

THE INFLUENCE OF COMMUNICATION AND MONETARY REWARDS AS MOTIVATION STRATEGIES ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of communication and monetary rewards on students; academic performance. The study was guided by two objectives that focused on communication and monetary rewards teachers' as strategies of motivating teachers and their influence on students' academic performance. The study was conducted in all public secondary schools in Kathiani district. The target population included all the 30 Principals, 150 Heads of Department and 320 teachers working in the district. The District Education Officer (DEO) and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (DQASO) were also targeted in the study. Using simple random sampling method, a sample of 17 principals, 34 Heads of Departments and 68 teachers from the public secondary schools in the sub county were selected. The study used descriptive survey research design where questionnaires and an interview schedule were used as the main tools for data collection. Validity was assured through consultation with lecturers while a test-retest method was used to test for reliability of the instruments. Data analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics. All the null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. The findings revealed that teachers were dissatisfied with the manner that principals handled matters of communication and monetary rewards. It was further revealed that there was statistically a positive and significant influence of communication and monetary reward strategies of teacher motivation on students' academic performance ($p < .05$). Using the coefficient of determination (r^2), the study found out that monetary reward and communication could each explain respectively about 66% and 64% of the total variance on students' performance

Key Words: Communication, Monetary Rewards, Motivation

1.0 Introduction

Education is a very important human activity worldwide. It helps any society fashion and model individuals to function well in their environment. According to Boit, Njoki and Chang'ach (2012), the purpose of education is to equip the citizenry to reshape their society and eliminate inequality.

In particular, secondary education is an important sector in national and individual development. It plays a vital role in creating a country's human resource base at a level higher than primary education (Achoka, Odebero, Maiyo & Mualuko, 2007). The vital role played by secondary education may partly explain the Kenyan government decision to introduce free tuition in public secondary schools in order to increase its demand (Ohba, 2009). The provision of quality secondary education is therefore important in generating the opportunities and benefits of social and economic development (Onsumu, Muthaka, Ngware & Kosembei, 2006). One of the indicators of quality of education being provided is cognitive achievement of learners (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, [UNESCO], 2005). According to Adediwura and Tayo (2007), academic achievement is designated by test and examination scores or marks assigned by the subject teachers.

According to Lydiah and Nasongo (2009), as well as Yusuf and Adigun (2010) the performance of students in any academic task has always been of special interest to the government, educators, parents and society at large. This explains the reason for rewarding teachers who excel in their teaching subjects during open education days held annually in every district. While appreciating the value of rewarding teachers who produce better results, teachers should also not escape a portion of blame when students perform poorly. Teachers have an important influence on students' academic achievement since they play a crucial role in educational attainment because the teacher is ultimately responsible for translating policy into action and principles based on practice during interaction with the students (Afe, 2001). In their study, Wright, Horn and Sanders (1997) concluded that the most important factor influencing student learning is the teacher. Teachers stand in the interface of the transmission of knowledge, values, and skills in the learning process. If the teacher is ineffective, students under the teacher's tutelage will achieve inadequate progress academically. This is regardless of how similar or different the students are in terms of individual potential in academic achievement.

Motivation is one of the most important human activity that managers in the work place can do in order to improve performance. Motivation has been defined as the act of stimulating someone to take a desired course of action (SMU, 2008). Teachers as an important asset in the organization of the school are a critical component in determining the success of the school. The ability of the teacher to perform well in his/her profession depends on his/her skills and the motivation to do the teaching activity (SMU, 2008). Concerted efforts have been made in Kenya since independence to address the skill levels of teachers through pre-service or in-service teacher education programmes (Mwebi, 2012). Similarly, all education commissions in Kenya (Republic of Kenya 1965; Republic of Kenya, 1976; Mackay, 1979; Republic of Kenya, 1999) have decried the low status of teachers and recommended that efforts be made to improve the societal status of the teacher. The status of the teacher cannot be improved however, without touching on the issues related to teachers' motivation. Although the teacher motivation is innate, research shows that teachers are likely to give their best when external factors surrounding their work are addressed (Seyfarth, 2008). Herzberg (1966) called these factors as either satisfiers or dissatisfies. Some of the motivators include: job security, sympathetic help with personal problems, personal loyalty to employees, interesting work, good working conditions, tactful discipline, good wages, promotion, growth in the organization and appreciation (SMU, 2008, p.171). According to the Kenyan society, effective schools are those seen to be excelling in national examinations. Principals who are heads of schools are therefore faced with the herculean task of ensuring that their schools are kept up the ladder so as to continue staying in the schools or they are axed. This state of affairs therefore underscores the premium placed on examination performance and the pressure to work hard by both teachers and principals in order to produce good results. Despite the fact that there are a number of factors such

