

**Teachers' Meals And Teachers Performance In Primary Schools In Kamwezi Sub County, Rukiga District,
Uganda**

Tumusiime Justus

Metropolitan International University

Abstract

This study was undertaken to establish the relationship between teacher's meals and teachers' performance in government-aided primary schools in Kamwezi Sub- County, Rukiga District, South Western Uganda. Teachers' meals were regarded as the independent variable, while teachers' performance was the dependent variable. The study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design - with both qualitative and quantitative approaches, and data was collected from 341 respondents. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS computer software (Version 20) to generate frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation. Principal Component Analysis and Regression were employed to determine the pattern of interrelations and robustness among the constructs of teachers' welfare variable and their level of effect on teachers' performance. Qualitative data analysis was done through thematic content analysis. The findings revealed that provision of meals has a statistically significant effect on teachers' performance in public primary schools in Kamwezi Sub- County, Rukiga District. It was concluded that provision of teachers' meals leads to high teachers' performance in Kamwezi Sub- County, Rukiga District. It was therefore recommended that education policy makers, implementers and managers pay much attention to the provision of teachers' meals in public primary schools in Kamwezi Sub- County, Rukiga District.

Keywords: Primary Schools, Teachers' Meals, Teachers' Performance.

Introduction

Teacher welfare and performance are introduced to provide a comprehensive background for study. The good living conditions of teachers can be traced back to the industrial revolution in European countries. In the early 1820s, workers began to form groups to address some of the challenges caused by the revolution, and managers worldwide have since used this to increase worker performance (Emmanuel et al., 2023). According to (Kazaara & Kazaara, 2023), concerns about employee welfare reflected the impact of the Industrial Revolution on workers' working conditions. The social effects of the Industrial Revolution on factory workers were at times inhumane as their daily lives were controlled by factory hours to increase employee productivity (Isaac et al., 2023).

Employee performance can be traced back to the period of scientific management, when early theorists promoted the ideals of setting performance standards and measuring work (Anthony et al., 2023). The issue of work measurement came along with the modern study of government-supported administration as people began to advocate rational, scientific management principles designed to improve community services (Ntirandekura & Friday, 2022). Employee performance was practiced long before the global New Government-aided Management movement (Hilgers, 2010; Prasad, 2010). But with the emergence of new government-supported management, performance has become more

Received: 16.01.2024

Accepted: 25.01.2024

Published on: 31.01.2024

pronounced due to the demand for transparency and appropriate management methods to control and manage the administration so that there is value for money in the government-supported sector (Racheal et al., 2023). Furthermore, employee performance has become a buzzword among management scholars, consultants and reformers not only for government supported organizations but also for the private sector (Ntirandekura et al., 2022). To ensure that teachers fulfill their responsibilities as educators, the Ministry of Education in Uganda has established quality assurance mechanisms that include the Directorate of Education Standards, District Education Officers, District School Inspector, School Management Committees and annual teacher evaluation forms.

School education in Uganda was introduced by missionaries in 1877 and was modeled after the British education system, as Uganda was a British protectorate from 1894 until independence in 1962. During this time, teachers were highly valued and their welfare included: accommodation, medical care, bread and tea at recess; and the school environment was largely conducive for teachers to fulfill their responsibilities as educators (Anthony et al., 2023). However, the period of 1971-1979 due to insecurity in Uganda affected all areas of life including the welfare of teachers. There has been a disruption of economic activities, a brain drains and a decline in social services, leading to poor teacher performance (Alex & Kazaara, 2023). Parents had to intervene and this led to the formation of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) which introduced fees to help reduce the financial burden on teachers' social security (Aguti, 1996; Okuda, 2014). With the introduction of universal primary schools Education In 1977, PTA fees were abolished in government-aided primary schools in rural areas and the government pledged to look after the welfare of teachers (Seth & Ntirandekura, 2022).

