

EFFECT OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KAKAMEGA EAST SUB COUNTY

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# EFFECT OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KAKAMEGA EAST SUB COUNTY

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#### **ABSTRACT**

This study sought to establish the relationship between job characteristics and performance of teachers in Public Primary Schools in Kakamega East Sub County. The study adopted a descriptive survey design in which 289 teachers were sampled from public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County. The study adopted simple random sampling to obtain respondents from the study population. Study data was collected using a standard questionnaire. Validity of data collection instruments was ascertained using a pilot study while reliability was ascertained using test-re-test method. Study data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of the Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) version 23 for windows. All statistical measurements were performed within 95% confidence interval. The study found a statistically significant relationship between job characteristics and teacher performance in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County. The study recommended that school management should ensure that school environment is conducive for teachers to ensure intrinsic motivation and satisfaction with their jobs. This can be achieved by ensuring that there are adequate teaching and learning resources as well as offering incentives to teachers and rewarding them for good performance.

Key Words: Job Characteristics, Autonomy, Feedback, Teacher Performance

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Intrinsic motivation is said to exist when behavior is performed for its own sake rather than to obtain material or social reinforcers. The concept of intrinsic motivation was an important challenge to behaviorism, and has roots in White's competence or effectance motivation. Delannoy (2000) addressed similar needs. In this study, intrinsic motivation of teachers was measured in terms of job satisfaction derived from teaching, enjoyment of teaching, the challenging and competitive nature of teaching, recognition, career achievement and , control over others.

After psychologists introduced the concept of intrinsic-needs, management scholars developed the important distinction between intrinsic motivation which is a hypothetical construct presumably residing within the person and intrinsically motivating tasks. Herzberg (1966) described tasks as intrinsically motivating when they are characterized by key responsibility, motivators as such challenge, achievement, variety, and advancement opportunity. With Herzberg as precursor, Hackman and Oldham (2000) identified task variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback from the task as key task characteristics that generate internal motivation. More recently in the psychology literature, intrinsically motivated behavior is alleged to derive from and satisfy innate psychological needs, including needs for competence and autonomy (Kasser & Ryan, 2006). According to Deci (2004), perceptions of personal (as opposed to external) control satisfy these needs, and constitute the fundamental feature distinguishing motivated behavior from extrinsically motivated behavior.

Several studies have been conducted across the world on the relationship between teacher motivation and performance. The effectiveness of motivational strategy may be measured based on its ability to influence teacher retention in schools. In the recent times, schools globally have been experiencing a lot of challenges in relation to retaining their teachers within

school. For instance, in the US, Graziano (2005) observed that every year, U.S. schools hired more than 200,000 new teachers for that first day of class. By the time summer rolls around, at least 22,000 have quit. Even those who make it beyond the trying first year aren't likely to stay long: about 30 percent of new teachers flee the profession after just three years, and more than 45 percent leave after five. In line with Dill and Stafford (2008) indicated that about 50% of the new teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching. In addition, young people studying to be teachers rarely know if they will succeed as a teacher.

Kenyan teachers have also been demoralized by the Government's policy intervention. The Government, in a bid to retain the special subjects teachers; gave them three increments on their salary different from their Art based counterparts. This policy intervention had a negative impact on the level of motivation of the Artsbased graduate teachers whose subjects were not considered special (Kasirye, 2009).

A study by Nyantika (1996) found that pay and allowances to the teachers is comparatively low than in the other professions. Teaching profession is considered as 'profession of the last resort' where individuals find themselves there after they fail to secure better professional courses. In some schools teachers are not involved in decision making as staff meetings are merely used as directive forums. There is poor housing and working conditions. Provision of teaching and learning materials and equipments to the teachers is sometimes not prioritized (Nyantika, 1996) Okumbe (1998) recommended that a clear scheme of service and promotion procedures are put in place and measures to achieve greater commitment to teaching through changes in the teaching environment. It is worth to note that teachers in Kenya had to fight for salary increments and the end results was that they could only get the increment over a period of three years. They also face some challenges in the line of their duties such as walking long distance to schools, inadequate schools facilities and equipment and

indiscipline of students. According to a study carried out by Nyantika (1996) on factors leading to poor performance in KCSE in Magombo zone of Nyamira District, lack of rewards for teachers and students to boost their morale and clan politics was to blame for poor KCSE performance. It is imperative in such type of scenario that teachers may experience motivation or demotivation which may affect negatively or positively the performance of the students in examinations in secondary schools, hence the need for this study.

