



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A REVIEW OF TEACHER DEMOTIVATIONAL FACTORS AND EMERGING ISSUES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses demotivational factors and emerging issues demoralizing secondary school teachers and creating low learning outcomes. Negative behaviours including frequent strikes, cases of examination irregularities and insecurity suggest moral decay and lack of values among learners. This indicates a decline in the quality of secondary education in the country. Teacher motivation is linked to improved student good performance in the national examinations. This review analyzes possible threats to teachers' motivation and remedial measures. The specific objectives of this review were to (i) Examine demotivational factors and ii) Determine emerging issues in secondary schools in Kenya. Provision of non-attractive remuneration together with emerging acute shortage of teachers, inadequate opportunities for professional growth, insecurity in schools and haphazard implementation of devolved government system in Kenya demotivate teachers. The findings are useful to the government, educational administrators, and other stakeholders to mitigate teachers' demotivation and improve performance in secondary schools.

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INTRODUCTION

The paper reviews demotivational factors' and emerging issues that demoralize secondary school teachers in Kenya making them none productive and affecting performance in national examinations. Secondary education in the country is crucial since it determines graduates' admission into professional programmes in tertiary institutions', jobs opportunities, social status and future career (Ongondo, 2010). Quality teaching is fundamental to the learning of young people and is crucial in transmitting and inculcating social values including democracy, tolerance, cultural understanding and respect for each person's fundamental freedoms (Education International, 2011; UNESCO, 2012). Clark (2003) defines motivation as a process that initiates and maintains goal directed performance. According to Guajardo (2011) motivation is the willingness, drive or desire by teachers to engage in good teaching. It energizes teachers' thinking, fuels their enthusiasm and persistence to achieve desired goals, creates positive and emotional reactions to teaching. Teacher demotivation on the other hand is lack of interest to undertake effective teaching. Teacher demotivation is a global phenomenon which has received intense research in many countries (UNESCO/ILO, 1966; UNESCO, 1997).

It is linked to low level of occupational status, recognition and prestige (Symeoniditis, 2015), remuneration package (Bennell and Akyeamong, 2007; Gatzinzi *et al.*, 2014), workload, classroom challenges, accountability, institutional environment and high standards of excellence and achievement expected (Achoka *et al.*, 2011). Research has found a strong relationship between teacher motivation and students' achievements (Rashed *et al.*, 2016). Teachers are the main determinants of quality education and if they are apathetic, unmotivated, immoral and antisocial then expected positive learning outcomes may not be achieved (Ige, 2014). Demotivated teachers are general unprofessional in their behavior and are characterized absenteeism, underutilization of class time, professional misconduct, reliance on traditional teaching practices, poor preparation and involvement in secondary income-generating activities that distract them from teaching duties (Bernell and Akyeamong, 2004; Guajardo, 2011). Some of these negative behaviours have been observed among secondary school teachers in Kenya (Nyakundi, 2012, Ocham and Okoth, 2015, Matoke *et al.*, 2015). Barasa (2015), found that 67 % of secondary school teachers in Bungoma District, Kenya are demotivated. Besides, there is public concern regarding the low linguistic and oral competence among secondary school graduates (Gudu *et al.*, 2014) and overall poor performance in national examinations (Barasa, 2005, Gudu, 2015) leading to low transformation rates from secondary to University (Kinyanjui, 2007; Gudo, 2014). Indiscipline and low moral values manifesting in frequent

