



Influence of Head Teachers' Motivational Strategies on Teachers' Performance in Public Primary Schools in Mashuuru Sub-County, Kajiado County, Kenya

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17149869>

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the Influence of Head Teachers' Motivational Strategies on Teachers' Performance in Public Primary Schools in Mashuuru Sub-County, Kajiado County, Kenya. This study contends that effective application of motivational strategies by head teachers plays a crucial role and serves as a major determinant of improved teacher performance. Grounded in Fredrick Herzberg Two-Factor Theory, the study examined how head teachers' recognition, facilitation of in-service training, involvement of teachers in decision-making, and provision of incentives impacts teachers' performance. Mixed-method approach was used, specifically convergent mixed method design, qualitatively; phenomenology design and quantitatively; cross-sectional survey design. The study targeted 93 schools, 555 teachers, and 93 head teachers with a sample 28 schools, 166 teachers, and 28 head teachers selected using stratified, simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Data from teachers were collected using questionnaire, while interview was conducted with head teachers. The findings revealed that head teachers' motivational strategies improve teacher performance but are poorly implemented. However, challenges such as lack of funding, rigid policies and limited school-level decision-making power were identified. The study recommends that TSC enhance leadership training, MoE and BoM develop clear guidelines on fair recognition, rewards, and teacher support, and policymakers revise rigid policies. The government to allocate funds specifically to support school-level motivational programs.

Keywords: Motivational strategies, teachers' performance, public primary schools, Kenya

Citation:

Orpiay, F. T., Wambiya, P., & Piliyesi, E. (2025). Influence of Head Teachers' Motivational Strategies on Teachers' Performance in Public Primary Schools in Mashuuru Sub-County, Kajiado County, Kenya. *Journal of Africana Articles*, 3(32), 1-19.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17149869>



Introduction

Teachers all around have essential resources for making sure that the educational process proceeds smoothly and that an institution meets its objectives. According to Apochi and Awoyeye (2022), the school is a replica of society and a center for society created to help citizens develop their inherent talents for the long-term, sustainable growth and development of both their local community and the wider world. In order to provide students with content that ultimately helps them reach their educational objective, teachers utilize their own expertise in addition to outside resources, such as books. Since education increases personal potential, fosters social mobility, and stimulates economic growth, it is a potent catalyst for social-economic transformation. Dhanda (2024) emphasizes that education is a fundamental human capital essential for adapting to global development challenges. The study highlights that providing quality education and training to all individuals, regardless of background, empowers them to acquire skills that reduce poverty and social inequality. This aligns with the goals of the Education 2030 Agenda, which strives to ensure accessible, high-quality education for everyone, (Smith and Johnson, 2023). The successful realization of this ambition depends on having educators who are well-prepared, fairly compensated, and motivated, (Thompson et al. 2021). Nevertheless, Garcia and Lee, (2022) observed that current global trends indicate a decline in teacher enthusiasm, which has contributed to an increasing shortage of qualified personnel. Andrews and Baker (2024), emphasize that teacher motivation is a key determinant of instructional quality and student achievement. As such, tackling declining motivation among educators is essential to maintaining high educational standards and improving learning outcomes across diverse educational systems worldwide.

Motivation is a fundamental concept in educational and organizational contexts. It is commonly described as the psychological process that initiates, directs, and sustains goal-directed activity (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2020). The collection of energy forces from the outside and within that initiate and establish the course, level of intensity, and length of behavior related to the workplace is known as motivation in workplace (Latham, 2023). Teacher motivation, according to Nsubuga and Musika (2023), is what propels educators to stay dedicated to their work and to always look for new and improved ways to improve student learning and professional development.

Eton et al. (2019) describe teacher performance as the extent to which teachers deliver a quality learning experience that enables students to fully develop their abilities, perform effectively in assigned tasks, and consistently demonstrate professionalism. According to Russamsi et al. (2020), teacher work performance refers to the demonstrated accomplishments that indicate how effectively a teacher executes their duties within the instructional process, including the preparation of lesson plans, facilitation of learning activities, and administration of assessments and evaluations.

Due to inadequate incentive and motivational systems, both high- and low-income nations struggle to find and keep qualified teachers (Crehan, 2016; World Bank, 2018). Due to higher student enrollment rates, teachers in many low-income nations are dealing with growing student-teacher proportions and worsening working circumstances. (UNESCO IICBA, 2017; World Bank, 2018). Lack of leadership support, subpar living conditions, an absence of accountability, or violence in schools are additional factors that undermines the motivation of instructors, (TTF, 2016; World Bank, 2018; UNESCO 2018b). As a result, they can cause greater absence of teachers and loss, that is, similar to students being taught less time (Ramachandran et al., 2018).



An important variable in job performance is motivation. Employees that are both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated will serve their employers and clients with great efficiency and effectiveness (Practices, 2020). Both intrinsic and extrinsic teacher motivation are now crucial components in helping students acquire new information and abilities. Behavior, performance, and well-being at work are all positively impacted by intrinsic motivation, which can come from within the individual or from the activity itself (Filgona et al 2020). The achievement of externally administered incentives, such as compensation, material belongings, status, and favorable evaluations, among others, is the cause of extrinsic motivation. Schunk and DiBenedetto (2020) noted that intrinsic motivation occurs when individuals participate in an activity out of genuine interest or personal challenge, rather than for external rewards or approval.

