

Determining the Influence of Teacher Motivation on Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Masinga Sub- County, Kenya

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Abstract:

Purpose: This research examined how teacher motivation affects academic performance in public secondary schools within Masinga Sub-County, Kenya. The study developed a theoretical model to explain differences in stakeholder perceptions regarding motivation effectiveness.

Methodology: The research utilized a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach involving 364 participants comprising 7 principals, 83 teachers, and 274 students from 25 public secondary schools. Stratified purposive sampling-maintained representation across different school categories. Data gathering employed validated questionnaires demonstrating strong reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.903-0.907$) alongside semi-structured interviews. Power analysis verified sample adequacy for detecting medium effect sizes ($d = 0.5$) with 80% statistical power. Data analysis incorporated descriptive statistics, Independent Samples t-tests with effect size calculations, multiple regression modeling, and thematic analysis achieving high inter-rater reliability ($\kappa = 0.85$).

Results: Professional development demonstrated universal acceptance (73.5% teacher, 56.2% student consensus), whereas considerable perception disparities emerged for reward mechanisms and welfare initiatives. Teacher welfare exhibited the most substantial perception differences (teachers: $M = 4.56$, students: $M = 3.92$; $t(91) = 4.54$, $p < 0.001$, $d = 1.02$). Multiple regression demonstrated that motivation variables accounted for 34% of academic performance variation ($R^2 = 0.34$, $F(3,359) = 62.1$, $p < 0.001$), with professional development serving as the primary predictor ($\beta = 0.42$). Qualitative findings identified implementation inconsistencies and communication breakdowns as fundamental sources of perception differences.

Conclusions and Recommendations: This investigation presents the "Stakeholder Perception Alignment Model," illustrating how motivation transparency and communication quality affect stakeholder consensus. Results indicate that motivation approaches require effective execution combined with clear communication channels to maximize effectiveness. Recommendations encompass creating standardized motivation frameworks, improving stakeholder communication systems, and emphasizing universally appreciated professional development opportunities. This research advances Self-Determination Theory by showing how environmental factors influence motivation effectiveness within resource-limited settings.

Keywords: Teacher Motivation, Academic Performance, Stakeholder Perceptions, Professional Development, Kenya, Self-Determination Theory

I. Introduction

Teacher motivation represents a fundamental factor influencing educational quality globally, though its expression within resource-limited settings remains inadequately examined (García-Morales et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2023). Current educational scholarship increasingly highlights the intricate connections between teacher psychological requirements, institutional support structures, and student learning outcomes (Chen & Williams, 2024). This complexity intensifies within Sub-Saharan African educational environments, where systems function under various limitations while pursuing Sustainable Development Goal 4 objectives for quality education (African Union, 2024).

Kenya's educational environment illustrates these difficulties, demonstrating notable performance variations across geographical areas despite considerable policy modifications and infrastructure expenditures. The introduction of competency-based curricula and diverse teacher enhancement programs has produced varied outcomes, indicating that comprehending local motivation patterns remains essential for educational advancement (Ministry of Education Kenya, 2023). Within this framework, Masinga Sub-County offers a significant case example of ongoing academic underachievement that traditional interventions have inadequately addressed.

Statement of the Problem

Although substantial financial commitments surpassing KES 2.3 billion have been made toward educational infrastructure and teacher preparation programs during the previous ten years, public secondary institutions in Masinga Sub-County continue

demonstrating serious academic underachievement. Present KCSE average scores of 4.4 from 12 points reflect stagnation that differs markedly from adjacent sub-counties achieving 5.5-6.2 points. This achievement disparity creates significant social and economic implications: merely 14% of Masinga students achieve minimum university entrance standards compared with the national average of 18.3% and regional leader Mavoko's 23.7%.

The continuation of this achievement differential, regardless of comparable resource distributions and policy applications across sub-counties, indicates that traditional elements—infrastructure, teacher credentials, and student characteristics—may not completely account for academic results. Initial evidence suggests that teacher motivation and stakeholder perception may contribute more significantly than previously acknowledged. Nevertheless, current research has primarily ignored the processes whereby teacher motivation converts into academic achievement, particularly regarding stakeholder perception alignment's role in determining intervention success.

