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School-based reward practices and their influence on teacher motivation and teaching quality in secondary schools in Masaka District, Uganda

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Abstract

The study, from which this article is derived, was partly triggered by the need to find teacher reward practices which can promote educational quality. Two of the specific objectives are handled here: To examine the relationship between prevalent teacher reward practices and teachers' motivation; and to examine the relationship between these practices and quality teaching. Based on pragmatism, the study was conducted in 23 secondary schools through a cross-sectional concurrent mixed methods research design, over a sample of 368 participants, using stratified random and purposive sampling. Data collected using questionnaires, interviews and documentary analysis was analysed using themes, frequency distributions, and Chi-square test of independence. Findings indicated that several reward practices are positively associated with teacher motivation and quality teaching. It was concluded that the variety of reward practices which are associated with teachers' motivation and teaching behavior reflects the complexity of teacher motivation, implying that reward managers may not effectively sustain teacher motivation and instructional quality unless teachers'

cooperation is well utilized. It was then recommended that each school should establish a teacher-governed rewards committee which can facilitate the participation of all teachers in merit-based reward decisions and enhance the trustworthiness of the school's reward practice. In this respect, every school should endeavor to allocate feasible funds for teachers' merit incentives, since the activities of the proposed rewards committee cannot be possible unless the resources required to finance the reward programs entrusted to the committee are assured.

Keywords: *teachers, reward practice, quality teaching, teacher motivation, performance, incentives.*

1.0 Introduction

It has been observed that finding the appropriate reward practices to influence teachers' motivation is complex and multifaceted (Jacobson, 1995; OECD, 2011; TIF, 2017; UNESCO, 2021; World-Bank, 2018). This difficulty implies that researchers and policy makers need to continue searching for the best way of using reward programs to sustainably motivate teachers for the delivery of quality teaching. This study, conducted in sampled secondary schools in Masaka District, Uganda, constitutes part of the needed research effort. The study's main goal was to examine the motivating role of school-based teacher reward practices in relation to enhancing quality education in both government and private secondary schools in Masaka District. The objectives handled in this article are two, namely: to examine the relationship between prevalent teacher reward practices and teachers' motivation; and to examine the relationship between prevalent teacher reward practices and quality teaching.

1.1 Background of the Study

That educational focus worldwide is directed towards delivering quality education cannot be overstated. At global policy level, the fourth sustainable development goal (SDG4) of the UN 2030 agenda focuses on achieving quality education (UN, 2015; UNESCO, 2021). Under this goal, it is emphasized that providing a quality education for all learners is the foundation of improving people's lives and sustainable development. It is also believed that providing quality education requires sufficiently qualified, adequately remunerated, and well-motivated teachers (UNESCO, 2016, 2021). Among these required qualities of teaching staff, motivation is commonly believed to play a vital role in teacher performance (Han & Yin, 2016; UNESCO, 2021; World-Bank, 2018). However, global trends indicate that teacher motivation has been falling in recent years, leading to ineffective teaching, teacher attrition and difficulties in attracting talented candidates into the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond, Furger, Shields, & Sutcher, 2016; UNESCO, 2017, 2021; World-Bank, 2018).

In considering the important factors responsible for the observed downward trend of teacher motivation, scholars place substantial focus on the poor incentive structures which are characterized by meagre pay for teachers especially in low-income countries or by lower salaries in contrast to the remuneration levels of comparable occupations (Allegretto & Mishel, 2018; Tournier, Chimier, Childress, & Raudonytė, 2019). Such difficulties in matters of teacher reward practice are said to make the teaching profession suffer a drop in prestige and attractiveness which cannot be expected to promote quality teaching. Hence, it is asserted that a key factor for achieving the SDG4 lies in motivating teachers with the proper incentives (UNESCO, 2021).

However, the idea of 'proper incentives' raises a major question about reward practices that could be considered proper or most suitable. Hence, this study's central question is: Which reward practices can sustainably motivate teachers to deliver best quality teaching? This question is central because the various reward options that have been implemented in the teaching profession and other contexts are observed to be inadequate or unreliable motivators of staff. For instance, the knowledge-based compensation model that was embraced in the USA in

the early 1900s was soon abandoned because it was also marred by unfair pay discrimination based on gender, race, grade level taught and administrator bias (Department-of-Education, 1995). This reward practice was then substituted by a single-salary schedule which ensured that teachers with the same level of education and years of teaching experience received the same salary (Weldon, 2011). However, the single-salary reward system, which is common in organizations, does not support optimal day-to-day motivation that is needed to enhance quality teaching, simply because it was not designed to reward/encourage superior performance (OECD, 2011; Santibañez, 2020). Hence, scholars and policy makers especially since the 2000s intensified their search for alternative (or at least supplementary) practices which might sustain and maximize motivation.