The ability of teachers to execute their responsibilities effectively is largely influenced by the support and encouragement provided by school leadership. According to Hossein and Tajpour (2020), one of the most critical responsibilities of an organizational leader is to enhance the job efficiency of their staff. Zhao and Xie (2020) points out that the leader's job is to help followers become competent and to give them chances to grow in anticipating every opportunity and challenge at work. Muriithi and Mwaura (2023) highlights that head teachers who demonstrate elevated levels of motivation are probably going to implement effective leadership strategies that inspire teachers to remain committed, innovative, and productive in their roles. Furthermore, Wamalwa et al, (2022) emphasizes that a motivated school leader fosters collaboration, promotes professional development, and ensures that teachers feel valued and empowered, all of which support better performance and job satisfaction.

Lack of motivation, on the other hand, can result in disengagement, less effort, and a lack of initiative. Workers who feel underappreciated or unchallenged may stop contributing to the success of the company, make more mistakes, or even quit. Kipkoech and Kyalo (2023) reported that teachers who do not receive encouragement or recognition from their head teachers often exhibit low morale, reduced job satisfaction, and decreased commitment to teaching. A decline in motivation may result in worse instruction, higher absenteeism, and even teacher turnover. Similarly, Mwangi and Muthee (2022) argue that inefficient methods of leadership, like not receiving feedback, minimal involvement in professional development, and poor interpersonal relationship, significantly diminish teachers' drive to perform well, ultimately affecting student learning outcomes.

Globally, a study by Yamin and Nawaz (2023) was conducted in Pakistan to Investigate the Motivational Techniques Employed by Head teachers to Enhance the Academic Performance of Secondary School Teachers in Lahore Division. According to report, the school heads' positive motivational strategies enhance the teachers' performance. The motivation strategies may be extrinsic or intrinsic, where by extrinsic motivational strategies include improving environment and workload, as intrinsic motivation includes remuneration, recognition, prestige and career development

In China, Chen et al. (2022) explored on the Impact of Working Environment on the Well-being of Teachers in China's Private Colleges. Findings from the survey indicated that the overall well-being of the teachers is rated at a moderate level. While work independence, chances for training and growth, evaluation comments guides, and social assistance from managers and fellow workers are valuable resources that enhance their well-being, the primary negative impacting factors are performance assessment, the academic foundation of students and the pressure of research.



In Indonesia, Guntur (2023) examined on the Influence of Incentives and Motivation on Teacher Performance with Supervision as a Moderating Variable at Serang city. This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach using questionnaires administered to 95 teachers. This study revealed that both incentives and motivation, in conjunction with supervision, have a positive and statistically significant impact on teacher performance. The findings affirm that structured encouragement, when paired with proper oversight, enhances educators' effectiveness in instructional roles.

Also, Hiolin & Billones (2019) assessed the Influence of the Principals' Motivational Strategies on Teachers' Job Performance in Secondary Schools in Philippine. Results demonstrated that teachers' performance is largely affected by principal's motivating tactics, and efficiency of teachers is greatly impacted by guided counseling and rewards.

A study that was carried out in Canada by Sokal, Trude, and Babb (2021), that examined the Factors Associated with Burnout and Low Organizational Commitment in Canadian Teachers during the Second Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The findings revealed that, recognition is necessary to boost teacher motivation and job contentment. When Canadian educators receive both official and informal credit for their accomplishments, they express greater contentment at work and a decreased possibility of burnout.

Tonga et al. (2022) assessed on the Professional Development of Teachers in PISA Achiever Countries: Finland, Estonia, Japan, Singapore and China. According to the results, giving educators regular chances for professional growth significantly boosts their motivation. Teachers who participate in career advancement feels more satisfied with their jobs and being more dedicated to improving their methods.

In UK, Sudibjo, Akmal and Nasution (2020) explored Effect of Work Environment, Work Motivation, and Organizational Culture in Influencing Teachers' Performance. Results of the investigation demonstrated that the work setting, motivation, and organizational norms all enhances teachers' performance. When the work setting is enhanced, teachers will feel more at ease and perform better since they will feel secure working in the school setting. Additionally, the presence of praise from head teachers or superiors for their accomplishments can boost their enthusiasm at work.

Lin and Gao (2023), conducted a study on exploring the Predictors of Teachers' Teaching Autonomy: A three-level international study. The results demonstrated that giving teachers more freedom to make decisions for the school increases their sense of commitment to their work. Teachers are urged to adopt innovative instructing techniques, work together, and take part in decision-making procedure at the school level in these nations because managers foster an atmosphere of empowerment and confidence. Because they believe they have more control over their job, teachers who feel more autonomous are more motivated and engaged.

In Africa, a study conducted in Cameroon by Shalanyuy and Haji (2022), The study found that the supervisory methods used by head of schools, motivational strategies, and professional development initiatives significantly affected teachers' job performance. These results led to the recommendation that school administration support teacher in-service training, raise teacher pay, and foster a positive learning environment.