as teacher absenteeism, heavy workload as a result of low teacher to student ratios and general poor school infrastructure, motivation is cited as a single most important factor influencing academic performance. Research on motivation however has tended to establish relationships about the motivation of the learners and their resultant academic performance (Yemo, Oladipupo & Omisore, 2013) much to the exclusion of teacher motivation's influence on academic outcomes. The pressure to excel has kept school administrators to devise ways of staying afloat in the era of ranking competition in national examinations. In fact, motivational practices have become the norm rather than an exception in schools nowadays. It is however not clear from the research perspective how these practices improve on academic performance of the students. Even though research on primary, secondary and college education regarding motivation has found significant relationship between students' motivation and academic performance (Kusurkar, Cate, Vos, Westers & Croiset, 2012; Yemo, Oladipupo & Omisore, 2013), this cannot be said with certainty about teacher motivation and students' academic performance. There is therefore need to investigate the principals strategies of motivating teachers and their influence on academic performance in public secondary schools.

1.1 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were

- i) To establish the influence of communication strategy on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub-County.
- ii) To ascertain the influence of monetary reward on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub-County.

1.5 Research hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide in achieving the study objectives

H₀₁: Communication strategy has no influence on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub-County.

H₀₂: Monetary reward has no influence on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub-County.

2.0 Research Methodology

The study used descriptive survey research design in the sense that the researcher does not have direct control over independent variables for their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulatable (Kothari, 2008). The study used questionnaires as the main tool for data collection and was supplemented by use of an interview schedule. The questionnaires were administered to the school principals, teachers and respective heads of departments (HODs) while the interview schedule was administered to the DQASO and DEO. These instruments collected data relating to the variables communication and monetary rewards and the secondary school national examination performance. This study was carried out in Kathiani district in Machakos County. The targeted population in this research therefore was all the 30 Principals, 150 Heads of Departments and 320 teachers working in the Sub County. Thus in this study, the researcher used simple random method to sample 17 schools out of the 30 secondary schools in Kathiani Sub County. All the principals in the sampled schools participated in the study. The researcher also used simple random to select two HODs and four teachers from each of the 17 schools. Consequently, the study sample included 17 principals, 34 HODs and 68 teachers, giving a total of 119 respondents. In order to ensure the validity of the instruments expert opinions was sought to establish the content validity. Test-retest technique of reliability testing was used whereby the pilot questionnaires were administered twice to the respondents, with a one week interval, to determine the stability of the instrument items. A Pearson's correlation coefficient value of (r) 0.89

was obtained and was considered acceptable as recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). Both descriptive and inferential (Pearson's r) statistics were used to determine whether communication strategy and monetary reward as motivation strategies had any significant influence on students' academic performance. Descriptive statistics used included frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation while hypotheses testing was done using simple correlation analysis. The analyzed data was then presented using frequency tables, pie charts, and bar graphs, in order to make it more illustrative and easy to observe and interpret.

3.0 Results

In this study the sample was made up of 17 principals, 34 HODs and 68 teachers giving a sample size of 119 expected respondents. Concerning the questionnaires return rate in this study, 17 were returned from the principals' category, 30 from the HODs and 60 from the teachers. Hence a proportion of 107 were returned out of a total of 119, making the questionnaire return rate to be 90 % of the total administered questionnaires to principals, HODs and teachers. This high return rate was possible because the researcher made appointments with the school Principals through phone calls before the actual day of data collection. The total number of questionnaires administered to the three categories were 119 and out of these questionnaires, 107 was the number returned duly filled, thus representing 90% of the total questionnaires distributed to the field for the three categories of respondents. Hence, 12 questionnaires were not returned representing 10%. From this return rate, it can easily be concluded that the response rate was good.