Consequently, performance-based reward practices (also known as merit pay schemes or incentive programmes) have been tried across the world in order to enhance teacher motivation that would support superior performance of teachers. But these reward-for-performance practices are also encumbered by numerous problems which often make them ineffective motivators. Such problems include, for example, cases of cheating, favouritism, exclusion of low achieving students, focus on the tested subjects at the detriment of other learning areas, teaching to the test, and instances of reward managers bullying reward recipients (Santibañez, 2020; Weldon, 2011; World-Bank, 2018). In this respect, University-of-California (2019) noted that although teacher incentive programs are growing in popularity, no one knows for sure if they have a positive effect on teacher practice and student achievement, or if they are worth the expenditure of funds allocated for them.

Hence, it has been remarked that since teacher motivation is driven by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, finding the proper reward practices to drive teachers' effort is complex (UNESCO, 2021; World-Bank, 2018). This observation seems to maintain Jacobson (1995)'s and Murnane (1993)'s contention that the question of how to most appropriately compensate teachers is one that persists, because it requires choices to be made between competing values that may not be fully satisfied. So, the search for those particular reward practices which can ensure a sustainable balance between competing values both at the school and upper levels remains necessary.

In the attempt to deal with this study's main question, this study endeavoured to search for those reward programs which are more likely to maximize on-going motivation of the teaching personnel. The study focused on the school-based practices, because it is at the school level that effective measures to promote teacher motivation and quality teaching can be applied on a daily basis. Although measures imposed by supra-school authorities may also influence teacher motivation, the school-level strategies can exert superior impact, because the implementers of these context-specific systems are immediately present at the school. Perhaps the upper-level schemes could work best if they would focus on supporting school-based policies and practices.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Vroom's expectancy theory was selected to guide this study. The theory postulates that people will put in high effort if they believe that their effort will yield expected performance level and that the performance will be recognized and rewarded (Armstrong, 2015a; Jones, George, & Hill, 2000). Although the theory's title only indicates expectancy, three major factors which determine a person's motivation constitute the theory; namely expectancy on effort, instrumentality of performance, and valence of rewards (Lunenburg, 2011; Parijat & Bagga, 2014).

The theory was adopted for this study because it advocates a clear link (line of sight) between effort, performance and rewards (Armstrong, 2015a, 2015b; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). It implies that a person's motivation will be supported when reward practice demonstrates that cherished rewards depend on exerting sufficient effort required to yield defined performance. The theory is also reasonably comprehensive, embracing extrinsic rewards, intrinsic rewards and the real worth as well as perceived value of rewards. However, Vroom's theory is criticized for wrongly assuming that individuals always make conscious considerations in relation to

their effort and performance and that they are fully aware of the relative value of short-term and long-term rewards related to the current job (Parijat & Bagga, 2014). This criticism implies that the theory tends to ignore cases when a person's effort may be motivated by unique devotion or even subconscious activism which is independent of reward considerations. Despite such limitations, however, the theory can largely guide reward policy and practice.

In the teaching context, the theory implies that teachers will put a lot of effort in their professional work if they firmly expect that their effort will not be frustrated, but will lead to the desired performance levels (e.g. students' impressive test scores and excellent ratings generated by a reliable teacher appraisal process), and that one's high performance will lead to desirable returns in form of intrinsic or extrinsic rewards, such as worthwhile inner satisfaction, formal recognition, self-esteem, bonus pay, and promotion. An illustration of the theory's postulations is depicted in Fig 1.1.

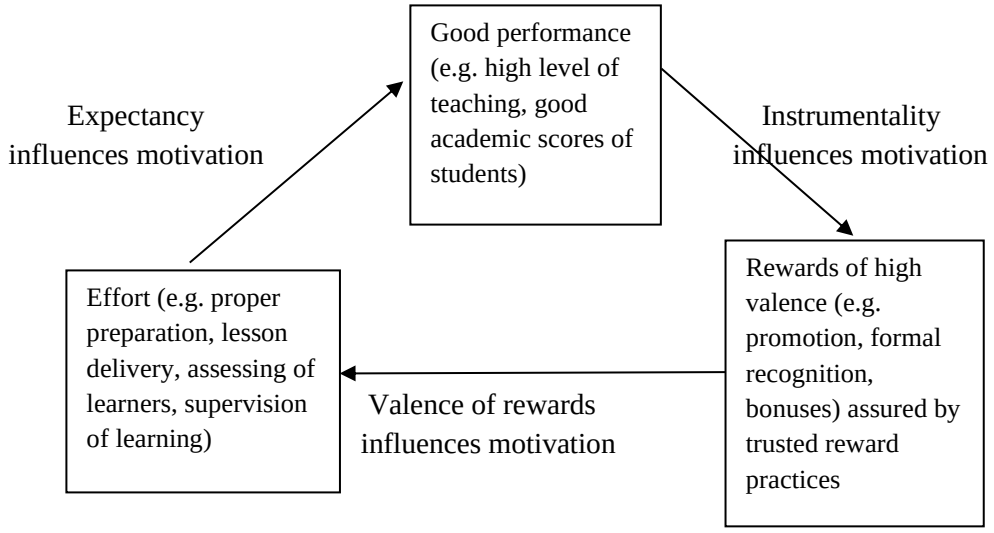

Fig. 1.1: Illustration of the motivation, expectancy, instrumentality and valence of Vroom's expectancy theory

Source: Adapted from linear diagrams used by Jones et al. (2000) and Lunenburg (2011).