A study done in Uganda by Musoba (2020), explored on The Relationship between Remuneration and Teachers' Performance in Private Secondary Schools in Buikwe District. According to results, teachers' pay and level of performance was good, but weren't exceptional. It was recommended that the founders and administrators of schools work harder to fulfill their



primary responsibilities of instructing, mentoring, and evaluating students as well as involving them in extracurricular activities. Additionally, as pay has a beneficial impact on performance, school founders should acknowledge the hard work of their teachers by giving them additional pay for the work they do. Recommendations were aimed at school founders rather than managers, who often decide how to pay staff and set regulations for their institutions. Also, Willium (2018), explored on the Impact of Remuneration and the Performance of Teachers in Selected Private Schools in Eastern Division Tororo District. The findings demonstrated that teacher pay had an impact on their performance, raising it and enhancing their efficiency and production. In light of the disparities in the private secondary school incentive systems, this study suggests that compensation be taken into account following a thorough assessment of its effects on the recipient.

In Nigeria, a study conducted in Abuja by Adam (2024) which examined the Relationship between Principals' Motivational Strategies and the Job Performance of Junior Secondary School Teachers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). According to the results among other factors, a substantial association exists between junior secondary school teachers' job performance and the techniques for motivation used by principals. Considering the findings, it was suggested that principals should participate in leadership development programs centered on effective motivational techniques, that those who plan curricula should work with lawmakers to remove administrative barriers to efficacy of teachers, that curriculum planners prioritize the development of teachers, and that supportive school climates be promoted by encouraging teachers to work together. Also, Uzokife and Mbonu (2023) investigated Principals' Management Strategies for Effective Teachers' Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Anambra State, Nigeria. The findings demonstrated that the principals' staff development, training, supervision, and motivational strategies had an effect on teacher performance in public senior high schools. Performance of teachers on the job in management of public senior secondary schools in Anambra State was significantly impacted by the principals' management techniques. Rewards also play a significant part in motivating teachers, professional growth, supervisor support, student performance, student involvement, recognition of diligence, attractive compensation, and benefits can also help teachers stay motivated and perform at their best. Teachers would not mind being sent for training in the field as a sort of recognition, according to the study, which said that awards should be viewed as a means of acknowledging a teacher's work that goes beyond financial rewards.

Furthermore, Pascal and Tangi (2022), conducted a study on Influence of School Heads' Motivational Practices on Teachers' Job Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in Igunga District, Tabora. According to report, one of the obstacles that teachers at public secondary schools' A study conducted in Tanzania by Peter (2019), on the Relationship between Job Satisfaction and Job Performance among University Academic Staff. Outcomes revealed an association between university academic staff work satisfaction and recognition, compensation, and promotions. Recognizing the efforts of academic personnel in universities is necessary to motivate them, which improves their job performance and the university's overall success. encounter is absence of motivation at their workstations, which includes a lack of job recognition. Mnjokava (2024), conducted a study on the Influence of School Heads' Motivation Strategies on Teachers' Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Arusha Region. Data showed that low CSEE performance was caused by many teachers' inability to finish the curriculum on time, which was partially caused by insufficient motivational techniques used by school administrators.



In Kenya, a study was conducted by Ochuka (2019), on Influence of Head Teachers' Motivational Practices on Teachers' Performance in Public Primary Schools in Kisumu West Sub-County. The results of the study found that while facilities provided by head teachers inspired most teachers, their distribution of materials demotivated them. Most Teachers voiced their displeasure over their absence of promotion recommendations and credit for their efforts. Also on the matter of inclusion in decision making head teachers have been found with the tendency of not involving teachers when it comes to some important matters that should be discussed and make decision as a staff. The researcher advised those involved in education to make sure that schools have resources needed for instruction and learning. Head teachers must develop methods for identifying teachers, properly propose worthy instructors for promotions, and be attentive to their proposals for achieving meaningful performance. Thirugi and Nyakundi (2023), conducted a study on the Influence of Principals' Provision of Motivational Strategies on Teacher Productivity in Public Secondary Schools in Machakos county. The study outcomes suggested that there was a need to adjust social reward, material reward, extrinsic motivation, and provision of financial reward for better teacher productivity in schools. Furthermore, Omwacha, Kara and Mutisya (2025), examined on the Work Environment and Job Satisfaction among Public Primary School Teachers in Narok Central Division. The research findings showed that teachers' workload was slightly above average and possessing a significant but weak connection to job contentment. Rotich, Manduku and Ngeno (2023), carried out research to figure out the nexus between Teachers' remuneration and contentment at work. Pay was fair for the work performed and compared to other school employees. Despite this, respondents felt the remuneration was inadequate relative to workloads, departmental expectations, and opportunities in the private sector. According to the results, teachers' pay significantly and favorably affected their contentment at work. Comparing remodeling compensation to other departments and the private sector was suggested by the study.

Evidence suggests that head teachers' motivational strategies have an effect on instructors' performance, either favorably or unfavorably, and this may even have an effect on students' performance. Different researchers globally, regionally and in Kenya have done research on the Head Teachers' intrinsic and extrinsic motivational practices and there has been mixed findings on these practices that head teachers used in motivating teachers and this brings misinterpretation as each researcher come up with different conclusion. This shows that the researchers are not straightforward that which motivational strategies can be employed by head teachers so as to impact teachers to perform their work well. This is the foundation upon which a researcher is prompted to investigate on the Influence of Head Teachers' Motivational Strategies on Teachers' Performance in Mashuuru Sub-County, Kajiado County.

