

EVALUATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF TANGIBLE REWARDS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

^{1*} **Ratemo Kemuma Judy**
judyk372@gmail.com

^{2**} **Maria Onyango**
clajos2000@gmail.com

^{3***} **Odaya Aleri**
aleriodaya@yahoo.com

^{1,2,3} *School of Business and Economics,
Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, Kenya*

Abstract: *The study aimed to assess the influence of employee motivation on the performance of public secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County, a sub-county of Migori County in Kenya. The study targeted 690 teachers and the sample size was determined using the Yamane formula. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire, which consisted of a five-part Likert scale. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential methods. The descriptive result revealed that the mean values ranged from 3.65 to 4.77, indicating a generally positive perception of the improvement in school performance over the specified period. The findings of the study showed that tangible rewards, as indicated by award of certificates, household items, monetary and sponsored trips, has a significant influence on school performance.*

Keywords: *tangible rewards, public secondary schools, employee motivation*

Introduction

Rewarding employees has been considered crucial in the motivation and performance of employees. Many entities have realized significant achievement by adhering to their policies through a successful and robust employee reward system. Rewarding teachers is an important factor in their motivation. According to Pratheepkanth (2011), the success of an educational system is dependent on the entity ensuring that its members of staff are motivated. Ajila and Abiola (2004), argues that organizations should design and implement robust system of rewards that attempts to link productivity and rewards. This will enable the organization to retain high performers in their entities.

Hornstra (2015) asserts that the commitment to performance is based on recognition and rewards, and how an organization treats its human resource determines its survival and prosperity. The merits of a reward system an institution uses on its employee is critical in determining its competitive advantage to achieve major objectives. Verma (2016) established that most schools have not adequately recognized and rewarded their teachers. Consequently, their low motivation has led to negative educational outcomes arising from increased professional misconduct, underutilization of class time, teachers' engagement in second income-generating activities, poor preparation, reliance on traditional teaching practices and absenteeism that distract from teaching duties. Kariuki and Mbugua (2018) argues that robustly established system of reward is necessary to realize the desired motivation level. A balanced level of tangible and intangible rewards helps organizations to motivate employees.

Tangible rewards are one of the most significant motivation strategies employed in the educational process in many countries. They are regarded as the simplest, most adaptable and direct approaches utilized to address many aspects of motivation, (Yuetyi and Zhang 2021). Tangible rewards refer to material items given to employees as recognition for their efforts towards the organization. They may include monetary or non-monetary benefits given to employees. Examples include salary enhancements, gift coupons, food baskets and free goods, (Nwosu 2020). The use of non-monetary incentives may be perceived as gifts that could change the nature of the employment relationship. Measures such as sponsored trips and gifts may lead to more sincere relationships than the payment of cash bonus and this may ultimately translate to increased performance, (Shakir, 2013).

Yuetyi and Zhang (2021) do not support the use of tangible rewards to enhance employee performance. The use of this type of rewards imposes an adverse effect on teacher's intrinsic motivation and it's likely to shape teachers from intrinsic motivation to extrinsic motivation. The scholars advocate for intrinsic motivation where people undertake activities for inherent satisfaction as opposed to responding to external items, rewards or pressures. As a result, teachers shift the effort to what they are supposed to achieve to what they're able to receive after a wonderful performance.

According to Ocham and Okoth (2015) reward in form of pay strongly impact on the employees' performance. He considered pay as one of the most powerful motivational tools. In his view, money provides the means to achieve a number of different ends.

According to Mbinya (2016) motivation of teachers has taken various modes such as awarding good performers or achievers. This has been done at school level by board of management or by extension where people inspired by good achievement or performance present their awards to the achievers. Many secondary schools have also adopted rewarding strategies in order to motivate their teachers and students. Chebukati, Namusonge and Makokha (2019) observe that schools have always organized prize giving days to their teachers at school, sub-county or county level. This has been done in form of certificate award, rewarding with household items and giving prizes inform of money or any other material items. Certificates have always remained as reminders of good performance in one's history.