According to the diagram, employees (e.g. teachers) will be motivated to put forth high effort into their work when they expect to attain defined good performance (desired by them or prescribed by policy) which will either bring important inner feelings or be instrumental for attaining high-valence extrinsic rewards. Trusted reward practices, which assure these worthwhile rewards, will motivate employees to put high effort into the job in order to achieve the required performance level that leads to the valued rewards, such as promotion and increased self-esteem.

1.3 Conceptual Framework

School-based reward practices

The phrasal notion "school-based reward practices" is part of the broader concept of reward management which is defined as the designing, implementation and maintenance of reward systems (Armstrong, 2015a; Armstrong & Brown, 2019). In this article, reward management can be viewed as the process of designing, implementing, and controlling matters of employee recompense involving extrinsic and intrinsic as well as pleasant and unpleasant rewards, which employees may receive from their job. Under this definition, school-based teacher reward practices concern the actual implementation of reward programmes which are entirely or largely managed at school-level, as contrasted with reward arrangements imposed by supra-school authorities.

Quality teaching

According to Wang, Lin, Spalding, Klecka, and Odell (2011), attempts to capture the patterns and characteristics of quality teaching are difficult because the concept changes with shifts in individuals, contexts, and ideologies. For instance, Nabaho, Oonyu, and Aguti (2017) opined that quality teaching involves lesson preparation, lesson delivery (facilitating learning), and after-lesson activities such as advising learners, conducting assessment, and providing feedback. This perspective implies that, to achieve quality teaching, each of the stages of instruction should be well-done. However, Wang et al. (2011) noted that available literature involves at least three perspectives of the concept: i) Quality teaching as teachers' cognitive resources (content and pedagogical knowledge); ii) as teachers' performance (in form of behaviour or practices); iii) as teachers' effect (indicated by learner outcomes). Hence, while NTP (2019) focused on quality teaching in terms of teachers' cognitive resources developed through pre-service and in-service training, Gomendio (2017), on the other hand, considered quality teaching as classroom behaviour indicated by teachers' practices. Still, Costa and Araújo (2018), Coe, Aloisi, Higgins, and Major (2014) and Masters (2012) regarded quality teaching as definable in relation to paticular subject matter and socio-cultural context.

The definition adopted for this study is: Quality teaching consists of good and ever-improving instructional practice carried out by teachers who are interested in their job and motivated to achieve high levels of performance and to improve the outcomes achieved by their pupils. This definition is based on Fenstermacher and Richardson, as cited by Wang et al. (2011), who viewed quality teaching as consisting of at least two dimensions: good and successful teaching. In this notion "good" refers to teaching practice that upholds specific standards and is normative; while "successful" refers to teaching that yields student learning. The working definition is also influenced by the notion of quality as a moving target, implying products that are progressively responsive to tougher and tougher customer demand and competition pressures (Stoner, Freeman, & Gilbert, 2001).

Operationally, quality teaching was viewed as the teaching service which produces desirable student results (in this case, indicated by UCE results) and is compliant with recommended professional practices. According to Naluwemba, Sekiwu, and Okwenje (2016) and TIF (2017), the normative professional practices include punctuality for lessons, teacher availability to answer learners' questions or to guide their individual learning, time devoted to actual teaching, use of learner-centered teaching strategies, timely marking of students' scripts and giving prompt feedback, positive attitudes and convictions about the potential of learners to achieve.

Teacher motivation

This study chose to examine reward practices in relation to teacher motivation which can deliver quality teaching. But the study did not forget that motivation may be supported by other non-reward factors (e.g. involvement, strong hope, conviction, threat) while reward practice may also serve non-motivational purposes (e.g. paying for temporary labour, compensation for injury or inconveniences, respect for established reward traditions). According to Denhardt, Denhardt, and Aristigueta (2008) and Ching (2015), motivation is what causes people to behave as they do. This definition implies that motivation could be a single factor or a set of factors prompting human actions.

However, Campbell and Pritchard (1976) and Jones et al. (2000) opined that employee motivation consists of a batch of psychological forces that determine the initiation and direction of a person's behaviour, a person's level of effort, and a person's level of persistence in the face of obstacles. The idea of 'a batch of psychological forces' implies many interior factors which can work together to generate the behavior-propelling phenomenon referred to as employee motivation. Some of these factors may also be influenced by external stimuli like good rewards, personal involvement, and perceived threat, while other factors such as special devotion or unique passion may seem to be independent of extrinsic conditions. In the employment context, Jones et al. (2000)

defined employee motivation as the drive to act as desired by the organization. So, staff motivation is the drive to behave as desired by the organization. Applying such definition to the teaching profession, teacher motivation is then the drive to act in ways that promote quality teaching, excellent learning achievement and other desirable results of teachers' professional service.