Statement of the Problem

In pursuit of an outstanding education, teacher motivation and performance were critical determinants of learner achievement. As instructional leaders, head teachers played an important part in creating workplace culture and affecting teacher productivity by putting effective motivational techniques into practice. Ideally, head teachers should employ motivational strategies that are responsive, inclusive, and tailored to the professional and personal needs of teachers, thereby creating a supportive school environment where teachers feel valued, satisfied, and committed to excellence in teaching.



However, in Mashuuru Sub-County, public primary schools continued to experience challenges such as low teacher morale, low job satisfaction, resistance to change and innovation, and feelings of neglect and discouragement. These issues raised concerns among stakeholders in the educational field, particularly teachers in Mashuuru Sub-County, who reported their dissatisfaction during school meetings that the tactics utilized by head teachers for motivating teachers were not succeeding in improving their performance. If these challenges are not addressed, the consequences may include continued decline in teacher productivity, poor learner outcomes, increased teacher absenteeism or turnover, and ultimately, the erosion of education quality within the sub-county.

Several investigations were conducted on the Influence of Head Teachers' Motivational Practices on Teachers' Teaching Performance (Ochuka, 2019; Thirugi & Nyakundi, 2023; Mnjokava, 2024). However, this study had not been conducted in Mashuuru Sub-County, Kajiado County. This study was intended to examine the Influence of Head Teachers' Motivational Strategies on Teachers' Performance in Public Primary Schools in Mashuuru Sub-County, Kajiado County. Therefore, this research filled the existing gap.

Research question

(i) How does the provision of incentives by head teachers influence teachers' performance in public primary schools?

Theoretical Framework

Fredrick Herzberg Two-Factor Theory

In the field of motivation theory, Herzberg is frequently regarded as a pioneer. His motivator-hygiene theory, sometimes known as the two-factor theory of satisfaction at work, claims that motivators and hygiene or maintenance factors are two sets of factors that affect people. The hygienic elements stood in for the physiological demands that people want and anticipate being satisfied. Pay, administrative and job rules, physical work conditions, supplemental advantages, relationships with others, and stability in the workplace are some of these element. The absence of hygiene factors can reduce motivation, but they won't motivate. These employment variables are vital to the existence of motivation at work. They don't acquire long-term favorable contentment. If these factors are absent or insufficient at work, dissatisfaction develops. Satisfiers, another name for motivational factors, are elements affecting the way a work is performed. These aspects are fundamentally satisfying to employees. Psychological requirements that were viewed as an additional benefit and were represented by the motivators. Motivational aspects are intrinsic to employment and produce positive fulfillment. These influences inspire staff members to work more. Recognition, a feeling of achievement, opportunities to grow and advance, accountability, and the significance of the work are some of these elements. Maslow's five levels of needs were reduced by Herzberg into two distinct levels.

Herzberg contends that humans have two fundamental needs, the drive to survive and prevent suffering, and a passion for learning, advance, and grow. When motivating factors are involved in the workplace in a positive way, employees feel fulfilled. When motivational factors are either nonexistent or present in an unpleasant manner, employees will not feel fulfilled. As a result, when these hygienic aspects are lacking or insufficient in a work environment, employees start to



feel dissatisfied, but when they are there, their satisfaction is apparent. (Oloo, 2022; Teklemariam, 2009).

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory contributes significantly to this study by providing a theoretical foundation to understand how various motivational strategies employed by head teachers can either enhance teacher satisfaction and performance (motivators) or reduce dissatisfaction and maintain baseline morale (hygiene factors). The theory aids in analyzing the extent to which head teachers' practices influence the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational needs of teachers, thereby affecting their teaching effectiveness in public primary schools.

Review of Empirical Studies

Globally, in China, Shansan, (2024), carried out a mixed-method study examine on the Impact of Incentive Factors on the Teachers' Performance among Private Higher Institution. According to the research, non-monetary elements like opportunities for career progression and recognition are also helpful in raising performance and job satisfaction, even though monetary rewards are still a major motivator for teachers. To ensure clarification of the complex connection between the performance of teachers and incentive factors, this study offers important information that Chinese private universities can use to develop evidence-based plans for maximizing teacher engagement, output, and overall institutional efficacy. Beyond the academic realm, these findings have practical consequences for policymakers and educational stakeholders, providing them with suggestions to cultivate an atmosphere that is conducive to teaching and creative thinking in private higher education field. The current study dealt with public primary schools unlike the previous study which dealt with higher institutions.

In Indonesia, a quantitative study was done by Yuliyanti, Sudjanto and Santosa, (2020), to ascertain the Effect of Incentives and Motivation on the Performance of Teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Swatsa in North Jakarta City. The findings demonstrated that rewards had a direct impact on motivation as well as beneficial impact of motivation on performance of teachers. Providing adequate incentives to teachers caused a rise in motivation of private Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers in North Jakarta. Giving teachers more incentives in schools is therefore one way to boost their motivation for their work. Both tangible and non-material incentives can be used as the actual incentive. The more incentive offered, the more motivated the teacher will be to do their best work.

