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Examining the Effectiveness of Public Sector Employee Motivation and Performance: A Case Study of Selected Government Schools in Lusaka, Zambia

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Abstract

This study examines how to improve employee motivation and performance in government schools in Lusaka District, Zambia. It identifies effective strategies, evaluates current motivational packages, and compares monetary and non-monetary incentives. Data from 50 public sector employees revealed that while most feel motivated, many lack training and development opportunities. Recognition and rewards are crucial motivators, with 48% highlighting their importance,

and 54% favoring monetary bonuses. Recommendations include increasing training, fostering a positive work environment, implementing performance management systems, and regularly seeking employee feedback to enhance motivation and educational outcomes. Key concepts include employee motivation, performance improvement, and workplace culture.

Keywords: Employee Motivation, Training and Development, Monetary Incentives and Non-Monetary Incentives

1. Introduction

Motivation is the internal drive that encourages individuals to achieve their goals, crucial for employee engagement and productivity in public education (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Motivated teachers are more committed and effective, leading to improved student performance (Ogunleye *et al.*, 2014). However, Zambia's education system faces challenges such as high student-to-teacher ratios and insufficient resources, which can diminish teacher motivation and increase turnover (Ministry of General Education, 2022) ^[15].

This study aims to identify effective strategies to enhance employee motivation and performance in government schools in Lusaka District, examining factors influencing motivation and assessing approaches for school administrators and policymakers to foster a more motivated workforce.

1.1 Background

The public sector is crucial for delivering services in developing countries like Zambia, encompassing schools and hospitals (Ogunleye *et al.*, 2014). However, it faces significant challenges related to employee motivation and performance, including low salaries, limited career advancement, poor working conditions, and perceived inequities in resource distribution (van Loon *et al.*, 2018) ^[29]. Key motivation theories, such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943), Herzberg's two-factor theory (1959) ^[13], and Vroom's expectancy theory (1964), emphasize the importance of addressing basic needs and job satisfaction to enhance performance. Motivated teachers are linked to improved student outcomes, as shown in studies from Kenya (Gikonyo & Muthoni, 2019) ^[12] and elsewhere (Shaheen & Mahmood, 2016). In Zambia, the pupil-to-teacher ratio is 47:1, exceeding the UNESCO recommendation of 40:1 (Ministry of General Education, 2022) ^[15], which strains teachers and diminishes educational quality. Surveys indicate that many teachers consider leaving due to low pay and inequitable resources, with only 35% satisfied with their working conditions (Zambia Public Sector Union, 2021) ^[32]. High turnover rates, reaching 20% annually, disrupt student learning and highlight the urgent need for strategies to enhance motivation and performance in

education.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Zambia's public sector, particularly in schools, struggles with low employee motivation, impacting service delivery and education quality (Mwansa, 2019). Teacher absenteeism is a significant issue, averaging 25% in Lusaka District in 2022 (Ministry of Education, 2023) ^[14], which disrupts student learning and academic performance. A survey by the Zambia National Union of Teachers (ZNUT, 2021) ^[31] found that 60% of teachers are dissatisfied, citing low salaries, limited professional development, and poor working conditions. This dissatisfaction leads to low morale and high turnover, undermining a stable learning environment. Addressing these motivational challenges is essential for improving educational quality and supporting national development. This study aims to identify effective strategies to enhance teacher motivation and performance in Lusaka's government schools, ultimately fostering a more engaged and effective teaching workforce.

1.3 General objective of the study

1. To examine the effectiveness of Public sector Employee Motivation and Performance

1.3.1 Specific objectives

1. To examine the effectiveness of the available motivational packages on employee's performance in public schools in Lusaka district.
2. To evaluate if monetary bonuses have more influence on employee performance in public schools more than non monetary bonuses.
3. To establish strategies that enhance employee motivation and performance in government schools

1.4 Research Questions

1. What motivational packages are available for employees in public schools in Lusaka district?
2. How much do monetary bonuses help employee performance compared to non-monetary bonuses in public schools?
3. What strategies have worked well in government schools to improve employee motivation?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