The influence of the provision of tangible awards on school performance has not escaped the attention of scholars. A study conducted by Tahira *et al.*, (2017) investigated the perception of teachers on the impact of a reward system on the performance of teachers for schools in Lahore, Nigeria. Guided by the expectancy motivation theory the study collected data from 200 teachers using Likert type questionnaires. The findings showed that rewards had a significant impact on performance. Mbinya (2016) in her study on teacher motivation factors influencing school management practices in public secondary schools in Machakos County, Kenya using descriptive survey and correlational research designs established that job satisfaction, reward systems, professional training and development and work situational factors affect teacher's output. In her conclusion, Mbinya noted a positive correlation between school performance and teacher motivation. The study recommended the need for teacher motivation which translates to students' improved performance. She further proposed that schools should ensure that school environment is conducive for teachers to ensure their motivation and satisfaction with their jobs. Also, she recommended that teachers should be remunerated well to motivate them in their job. Similarly, Mbinya suggested that school management should ensure that the school environment should be conducive.

Ogunlade, Kamonges and Adulkadir (2015) conducted a study with the sole aim of investigating the link between motivational factors and the commitment of teachers in public secondary school in the district of Mbale, Uganda. Guided by a cross-sectional design the data collected via questionnaires was analyzed using regression and the person correlation index. The findings showed that the reward system and commitment of teachers to performance were significant and direct.

Adeyemo, Oladipupo and Omisore (2013) in their study on teachers` motivation on students` performance in Mathematics in Government Secondary Schools, Makurdilg Area examined the effect of teachers` motivation and the influence of the condition of service of teachers on students` performance in mathematics using descriptive survey. They also assessed the impact of teachers` fringe benefit payment and promotion of in-service training on student`s performance in mathematics. This study established that for improved academic performance of the students in mathematics to be realized, teachers have to be motivated and satisfied. The study also revealed that productivity may increase when needs of the teachers are met which in turn may enhance excellent performance of students academically. In conclusion, the study justified a significant relationship between the condition of service of teachers and student`s academic performance in mathematics. Adeyemo *et al.*, (2013) recommended improvement of condition of service of teachers since it has direct impact on student`s academic performance in mathematics.

Nwosu (2020) conducted a study on the influence of motivation on teacher performance for selected public secondary schools in the Ogun state, Nigeria. Using multiple regression analysis, the study revealed reward system significantly influences motivation of teachers in public secondary schools. The study concluded that motivating teachers and students and reward system are highly and significantly associated and this may in turn help in improving the performance of the school. Further the study indicated significant positive relationship between the teachers` job performance and motivation. Momanyi (2015) conducted a study on the factors determining teacher motivation in public secondary schools in Marani Sub- County of Kisii County. The study collected data using self-administered questionnaires and interview schedules.

Using regression analysis, the study revealed that reward systems have significant influence on school performance.

Iram, Muhammad, Sajila and Naeem (2021) researched on the relevance of motivation in students` achievement in English language as a foreign language in Egypt. A descriptive design was adopted whereas data was collected via questionnaires. Data was examined with percentages, T test and ANOVA in SPSS. The output of the study postulated that learning facilities have appositve effect on students` achievement.

Chebukati, Namusonge and Makokha (2019) conducted research on the effect of motivation practices on employee performance in public secondary schools in Kenya. The study targeted the management and teaching staff of public secondary schools in the counties of Bungoma, Trans-Nzoia, Vihiga, Kakamega and Busia. Based on a mixed research design, the data collected through questionnaires was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed a significant positive influence of reward system on performance. The study also revealed that the relationship between motivation practices (promotions, staff welfare, rewards and remunerations) and employee performance in public schools in Kenya is direct and significant. Similarly, Nyamekye (2012) carried out a study to determine the influence of motivation on the retention of employees at Standard Chartered Bank Limited in Ghana. The study established that factors such as salary and fringe benefits were considered as the most critical in influencing motivation, followed by job security and the relationship among co-workers.

Shakir (2013) evaluated the influence of extrinsic rewards on the performance of teachers in secondary schools in Islamabad, Pakistan. The study collected data through surveys and questionnaires. The study analyzed data using the Pearson correlation coefficient, frequencies, percentages and the mean. The study determined that there was a positive correlation between extrinsic rewards (some gifts, promotions, salary raise and bonuses) and school performance. Ritho (2015) sought to determine if student motivation influence academic performance in public secondary schools in Dagoreti Sub- County in Nairobi. This study adopted a survey research design with a target a population of 264 teachers. It was revealed that the giving of prizes to students is the most effective motivational technique that improves performance.