#### Statement of the Problem

Psychologists and educators have for a long time considered the role of teacher motivation in their performance and by extension in student achievement at school level. A study done by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2013) pointed to the importance of the motivation of teachers towards their jobs. In a research report on teachers in developing countries undertaken by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) in the U.K in 2002, noted in one of its main findings that teachers' motivation was fragile and declining. The report noted that there was a strong link between teachers' motivation and performance, and education quality, but improving teachers' motivation is not uniformly prioritized as a major concern of national and international policymakers. In Kenya, the Government introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003, which pushed up subsequent primary school enrollment from 851,836 students in 2002 to 1,580,287 students in 2015, an increase of 53.9 percent (MOE, 2015). Against this back drop, there has been minimal recruitment of teachers to match the increasing enrolment. The Government since 1997 has kept to teacher replacement as opposed to employment of more teachers. This therefore translates to a higher student - teacher ratio, which in so many ways compromises educational outcomes for learners and increases the teachers' workload hence lowering their motivation levels. In Kakamega East Sub-County, the teacher student ration is the worst in Kakamega County at 1:47 as compared to 1:35 in Kakamega Central Sub-County, 1:43 in Kakamega South, 1:41 in Kakamega North, 1:40 in Khwisero and Butere and 1:42 in Mumias region Sub-Counties (Onyambu, 2009). There have been numerous strikes and/or threats to strike by teachers' unions all over the country, Kakamega East Sub-county inclusive, due to poor working conditions, low pay, lack of recognition and lack of opportunity for professional advancement. Studies have revealed that high workload, long working hours, poor working conditions as well as low pay translate in reduced employee motivation (OECD, 2013). Due to lack of intrinsic motivation among teachers, there has been deteriorating standards in the teaching profession characterized by poor preparation of teaching materials, lack of continuous pupil assessment and general poor professional conduct. Teacher absenteeism is unacceptably high and rising, time on task is low and falling, and teaching practices are characterized by limited effort with heavy reliance on traditional teacher-centered practices (Ministry of education Report, October, 2012). To this end, the relevance of teacher motivation to the long -term growth development of any education system cannot be over emphasized. In any school setting, whether it be secondary, elementary, or higher education, teacher's motivation is generally regarded as one of the most critical determinants, if not the premier determinant, of the success and quality of learning outcome (Mitchell, 2015). Examining the construct of intrinsic motivation among teachers in primary schools is critical because intrinsic motivation among teachers in the early elementary years of an education system has profound implications to the initial and future success of the education system. It is against this backdrop that the study sought to investigate the relationship between motivation practices and performance of public primary school teachers in Kakamega East Sub County.

## **Objective of the Study**

The general objective of the study was to investigate the effect of Job Characteristics on teacher performance in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub- County.

## **Research Hypotheses**

**H0**<sub>1</sub>: Job Characteristics do not have a significant influence on teachers' performance in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County.

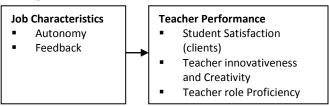
## LITERATURE REVIEW

## **Expectancy Theory**

This study was informed by Vroom's (1964) Expectancy theory. Vroom's (1964) theory explains why people work and behave in the way they do in terms of efforts and direction they take. It also describes what organizations do to encourage people/teachers to apply their efforts and abilities to achieve desired goals as well as satisfying individual needs.