3.1 Academic performance of public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub County

In line with KCSE academic performance, the principals were asked to indicate the mean grade of their school from the year 2008 to 2013. Data for this parameter was analyzed descriptively using the mean and standard deviation as a measure of central tendency and dispersion respectively to enable the researcher to understand the deviation of these scores over the years from their means. The results on performance are as presented in table 1.0

Table 1.0: KCSE mean performance of public secondary schools (2008-2013)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
KCSE performance 2008	17	2.90	6.70	4.62	1.40
KCSE performance 2009	17	3.00	6.90	4.90	1.51
KCSE performance 2010	17	3.10	7.00	4.97	1.48
KCSE performance 2011	17	3.20	6.60	4.72	1.30
KCSE performance 2012	17	3.10	6.10	4.60	1.10
KCSE performance 2013	17	3.20	6.20	4.67	1.24
Grand Mean and SD				4.74	1.33

Table 1.0 shows that the mean performance score in KCSE for the public schools in Kathiani Sub County has been oscillating between an average score of 4.60 to 4.90 for a period of 6 years. The average mean performance in the sub county for the mentioned period is 4.74 with a standard deviation of 1.33. When this performance is interpreted using the grade norms as commonly used in Kenya's education system, it implies that the performance has stagnated at a mean grade of C-(minus) for the period under study. This is an indication that there has never been any meaningful improvement in performance for almost half a decade. To break this cycle of performance

stagnation and in order to realize positive improvement in performance, there is need to address key performance related factors such as teachers' motivation which was the focus of this study.

3.2 The influence of communication strategy on students' academic performance

The first objective of the study was to establish the influence of communication as means of motivation on students' performance. Both teachers and HODs were asked to rate the extent to which they were satisfied on the manner in which the school principals communicate school matters to them. The results of this analysis are presented in table 2.0

Table 2.0: The extent to which principals communicate school matters to the teachers

Communication aspects	Very satisfied		Fairly satisfied		Very dissatisfied	
	8	19	21	36	16	16
The principals' style of communication	5	20	20	40	15	
Teachers involvement in communication	10	20	20	35	15	
Teachers views on the way principal appreciate teachers verbally	5	15	30	30	20	
Ways on how communication aspects affect them	10	20	15	40	15	
Total	30	75	85	145	65	Percentage
	8	19	21	36	16	

Table 2.0 shows that majority of teachers were not satisfied on the way communication matters are handled in their schools. This is evidenced by the percentage of teachers who responded as being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied across the four items of measuring this parameter. This implies that communication matters are not satisfactorily handled in schools hence dissatisfaction. This is evidenced by the number of teachers (36.25 %) who indicated as dissatisfied and (16.25%) as very dissatisfied. This implies that communication matters are not satisfactorily handled in schools. From the table it is deduced that mostly principals are not explicit when communicating school matters to the teachers and HODs. It is worth to note that effective communication fosters motivation by clarifying to employees what is to be done and how well they have to do it to improve performance (Aswathappa, 2012). Lack of effective communication therefore can be a cause of employee disenchantment and poor performance or stagnation (SMU, 2008).

The principals were also asked to indicate how they carry out communication activities in their school. Their responses mimic that of the teachers because they indicated that they communicate by having staff meeting, briefs, by use of memo and sometimes face-to face with the affected teachers. However, upon probing, they indicated that these communication strategies are not regular and it can take long time before any mode of communication is made. In line with the communication on monetary rewards, the principals affirmed that it is the Board of Management (BOM) who meet and agree the kind of token to be given to the exceptionally performing teachers which is never communicated to the teachers until the material day when there is a prize giving day when such tokens are presented to the teachers. When asked why they did not communicate to the teachers on the token to be given to them, they asserted that communication to the teachers in advance before the material day would bring discontent and therefore need to keep them in suspense until the prize giving day when the awards are presented to them. The responses from the principals

hints the reason why the teachers indicated that they are dissatisfied by nearly all the statements on the way the principals address matter of motivating them through communication. This practice is however contrary to known motivation practices which recommend that effective motivation practices should be participatory in the sense that management must seek opinion and suggestions from the beneficiaries before designing any motivational strategy (SMU, 2008).

