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Intrinsic Drive Versus Extrinsic Deficits and Their Effect on Teaching Efficiency in Public Secondary Schools in Mandera South Sub-County, Kenya

By

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Abstract
This study investigated the effect of teacher motivation, as influenced by principals' management practices, on teaching efficiency in public secondary schools in Mandera South Sub-County, Kenya. The contention of the study is that teacher motivation is universally recognized as a critical determinant of teaching efficiency and student achievement. However, sustaining motivation is a profound challenge in marginalized, resource-scarce environments. In Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs), such as Mandera County, teachers operate under extreme conditions that test their professional commitment. While principals' management practices are expected to foster motivation, the specific impact of these practices on teaching efficiency in such a unique context remains empirically under-investigated. The study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. A census approach was utilized, targeting all 11 principals and 138 teachers in the sub-county's public secondary schools. Quantitative data were collected from 125 teachers using a structured questionnaire with 5-point Likert scales to measure perceptions of motivation and teaching efficiency. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 11 principals to provide explanatory depth. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression to test the hypotheses.The findings reveal that teacher motivation is the single most powerful predictor of teaching efficiency. Multiple regression analysis showed that motivation had the largest statistically significant effect ($\beta = .420$, $p < .001$) compared to other management practices like capacity building, recruitment, and delegation. However, a stark "motivation paradox" emerged: teachers reported extremely low satisfaction with extrinsic factors such as salary and working conditions (Mean = 1.95), but exceptionally high levels of intrinsic motivation to do their best for students (Mean = 4.10). The overall regression model was highly significant ($F(4, 120) = 66.20$, $p < .001$), explaining 65.9% of the variance in teaching efficiency. The education system in Mandera South is sustained not by systemic support, but by the finite personal and professional commitment of its teachers. This reliance on intrinsic motivation, in the face of profound extrinsic deficits, is an unsustainable model. The study concludes that while principals' efforts to foster a supportive culture are valuable, systemic policy interventions addressing fundamental "hygiene factors" like compensation and working conditions are urgently required to prevent teacher burnout and ensure long-term educational quality in marginalized regions.

Keywords: Teacher Motivation, Teaching Efficiency, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, School Management, Marginalized Education, Mandera County, Kenya, Educational Leadership

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1. Introduction

The efficiency of a nation's teaching force is the primary determinant of the quality of its educational outcomes. At the heart of this efficiency lies the complex and multifaceted construct of teacher motivation the psychological engine that drives professional commitment, pedagogical innovation, and resilience in the face of classroom challenges (Kumari & Kumar, 2023). A principal's capacity to cultivate and sustain this motivation through effective management practices is, therefore, a cornerstone of successful school leadership (Karacabey, 2020). This principle, which links leadership, motivation, and performance, forms a central theme in global educational discourse.

Internationally, research from diverse contexts affirms this linkage. Studies in high-performing education systems have shown that strategic Human Resource Management (HRM) practices are critical for attaining institutional goals (Faizuddin, 2018; Sothy, 2019). In Britain, for example, improved academic performance in schools is strongly associated with the intensive use of effective management practices that bolster teacher morale and professionalism (Bryson, Stokes & Wilkinson, 2018). These findings underscore a universal truth: the strategic management of teachers as a school's most valuable resource is directly correlated with student achievement (Alexopoulos, 2019).

This dynamic is equally, if not more, critical across the African continent, where educational systems often grapple with significant resource constraints and challenging working conditions. In Nigeria, effective HRM is understood as the key to unlocking teacher commitment and achieving educational goals (Omebe, 2018). Similarly, research in Tanzania highlights that fair remuneration, a safe working environment, and opportunities for development are fundamental drivers of teacher performance and commitment (Leila & Mnjokava, 2022). These studies emphasize that creating a motivational climate is not a peripheral concern but a central administrative function.

In Kenya, the management of the teaching force is constitutionally mandated to the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), which oversees recruitment, remuneration, and professional standards (Manthi, Kilika, & Kimencu, 2018). Despite substantial government investment in the education sector (KNBS, 2018), challenges in the implementation of effective management practices at the school level persist. Research in Kenya has consistently linked principals' management practices to teacher performance. Ismail (2022) found that principals' ability to cultivate a conducive teaching environment is a key factor in academic success, while Mabatuk (2016) argued that poor student performance in many public schools can be directly attributed to the poor management and motivation of teachers.