In Africa, a quantitative study was done by Flavia, (2024), to examine the Effect of Non-Financial Incentives on Teachers' Performance in Selected Government Aided Secondary Schools in Sheema Municipality District in Uganda. This study found that non-financial incentives given to the teachers including giving them opportunities for career development, allowing flexible work arrangements, provision of meals of the teachers, employee involvement and empowerment, giving teachers leadership opportunities and giving teachers accommodation facilities increases teachers' performance. It was found out that there was strong cause and effect link between the entities in question. This study recommended that that school administrators should always keep a cordial relationship with the teachers they work with; government should put up strategies, for example, constructing modern houses to ensure that staff accommodation/ houses is conducive and adequate. The present study was conducted in public primary schools not secondary schools as previous study.



In Tanzania, Makule and Otieno (2024), a mixed technique approach was used in investigation assessing the Influence of Incentives on Teachers' Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Arusha City. According to finding of the study aspects that affect offering of incentives include community support, teacher productivity, government financial support, efficient school management, and a positive school climate. Additionally, secondary school teachers' performance is greatly impacted by incentives. since they encourage longer workdays, lower stress levels, increase productivity, and foster motivation and appreciation The report claims that, the authorities of Arusha City's public secondary schools concentrate on retaining and improving high-impact incentives including paid time off, better working conditions, and work advancements. These are essential for sustaining and encouraging teachers.

Despite the geographical difference also public primary schools served as the study's locations. Kassim (2022), research investigated the role of Non-Monetary Incentives on Teachers' Job Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Ilemela District. Results of investigation demonstrated that, in spite of wide variety of incentives available, non-monetary rewards are essential for supporting the success of teachers in their careers. Additionally, the study found that incentives to encourage work to perform effectively include the provision resources for teaching and learning, staff housing, food, transportation as well as medical care. The study suggests that non-monetary rewards for teachers' job satisfaction have to be enhanced. The government must also provide administrative training to school administrators on how to elevate the efficiency of teachers' delivery.

In Kenya, Malebe, Nyabisi and Ochieng, (2023) used qualitative design to determine that Influence of Provision of Incentives by Head Teachers on Teachers Work Performance in Public Primary Schools in Nakuru County. According to data, work output from primary school teachers in public institutions, is significantly impacted by incentives offered by head of schools.

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in the present research, and the geographical location was different from the prior study's qualitative design, which created a research gap. Also, a quantitative study was done by Ndiragu and Mungai, (2024), to investigate the Influence of Principals' Financial Incentives and Exceptional Performance Recognition on Teachers' Work Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya. The data demonstrated that the monetary rewards and praise that teachers receive have an effect on their work efficiency. Given that associations shown are noteworthy in terms of statistics, analysis concludes that work performance of teachers is positively influenced by monetary incentives and recognition. As a motivational strategy, the report advises principals to think about implementing financial rewards. Teachers can be effectively motivated by principals to perform well in their positions by providing monetary incentives like performance-based bonuses. To gather comprehensive data, the current study employed a mixed approach.

Research Design and Methodology

The researcher used mixed method design specifically convergent design. Gay, Mills, and Alrasian (2018) noted that the design choice relies on the idea that both quantitative and qualitative data offer distinct forms of information, such as statistical information from quantitative instruments and a detailed description of the phenomenon from qualitative instruments, which together produce complementary results. Using convergent design, quantitative method employed cross-sectional design and qualitative method employed phenomenology design. Creswell (2018), identified that cross-sectional design is a quantitative research approach that entails collecting data from a population or a sample at a single location in time. The data is collected at one specific



moment, providing a snapshot of the variables being studied. A cross-sectional survey design was used to collect quantitative data from teachers as it allowed the researcher to obtain a broad view of how head teachers' motivational strategies influenced teaching performance across different schools. Creswell (2018) stated that phenomenology is a qualitative research design focused on exploring and understanding individuals' lived experiences of a particular phenomenon. It centers on how individuals experience phenomenon in their everyday lives. The phenomenological design was used to collect qualitative data from head teachers, enabling the researcher to explore their lived experiences and perceptions regarding the motivational strategies they employ.

The target population of this study was 93 public primary schools, 93 head of schools and 555 teachers. This study targeted teachers and head teachers because they are the key stakeholders involved in the dynamics of school motivation and performance. Head teachers are the originators of motivational strategies, while teachers are the ones whose performance is directly impacted. Including both groups enabled the researcher to gather complementary insights, which enhanced the depth, relevance, and validity of the study's findings.

To acquire both qualitative and quantitative information on the topic of study, the researcher utilized questionnaires and in-depth interviews. In terms of money and time, these instruments are similarly inexpensive. To gather information from the teachers for this study, semi-structured questionnaires were employed. A semi-structured interview guide was used to navigate conversations with head teachers.

Questionnaire and interview guide instrument were tested, whereby the researcher tested it within two public primary schools. Among schools in the sample, these two were not present. Questionnaires were filled by five teachers and interview guide by two head teachers respectively, provided feedback on any difficulties or ambiguities they encountered. The participant feedback helped in some modification to increase clarity, structure, and relevance of items.

Content validity was established by presenting the questionnaire and interview guide to two supervisors from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), who evaluated whether the instruments adequately represented the intended constructs. Face validity was used to ensure that the questionnaire and interview items appeared relevant, clear, and appropriate to both experts and participants. Criterion validity was employed to assess how well the study's instruments aligned with established benchmarks or existing validated tools. This provided empirical support for the accuracy and predictive value of the measurements, ensuring the findings were consistent with accepted standards in the field.