From the wide range of factors which generate/carry motivation, this study selected two factors to serve as proxies of teacher motivation. These are namely: (i) perceived reward equity and ii) satisfaction with the school's reward practice. The notion of perceived reward equity, derived from Adams' equity theory of motivation (Adams, 1963), refers to the impression of fairness when one considers one's reward situation in relation to that of comparable colleagues (referents). According to this concept, perceived equity sustains a person's motivation to continue serving normally, while perceived inequity disrupts morale. On the other hand, the notion of satisfaction with the school's reward practice, derived from Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1959)'s idea of satisfiers and dissatisfiers, combines several personal considerations which enable an individual to be contented or happy with the current reward situation and remain willing to continue working in the circumstances.

However, the notion of satisfaction is different from the another form of satisfaction or gratification offered by a consumable (e.g. food, drink, or piece of entertainment) which would reduce the desire to consume more. In the employment context, such gratification would be undesirable since it would imply lower (or absence of) motivation to continue working. Instead, the reward-related satisfaction implies being contented/pleased with the present reward arrangement and willing to continue working under it. Operationally, the two factors (perceived reward equity and satisfaction with the school's reward practice) were indicated by teachers' questionnaire responses.

2.0 Methodology

This study's methodology was hinged on the philosophical paradigm of pragmatism which was considered capable of guiding decisions in the direction of what could work best both in this study and in the school-based reward practice. Conducted through a cross-sectional survey design, using a quantitatively driven concurrent mixed methods strategy, the study targeted Government and private secondary schools in Masaka District, in the southern part of Uganda, where several of the issues related to reward practice and quality outcomes were casually observed by the researcher.

The target population consisted of 61 secondary schools whose accessible population was 23 schools (37.7%). Instead of about six to twelve schools constituting the sample, as Gay (1996) recommends for largely descriptive studies, a bigger sample of 23 schools, expected to provide an average number of 12 teachers per school, were selected in order to obtain a sufficient number of teacher-respondents. Other participants included students, Headteachers, Directors of studies and District Education Officers who directly deal with (or are affected by) important school affairs including teaching quality and teacher reward systems. The sample size of 368 was used. The study employed stratified random sampling and purposive sampling techniques, while questionnaire, interview, and documentary analysis were used as the main methods for collecting data. The main questionnaire's calculated validity and reliability indices were respectively 0.77 and 0.822, implying that the central instrument was sufficiently valid and reliable.

The study explored the prevailing reward practices in order to identify prevalent ones which were required to form an emerging sample for this study. Quantitative data was analysed using frequency distributions and Chi-square test of independence, interpreted at 0.05 level of significance. Qualitative data was analysed following themes identified in participants' responses. Among ethical concerns, the possibility of involving under-age students was handled by obtaining informed parental consent. For adults, consent was confirmed by their signing of the informed consent forms designed for them. In addition, the study got ethical clearance from both Makerere

University School of Social Sciences Research and Ethics Committee and Uganda National Council for Science and Technology. Likewise, an introduction letter from the Dean of School of Education of Makerere University as well as authorization letters from Masaka District administration were secured.

3.0 Findings

By examining school-based teacher reward practices in relation to motivation which is required to inspire teachers to deliver quality teaching, the study found out that several of the prevalent reward practices were associated with proxies of teachers' reward-related motivation and quality teaching. The major findings are presented under each objective.

3.1 Reward practices and teacher motivation

In line with objective one, various reward practices, including involvement of teachers in reward decisions, performance-based reward practice, and espousal of intangible rewards, were positively related with teacher motivation. Table 1 shows the results of Chi-square analysis which yielded significant relationships between the variables.

Table 1: Prevalent reward practices and teachers' reward-related motivation

No	Significant relationship observed	$\chi 2$	df	α-level	Cramer's V	Cells with expected count less than 5
1	Consulting teachers and satisfaction with the school's reward practice	31.708[a]	2	.000	0.343	0 cells (0.0%)
2	Consulting teachers when deciding on their rewards and whether reward package promotes teaching motivation	25.178	2	.000	0.304	0 cells (0.0%)
3	Consulting teachers when deciding on their rewards and perceived internal equity	19.467	4	.001	0.192	0 cells (0.0%)
4	Consulting teachers when deciding on their rewards and satisfaction about performance-based reward practice	35.625	2	.000	0.363	0 cells (0.0%)
5	Prevalence of reward-for- performance and whether reward package promotes teaching motivation	35.390	2	.000	0.360	0 cells (0.0%)
6	Prevalence of reward-for-performance and perceived external equity	15.314	4	.004	0.169	0 cells (0.0%)
7	Prevalence of reward-for-performance and teachers' satisfaction with the school's reward practice	59.239	2	.000	0.481	0 cells (0.0%)
8	Administrative encouragement and whether reward package promotes teaching motivation	38.667	1	.000	0.392	0 cells (0.0%)
9	Administrative encouragement and satisfaction with the school's reward practice	14.170	1	.000	0.238	0 cells (0.0%)