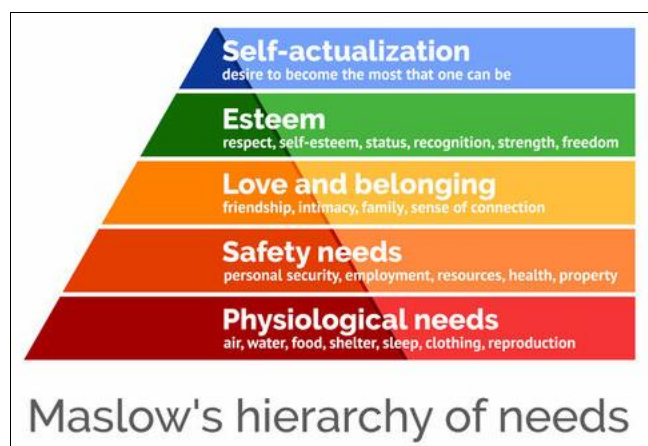


Fig 1.5.1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs provides a framework for understanding employee motivation in Zambia's public

schools. Proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943, it outlines five levels of needs that must be satisfied in order to achieve self-actualization (Dailey, 2012) ^[9]:

1. Physiological Needs: Basic needs such as adequate salaries and resources are essential for teachers to perform effectively (Chomba *et al.*, 2017).
2. Safety Needs: Job security and a safe work environment are crucial for teacher motivation. Improved safety measures can enhance retention (Simukanga *et al.*, 2019) ^[27].
3. 3.Love/Belongingness Needs: Fostering social relationships and a supportive community boosts teacher morale and job satisfaction (Mulenga and Bwalya, 2018).
4. Esteem Needs: Recognizing teachers' achievements enhances their self-esteem and motivation. Empowerment through leadership roles is beneficial (Mwaba *et al.*, 2016) ^[18].
5. Self-Actualization Needs: Supporting teachers in achieving their professional goals contributes to job satisfaction and commitment (Tembo and Phiri, 2020).

Utilizing Maslow's hierarchy allows policymakers to create targeted strategies that address teachers' diverse needs, ultimately improving motivation and performance in government schools.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study focuses on enhancing the quality of education in Zambia's public sector, particularly in government schools in Lusaka District, by identifying strategies to boost motivation and performance among teachers and administrators. Given the significant challenges facing Zambia's education system, such as teacher shortages, inadequate resources, and low student performance, addressing the motivation of public sector employees is crucial (World Bank, 2019). Motivated teachers are more effective in engaging students, which leads to improved academic results (Ngoma & Ntale, 2016) ^[23]. The findings of this study could inform policies and interventions to enhance service delivery across Zambia (Chikulu *et al.*, 2021) and provide localized insights that are relevant to the unique challenges of the region (Mutale *et al.*, 2017) ^[21]. Furthermore, the study advocates for increased investment in human resources within the public sector, urging policymakers to prioritize support for teachers and administrators to foster sustainable improvements in education and governance (Phiri *et al.*, 2022) ^[25]. Ultimately, by addressing motivation and performance challenges, this research has the potential to drive positive change in educational outcomes and contribute to Zambia's broader development goals (Munkondya & Mwaba, 2021) ^[22].

2. Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This literature review examines various strategies aimed at boosting motivation and performance among public sector employees, with a particular focus on government schools Zambia, specifically in Lusaka district.

2.2 Thematic Area: Effectiveness of Motivational Packages in Public Schools

Motivational packages help teachers improve their performance in public schools. These packages include

financial rewards, training, and recognition, making teachers feel more engaged and productive (Baker *et al.*, 2019) [2]. Research shows that motivated teachers work harder and connect better with students. For example, in Zambia, teachers who received extra training and recognition reported higher job satisfaction and commitment (Mwansa, 2021) [19]. In Lusaka, these packages positively impact teaching quality and student learning. Motivated teachers try new methods and create better classroom environments, leading to improved student performance (Smith & Johnson, 2021). The Zambian Ministry of Education (2020) noted that schools using motivational packages saw better attendance and grades in subjects like math and science.

Key factors influencing motivation include fair salaries, career development opportunities, and a positive work environment. Many Zambian teachers feel underpaid, especially in rural areas (Musonda, 2020). Access to training is often limited, affecting teacher engagement (Mweemba, 2019).

Good leadership and involving teachers in decision-making also boost motivation. Schools that promote teamwork and recognize achievements tend to have happier teachers and better student outcomes (Mubanga, 2019 [17]; Mwiinga, 2018).

2.3 Thematic Area: To evaluate if monetary bonuses have more influence on employee performance in public schools more than non monetary bonuses.