Reliability was assessed through a pilot test and statistical analysis. The internal consistency of questionnaires was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, with a coefficient of 0.7 set as the benchmark for acceptable reliability (Middleton, 2023). For qualitative tools, reliability was reinforced through member checking, where respondents reviewed transcripts to confirm accuracy, and triangulation techniques to ensure uniformity in coding (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). These approaches minimized errors and enhanced consistency across instruments, confirming their credibility and appropriateness for gathering dependable data to address the study's research questions.

Triangulation and member checking were used to assure qualitative validity. The researcher applied source triangulation by collecting data from different participant groups using different methods: head teachers participated in in-depth interviews, while teachers completed structured questionnaires. This combination of data sources allowed for cross-validation of information, enabling the researcher to identify consistent themes and patterns across the different groups.



Member checking was utilized to enhance credibility, which involves accurately representing participants' views. After the interviews with head teachers were conducted and transcribed, the researcher returned summaries of the responses to the participants to confirm their accuracy and interpretation.

The data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Researcher coded computer using SPSS, Version 26 after putting the quantitative data into homogenous categories and removing any inaccurate data. Tables of frequencies were employed to display quantitative data. In accordance with the study questions, qualitative information gathered from the interview guide was arranged into themes. Qualitative findings were shown using direct quotes and narrative.

Prior to data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) postgraduate studies department, and a research permit was secured from NACOSTI. Approval to conduct research in selected schools was granted by school heads and the Sub-County Education Director. Participants were provided with a clear overview of the study, and informed consent was obtained. Participation was voluntary, with assurances that there was no coercion from peers or superiors. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained through data anonymization, secure storage of personal information, and the use of pseudonyms. The researcher was sensitive to participants' privacy and dignity, avoiding intrusive questions and being mindful of power dynamics, especially when interviewing head teachers. All sources were properly cited using APA style to avoid plagiarism, and the data reported was accurate, with no falsification. The researcher was sensitive to participants' privacy and dignity, avoiding intrusive questions and being mindful of power dynamics, especially when interviewing head teachers. All sources were properly cited using APA style to avoid plagiarism, and the data reported was accurate, with no falsification.

PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Instrument Return rate

Table 2

Instrument Return Rate

	N/ administered	N/ collected	Return rate (%)
Head teachers	28	26	92
Teachers	166	150	90
Total	194	176	Average= 91

Source: Field data (2025)

As displayed in table 2, study target had a target of 194 respondents. Questionnaires were distributed to 166 teachers and 150 were successfully filled and returned which represented a response percentage of 90%. Interview was administered to 26 out of 28 head teachers which indicated a 92% response percentage. However, there was some gaps in response percentage of both head teachers and teachers. Percentage of responses was less by 8% for head teachers and 10% for teachers. Two head teachers were not in school as they went for games activities and some questionnaires were returned unfilled, while some respondents reported to have misplaced them. Creswell (2018) points out that a high response rate lowers the likelihood of bias from nonresponse and enhances generalizability of findings. Table 2 indicates that exceptionally high rates of both



quantitative and qualitative responses were seen, above 70% level that is considered very satisfactory for analysis and reporting. Considering the statement, the study's 91% response percentage is outstanding.

Head Teachers' Provision of Incentives to Teachers and Teachers' Performance

This question examined on how head teachers' incentives influenced performance of their teachers in Mashuuru Sub-County public primary schools. A rating system with five points was chosen to ask the teachers to select the response that best reflected how they felt. The following were the ratings: strongly disagreeing, disagreeing, agreeing, strongly agreeing, and undecided. In Table 8, the results are displayed.

Table 8

Responses of Teachers on Head Teachers Provision of Incentives to Teachers (n=150)

STATEMENT	SD		D		UN		A		SA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Head teacher regularly provides incentives to recognize teachers' good performance.	85	(56.7)	30	(20)	9	(6)	7	(4.7)	19	(12.7)
Incentives from the head teacher motivates me to improve my teaching efforts.	80	(53.3)	39	(26)	10	(6.7)	13	(8.7)	8	(5.3)
I feel value when my work is acknowledged through incentives.	04	(2.7)	04	(2.7)	03	(2)	44	(29.3)	95	(63.3)
We are given non-monetary incentives that boost my morale at work by the head teachers including certificates, verbal praise etc.	31	(20.7)	34	(22.7)	15	(10)	30	(20)	40	(26.7)
Monetary incentives from the head teachers encourage me to meet performance targets.	63	(42)	36	(24)	13	(8.7)	20	(13.3)	18	(12)
The provision of incentives has led to improve attendance and punctuality among teachers.	55	(36.7)	49	(32.7)	15	(10)	16	(10.7)	15	(10)
I am more committed to my duties when incentives are fairly and consistently awarded.	06	(4)	08	(5.3)	14	(9.3)	28	(18.7)	94	(62.7)



Incentives have contributed to improved collaboration and teamwork among teachers.	61	(40.7)	62	(41.3)	10	(6.7)	10	(6.7)	07	(4.7)
Teacher's job satisfaction has increased as a result of the incentive system in our school.	74	(49.3)	43	(28.7)	05	(3.3)	17	(11.3)	11	(7.3)
The head teacher's use of incentives positively influences overall teacher performance.	09	(6)	11	(7.3)	13	(8.7)	39	(26)	78	(52)

Source: Field data (2025)

Teachers were asked if the head teacher regularly provides incentives to recognize teachers' good performance, strongly disagreeing 56. 7%, disagreeing 20%, 6% remained unsure, accepting 4. 7% and strongly accepting 7%. Data reveals a pervasive perception among features that incentives are a rarely provided by head teachers in recognition of performance as 76. 7% of teachers disagreed. Only 17.4% believe such incentives exist at their schools. This suggests that incentives are not being used effectively as a motivational strategy at the school level. This finding does not agree with the study done by Ndirangu and Mungai (2025) who found that financial rewards and recognition of exceptional performance from school leadership significantly correlated with the higher teacher performances in secondary schools.

