

Effect of Performance-Based Rewards on the Performance of Teachers in Selected Private Secondary Schools in Uganda

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Abstract

A cross-sectional and correlation research was conducted to investigate the effects of performance-based rewards on the performance of teachers in selected private secondary school in Gayaza Township in Uganda; using questionnaire and interview guide to 113 respondents. The study revealed the types of performance-based rewards common in private secondary schools to be public appreciation (mean, 3.67), packages (gifts or presents) (mean, 3.44), duty allowance (mean, 3.41), certificate of merit (mean, 3.21), and overtime pay (mean, 2.98). The study revealed also that there is a significant relationship between the performance-based rewards and performance of teachers which was moderately rated (mean, 3.22), with r -value = 0.743 and p -value = 0.012 at $\alpha = 0.05$. It is concluded that, when used properly, performance-based rewards can improve teachers' performance, consequently the general performance of students.

Key Words: *Performance, rewards, appreciation, merit*

Introduction

People influence important aspects of organisational performance in a multiple ways. Workers conceive and implement the organisational strategy, while the mix of workers and system mostly determine organisation's capabilities. Competencies required to execute the strategy are primarily a function of the skills and knowledge of an organisation's human capital. If an organisation is to treat its employees as its most important asset, it has to know what motivates the workers to reach their full potential (Lawler, 2003). It is not easy to know all the things that motivate people in life or at work but effort has to be made to maximise human resource potentials. Traditionally, individual performance in organisations has centred on the evaluation of performance and the allocation of rewards. Organisations nowadays acknowledge that planning and enabling individual performance have an effect on organisational performance. The planning process is one of the primary elements of the total reward system and it affects performance between pay checks. It provides the basis on which individuals results are measured and acts as a bonding agent in programmes that direct rewards to true performance. The primary focus of reward and recognition is how organisations define their reward schemes and communicate it in a manner that employees clearly understand the link between reward and performance (Flynn, 1998, in Kirunda, 2004).

Reward is something that increases the frequency of an employee action (Zigon, 1998), and retention (Jimenez, 1999). It can take a form of monetary or non-monetary. Non-monetary recognition can be very motivating, helping to build feelings of confidence and satisfaction than even monetary (Keller, 1999, cited in Ryan), and should be part of comprehensive performance improvement strategy. In fact, in a study by Nelson (2004), 78% of employees indicated that it was very or extremely important to be recognised by their managers when they do good work. In general, employees perform more energetically when they feel strongly connected to and valued by the organisation. One can imagine how the disciples of Jesus worked after he had given them a rest after a day's toil, 'come and rest awhile' Mark 6:30, 31 (KJV).

In the education sector, the quality of education depends on the teachers' performance of their duties. Over time pupils' academic performance in both internal and external examinations had been used to determine excellence in teachers and teaching (Ajao, 2001). Teachers have been shown to have an important influence on students' academic achievement and they also play a crucial role in educational attainment because the teacher is ultimately responsible for translating policy into action and principles based on practice during interaction with the students (Afe, 2001). Both teaching and learning depend on teachers; no wonder an effective teacher has been conceptualised as one who produces desired results in the course of duty as a teacher (Uchefuna, 2001).

Performance refers to the result of an activity according to Boddy (2008). Upon individuals' results, there are three main models of performance-based rewards that are commonly found in education systems. The first model is 'merit-pay', which generally involves individual pecuniary awards based on student performance, and classroom observation (McCollum, 2001, in Harvey-Beavis, 2003). The second model is 'knowledge and skill-based' compensation, which generally involves individual pecuniary rewards for acquired qualifications and demonstrated knowledge and skills, which are believed to increase student performance (Ibid.). Knowledge and skill-based pay differs from merit pay because it provides clear guidelines on what is being evaluated. The third model is school-based compensation, which generally involves group-based pecuniary rewards, typically based on student performance (Odden & Kelley, 2002). For purposes of this study, performance based reward refer to what a teacher earns as a result of his/her performance despite his/her skilfulness, knowledge and the level of education.

