated that the researcher could not identify the ideal reward that can be sustained by private primary schools. The study would also not establish the extent to which training programs enhance employee effectiveness in the quest for improving performance and productivity of teachers. Njeru (2011) undertook a study in Embu County Kenya, on the influence of total quality management on performance of public secondary schools. The findings showed that principals were not committed to quality issues in the schools and hence the dismal performance in schools. Further findings indicated that employee empowerment was poor. This meant that even though the employees had a capacity for decision making, for instance guidance and counseling, they were minimally used. The principle of customer focus was not well internalized by the management and hence poor performance in the public secondary schools in the county.

Munga (2013) also carried out a study in Kirinyaga South District, Kenya, on the relationship between non-financial rewards and teacher retention in private schools. It was found out that teacher retention was high where they were recognized by society. It was also found out that in situations where the school management supported personal development in teachers, the teachers were less likely to leave the school to go to a different school. Muguchu (2013) carried out a study on the effectiveness of non-monetary incentives in motivating employees in the NGO sector in Kenya. The findings indicated that promotion was a major motivator of staff in the NGO sector as it was used as a reward for motivating highly productive workers. This study aimed at finding out the various recognition programs offered by schools

in Bureti Sub-County. Mutua (2015) carried out a study on the influence of motivation on job performance among secondary school teachers in Kiriya Central Sub-County. It was discovered that, in view of the teacher’s opinion on the strategic measures to be taken to enhance job motivation and performance, 80 per cent called for improvement of working conditions and good opportunities for career advancement. Reward addiction is a phenomenon where people develop dependence upon both tangible rewards and intangible rewards. The reason why it happens is that people’s dopamine system is highly responsive to reward stimuli. When teachers give rewards to students, students’ dopamine system will detect intense stimuli and generate a sense of pleasure after receiving rewards. Once teachers continuously use reward systems, students’ dopamine systems will respond to stimuli that “immediately precede and reliably predict the reward,” forming a strong association between predictors and rewards (Wise & Robble, 2022).

Methodology

The descriptive research design was utilized in the study. A descriptive research technique, according to Kombo and Thomp (2006), is best for acquiring information on people’s attitudes and opinions on social or educational issues. The descriptive technique was effective in gathering data to examine the influence of administrators’ motivating strategies on secondary school teachers’ academic performance in Kipkomo West Sub-County. The research approach, which provided both qualitative alongside quantitative data in addition to the opportunity towards including a range of respondent characteristics, made the study more successful. This research method was the finest since it was adaptable enough to measure a wide variety of criteria, such as satisfaction, instructor engagement or turnover, and job devotion.

In this study, qualitative research, which primarily used a variety of interpretative techniques of inquiry popular in social sciences, was employed. According to qualitative researchers, the goal of investigating social systems and problems should be to empower people to be investigated by giving them a voice (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). As in this study, qualitative research methods for gathering data included interviewing, observing, and document analysis. The study was carried out in Kipkomo Sub County in West Pokot County. The Sub- County was picked because it contained public schools with an assortment of understudy socioeconomics, showing that enlistment changes in view of the area of the study.

According to Kothari (2007), a research population is a large collection of people or objects that are known to share characteristics that may be of a researcher’s interest. According to Kothari’s later research, the research population accurately represents the whole group of persons as well as groups from which data is solicited. The study target population for this study was 597 people; hence the study focused on all 22 public school principals, 22 BOM heads, as well as 553 teachers.

Sampling is the practice of choosing a certain number of personalities to represent a specific community. To ensure that every school throughout the sub county had an equivalent probability of being incorporated in the sample, the researcher utilized a straightforward random selection procedure, where 22 public secondary schools were chosen with all the 22 Principals and 22 BoM heads being used in the study. Table 1 displays the sample frame.

To gather the information for this study, questionnaires, and interview schedules were used. The utilization of respectively qualitative and quantitative methodologies as a mixed - methods approach, as per Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), utilizes strategies of independent investigation, which thus encompass information gathering whether sequentially or simultaneously to comprehend research issues, improving instrument truthfulness since the qualities about one strategy could indeed constitute again for deficiencies of the different framework.

Qualitative data was gathered through tabulation besides coding, while the uncategorized data was classified. Additionally, descriptive statistics were employed whereby Standard deviations, percentages, and averages were all used in this study.

Results

The study adopted descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. This helped to assess the influence of reward-based motivation strategy on students’ academic achievement in public secondary schools in Kipkomo Sub- County, Kenya. For analysis, descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, and mean distribution) for the level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale of the variable, reward-based motivation strategy was assessed and summarized in Table 7.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics for reward-based motivation strategy on students’ academic achievement in public secondary schools

Statements		SD	D	U	A	SA	MEAN
Recognition of teachers’ salaries and allowances increases students’ academic achievement	F	19	12	15	85	75	3.90
	%	9.2	5.8	7.3	41.3	36.4	
Payment of teachers’ overtime enhance students’ academic achievement	F	3	32	13	84	74	3.94
	%	1.5	15.5	6.3	40.8	35.9	
Teachers’ incentives improve students’ academic achievement	F	6	6	35	62	97	4.16
	%	2.9	2.9	17.0	30.1	47.1	
Offering opportunities for career advancement increases students’ academic achievement	F	5	23	9	62	107	4.18
	%	2.4	11.2	4.4	30.1	51.9	

Source (Researcher, 2023)

Table 7 shows that 85(41.3%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that recognition of teachers’ salaries and allowances increased students’ academic achievement, 75(36.4%) strongly agreed, 19(9.2%) strongly disagreed, 15(7.3%) were undecided and 12(5.8%) disagreed with the statement. The study findings suggested that the respondents tended to agree (Mean=3.90) that recognition of teachers’ salaries and allowances increased students’ academic achievement. This was supported by an interviewee who had the following to say;

... Teaching staff feel committed to their work as the basic salary is a motivation to come to work every day, thus, an increased pass rates on the state exams. Salaries and pay not only increase job satisfaction but also inspire teachers to report to work each day... *Female Participant, 54 years, School Principal.*

This implies that when teachers’ salaries and allowances are improved, they get motivated to work, thus increasing students’ academic achievement. This is in line with the findings of Akuoko (2021) that improving teachers’ salaries and allowances was a good way of motivating teachers to be more committed to their work.

