

## Motivational Factors Affecting High School Teachers' Professional Conduct and Work Performance: A Case of Public High Schools in Nairobi City

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### Abstract

*Professional conduct is critical to effective work performance of all employees including teachers. The teaching profession requires a high degree of professionalism as required in the teacher's code of conduct, professional ethics and generally 'expected' norms for teachers by the society given the important role teachers play in molding students, guidance and overall students' academic performance. The foregoing notwithstanding, there have been reports indicative that teachers professional conduct has not been consistent with their professional call. Proper understanding and appreciation of the underlying motivational factors affecting the professional conduct of teachers is critical to effective management of the challenge therein. Poor professional conduct has been put forward as a precursor to low morale and is said to lead to poor work performance. Low morale emanates from lack of motivation and failure by employers to address employee needs, drives and capabilities. This study sought to establish the motivational factors affecting teachers' professional conduct and work performance of high school teachers in Nairobi County. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with a sample of 150 teachers. The findings indicated teachers professional conduct and work performance is greatly influenced by motivational factors and there is need to review the motivational tools in place to align them with the teachers need.*

**Key words:** Professionalism, Motivation, low morale, Teacher, High schools

### 1. Introduction

Employees are the most important resource in every institution. Through their individualized professional competence, they provide valued products and services. But, do employees perform to their full potential in view of their skills, abilities and capabilities? Finer (2000) notes that employee's performance level never exceeds 50% of an individual capacity to perform particularly when not effectively motivated. They may stunt in low morale often displayed in poor professional conduct and poor work performance. Employees' productive performance and professionalism can be enhanced through motivational practices responsive to their needs. Gibbs (1994) defines professionalism as qualification arising from a specific body of knowledge and its ethical code of conduct.

Good work performance and professionalism are said to go hand in hand. Highly motivated employees perform better, thus enhancing their professional growth through training and experience. A sense of identity and distinctiveness also increases translating into professional growth. How employees behave at work, is not simply a result of random influences. Behaviour is caused and so is its reoccurrence. To date education remains the most important index in measuring development of a nation (Human Development Journal 2007). Its linkage to other indicators of development like socio-economic status, health, mortality rate, technology and poverty reduction are clear. Education is credited with developing the full potential of people to lead productive lives. Fundamentally, education enlarges people's choices in life through capacity building and transforms people by making them more receptive (Ndegwa, 2001). In view of the above, the Kenyan government has continued to invest immensely in education with over 40% of the country's resources being spent on education (Economic Survey 2010).

High school education spends a substantial part of this allocation. Its importance is seen in it being the bridge between primary education and higher learning. Charged with the responsibilities of this monumental duty, is the high school teacher.

The government is the employer of all public high school teachers through the Teachers Service Commission (T.S.C.) a corporate body established under the Kenyan law and enshrined in the constitution. Its mandate includes all human resource functions comprising employment and deployment of teachers, remuneration, performance appraisal, promotion and transfer, registration, interdiction and termination of service, advisory services and any other practices that are necessary to facilitate the teacher services in schools. In particular, the commission is in charge of managing the professional conduct of high school teachers. However, evidence documented by the school's inspectorate department in the Ministry of Education (2010) indicates a lapse in the teaching fraternity's work, professional conduct and work performance. It is therefore imperative to establish the motivational factors which affect teachers' professional conduct and work performance.

## **2. Objectives of the Study**

- a) To identify the effect of human resource management practices on teachers' work performance and professionalism.
- a) To establish the effect of the teachers' scheme of service on performance and professionalism of teachers'?
- b) To come up with suggestions on enhancing high school teachers' performance and professionalism.

## **3. Research Questions**

- b) What is the effect of human resource management practice on teacher's performance and professionalism?
- c) What is the effect of the teacher's scheme of service on performance and professionalism of teachers'?
- d) What other motivational factors affect teachers' professionalism of public high school teachers?

## **4. Statement of the Problem**

Employee work performance and professional conduct is an importance prerequisite for competitiveness. Work performance and professionalism may be affected variously by different organizational aspects including motivational factors. Secondary education is important, due to its being a bridge between basic primary education and University education. Charged with the implementation and facilitation of this role is the high school teacher. The teacher is central to inculcating attitudes, values and character through teaching. The teacher is a role model of which students' intellect and behaviour are conditioned, imitated and learnt. She is a counsel and can alter behaviour through reinforcement and motivation.

