
INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' MOTIVATION STRATEGIES ON TEACHERS' JOB SATISFACTION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MAKUENI SUB-COUNTY, MAKUENI COUNTY, KENYA

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Doi Link: <https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t109>

Publication Date: September 2024

ABSTRACT

Statement of the Problem: Principals play a crucial role in providing instructional leadership by adopting motivation strategies to enhance teacher performance. However, teachers in public secondary schools in Makueni Sub-county have continued to express dissatisfaction with their professional roles, despite initiatives aimed at improving educational standards.

Purpose of the Study: To assess the influence of principals' motivation strategies on teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Makueni Sub-county, Makueni County, Kenya.

Methodology: The study employed a mixed-methods approach with a descriptive survey design, targeting a sample of 380 respondents (8 principals, 228 teachers, and 144 students) selected through stratified and purposive sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews, and analyzed thematically for qualitative data and through descriptive statistics using SPSS for quantitative data.

Findings: The study found that many teachers expressed dissatisfaction with their roles, attributed to principals' inability to implement effective motivation strategies. Conversely, motivated educators tend to be more satisfied with their positions and actively contribute to a collaborative and supportive learning environment, as they feel valued and appreciated.

Recommendations: Principals should establish acknowledgment systems, whether through formal awards or informal praise, to significantly boost morale. Additionally, they should encourage participation in workshops, conferences, and collaborative projects that enhance skills and knowledge.

Keywords: *Principals', Motivation Strategies, Teachers,' Job Satisfaction, Public Secondary Schools*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are at the heart of any educational reform's success, making them a critical component of the education sector in terms of curriculum implementation. Aaronson, Lisa, and William (2014) assert that teachers are responsible for classroom pedagogy, syllabus coverage, and, most importantly, ensuring that students achieve high academic grades in both internal and national examinations. However, in order to realize this, teacher motivation must be considered. Motivational activities, such as providing opportunities for professional development, are critical for teacher effectiveness. Professional development refers to the growth of an individual in his or her professional role. In the context of teaching, Villegas-Reimers (2015) defines professional development as a series of activities that help an individual develop their skills, knowledge, expertise, and other characteristics as teachers.

Motivation is important in teacher pedagogy and job satisfaction, so a thorough investigation into motivation and its impact on behavior was required to understand the complex relationship between teacher motivation and work efficiency in public high schools. Esteemed scholars such as Hornby (2000), Gizem (2013), and Angela (2006) emphasized the importance of motivation in shaping people's ideas, behaviors, and pursuits. Byaruhanga (2018) demonstrated how internal motivation directed behavior toward goals, emphasizing the importance of teacher motivation in increasing productivity and promoting effective teaching and learning outcomes. Teachers who are motivated by a sense of purpose work harder, which leads to better job performance (Robbins, 2012). Research consistently shows that happy and motivated educators contribute to higher productivity, lower absenteeism, lower turnover rates, lower workplace stress, and improved performance outcomes (Iwu, Mbandi, & Mpofu, 2013).

Demotivated teachers, on the other hand, frequently exhibit behaviors that contradict organizational goals, such as low morale, poor work quality, increased absenteeism, higher turnover rates, and elevated levels of stress and burnout (Iwu et al., 2013). Teacher motivation extends beyond individual levels to societal impact, as educators play critical roles in societal development through knowledge dissemination (Okumbe 1999). Recognizing that meeting learning objectives requires excellent instruction emphasizes the critical role that teachers play in the process (Dorney, 2001). As a result, teacher motivation is critical for providing high-quality education and positively impacting students' academic achievement (Alarm & Farid, 2011).

A growing global awareness of the various factors influencing teacher motivation and effectiveness has emerged. For example, in the United States, low pay has been identified as a contributing factor to decreased teacher motivation, prompting some educators to participate in extracurricular activities to supplement their income (Sogomo, 1993). Similar issues affecting teacher motivation in the United Kingdom, such as excessive workloads, low pay, and cultural attitudes, were identified (Spear 2000). It was clear that teachers worldwide faced similar challenges, such as low self-esteem, managing large class sizes, inadequate pay, and resource scarcity. Looking ahead, Kenya needed to address its challenges, which included substandard housing, unfavourable working conditions, a lack of recognition, and limited teacher participation in decision-making processes (Odul 2012). Teachers in Kenya also faced performance issues such as sporadic absences, poorly prepared professional documentation, insufficient supervision, and demotivated absentee students (Rachuonyo South Quality Assessment Report, 2013).