Social security can help minimize absenteeism and retain teachers, which contributes to good quality state-supported education (Brian & Jacob, 2023). Social security induces high levels of employee performance, and if not provided, workers may remain absent for long periods to escape unhealthy working conditions (Paul & Kazaara, 2023). Welfare provides an environment for employees to breathe growth and development and think constructively, and helps to improve the relationship between employees and management. This can minimize strikes and absenteeism, thereby promoting efficiency and effectiveness (S. J. Mark & Jacob, 2023). Gulled (2011) traced school meal programs back to the mid-nineteenth century in France, when Paris guards established a fund to provide school lunches to needy children. It later spread to other countries such as Japan and in the late 1940s; was established in the United States of America and later in several other countries. As previously mentioned, providing meals such as break tea, lunch and evening tea not only addresses the physical health of teachers but also helps the teacher have more time to devote to students and lesson preparation (Ntirandekura et al., 2022). A number of studies have been conducted on school meal programs and performance.

(Christopher, Komunda, et al., 2022) assessed the extent to which parents and school stakeholders (principals, teachers, cafeteria managers, and parents and civic committee presidents) support the potential expansion of a new school food policy in Australia. The research findings of this study revealed that parents and teachers supported the

Received: 16.01.2024**Accepted: 25.01.2024****Published on: 31.01.2024**

expansion of existing and appointed policy components as other school stakeholders (Annet et al., 2023). The study further revealed that little research has been conducted to examine the extent of support for specific potential school food policy components.

Statement of the problem

Uganda's education system saw major changes in 1997 when the government enacted the UPE, which abolished all school fees and all Parent Teacher Association (PTA) fees for basic education. This led to an increase in primary school enrollment from 2.9 million in 1997 to over eight million (8 million) in 2010 (N. Mark et al., 2023). The Government of Uganda and its development partners have responded by launching substantial quality improvement measures such as the introduction of thematic curricula to improve the teaching and acquisition of literacy and numeracy in lower primary schools, teacher training, salary increases, regular monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes, pupils, the construction of additional classrooms and the purchase and delivery of teaching materials (Brian & Jacob, 2023). This was to ensure the smooth development of the primary education system in Uganda. The government also increased demand in education by implementing several reforms and policies that included: construction and renovation of schools, procurement of teaching materials, training, hiring, retention of teachers, combating absenteeism, curriculum reforms and decentralization of basic education (Christopher, Muhindo, et al., 2022). The national pupil-teacher ratio and pupil-class ratio (42.66 in 2017 according to the World Bank) have also been revised downwards to avoid overcrowding and to have a teacher for every child (Annual Report, 2012). Despite all the above interventions, the performance of teachers in state support primary schools in Kamwezi Sub-Cou.

Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the impact of meals on the teacher's performance in government-aided primary schools in Kamwezi Sub- County, Rukiga District in south western Uganda.

Research Question

What is the impact of meals on teachers' performance in government-aided primary schools in

Methodology

In the study, the researcher used Convergent parallel mixed methods, by merging quantitative and qualitative data thus making easy all-encompassing analysis of the research problem. The researcher using this design ordinarily collected both forms of data at roughly the same time and then assimilates the relevant collected data in the interpretation of the overall results. Contradictions in the findings will be explained or further probed in this design (Ranganathan & Aggarwal, 2019). Mixed methods involved integrating the qualitative and quantitative data in the study. The qualitative data was by open-ended thus without predetermined responses whereas quantitative data included closed-ended responses like found on questionnaires or psychological instruments. The design and its approaches were preferred for its role aimed to neutralize the weaknesses of each form of data and triangulating data sources which is a means for seeking convergence across qualitative and quantitative methods. The idea of integration of different research designs emerged and mixed methods turned towards the systematic convergence of qualitative and