According to Table 1, various reward practices are significantly related to teachers' responses on reward-related satisfaction and other selected proxies of motivation. For example, according to entry 1, a Chi-square value of 31.708 which is significant at α-level of 0.000 was obtained by cross tabulating responses on whether teachers are consulted while making decisions concerning their rewards and teachers' expressed level of satisfaction with the school's reward practice. This finding means that there is a significant association between involving teachers in reward-related decision-making processes and teachers' satisfaction about the existing reward arrangement in their work place. The finding implies that when teachers participate in making decisions, at least concerning their rewards, they tend to be satisfied with the reward system adopted in the school, as compared to those who experience situations of non-prevalence or absence of such involvement.

Likewise, entries 2-4 show that the practice of involving teachers in the process of reward-related decision making was significantly associated with responses on whether the reward package promotes teaching motivation, or perceived internal equity, or satisfaction with the school's performance-based reward practice, as shown respectively by the Chi-square values of 25.178 (at $\alpha = 0.000$), 19.467 (at $\alpha = 0.001$), and 35.625 (at $\alpha = 0.000$). This data distribution implies that involving teachers in the decision-making process concerning their rewards enhances their motivation to deliver quality service.

In a similar line, entries 5-7 indicate that the prevalence of reward-for-performance was associated with teachers' responses on whether the reward package in their school promotes teaching motivation, or perceived external equity, or satisfaction with the school's reward practice, as the Chi-square values of 35.390 (at $\alpha = 0.000$), 15.314 (at $\alpha = 0.004$), and 59.239 (at $\alpha = 0.000$) respectively show. Likewise, entries 8-9 reveal that deliberate managerial attention to the reinforcement of intrinsic motivation using intangible rewards like gratitude and formal recognition was significantly related with responses on whether the reward package in each school promotes teaching motivation, or satisfaction about the school's overall reward practice, as the Chi-square values of 38.667 (at $\alpha = 0.000$) and 14.170 (at $\alpha = 0.000$) respectively indicate. The data distribution implies that administrative endeavor to encourage teachers using verbal or symbolic rewards will motivate teachers to deliver quality service even amidst resource challenges.

In addition, qualitative responses indicated that, despite reward-related challenges, some teachers are driven by intrinsic motivation to remain dedicated to their instructional service. For instance, one teacher in a private school said:

> *Teaching is a call from God. So, teachers should first teach before salary to improve education standards in Masaka* (Extracted from teachers' questionnaire, Case 64).

This comment implies that the motivation of some teachers is firmly sustained by religious virtue and personal conviction, regardless of whether or not they are extrinsically well rewarded by their employers.
Similarly, another teacher also from a private school recommended:

> *Teachers should make sure that learners are attended to despite the little reward. They should also desist from looking at a reward as the only way to make learners pass* (Extracted from teachers' questionnaire, Case 177).

This statement carries commendable parental attitudes which focus on the child's progress, despite hardships imposed by problematic remuneration situations.

Likewise, another teacher in a private school sounded quite considerate in his view:

> *Give employees appointment letters included with basic affordable salary that should be paid in time, residence with power and water if available, and other simple motivational allowances. All these followed by continuous appraisals and comprehensive communication just in case of failure or delay* (Extracted from teachers' Questionnaire, Case 156).

This recommendation implies an intrinsically motivated teacher who also makes effort to reflect understandingly on both the possibilities and limitations faced by the school administrators.

A student too made an important remark:

> *Teachers teach well the students and some of them come from very far and they tend to live [leave] other activities to educate the students* (Extracted from students' questionnaire, case 9).

This statement implies that students opine that their teachers exhibit good intrinsic motivation as they incur opportunity costs (forego certain important alternatives) in their lives to come to school so as to facilitate the teaching-learning process amidst pay-related difficulties.

These verbatim examples imply that, despite the constraining realities in the realm of pay and other extrinsic rewards, teachers' motivation to teach well is being supported by intrinsic motivation which is at least maintained by interior personal convictions if the extrinsic rewards are not reliable.

Thus, the findings under objective one reveal that involving teachers in reward-related decision making and espousal of reward-for-performance practice are associated with teacher motivation. In addition, some teachers are driven by intrinsic motivation. However, if such inner motivation is to be sustainable, it could be reinforced by verbal/symbolic rewards as well as tangible rewards, where possible.