Similarly, 84(40.8%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that payment of teachers’ overtime enhanced students’ academic achievement, 74(35.9%) strongly agreed, 32(15.5%) disagreed, 13(6.3%) were undecided and 3(1.5%) strongly disagreed with the statement. It emerged from the study that the respondents tended to agree (Mean=3.94) that payment of teachers’ overtime enhanced students’ academic achievement. This was supported by an interviewee who had the following to say;

... Overtime payment varied from one school to another in various public secondary schools. Overtime appreciation of teacher’s efforts is a direct motivator for them to work harder and efficiently, as when teachers are awarded overtime payment there will be increased teacher-student contact hours ... *Male Participant, 52 years, BOM Head.*

This implies that when teachers are paid for their work overtime, they become stimulated, hence, enhanced students’ academic achievement. This supports the findings of Kassim (2011) asserts that payment of overtime work makes the staff work smarter if not harder making productivity and effectiveness increase.

Additionally, 97(47.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that teachers’ incentives improved students’ academic achievement, 62(30.1%) agreed, 35(17.0%) were undecided, 6(2.9%) disagreed and another 6(2.9%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The study findings suggested that the respondents agreed (Mean=4.16) that teachers’ incentives improved students’ academic achievement. This was supported by an interviewee who had the following to say;

... Incentive schemes can motivate teachers by rewarding good performance, encouraging them to expend more effort in teaching and preparation, or even to show up in the classroom... *Male Participant, 52 years, BOM Head.*

This implies that when teachers are given incentives, they become encouraged, hence, improved students’ academic achievement. This is in line with the findings of Ofoegbu (2018) that students in incentives schools performed significantly better than those in control schools by 0.27 and 0.17 standard deviation in math and language tests respectively.

Lastly, 107(51.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that offering opportunities for career advancement increased students’ academic achievement, 62(30.1%) agreed, 23(11.2%) disagreed, 9(4.4%) were undecided and 5(2.4%) strongly disagreed with the statement. It emerged from the study that the respondents agreed (Mean=4.18) that offering opportunities for career advancement increased students’ academic achievement. This was supported by an interviewee who had the following to say;

... Teacher motivation is essential for the long-term development of any educational institution worldwide. Anything done to encourage teachers to be content, devoted, as well as joyful at work would help students, parents, including society, benefit immensely from their efforts... *Male Participant, 49 years, School Principal.*

This implies that when teachers are offered opportunities for career advancement, they become motivated, thus, increased students’ academic achievement. This agrees with the findings of Mutua (2015) that good opportunities for career advancement improve job performance among secondary school teachers.

These descriptive statistics of objective one was followed by a Chi-square test of association. The Chi-square test at $p \leq 0.05$ significance level illustrating statistically significant association between reward-based motivation strategy on students’ academic achievement in public secondary schools in Kipkomo Sub- County, Kenya is as summarized in Table 8 To achieve this, the hypothesis below was tested.

H₀₁: There is no significant association between reward-based motivation strategy on students’ academic achievement in public secondary schools in Kipkomo Sub- County, Kenya.

Table 8: Chi-square test of association between reward-based motivation strategy on students’ academic achievement in public secondary schools

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	769.191 ^a	144	.000
Likelihood Ratio	410.930	144	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	133.387	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	206		

a. 162 cells (95.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.

Source (Researcher, 2023)

Table 8 shows that the p value ($p=0.000$) for reward-based motivation strategy was less than 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis, “there is no significant association between reward-based motivation strategy on students’ academic achievement in public secondary schools in Kipkomo Sub- County, Kenya” was rejected. This implies that there is

statistically significant association between reward-based motivation strategy on students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Kipkomo Sub- County, Kenya.

Conclusion

The study findings suggested that the respondents tended to agree that recognition of teachers' salaries and allowances increased students' academic achievement. Similarly, it emerged from the study that the respondents tended to agree that payment of teachers' overtime enhanced students' academic achievement. Additionally, the study findings suggested that the respondents agreed that teachers' incentives improved students' academic achievement. Lastly, it emerged from the study that the respondents agreed that offering opportunities for career advancement increased students' academic achievement. Chi-square test of association revealed that there is statistically significant association between reward-based motivation strategy and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in Kipkomo Sub- County, Kenya.

From the findings, the study concludes that teachers' motivational strategies like reward-based motivation strategy, fear-based motivation strategy, power motivation strategy, social motivation strategy influence students' academic achievement in public secondary schools. It is concluded that there is a statistically significant association between reward-based motivation strategy and students' academic achievement in public secondary schools. Therefore, when teachers' salaries and allowances are recognized, their overtime and incentives are paid and they are offered opportunities for career advancement, they become motivated, thus, increase their effort that result into improved students' academic achievement.

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