Monetary bonuses are vital for motivating teachers in public schools, significantly enhancing their performance and job satisfaction (Chulu, 2021). Research shows that performance-based bonuses lead to increased morale and better student outcomes, with schools reporting higher test scores and improved teacher attendance (Chanda *et al.*, 2016) [5]. Key factors influencing the effectiveness of these bonuses include timely distribution and transparency in criteria, which boost motivation and engagement (Bwali *et al.*, 2019). However, challenges such as fairness in distribution can lead to resentment among staff if bonuses are perceived as unequal (Mwansa and Sinkala, 2018) [20]. Over-reliance on cash rewards may also result in burnout if intrinsic motivations are overlooked (Ngulube and Banda, 2020) [24]. Therefore, it is essential to balance monetary incentives with non-monetary rewards, such as recognition and professional development opportunities. Non-monetary bonuses foster long-term motivation and commitment, as seen in programs that publicly acknowledge outstanding teachers and provide skill enhancement training (Ryan & Deci, 2020) [26]. Ultimately, a combination of both monetary and non-monetary rewards is crucial for creating a motivated teaching environment that improves both teacher performance and student success.

2.4 Thematic area: To establish strategies that enhance employee motivation and performance in government schools

To enhance motivation and performance among teachers in Zambian government schools, a multifaceted approach is essential. Key strategies include implementing performance-based incentives, such as bonuses for improved student test scores, which encourage teachers to innovate in their teaching methods. Professional development programs are crucial, as they provide ongoing training that boosts teachers' skills and confidence, leading to higher job

satisfaction (Miti & Chanda, 2018) [16]. Strong leadership is also vital; effective communication from school leaders fosters trust and inclusion, making teachers feel valued (Mwila *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, mentorship initiatives that pair experienced teachers with novices create supportive networks, enhancing teacher confidence and reducing turnover (Harris & Adams, 2007). A positive work environment, characterized by good working conditions and recognition programs like "Teacher of the Month," further motivates teachers and improves morale. Addressing infrastructural challenges is important, as adequate resources and clean facilities significantly boost motivation (Musonda & Kanyuka, 2019).

2.5 Personal Critique of Literature Review

The literature review effectively explores employee motivation and performance in Zambian public schools, grounding its analysis in key theories like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Vroom's Expectancy Theory. It highlights the influence of local cultural and economic factors on teacher motivation (Chirwa, 2018) [7] and covers various motivational factors, including compensation and leadership. Practical strategies for improvement, such as performance management systems and professional development, are also proposed (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2017) [10].

However, the review could be enhanced by providing deeper analysis of specific Zambian studies and incorporating more empirical evidence, such as quantitative data or case studies (Kauffman & Tschannen-Moran, 2018; Mumba, 2020). More specific recommendations based on successful implementations would further aid policymakers. Overall, while comprehensive, the review could benefit from additional depth to better support stakeholders in addressing motivation issues in Zambian schools.

2.6 Establishment of Research Gaps

In Zambia, significant research gaps exist regarding strategies to enhance teacher motivation and performance in government schools. There is a lack of studies examining how Zambian cultural values influence teacher motivation (Mulenga *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, more research is needed to understand the impact of different leadership styles on teacher motivation and performance (Muyunda *et al.*, 2017). The effectiveness of incentive programs in Zambian schools remains underexplored (Kabwe *et al.*, 2019), as does the role of professional development opportunities in motivating educators (Chileshe *et al.*, 2016) [6]. Furthermore, while some studies indicate a connection between job satisfaction and teacher performance, further investigation is required to clarify this relationship within government schools (Sinkamba *et al.*, 2015). Addressing these gaps is crucial for developing effective strategies to improve teacher motivation and performance in Zambia's public education system.

3. Research Methodology

This section explains the methods used to study ways to improve motivation and performance among public sector employees in Zambia.

3.1 Research Design

The research design is the plan for how the study will collect and analyze data. A descriptive research design using a

mixed-methods approach was chosen, focusing on quantitative data collected through questionnaires (Creswell and Clark, 2007) ^[8]. Questionnaires allow researchers to gather information quickly from many people, making it easier to identify patterns in the data (Bryman, 2016) ^[4].

3.2 Target Population

The study targeted public sector employees in various government schools in Lusaka, aiming to include at least 50 participants from different schools.

3.3 Sampling Design

A random sampling technique was used, giving every participant an equal chance of being selected. This method helps avoid bias and ensures a diverse sample (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011).

3.4 Sample Size

A sample size of 50 respondents was chosen, which is large enough to provide reliable and valid results, capturing a variety of perspectives (Cohen and Morrison, 2018).

3.5 Data Collection

Data was collected through questionnaires administered in person at participants' workplaces. This face-to-face method helped build trust and ensured participants understood the questions (McBurney and White, 2010). Consent was obtained before collecting responses, and secondary data from reports and academic journals were also used to provide context (Babbie, 2016) ^[3].

3.6 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using STATA software, which helped organize and visualize the information through statistical tables and graphics (StataCorp, 2021) ^[28]. This software allowed researchers to explore relationships between different variables (Field, 2013) ^[11].