3.2 Reward practices and teaching quality

In line with objective two, the study used teachers' self-rating to examine the interaction between reward practices and teaching behavior as indicated by selected practices including lesson preparation, optimal time utilization, use of innovative teaching methods, prompt feedback, among others. However, teachers' responses tended to somehow confound analysis and interpretation because the self-rating largely painted a positive image about teachers' pedagogical behavior. Such skewed trend of responses implied that either teachers were doing what is desirable to sustain quality teaching or they tended to respond according to what they believed to constitute normative practice. Incidentally, students' and Directors of Studies' responses largely confirmed the positive impression portrayed by teachers' self-rating. This corroboration implies that teachers' self-ratings, despite their apparently skewed trend, generally reflect teachers' real effort to deliver quality teaching. Hence, the data was used in the Chi-square analysis to generate the results presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Prevalent reward practices and teaching behaviour

	Significant relationship observed	$\chi 2$	df	α-level	Cramer's V	Cells with expected count less than 5
1	Consulting teachers and teachers' propensity to compensate for time lost.	12.417	4	.015	0.154	1 cell (11.1%)
2	Holiday pay practice and teachers' wanting to get more time to teach.	16.249	4	.003	0.182	0 cells (0.0%)
3	Timely pay and teachers' propensity to try newer methods of teaching.	15.080	2	.001	0.238	2 cells (33.3%)
4	Timely pay practice and teachers' wanting to get more time to teach.	11.166	2	.004	0.207	0 cells (0.0%)
5	Prevalence of performance-based reward practice and teachers' tendency to try newer methods of teaching.	15.234	4	.004	0.168	3 cells (33.3%)

6	Administrative encouragement and teacher's propensity to seek more time to teach	11.583	2	0.003	0.217	0 cells (0.00%)
7	Administrative encouragement and teachers' tendency to try newer methods of teaching	16.861	2	0.000	0.260	1 cell (16.7%)

According to Table 2, various reward practices were mildly associated with teachers' self-rated teaching behaviour. For instance, entry 1 shows that a Chi-square value of 12.417 which is significant at α-level of 0.015 was obtained by cross tabulating responses on whether teachers are consulted while making decisions concerning their rewards and teachers' self-reported propensity to compensate for teaching time lost. This finding means that teachers who are involved in decision-making, at least concerning their rewards, are more likely to have the enthusiasm to compensate for lost time when they, for some reason or another, have had to be absent. The finding further implies that the teachers who are genuinely involved in major decision making are motivated to ensure that the best teaching strategies, including optimization of time on task, are adopted so that the learners may receive quality service from their teachers.

Similarly, entry 2 shows that the holiday pay practice (full or partial or zero salary) was associated with teachers' tendency to seek more time to teach their students, as the Chi-square value of 16.249 which is significant at α-level of 0.003 indicates. This finding implies that teachers who get full or considerable holiday pay tend to be motivated to seek more time than allocated on the timetable to teach their learners, which also implies that these teachers are relatively motivated to seek any viable strategies that point in the direction of good teaching.

Likewise, entries 3-4 indicate that timely payment was associated with teachers' self-rated tendency to use newer methods of instruction and the propensity to seek more time to teach their pupils, as shown respectively by the Chi-square values of 15.080 (at α-level of 0.001) and 11.166 (at $\alpha = 0.004$). The data implies that teachers who are paid in time tend to be more motivated to try more innovative teaching methods, which means that prompt payment enables the teacher to settle their personal bills in time, such that he/she may concentrate on the search for better techniques of teaching and optimal time of facilitating learning. In the same line, entries 5-7 show that the prevalence of performance-based reward practice and administrative encouragement using intangible rewards like gratitude and formal recognition were significantly related to teachers' self-rated propensity to seek more time to teach their students and to use newer methods of instruction. These findings are shown respectively by the Chi-square values of 15.234 (at α-level = 0.004), 16.861 (at $\alpha = 0.000$) and 11.583 (at $\alpha = 0.003$). The data trend implies that the practice of offering performance-based rewards, if espoused by the schools, will tend to promote teacher's morale to use newer methods. In the same way, deliberate administrative encouragement using the inexpensive verbal or symbolic rewards reinforces teachers' intrinsic motivation to seek more teaching time and to try more innovative methods of teaching in order to maximize their availability and effectiveness.

Incidentally, a promising idea emerged in connection with the management of performance-based rewards. From questionnaire responses, 24.5% of teachers and 34.8% of DOS indicated that a teachers' committee was involved in assessing teacher performance in order to facilitate performance-based reward decisions. This finding implies that in some schools the strategy of using teachers' input is adopted, at least at the level of performance evaluation. However, it is possible that the subsequent merit-based reward decisions are made without teacher involvement. But 2.9% of teachers and 4.3% of DOS indicated that in some schools an awards committee, consisting of staff and members of the school's governing body, was being used to determine performance-based rewards. These limited indications suggest that staff participation can be extended to actual

reward decision making. However, the minute percentages mean that the use of such awards committee is virtually absent in schools. Hence, one teacher in a government school recommended:

> *A special committee should be put in place to oversee teacher rewards, not administrators* (Extracted from teachers' questionnaire, Case 274)

This recommendation implies that having a specific rewards committee in the school, instead of letting administrators make autocratic decisions, will enhance objectivity and reliability in rewarding teachers, provided the possibility of unethical manipulation can be tightly controlled by strict guidelines. Such recommended rewards committee could be a good avenue for the strategy of teacher involvement which was observed by this study to be an influential driver of teacher effort.