Performance-based rewards have a long history in education, particularly in the United States, but nowadays a number of countries have adopted pay-for-performance strategies to modify the traditional salary scales. The distinguishing feature of a performance-based scheme is that it rewards or sanctions teachers based upon some form of performance evaluation (Chamberlin, *et.al*, 2002). Kirunda (2004) observed:

Distinctions in performance-based reward programmes are found in the skills assessed and the rewards provided. Most individually-based programs have used pecuniary rewards for high levels of performance, usually defined in terms of student outcomes or teacher skills and knowledge. Today, some analysts have proposed that intrinsic rewards, such as seeing students improve in performance, and increased feelings of well-being are better motivators of teachers.

Other rewards include increased holiday time and professional development courses.

Different performance-based rewards have been applied worldwide with different results and preferences recorded. Many of the earlier programmes tended to focus on individual performance, in particular merit pay (Richardson, 1999), with recent debates more likely to consider group-based reward programmes, or knowledge and skill based rewards (Odden, 2000; Odden and Kelley, 2002). However, Azordegan, *et.al*. (2005) in their study on 'diversifying teacher compensation' discovered that many countries have consolidated individual performance bonuses into base pay. Others prefer to administer them in the form of one-off payments either as a token for a good year's work or a reward for contribution to a project. However, according to Langdon (1998), only 40% of teachers as by 1998, favoured performance based compensations. The reasons given being; it is difficult to evaluate teacher's performance, teachers' morale problem may arise, and possibility of arising political problems in schools. Furthermore, Solmon and Podgursky (undated), synthesises fifteen disadvantages of using performance-based compensations to teachers, among them being; discontentment of the choice of beneficiaries, insufficiency of the pay comparing to the work required, bias and favouritism, killing the spirit of collaboration and inculcating competition, teachers working for pay and not for teaching. The imposition of the motivation strategy was also mentioned with a great concern. Teachers feel like been not valued if the motivation scheme is decided by other people for them. A good example is in the United States where there has been a push from parents to pay teachers according to the performance of teachers, but even up to 2010 this idea has greatly been opposed by teachers (Turner, 2010).

On the other hand, the recommendations made by the independent School Teachers' Review Body in UK (STRB) in 2012, called the government to link teachers' pay more closely to performance. Under this policy, heads and governors are given freedom to reward their staff, in that head teachers at all state schools will be able to link teachers' pay to performance – allowing them to pay good teachers more. Heads can develop pay policies tailored to their schools' needs; helping them attract and retain talented teachers in the subject areas they know they need (DES, 2013). Whereas this idea has been received with two hands by head teachers, there is no evidence that the same will be received by teachers.

In addition, Harvey-Beavis (2003), records comprehensive findings from different studies on the effect of performance-based rewards. He noted that performance-based rewards increase motivation of teachers and collegiality, among others, consequently, increased students' performance. He further reports arguments by some researchers that while teachers are not motivated by money, financial reward must have some influence on career choices for at least some teachers (Richardson, 1999), but money is just one motivator among many (Odden and Kelley, 2002). Again, it is good to note that whereas one motivating system can fit one group, it may be rejected in other places.

Where performance-based rewards were used, it was realised that team-based performance rewards were less common, and were normally associated with completing a particular task or project, or achieving a prescribed performance target. However, many opposed the idea of awarding an individual which is the current trend in many schools. As it is stated by Harvey-Beavis (2003), rewarding individual performance can be detrimental to teacher collaboration; thereby reducing overall school performance. Conversely, reward systems based entirely on whole school performance can result in 'free riders' who reduce the overall reward of high performers by not contributing at the same level.

In Uganda, employers in private secondary schools have not put up any standard measure upon which employees are rewarded. Some employers have used pecuniary rewards for high levels of performance, usually defined in terms of student outcomes or teacher skills and knowledge (Chamberlin, *et.al*, 2002). It has been evident in some schools that when students perform well, the concerned teachers in candidate classes are given some rewards which may not be the case with other teachers who teach in other classes yet they also play a role in preparing these candidates in lower classes for the final exams. Other individuals in private schools have also been rewarded on grounds of nepotism and other unclear grounds. It is upon such a background that some teachers have performed reluctantly while others continue to be promoted due to their pseudo performance. In this note, Kirunda (2004) notices inconsistencies in the reward systems in the private secondary schools of Kampala district and recommends that rewards should be based on performance considerations after a fair and accurate evaluation of its effects on the beneficiary. She further suggests that the nature of performance-based reward systems in schools should be based on the essence of ensuring that teachers are looked at as the prime components in the success of any school, administratively and academically. Administrators should also be trained and sensitized about the value of performance-based reward systems and also be made aware that pay motivates teachers to perform at their best. In other words, employers have the opportunity to leverage the value of their total rewards program to provide solutions to all the challenges affecting teachers; this would increase their motivation and their performance. On the other hand, some school employers realised that they could not merely mimic the rewards practices of other schools since each school differ from the other, especially economically. What is feasible in one school or situation may not apply in another.