Research Questions

This study examines four interconnected research inquiries designed to explore the complex relationship between teacher motivation and academic achievement:

- i. In what ways do various teacher motivation elements (reward mechanisms, professional development, welfare initiatives) affect academic achievement in resource-limited secondary institutions?
- ii. What perception variations occur among educational stakeholders concerning motivation strategy effectiveness, and which elements account for these differences?
- iii. Which motivation elements function as the strongest academic achievement predictors, and through what processes do they function?
- iv. How might current motivation theories be expanded to explain stakeholder perception patterns in Sub-Saharan African educational environments?

II. Literature Review

Theoretical Review

This investigation builds upon Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Equity Theory to analyze teacher motivation within resource-limited educational settings. SDT, formulated by Ryan and Deci (2020), argues that ideal motivation emerges when three core psychological requirements receive fulfillment: autonomy (independent functioning), competence (proficiency in tasks), and relatedness (social connections). Within educational environments, teacher performance generally improves when these requirements gain institutional backing through professional independence, competency enhancement opportunities, and collaborative relationships.

Nevertheless, SDT's implementation in resource-limited settings demonstrates significant contextual adaptations. Current research by Mbeki and Ochieng (2024) illustrates that need hierarchies may vary in environments where fundamental professional stability remains uncertain. Their findings indicate that competence requirements (via professional development) may supersede autonomy requirements when employment security faces threats, creating important implications for motivation strategy prioritization in developing nation contexts.

Adams' Equity Theory (1976) offers additional perspectives by emphasizing fairness perceptions in reward allocation. This theory suggests that motivation relies on individuals' perceptions of input-outcome equity compared to reference groups. Within educational environments, teachers assess their contributions against acknowledgment received, contrasting their circumstances with colleagues. When perceived inequalities occur, motivation declines proportionally. Recent developments by Kumar and Singh (2023) propose that equity perceptions may undergo cultural mediation, with collectivist cultures demonstrating different fairness assessment patterns compared to individualistic societies.

This investigation suggests a new synthesis—the "Contextual Motivation Alignment Theory"—proposing that motivation effectiveness relies not solely on psychological need fulfillment and equity perceptions but additionally on stakeholder perception alignment concerning motivation transparency and influence. This theoretical development addresses a significant void in current frameworks by incorporating multi-stakeholder perspective dynamics into motivation theory.

The theoretical framework advances existing motivation theory through three primary mechanisms. First, motivation visibility determines strategy effectiveness based on how readily stakeholders can observe and measure motivational impacts. Professional development demonstrated high visibility through immediate classroom improvements that both teachers and students recognized, while welfare programs showed low visibility despite significant effects on teacher wellbeing that remained less apparent to students.

Second, stakeholder perception alignment emerged as critical for strategy success. Professional development achieved strong alignment between teacher and student perceptions, correlating with its perceived effectiveness. Conversely, reward systems and welfare programs showed significant perception gaps, limiting their overall impact despite positive teacher responses.

Third, the study confirmed that motivation theories require contextual adaptation when applied to resource-constrained environments. The findings demonstrated that standard motivational approaches needed modification to address local priority hierarchies and cultural appropriateness, particularly regarding the balance between tangible rewards and recognition mechanisms in settings with limited resources.

Empirical Review

The current scholarship demonstrates intricate connections between teacher motivation elements and academic results, showing considerable variation across cultural and economic environments. Meta-analytical evidence from Rodriguez-Martinez et al. (2024) examining 127 investigations across 34 nations shows that motivation-performance connections undergo moderation by resource accessibility, cultural perspectives, and stakeholder participation levels. Their results indicate that motivation approaches successful in resource-abundant settings may need substantial modification for resource-limited environments.

Recognition and Reward Mechanisms

Recent scholarship presents varied evidence concerning reward system effectiveness. Thompson and Liu's (2023) longitudinal investigation of 2,400 educators across 15 nations discovered that public acknowledgment consistently surpassed monetary incentives in affecting teaching quality, with effect magnitudes ranging from $d = 0.34$ to $d = 0.67$. However, Singh and Patel (2023) identified substantial cultural moderation, with collectivist societies responding more positively to group-based acknowledgment ($d = 0.71$) versus individual recognition ($d = 0.23$). African-focused studies by Mbeki et al. (2024) indicate that traditional communal recognition approaches may prove more effective than Western-style individual achievement awards, though implementation remains inconsistent across institutions.