On the question whether the incentives from the head teacher motivates them to improve their teaching efforts, strongly disagreed 53.3%, 26% disagreeing, remained unsure 6.7%, agreeing 8.7% and strongly agreeing 5.3%. That trend reveals a strong majority of teachers (nearly 80%) in Mashuuru Sub County do not feel motivated by incentives provided by head teachers. This is seen from the previous report of teachers in item one that the majority of head of schools rarely provide incentives to their teachers. These findings show a critical gap in motivational strategy and amazed opportunity to harness teacher performance through recognition and rewards. Wambui and Njeri (2023) found that lack of recognition and poorly structured incentive systems discouraged teachers directly the lowering morale and classroom performance. Teachers reported being more motivated when incentives were clear, fair, and consistently applied.

Teachers who are also asked whether they feel valued when their work is acknowledged through incentives, 2. 7% strongly rejected, 2. 7% rejected, 2% remained unsure, 29. 3% accepting and the 63.3% strongly accepting. From the results, the overwhelming agreement (92. 6%) shows that teachers deeply value recognition through incentives and that such acknowledgment significantly enhances their sense of being appreciated. This was proved by one of the head teachers who said that;

"Incentives play a vital role in enhancing teacher motivation and the commitment. When teachers are recognized and rewarded for their hard work it boosts their morale and reinforces a sense of value and purpose. This recognition encourages them to go above and beyond in lesson delivery, student engagement and professional development". (HT6: 11/07/2025)

Despite earlier data indicating that head teachers in Mashuuru Sub County rarely provide incentives, this finding suggests that teachers still highly desire and respond positively to incentive based acknowledgment. This is backed up by Kintu et al. (2023) who disclosed that recognition



incentives, such as, "teacher of the month" awards, increased teachers' morale and reduced absenteeism. Most teachers reported that being appreciated motivated them to teach better.

Teachers were also asked if they are given non-monetary incentives by the head teacher and that boost their morale at work, 20. 7% strongly condemned, 22. 7% condemned, 15% remained unsure, 20% accepted and 40% strongly accepted. The responses revealed a divided trend in the provision and effectiveness of non-monetary incentives in Mashuuru Sub County. This indicates inconsistency in how teachers apply non-monetary incentives. While some teachers (60%) feel acknowledged and motivated through verbal praise, certificates and the similar methods, others (43. 4%) feel these are not insufficient or absent. This inconsistency affects the overall effect of motivational practices on teacher performance and morale. Oduor et al (2020) emphasized that non-monetary incentives are particularly crucial where financial rewards are a limited, acting as low cost yet high impact motivational tools.

On the other question regarding whether monitoring incentives from the head teachers encourage them to meet performance target: 42% strongly objected, 24% objected, 8. 7% remained neutral, 13. 3% agreeing and 12% strongly agreeing. From this data, 66% of teachers do not feel motivated by monetary incentives from the head teacher, likely due to their infrequency, inadequacy or absence. Only 25.5% of teachers expressed that search incentives do and courage performance, while 8. 7% were undecided. This was confirmed by one of the teachers and open-ended question and said that, *"As a teacher, I never got monetary incentive from my head teacher but I receive verbal praise and thank you notes and even the provision of tea during break time, this makes me feel valued"*. This agrees with the study done by Munene and Kisilu (2021) who found that monetary incentives were rare due to budget constraints, and where offered they were often too minimal significantly impact performance.

Teachers were also asked if the provision of incentives has led to improve attendance and punctuality among teachers, 36. 7% strongly disagreeing, 32. 7% disagreeing, 10% remained neutral, 10. 7% agreeing, and the 10% strongly agreeing. From these results, 69.4% of teachers do not believe incentives are improving their punctuality or attendance, only 20.7% agreed and the 10% remained undecided. These findings indicate that most teachers either do not receive meaningful incentives or the ones given are not effective in influencing basic professional behavior like punctuality and attendance. This agrees with the investigation done by Kimemia et al. (2020) who discovered that where teachers were not given incentives the teachers failed to implement effective incentive programs, teacher discipline metrics like punctuality or negatively affected.

On the other question teachers were asked if they are more committed to their duties when incentives are fairly and consistently awarded, 4% strongly rejected, 5. 3% rejected, 9. 3% remained impartial, concurred 13. 7% and strongly concurred 62. 7%. This results reveals that 81. 4% of teachers agreed, hence most of teachers in Mashuuru Sub county believe strongly that fair and consistent incentives significantly enhance their commitment to duty. It emphasizes that importance of transparent and equitable recognition systems in motivating teachers. This concur with the study by Bola and Yusuf (2022) who emphasized that equity in incentive distribution (non-monetary or otherwise) is crucial in maintaining teachers trust and commitment, especially in public primary schools where financial motivation is limited.