Received: 16.01.2024**Accepted: 25.01.2024****Published on: 31.01.2024**

quantitative data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The study was carried out in will be carried out among UPE primary schools in kamwezi subcounty, Rukiga district. The district shares its borders with Kabale District in the south west, republic of Rwanda in south east, Rubanda district in the north east, Ntungamo district in east and Rukungiri district in the north. Creswell (2020) asserts that population is the vast cohort of people to whom the researcher engenders the results of study that gives a small unit known as the sample size that is always its subset. She mentions that the population depends on the study scope. In this case therefore Rukiga district an area considered for the study was the following respondents' categories suggested to provide the information required. They included; sub county chiefs, Community Based Organizations (CBOs), parish chiefs, headteachers and teachers, political leaders, The total respondents' number was 27252 from whom the sample size will be selected. Sampling is described by Black (2004, 2011) as the selection of individuals from within a population to provide some knowledge of the entire population, especially for the purpose of making statistical inference predictions. In the determination of sample size, the table for sample size determination as formulated by Krejcie and Morghan (1970) was used. Sampling Strategy or technique is a method that allows researchers to infer information about a population based on results from a subset of the population without having to investigate every individual. It is important to reduce the number of individuals in a study reduces the cost and workload making it easier to obtain high quality information (O'Leary, 2014). The study embraced purposive Sampling for Qualitative Approach and Simple Random Sampling for Quantitative Approach as fully explained in each of the subsequent captions. Sampling Technique. Purposive Sampling technique was used all through the selection of the respondents for the study. Purposive Sampling is described as a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their surveys (Tromp, 2017). Data was analyzed inform of tables, frequencies and percentages using SPSS and STATA (Nelson et al., 2022)

Results

Factor Analysis

Table 1: *Rotated Component Matrix (Meals).*

		Availability of meals		
This school always provides teachers with break tea. This school regularly provides food to teachers at lunch time	0.799			
This school regularly provides evening tea to teachers. Staff meals are served on time at school	0.749			
This school has a menu for teachers meals while at school.	0.631	0.846		
This school has a school garden where teachers' food is grown				
This school provides monthly food rations to teachers This school has a school kitchen where teacher's meals are prepared.		0.697		
Drinking water is provided to teachers in this school				
School management has hired a cook to prepare staff meals at school				0.813
Parents provide foodstuffs to this school				
School management is concerned with teachers' meals while at school				0.724
<i>Eigen Value</i>	1.971	1.931	1.845	1.718
<i>Variance (%)</i>	13.143	12.876	12.301	11.452
<i>Cummulative Variance (%)</i>	13.143	26.019	38.32	49.772

The items under each factor with factor loadings above 0.50 were retained. Only those factors with an Eigen value of greater than one unit were retained according Guttman- Kaiser rule.

Results in Table 1 indicate that of the four factors that were extracted, availability of teachers' meals was the most significant with Eigen Value of 1.971, contributing 13.143%; followed by quality of meals with Eigen Value of 1.931, accounting for 12.876%. This was followed by food supportive systems condition with Eigen value of 1.845, contributing 12.301%. Management of the food came last with Eigen value of 1.718 and its contribution was 11.452%. The salient items under availability of meals included; (i) This school always provides teachers with break tea. (ii) This school regularly provides food to teachers at lunch time (iii) This school regularly provides evening tea to teachers. Quality of meals was perceived in terms of staff meals being served on time at school and schools having a menu for teacher's meals while at school. Food-supportive systems and management of the food were underscored by: (i) This school has a school garden where teachers' food is grown; (ii) This school provides monthly food rations to teachers; and (i) School has hired a cook to prepare staff meals at school; (ii) Parents provide foodstuffs to this school respectively. To triangulate these quantitative data from the questionnaires that were administered to teachers and school management committee members, structured interviews were conducted with the political leaders, parish chiefs and head teachers.

Interviews with head teachers were supportive of these findings. When asked whether schools always provided teachers with break tea, some of their responses were:

Head Teacher A said: "As a school, we do not provide break tea to our staff. However, our teachers normally contribute money from their own sources to buy food and sugar for both lunch and break tea. But we do not cater for evening tea." Asked what happens to teachers who do not contribute, the head teacher said:

"I have not had any teacher who has failed to contribute. All my teachers are very co- operative. Teachers cannot only fail to contribute because they earn salary at the end of every month, they may only refuse to pay if there is poor management of their funds. Ours is democratic, teachers themselves elect one colleague who handles our meals and makes accountability at the end of every term. If one does not have money at the time, we allow that teacher to have meals until salary is paid and then he or she pays up."

