

Effectiveness Of Monetary Incentives To Teachers And Academic Performance Of Learners In Selected Government Aided Primary Schools In Lugusuulu Sub-County, Sembabule District, Uganda

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of monetary incentives offered to teachers on the academic performance of learners in selected Government Aided Primary schools in Sembabule District. The researcher noted that teaching in a rural government primary school can be an interesting, which can subsequently impact on learners' academics. The study had three objectives which highlighted the nature of monetary incentives provided to teachers, the cause of the declining trends of learners' academic performance and the impact of monetary incentives offered to teachers on the trend of academic performance of learners. The research subjects were teachers and head teachers serving in selected government aided primary schools. According to the study, monetary incentive was the independent variable while academic performance was the dependent variable. The research methodology was mixed since it applied both quantitative and qualitative approaches, using closed ended questionnaires and interview guides as research instruments. A simple random sampling technique was used to select ten (10) head teachers and sixty-six (66) teachers out of 80 teachers from ten (10) primary schools in Sembabule District. The quantitative data which was collected was presented using inferential statistics and subsequently analyzed using a Chi-Square test, while qualitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The researcher tested directional hypothesis by comparing two Chi-Square values namely: Chi-Square calculated; which was computed using a standard formula, and the critical Chi-square value which was obtained using a standard distribution statistical table. It was revealed that the calculated value (62.68) was higher than the critical value (9.48). Basing on the two Chi-Square values, the researcher retained the hypothesis and concluded that, monetary incentives offered to primary teachers significantly impact on the academic performance of learners.

Keywords: Monetary incentives, academic performance, Learners, Schools.

Introduction

Education is one of the most important aspects of human development. (Oromo et al., 2023) reiterated that "education is the most powerful weapon that can be used to change the world". The quote mentioned above is of great importance to teachers. Achieving consistent academic performance in schools where teachers and students interact is always a challenge (Mark et al., 2023). This meant that teachers should be seen as an important asset for better academic performance (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Komunda, 2022). Torrington Italian (2008) stated that until the 1980s, academic performance was conceptualized as an output of teacher ability (Victoria et al., 2023). However, incentives offered to teachers can be a catalyst for academic performance. This study examined the impact of monetary incentives for teachers on the academic performance of students in selected government-aided primary schools in Sembabule District.

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According to a 1992 report by the Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC), education in Uganda has developed since colonial times mainly through the initiative of voluntary organizations, especially early Christian missionaries (Micheal et al., 2023). The report further noted that education during the colonial days was only available to a small elite group and the masses remained largely illiterate or poorly educated. From 1925, the government began to exercise control over education by establishing the Directorate of Education and rapidly expanded the education system during the 1950s and 1960s (Brian & Jacob, 2023).

Therefore, academic performance was measured by the ability to integrate experiences, teaching methods, teaching materials, knowledge and skills in delivering the curriculum to students in and out of the classroom according to Mathias (2009). However, this could be easily achieved if teachers were motivated (Winny et al., 2023). Kaweesa (2004) stated that the indicators of academic performance were: quality and relevance of education, student scores, equitable access to education, learning environment and effectiveness in providing education to students. Based on the above, the role of teachers in the implementation of educational programs that contributed to the academic success of students was very important in this regard (Joventa et al., 2023). This meant that teachers should be well motivated if students' academic performance is to improve. Monetary incentives as a form of incentive, emphasized rewarding people at the place of work Onanda, (2015). The ability to deliver what employees wanted brought about desired expectations such as productivity, quality and service delivery (Racheal et al., 2023). Akinyi (2015) argued that offering monetary incentives to teachers should be a psychological force that can increase teachers' commitment to improve students' academic education.

Bowen (2000) stated that the offer of monetary incentives originated in the 18th century when economic theories were developing that teachers should be motivated by economic gain and therefore the prospect of monetary incentives was sufficient to bring about an increase in desirable learning outcomes. Beard well (2004) highlighted that the PLE of monetary incentives as a motivator linked to various goals improved academic performance in many primary schools (Victoria et al., 2023). For this reason, teachers should be motivated by obtaining the highest possible salaries in the most efficient way possible, thereby offering the expected service aimed at improving student learning outcomes. Dressler (2003) agreed with Beard well (2004) that scientific management theory popularized the application of monetary incentives for teachers who contributed to high academic performance of students (Godfrey et al., 2023).