The study was confined to 23 public secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County. The purpose of the study was to assess the influence of employee motivation on the performance of secondary schools in Rongo sub-county. The study was limited to learning facilities, tangible rewards and recognition. Data was collected in February, 2023 and was analyzed using descriptive and inferential methodologies. The study was guided by goal setting theory, expectancy theory and Herzberg two factor theory.

Significance of the Study

Identifying the factors that influence school performance is of great significance to all the stakeholders, including teachers, the government, parents and students. The establishment of the relationship between employee motivation and school performance is an essential element in the formulation and implementation of efficient and effective educational policies that would go a long way in improving school performance.

The study findings may also be useful to school managers in proposing and encouraging adoption of motivational strategies for improved performance and productivity in various secondary schools in Kenya. Motivational strategies are varied and some may require the use of resources. In this regard the findings of the study may inform the allocation of resources to schools and also among the various educational institutions. The study findings may also be critical in future studies on the areas of school performance and employee motivation. It provides a background against which future studies may be carried out.

Problem statement

Past studies: Oriahi (2009), Mutua (2015), Deepika and Sharma (2018), Wilkesmann, Steinmayr and Fischer, (2021) Hanitha (2017) reported a positive interaction between employees' motivation and school performance, they were not conducted in Rongo sub-county. Studies by Oguta and Getange (2021) revealed that motivation has no influence on schools' performance; on the other hand, Chebukati, Namusonge and Makokha (2019) found positive relationship between motivation practices (promotions, staff welfare, rewards and remunerations) and employee performance in public schools in Kenya were significant and positively related. Nyamekye (2012) carried out a study to determine the influence of motivation on the retention of employees at Standard Chartered Bank Limited in Ghana had found that such factors as salary and fringe benefits were critical in influencing motivation, followed by job security and the relationship among co-workers. Since there was inconsistency in the findings of the cited studies.

In the dynamic landscape of education in Kenya, the role of motivated employees, particularly teachers and administrative staff, is pivotal in shaping the overall performance and effectiveness of schools. Despite the acknowledged significance of employee motivation in educational institutions, there exists a gap in understanding the specific dynamics and factors that contribute to or hinder motivation among school personnel in Kenya.

In the realm of public secondary education in Kenya, the pivotal role of motivated employees in shaping the performance and overall effectiveness of schools cannot be overstated. The dynamic and demanding nature of the educational landscape necessitates a thorough exploration of the factors influencing employee motivation and their subsequent impact on school performance. However, there is a noticeable gap in existing literature regarding a comprehensive survey that specifically investigates the influence of employee motivation on school performance in public secondary schools across Kenya. This research aims to address this gap by conducting a detailed examination of the influence of employee motivation on school performance, with a focus on Rongo Sub County, which is a sub-county of Migori County, educational context.

Study objectives

The general objective of the study was to assess the influence of employee motivation on schools performance with a specific objective to evaluate the influence of tangible rewards on the performance of public secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County.

A research hypothesis **H₀₁**: Tangible rewards have no significant influence on the performance of public secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County, guided the study.

Research Methodology

The researcher used a descriptive survey because it allowed them to take a more holistic approach to the investigation. Another reason for using a descriptive survey is that data was obtained from a large number of people. The study area was all Public Secondary Schools in Rongo Sub-County. Rongo Sub -County is one of the county administrative areas within Migori County. Migori county lies in South western Kenya and borders Homa Bay County (North), Kisii County (North E), Narok (South East), Tanzania (West and South) and Lake Victoria to the West. The county also borders Uganda via Migingo Island in Lake Victoria. The study targeted 690 teachers and the sample size was determined using the Yamane formula (Yamane, 1967: Adam, 2020) as shown below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \tag{1}$$

Where;

n= sample size

N= population size

e= significance level

$$n = \frac{690}{1+690(0.05)^2} = 253$$

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire, which consisted of a five-part Likert scale. The respondents indicated agreement with each item on the five-point scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=agree, 5= strongly agree.

