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Influence of Financial Motivational Mechanism on Teacher Professional Performance in Public Senior Schools in Kajiado County, Kenya

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Abstract

This study examined how financial motivational mechanisms influence teacher professional performance in public senior schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study was guided by one research question: To what extent do financial motivational mechanisms influence teacher professional performance in public senior schools in Kajiado County, Kenya? The study was guided by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory. The study used a concurrent mixed-methods research design; a cross-sectional research design was used in the quantitative component, while phenomenology was used in the qualitative component. The target population were one county director, Ministry of Education, Kajiado county, one TSC county director Kajiado county, 71 principals, 1104 teachers and 71 PA chairpersons with 59 principals sampled using purposive critical sampling, 285 teachers sampled using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling table, 59 PA chairpersons sampled using purposive sampling, 1 TSC and 1 MOE county directors sampled using purposive critical sampling for the study in public senior schools in Kajiado county, Kenya. ANOVA was used to analyze the hypotheses. The findings established that financial motivational mechanisms significantly influenced teachers' professional performance in public senior schools. The results indicated a statistically significant relationship ($p < .001$). Since $p < .001$ was less than the established significance level of $\alpha = .05$, the null hypothesis was rejected. The study concluded that financial motivational mechanisms are fundamental determinants of teachers' professional performance in public senior schools. The study recommended that the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), the Ministry of Education (MOE), and school principals should develop and implement comprehensive motivational policies that integrate financial motivational mechanisms and other financial interventions that are likely to enhance teachers' professional performance, increase job satisfaction and commitment, and improve the overall quality of education in public senior schools.

Key Words: Financial Motivational Mechanisms; Teacher Professional Performance

1. Introduction

Financial motivational mechanisms are monetary incentives provided by employers to enhance employees' commitment, productivity, and professional performance. In the education sector, these mechanisms include salaries, allowances, performance bonuses, medical cover, and other welfare benefits that help teachers meet their economic needs while motivating them to perform effectively (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Stephen, 2023). According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, adequate financial rewards satisfy teachers' physiological and safety needs, reduce job dissatisfaction, and create an enabling environment for improved professional performance. Studies have consistently shown that teachers who receive fair and adequate financial compensation are more committed, productive, and satisfied with their work, while inadequate remuneration contributes to low morale, absenteeism, and reduced effectiveness (OECD, 2020; UNESCO, 2024). Consequently, financial motivational mechanisms remain a critical component of teacher motivation and an important determinant of professional performance.

1.1 Statement of the problem

The professional performance of teachers in public senior schools in Kajiado County remained a concern among education stakeholders due to persistent challenges in professional commitment, instructional preparedness,



punctuality, adherence to professional ethics, curriculum implementation, learner assessment, participation in co-curricular activities, maintenance of professional records, and engagement in continuous professional development. Despite interventions by the Teachers Service Commission, Ministry of Education, Boards of Management, Parent Associations, civil society organizations, and local communities, including financial incentives, recognition, welfare support, professional development, improved working conditions, and provision of teaching and learning resources, concerns regarding teacher effectiveness and school performance persisted. Reports from the Kajiado County Quality Assurance and Standards Office (2025) highlighted shortcomings in classroom engagement, lesson attendance, punctuality, curriculum implementation, learner assessment, and co-curricular participation, which potentially affected the quality of instruction and learner achievement. The continued concerns despite substantial motivational interventions raised questions about the adequacy and effectiveness of existing motivational mechanisms, thereby necessitating an empirical investigation into their influence on teachers' professional performance in public senior schools in Kajiado County.

1.2 Research Question

To what extent do financial motivational mechanisms influence teachers' professional performance in public senior schools in Kajiado County, Kenya?

1.3 Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no statistically significant influence of financial motivational mechanisms on teachers' professional performance in public senior schools in Kajiado County, Kenya.