Contrastingly, teachers' work performance and professional conduct has become a subject of public scrutiny over the past two decades. The government is duty-bound to provide a good education to her citizens. To achieve this, she needs highly motivated teachers whose work performance and professional conduct are exemplary. Forester (2002), states that the secret of success, for any business is highly professional employees who deliver both high quality work and optimum quantity. This research is proposed to establish the motivational factors that may be contributing to poor work ethics, low morale affecting work performance and the professional conduct of public high school teachers.

## **5. Literature Review**

### **Theoretical perspective**

This study is founded on Herzberg (1968) two factor theory. He advanced his theory making by a distinction between lower and higher order needs. He described the lower order needs as potential dissatisfiers or hygiene factors and the higher needs as potential satisfiers or motivators. Hygiene factors include pay, job security, supervision and working conditions. The motivators are those factors that increase motivation but whose absence does not necessarily result in dissatisfaction. These include achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, growth and work design. The former are important bases of building a foundation of motivational factors while the latter's presence motivate employees' disposition for pursuit of professionalism.

## Foundations of motivation

Over the years, different perspectives on motivation have evolved. The perspectives can largely be classified as macro and micro. The macro describes the nature of humans, while the micro explains the specific behaviour likes social, political and cultural factors. Cherry (2000), states that ancient philosophies Aristotle and Plato, medieval ones like Aquinas and recently Spinoza view human as rational beings, with divergent needs. Recent findings published by Hersey and Blanchard (2001) explain that advancement, autonomy, caring bosses, company philosophy, fringe benefits, improved communication channels with top management /supervisors, responsibility, good working conditions, tactful disciplinary machinery, good wages, clear promotion and growth opportunities, job security and interesting work motivate employees. The absence of motivational factors negatively impacts employee behavior and results to low work morale. Polarold (2002) identified certain motivational aspects found to be a success story for well performing organizations. They include good working environment, good financial incentives, and employee development and training and general welfare services. Aspects that further satisfy employees include recognition for good performance and employer branding as a choice employer.

Thomson and Strikland (2001) found that in most successful Japanese companies, employees met regularly to have professionally inspirational dialogues and recite professional litany. They further noted that one of the most untapped motivational factors was the creation of 'unashamed' professional attitude and values including the belief in doing the best job and profession. The opportunity for recognition, power, social status, prestige, security, belonging, growth and development in their career and good leadership are much more important than money towards good performance. In view of the foregoing, public high school teachers can be motivated by among other things, a good salary, personal growth, development and sense of belonging/security, pride in the teaching profession, good working environment and conditions. Researchers (Bellois, 2003) in the field of motivation by consensus, agree that motivation plays an important role in the productivity and professionalism of employees. Whereas there may be no single 'best practice' concerning motivation to which all organizations should aspire to meet. Employees must feel valued, part and parcel of the organization. Some feeling of ownership on the part of the employees must prevail. Conductive leadership style that stimulates employees' performance should be put in place. Good employee relations that foster informal and interpersonal groups at work should also be at play. Good compensatory schemes and also good salaries must be in place. Work must be as much fun as play. Actions to satisfy employees' needs, increase quality of work life must be tied to every H R practice in the organization. Bryan (2003) summarily contends that motivation is crucial to every organization that seeks to effectively succeed.

## 6. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design and the target population comprised all teachers in Public High Schools within Nairobi City. A list of these schools was obtained from the Nairobi Provincial Director of Education in the Ministry of Education.

The researcher randomly sampled a total of 150 respondents being 10% of the total population and conventionally viewed as representative of a large population. Data was collected by use of structured and semi-structured questionnaires preceded by a pilot study to verify the instruments. The data collected was analyzed with a use of appropriate statistical tools, which include descriptive statistics such as proportions, frequencies and percentages.

## 7. Findings

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents by gender and educational background**

Educational Background	Male		Female		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Graduate</b>	28	32.9	57	67.9	85	68
<b>Diploma</b>	24	60%	16	40%	40	32
<b>Total</b>	52	40.2	73	59.8	125	100

As shown in table 1, a total of 73 females and 52 males took part in the research. This indicates that both men and women were fairly represented. The table also shows that majority of the candidates that took part in the research were graduate teachers with university qualification. They formed 68% while 32 % held diploma qualification.