Descriptive Statistics

The study objective was to evaluate the influence of tangible rewards on the performance of public secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County. The finding of the study in Table 1 shows that the mean values range from 3.69 to 4.35, indicating a generally positive perception of the influence of these incentives on school performance. The standard deviations range from 0.570 to 1.429, suggesting varying degrees of dispersion around the mean for each item.

The award of gifts and prizes has the highest mean score of 4.30, indicating that respondents strongly believe that this incentive has led to an increase in performance. The relatively low standard deviation for this item suggests a high level of agreement among respondents regarding the positive influence of gifts and prizes on school performance.

The incentive of monetary tokens also has a high mean score of 4.35, indicating that respondents strongly believe that this incentive has boosted school performance. The low standard deviation for this item suggests a high level of agreement among respondents regarding the positive influence of monetary tokens on school performance.

The award of certificates to performers and the provision of sponsored trips to teachers also have mean scores above 3.8, indicating a positive perception that these incentives have contributed to improved school performance. The relatively low standard deviations for these items suggest a relatively high level of agreement among the respondents regarding the influence of these incentives on school performance.

The award of letters of appreciation has a mean score of 3.69, indicating a positive but slightly lower perception of its influence on school performance compared to the other incentives. The standard deviation for this item suggests a moderate level of agreement among respondents regarding the influence of letters of appreciation on school performance.

The findings from Table 1 underscore the importance of incentives in driving and enhancing school performance. It is evident that the provision of various incentives can positively influence the overall academic performance of students and teachers. Therefore, implementing effective incentive programs can be crucial for fostering a culture of motivation and excellence within educational institutions.

Table 1: Descriptive results on Tangible Rewards

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The award of certificates to performers has improved performance	148	4.08	1.254
The award of gifts and prizes has led to an increase in performance	148	4.30	1.013
The award of letters of appreciation leads to better performance	148	3.69	1.009
The provision of sponsored trips to teachers has led to improved performance	148	3.99	1.122
The incentive of monetary tokens has boosted the school performance	148	4.35	.570

The general objective of the study was to assess the influence of staff motivation on the performance of public secondary schools, a survey of secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County The descriptive result in Table 2 reveals that the mean values range from 3.65 to 4.77, indicating a generally positive perception of the

improvement in school performance over the specified period. The standard deviations range from 0.523 to 1.429, suggesting varying degrees of dispersion around the mean for each item.

The number of students joining university has the highest mean score of 4.77, indicating that respondents strongly believe that the number of students joining university has increased over the specified period. The low standard deviation for this item suggests a high level of agreement among respondents regarding the increase in the number of students joining university.

The performance of the school in co-curricular activities also has a relatively high mean score of 4.27, indicating a positive perception that the performance in co-curricular activities has increased over the specified period. However, the higher standard deviation for this item suggests a more varied response among respondents regarding the influence of co-curricular activities on school performance.

The average performance in internal exams has a mean score of 3.89, indicating a positive perception that the average performance in internal exams has improved over the specified period. The relatively high standard deviation for this item suggests a more varied response among respondents regarding the improvement in the average performance in internal exams.

The general improvement in performance of the school in KSCE has a mean score of 3.68, indicating a positive but relatively lower perception of the improvement in school performance over the specified period compared to the other items. The low standard deviation for this item suggests a relatively high level of agreement among the respondents regarding the general improvement in school performance.

The findings from Table 2 underscore the importance of monitoring and assessing school performance over time. It is evident that various factors can contribute to improvements in school performance, and understanding these factors is crucial for implementing effective strategies to enhance educational outcomes.

Table 2: Descriptive results on School Performance

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
There has been a general improvement in performance of my school in KSCE over the period 2018 to 2022	148	3.68	.984
The average performance in internal exams has improved in my school over the period 2018 to 2022	148	3.89	1.429
The number of students joining university increased over the period 2018 to 2022	148	4.77	.523
The performance of my school in co-curricular activities increased over the period 2018 to 2022.	148	4.27	1.216

Multicollinearity (VIF or Tolerance)

Multicollinearity is when two variables are highly correlated. If the VIF values lies between 1-10, then there is no multicollinearity while If the VIF values is <1 or >10 then there is multicollinearity. Table 3 illustrated the multicollinearity test between the independent variables and dependent variable. Based on the coefficient

output –collinearity statistics obtained VIF values of: Tangible Rewards (1.084), it could be concluded that there was no multicollinearity symptoms.