Thus, the findings under objective two indicate that espousal of performance-based reward practice and teacher involvement in reward-related decision making as well as administrative utilization of intangible rewards are associated with quality teaching. In addition, having a specific rewards committee in each school promises to enhance reward objectivity and trustworthiness which will support good teaching.

4.0 Discussion

This study's findings reveal that several of the reward practices prevalent in the schools studied, were associated with teachers' motivation and teaching behaviour. These findings imply that reward managers will find it difficult to identify the best practice that could be reliably adopted. The difficulty reflects the complexity of teacher motivation, implying that reward executives may not effectively manage teacher motivation until an effective strategy is found. This complexity observed in the data agrees with the findings arrived at by scholars. For instance, it has for a long time been noted that the search for proper reward practices or incentive schemes, which can sustainably motivate teachers to devote optimum energies to the delivery of quality education, is complex and multi-faceted (Jacobson, 1995; Murnane, 1993; OECD, 2011; TIF, 2017; UNESCO, 2021). Even in connection with performance-based reward practice alone, various problems have been noted. Such problems include cases where teachers tend to neglect the slower learners and instead pay more attention to higher achieving students who can easily score reward-worthy grades (Chang et al., 2020). There are also instances of cheating especially in the case of schemes which base rewards on students' scores (Weldon, 2011; World-Bank, 2018). Likewise, certain designs of reward-for-performance have been accused of encouraging free-riders (individuals who, with little or no useful effort/contribution, benefit from group achievements and rewards) in the case of team-based reward designs, as well as promoting selfish tendencies when individual reward options are preferred (Greene, 2019; University-of-California, 2019).

The complex nature of teacher motivation is also reflected by the argument that education systems need to invest in a comprehensive teacher motivation framework which focuses on rewards which are highly valued, including competitive salaries, professional development, on-going promotion, feeling of accomplishment, and professional prestige (Eren, 2019; Loyalka, Sylvia, Liu, Chu, & Shi, 2016; Tournier et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2020, 2021; World-Bank, 2018). Unfortunately, such comprehensive reward arrangements can be expensive. So, in several contexts, especially the low-resource educational settings, reward options which are less resource-intensive may be more affordable before a more comprehensive strategy can be embraced. Hence, concerning the difficulty of finding appropriate reward practices which can sustainably motivate teachers to deliver quality teaching, the findings largely agree with previous studies: Finding a suitable reward system for teachers is difficult. However, the strategies of involvement and reward-for-performance are promising.

In addition, the idea of a staff committee which could especially manage performance-based rewards presents a promising reward practice because it would imply staff participation and espousal of merit schemes which link reward to performance. It would also constitute part of good effort to adopt reward systems that are

informed by fellow staff-members (and perhaps learners, to some extent) who are able to make useful remarks about day-to-day work-related conduct, since they spend hours in various kinds of interactions with one another. It would essentially represent the desired proper design of merit-based reward schemes which can be expected to support teacher motivation. Concerning such desired design, University-of-California (2019) opined that if teacher incentive programs are properly designed, they can improve educational results, especially students' achievement. Along this line of thought, greater involvement of teachers in merit-based reward decisions can form a major ingredient of the appropriate design. With respect to the need for performance-based reward programs, World-Bank (2018) argues that no education system will be successful unless it provides performance-incentives. This argument implies that merit-based reward programs or incentive schemes are indispensable in the effort to boost teacher motivation. Such performance-based reward arrangements can be effective drivers of motivation, especially when managed by teachers themselves through a teacher-governed reward committee in each school.

The idea of a rewards committee promotes staff participation which is supported by several scholars. For instance, Fang (2021), San and Ni (2020) and Tournier et al. (2019) argued that enabling teachers to play an influential role in the decision-making process promotes good motivation which impacts positively on various teaching-related aspects. Such aspects would logically include reward practices and matters of quality teaching, among other school matters. Likewise, Chimaobi and Chikamnele (2020), Ike, Ezeh, and Etodike (2017) and Tournier et al. (2019) observed that skilled employees such as teachers tend to be motivated by systems where their voices are heard and where they feel valued as respectable professionals who should not be treated as passive takers of already-made decisions. So, any strategy such as a teacher-governed reward committee which maximizes staff participation would support teachers' motivation and effort.

In the light of the expectancy theory of motivation, the espousal of performance-based reward programs tallies well with the theory's notion of a direct link between effort, performance and rewards, because such programs tie incentives to assessed performance or effort. Similarly, entrusting merit schemes to a staff-governed rewards committee implies teacher involvement in reward-related decision making. This devolution of reward responsibility implies granting to the teachers a greater opportunity to dialogue with management, thereby enabling them not only to obtain clarification about expected performance and available reward options, but also to actively define these elements. This means that well-defined and achievable targets will increase expectancy of performance while the valence of available reward packages will also be clearly understood and willingly accepted or collegially adjusted by the teachers involved. Thus, when the reward committee is governed by staff, and reports regularly to staff, it can facilitate the participation of all teachers in reward-related decision making and guarantee the credibility of the reward system. Therefore, teacher participation facilitated by this committee is likely to ensure that the merits of various reward strategies are utilized well, while the demerits associated with almost every incentive program are addressed by the teachers themselves in the context-specific setting of each school.