This study was based on the assumption that employers' attitudes towards performance based rewards determines employees work performance, in other words, it motivates or de-motivates them. The value that the employers attach to the rewards that they give to their teachers determines the teachers' perception of these rewards and their overall performance. The study also assumes that the effect of performance based rewards differ from one situation to another, from one socio-economic setup to another. The study therefore, sought to evaluate the effect of performance based rewards in school performance in African and sub-urban environment and relate it with such studies done in other places. The study aimed to answer the following questions: What are the types of performance-based rewards systems used in private secondary schools in Gayaza Township? What is the performance of teachers' in secondary schools in Gayaza Township? Is there a relationship between performance based reward systems and teachers performance in private secondary schools in Gayaza Township? The objective of the study was to identify the types of performance-based rewards used, establish the performance of teachers and determine the relationship that exists between the rewards and the performance of teachers in private secondary schools of Gayaza Township in Uganda.

Methodology

The study used a cross-sectional survey and correlation design adopting qualitative and quantitative methodologies (adapted from Kirunda, 2004). The study population constituted mainly private secondary schools, head teachers and teachers. This population was chosen because it was assumed to have adequate knowledge of the subject under investigation and the research variables under investigation. There are 10 privately owned secondary schools in Gayaza Township, since they were few all of them were used for the

study. A sample size of 113 respondents was drawn from a population of 157 individuals using Yamane's formula (Israel, 2009), employing simple random sampling technique (Table 1).

The study used a self-administered questionnaire with open and closed ended questions to collect data from the respondents. Specifically, the questionnaire was designed in a way that it limited the nature of responses provided on the close-ended part and allowed respondents to give in their feelings and opinions in the open-ended section. The questionnaire was constructed based on the objectives of the study. Content validity index (C.V.I) was ascertained before the questionnaire was administered, which generated an overall CVI of .811. On the other hand, reliability involved, quality control which was done by carrying out a pre-test of the questionnaire to test the reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The pre-test result was 0.841 which was above Cronbach's alpha coefficient, 0.70; hence the tool was considered as reliable.

An interview guide consisting of semi-structured questions was designed and administered to the head teachers. The choice of this instrument was made because it was considered a good method for producing data, which dealt with the topic in depth. Interviewing was also a good method for producing data based on informants' priorities, opinions and ideas. The findings were analysed thematically.

The unit of analysis was secondary schools teacher and head teachers who were in private secondary schools in Gayaza Township. The descriptive statistics such as the frequency, percentage and mean were used so as to ascertain types of performance-based rewards used and measuring the performance of teachers in private secondary schools. Furthermore, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to assess the relationship between performance based reward and performance of teachers using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Table 1: Sample distribution

School	No of teachers	Sample
Kabanyolo S.S.	15	11
Katikamu S.S	19	14
Atlas High	16	12
Tender Talents	17	12
Gayaza Junior	15	11
Bulamu S.S	14	10
Eden High School	13	9
Magnet Sec School	14	10
Bafra Sec School	15	11
Younani Bulaumu	19	14
Total	157	113

The Locale of the Study

Gayaza is situated in North Kyaddondo Constituency, Kyaddondo County, Wakiso District, in Central Uganda. The township is located 16km northeast of Kampala, the capital city of Uganda. The coordinates of the township are: 00 26 57N, 32 36 42E (Latitude: 0.4490; Longitude: 32.6115) (Wikipedia, 2013). It is a sub-urban town situated about 16km north of Kampala. The accessibility of the town makes it possible for its fast development although the total population. It is a home of a prestigious all-girls' boarding high school, Gayaza High School, established in 1905, three other government aided and ten private owned schools.