According to a study conducted in Thika West District by Kemunto (2015), teachers must have a solid foundation in the knowledge, skills, values, principles, methods, and procedures relevant to their field. According to Kemunto (2015), high-quality professional development for teachers is an essential component of nearly every modern educational improvement proposal. According to Kemunto (2015), teachers must be prepared to meet specific standards while also improving learner performance. In Masaba South District, for example, Onyambu (2014) claims that increasing working hours, larger class sizes, more subjects, and constantly changing curricula are major demotivators in many countries. According to Onyambu (2014), the expectations of teachers in many regions are unrealistic in terms of material rewards, workloads, work and living environments. According to Onyambu (2014), teachers in many schools are being asked to take on additional responsibilities such as HIV/AIDS education, counselling, and community development.

Similarly, Nyakundi's (2015) study in Thika West Sub-county found that 79.3% of motivated teachers are more likely to motivate students to learn in the classroom, ensure the implementation of educational reforms, and feel satisfied and fulfilled. According to Nyakundi (2015), while teacher motivation is critical to the teaching and learning process, many teachers are not highly motivated. As a result, in secondary schools, principals face the challenge of developing highly motivated teachers who are actively engaged in teaching and learning, open

to new ideas and approaches, and committed to students and change throughout their careers. Principals in Makueni Sub-county play an important role in teacher motivation, which leads to job satisfaction. However, this has not been the case, as many teachers are dissatisfied with their jobs. Despite these claims, few empirical studies have thoroughly investigated the extent to which principals' motivation strategies influence teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools, necessitating the study.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Principals play an important role in providing instructional leadership by adopting motivation strategies to ensure that teachers perform. However, in public secondary schools in Makueni Sub-county, the situation is different since teachers have continued to voice dissatisfaction with their professional roles despite some initiatives aimed at raising educational standards. Quite a number of teachers rarely cover syllabus in time which has reflected in low academic performance of their students. Efforts to mitigate on these challenges have not yielded much remarkable progress and has compromised the quality of education offered in public secondary schools. Despite these findings, few empirical studies have interrogated the influence of principals' motivation strategies on teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools; hence the need for the study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To assess the status of teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Makueni Sub-county.

To examine the influence of principals' motivation strategies on teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools in Makueni Sub-county.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by Luhmann's (2004) systems theory, which conceptualizes schools as open systems with shared responsibilities, akin to organisms with interconnected, interdependent parts. Within this theoretical framework, schools are perceived as continually evolving entities that interact with their environment. Drawing from systems theory, the research explored how school administrators and supervisors applied this framework to manage their organizations. Key areas of focus included understanding organizational goals, implementing them, and motivating staff—especially teachers—to excel. It was expected that,

globally, school administrators equipped with a theoretical understanding of management concepts would demonstrate increased efficacy and efficiency in achieving organizational and student enrollment objectives. In this study, Luhmann's (2004) theory took precedence, underscoring the pivotal role of school administrators in encouraging girls to participate in secondary education. It emphasized the need for school managers to recognize their crucial position within the institutional structure to support better education for females in secondary schools. According to the survey findings, implementing initiatives aimed at improving teachers' job satisfaction was essential to ensure that all secondary school educators were of the highest caliber. The application of Luhmann's (2004) systems theory was seen as a catalyst for organizational success in future secondary education settings. Acknowledging the theory's potential to enhance school management, administrators were encouraged to integrate it into their daily practices. This theoretical foundation was expected to guide administrators in adopting strategies that not only improved teachers' well-being but also elevated the overall quality of secondary school teaching personnel.

The study was also anchored in the theory of teacher dynamics, proposed by Owens (2008). The theory of teacher dynamics serves as an essential framework for understanding the intricate relationships between educators, their work environments, and the resulting impact on job satisfaction in schools. This theory emphasizes the fluid interactions among teachers, administrative staff, students, and the broader educational community. Proponents of teacher dynamics posit that by recognizing these interactions, schools can enhance both teacher well-being and student outcomes. At the core of the theory are several key principles. Firstly, the concept of relational dynamics highlights the importance of interpersonal relationships within the educational setting. Effective communication and collaboration among staff members can lead to a supportive work environment, ultimately fostering job satisfaction.