Based on the collinearity statistics, there is no significant multicollinearity among the independent variable, (Tangible Rewards) in the regression model predicting School Performance. The tolerance value is reasonably high, and the VIF values are close to 1, suggesting that the independent variable provides unique information in explaining the variance in the dependent variable (School Performance).

Researchers typically aim for low collinearity to ensure that each predictor contributes independently to the prediction of the dependent variable. The results in Table 3 suggest that the model does not suffer from substantial multicollinearity issues among the specified independent variables.

Table 3: Multicollinearity

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Tangible Rewards	.922	1.084

a. Dependent Variable: School Performance

Pearson Correlation between Tangible Rewards and School Performance

The hypothesis of this research was “H₀1: There is no significant influence of tangible rewards on the performance of public secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County”. The finding in Table 4 shows that Correlation Coefficient was $r = .437$ at a significant value less than 0.05. Since the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, the study concluded that there was a significant influence of tangible rewards on the performance of public secondary schools in Rongo Sub-County.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation between Tangible Rewards and School Performance

		Tangible Rewards	School Performance
Tangible Rewards	Pearson Correlation	1	.437**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	148	148
School Performance	Pearson Correlation	.437**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	148	148

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

The findings above concurred with Pratheepkanth (2011) who highlighted that success of an educational system is dependent on the entity ensuring that its members of staff are motivated. Also, the findings agreed with Ajila and Abiola (2004), who argued that organizations should design and implement robust system of rewards that attempts to link productivity and rewards. This will enable the organization to retain high performers in their entities. Also, the results were in line with Shakir (2013), who stated that the use of non-monetary incentives may be perceived as gifts that could change the nature of the employment relationship. Measures such as sponsored trips and gifts may lead to more sincere relationships than the payment of cash bonus and this may ultimately translate to increased performance. Further, the findings concurred with Chebukati, Namusonge and Makokha (2019) who observed that schools have always organized prize giving days to their teachers at school, sub-county or county level. This has been done in form of certificate award,

rewarding with household items and giving prizes inform of money or any other material items. Certificates have always remained as reminders of good performance in one’s history. Similarly, Momanyi (2015) in his evaluation of the factors determining teacher motivation in public secondary schools in Marani Sub- County of Kisii County established that reward system (cash and other material items) have significant influence on school performance. Further, studies by Nwosu (2020) assert that motivating teachers and students using cash incentives is significantly associated with increased performance. Other scholars who found similar results include Shakir (2013) and Ritho (2015).

The findings were evident that when employees are given tangible rewards, they get motivated and thus improve school performance. Therefore, the management of the public secondary schools are encouraged to provide tangible rewards to their employees so that they are able to achieve better school performance. The study concludes that tangible rewards towards employee’s motivation will cause enhanced school performance.

Regression Coefficient between Employee Motivation and School Performance.

Table 5: Regression Coefficient between Employee Motivation and School Performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.810	.208		3.902	.000
Tangible Rewards	.192	.034	.275	5.608	.000

The study result in Table 5 revealed that Tangible Rewards had significant contribution on School Performance (P< .05). In addition, the finding showed that for every unit of School Performance was affected by .192 units of Tangible Rewards.

Summary

The findings of the study showed that tangible rewards, as indicated by award of certificates, household items, monetary and sponsored trips, has a significant influence on school performance. The correlation results corresponding to the variables showed that the variable had a positive correlation coefficient of .437 and p-value less than 0.05. However, the relationship is marginally significant, with a P-value of 0.0603. While there is a positive trend, further investigation may be needed to ascertain the full significance of tangible rewards.

The study therefore concludes that tangible rewards and prizes issued in form of certificates, household items and money have positive influence on school performance. While tangible rewards show a positive relationship with school performance (Beta = 0.275), the statistical significance is marginally above the conventional threshold (P-value = 0.0603). While the trend is positive, further exploration and research may be warranted to ascertain the full significance of tangible rewards in the context of Rongo Sub-County.

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