Results and Discussion

The study intended to establish the types of performance-based rewards used, the performance of teachers and the relationship that exists between performance-based rewards and the performance of teachers in private secondary schools in Gayaza Township in Uganda. Since the nature of the study called for maturity, it was pertinent to study the biographical structure of the respondents, to include sex, age, years of experience, and the academic qualification. As indicated in table 2, males (59.8%) appeared to dominate

the study although the females (40.2%) were substantively represented. It is also interesting to see that the schools are populated with young people below 40 as they accounted for 69.1% of the total sample. Concerning the years of the service of the respondents it was found out that 46.7% of the respondents had serviced their schools for 4-6 years then followed by those who had serviced their schools between 1-3 years (40.2%). This implies that majority of respondents had moderately serviced their schools as few had exceeded 6 years. This could be attributed to the fact that some of the schools in the area are new and it is easy to get jobs in private sector. It is good to note also that the respondents were mainly trained teachers, with degree (52.3%) and diploma (33.6%) dominating.

Table 2: Respondents profile

	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	68	59.8
Female	45	40.2
Age bracket		
Below 30 years	22	19.6
30-39 Years	56	49.5
40-49 years	19	16.8
50 and above years	16	14.0
Years of service		
1-3 years	45	40.2
4-6 years	53	46.7
7 and above years	15	13.1
Academic qualification		
Untrained	3	2.8
Diploma	38	33.6
Degree	59	52.3
Post graduate	13	11.2

n=113

Types of Performance-Based Rewards

The study sought to establish the types of performance-based rewards used in private secondary schools in Gayaza Township in Uganda. In this aspect, the findings revealed that public appreciation was the common rewards provided (mean, 3.67). This was attributed to the fact that it had no or little financial implication costs to the school as it would have been for salary increment, duty allowances and pay checks. In an interview with head teachers it was pointed out that appreciation does well as it helps the teachers to feel more valued as compared to financial type of rewards. In addition, they noted that they preferred to use public appreciation as a type of reward because it is considered cheap. For example, good performing teachers could be appreciated during visiting days where teachers are recognised before parents and students. This finding is supported by Murnane and Cohen (1986) who note that teachers' impressions of performance-evaluations systems play a crucial role in the success of performance-based pay programme. On the other hand, packages, presents or gifts were rated second as part of the rewards provided (mean, 3.44). This was a common type of practice as noted through interviews with head teachers. Such tokens were provided during the final release of results from Uganda National Examination Board. In this matter, a number of schools pointed out that the teachers were given presents or gifts and packages based on the performance of students. Packages, presents and gifts common to private schools in this area of study included giving out home utensils, clothes, Christmas gifts, organised performance parties and even checks. The findings in this study differs from that of Kirunda (2004) who reports public appreciation and promotions to be the common used rewards in Kampala private schools followed by packages, presents or gifts. In another study on performance-based rewards for teachers conducted in Australia (DEST, 2007), knowledge and skill based compensation were pointed out. It was suggested that in knowledge and skill-based compensation schemes, teachers are rewarded for the acquisition of a specific knowledge and skill required to meet higher expectations of performance.

Table 3: Performance-based rewards available in schools

Rewards	Mean
Salary Increment	2.51
Overtime pay	2.98
Certificate of merit	3.21
Packages/presents/gifts	3.44
Duty allowance	3.41
Individual/group photograph	2.31
Public appreciation	3.67
Promotions	2.56
Average Mean	3.01

n=113

Duty allowance and overtime pay were also found popular in private secondary schools with mean of 3.41 and 2.98, respectively. With regard to these two, it was revealed during interview that they too had a cheaper financial implication to the school since they were dished out once in a while and minimally, yet they yielded high satisfaction to the performer. It was also noted, however that, duty allowance and overtime pay were common in well-established private secondary schools. In 'small' schools, it was discovered that the school budget could not support it. In contrary, the most common practice in small private schools was to overload teachers which actually de-motivate them. One teacher could teach more than one subject and in most cases teaching almost all papers in the specified subjects.