Secondly, the principle of professional development underscores the necessity of continuous learning opportunities for teachers. Professional growth not only enhances educators' skills but also instills a sense of value and recognition within the profession, further contributing to job satisfaction. Furthermore, the application of teacher dynamics in practice reveals several strategies that can be implemented to improve job satisfaction. Schools can adopt mentorship programs that pair novice teachers with experienced colleagues, facilitating knowledge sharing

and professional support. Additionally, creating inclusive decision-making processes can empower teachers, giving them a sense of ownership over their work environment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a mixed methodology with a descriptive survey research design. The target population was 7949 respondents, which included 50 principals, 652 teachers, and 7247 Form IV students, from whom a sample of 380 respondents was drawn using Yamane's Formula. Using stratified sampling, four strata were formed based on the number of zones in Makueni Sub County. Samples from each zone were proportionately distributed, homogeneous, and uniform. Purposive sampling selected two principals and fifty-seven teachers from each zone, with a focus on public secondary schools experiencing teacher job satisfaction issues in the previous five years. This approach was consistent with Creswell's (2014) assertion that purposive sampling tests hypotheses about the setting and ensures an understanding of variance in the phenomenon under consideration. To prevent bias, 32 fourth- and third-year students were chosen at random from each zone. This process produced a participant group of eight principals, 228 teachers, and 144 students. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers, while interviews were conducted with principals and Form IV students. The data analysis began with identifying common themes. Qualitative data were analysed thematically based on the objectives and presented in narrative format. Quantitative data were analysed with descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23) and presented in tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings of the study based on the objective. It also outlines the methods of presentation of the study findings and discussions.

Status of Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools

The study sought to assess the status of teachers' job satisfaction in public secondary schools. This focused-on dimensions such as collegial collaboration, perceptions of a positive work environment, opportunities for professional development, support from leadership, and overall satisfaction. Results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers' Job Satisfaction

Dimension	Totally Disapprove	Somewhat Disapprove	Undetermined	Support	Completely Support	Total	Mean	Std. deviation
TJS Collegial Collaboration	40 (21.9%)	30 (16.4%)	36 (19.7%)	43 (23.5%)	35 (19.1%)	183	3.02	1.424
TJS Positive Work Environment Perceptions	34 (18.6%)	36 (19.7%)	34 (18.6%)	30 (16.4%)	50 (27.3%)	183	3.14	1.471
TJS Professional Development Opportunities	34 (18.6%)	41 (22.4%)	31 (16.9%)	36 (19.7%)	42 (23.0%)	183	3.06	1.440
TJS Leadership Support	36 (19.7%)	34 (18.6%)	32 (17.5%)	47 (25.7%)	34 (18.6%)	183	3.04	1.403
TJS Contentment	40 (21.9%)	30 (16.4%)	36 (19.7%)	43 (23.5%)	35 (19.1%)	183	3.02	1.424

Source: Field Data (2024)

The data in Table 1 show that teachers have moderate levels of job satisfaction across multiple dimensions. Descriptive statistics showed that mean scores ranged from 3.02 to 3.14, with standard deviations ranging from 1.403 to 1.471. According to frequency distributions, while a significant proportion of teachers expressed positive sentiments, a significant percentage reported neutral or negative perceptions across dimensions. For example, when it came to TJS Collegial Collaboration, 38.3% (70) of teachers expressed dissatisfaction (Totally Disapprove and Somewhat Disapprove), while 42.6% (78) indicated support or full support. Similarly, in terms of TJS Positive Work Environment Perceptions, 38.3% (70) expressed dissatisfaction (Totally Disapprove and Somewhat Disapprove), while 43.7% (80) expressed support or full support. According to Smith and Jones (2019), the work environment, leadership support, and professional development in schools all play important roles in shaping teacher contentment.

Their research delves into the complex relationship between teacher well-being and a variety of other factors, including opportunities for professional development, leadership support, and work environment. It explains how these variables influence teachers' opinions and overall well-being in learning environments. The study's findings, which emphasize the complexities of job satisfaction, are consistent with Smith and Jones' results. This emphasizes the importance

of addressing these issues in order to create a productive and encouraging work environment for educators. Their findings emphasize the importance of teamwork, positive workplace attitudes, and other study-identified factors, emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies to improve teacher satisfaction and retention. These findings highlight the complex relationship between teacher job satisfaction and leadership support, emphasizing the importance of addressing aspects such as work environment, professional growth opportunities, collaboration, and overall contentment in order to create a supportive work environment that promotes teacher retention and well-being.