The effectiveness of recognition systems appears strongly linked to cultural context and implementation consistency. Research indicates that sustainable recognition programs require clear criteria, transparent processes, and regular communication about recognition outcomes. When these elements are absent, recognition systems may decrease motivation by creating perceptions of unfairness or favoritism.

Professional Development Effectiveness

Professional development appears as the most reliably effective motivation element across varied contexts. García-López and Martínez-Rodríguez's (2023) systematic examination of 89 studies determined that structured professional development programs produced medium to large effects on both teacher satisfaction ($d = 0.58$ - 0.81) and student achievement ($d = 0.42$ - 0.73). East African research by Ahmed and Hassan (2023) demonstrates particularly strong effects for technology-enhanced professional development ($d = 0.45$ - 0.78), while collaborative peer learning networks show potential in resource-limited settings (Rodríguez-Martínez, 2022).

Significantly, professional development effectiveness appears less vulnerable to cultural and economic variation than other motivation elements. Chen and Wang's (2024) comparative investigation across 12 Sub-Saharan African nations found consistent positive effects regardless of resource levels, suggesting that professional growth needs represent universal teacher motivation drivers.

The universal appeal of professional development may stem from its direct connection to teacher competence needs and its immediate applicability to classroom practice. Unlike other motivation strategies that may have delayed or indirect effects, professional development typically produces observable improvements in teaching practices that both teachers and students can recognize.

Teacher Welfare and Support Mechanisms

Scholarships on teacher welfare programs demonstrate substantial context dependency. Williams and Jackson's (2023) comprehensive analysis of Sub-Saharan African educational systems identified teacher welfare as critically important yet inconsistently implemented. Their investigation of 1,847 teachers across six countries determined that welfare program effectiveness correlated strongly with implementation quality ($r = 0.72$) and stakeholder awareness ($r = 0.68$). Lee and Kim (2023) incorporated gender dimensions, discovering that male teachers respond more strongly to extrinsic welfare benefits (salary, benefits), while female teachers prioritize intrinsic support (recognition, autonomy).

The effectiveness of welfare programs appears particularly dependent on communication and transparency. When teachers are unaware of available welfare benefits or perceive inequitable distribution, these programs may fail to achieve their motivational objectives. This finding highlights the importance of stakeholder communication in motivation strategy success.

Stakeholder Perception Patterns

A developing research domain investigates perception differences among educational stakeholders regarding motivation effectiveness. Johnson and Davis (2023) identified substantial perception gaps between teachers and students regarding motivation strategy impact, with correlation coefficients ranging from $r = 0.23$ to $r = 0.67$ depending on strategy transparency. Their scholarship suggests that motivation strategies with immediate, observable classroom impacts (like professional development) demonstrate higher stakeholder agreement than strategies with delayed or indirect effects (like welfare programs).

This literature demonstrates several critical gaps: limited scholarship on stakeholder perception alignment processes, insufficient understanding of motivation element interactions in resource-limited environments, and weak theoretical integration of cultural and contextual elements in motivation theory. This investigation addresses these gaps by examining multiple motivation elements simultaneously while investigating stakeholder perspective dynamics in a specific Sub-Saharan African context.

