

Effects of Motivation on the Performance of Teachers: The Case of Selected Primary Schools in Serenje District

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of motivation on the performance of primary school teachers in selected schools in Serenje District, Central Province. Using a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 113 respondents, including teachers, headteachers, and School Management Committee members, through questionnaires and focus group discussions. The findings showed that although teacher motivation was generally low, performance remained relatively good, with teachers demonstrating high morale through regular attendance and commitment to duties. The study established a positive relationship between both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and teacher performance, indicating that motivation plays a significant role in enhancing effectiveness. The study recommends improving teacher motivation through better salaries, allowances, provision of accommodation, strengthened supervision, and recognition of good performance.

Keywords: Teacher motivation, primary education, teaching methods, student engagement, performance, Serenje District, professional development, educational outcomes

1. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Teacher motivation is a key factor in improving the quality of education, as it influences teachers' commitment, morale, and classroom performance. Both intrinsic factors (such as passion and personal satisfaction) and extrinsic factors (such as salary, recognition, and working conditions) play a vital role in shaping teacher effectiveness and student outcomes. In many developing countries, including Zambia, teacher motivation is often affected by challenges such as low salaries, poor infrastructure, limited teaching resources, and lack of professional development opportunities. These challenges are more pronounced in rural areas like Serenje District, where teachers work under difficult conditions, including overcrowded classrooms and limited support.

Studies globally and in Africa have shown that motivated teachers are more committed, use effective teaching methods, and positively influence student achievement. However, teachers in rural Zambia continue to face motivational challenges that may affect their performance.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers in Serenje District face several challenges, including low remuneration, inadequate resources, limited professional development, and high teacher-pupil ratios. These factors are believed to negatively affect their motivation and performance.

Despite efforts by the Ministry of Education, there is limited research on how these motivational factors influence teacher performance in rural areas. This study therefore seeks to examine how teacher motivation affects performance in Serenje District.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of motivation on the performance of teachers in selected primary schools in Serenje District, focusing on both intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

To investigate the effects of motivation on the performance of primary school teachers in Serenje District.

Specific Objectives

1. To determine whether teacher motivation affects morale and performance.
2. To examine the effect of intrinsic motivation on teacher performance.
3. To assess the influence of extrinsic motivation on teacher performance.

Research Questions

1. Does teacher motivation affect performance and morale?
2. What is the effect of intrinsic motivation on performance?
3. What is the effect of extrinsic motivation on performance?

Significance of the Study

The study provides useful insights for policymakers, school administrators, and teachers. It helps inform strategies to improve teacher motivation through better salaries, professional development, and supportive work environments. It also contributes to research on teacher motivation in rural contexts.

Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to a few selected schools in Serenje District and involved a relatively small sample. Data collection relied on participants' responses, which may be subject to bias.

Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which explains motivation through two categories:

- **Hygiene factors:** Salary, working conditions, and job security, which prevent dissatisfaction.
- **Motivational factors:** Achievement, recognition, and growth, which enhance satisfaction and performance.
- The theory suggests that while improving working conditions reduces dissatisfaction, true motivation comes from intrinsic factors such as recognition and professional growth.

Operational Definitions

- **Teacher Motivation:** Factors influencing teachers' willingness to perform their duties.
- **Teacher Performance:** Effectiveness in teaching and improving student outcomes.
- **Intrinsic Motivation:** Internal drive such as passion and satisfaction.
- **Extrinsic Motivation:** External rewards such as salary and recognition.
- **Teacher Morale:** Teachers' level of enthusiasm and job satisfaction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews literature on teacher motivation and its influence on performance. It focuses on the concept of teacher motivation, factors influencing it, its role in teacher performance, and strategies for improving motivation at global, regional, and local levels.

Understanding Teacher Motivation

Teacher motivation refers to internal and external factors that influence teachers' willingness to perform their duties effectively. According to Self-Determination Theory, motivation can be intrinsic (driven by personal satisfaction and passion) or extrinsic (driven by rewards such as salary and recognition).

Research shows that intrinsic motivation is more sustainable and leads to higher commitment, creativity, and enthusiasm in teaching. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory further explains that motivational factors (achievement, recognition, growth) enhance satisfaction, while hygiene factors (salary, working conditions) prevent dissatisfaction but do not necessarily improve performance.

Factors Influencing Teacher Motivation

Internal Factors

Internal factors include personal values, teaching philosophy, and career goals. Teachers with strong intrinsic motivation and a sense of purpose are more committed and engaged in their work.

External Factors

External factors include salary, working conditions, school leadership, and availability of teaching resources. Studies show that poor infrastructure, low pay, and lack of support reduce motivation, especially in rural areas. Supportive leadership and recognition from school administrators significantly improve teacher morale.