The views of the DEO and the DQASO on the way the principals handle the matters of communication in relation to motivation have commonality with those of teachers, HODs, and the principals' sentiments. The DEO and the DQASO confirmed that the communication is done haphazardly and this, according to these respondents, necessitated the training of the teachers on the matters of communication through the Kenya Education Management Institute [KEMI]. Communication is one of the skills that need to be imparted on the principals so that they can generally be able to communicate school policies to the teachers including that of motivation. The DEO and the DQASO expressed their concern that they received complaints from the teachers on how the principals do not communicate to them on matters of motivation and therefore recommended communication to be included in the diploma course offered by the KEMI to all the principals in Kenya. This aimed at making the communication open and contribute to students' performance because the teachers will be happy with the communication and consequently discharge their duties well.

3.3 The influence of monetary reward strategy on students' academic performance

The second objective sought to establish the extent to which monetary rewards influence students' performance in public schools. The teachers and HODs were asked to indicate whether school principals reward teachers and the results are as in figure 1

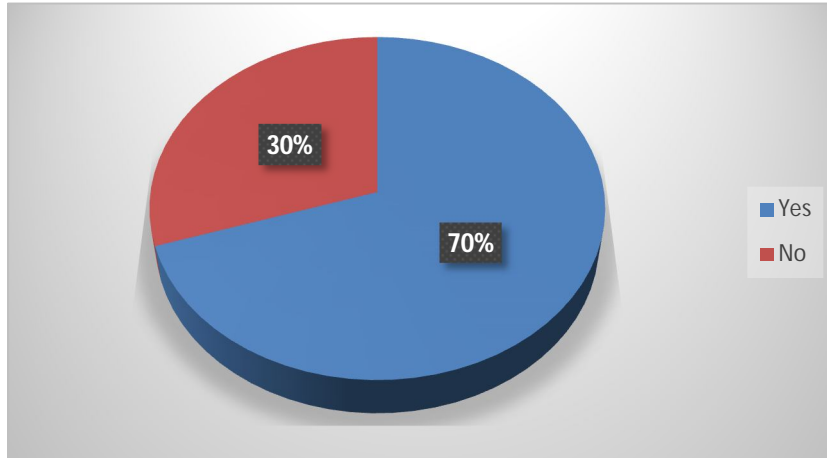


Figure1: HODs and teachers response on whether school principals reward teachers

Figure 1 shows that 70% of the teachers and HODs attested that there is a system of motivating teachers in their schools. Since monetary reward is one of the motivation strategies, the study sought to establish the extent to which teachers were satisfied with motivation through monetary rewards. The results are presented in table 3.0

Table 3.0: Teachers' satisfaction level with monetary rewards

Monetary reward aspects:	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
The amount of money given to every teacher after enabling students to score an "A" in a subject	0	10	20	20
The level of involvement on money matters	5	5	10	10
The amount of money paid for remedial classes	0	5	15	20
Other monetary rewards given in school	2	10	20	10
Total	25	30	65	60
Percentage	6.25	7.5	16.25	15

Table 3.0 shows that majority of the teachers and HODs are dissatisfied with the monetary reward system of motivation applied by their principals. In particular, about 55% of the teachers were dissatisfied and 15% very dissatisfied with the amount of money given to teachers for monetary rewards. This shows that, the monetary reward as a strategy of rewarding teachers is deficient. Most of the teachers felt that the amount of money given to every teacher after students' score an "A" in a subject is little compared to the expectations of the teachers hence making them get dissatisfied. The results also show that teachers are rarely involved in decision making regarding rewarding of teachers using money.