Principals’ Motivation Strategies and Teachers’ Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools

The study sought to assess how different strategies adopted by principals to motivate teachers influence teachers’ job satisfaction in public secondary schools. Descriptive data were collected from teachers and results are shown in Table 2;

Table 2: Principal's Motivation Strategies

Dimension	Completely Oppose	Partially Oppose	Unsure	Endorse	Fully Endorse	Total	Mean	Std. deviation
Integrate culturally specific motivational strategies (M1)	36 (19.7%)	41 (22.4%)	38 (20.8%)	37 (20.2%)	29 (15.8%)	183	2.92	1.377
Recognition and rewards aligned with cultural values (M1)	33 (18.0%)	41 (22.4%)	35 (19.1%)	36 (19.7%)	33 (18.0%)	183	2.99	1.385
Engage in community-based cultural training (M1)	45 (24.6%)	35 (19.1%)	37 (20.2%)	34 (18.6%)	33 (18.0%)	183	2.87	1.435

Source: Field Data (2024)

The investigation's findings revealed that educators had mixed feelings about the incorporation of culturally specific strategies and practices into leadership. Descriptive statistics revealed

mean scores of 2.87 to 2.99, with standard deviations ranging from 1.377 to 1.435. Frequency distributions demonstrated varying degrees of agreement across dimensions. For example, when it came to "Integrate culturally specific motivational strategies," 42.2% (77) (Completely Oppose and Partially Oppose) of respondents had reservations, while 35.8% (66) agreed or strongly agreed. Similarly, 40.1% (73) had reservations about "recognition and rewards aligned with cultural values," while 37.7% (69) agreed or strongly agreed. Byaruhanga's (2018) research on culturally responsive leadership strategies is critical in the effort to improve teacher job satisfaction in public high schools in the Makueni sub-county of Kenya. Byaruhanga is likely looking into how incorporating culturally specific strategies can effectively motivate and engage teachers from various backgrounds. This research is critical to achieving the goal of increasing teacher satisfaction by ensuring that leadership approaches respect and embrace cultural diversity within schools. Understanding and incorporating cultural nuances allows school leaders to create environments in which teachers feel valued and understood, ultimately increasing job satisfaction and commitment. In addition, Usman and Adelabu's (2015) findings may highlight the importance of aligning reward systems with cultural values in order to improve teacher motivation and satisfaction. These studies highlight the importance of culturally informed approaches in developing motivational strategies that address the unique needs and perspectives of teachers in Makueni Wote sub-county's public secondary schools, resulting in a supportive and enriching work environment.

Table 3: Influence of Principals' Motivation Strategies on Teachers' Job Satisfaction

Dimension	Completely Oppose	Partially Oppose	Indifferent	Endorse	Fully Endorse	Total	Mean	Std. deviation
Teachers perceive cultural appropriateness (M2)	37 (20.2%)	31 (16.9%)	34 (18.6%)	44 (24.0%)	37 (20.2%)	183	3.08	1.427
Recognition and rewards alignment (M2)	40 (21.9%)	31 (16.9%)	34 (18.6%)	44 (24.0%)	34 (18.6%)	183	3.02	1.429
Inclusive professional development (M2)	34 (18.6%)	31 (16.9%)	44 (24.0%)	35 (19.1%)	39 (21.3%)	183	3.07	1.400
Effectiveness of communication and collaboration (M2)	31 (17.0%)	33 (18.0%)	41 (22.4%)	36 (19.7%)	42 (23.0%)	183	3.11	1.389
Promote cultural sensitivity (M2)	37 (20.2%)	34 (18.6%)	33 (18.0%)	40 (21.9%)	39 (21.3%)	183	3.05	1.429

Outcomes from the table revealed varied perceptions among teachers regarding several dimensions of cultural sensitivity and recognition within the educational context. Descriptive

statistics indicated mean scores ranging from 3.02 to 3.11, with standard deviations ranging from 1.389 to 1.429. Frequency distributions showed differing levels of agreement across dimensions. For instance, concerning "Recognition and rewards alignment," 38.5% (70) (Completely Oppose and Partially Oppose) of respondents expressed reservations, while 42.6% (78) indicated agreement or strong agreement. Similarly, for "Effectiveness of communication and collaboration," 35.0% (64) expressed reservations, while 42.7% (78) expressed agreement or strong agreement. In the pursuit of developing motivational strategies to bolster teacher job contentment within public high schools in Makueni sub-county, Kenya, Byaruhanga (2018) highlights the significance derived from encouraging culturally competent practices and bolstering educators' cultural understanding. To enhance cooperation, communication, and recognition in educational settings, it is imperative to recognize cultural differences and incorporate inclusive professional development opportunities, as this research makes clear. A more encouraging and stimulating atmosphere for both instructors and students may be created by acknowledging and accepting these variances.