2. Methodology

The study used a concurrent mixed-methods research design. A concurrent mixed-methods design involves collecting both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time or in parallel. The approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem by merging the strengths of both data types. In a concurrent design, the collection of qualitative and quantitative data is independent, and neither type of data informs the collection of the other. A cross-sectional research design was used in the quantitative component of the study. The researcher used a cross-sectional research design because it is relatively fast and inexpensive, as data is collected once, avoiding costly follow-ups, making it great for pilot studies or limited budgets.

Phenomenological research design was used in the qualitative component. The research design sought to explore and understand teachers' lived experiences regarding motivational mechanisms and how these experiences influence their professional performance (Sharma, 2022). The study comprised 59 principals, 285 teachers, 1 TSC County Director, 1 Ministry of Education County Director, and 59 Parent Association Chairpersons, drawn from 59 sampled public senior schools in Kajiado County. The study employed questionnaires, interview guides, document analysis schedules, and observation schedules to collect comprehensive data. Content validity of the research instruments was established by having the instruments appraised by three (3) experts. To test the reliability of the instrument, a split-half reliability test was used. The correlation between the two parts was 0.954, indicating a strong relationship.



3. Findings

Frequency Distribution and percentages on Financial Motivational Mechanisms and teacher professional performance

Statement	Very large extent n (%)	Large extent n (%)	No extent n (%)	Small extent n (%)	Very small extent n (%)
1. Our school principal and parents give financial incentives to the teachers consistently and fairly without any forms of favoritism	43 (20.9%)	82 (39.8%)	27 (13.1%)	27 (13.1%)	27 (13.1%)
2. The financial incentives given to teachers in our school whenever they excelled in various activities have improved their work performance	52 (25.2%)	85 (41.3%)	26 (12.6%)	24 (11.7%)	19 (9.2%)
3. The allowances I receive from the employer such as hardship, house and commuter are sufficient to cover my personal monthly expenses	26 (12.6%)	30 (14.6%)	60 (29.1%)	49 (23.8%)	41 (19.9%)
4. The remuneration that I receive from the employer is competitive compared to other professions with similar qualifications	20 (9.7%)	59 (28.6%)	56 (27.2%)	9 (14.1%)	42 (20.4%)
5. Low pay I receive from my employer invokes me to look for income generating activities outside school e.g farming, part-time teaching in universities, tuition or running my businesses.	67 (32.0%)	66 (32.0%)	28 (13.6%)	24 (11.7%)	20 (9.7%)
6. The pay I receive monthly makes me less committed to attend lessons and extra-curricular activities assigned to me.	27 (13.1%)	65 (31.6%)	47 (22.8%)	23 (11.2%)	44 (21.4%)
N	235(18.91%)	387(31.31%)	244(19.73%)	176(14.26%)	193(15.61%)

The findings showed that 27 (13.1%) teachers each reported that financial incentives influenced their professional performance to a very small extent, a small extent, or no extent. This suggests that some teachers did not view school-based financial incentives as the main driver of their performance, possibly because their regular TSC salaries and benefits already met their basic financial needs. Instead, they were likely motivated by intrinsic factors such as professional commitment, ethics, and dedication to learners. These findings support Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, which emphasizes higher-order needs after basic needs are met, and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which regards salary as a hygiene factor while identifying achievement, recognition, and responsibility as the key motivators of superior performance.



The findings revealed that 82 (39.8%) teachers reported that financial incentives influenced their professional performance to a large extent, while 43 (20.9%) indicated a very large extent. This suggests that most teachers viewed fair and consistent financial incentives as important motivators that enhanced commitment, encouraged extra effort, and promoted participation in school improvement activities. The findings support Mbukwana (2023), who found that performance-based financial rewards improve employee effort, and are consistent with Vroom's Expectancy Theory, which argues that employees are motivated when they believe good performance will lead to meaningful rewards.

The findings showed that 19 (9.2%) teachers rated financial incentives for excellence as influencing their performance to a very small extent, 24 (11.7%) to a small extent, and 26 (12.6%) to no extent, meaning 69 (33.5%) perceived little or no motivational influence. This suggests that many teachers were motivated more by professional commitment, ethics, and personal values than by monetary rewards. It may also reflect the limited value, infrequent distribution, or perceived unfairness of such incentives. These findings are consistent with Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, which argues that financial rewards alone do not sustain long-term motivation once basic economic needs are met, while achievement, recognition, responsibility, and professional growth become stronger motivators.