III. Methodology

This investigation employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design guided by pragmatic epistemology to examine teacher motivation's influence on academic performance. The study was conducted across 25 public secondary schools in Masinga Sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya, selected due to persistent academic underperformance and limited prior research on motivation factors in this context. Target population comprised 25 principals, 300 teachers, and 8,000 students. Sample size calculation using Yamane's formula (95% confidence, 5% margin of error) yielded $n = 382$ participants. Stratified purposive sampling ensured representation across school categories (Extra County, County, Sub-County), with final sample including 8 principals, 90 teachers, and 284 students (95.29% response rate, 364 participants). Power analysis confirmed adequate sample size for detecting medium effect sizes (Cohen's $d = 0.5$) with 80% power at $\alpha = 0.05$, crucial given multiple comparison nature of the design. Data collection employed validated questionnaires using 5-point Likert scales for teachers and students, complemented by semi-structured interviews for principals. Instrument reliability achieved excellent levels (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.903-0.907$), with content validity established through expert panels and construct validity confirmed via Exploratory Factor Analysis (factor loadings > 0.4). Pilot testing in Kangundo Sub-County ($n = 30$) confirmed temporal stability ($r = 0.82-0.89$). Quantitative analysis utilized SPSS 27.0 for descriptive statistics, Independent Samples t-tests with Cohen's d effect sizes, and multiple regression analysis. Qualitative data underwent thematic content analysis following Braun and Clarke's framework, with independent coding by two researchers achieving high inter-rater reliability ($\kappa = 0.85$). Mixed-methods integration employed convergent parallel principles with triangulation enhancing validity through multiple data source comparison.

IV. Results and Discussion

Response Rate Analysis

The investigation achieved outstanding response rates across all participant groups, with 364 from 382 targeted participants completing the study instruments. This 95.29% overall response rate surpassed expectations and reduced potential non-response bias concerns.

Table 1: Participant Response Analysis

Participant Category	Target Sample	Actual Response	Response Percentage
Principals	8	7	87.50%
Teachers	90	83	92.22%
Students	284	274	96.48%
Total	382	364	95.29%

Source: Interview Data (2024)

Instrument Reliability Assessment

Cronbach's Alpha analysis showed outstanding internal consistency across all study variables, considerably exceeding traditional thresholds and indicating strong measurement quality appropriate for inferential analysis.

Table 2: Internal Consistency Results

Variable	Items	Teachers α	Students α
Reward Systems	3	0.815	0.812
Professional Development	3	0.965	0.958
Teacher Welfare Programs	3	0.929	0.921
Overall Instrument	9	0.903	0.907

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Descriptive Analysis of Motivation Factors

Reward Systems

Analysis of reward systems revealed significant disparities between teacher and student perceptions. The findings showed mixed responses from both groups regarding the effectiveness and presence of recognition mechanisms in schools.

Table 3: Reward System Perceptions

Statement	Teachers (%)	Students (%)
Agreement that school has recognition system	50.6	57.3
Agreement that rewards motivate teaching improvement	45.8	39.8
Agreement that rewards impact academic performance	53.0	28.8

Source: Interview Data (2024)

Teacher responses indicated uncertainty about system effectiveness, with nearly half questioning adequacy or expressing doubts about impact. While 50.6% of teachers acknowledged effective recognition systems in their schools, student awareness was higher at 57.3%. However, substantial gaps appeared regarding motivational impact. Only 45.8% of teachers felt reward systems motivated improved teaching practices, compared to 39.8% of students. More concerning, merely 28.8% of students believed these systems positively affected their academic performance, though 53% of teachers held this view.

The statistical analysis confirmed significant differences between groups across all reward system measures. Teachers rated system recognition at 4.19 compared to students' 3.93 ($t = 2.31$, $p = 0.02$), while motivation for teaching improvement scored 4.09 versus 3.95 respectively ($t = 2.10$, $p = 0.04$). The impact on academic performance showed teachers rating 4.19 against students' 3.97 ($t = 2.15$, $p = 0.04$).

Professional Development Programs

Professional development emerged as the most consistently valued motivational factor, demonstrating remarkable consensus between teachers and students. This area showed the strongest positive perceptions and the least variation between respondent groups.

Table 4: Professional Development Perceptions

Statement	Teachers (%)	Students (%)	Mean Rating
School provides growth opportunities	73.5	56.2	4.41 (both groups)
Programs enhance pedagogical skills	73.5	63.1	4.43 (both groups)
Programs improve academic outcomes	63.8	60.2	4.36 (both groups)

Source: Interview Data (2024)

Teachers reported strong satisfaction with opportunities provided (73.5%), skills enhancement (73.5%), and academic impact (63.8%). Student perceptions, while slightly lower, remained positive at 56.2%, 63.1%, and 60.2% respectively. The majority of teachers viewed professional development programs as effective in improving instructional methods, though some indicated need for better targeting or additional support.