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strikes, burning and destruction of school properties, and increased cases of examination irregularities have been linked to declining quality of education and teacher morale (Anon., 2016; Aullo, 2004; Abuya *et al.*, 2015). However, minimal effort has gone in analyzing emerging trends in teacher demotivation in the country. The emerging issues such as rapid expansion in the number of secondary schools without concomitant increase in the number of teachers (KIPPRA, 2007; Getange, 2013) and recently introduced free tuition in secondary schools but with inadequate funding which sometimes are disbursed late (Adan and Orodho, 2015; Chesek and Mugalavai, 2012). Other factors include growing insecurity in parts of the country leading to poor teacher distribution and high workload of teachers in some parts of the country (Kirui *et al.*, 2016), and unsatisfactory teacher management and administrative challenges brought about by haphazard implementation of national and county governance structures based on the Kenya Constitution (Mulwa *et al.*, 2011). These emerging issues could be detrimental to the current learning outcomes and far reaching consequences to education in the future. This is especially true for the Kenyan education system which is heavily examination oriented and requires that learners score highly in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E) to enter competitive programmes in the universities (KIE, 2002; Ongondo, 2010; Bennell, 2004). Despite all these challenges, there is little information on the strategies the government has put in place to mitigate teachers' demotivation and emerging issues. Thus, the review was carried out to: (i) examine demotivational factors and ii) determine emerging demotivational issues for secondary school teachers in Kenya.

Demotivational Factors

The review discusses demotivational factors under seven major themes including inadequate remuneration, lack of involvement in decision making process, inadequate professional development opportunities, inadequate instructional resources, low recognition, responsibility and appreciation, low professional status and poor work environment. It focuses more on understanding the gap between theory and practice and how emerging factors currently influence teachers' morale in secondary school in Kenya. In addition, the effect of confounding factors such as school contexts, public or private sponsorship, cultural practices, school's mission and vision on teachers' motivation are examined.

Inadequate Remuneration

Researchers globally rate attractive remuneration strategy as number one motivator particularly for those working at low level. Better remuneration is emotionally fulfilling and minimizes workers worries and financial commitments (Hannum *et al.*, 2011; Kariuki *et al.*, 2014). In the context of this paper, remuneration is defined as a reward for employment in the form of pay, salary, or wage, including allowances, benefits, cash and non-cash incentives. The influence of remuneration on employees work attitude is exemplified by the research findings by Spitzer (1995) cited by Clark (2003) which indicated that slightly over 50 % of workers admitted that they only do the minimum so that they are not fired while over 80% indicated that they could work much harder if they were adequately remunerated. Thus, inadequate remuneration remain a major demotivating factor to workers including

teachers. According to Salifu and Agbenyega (2013 p. 63) provision of attractive remuneration is rated first in teacher motivation. They say that:

Competitive salaries and benefits for teachers are very important in attracting and retaining high quality teachers... once teachers receive attractive remuneration, they would be satisfied with their jobs and this in turn, is tied to their work performance including involvement and commitment.

Similarly, a research done in Pakistan by Rasheed *et al.* (2016) found that compensation package was the most important factor for teachers' high motivation. A teacher in their study sample said:

We need maximum bonuses, monetary rewards and salary rises to fulfill our financial needs. Just like any other profession, we dream owning a car, a home, sending our children to the top-class schools ... we need appropriate compensation packages at the institution where we work (p. 108).

Similarly, teachers in Kenya are among the unhappy and demotivated public servants because of low pay (KNUT, 2015). They perceive their salary package as grossly inadequate and demanded up to 300% salary increase (Anon., 2016). Besides, Kenyan teachers feel the society should recompense them proportionate to the increased volume of work (KNUT, 2015) owing to over-enrollment because of free primary and secondary education (Kariuki, *et al.*, 2015). There is a general feeling among teachers in Kenya that the number of salary reviews were limited and if done, the increase is so little that it does not have significant impact on teachers' financial needs (Ombunya, 2015; Huma, 2014). They argue that the difficult economic times wipe their meagre pay income immediately it is received. This creates persistent expression of dissatisfaction manifested in frequent industrial strikes especially those in public schools (Marakia, 2014). According to Koross (2012), Kenya has experienced over ten national teachers' strikes demanding salary increment through their labour unions KNUT and Kenya Union of Post Primary Teachers (KUPPT).