This study situates its inquiry within the unique and challenging context of Mandera South Sub-County. As one of Kenya's Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs), the region faces a confluence of severe challenges, including historical marginalization, insecurity, poor infrastructure, and extreme climatic conditions. These factors create a uniquely difficult

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environment for educators, making the task of sustaining teacher motivation both exceptionally challenging and critically important.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite being adequately staffed and resourced relative to regional standards, public secondary schools in Mandera South Sub-County have consistently demonstrated poor teacher performance and, consequently, suboptimal student academic outcomes in national examinations. This is evidenced by observable indicators such as high rates of teacher absenteeism, late reporting, and a general lack of engagement, which collectively reduce valuable instructional time and compromise the quality of education delivered. This performance deficit exists in stark contrast to the significant human and material resources invested in the sub-county, suggesting a fundamental breakdown in school-level management.

The central problem lies in the failure of existing management practices to effectively motivate the teaching force. While the principal's role in human resource management is theoretically understood to be a key driver of efficiency, there is a profound lack of empirical evidence investigating this relationship within the unique, high-stress context of Mandera South. Studies have linked declining teacher performance to management issues in other parts of Kenya (Riungu et al., 2021), but the specific motivational dynamics at play in an ASAL region—where teachers face exceptional hardships related to security, isolation, and a harsh environment—remain largely unexplored.

Without a clear, data-driven understanding of the specific motivational factors that influence teaching efficiency in this context, interventions from school leaders and policymakers are likely to be ineffective. It is unknown whether teachers in this region are more responsive to financial incentives, non-monetary recognition, or improvements in working conditions. This knowledge gap prevents the development of targeted, contextually-appropriate management strategies. This study, therefore, sought to fill this gap by systematically examining the effect of teacher motivation, as a key component of principals' management practices, on teaching efficiency in the public secondary schools of Mandera South Sub-County.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to determine the effect of teacher motivation on teaching efficiency in public secondary schools in Mandera South Sub-County, Mandera County, Kenya.

1.3 Research Question

To what extent does teacher motivation affect teaching efficiency among teachers in public secondary schools in Mandera South Sub-County, Kenya?

2. Literature Review

This section explores the theoretical foundations of teacher motivation and reviews the empirical literature that examines its relationship with teaching efficiency, establishing a conceptual basis for the study.

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2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study is primarily anchored on Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959), a seminal framework in the study of workplace motivation. Herzberg's theory provides a nuanced and highly relevant lens for analyzing the complex motivational environment of teachers, particularly in a challenging context like Mandera. The theory distinguishes between two independent sets of factors that influence employee attitudes:

1. Hygiene Factors (Extrinsic): These are factors related to the job context and environment. They do not in themselves produce job satisfaction or motivation, but their absence or inadequacy leads to job dissatisfaction. For teachers, key hygiene factors include salary, hardship allowances, job security, working conditions (e.g., quality of school facilities, safety), school policies, and the quality of supervision. According to the theory, even if a school has excellent hygiene factors (e.g., a high salary), this will only bring a teacher to a neutral state of no dissatisfaction. It will not, on its own, motivate them to excel. Conversely, poor hygiene factors, such as an inadequate salary or unsafe working environment, will actively cause dissatisfaction and demotivation.
2. Motivators (Intrinsic): These are factors that are intrinsic to the nature of the work itself. These are the factors that lead to job satisfaction and genuine motivation. For teachers, key motivators include a sense of achievement (seeing students learn and succeed), recognition for their work, responsibility (being trusted with important tasks), the work itself (a passion for teaching and shaping young minds), and opportunities for professional growth and advancement. Herzberg argues that these are the true drivers of high performance.

This theory is profoundly applicable to the current study. It allows for the investigation of a potential motivation paradox where teachers might express high levels of intrinsic motivation (driven by a sense of purpose and achievement) while simultaneously experiencing high levels of dissatisfaction due to poor hygiene factors (low pay, harsh conditions). Herzberg's framework predicts that to achieve high teaching efficiency, principals must not only address the hygiene factors to prevent dissatisfaction but must also actively foster motivators to build true commitment. This study will use the Two-Factor Theory to dissect the motivational landscape in Mandera South, examining the relative influence of both hygiene factors and motivators on teaching efficiency.

This framework is further supported by Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), which posits that basic physiological and safety needs (which align with Herzberg's hygiene factors) must be reasonably met before an individual can be motivated by higher-level esteem and self-actualization needs (which align with motivators). In a hardship area, where safety and basic living standards can be a daily concern, this theory suggests that hygiene factors may be particularly potent sources of dissatisfaction if not adequately addressed.