3.7 Triangulation

Triangulation, which involves using multiple methods to confirm findings, was not used in this study due to time constraints. The focus was solely on the survey questionnaire.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

The study faced challenges, such as high printing costs for materials and participants being hesitant to share honest opinions due to fear of repercussions. These issues could affect the quality and reliability of the data collected (Robson, 2011; McLeod, 2019).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines were followed to ensure participants were treated respectfully. Informed consent was obtained, meaning participants were informed about the study's purpose and how their data would be used (American Psychological Association, 2017) ^[1]. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured to help participants feel safe sharing their thoughts (Beauchamp and Childress, 2013). By following these ethical practices, the researcher aimed to create a trustworthy environment for honest responses.

4. Results/Findings

4.0 Overview

This involves analyzing and deriving meaning from presented data, going beyond raw numbers to identify patterns, relationships, and implications. It requires understanding the context of data collection and study objectives.

4.1 Presentation of Results on Background Characteristics of the Respondents

a) Gender of the Respondents

Table 4.1.1: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Male	17	34%	34
Female	33	66%	100
Total	50	100%	

The results of the study regarding the gender distribution of respondents show that there were 17 males (34%) and 33 females (66%) participating in the study.

b) Age range of the Respondents

Table 4.1.2: Age range of the Respondents

Age Range	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
18- 30	4	8%	8
31- 45	38	76%	84
46- 55	8	16%	100
Total	50	100%	

The survey results reveal the age distribution of respondents, with 4 individuals (8%) in the 18-30 age range, 38 individuals (76%) in the 31-45 age range, and 8 individuals (16%) in the 46-55 age range. The overwhelming majority of respondents fall within the 31-45 age group.

4.2 Presentation of results based on a thematic area developed from objective one (To examine the effectiveness of the available motivational packages on employee's performance in public schools in Lusaka district)

a) Job satisfaction

Table 4.2.1: Job satisfaction

How satisfied are you with your current job in the public sector	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Very satisfied	3	6%	6
Satisfied	27	54%	60
Neutral	13	26%	86
Dissatisfied	7	14%	100
Total	50	100%	

The key findings are: Very Satisfied: 6% of the respondents are very satisfied with their current job in the public sector. Satisfied: 54% of the respondents are satisfied with their current job in the public sector. Neutral: 26% of the respondents have a neutral stance towards their job satisfaction. Dissatisfied: 14% of the respondents are dissatisfied with their current job in the public sector.

b) Employee motivation

Table 4.2.2: Employee motivation

Do you feel motivated to perform well in your job	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Strongly agree	4	8%	8
Agree	28	56%	64
Disagree	16	32%	96
strongly disagree	2	4%	100
Total	50	100%	

The data shows strongly agree (8%), agree (56%), disagree (32%) and strongly disagree 4%

c) Factors contributing to employee motivation

**Fig 4.2.3:** Factors contributing to employee motivation

The data shows that the most significant factor contributing to employee motivation is recognition and rewards, with 48% followed by career growth opportunities with 30%. The study also reveals that work-life balance (12%) and supportive management (10%) are considered important factors in employee motivation.

4.3 Presentation of results based on a thematic area developed from objective two (To evaluate if monetary bonuses have more influence on employee performance in public schools more than non monetary bonuses)

a) Current motivation offered by the school

Table 4.3.1: Current motivation offered by the school

What is the current motivation offered by your school to improve employee performance	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Monetary motivation	4	8%	8
non Monetary motivation	46	92%	100
Total	50	100%	

The table shows that the majority of the motivation offered by the school (92%) is non-monetary, while only 8% is monetary

b) Influence of monetary bonuses on employee performance in public schools.

Table 4.3.2: Influence of monetary bonuses on employee performance in public schools

Do you think monetary bonuses influence employee performance in public schools	Freq.	Percent %	Cum.
I think so	27	54%	54
I don't think so	9	18%	72
I am not sure	14	28%	100
Total	50	100%	

The data presented in the table provides valuable insights into the perceived influence of monetary bonuses on employee performance in public schools. The key observation from the table is that a majority of the respondents (54%) believe that monetary bonuses do influence employee performance in public schools. (18%) disagreed while (28%) were not sure.

c) Influence of different types of bonuses on employee performance in public schools

Table 4.3.3: Influence of different types of bonuses on employee performance in public schools

Which type of bonus do you believe influences your performance more	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Monetary Bonuses	5	10%	10
non Monetary Bonuses	14	28%	38
both Monetary and Monetary Bonuses	29	58%	96
neither Monetary or non monetary Bonus	2	4%	100
Total	50	100%	

The data presented in the table provides valuable insights into the perceived influence of different types of bonuses on employee performance in public schools. The key observation from the table is that the majority of the respondents (58%) believe that a combination of both monetary and non-monetary bonuses influences their performance more. 10% believed that only monetary bonuses influences bonus, 28% said non-monetary and 4% believed neither monetary or non-monetary influence performance

4.4 Presentation of results based on a thematic area developed from objective three (To establish strategies that enhance employee motivation and performance in government schools)

a) Overall motivation levels of employees in public schools.