However, Briker, Walter, and Cole (2020), Harms, Wood, Landay, Lester, and Lester (2018) and Huang, Xu, Chiu, Lam, and Farh (2015) noted that when efficiency is needed and there is little time for meaningful involvement of various role-players, autocratic leadership becomes necessary, implying that staff will in this case not be consulted. But the idea of urgency or lack of time for teacher's involvement does not seem to be applicable in matters of teacher reward practice, since disbursement of pay or any other reward can temporarily wait for teachers' professional input. So, if teachers are to be sustainably motivated to deliver quality service, their cooperation needs to be utilized in matters of reward practice (and preferably in other important areas of school management as well).

5.0 Conclusion

The variety of reward practices which are associated with teachers' motivation imply that the motivating role of school-based teacher reward practices in relation to enhancing quality teaching is difficult to establish. Likewise, the relationship between various reward practices and various indicators of quality teaching points to the same complexity. These findings imply that reward managers may not effectively sustain or enhance teacher motivation and teaching quality, unless teachers' cooperation is well utilized. Hence, the idea of a teacher-governed rewards committee being entrusted especially with the task of making performance-based reward decisions in each school's context promises to enhance objectively and trustworthiness in reward decisions which will sustainably motivate teachers to deliver quality teaching.

6.0 Recommendations

Since the task of establishing an appropriate teacher reward practice, which can sustainably motivate teachers to deliver quality education, is complex, coupled with the wide variety of rewards as well as the innumerable designs of reward schemes, there is need for a pragmatic approach which may direct managerial focus towards cross-cutting features of school-based reward practice. Therefore, the study makes the following recommendations:

Considering that teachers' salary needs to be stable without being subjected to the oscillations of performance appraisal (in order to guarantee basic living for the teacher and his/her family), each school should endeavour to find and allocate resources (bonus funds) for a reward-for-performance scheme which is specifically intended to provide merit incentives in order to encourage superior pedagogical performance among teachers. This merit pay scheme should be entrusted to a teacher-governed rewards committee which can, in line with appropriate guidelines, formulate or continually refine performance assessment criteria (such as teacher's classroom practice, students' test scores, teachers' team-building behavior, etc.), identify good performers basing on those criteria, and decide on the financial pay and non-financial rewards like formal recognition which may be issued for outstanding performance and/or exemplary practice. The committee can mainly deal with merit-pay funds, but it may also be mandated to play an active role in relation to salary mechanisms, such as salary increment, advance payments and holiday support, especially for private-payroll teachers whose salaries are determined at school level. However, the rewards committee should not handle negative rewards (penalties) because these matters, often involving greater resentment and social friction, could interfere with the committee's motivational and persuasive role. So sanctions should be managed by the ordinary disciplinary bodies which are usually present in schools.

7.0 Study's Contribution to Knowledge / Significance of the Study

The study's discovery of the need for the creation of a school-based teacher-governed rewards committee is an outstanding contribution to knowledge. Teachers themselves need to be major drivers of reward decisions, and drivers of the associated performance evaluation and on-going peer motivation. But, not all teachers in each school, especially where the teachers' population is big, may be directly involved in reward-related decision making. Hence, a rewards committee, elected by school staff and reporting to the staff meetings, is particularly important in each school. Since the teachers themselves will have the opportunity to control this committee's conduct, the virtues of fairness, equity, transparence and consistency in reward practice will be enhanced, implying trustworthiness of reward decisions which will sustainably motivate teachers, regardless of the types and significance of the rewards available in their respective school contexts.

Directly linked to the idea of a teacher-governed rewards committee is the need for every school to set aside considerable funds that are specifically destined for teachers' merit-based incentives, because the activities of the proposed rewards committee cannot be possible unless the resources required to finance the reward programs entrusted to the committee are assured.

8.0 Limitations of the Study

This study does not provide guidelines that would define such details as the size and composition of the proposed rewards committee, the terms and conditions of the committee members, nature of teachers' performance data required for the assessment of merit in each school, types and value of rewards involved, source of the necessary funds for merit rewards and accountability system about the reward scheme. Such details need to be determined by the schools' governing bodies (or similar upper management) in accordance with local or national policies. Likewise, the study does not include the category of non-teaching staff, whose rewards could also be utilized to enhance educational quality. Hence, further research is needed to guide regional or national policies that may streamline school-level reward practices, to clarify the notion of teacher performance which tends to remain elusive, and to examine the relationship between reward practices for non-teaching school staff and quality education.

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