Valency Instrumental Expectancy theory indicates that people constantly predicts the likely future leading to expectations about future events. Motivation therefore, according to Vroom is a combination of valence (value of perceived outcome), instrumentation (the belief that if I complete certain actions then I will achieve the outcome), and expectancy (the belief that am able to complete the actions). His theory argues that, the strength to act in a certain way depends on the strength of the expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome on the attractiveness of the outcome to an individual. It is a monetary belief concerning the likelihood that a particular act will be followed by a particular outcome (Vroom, 1964). Thus a belief that hard work leads to quick promotion is an expectancy, which an individual can pursue to satisfy his needs. The theory assumes that teachers will be motivated to produce only if they expect that productivity will lead to the goal they value. Increased effort will lead to increased performance. This means therefore that satisfaction from the initial effort must be efficiently great or equitable to make the effort worthwhile and there must be a feedback.

## **Conceptual Framework**



**Independent Variable** 

**Dependent Variable** 

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework** 

Source: Author (2018)

#### **Review of Variables**

### **Job Characteristics and Performance**

With the employees perspective for the perceived task Job characteristic model (Hackman & Oldham, 2005) is commonly used. The model has five important dimensions, which is skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. According to Garg & Rastogi (2005) skill variety is the degree of utilization of different skills and abilities. Skill variety is the extent of diversity in any task of the occupation (Price & Mueller, 2006). Researcher argues that the claim for skills in the economy is originated from the goal /aim requirements related with jobs (Cappelli, 2003). Skill variety is one factor in the job characteristics model that influences the knowledgeable meaning of work (Hackman & Oldman, 2004). Task variety possibly will transmit explicit and declarative knowledge (Pentland, 2003). From the perspective of career literature, an individual in the beginning of his career tries to discover tasks in which goals will be obtained successfully (Feldman & Thomas 2002). Individuals dynamically deal with their career (flexibly career oriented); guest worker sales persons are also expected to perceive that high job variety (different skill) can be a source to help for their career growth during the beginning stage of the profession (Baird &

Kram 2003). Career advantages will perhaps increase their job satisfaction, (Flaherty & Pappas 2002). Intrinsic job characteristics, such as skill variety and significance of task, are normally associated with low absenteeism (Taber & Taylor, 2000). The research study explore that the skills and knowledge are particular required by information system (IS) experts to do their job effectively.

Task identity is the amount to which a job demands for the accomplishment of a given task that is considered its commencement with the desired outcome and if the task has no identity the employee will not be motivated for the drama of the task (Locke & Edwin 2001). Task identity requires a pragmatic action to complete 'whole' task; responsibility of job completion from its start to end with visible result. Complex task and difficult goal can better be performed due to the effect of both cognitive and motivational processes (Campbell & Gingrich, 2006). Researchers have emphasized that skill and knowledge are main requirements of complex tasks (March & Simon, 2008) but others have separately focused on different performance magnitude included in a task (Latham & Yukl, 2005).

Task autonomy is the extent in which an individual is given a freedom, choice and liberty to precede a task, such as self time management for a task and the way to be done (Hackman, 2000). Lawler, Mohrman and Ledford (2005) have claimed that task autonomy and related forms of employee contribution in the task were found effective in ninety percent of Fortune companies out of one thousand. If the task autonomy was given to the employee, it may see wonderful results and the high level of satisfaction and performance (Dwyer, Schwartz & Fox, 2002).

#### **Empirical Review**

Several studies have been conducted on the role of teacher motivation on their performance and student learning outcomes .There is a wide range of views about teacher motivation in Africa and South Asia, most of which are country specific. However, there

appears to be mounting concerns that unacceptably high proportions of teachers working in public school systems in many developing countries are poorly motivated due to a combination of low morale and job satisfaction, poor incentives, and inadequate controls and other behavioural sanctions. For example, Bennell (2004) reports the 2000 EFA Country Assessment for Pakistan which noted that poor teacher motivation is a colossal problem, which is seriously compounded by political interference. A study by Majanga, Nasongo and Sylvia (2010) asserts that in Kenya, information about the teachers' job performance is not well documented, yet job performance of teachers is important in areas like classroom management, participation in sports, guidance and counseling, conducting fieldwork among other activities.