Asked if this had any effect on teachers' work at school, this same head teacher said: "This affects teachers negatively and it is the reason we contribute to our meals at school in order to save on time and keep teachers in school."

On the same question concerning teachers' contribution for meals at school, head teacher BH7 revealed: "My teachers get break tea and lunch but from personal contributions. They pull resources and plan for their own meals at school. They have appointed one of themselves to be in charge of their money for their meals and as administration, I do not interfere with their plans. I also contribute and this system is working very well. It has helped in keeping my teachers in school up to 5:00pm because before we started it, they would leave by 3:00pm."

Head teacher Z: "We do not provide break tea and lunch to teachers. They cater for their own meals. We are near the trading center and so teachers buy their own breakfast and lunch. This has made time management quite difficult as

Received: 16.01.2024

Accepted: 25.01.2024

Published on: 31.01.2024

most of them delay to come back after lunch. If one does not have money on a particular day like it is on most occasions, then it means that no breakfast and lunch. Some teachers pay to food sellers in those lockups in advance when they receive their salary while others eat on credit and pay when they get their salary at the end of the month.” Another head teacher was supportive of the above when he reported: “We do have meals but out of self-contributions by the teachers themselves.” When asked about the management of the meals, the head teacher said, “Out of the twelve teachers in this school, two are female and one was chosen to be in charge of our welfare. It is this welfare mistress who handles teachers’ contributions for their meals and makes accountability every end of month because the contributions are made on monthly basis.”

Head teacher X views were quite different from the above two head teachers. He had this to say: “This school is unique from other schools in the district. This school is both day and boarding. It is also one of the oldest schools not only in the district but also in the country. Therefore, teachers in this school receive both break tea and lunch. They get lunch at the same time with the pupils in the boarding section of the school. Teachers in this school are happy with this arrangement. Most teachers in the district would like to be transferred here because of good welfare for staff. You can see them in the staff room doing their work. They arrive here early and leave late because all is well including my management. Their only problem is the low salary by the government.”

All the district education officers and district inspectors of schools that participated in the present research reported that provision of meals in public primary schools was not official. Teachers cater for their own meals at school through their personal contributions. One technical personnel : “As a district, we encourage teachers to plan and contribute money to have lunch at school as a way of having them in school up to right time for them to go back home in the evening. Most schools are having this arrangement and it is working well. We hope it will help to minimize absenteeism in our schools and the pupils will benefit.”

Asked if schools in the district had food supportive systems like school gardens where teachers’ food was grown and food rations for teachers, the technical personnel remarked: “There is no official policy in the district in regard to food support systems but this is something we may think about in the future. Some of our schools have some land on which teachers’ food may be grown. Currently, some of this land is used by teachers to grow their crops for their families and not to be consumed at school. Some head teachers even hire it out to locals while others have given it to school management committee members who use it for their private gain. For our biggest and oldest school in the district which is also partly boarding, the story is different. The land in that school is used to grow food for the children and the teachers even when the teachers have been given some portions to grow their own private crops. As regards food rations, our teachers do not receive any food rations. School budgets do not cater for this type of arrangement.”

Discussion

Findings revealed that provision of meals to teachers had a statistically significant positive effect on teachers’ performance in public primary schools in kamwezi Sub- County. This is in tandem with (Anthony et al., 2023) who have argued that parents and school-based stakeholders (principals, teachers, canteen managers and parents) were

Received: 16.01.2024

Accepted: 25.01.2024

Published on: 31.01.2024

supportive of potential expansions to new school food policy in Australia. The findings corroborate a study by (Brighton et al., 2023) in Atwima-Nwabiaga District, Ghana, who recommended more effort in designing intervention programmes to enhance the quality of meals the pupils consume and more emphasis put on nutritional education in primary schools.