The certificate of merit (mean, 3.21) rated the fourth and above the average in this study. It is really surprising to see certificate of merit rated higher than salary increment (mean, 2.51), promotions (mean, 2.56) and overtime pay (mean, 2.98) because in African culture it is believed that 'Africans never eat flowers, neither do they eat papers'. That is to say, you cannot give an African a bouquet of flowers, a card or letter of appreciation and value it as being given a valuable thing. But this could signal some change of trends or that the increments and pays that are given are not large enough to outweigh the paper (certificate) display. On the other hand, the salary increment, and promotions and memorial photographs were perceived to be rare. Although most teachers preferred salary increment to any other form of reward, they noted that promotions would be good but schools have put no proper yardstick upon which promotions are given. It was pointed out that some schools might have a mechanism of promotion but there is no salary increment attached equivalent to the position is given. At times, the promotions add on more responsibilities with no financial increment attached.

According to Odden (2002), in most current systems of a salary scale, teachers are rewarded for the number of years spent teaching and the number of tertiary degrees, rather than their performance. In contrast the respondents noted that in the Ugandan context, rewards or promotions are given according to the number of distinctions scored by students in a given subject, one's relationship with the head teacher, directors. Odden (2002) suggests that on laying out an effective and workable system of performance pay in schools, one of the more crucial questions to be answered is that of whether the contributions of individual teachers can be measured in a way which will provide a valid, fair, and generally accepted basis for varying pay rates. Very often the yardstick the private schools have used to gauge the performance of individual teachers is the performance outcomes of students in a given subject without considering other circumstances that could contribute to failure in other subjects. Teaching is a process and a collective effort of many individuals; it is at times difficult to determine which teacher performed better than the other and be rewarded accordingly.

Teachers Performance in Private Secondary Schools

The study also sought to establish the performance of teachers in private secondary schools in Gayaza Township in Uganda using views of participants' skills and expertise in teaching. A number of items upon which teachers were rated included possession of adequate problem solving skills, commitment to teamwork, understanding students' problems, teachers' level of enthusiasm for teaching in this school, willingness to help students' learn, doing their job effectively without complaining, having good working practices, having

pride in their work and being consistently accurate in all aspects of their work. These were assessed purely on how the respondents viewed themselves.

On average the respondents rated the performance of teachers above average. All items used to assess teachers' performance were above average except teachers' level of enthusiasm (mean, 2.51), doing their job without complaining (mean, 2.98) and having pride in their work (mean, 3.12). Otherwise, teachers on average expressed their commitment to their professionalism through understanding their clients (mean, 3.58) and possession of adequate problem solving skills (mean, 3.54). This implies that the teachers were competent enough in what they were doing which is reflected also through their academic qualification they possess (table 2). In other aspects of performance that were evaluated commitment to teamwork rated third (mean, 3.47), followed by willingness to helping students learn (mean, 3.32), striving for accuracy in their work (mean, 3.24) and having pride or loving in their work (mean, 3.12). In an interview with the head teachers it was disclosed that schools encouraged working in teams (teamwork) for example, administrators would provide tasks such as ensuring punctuality among students, school cleaning, and enforcing discipline and other kinds of group work and in the process teamwork was enhanced. The fact that understanding students and willingness to help them rated above average, it is evidence that teachers loved their work and they possess necessary training and skills required to perform their work. However, the same teachers seriously lacked the spirit of work as reflected by their rating of enthusiasm towards teaching (mean, 2.51). This can be attributed to the low level of motivation and incentives as well as too much load; both teaching and non-teaching activities at school.

Table 4: Performance of teachers

Attributes	Mean rating
Possession of adequate problem solving skills	3.54
Commitment to teamwork	3.47
Understanding students' problems	3.58
Teachers' level of enthusiasm for teaching in the school	2.51
Willingness to help students' learn	3.32
Doing their job effectively without complaining	2.98
Having pride in their work	3.12
Strive to be consistently accurate in all aspects of their work	3.24
Average mean rating	3.22

n=113

It is perplexing to see that teachers who lack enthusiasm are willing to help their students and are proud of their work. This is probably suggesting what OECD Paris (2005) indicated: that while people who have chosen teaching as a career are chiefly motivated by 'intrinsic' rewards (such as wanting to make a difference), extrinsic factors such as remuneration are the most significant factors influencing people not to choose teaching as a career, and to leave the profession. It thus means that performance-based rewards play a significant role in the performance of teachers in secondary schools. So, performance-based rewards seem to be a plausible way both to motivate teachers to direct effort at performance goals and to attract and retain teachers who are high performers.