The principals on the other hand agreed that they rewarded the exceptionally performing teachers on academic and non-academic activities in the school. However, they affirmed that the amount of money that they give or the value of the material token that they give is small and below the expectations of the teachers. This was arrived at by the principals stating that during the staff meetings, the teachers' welfare committee in the schools suggests the amount of money that any teacher should be given upon achieving a certain task. However, the amount of money that the Board of Management [BOM] passes as a vote head for motivation is way below the expectation of the teachers hence making them dissatisfied. Aswathappa (2012) says that motivation of people depends on their self-image and their expectations about the worth of that image. This means that the teachers perceive themselves as having done a lot of work and expect high recognition and rewards while management views these from a different lens. The end result is disfranchisement resulting to lower morale and decline in productivity by the teachers. The views of the DEO and the DQASO mirror that of the principals. During the interview, the DEO and DQASO affirmed that the Public Officers' Code of Ethics (2003) is against any monetary reward or material rewards for public servants. This public officer's code of ethics is also supported by the TSC code of regulations (2013) which also discourages use of monetary rewards to motivate teachers. This puts the principals at cross-purposes since as institutional CEOs and agents of the ministry, they have to implement ministerial policies and devise ways of motivating the teachers. This state of affairs serves to hamper the spirit of rewarding teachers using monetary rewards and subsequently leads to low job morale and dissatisfaction hence poor academic achievements of learners.

3.4 Hypotheses testing

This study sought to establish the efficacy of the formulated hypotheses through a correlation process. In this regard, all the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The influence of the independent variables of communication strategy and monetary rewards on academic performance was established through a correlation analysis as presented in the correlation matrix in table 4.0

Table 4.0: Correlation between academic performances, communication and monetary rewards

		performance	Communication	Monetary
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.	.
	N	90		
Communication Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.80*	1	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.031		.
	N	90	90	
Monetary rewards	Pearson Correlation	.810*	.179	.715**
	Sig (2-tailed)	.015	.671	.046
	N	90	90	90

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.0 shows the correlation analysis of the independent variables with the depended variable. The correlation results thus indicate a positive and significant influence of communication strategy, monetary reward, teachers' welfare and teachers' promotion on students' academic performance. The implication of this is that the more the principals embrace these motivational practices, the better the students' academic performance. This is because respectively for the four practices, $p < .31$ and $p < .015$, as is indicated in the table. Respectively for these four motivational practices, the coefficient of determination r^2 is .64 and .66 indicating what each practice is accounting for, in relation to the total variance of the students' academic performance.

The first hypothesis (H_{01}) formulated for this study was: Communication as a strategy of motivation has no influence on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub County. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The correlation analysis results established were as in table 4.0 which showed that there was a statistically significant influence of communication strategy on students' academic performance; $r = .80$, $p < .05$. On the basis of this finding, the null hypothesis H_{01} that: communication strategy has no influence on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub County was rejected implying that the more the principals embrace communication the better the students' academic performance. The coefficient of determination was also found to be 64% ($r^2 = .64$), which

means that effective communication, could help explain about 64% of the total variance on student performance. This implies that when principals adopt effective communication strategies, students' performance is likely to improve by a beta (β) factor of .64.

The second hypothesis (H_{02}) for this study stated that: Monetary reward has no influence on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub County. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the correlation matrix in table 4.0, it can easily be inferred that the influence of monetary rewards on students' academic performance was positive and statistically significant; $r = .810$, $p = .015$. In this regard therefore, the second null hypothesis H_{02} that: monetary rewards has no influence on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub County was also rejected implying that the more the principals embrace monetary rewards the better the students' academic performance. The coefficient of determination for this relationship was, $r^2 = .66$ implying that nearly 66 % of the total variance in students' performance could be explained by monetary rewards thus signifying the amount of influence this variable has in explaining the student performance. This therefore would mean the higher the monetary reward, the better the students' academic performance, hence signifying the importance of monetary rewards system in influencing performance.

4.0: Conclusion

In conclusion, communication and monetary rewards had positive and significant influence on students' academic performance. This resulted from correlation analysis findings, after the formulated study hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. In all the cases of correlation, it emerged that $p < .05$. This led to the rejection of the null hypotheses which stated that: Communication strategy and monetary rewards had no influence on students' academic performance. Therefore, the more the principals embrace the above practices, the better the students' academic performance. The study also found out that monetary reward and communication could each explain respectively about 66% and 64% of the total variance on students' performance

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