Statement of the problem

According to Scot (2015), the lack of adequate monetary incentives for teachers in public elementary schools has prompted school administrators to move away from traditional teacher compensation toward performance-based payments based on student academic achievement (Anthony et al., 2023). This was achieved by offering monetary incentives to teachers. The problem under investigation was to determine whether monetary incentives for teachers have an impact on student academic performance. The remuneration of primary school teachers was considered the lowest compared to other professions, yet primary school teachers contributed to the success of other professionals (Seth &

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Ntirandekura, 2022). For example, a qualified teacher at a government-supported primary school earns between UGX 480,000 and UGX 880,000 per month, which is considered too little to cover a family's monthly needs due to the high cost of living in Uganda. This low payment discourages teachers from working extra hard to improve students' academic performance (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Nturanabo, 2022). The wide pay gap between teachers and other professionals has led to teachers leaving the teaching profession to join other well-paid professions, creating a shortage of qualified teachers, which has a negative impact on student learning outcomes (Musaibah et al., 2023). To make matters worse, primary school teachers working in rural areas were less committed to teaching, which was reflected in poor PLE results.

In Uganda, there was evidence to support the research problem, specifically in Sembabule District, where the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools between 2012 and 2017 was poor due to this; teachers were not committed to teaching, which affected students' academic performance and future (Tasha et al., 2023). After completing the seventh year of primary school, students dropped out of academic studies due to poor academic grades achieved in the primary school leaving examination. Many states primary school principals in Sembabule District.

Objectives of the Study

The study had three objectives which highlighted the nature of monetary incentives provided to teachers, the cause of the declining trends of learners' academic performance and the impact of monetary incentives offered to teachers on the trend of academic performance of learners.

Methodology

The research methodology was mixed since it applied both quantitative and qualitative approaches, using closed ended questionnaires and interview guides as research instruments. Sampling is a process of selecting a number of respondents from the target population such that, the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group (Orodho & Kombo, 2002). A sample is a subset of targeted population that is systematically selected to represent the whole population. In this research, the sample comprised of 10 head teachers and 66 Primary teachers from the selected Government Aided Primary Schools in Lugusuulu Sub-county, Sembabule District. According to Mugenda (1999), sampling technique is a technique used by the researcher to determine the actual number of respondents in the target population that will participate in the study. The target population comprised of Head teachers and Primary school teachers selected from the selected schools. Both the Primary schools and teachers were selected using a simple random sampling technique, which according to Mugenda (1999), a small portion was considered to represent the entire population. The simple random sampling technique was appropriate to the research because every school or teacher in a target population had an equal chance of being part of the sample size, without any bias from the researcher. The number of Head teachers and teacher population which made the required sample size was determined with help of Robert Krejcie and Daryle Morgan (1970) sample size determining table as indicated in the table below.

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Table 1. Categories of respondents which were involved in the study

Primary School	Population		Sample Size	
	Head Teacher	Teachers	Head Teacher	Teachers
A	01	09	01	07
B	01	09	01	08
C	01	08	01	06
D	01	07	01	05
E	01	09	01	07

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The instrument was used to collect information from the selected teachers in upper Primary classes. The instrument was considered appropriate for the study because it is the most common research instrument, easy to administer and covered a big number of respondents (Amin, 2005). Similarly, Ghosh (2000) pointed out that the questionnaires are also convenient for literate respondents who are able to fill it objectively and within a short time. Each questionnaire contained an opening introductory statement requesting for the respondent's cooperation when providing the required information for the study. Questionnaires issued were pre-tested to determine their reliability and validity. A section of the questionnaire items was rated in accordance with the Likert scale where respondents were required to indicate the extent to which they Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Not Sure (NS), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA) with an item regarding a particular phenomenon under investigation. Data was analyzed in form of tables, frequencies and percentages using SPSS & STATA (Nelson et al., 2022)

Results

Table 2: Teachers' perception on Monetary Incentives

No.	Statement on Monetary Incentives	Strongly Disagreed	Disagreed	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agreed	Total
1	Head teachers should streamline the practice of offering monetary incentives to Primary teachers.	00	01	03	33	25	62

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2	Allowances and bonus payment given						
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This implied that the majority of teachers in Lugusuulu Sub-county believed that monetary incentives were valuable and if they were offered, teachers might work harder for the benefit of learners. On the other hand, the minority of Primary teachers devalued them, meaning that incentives were not required to enforce hard work. Therefore, the interpretation of this opinion was based on the fact that head teachers should streamline the practice of offering monetary incentives to Primary teachers in Lugusuulu Sub-county to achieve the school objective of improving academic performance of learners (Frank et al., 2023).

In case of offering allowances and bonus payment, which was another element of a specific research objective, fifty-five (55) respondents represented by 88.7% indicated that such monetary incentives could induce Primary teachers to work harder, while seven (7) respondents represented by 11.3% perceived allowances and bonus payment were irrelevant in Primary teaching. A similar case was observed as far as offering Group incentives to teachers was concerned (Turyatamba et al., 2022). To be specific, results indicates that fifty-three (53) respondents represented by 85.5% perceived Group incentives should be offered to Primary teachers, while nine (9) respondents represented by 14.5% were in a contrary (Rashid et al., 2023).