Apart from low salaries, teachers' dissatisfaction also arises from inadequate and differential provision of non-salary incentives including allowances, bonuses, security, housing and food programme among schools (Huma, 2014 According to Musungu *et al.*, 2008), some Principals of secondary schools in Kenya employ some of these non-monetary rewards to enhance teacher motivation. Besides, self-help welfare community services Guajardo (2011), such as microfinance groups, child care, and other income generating activities have also been employed to motivate teachers. Low remuneration package to teachers does not only result in frequent strikes which has negative effects on quality of education but also high attrition and loss of motivation. In total, governments and other stakeholders should regularly review teachers' salary while paying attention to non-salary incentives as well to keep pace with inflation trends to enhance teachers' motivation for good performance.

Inadequate involvement in Decision Making Process

Decision making is an important process which helps secondary schools to realize their objectives. Inadequate or

non-inclusion in the process demotivates teachers (Kumbi, 2015). Teachers record high motivation when they are involved in decision making or are consulted on decisions that involve their work (Salifu and Agbenyega, 2013; Ige, 2014).

Adie *et al.* (2008) reported that the need for autonomy is fulfilled in most people when they see themselves as the origin of choices and decisions. Therefore, good leadership should be participatory and enhance autonomy, respects other peoples' perspectives and choices. According to Kinyanjui and Orodho (2014) the use of democratic leadership styles, involving teachers more in decision making process enhances their motivation and thus leads to better curriculum implementation and high academic achievement by their students. Researches in Kenya indicate that some Head teachers and Principals do not involve teachers in decision making. In some cases, the school administrators made critical decisions touching on policy implementation and administrative matters without consulting teachers (Lisanza, 2011). According to Kumbi (2015) and Mwaluko *et al.* (2009), teachers are least involved in issues related to general school administration. Similarly, a research done in Nigeria by Ige, (2014) indicated that largely teachers are not involved in decision making. He reports that:

A high proportion of school managers are high-handed and autocratic in their dealings with teachers which really demotivate teachers...school administrators should thus involve teachers, including the youngest and the least experienced in decision making. According to Otunga *et al.* (2011) teachers are key stakeholders in matters pertaining to curriculum development and implementation. Therefore, if their perceptions are not taken care of during policy formulation there could be confusion leading to two curricular at play (Orafi and Borg, 2009) and hence the intended programme objectives may not be achieved. What is emerging is that teachers' have become more and more enlightened, inquisitive on matters of government, aware of their and hence should be involved in all aspects of school administration.

Inadequate Professional Development Opportunities

Lack of professional development opportunities demotivate teachers and often cause attrition (Hannum *et al.*, 2011) and poor class performance (Mwania, 2015). Owing to the dynamic nature of teaching, teachers need to acquire and adequate knowledge, skills and experience to be effective in their work and once they do so they anticipate future professional growth. Research done in Kenya by Huma (2014) indicated that teachers' training needs training in content and pedagogical preparation. This could be achieved through teacher development opportunities such as conferences, seminars and workshops which equip teachers with current trends of teaching and learning paradigms (Ige, 2014). However, according to Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) (2015), there is inadequate assessment of teachers professional training needs which reduces their morale. Consequently, there is need for continuous assessment and encouragement to boost their morale (KNUT, 2015). A study done in Kenya by Matoke *et al* (2015) showed that teacher development opportunities account for 62.2% of teacher motivation. Thus, opportunity for further training and sponsorship to attend workshops and seminars is a key factor in enhancing motivation. Similarly, research by Nyakundi (2012) and Kariuki *et al.* (2014) indicated that professional training and development influences teacher morale and commitment to their duties. However, according to Barasa (2015) most secondary teachers interviewed indicated that they