Table 4.4.1: Overall motivation levels of employees in public schools

How would you rate your overall motivation to perform your duties	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Very low	10	20%	20
Very high	35	71%	91
Not sure	5	9%	100
Total	50	100%	

The data presented in the table provides valuable insights into the overall motivation levels of employees in public schools. The key observation from the table is that a significant majority of the respondents (71%) rate their overall motivation to perform their duties as “very high”, followed by (20%) as “very low” then (9%) as “not sure”

b) Relationship between employee motivation and performance in public schools.

Table 4.4.2: Relationship between employee motivation and performance in public schools

How closely related is motivation to your performance			
	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Not related	23	46%	46
Very related	17	34%	80
Not sure	10	20%	100
Total	50	100%	

The data presented in the table provides insights into the perceived relationship between employee motivation and performance in public schools. The key observation from the table is that the responses are quite mixed, with 46% of the respondents indicating that motivation is not related to their performance, 34% believing that the two are very related, and 20% being unsure.

4.5 Discussion of Research Findings

This section explores how employee motivation impacts performance in public education, highlighting the need for improved access to training and development opportunities. The findings underscore the importance of creating a motivated workforce to enhance educational outcomes and service delivery.

4.5.1 Background Characteristics

Gender: A diverse workplace fosters creativity, but female employees face challenges balancing work and family. Policies like flexible hours and professional development support are crucial.

Age: Employees aged 31-45 seek career growth and perform better with support. Younger employees are underrepresented, indicating a need for engagement strategies. Older employees may struggle with new methods, requiring targeted support.

Educational Qualifications: Higher qualifications correlate with motivation and performance. Employees with lower qualifications need mentorship and skills training to adapt to modern teaching methods.

4.5.2 Objective One: Motivation and Performance Relationship

Job Satisfaction: 60% of employees report satisfaction, which correlates with engagement and productivity. However, 40% are neutral or dissatisfied, indicating areas for improvement.

Employee Motivation: Lack of motivation leads to poor performance. Strategies to enhance motivation include recognition programs, professional development, positive work culture, and open communication.

Factors Influencing Motivation: Key factors include recognition, career growth, and work-life balance. Addressing these can enhance engagement and performance.

Effectiveness of Current Strategies: Many employees view current motivation strategies as ineffective, leading to

disengagement and high turnover. Improved recognition and support are essential.

4.5.3 Objective Two: Monetary vs. Non-Monetary Bonuses

Current Motivation: Non-monetary incentives can be fulfilling but may not meet financial needs. A balance of both types of motivation is necessary.

Monetary Bonuses: These can significantly boost performance and job satisfaction, but perceptions vary among employees. A mixed approach is recommended.

Non-Monetary Bonuses: Recognition and career development opportunities enhance motivation. A robust recognition system is vital for fostering engagement.

4.5.4 Objective Three: Strategies for Enhancing Motivation and Performance

Overall Motivation Levels: High motivation leads to better engagement and student outcomes. Schools should assess employee needs, implement performance management systems, and encourage open communication.

Motivation-Performance Relationship: Mixed perceptions about this relationship suggest training and performance management can strengthen it.

Training and Development Access: Unequal access to training affects motivation. Regular assessments and structured programs are needed to ensure all employees benefit from professional development opportunities.

5. Overview

This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations from a study on improving employee motivation and performance in Lusaka's public sector schools.

5.1 Conclusion

Motivated employees, especially teachers, perform better and engage more effectively. However, many lack access to training, leading to feelings of undervaluation and lower motivation. Schools must prioritize employee motivation to enhance educational outcomes.

5.2 Recommendations

1. **Enhance Training Opportunities:** Create accessible training programs tailored to staff needs.
2. **Foster a Motivating Work Environment:** Implement recognition programs and encourage open communication.
3. **Implement Performance Management Systems:** Set clear performance goals and provide regular feedback.
4. **Encourage Professional Development:** Support ongoing learning and mentorship programs.
5. **Solicit Employee Feedback:** Regularly gather feedback to understand and improve employee satisfaction.

These strategies aim to foster a motivated workforce, improving both teaching quality and student outcomes.

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