The interpretation of teachers in regard to offering allowances, bonus payment and Group incentives was based on the fact that assorted incentives should be offered to Primary school teachers in Lugusuulu Sub county as long as they are commensurate and impactful to academic performance of learners. Otherwise, such incentives might breed laziness when quality assurance checks are not instituted.

For the case of offering retirement packages to Primary teachers, which was another element of a specific research objective, the degree of perceived agreement and disagreement among respondents significantly reduced. This was supported by figures in Table 12 above, where thirty-seven (37) respondents represented by 59.7% had the perception that retirement packages should be offered to Primary teachers, while twenty-five (25) respondents represented by 40.3% gave a negative perception towards offering retirement packages. The difference of 19.4% was attributed to fact that majority of respondents who were aged between 25 -35 years considered retirement package as dream since they were regarded as the youth (Polycarp et al., 2023).

The interpretation of this opinion was based on the fact that the youth teachers in Lugusuulu Sub county were not strategic thinkers to consider retirement benefits as a form of teachers towards enhancing teacher commitment to teaching responsibilities in Lugusuulu Sub-county.

Table 3: Showing results of teachers' perception on academic performance

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S/N	Statement on learners academic performance	Strongly Disagreed	Disagreed	Neutral	Agreed	Strongly Agreed	Total
1	Learners should attend classes promptly from the beginning to the end of the term to improve their academic performance	00	01	02	21	38	62
2	Learners must understand class work taught and do assignment offered to them as a way of improving their academic performance	00	02	03	20	37	62
3	Primary school teachers should attend to learners' academic work with speed and accuracy	01	03	05	32	21	62
4	Primary teachers should encourage learners to actively participate during the teaching time as a way of enhancing academic performance.	00	02	01	21	38	62
5	The intellectual capacity of learners positively impacts on the academic performance of learners	01	03	08	35	15	62
6	Learners should be rewarded for performing highly in PLE Examinations	02	01	22	20	17	62

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Teachers' opinions as to whether the intellectual capacity of learners positively impacted on the academic performance of learners in Government Aided Primary Schools as indicated in Table 13, reveals that, fifty (50) teachers, represented by 80.6% supported the statement. It was observed that eight (8) teachers represented by 12.9% neither agreed nor disagreed, while four (4) teachers represented by 6.5% indicated to the contrary. As a measure to address academic performance gaps among Students, teachers were requested to respond to a statement whether high performing learners should be rewarded when Primary Leaving Examinations results were released. It was discovered that thirty-seven (37) teachers, represented by 59.7% were in support of the statement, twenty-two (22) teachers represented by 35.5% were undecided, while three (3) teachers represented by 4.8% were not in agreement with the statement (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022).

The interpretation of these two opinions was based on the fact that learners' intellectual capacity varies from one learner to another. Some learners were more intelligent and hardworking than others and so their respective academic performance differs. Other learners were intelligent but not hard working, while some learners were neither intelligent nor hard working. Additionally, rewarding high performing Students in a Government Aided Primary School was costly. But if implemented, can create competition amongst learners which is considered healthy. Therefore, the intellectual capacity of learners and rewarding high performing learners positively impacted on learners' academic performance in Lugusuulu Sub county (Ronald et al., 2023).

In order to determine the opinions of teachers about the impact of monetary incentives on the academic performance of learners in selected Government Primary Schools in Sembabule District, a Chi-Square analysis technique was conducted and the following statement was postulated. "Do monetary incentives offered to Primary teachers positively impact on the learners' academic performance in Government Aided Primary Schools? "The results were summarized in the table below.

Table 5: Computation of Chi-Square Calculated Value (χ^2)

Category statement	Frequency Observed (fo)	Frequency Expected (fe)	(fo- fe)	(fo- fe) ²	<u>(fo- fe)²</u> / fe
Strongly Agreed	29	12.4	16.6	275.56	22.22
Agreed	26	12.4	13.6	184.96	14.92

Neither Agreed nor Disagreed	05	12.4	-7.4	54.76	4.42
Disagreed	02	12.4	-10.4	108.16	8.72
Strongly Disagreed	00	12.4	-12.4	153.76	12.4
					$\Sigma=62.68$

Table 15 above indicates the calculations which were manually done by the researcher to compute the value of Chi-Square Calculated. The first column represents the five study response statements, the second and the third column represents frequency observed and expected of each study response respectively, while the forth column represents the difference between the two frequencies. The fifth column represents the squared value of the difference between the two frequencies, and the last column represents standard deviation of both frequencies. The total figure of the standard deviation which is **62.68** is the Chi-Square Calculated (Xc^2) value (Nelson et al., 2023).