lacked motivation in their work because of inadequate training and development opportunities. Gathumbi *et al.* (2013) concurs that in-service training opportunities are inadequate and if provided they do not adequately meet teachers' professional development needs because they are shallow in content. A research done in East Africa by Bramwell *et al* (2014) indicated that preservice training is lacking or is of insufficient quality. The weak pre-service training opportunities do not adequately prepare teachers to have knowledge about effective teaching strategies, engage external expertise, model effective practice in teacher development activities, have peer collaboration, effective feedback and follow up in the classrooms (Kafu, 2011; Bramwell *et al*, 2014; Otunga *et al*, 2012). Studies done by Musili (2015) and Gitonga (2012) revealed that there was a significant relationship between teachers' professional development, motivation and KCSE performance. Thus, it is imperative that teachers receive quality professional training opportunities.

Inadequate Instructional Resources

Instructional resources are key in successful teaching and learning (KIE, 2002; Gudu, *et al.*, 2014; Mwamba, 2005; Mwaka *et al*, 2014). Research done in Nigeria by Ige, (2014) indicated that appropriate instructional resources selectively chosen and utilized enable teachers to teach better. However, many researchers have reiterated the inadequacy of instructional resources in Kenyan secondary schools (Mwamba, 2005; Gudu *et al*, 2014; Barasa, 2005; Kafu, 2011; Mwaka *et al*, 2014). The problem is more acute in small and medium size secondary schools (Makori and Onderi, 2014) where library, laboratory and sports facility including text books are in dire need (Yara and Otieno, 2010). yet a recent study by KNUT (2015) emphasized that teaching and learning resources is one of the most teacher professional need and when they are inadequate, teachers get demoralized. In general, funding of secondary school education in Kenya seems to have been neglected by the government compared to primary schools. Most of the funds have largely been directed towards meeting teachers' salaries and allowances, at the expense of development expenditures (Abaya, 215). Therefore, provision of adequate teaching and learning materials continues to be a challenge to the Board of Management, parents and communities'. This impacts negatively to quality education.

Emerging issues such as high cost of teaching and learning resources, compulsory free primary education which increased the number of secondary schools in the country to cope with large numbers of class eight graduates (Ngware *et al.*, 2007; Getange, 2013) and the introduction of subsidized secondary education have had negative impact on availability of teaching resources. This concurs with research done by Gudu *et al* (2014) in Kenya which indicated that large class size, overloaded curriculum and lack of learning resources in schools demotivated teachers. There should be deliberate effort by head teachers and principals to ensure that instructional resources are provided in schools to increase teaching effectiveness and teacher motivation (Ige, 2014; Nyakundi, 2012). It is recommended that where the resources are limiting, teachers should be encouraged to use locally available materials for instance realia, resource persons, learners, magazines, news papers and charts among others (Gudu *et al*, 2014). In addition, teachers should embrace collaborative teaching, technology and reflective practice (Borg, 2006;

Salifu and Agbenyenya, 2013; Robinson, 2004; Abenga, 2005). Further, secondary schools could venture into income generating activities to acquire learning resources (Getange, 2013).

Low Recognition and Appreciation

Low recognition and appreciation demoralize teachers and could lead to low performance. According to Andrews (2011) recognition is a very rewarding experience for an excellent classroom teacher because it brings hope, pride and support from students, teachers, governing board and public. Research has found high value in providing recognition and awards programs for excellent teachers for teaching efforts, advising and mentoring students, scholarly/creative work, service contributions and outreach which together market schools (Anon., 2014, Ogunlade *et al.*, 2011). According to Iliya and Ifeona (2015) self-respect, responsibility and sense of accomplishment are great premise for improving teachers' professional motivation. Studies have identified some of the most commonly used performance-based recognition in schools including public appreciation, promotion, presents, duty allowances and overtime pay. Others include praise, verbal recognition, challenging work, growth and development opportunities also motivate teachers (Kamery, 2004; Abuya *et al.*, 2015). These help to boost performance of teachers by motivating them and increasing their productivity and efficiency in class (KNUT, 2015). These observations concur with a research done in USA and Australia by Andrews (2011) which found that teachers when recognized and awarded for their teaching they are motivated thus continue giving high-level instruction to their learners.