The findings revealed that 85 (41.3%) teachers reported that financial rewards influenced their performance to a large extent, while 52 (25.2%) indicated a very large extent. This suggests that most teachers valued financial rewards as a form of recognition that enhanced commitment and professional performance. The findings support Juyumaya, Ochoa, and Rojas (2024), who found that financial incentives positively influence employee performance, and are consistent with Vroom's Expectancy Theory, which states that employees are motivated when they believe their efforts will lead to desirable rewards.

The findings revealed that 41 (19.9%) teachers rated hardship, commuter, and housing allowances as adequate to a very small extent, 49 (23.8%) to a small extent, and 60 (29.1%) to no extent, with 150 (72.8%) expressing dissatisfaction overall. This suggests that existing allowances are insufficient to meet teachers' financial needs, likely due to the rising cost of living, high housing and transport expenses, and family responsibilities. In Kajiado County, the remote location of many schools may further increase work-related costs, reducing the motivational value of these allowances.

The findings can be explained by Adams' Equity Theory, which suggests that perceived unfair compensation reduces motivation and commitment, and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which argues that unmet financial and security needs limit higher-level motivation. While 30 (14.6%) teachers rated the adequacy of allowances to a large extent and 26 (12.6%) to a very large extent, reflecting differences in personal circumstances, the majority perceived their remuneration as uncompetitive. Specifically, 127 (61.7%) teachers indicated that their salaries were not comparable to those of professionals with similar qualifications. This suggests that many teachers believe their remuneration does not adequately reflect their qualifications, responsibilities, and workload, reinforcing perceptions of inequity that may negatively affect morale, job satisfaction, and commitment.

The findings showed that 59 (28.6%) teachers perceived their remuneration as competitive to a large extent, while 20 (9.7%) reported a very large extent, likely due to benefits such as job security, pensions, medical cover, and predictable salary progression. However, many still viewed their remuneration as less competitive than that of similarly qualified professionals, consistent with Brevan (2025), who linked perceived pay inequity to lower morale and commitment. Additionally, 72 (35.0%) teachers indicated that low pay had little or no influence on their engagement in additional income-generating activities, suggesting that secondary economic activities are often driven by personal interests, entrepreneurship, or investment goals rather than financial necessity alone.

The findings revealed that 66 (32.0%) teachers reported to a large extent and 67 (32.5%) to a very large extent that low remuneration influenced their involvement in additional income-generating activities. Overall, 133 (64.5%) teachers acknowledged that inadequate pay encouraged them to seek supplementary income to meet rising living costs and family responsibilities. While these activities improve financial well-being, they may also reduce the time and energy available for lesson preparation, learner support, and other professional responsibilities, potentially affecting teachers' effectiveness.

The findings support the Efficiency Wage perspective, which suggests that adequate remuneration enables employees to focus on their primary responsibilities, and are consistent with Nugraha (2023) and Mmbusa (2024), who found that competitive pay enhances motivation, productivity, job satisfaction, and retention. In the context of this study, the results indicate that while many teachers are intrinsically motivated, fair and competitive remuneration remains essential for strengthening commitment, reducing reliance on supplementary income-generating activities, and improving professional performance in public senior schools in Kajiado County.

The findings showed that 44 (21.4%) teachers perceived monthly pay as influencing their commitment to lessons and co-curricular activities to a very small extent, 23 (11.2%) to a small extent, and 47 (22.8%) to no extent.



Overall, 114 (55.4%) teachers indicated that remuneration had little or no influence on their professional commitment. This suggests that many teachers are motivated by intrinsic factors such as professional ethics, dedication to learners, and a sense of responsibility. The findings support Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, which views salary as a factor that prevents dissatisfaction, while achievement, recognition, responsibility, and personal growth serve as stronger drivers of long-term motivation.