Teachers were also asked if incentives have contributed to improve collaboration and teamwork among teachers, 49. 3% strongly objected, 28. 7% objected, 3. 3% remained unsure, accepted 11.3% and strongly accepted 7.3%. 70% of teachers disagreed, only 18. 6% of teachers agreed and the 3. 3% were undecided. This trend suggests that teachers in Mashuuru sub-county do not



perceive the current incentive practices mainly non-monetary as effective in promoting collaboration or teamwork. The high level of disagreement likely stems from the lack of structured, team based rewards or recognition systems at the school level, especially since most incentives are either individual focused or rarely providing. Ntawiheba et al. (2023) reported that teacher collaboration increased significantly who has implemented team based rewards such as group recognition, team development seminars, and the public acknowledgments during staff meetings.

On the question whether the work contentment of teachers has increased due to the incentive system in their school, 40.7% strongly rejected, 41.3% rejected, remained unsure 6.7%, concurred 6.7% and 4.7% strongly concurred. From the data, there is a negative trend which reflects serious dissatisfaction with the current incentive system across the Sub-County. Teachers do not feel that the incentives provided contribute meaningfully to their job satisfaction, likely due to the absence of monetary rewards, inconsistency, and lack of transparency or minimal recognition efforts. This concur with the investigation of Tella et al. (2021) who reported that teachers' satisfaction was highly dependent on a structured incentive system that recognizes both individual and collective performance and includes both financial and non-financial components.

Finally, teachers were asked whether the head teachers use of incentives positively influences overall teacher performance, 6% strongly disagreeing 7.3% disagreeing, 8.7% remained impartial, 26% accepted and 52% strongly accepted. Most teachers in Mashuru Sub-County perceive incentives as a significant motivational tool that boosts their overall performance, particularly when they are meaningful, consistent and fair. Even though earlier responses showed dissatisfaction with the certain aspects of incentives (like monetary limitations), this result suggest that well delivered non-monetary or informal incentives like praise, recognition, and the certificates are still impactful and appreciated by teachers. Adeyemi (2022) emphasized that positive reinforcement strategies by school heads significantly influence teacher output and commitment. Teachers in schools with the structured incentive practices showed better attendance and instructional delivery.

The head teachers were also asked on the challenges they face on the provision of incentives to teachers and the improvements needed on this strategy: All interviewed head teachers agreed that providing incentives was the most challenging strategy to implement as a result of not having funding and official support system. A certain head of school said that;

"I would love to give teachers transport money or lunch, but I just don't have any extra resources. All our funds go to school operations and learning materials". (HT87: 15/07/2025)

This was given support by other head from another school who emphasized that;

"I wish to provide incentives both monetary and non-monetary, example tea, lunch and transport allowances, but even school basic needs are hard to meet. Some teachers travel long distances daily, yet I can't support them". (HT64: 10/07/2025)

On the issue of improvements in incentive strategy one head teacher commented that;

"To improve our incentive program, we would need more support from the Ministry of Education, Teachers Service Commission (TSC) in terms of budget allocations specifically for teachers' motivation". (HT15: 11/07/2025)

The other head teacher gave out an idea that;

"Support from the Board of Management (BoM) and local stakeholders, such as NGO's or well-wishers, could help us introduce small but meaningful reward like gifts, certificates or appreciation events. These non-monetary incentives may seem small, but they go long way in boosting morale". (HT28: 07/07/2025)



The other head teacher said that;

“We also need flexibility from education authorities to allow schools to design their own locally appropriate incentive model based on available resources and staff needs”. (HT31: 14/07/2025).

Considering the results of the study, current research reveals a disconnect between the high motivational value teachers place on incentives and the limited or absent provision of such incentives in practice. While other studies report positive impacts of incentives, this research shows that in Mashuuru, most teachers do not receive incentives, and those who do often feel they are poorly structured or inconsistently applied.

Despite this, the study reveals a deep yearning among teachers for recognition, whether in monetary or non-monetary form, suggesting an untapped potential for motivation. It also identifies teacher-perceived fairness as crucial in making any incentive system effective, a nuance not deeply explored in previous literature. It is noted that, in resource-constrained settings, non-monetary, well-structured, and fairly applied incentives like “teacher of the month”, travel opportunities, or public praise can serve as powerful levers of performance, even in the absence of formal funds.

CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrated that most teachers believed incentives given by head teachers possess positive impact on their motivation and job performance. Teachers indicated that both monetary and non-monetary incentives serve important motivators, enhancing their morale and commitment to their work. However, most head teachers did not provide any form of monetary incentives to their teachers. Only a few schools offered non-monetary rewards such as verbal praise, public acknowledgement, or certificates of appreciation. This finding suggests a disconnect between the acknowledged value of incentives and the actual practices implemented by head teachers. Without regular and meaningful incentives, teacher may feel undervalued, this can have a detrimental effect on their output and engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Head teachers need to receive training in resource mobilization, leadership, and human resource management to help them provide incentives creatively, even with limited budgets. Government ought to make an allocation of targeted funds to support head teachers in implementing effectively this motivational strategy. The Education Ministry ought to develop clear national guidelines that support school-level motivation frameworks, giving head teachers structured autonomy to implement this strategy. The education policymakers ought to revisit existing education policies to integrate flexible, school-based motivational components.



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