Analoui (2000) asserts that low teacher motivation is reflected in deteriorating standards of professional conduct, including serious misbehavior (in and outside of work), and poor professional performance. Teacher absenteeism is unacceptably high and rising, time on task is low and falling, and teaching practices are characterized by limited effort with heavy reliance on traditional teacher centred practices. Teachers are devoting less and less time to extracurricular activities, teaching preparation, and marking. The 2004 World Development Report neatly summarizes these concerns about teachers.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The study used descriptive survey research design . This method was found appropriate because the research intended to explore the relationship between the different variables forming the study that's the relationship between motivation and teacher performance. According to Cooper and Schindler (2008) descriptive survey design is considered to be relevant in a survey because it involves collecting data which can then be used to answer the research question in the current state of the object of the study. The population of the study

was all the primary school teachers and Primary school head teachers in Kakamega east sub-county. The sampling frame for the study comprised Primary School Head Teachers and Primary School teachers in Kakamega East Sub- County. On data collection, the study used a standard questionnaire for teachers and Head Teachers in Kakamega East Sub-County. A five point Likert type scale ranging from 1(strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) was used where respondents were required to put a tick against their answer that best described their opinion.

The data obtained from the field was organized and edited to ensure completeness and consistency, classified and coded according to research hypotheses and objectives for analysis. They were then analyzed by use of both descriptive as well as inferential statistical procedures with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

#### **REULTS**

The objective of the study sought to investigate the effect of job characteristics on teacher performance in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County. In order to effectively test the study objective, the following null hypothesis was formulated;

**H0**<sub>1</sub>: Job Characteristics do not have a significant influence on teachers' performance in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County. The study data relating to job characteristics and data on teacher performance were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Study findings revealed a statistically significant relationship between job characteristics and teacher performance in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County (r= 0.624; P<0.05). The interpretation of the findings is that various job characteristics investigated in the study like job autonomy and feedback influence improved

performance (direct relationship). This is so since the positive correlation coefficient between job characteristics and teacher performance suggested that most teachers in public primary schools experienced job autonomy and received feedback on their performance in schools and this ultimately influenced their improved performance. It was stated based on the findings of this study that there was enough statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis, thus accepting the alternative hypothesis that job characteristics have a significant influence on teachers' performance in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County.

Empirical literature on job characteristics and teacher performance was compared with findings of this study. Task identity is the amount to which a job demands for the accomplishment of a given task that is considered its commencement with the desired outcome and if the task has no identity then the employee will not be motivated for the drama of the task (Locke & Edwin 2001). Task identity required a pragmatic action to complete 'whole' task; responsibility of job completion of job from its start to end with visible result.

Complex task and difficult goal can be better performed due to the effect of both cognitive and motivational processes (Campbell & Gingrich, 2006). Researchers emphasized that skill and knowledge are main requirement of complex task (March & Simon, 2008) but others have separately focused on different performance magnitude included in a task (Latham & Yukl, 2005). Career advantages will perhaps increase their job satisfaction, (Flaherty & Pappas 2002). Intrinsic job characteristics, such as skill variety and significance of task, are normally associated with low absenteeism (Taber & Taylor, 2000). The research study explore that the skills and knowledge are particularly required by information system (IS) experts to do their job effectively.

Table 1: Regression Results for Job characteristics and Teacher Performance

Variable		Coefficients	t-value	p-value	
Constant		0.461	3.539	0.003	
Job Autonomy		1.775	3.229	0.001*	
Feedback		1.595	3.173	0.002*	
Goodness of	Fit:				
$R^2$	0.647				
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.628				
F-value	3.887				

Source: Field Data, 2018.