However, research indicate that in many countries social respect for teachers is low. A research done by Guajardo (2011) established that social respect for teachers has fallen in many countries. Yet adequate research has not been done in this area for any meaningful interventions to be put in place in the Kenyan context. It is emerging among Kenyan secondary school teachers that they do not receive respect, appreciation, and acknowledgment commensurate with their contribution to schools and national development (KNUT, 2015; Ogunlade *et al.*, 2011; Nyakundi, 2012; Ogochi, 2014). In addition, research indicate that there are inconsistencies in the reward systems in the secondary schools (Kirunda *et al.*, 2014) because there is no fair and transparent procedure for recognizing best performing teachers in each secondary school. The foregoing arguments clearly demonstrate that issues pertaining to respect, appreciation and acknowledgment of teachers run far deeper than the occasional verbal praise or an annual appreciation luncheon (Giangreco *et al.*, 2001). School management should therefore take teacher recognition as part of the school administration and curriculum implementation process. There is need to develop a clear and transparent system for teacher recognition and appreciation.

Low Profession Status

Teacher status is the occupational prestige and esteem in the public's perception where teaching is placed in a hierarchy of occupations (Symeonidis, 2015). It is influenced by many factors including initial and continuing training, recruitment, advancement and promotion, security of tenure, disciplinary procedures, professional freedom, supervision and assessment (UNESCO and ILO, 2008). Therefore, absence of these could

lead to teacher demotivation. There has been a continuous debate over the years concerning low status of teaching as a profession. Teachers feel that the traditional status of teachers is getting de-professionalized due to declines competitive attitudes, insecure employment relationships and mistaken policies on measurement and accountability (Symeonidis, 2015). Research by Aliet *et al.* (2016) in Somalia and in Kenya (Kafu, 2011) found that teachers feel their profession is not highly rewarding as compared with other occupations.

Factors that make teaching profession non-popular in Kenya include: the low entry academic qualifications requirement for admission to educational programmes. Second, students who do not choose education are admitted to programmes Third, graduates who have missed employment opportunities seek employment in teaching profession as a last alternative. Shafiwu and Salakpi (2013, p. 179) Observe that: The status of teachers as compared to other professions is low that it has become 'employment of the last resort' among university graduates and secondary school leavers in many countries. Fourth, high rate of teacher attrition due to many factors create impression that teaching is unpopular (Bennell, 2004; Symeonidis, 2015). Fifth, some teachers unprofessional behaviours demean status of teaching profession in the society (Kafu, 2011). Despite the perceived low status of teaching profession in the Kenya, some students join teaching profession due to family influence. To improve status of teaching profession, the government and other stakeholders should improve image teachers, entry qualifications for teachers employing qualified teachers and increasing teachers remuneration (KNUT, 2015; Ocham and Okoth, 2015) and offer mentorship programmes (Guajardo, 2011: Gudu *et al.*, 2016) to boost teachers' morale and achieve good performance in schools.

Poor Work Environment

Work environment is a key factor in teacher motivation which promotes effective teaching and learning. Conducive working atmosphere motivates teachers to give quality service. It is defined by physical, social, administrative and security factors Physical factors including classroom space, class size, availability of electricity, furniture among others contribute to a conducive learning environment (Salifu and Agbenyenya, 2012). Teachers are proud of their teaching and work environment when it is attractive. Kafu (2011) laments that teachers' work environments are poor, dilapidated and impoverished. Thus renovating dilapidated buildings, planting trees and flowers, painting faded buildings and constructing recreational facilities all contribute to acceptable work environment. A social and teacher management environment that fosters teamwork, brings positive emotions such as happiness, humor, joy and enthusiasm positively contribute to preferred work environment (Robinson, 2004; Eisner, 2002; Clark, 2003). Conditions which create a feeling of belongingness, collegiality, support individual teachers to manage work-related stress including music and balanced workloads motivate teachers (Kamau and Ruth, 2016). School administration that embraces democratic principles, undertakes frequent assessment and evaluation of teacher performance and gives timely feedback help motivates teachers (Gudu *et al.*, 2016; Ayot, 1984). Monitoring teachers class attendance to ensure utilization of time allocated (Ndungu *et al.*, 2015), evaluation of schemes of work, lesson plans, records of work covered and students' progress records (Bushiri, 2014)