Usman (2015) and Adelabu (2005) offer further viewpoints on how to successfully motivate instructors through the alignment of incentives with cultural values. According to their research, reward schemes that take cultural values into account may improve teacher motivation and work satisfaction. Their studies suggest that understanding and incorporating cultural values into reward systems can enhance teacher motivation and job satisfaction. Together, these works underscore the critical role of culturally informed practices in creating a supportive work environment, which ultimately leads to better job satisfaction and retention of teachers in diverse educational contexts. According to their research, incentive systems that take cultural values into account and take them into account might improve teacher motivation and work satisfaction. When taken as a whole, these pieces emphasize how important culturally aware workplace practices are to creating a positive atmosphere. The Makueni sub-county's educational institutions should better assist their instructors by implementing culturally sensitive practices, which would eventually boost job satisfaction and retention.

Thematic Analysis

During a principal's interview, a thorough plan for increasing teachers' job satisfaction through culturally appropriate rewards and community involvement programs was revealed. The principals aimed to acknowledge and celebrate teachers' diverse cultural backgrounds by

incorporating culturally relevant activities and materials into school functions and professional development sessions. Researchers such as Usman and Adelabu (2015) have studied culturally unique motivational methods and their effect on teachers' well-being in various contexts, including the Makueni sub-county. Their studies outlined practical methods for creating a supportive workplace where educators feel appreciated and respected, which enhances overall teacher satisfaction and school effectiveness. As one principal disclosed.

We intend to integrate culturally relevant content into teacher training programs and professional development sessions, organize cultural events, celebrate diverse cultural backgrounds, and implement culturally specific motivational strategies.

Creating a supportive environment was a top priority, achieved through active community involvement by collaborating with local organizations and encouraging community participation in school activities. Regular staff meetings, an open-door policy, and digital communication platforms emphasized effective communication and collaboration among staff members, facilitating transparent information sharing and valuing teacher input in decision-making processes. Another principal added.

By planning community events, inviting community members to participate in school activities, and forming partnerships with local organizations to support teachers, we aim to engage the local community.

Principals emphasized the significance of creating a warm and inviting environment, making sure that every voice in the school community is respected and heard, giving teachers a sense of community, and improving work satisfaction. Students saw that instructors were inspired by things like witnessing their students achieve, finding personal fulfillment, and having their work recognized, all of which helped to create a positive and encouraging learning atmosphere. This comprehension promoted a constructive and productive learning environment. Students observed.

We think that the success of their students, as well as their sense of fulfillment and acknowledgment, motivate teachers. Their drive creates a motivating and encouraging learning atmosphere, which enhances our educational experience.

In addition, incorporating culturally relevant teaching methods, peer tutoring, after-school study groups, and personalized assistance helped struggling students, affirming teachers' effectiveness and positively impacting their satisfaction. Robbins (2012) and Byaruhanga (2018) emphasized developing motivational strategies to boost teachers' well-being in public high schools in Makueni sub-county, Kenya. One student remarked.

Teachers may get overwhelmed or demoralized by the additional work and emotional toll of helping difficult pupils, which might result in burnout and discontent. It is important to offer supplementary materials and counseling services to guarantee that students who are having difficulties receive enough assistance.

These qualitative findings suggest that high teacher stress causes burnout, which is characterized by emotional exhaustion, decreased professional efficacy, and job detachment. Burnout hurts teachers' performance and student outcomes because teachers with heavy workloads may not be able to provide an engaging and supportive learning environment. Teachers' already full schedules are further strained by administrative and accountability requirements. Paperwork and bureaucracy take up time that could be spent on pedagogical innovation and student interaction. This distraction from teaching to administrative tasks can increase teacher stress and disillusionment, lowering job satisfaction. These mixed findings confirm that teachers' overwork is a major educational issue because it causes dissatisfaction.

CONCLUSIONS

The study findings indicate that a substantial proportion of teachers report dissatisfaction with their roles. This is ascribed to the incapacity of principals to implement effective motivational strategies. The study revealed that motivated educators tend to be more satisfied with their roles

and actively foster a collaborative and supportive learning atmosphere due to feelings of value and appreciation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the study, principals must recognize and celebrate teachers' achievements. Creating a system of recognition, whether through formal awards or informal praise, can significantly boost morale. When teachers feel valued for their efforts, their intrinsic motivation increases, resulting in higher job satisfaction and performance. In addition, providing professional development opportunities is critical for keeping teachers motivated. Principals should encourage students to participate in workshops, conferences, and collaborative projects that will help them develop their skills and knowledge. This investment in teacher development benefits not only the individual, but also the entire educational community.

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