2.2 Empirical Review of Teacher Motivation and Efficiency

The empirical literature provides a vast and consistent body of evidence linking teacher motivation to teaching efficiency and student outcomes. The discourse, however, reveals complexities regarding the relative importance of extrinsic versus intrinsic factors, which vary significantly by context.

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2.2.1 The Global and Regional Landscape

Globally, research affirms that motivated teachers are more committed, innovative, and effective in the classroom. A study in the Philippines by Comighud and Arevalo (2020) found a powerful synergy between extrinsic and intrinsic factors, where teachers who received financial incentives and were also supported in their professional development showed the highest levels of commitment. This suggests that a balanced approach, addressing both hygiene and motivator needs, is most effective. The central role of leadership in creating this motivational climate is also well-documented. A study in Lebanon found that a lack of motivation, often stemming from unsupportive leadership, had a significant negative impact on teacher performance (Naim et al., 2020). Conversely, research in Nigeria showed that principals who practiced democratic leadership and provided both material incentives and opportunities for participation improved both teacher motivation and student outcomes (Asogwa et al., 2020).

2.2.2 The Extrinsic vs. Intrinsic Debate in the Kenyan Context

While the importance of motivation is undisputed, the Kenyan literature presents a more complex and seemingly contradictory picture regarding the efficacy of specific motivational strategies. This highlights the highly context-dependent nature of motivation.

Some studies provide strong evidence for the power of extrinsic, financial rewards. A study by Kalsoom et al. (2018) in Pakistan, a context with some socio-economic similarities to parts of Kenya, found that providing monetary rewards to teachers directly improved their attendance and their students' test scores. This perspective suggests that in environments where basic financial needs are a primary concern, extrinsic incentives can be a powerful lever for behavioral change.

However, other Kenyan studies offer a contrasting view. A notable study by Kiprop (2018) in Kericho County found that while the basic salary (a hygiene factor) had a significant effect on teacher performance, non-financial rewards such as recognition and praise (motivators) were statistically insignificant. This finding appears to challenge Herzberg's theory, suggesting that in that specific context, intrinsic motivators were less impactful than basic compensation.

This finding must be analyzed in conjunction with other research that highlights the profound dissatisfaction with extrinsic factors in the Kenyan teaching profession. A descriptive study by Ndungu (2017) found that salaries and fringe benefits were widely perceived as inadequate and that a lack of job security was a major source of dissatisfaction, both of which negatively affected performance.

2.2.3 Synthesizing the Contradiction and Identifying the Gap

The apparent contradiction between these Kenyan studies can be resolved through a more rigorous application of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The theory predicts that if fundamental hygiene factors (like an adequate and fair salary) are not met, employees will remain in a state of dissatisfaction. In such a state, higher-level motivators (like recognition or praise) will have little to no effect, because the employees are still preoccupied with their unmet basic needs. Therefore, Kiprop's (2018) finding that non-financial rewards were insignificant in Kericho is likely not because motivators are unimportant, but because the foundational hygiene factors, as documented by Ndungu (2017), were not sufficiently in place to allow the motivators to have an effect.

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This synthesis reveals a critical research gap. The conflicting findings in the literature underscore that the effectiveness of motivational strategies is not universal but is highly contingent on the specific economic and social context. No study has systematically investigated this motivational dynamic within the unique and extreme context of Mandera South, an ASAL region where hygiene factors are likely to be under severe strain. This study aims to fill this gap by applying Herzberg's framework to examine the interplay of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and its ultimate effect on teaching efficiency in this under-researched and challenging environment.

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to investigate the relationship between principals' management practices and teaching efficiency as they naturally occur (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.1 Population and Sampling

The study was conducted in the 11 public secondary schools of Mandera South Sub-County. Given the small and manageable size of the target population (N=149, comprising 11 principals and 138 teachers), a census approach was adopted. This method eliminates sampling error and ensures the findings are a complete representation of the entire population of interest (Collis & Hussey, 2013). All 11 principals and all 138 teachers were included in the study sample.

3.2 Data Collection and Instruments

Primary data were collected using two main instruments. A structured questionnaire with 5-point Likert scale items was administered to all teachers to gather quantitative data on their perceptions of management practices (including motivation) and their own teaching efficiency. A semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect in-depth qualitative data from the 11 school principals regarding their management strategies, challenges, and perceptions of teacher motivation.