Findings in table 1 presented regression analysis for job characteristics and teacher performance in Kakamega East Sub-County where the constructs involved were job autonomy and feedback. Study findings revealed that calculated t-statistics (t = 3.229 and 3.173) for parameters; job autonomy and feedback were greater than tabulated t-statistics within 95% confidence interval. This finding implied that job autonomy and feedback had a significant effect on performance of teachers in Kakamega East Sub-County. The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) was 0.647 implying that job autonomy and feedback accounted for 64.7% of the variance in performance of teachers in Kakamega East Sub-County. The remaining 35.3% unexplained variance was largely due to variation in other factors outside the regression model which were otherwise included in the stochastic error term. The overall regression model was statistically significant in terms of its overall goodness of fit (f = 3.887, P < 0.05).

#### **SUMMARY**

The fourth of the study sought to investigate the effect of job characteristics on teacher performance in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County. Study data relating to job characteristics and data on teacher performance were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Study findings revealed a statistically significant relationship between job characteristics and teacher performance in public primary schools in Kakamega

East Sub-County (r= 0.624; P<0.05). The interpretation of the findings is that various job characteristics investigated in the study like job autonomy and feedback influence improved performance (direct relationship).

Individual constructs of job characteristics were subjected to regression analysis to determine their effect on teacher performance. Study findings revealed that calculated t-statistics (t = 3.229 and 3.173) for parameters; job autonomy and feedback were greater than tabulated t-statistics within 95% confidence interval. This finding implied that job autonomy and feedback had a significant effect on performance of teachers in Kakamega East Sub-County. The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) was 0.647 implying that job autonomy and feedback accounted for 64.7% of the variance in performance of teachers in Kakamega East Sub-County. The remaining 35.3% unexplained variance was largely due to variation in other factors outside the regression model which are otherwise included in the stochastic error term. The overall regression model was statistically significant in terms of its overall goodness of fit (f = 3.887, P < 0.05).

# CONCLUSIONS

The objective of the study sought to investigate the effect of job characteristics on teacher performance in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County. Study findings revealed a statistically significant relationship between job characteristics

and teacher performance in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County (r=0.624; P<0.05). Regression results revealed that calculated t-statistics (t=3.229 and 3.173) for parameters; job autonomy and feedback were greater than tabulated t-statistics within 95% confidence interval. The overall regression model was statistically significant in terms of its overall goodness of fit (f=3.887, P < 0.05).

With respect to the study findings on the objective, it was concluded that job characteristics have a significant effect on teacher performance in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Job characteristic model has five important dimensions, which is skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. This study examined autonomy and feedback. Intrinsic job characteristics, such as skill variety and significance of task, are normally associated with low absenteeism. Task autonomy is extent in which an individual is given a freedom, choice and liberty to precede a task, such as self-time management for a task and the way to be done. Task autonomy and related forms of employee contribution in the task were found effective in school settings. Task autonomy given to the teachers allows them to plan their work, participate in timetabling of lessons and determine their own teaching schedules. This has been found to bring about high levels of teacher motivation, satisfaction and performance.

## **Suggestions for Further Studies**

This study sought to investigate the effect of job characteristic on teacher performance in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County. The following suggestions were made for further research;

Given that school management plays a significant role in ensuring intrinsic motivation factors in schools, the researcher recommended that another study be undertaken on the effect of school leadership style on teacher performance which was not the concern of this study.

This study was carried out in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County. It is not clear whether the same situation also exists in the other regions as well. A study may be replicated on the basis of a different sample of schools from another region in the country and beyond and results compared with those of this study.

Further still, relationship between school culture and how it influences teacher performance also needs to be interrogated and explored. This is because culture is inbuilt in all systems in terms of value attitudes and norms shared across members of the organization. Therefore for improved teacher performance to be realized, school culture and its antecedents need to be looked into as predictors of improved performance. This argument is supported by Kotter (1996).

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