Role of Motivation in Teacher Performance

Motivation has a direct impact on teacher performance. Motivated teachers are more likely to use effective teaching methods, engage learners, and improve student outcomes.

Studies indicate that intrinsically motivated teachers demonstrate greater commitment and innovation, while lack of motivation leads to low performance, absenteeism, and burnout. Motivation also affects teacher retention, as satisfied teachers are more likely to remain in the profession.

Strategies for Improving Teacher Motivation

Improving Working Conditions

Better infrastructure, adequate teaching materials, and safe environments help improve teacher morale and performance.

Increasing Salaries and Benefits

Competitive salaries and allowances are important in reducing dissatisfaction, especially in developing countries.

Professional Development

Training and career development opportunities enhance teachers' skills, confidence, and motivation.

Recognition and Career Growth

Acknowledging teachers' efforts and providing promotion opportunities increase job satisfaction and commitment.

Global Perspectives on Teacher Motivation

Globally, teacher motivation is strongly linked to education quality. Countries with well-supported teachers tend to achieve better student outcomes. Investment in teacher development, salaries, and supportive work environments is key to improving performance.

Regional Perspectives (Sub-Saharan Africa)

In Sub-Saharan Africa, teacher motivation is affected by limited funding, poor infrastructure, and lack of resources. Studies show that improving working conditions, recognition, and professional growth opportunities can significantly enhance teacher performance.

Local Perspectives (Zambia)

In Zambia, particularly in rural areas like Serenje District, teacher motivation remains a major challenge. Teachers face issues such as delayed salaries, overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and lack of professional development opportunities.

These challenges often lead to low morale, stress, and reduced performance. However, supportive school leadership and intrinsic motivation have been shown to improve teacher commitment even under difficult conditions. Government efforts and teacher unions have attempted to improve conditions, but challenges persist.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methods used to conduct the study, including the research paradigm, approach, design, sampling, data collection, analysis, and ethical considerations. It explains how data were collected and analysed to ensure credible and valid findings.

Research Paradigm

The study was guided by a qualitative research paradigm, which focuses on understanding participants' experiences and perspectives. This paradigm allowed for an in-depth exploration of teacher motivation and how it influences performance within a real-life context.

Research Approach

A qualitative approach was used to gather detailed and contextualized data. This approach enabled the researcher to explore teachers' views, experiences, and perceptions regarding motivation and performance through interviews and discussions.

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive case study design, which allowed for an in-depth examination of teacher motivation within selected schools. This design was appropriate for understanding real-life situations without manipulating variables.

Population

The study population consisted of teachers in Serenje District, who were selected because of their direct involvement in teaching and their ability to provide relevant insights on motivation and performance.

Sample Size

A sample of 113 participants was selected from the population. The sample included individuals with diverse backgrounds to ensure a broad range of perspectives.

Sampling Procedure

The study used purposive sampling to select participants with relevant experience and knowledge about teacher motivation. This method ensured that participants could provide meaningful and detailed information.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using:

- **Interview guides** (semi-structured)
- **Focus group discussions (FGDs)**

These instruments allowed participants to express their views freely and provided rich qualitative data.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted over a period of three months. Participants were informed about the study and gave consent before participating. Interviews and FGDs were conducted, recorded, and later transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using thematic analysis, where responses were coded and grouped into themes. This helped identify patterns related to teacher motivation and performance.

Trustworthiness, Reliability, and Validity

To ensure quality:

- **Credibility** was achieved through member checking and triangulation.
- **Dependability** was ensured by maintaining clear research procedures.
- **Confirmability** was maintained by minimizing researcher bias.
- **Transferability** was supported through detailed descriptions of the study context.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were maintained by:

- Obtaining informed consent
- Ensuring confidentiality and anonymity
- Protecting participants from harm
- Allowing voluntary participation

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the effects of motivation on the performance of teachers in selected primary schools in Serenje District, Zambia. The findings revealed that teacher motivation plays a significant role in influencing performance. Both intrinsic factors, such as passion for teaching and personal satisfaction, and extrinsic factors, such as salary, working conditions, and recognition, were found to affect teachers' morale and effectiveness in the classroom.

The study established that although many teachers demonstrated commitment and maintained acceptable performance levels, their overall motivation remained inadequate due to challenges such as low salaries, limited resources, and lack of professional development

opportunities. These challenges were more evident in rural settings, where working conditions are often difficult.

Furthermore, the study confirmed a positive relationship between motivation and teacher performance. Teachers who felt supported, recognized, and provided with opportunities for growth were more likely to perform better and engage effectively with learners.

The study concludes that improving teacher motivation requires a balanced approach that addresses both extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Enhancing working conditions alone is not sufficient; efforts must also focus on recognition, career development, and supportive leadership. Addressing these issues is essential for improving teacher performance and ultimately enhancing the quality of education in Serenje District and similar rural contexts.

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