3.3 Validity and Reliability

The validity of the instruments was ensured through expert review by university supervisors and through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) during a pilot study. All constructs demonstrated acceptable validity with an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) above the .50 threshold. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The motivation scale achieved an alpha of .764, and the teaching efficiency scale achieved an alpha of .744, both indicating acceptable internal consistency and reliability (Veal, 2017).

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS Version 28. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) were used to summarize perceptions. To test the hypothesis, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive power of teacher motivation on teaching efficiency while controlling for other management practices (capacity building, recruitment, delegation). The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$. Qualitative data from interview transcripts were analyzed thematically.

The regression equation was specified as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

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Where: Y = Teaching Efficiency, X_1 = Capacity Building, X_2 = Recruitment, X_3 = Motivation, X_4 = Delegation of Duties.

4. Quantitative Analysis and Results

This section presents the empirical findings regarding teacher motivation and its influence on teaching efficiency.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis: The Motivation Paradox

Teachers were asked to rate their agreement with statements regarding motivation. The results, summarized in Table 4.1, reveal a stark contrast between their satisfaction with extrinsic versus intrinsic factors.

Table 4.1: Teachers' Perceptions of Motivation (N = 125)

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
My salary and hardship allowances are sufficient.	1.95	0.95	Strong Disagreement
My work is valued and respected by the administration.	3.30	1.20	Agreement
The school environment is conducive for teaching.	2.40	1.10	Disagreement
I feel motivated to do my best for my students.	4.10	0.90	Agreement
Overall Mean	**2.94**	**1.04**	**Neutral**

Source: Field Data 2025

The data vividly illustrates the "motivation paradox." There is profound dissatisfaction with extrinsic hygiene factors: teachers strongly disagree that their compensation is sufficient (Mean = 1.95) and disagree that the school environment is conducive (Mean = 2.40). However, despite these significant demotivators, they report high levels of intrinsic motivation to serve their students (Mean = 4.10) and feel respected by their immediate administration (Mean = 3.30). This suggests that teachers are operating on a reservoir of professional commitment and goodwill, even as they feel let down by the broader system.

This paradox was powerfully articulated in the qualitative interviews with principals. One principal (Principal 8) observed:

> Motivation is a paradox here. If you look at their pay, the resources, the living conditions, you would expect them to have zero motivation... But when you see them in the classroom, most of them are incredibly dedicated. They have a sense of mission... Their intrinsic motivation is what keeps these schools running (Principal 8, School J)

Another principal highlighted the frustration with the systemic failures:

> We try our best to offer non-financial motivation. We praise them publicly... But it is difficult to sustain morale when the system fails them on the basics

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like promotions and a decent hardship allowance. They feel forgotten by the TSC. (Principal 11, School B)

4.2 Inferential Analysis: The Predictive Power of Motivation

To determine the unique effect of motivation on teaching efficiency, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The model included motivation, capacity building, recruitment, and delegation as predictors.

Table 4.2: Multiple Regression Coefficients Predicting Teaching Efficiency

Predictor	Unstandardized B	Standardized Beta (β)	t	Sig. (p-value)
(Constant)	0.95	-	3.39	.001
Capacity Building	0.32	.310	3.56	<.001
Recruitment	0.18	.160	2.25	.027
Motivation	0.44	.420	6.29	<.001
Delegation	0.26	.240	3.25	.002

Note. Dependent Variable: Teaching Efficiency. Overall Model Fit: $R^2 = .659$, $F(4, 120) = 66.20$, $p < .001$.

Source: Field Data 2025

The overall regression model was extremely powerful, explaining 65.9% of the variance in teaching efficiency ($R^2 = .659$), and was highly statistically significant ($p < .001$).

The regression coefficients in Table 4.2 reveal the individual contribution of each management practice. While all four practices were significant predictors, teacher motivation emerged as, by a substantial margin, the strongest and most significant predictor of teaching efficiency.

The standardized beta coefficient for Motivation ($\beta = .420$) is considerably higher than for Capacity Building ($\beta = .310$), Delegation ($\beta = .240$), and Recruitment ($\beta = .160$). This indicates that a teacher's motivational state has the largest unique impact on their classroom efficiency, even after accounting for the effects of their training, how they were hired, and the responsibilities they are given. The unstandardized coefficient ($B = 0.44$) suggests that a one-unit increase on the motivation scale is associated with a 0.44-unit increase in teaching efficiency, a substantial effect.