The findings are also in tune with findings by (Paul & Kazaara, 2023) who established that prompt payment for food and clothing were a statistical predictor of teachers' effectiveness. Similarly, findings by Stuijvenberg (2005) in South Africa revealed that for children to realize their full mental and physical potential to perform to their best at school, both short-term and hidden hunger needs had to be addressed. Whereas the study was in South Africa and was about children, as revealed, teachers in kamwezi Sub- County equally have hunger needs that must be addressed for them to have mental and physical strength to perform their duties as educators.

The findings are also buttressed by Gulled (2011) who has argued that there is a strong relationship between school feeding programme and pupil access and retention in primary schools in Wajir District in Kenya. This is also true for teachers in kamwezi Sub- County as was noted by Head teacher SH14 who said, "This school is unique from other schools in the district. This school is both day and boarding. It is also one of the oldest schools not only in the district but also in the country. Therefore, teachers in this school receive both break tea and lunch. They get lunch at the same time with the pupils in the boarding section of the school. Teachers in this school are happy with this arrangement. Most teachers in the district would like to be transferred here because of good welfare for staff. You can see them in the staff room doing their work. They arrive here early and leave late because all is well including my management. Their only problem is the low salary by the government."

All head teachers interviewed agreed that schools in kamwezi Sub- County did not have an official feeding policy for teachers. The headteachers, political leaders and other respondents who participated in this study were also in agreement with this view. As noted earlier, the Ppolitical leaders B remarked that, "There is no official policy in the district in regard to food support systems but this is something we may think about in the future. Some of our schools have some land on which teachers' food may be grown. Currently, some of this land is used by teachers to grow their crops for their families and not to be consumed at school. Some head teachers even hire it out to locals while others have given it to school management committee members who use it for their private gain. For our biggest and oldest school in the district which is also partly boarding, the story is different. The land in that school is used to grow food for the children and the teachers even when the teachers have been given some portions to grow their own private crops. As regards food rations, our teachers do not receive any food rations. School budgets do not cater for this type of arrangement."

Most teachers indicated that they made personal contributions for their meals at school implying that feeding affects teachers' performance. This is in agreement with findings in Table 4.22 which show that provision of food at school has a statistically significant effect on teachers' performance.

The findings were found to be in tune with both local and international empirical studies related to the effect of feeding on teachers' performance in kamwezi Sub- County. The findings have revealed that teachers in public primary schools in kamwezi Sub- County contribute to their meals at school. Lack of provision of meals to teachers at school contributes to absenteeism and ultimately poor teachers' performance. The status of teachers' performance in public primary schools in kamwezi Sub- County was not satisfactory and this is related to the status of their feeding.

Conclusion

It was concluded that provision of meals at school has a statistically significant effect (0.000 at $p < .05$ level) on teachers' performance in public primary schools in Kamwezi Sub- County.

From the findings of the present research, it is concluded that an improvement in the provision of teachers' meals in public primary schools in Kamwezi Sub- County leads to a significant increase in teachers' performance.

The findings are in tune with both local and international empirical studies related to the effect of provision of meals at school on teachers' performance in public primary schools in Kamwezi Sub- County.

Recommendation

From the study findings about the effect of provision of meals on teachers' performance in public primary schools in Kamwezi Sub- County, the researcher made the following recommendations:

- To increase teachers' performance, it is recommended that education policy makers, implementers and managers pay much attention to the provision of teachers' meals at school in public primary schools in kamwezi Sub- County in order to address short-term and hidden food needs while at work.
- Head teachers and community members in public primary schools with land should provide school gardens for growing school food for teachers as most of these schools are found in rural areas with favorable climate and fertile soils. This would go a long way in contributing to teachers' food security in public primary schools in kamwezi Sub- County.
- The Ministry of Education, Sports, Science and Technology should have a feeding policy for teachers in public primary schools since they are required to be at school by 7:30 am up to 5:00pm during the school term from Monday to Friday yet there is no clear mechanism to address their hunger needs while at school. Most teachers in public primary schools in kamwezi Sub- County pool resources and plan for joint meals at school. Government could study this teachers' initiative with a view of improving and supporting it. There should be food support systems for teachers in public primary schools.

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Received: 16.01.2024

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