Relationship between performance-based rewards and the performance of teachers:

The study finally looked at the relationship that exists between performance-based rewards and the performance of teachers in private secondary schools of Gayaza Township in Uganda. The study used Pearson Product Moment Correlation in this aspect and it was found that there existed a significant relationship between performance-based rewards and performance of teachers ($r\text{-value}=0.743$ at $p=0.05$).

Table 5: Correlation between performance-based rewards and performance of teachers

		Performance of teachers
Performance Based rewards	r. value	.743**
	p. value	.012

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

n=113

This implies that performance-based rewards significantly affected the performance of teachers in private schools. In private schools, performance-based rewards were considered important because they motivate teachers, promote good performance, improve on administrator-teacher relations, demonstrate a fair and equal treatment and contribute to individual records. Since the performance-based rewards have got an impact on the performance of teachers, it is imperative for head teachers and proprietors to assess the treatments and rewards they give to their teachers. In this line, Stedman & McCallion (2011) assert that interest in performance-based pay for teachers rose, in part, from a basic dissatisfaction with the traditional salary schedule can therefore be approved. They maintain that many policy-makers believed that the traditional salary schedule provided no incentive for teachers to demonstrate subject matter competence, improve teaching, or increase academic performance by students. Findings of this study also indicated that teachers' salaries in private school were not attractive, they could only be supplemented by other rewards such as bonuses, allowances, gifts just to mention a few.

Proponents of pay-for-performance programmes believe they will attract and retain better teachers if they are able to offer increased salaries to the best teachers. They argue that paying teachers poorly in the same way as those who work longer hours, engage more effectively with their students and consistently produce improved academic outcomes, is unfair, inequitable and does little to improve the overall quality of teaching. This is also highlighted by Lavy (2007) who identified benefits of performance-based rewards as improved productivity; that is, if rewards are based on student performance, they provide teachers with powerful signals about what is valued and what is not. If these signals are absent, even well meaning teachers may emphasise materials that are generally not valued by parents or the labour market. However, Harvey-Beavis (2003) argued that performance-based compensation programmes encourage competition rather than collaboration among teachers. Many would argue that the concept of individual merit is at odds with the collegiate approach of effective schools, stifling collaboration and creating conflict and tension in the school environment. Nevertheless, Harvey-Beavis (2003) argument contradicts with the findings, realised that performance-based reward systems can increase collegiality by rewarding cooperation between teachers' especially through administering group-based rewards.

Opponents of pay-for-performance, on the other hand, argue that it is almost impossible to evaluate and measure teachers' performance fairly. They point to the many variables involved in student academic outcomes, such as family support, socio-economic status, ethnicity, natural ability, location, and ask how teacher performance can be measured fairly. Another problem in relation to pay-for-performance is the fact that the true outcomes of education might not materialize for many years. If we accept that one of the key goals of education is to empower students with skills that they can use to enhance a productive career and sustain their economic well being (Lavy, 2007), it may be many years before we can measure whether or not a teacher has been successful. Nevertheless, it can then be concluded that performance-based rewards affect the performance of teachers in private schools.

In conclusion, the most commonly used types of performance-based rewards were public appreciation, package or presents, and duty allowances and overtime pay. Salary increment was the least considered by many head teachers because it often constrains the school budget and it cannot easily be re-adjusted in case of any financial crisis. The fact that public appreciation rated highly among the rewards, it is clear that teachers valued more recognition than money which would look like selling and buying service.

Conceptually, this study has empirically verified the influence of performance-based rewards on the performance of teachers' in private secondary schools. It therefore, forms a basis for subsequent research to explore other factors that could affect teacher and students' performance. Also, the study will help the government and employers to design and formulate future and feasible staff reward system strategies or mechanisms to increase the teachers' performance. The study recommends that head teachers and proprietors should always think of being close to their teachers, sit on round table and negotiate what is best fit for them. These findings can be used to motivate teachers in our schools and thus increase teachers'

performance, consequently improve schools and students performance. It is recommended that similar study be conducted explicitly in church-related and government schools to see if the same results will hold.

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