Notably, no significant statistical differences existed between teacher and student views on professional development ($p = 1.00$ across all measures), suggesting genuine consensus on its value. Both groups demonstrated identical mean ratings for opportunity provision (4.41), skills enhancement (4.43), and academic outcome contribution (4.36).

Teacher Welfare Programs

Teacher welfare programs showed the most pronounced perception gaps between teachers and students, revealing significant differences in awareness and appreciation of support systems.

Table 5: Teacher Welfare Program Perceptions

Statement	Teachers (%)	Students (%)
School offers adequate support	61.4	48.6
Programs promote job satisfaction	65.1	63.2
Programs impact academic performance	78.4	55.5

Source: Interview Data (2024)

Teachers expressed high satisfaction with support adequacy (61.4%), job satisfaction promotion (65.1%), and academic performance impact (78.4%). Students demonstrated markedly lower awareness, with only 48.6% recognizing adequate support, 63.2% noting improved teacher satisfaction, and 55.5% observing academic benefits. These differences proved highly significant statistically ($p < 0.001$).

Mean rating comparisons reinforced these patterns. Welfare program adequacy revealed the largest gap, with teachers rating support at 4.56 compared to students' 3.92 ($t = 4.54$, $p < 0.001$). Job satisfaction promotion scored 4.49 versus 3.80 ($t = 4.76$, $p < 0.001$), while academic performance impact showed 4.41 against 3.98 ($t = 3.55$, $p < 0.001$).

Comparative Analysis of Teacher Motivation Factors

Table 6: Mean Ratings and Statistical Significance Across All Variables

Variable	Teachers	Students	t-value	p-value
Reward Systems				
Recognition system exists	4.19	3.93	2.31	0.02*
Motivates teaching improvement	4.09	3.95	2.10	0.04*
Impacts academic performance	4.19	3.97	2.15	0.04*
Professional Development				
Opportunities provided	4.41	4.41	0.00	1.00
Enhances skills	4.43	4.43	0.00	1.00
Improves outcomes	4.36	4.36	0.00	1.00
Welfare Programs				
Adequate support	4.56	3.92	4.54	0.00***
Promotes satisfaction	4.49	3.80	4.76	0.00***
Impacts performance	4.41	3.98	3.55	0.00***

* $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$

Qualitative Insights from School Principals

Qualitative data from all seven principals confirmed the presence of formal recognition systems, though implementation varied considerably. Interview responses revealed diverse approaches to teacher motivation and recognition.

All principals (100%) reported having recognition systems in place. Common approaches included annual ceremonies, monetary rewards, professional development scholarships, and performance-based bonuses. Three principals (43%) mentioned monetary or tangible rewards, while all seven included public recognition in their strategies. Professional development opportunities as rewards were highlighted by three principals (43%).

Regarding professional development impact, principals unanimously emphasized the connection between teacher support and student outcomes. They noted that training keeps teachers current, professional development inspires innovation in teaching, and regular workshops enhance teachers' skills. One principal observed that "when teachers feel valued and equipped, they are more effective in improving student performance."

Concerning welfare programs, all principals stressed their importance in reducing teacher stress and maintaining morale. They indicated that welfare programs ensure teachers remain motivated and focused, leading to improved classroom performance. The assessment of motivational impact typically involved regular performance tracking, student progress reports, and feedback mechanisms during review meetings.

V. Discussion of Key Findings

The findings reveal three interconnected motivational components that collectively influence teaching effectiveness. Professional development functions as the foundational element, universally recognized for enhancing pedagogical skills and classroom delivery. The consensus between teachers and students on this factor suggests its visible impact on the learning environment.

Reward systems provide necessary recognition but require better implementation to bridge perception gaps between teachers and students. The fact that only 43% of principals incorporated tangible rewards may explain why merely half of teachers perceived effective recognition systems. This suggests that while recognition exists, its form and visibility may not meet teacher expectations or student awareness.

Welfare programs serve as crucial support mechanisms, though their impact remains less visible to students despite strong teacher appreciation. The significant differences indicate that while these programs effectively support teacher wellbeing and job satisfaction, their indirect benefits to student learning may not be immediately apparent to the student body.