**Table 2: Work experience**

<b>WORK EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>NO.</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>5-10 years</b>	74	59%
<b>Over 1 0 years</b>	51	41%
<b>Total</b>	125	100%

On staff work experience (teaching), the results revealed that 59 % of candidates in the research samples had worked for duration of 5 - 10 years while 41 % had an experience of more than 10 years. 80% of the respondents indicated that they had not enjoyed any career development opportunities besides their initial teaching experience, 20% had the opportunity to attend career development programme of which 10 % of this cohort had pursued or were pursuing masters programmes, 5% post -graduate diplomas mainly in counseling and the other 5% had done short courses in computer packages. Those on further studies indicated that they were sponsoring themselves from their own salaries under strenuous circumstances and that the employer did not support them satisfactorily.

Asked whether they enjoyed their job, 73.3 % of the respondents, indicated that they did not, while the rest (26.7%) answered in the affirmative, 50% of those who had indicated that they were not enjoying their job, cited various frustrations at work; 20% cited inadequate pay and incentives. Another 20% indicated that generally promotions and related human resources practices were not done strictly on merit and satisfactorily. The last 10% cited other reasons. On appraisal, 70% of the respondents conceded that it was done seldom, 20 % indicated that it was never done, while 10% indicated that it had indeed been done but haphazardly. On whether it helped them improve on their performance, 84.8 % of those appraised indicated that it had not and 15.2 % indicated that it did. When asked whether they felt motivated to report on duty the results showed that 71.4% were not while 28.6 % said yes. Majority (89 %) of those who said yes i.e. 28.6 % indicated that what motivated them to report on duty was fear of losing their job. This compares to 11% who said that their motivation was due to such reasons as; love for their job, a sense of feeling a moral responsibility and obligations to perform their duties, well as members of society as well as a great zeal to attract promotion, career development recommendation, recognition and reward.

Others saw it as an activity that put food on their table, for those who said they did not feel motivated to report to work (71.4 %), 51% cited the inadequacy of a total compensation, incentive and reward package as the major reasons that lowered their morale. Total compensation was used to refer to an umbrella of compensatory issues, like poor salary, unattractive benefits i.e. medical allowance, housing, insurance, educational fund, training and development avenues; employee services, increments, growth and future prospects. 27 % said that poor human resource practices such as disciplinary machinery, placement, promotion, transfers, appraisal, management style, secrecy, working conditions and mutual communication systems were the cause of their de-motivation, especially by their employer. 15% cited frustrations at work place such as undisciplined students, oppressive and witch hunting principals, unfriendly workmates, and lack of good working conditions, poor sanitation, dark offices, congestions and poor furniture /infrastructure as their de-motivation. Lastly, 5% accounted for other reasons which ranged from unfriendly parents, negative attitude towards the profession by the society "Nobody cared about the teachers as long as students passed" and also a feeling of being used and exploited by the employer / heavy workload. As regards absenteeism, a big number of the respondents, (80%) indicated that they had indeed been absent from duty to make extra money for livelihood. The remaining 20% indicated that they had not been absent.

In a follow-up to the absenteeism trend, 86% of the respondents indicated that they were conveniently sick, disinterested in work, boredom of routine, poor human resource practices, poor rewards systems, too much work, unruly students, and lack of growth avenues, excitement and negativity, supplementing their low salaries with other businesses. Those who did not absent themselves cited love for the teaching job, lack of strictness, the job catered for their food, shelter and clothing, school fees, it was challenging and interesting. On whether the respondents were aware of the code of regulations, a majority of them (87.6%) answered in the affirmative while 12.4 % indicated that they were not aware of it. Those who were aware of it, 89.5% indicated that they were not conversant with it. Only 10.5% of those aware were conversant.

When asked whether communication channels were freely open to them, only 13.9% of the respondents answered in the affirmative. 86.1 % indicated the channels were not open to them. 89% of the respondents answered that recruitment, selection, induction, recognition, promotion, compensation and staff services were handled poorly. The rest 11% indicated that these practices were done satisfactorily. When questioned whether if given an opportunity, they would leave their job for another, majority i.e. 91 % said yes, while only 9 % said no. The reasons given for a yes are indicated in table 3.

**Table 3: Reasons for leaving job**

Reasons for leaving job	N	%
For greener pastures in terms of higher salary	20	17.5
Higher rate of job satisfaction, interesting and less frustration.	15	13.2
For more performance related rewards.	15	13.2
For transparent and on merit human resource practices.	15	13.2
For involvement in decision making and open communication channels.	20	17.5
Secrecy, prestige in society and status quo.	15	13.2
Friendly working conditions, facilities and terms.	14	12.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100</b>

Of the 9% who indicated they would not leave their job, 75 % said it was because they were satisfied with their current job while the next 25% indicated that they were used to it and they preferred it more to another. Asked what the government i.e. the Teachers Service Commission and the Principals should do to motivate teachers, various responses were given. These have been separately tabulated and presented below.