enhance teaching effectiveness and motivation. Research indicates that work conditions in secondary schools are not quite favourable (Johari, 2014). Administrative issues such as dishonesty, unfair treatment, setting vague goals, unnecessary policy and stringent rules, distraction, lack of respect, poor organizational structures and interpersonal relationship with staff further demotivate teachers (Hannum *et al.*, 2011; Bushiri, 2014). Yet there is little research on how administrative issues affect teacher motivation in the country. Teachers can be demotivated further when given excessive administrative responsibilities apart from their normal curriculum and co-curriculum duties (Wangu *et al.*, 2015). Some of the school duties include being a head of department, boarding master, library services, time-table coordinator, patron of various clubs and societies in the school (Gudu *et al.*, 2014; Kamau and Ruth, 2016). This makes teachers work overtime, have high work load, stressed and fatigued. These observations highlight the need for recruitment of more staff and staff counselors in secondary schools in Kenya to help teachers to cope with excessive responsibilities and stress. Student indiscipline also make teachers unhappy. Recent research in Kenya indicates that indiscipline is becoming a serious problem in most secondary schools (Kamau and Ruth, 2016). There has been increased cases of bullying (Oriya, 2005), students refusing to wear proper school uniform and taking punishments (Gudu *et al.*, 2016), strikes and general disobedience (Kamau and Ruth, 2016; Daily Nation 27th March 2001). This is because of introduction of a new policy that forbids the use of corporal punishment. However, a recent research done in Pakistan by Nawaz and Yasin (2015) found that positive behaviours of students and friendly environment enhance teacher motivation. Johari (2014) concurs that learners' discipline and parents' involvement in school issues increase teacher motivation. Thus, school management should ensure adherence to the school rules and regulations to enhance student discipline.

Security and safety in school environment is known to affect teachers' motivation and commitment especially in countries experiencing war and insurgency over cultural related issues, racism, tribalism and meagre resources (Mijah, 2014). Globally, there has been a growing concern of insecurity and conflicts in secondary schools and this has made many countries to implement School Management Manuals to address this concern (Anon., 2009; MoE, 2008). Kirui *et al.* (2011) described various insecurity issues in secondary schools in Kenya including strikes, arson, theft, fighting, lack of secure and safe school compounds among students. According to Kindiki (2009), 300 secondary schools were closed due to insecurity arising from students strikes. Thus, insecurity is emerging as an important issue in schools. Recently, Cabinet Secretary for Education appointed a commission to consider security and safety students and school property owing to increased incidences of arsons and strikes.

Conclusion

The review highlights strategies and how to handle emerging issue to enhance teacher motivation and improve quality of teaching and learning for best performance. The most important strategy is for the government and other stakeholders to provide attractive remuneration to meet financial needs of teachers. In cases where there are inadequate funds other strategies such as such enhancement of professional status teacher development opportunities and conducive working environment could be provided to motivate teachers.

The review also found several emerging issues that could influence the implementation of motivational strategies. For instance, unnecessary stringent rules, insecurity, student indiscipline, work related stress, inadequate attention to cultural dynamics and inadequate inclusivity in decision making process further aggravate teacher demotivation. Thus, there is a need for special training for school administrators to be conversant with the current demotivational trends in secondary schools in Kenya and how to handle them. In addition, school administrators are encouraged to use government approved School Management Manuals.

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