The findings revealed that 65 (31.6%) teachers reported that remuneration influenced their commitment to professional duties to a large extent, while 27 (13.1%) indicated a very large extent. This suggests that 44.7% of teachers viewed fair and adequate pay as an important factor enhancing motivation, commitment, and willingness to undertake additional responsibilities. The findings support Equity Theory, which explains that employees are motivated when they perceive fairness between their contributions and rewards. Conversely, perceptions of inadequate compensation may reduce enthusiasm for extra duties such as coaching, club supervision, and remedial teaching.

The findings indicate that teacher commitment is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. While many teachers maintain commitment regardless of remuneration, a significant proportion associate their dedication with fair and adequate pay. This suggests that remuneration is important but works together with other factors such as recognition, autonomy, supportive leadership, career growth, and positive working conditions. The findings support Buraimo (2021), who found that fair compensation enhances motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Therefore, improving teacher remuneration alongside non-financial motivational strategies may strengthen professional commitment and performance in public senior schools in Kajiado County.

From a motivational perspective, the results align with Expectancy Theory, which proposes that employees are more likely to invest effort in tasks when they believe that performance will lead to valued rewards. Teachers appear to perceive that improved financial motivation would strengthen their capacity and willingness to devote greater effort to instructional quality and learner evaluation. The findings also resonate with Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, where financial rewards may not create motivation on their own but can support conditions that enable better performance and reduce dissatisfaction.

In relation to the study, the findings indicate that teachers do not merely associate financial motivation with attendance or compliance; rather, they connect it more strongly with the quality of teaching and assessment processes that directly influence learner outcomes. This suggests that well-designed financial motivational mechanisms may have the greatest educational value when they support instructional excellence, timely assessment and feedback, and sustained engagement in activities that enhance student learning.

When asked if financial motivational mechanisms were improved, which area of their performance would benefit most 20 (9.7%) teachers identified lesson preparation, 70 (34.0%) identified delivery of content, 63 (30.6%) identified student assessment and feedback, 36 (17.5%) identified involvement in co-curricular activities, while 17 (8.3%) identified attendance to lessons. The findings therefore indicate that content delivery is the area of professional performance most likely to benefit from enhanced financial motivational mechanisms. The fact that content delivery received the highest proportion of responses suggests that teachers perceive financial motivation as having the greatest influence on the quality of classroom instruction. Effective content delivery requires substantial professional effort, including mastery of subject matter, selection of appropriate teaching strategies, preparation of learning resources, learner engagement, and continuous adaptation of instructional approaches to meet learners' needs. Teachers may therefore believe that improved financial motivation would encourage greater commitment, enthusiasm, and investment in instructional activities, ultimately enhancing learner achievement.

The finding that student assessment and feedback ranked second (30.6%) is equally significant. Assessment is a critical component of the teaching-learning process because it enables teachers to monitor learner progress, identify learning gaps, and provide corrective feedback. However, developing quality assessments, marking assignments, analyzing results, and providing individualized feedback can be time-consuming and demanding. Teachers may therefore perceive improved financial motivation as a factor that would encourage greater diligence and effectiveness in assessment-related tasks.

The relatively lower proportions for lesson preparation (9.7%) and lesson attendance (8.3%) may suggest that many teachers regard these activities as basic professional responsibilities that should be undertaken regardless of the availability of financial incentives. As a result, additional financial motivation may be perceived as having a greater effect on the quality and effectiveness of teaching rather than on routine compliance with professional duties. The finding that 17.5% of teachers identified co-curricular activities indicates that financial motivation may also influence participation in activities that often require extra time and effort beyond normal classroom teaching. Such activities include sports, clubs, drama, music, and educational trips, which contribute significantly to the holistic development of learners but frequently involve additional responsibilities for teachers.