These results suggest that schools must address all three motivational areas simultaneously to optimize academic outcomes. The current approach shows strength in professional development but reveals implementation challenges in reward systems and

communication gaps regarding welfare programs. The study confirms that teacher motivation substantially influences academic performance in Masinga Sub-County's public secondary schools, though effectiveness depends on comprehensive implementation across all domains with attention to ensuring student awareness of how these initiatives ultimately benefit their educational experience.

Integration and Theoretical Contribution

The convergence of quantitative and qualitative findings supports the proposed Stakeholder Perception Alignment Model and extends existing motivation theory in three important ways. First, the model introduces “motivation visibility” as a key moderator of stakeholder agreement, suggesting that immediate, observable impacts create stronger consensus than delayed effects. Secondly, the research shows that cultural contexts might require adaptation of universal motivation theories, with community-based recognition showing greater effectiveness than individual achievement focus. Third, the findings suggest that motivation strategy effectiveness depends not only on psychological need satisfaction but also on stakeholder perception alignment, requiring educational leaders to consider communication and visibility factors in strategy design.

Summary

This research identified that instructor motivation exerted a considerable impact on academic success through complex mechanisms mediated by stakeholder perception dynamics. Professional development was the one that was valued by all since visibility in motivation was high, whereas welfare programs had a huge perception gap although there may be potential effect. The proposed Stakeholder Perception Alignment Model provides theoretical framework for such dynamics with implications for motivation theory and educational practice alike. Multiple regression analysis confirmed professional development as the strongest predictor of academic performance ($\beta = 0.42$), followed by welfare programs ($\beta = 0.28$) and reward systems ($\beta = 0.19$), together explaining 34% of the variance. These findings contribute to Self-Determination Theory by demonstrating contextual moderators and providing practical recommendations for educational leaders in impoverished settings.

VI. Conclusion

This study makes contributions conceptually and empirically to the study of teacher motivation in low-resource educational settings. The study introduces the Stakeholder Perception Alignment Model, an extension of Self-Determination Theory that incorporates visibility of motivation and communication processes among stakeholders. The finding that professional development is a cross-cultural motivator and reward systems and welfare programs have huge perception gaps is of great policy and practice value in education. The proposed model anticipates that motivation efficacy would not only lie in satisfying teachers' psychological needs but, rather, also in ensuring that strategies for motivation yield overt, shareable effects which could be noticed and valued by everyone. The findings hold particular significance for Sub-Saharan African learning environments, given that resources are scarce and careful prioritization of investment in motivation is necessary. Research assists in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 by providing evidence-based suggestions for strengthening educational quality through improvement of teacher motivation strategy.

Recommendations

Following these findings, we suggest a multi-tiered intervention framework focusing on policy, institutional and practice levels. Governments can be helpful at the policy level by setting national standards of professional teacher development motivators and recognition and welfare systems contextually appropriate for motivation and welfare implementation. Ministries of education should design tools for evaluating stakeholder perceptions and the efficacy of motivation strategies termed Teacher Motivation Assessment Tools that assist schools in evaluating stakeholder perception alignment and strategy effectiveness. At levels of institutional governance, school principals should enforce the Stakeholder Perception Alignment Model through regular marketing and communication audits focused on motivation, high-visibility professional development, enhanced communication about motivation strategies, and prioritized building professional development visibility. Teacher-Student Motivation Committees should be founded to incorporate stakeholder perspectives into the design and implementation of motivation strategies. At these practices, teachers are expected to actively participate in professionally-oriented peer learning networks that maximize professional development impact, while principals are tasked with drafting protocols detailing how motivation communications are articulated to various stakeholders to illustrate the link between motivation strategies and educational achievement. Subsequent research will need to employ longitudinal designs to track motivation-performance relationships across time, conduct cross-cultural validations of the Stakeholder Perception Alignment Model, and develop standardized measures for evaluating motivation visibility and stakeholder perception alignment. Intervention studies to validate the proposed theoretical model would provide valuable evidence to refine motivation strategies in different educational contexts.

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