**Table 4: Responses as to what the T.S.C should do**

Response	Frequency	%
Ensure fair, effective and efficient human resource practices (recruitment selection, induction, appraisal, promotion, transfer, disciplinary)	25	20
Improve channels of communication, secrecy of teachers affairs (terms and conditions of employment out of media and public)	15	12
Improve the overall total compensation package (fringe benefits, salaries and other allowances).	20	16
Create prestige in the teaching profession (corporate culture)	10	8
Fair treatment and good working conditions.	10	8
Clear-cut career path development, growth through supported training and development avenues.	10	12
Good employee services (retirement, separation counseling clinics, subsidized drugs education fund, health and fitness clubs).	5	4
Recognition (awards of merit, end-year parties and greetings).	5	4
Friendly management styles.	10	8
Retrain its staff to have good customer care/service culture. Also good public relations towards teachers	5	4
Others.	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 5: Response as to what the principals should do**

What to do	Frequency	%
Be good leader, good managers and role models.	40	32
Should exercise impartiality not witch hunting teachers and treat them fairly.	20	16
Involve teachers in decisions at the school.	15	12
Listen to teachers and understand them, ensuring good conflict resolution.	15	12
Create good working environment and employee relations.	10	8
Recognize/e teachers heavy burden/ motivate them in word or material if possible.	10	8
Go for refresher courses/training in human resource management	10	8
Others	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 6: Suggestions for increasing motivation**

<b>Suggestion</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Improved total compensation package (pay, benefits and rewards).	14
Effective, fair and efficient human resource practices (recruitment selection, promotion transfer, disciplinary for teachers).	14
Friendly training and career development strategy / programmes.	13
Motivation techniques to be incorporated in training curriculum for all heads.	12
Reviewed syllabus, restructured job -enlargement and enrichment.	14
Non-financial factors like; Good communication channels, value employees, positivity and secrecy of teachers' issues.	13
Encouraging teamwork, propagating job security and good retirement plans.	14
Good working relations, employee relations and participatory management styles.	13
Refresher courses for the T.S.C. staff, retrain her personnel on how to handle teachers appropriately	13
Others	10

As revealed by the findings, majority of high school teachers don't care or love their work as they should. High rates of absenteeism are common. Those who report to work are neither efficient nor effective. Most of them go to work because the jobs are a simple channel of partially meeting their financial obligations. Those interviewed were clearly unhappy about most human resource practices especially how they are administered. There were clear indications that the overall compensation package is neither satisfactory nor pleasant. Recruitment, selection, induction, appraisal, promotion, recognition, disciplinary machinery, transfers and retirements were singled out as either opaque or unprofessional. Moreover, non-monetary but job-related incentives like training and development, career development, study leaves, health and educational funds, employee services, open and friendly management systems were found inadequate or non-existent. There was a clear indication that motivational requirements of teachers are not adequately met.

### **8. Conclusion, Implications and Recommendation.**

The government must stride to attract, develop and retain high performing teachers who are highly motivated. It should put in place realistic and attractive professional compensation packages, models of staff recognition and other all-round motivational programmes. Without the above in place, teachers may continue to spend more time engaging in income-generating activities outside their work. Additionally, aspects of job enlargement, opportunities for promotion, pay increments, bonuses and luncheons, good performance measures that foster career development should be in place. Transparent and professional recruitments and selection, promotion, appraisals training and separation, open communication channels need also be addressed. Sound management of employee relations and respect to labour relations agreements also need to be prioritized. Employees' welfare services such as lunch, tea, good furniture, spacious /ventilated offices and a distinct corporate image will be good for the professional pride. Respect and fair administration to the code of conduct will ensure that teachers own the professional conduct. The employer should enlighten teachers on the code of regulations and ensure that they are conversant with it and deal with their issues with meaningful privacy. In summary the government should put in place a sound professional and ethical management system of all teachers welfare issues that envisage teachers motivational needs, with a view of adequately meeting them.

### **9. Suggestions for Further Research.**

This research looked at motivational factors affecting high schools teachers' professional conduct and work performance. Other researches may undertake to improve on the recommendations arising from the findings of this study and thus facilitate better management of teachers' affairs as well as carry out the study in the context of primary school teachers or higher levels of teaching.

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