According to Udo (2006), to compute the Chi-Square critical value, the researcher had to take into account a certain Level of Significance (α) and Degree of Freedom (df). Udo (2006) further defined the Level of Significance (α) as a percentage degree at which the occurrence of an event is said to have taken place not by chance, but rather, under certain significant evidence. Therefore, the researcher chose a level of significance (α) of 0.05, among other levels, to avoid committing type one error. In research methods, such an error might lead to performance, it confirmed teaching performance measured by monitoring lessons taught, monitoring performance of Students in monthly tests, and reviewing Students' performance reports of different class teachers. In fact, one (1) head teacher confirmed that, class attendance and marking of Students' class work was a key performance measurement of work done by teachers. However, four (4) head teachers lamented that teachers' morale was low because PLE remuneration was not commensurate with the work done in comparison to the ever increasing inflation rate in the country. A record of written responses from head teachers' perceptions concerning the two research variables was summarized as shown below.

Head teachers noted that incentives offered to teachers were categorized into two groups: Financial and Non-financial incentives. This was in line with the conceptual framework. Head teachers mentioned that Primary teachers were given cash for their outstanding performance and allowances for additional responsibility performed as forms of financial

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incentives. The non –financial incentives which were offered to teachers were in form of free accommodation, occasional special meals for lunch and breakfast, certificates of recognition, verbal appreciation for excellent work done, physical gifts such as flasks and T- shirts, congratulatory or appreciation messages on phones, free workshop attendance, festive season packages and free land for farming purposes. The head teachers noted that incentives impacted on the teacher attitude towards teaching in form of improved commitment to teaching of learners, consistent punctuality of teachers, frequent monitoring of Students class work for continuous academic improvement and enhanced teachers’ participation when designing school rules and regulations as well as implementing disciplinary measures. The researcher also noted that head teachers recorded down strategies which were used to energize teachers when incentives are not provided. Such strategies included encouraging teachers to be patriotic, sensitizing parents to support teachers financially (Christopher, Moses, Muhindo, & Komunda, 2022), organizing staff meetings with the School Management Committee and appealing to teachers to work hard to influence parents for subsequent rewards.

Additionally, head teachers suggested that comparing class work taught with syllabus coverage, following up Students class work in exercise books, ensuring that time management is respected by teachers and assessing of learner’s performance in external tests and examinations, review learner’s performance trends were the measures used to enhance academic performance of learners. Lastly, head teachers noted that in some situations strategies such as developing and sustaining a good working relationship with teachers.

Discussion of Study Findings

The objective of identifying the nature of monetary incentive offered to teachers in Lugusuulu Sub county formed part of study deliverables. The results presented and analyzed revealed that financial and non –financial incentives offered impacted on teachers’ commitment to teaching duties leading to improved academic performance of learners. The study findings indicated that head teachers had an obligation to be innovative enough to provide incentives to Primary teachers, transparently and consistently, so that a high trends of learners’ academic performance in PLE Examinations in Lugusuulu Sub-county. Head teachers expressed their view that Primary School Students specifically in rural areas don’t take studies seriously and as such class attendance is poor because of rampant agricultural activities. Education is not considered as a priority by learners in Lugusuulu Sub county. So even if Primary teachers are offered with incentives to enhance academic performance, learners are either not available for lessons or they are not interested in studying.

Ascertaining the impact of monetary incentives to teachers’ commitment to teach learners in Lugusuulu Sub-county was the third objective to be achieved. The study findings revealed that the strategy of offering incentives based on individual teacher performance had little impact on learners’ academic performance and in some cases it generated negative impact which kills team work. Group incentives based on collective group performance of the entire teaching team can stimulate efforts to perform teaching responsibilities to the expected standards; but in this situation, a teacher may PLE efforts to achieving collecting academic performance in response to an increase in the contribution of other

group members. It should be noted that offering the combination of individual and group incentives could be a solution to anticipated competition among teachers.

Monetary incentives impact on the learners' academic performance because a motivated teacher can report on the duty early, can attend classroom lessons promptly, can ensure that academic syllabus is fully covered, can teach and give adequate content to the learners, can assess the learners' academic performance and identify their weaknesses. When a teacher is not offered incentives, given the fact that remuneration is low, such a Primary teacher will have a poor attitude towards teaching. In fact, teaching will not be considered as a profession but rather as a means of survival. Therefore, failure to introduce monetary incentives to Primary education would escalate poor academic performance of learners.

Conclusions

According to the study findings from the raw data that was computed and analyzed, the value Chi-Square calculated was noted to be far greater than the critical value of Chi-Square tabled. This was also based on the fact that, teachers in government aided Primary schools were among the least paid government employees yet they contribute enormously to national development.

Recommendations

- Primary seven teachers should be employed using performance contracts, where in most cases; the employment contract could be renewed basing on learners' national academic results.
- Head teachers should work with other stakeholders such as political leaders in Sembabule District to enforce strict penalties on irresponsible parents whose children don't attend classes regularly despite the free Primary Education Government Policy.

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