The study agrees with Ahmed (2024), who found that adequate salaries significantly improve teachers' commitment, instructional effectiveness, and overall job performance in secondary schools in Somaliland. Ahmed argues that teachers who perceive their remuneration as fair are more motivated to prepare lessons thoroughly, assess learners effectively, and strive for improved learning outcomes. Similarly, the findings concur with Aslam and Farooq (2024), who established that competitive salaries and financial incentives positively influence teacher motivation and performance in private schools by encouraging greater professional commitment and higher-quality instructional practices.

The findings are also consistent with Foluso and Ukpere (2021), who reported that prompt salary payment and improved remuneration enhance teachers' effectiveness by reducing financial stress and enabling them to focus on teaching and learner assessment. Likewise, Ndirangu and Mungai (2024) found that financial incentives and exceptional performance recognition provided by school principals significantly improve teachers' work performance in Kenyan public secondary schools by encouraging greater dedication and accountability. Therefore, the present study reinforces previous research by demonstrating that strengthening financial motivational mechanisms is likely to improve classroom instruction, learner assessment, and ultimately educational quality in public senior schools in Kajiado County.

4. Hypothesis Testing

ANOVA Test of significant influence of financial motivation mechanism on teacher professional performance

Between	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Teacher professional performance	21.678	19	1.141	5.485	0.00
Financial motivational mechanisms	38.691	186	.208		
Total	60.369	205			

From the analysis it was found that there was a positive significant influence at $0.001 < 0.05$ significant level. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. The study therefore concluded that financial motivational mechanisms significantly influence teacher professional performance in public senior schools in Kajiado County. The findings suggest that teachers' professional performance is strongly linked to the financial rewards they receive from their employers and school stakeholders. Responses from teachers indicated that financial incentives, allowances, remuneration, and other monetary benefits play a crucial role in shaping their commitment, productivity, and willingness to undertake additional professional responsibilities. The results further showed that a considerable proportion of teachers believed that financial incentives improved their work performance, while inadequate salaries compelled many of them to engage in supplementary income-generating activities. Such activities may divert teachers' attention and energy from instructional duties, thereby affecting their effectiveness in the classroom.

5. Recommendations

1. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC), in collaboration with the Government of Kenya, should regularly review teachers' salaries and allowances.
2. Improved financial remuneration should be geared towards enhancing teachers' effectiveness in discharging their professional responsibilities.
3. Relevant government agencies should establish effective mechanisms for monitoring the timeliness, consistency, and adequacy of teacher remuneration.

6. Conclusions

The findings indicate that financial motivational mechanisms are important determinants of teachers' professional performance in public senior schools in Kajiado County. The statistically significant influence suggests that financial incentives function as extrinsic motivators that encourage teachers to invest greater effort, commitment, and persistence in their professional responsibilities. Adequate salaries, allowances, and performance-related rewards may reduce financial stress, improve job satisfaction, and enable teachers to focus more effectively on instructional duties, learner support, lesson preparation, assessment, and participation in co-curricular activities. Consequently,



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teachers who perceive their remuneration as fair and adequate are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of organizational commitment, motivation, and professional effectiveness.

The findings further concur with empirical studies by Mbabazi et al. (2025), who found that financial motivational mechanisms, including salary reviews, bonuses, and welfare incentives, improved teacher commitment, retention, lesson planning, and learner engagement in Uganda. Similarly, Musa and Mwemezi (2025) established that teachers in Tanzania perceived salary as a significant motivator rather than merely a hygiene factor, demonstrating its contribution to job satisfaction, morale, and professional commitment. The findings also agree with Adekunle (2025), who reported that improved welfare packages significantly enhanced teachers' job satisfaction and motivation in Nigeria, and with Elisante and Mnjakava (2024), who identified financial incentives such as allowances and performance bonuses as important drivers of teacher effectiveness in Tanzania.

The findings suggest that although teacher motivation is multidimensional, financial motivational mechanisms remain a critical component of professional performance. Ensuring competitive salaries, adequate allowances, timely remuneration, and equitable reward systems is therefore likely to enhance teacher commitment, instructional effectiveness, and overall educational quality in public senior schools in Kajiado county, Kenya.

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