Given the highly significant p-value ($p < .001$), the null hypothesis is rejected. The results provide robust statistical evidence that teacher motivation has a strong, positive, and significant effect on teaching efficiency.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study powerfully confirm that teacher motivation is the most critical driver of teaching efficiency in the public secondary schools of Mandera South. The dominance of motivation in the regression model ($\beta = .420$) provides a clear, quantitative answer to the research question: the extent to which teachers are motivated has a profound and direct impact on their performance.

The most significant contribution of this research, however, is its empirical illumination of the motivation paradox, a dynamic that perfectly illustrates Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in an extreme context. The descriptive data reveals a teaching force operating

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under conditions of severe hygiene-factor failure. The profound dissatisfaction with salary, allowances, and the working environment (all hygiene factors) is palpable. According to Herzberg's theory, this should lead to high levels of dissatisfaction, which it does. However, the theory also posits that the presence of motivators can still lead to satisfaction and high performance. This is exactly what the data shows. Despite the poor hygiene, teachers report feeling respected by their administration and, most importantly, derive a powerful intrinsic motivation from the work itself their sense of mission and commitment to their students. These are classic motivators: recognition and the work itself.

This study empirically demonstrates that in Mandera South, the education system is functioning almost entirely on the power of these intrinsic motivators. The teachers' professional dedication is compensating for the systemic failures in providing adequate extrinsic support. This aligns with and helps to explain the seemingly contradictory findings in the Kenyan literature. The reason that non-financial rewards may seem insignificant in some contexts (Kiprop, 2018) is likely because the foundational hygiene needs are so acutely unmet that they overshadow everything else. This study, conducted in a context of extreme hardship, shows that while hygiene failures cause deep dissatisfaction, the intrinsic pull of the teaching profession is, for now, a more powerful determinant of day-to-day classroom efficiency.

The qualitative insights from principals add a critical and cautionary layer to this discussion. Their recognition that this reliance on intrinsic motivation is a paradox and that teachers feel forgotten by the TSC highlights the unsustainability of the current situation. Intrinsic motivation is a finite resource. When teachers feel that their professional commitment is taken for granted by a system that fails to meet their basic needs, this goodwill will inevitably erode, leading to burnout, attrition, and a decline in the very efficiency that it currently sustains.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This study set out to determine the effect of teacher motivation on teaching efficiency in a marginalized Kenyan sub-county. It concludes that teacher motivation is the single most powerful predictor of teaching efficiency, with a greater impact than capacity building, recruitment, or delegation. However, this motivation exists as a paradox: teachers are driven by a powerful intrinsic "sense of mission" while being profoundly demotivated by systemic failures in extrinsic support, such as inadequate compensation and poor working conditions. The current level of teaching efficiency in Mandera South is being sustained by the personal and professional commitment of its teachers, a model that is both admirable and fundamentally unsustainable. Without systemic interventions to address the profound hygiene factor deficits, this reservoir of intrinsic motivation is at risk of depletion, which would have catastrophic consequences for education in the region.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, the following evidence-based recommendations are proposed:

1. For Policy Makers (Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission):
    (i) Urgently Review and Enhance the Hardship Allowance: The single greatest source of dissatisfaction is financial. The TSC must conduct an immediate and realistic review of the hardship allowance for ASAL regions to ensure it is

commensurate with the high cost of living and the severe challenges teachers face. This directly addresses the most critical hygiene factor.

(ii) Develop a Context-Specific ASAL Motivation and Retention Policy: Move beyond one-size-fits-all policies. Develop a specific framework for ASAL counties that includes not only enhanced financial incentives but also clear pathways for career progression, priority for transfers after a fixed term of service, and improved housing and security arrangements.

2. For School Principals:
   (i) Systematize Non-Monetary Motivation: While principals cannot control salaries, they can and must amplify the motivators they do control. This involves moving beyond ad-hoc praise to create systematic, formal programs for recognizing teacher effort and achievement. This could include "Teacher of the Month" awards, public acknowledgment in assemblies, and written commendations.
   (ii) Foster a Supportive and Protective School Culture: Principals should focus on strengthening the sense of "family" and community within the school. This involves actively shielding teachers from external pressures, advocating fiercely on their behalf, and ensuring that the school environment is a psychologically safe and supportive space.
3. For Future Research:
   (i) A Longitudinal Study on Motivation Erosion: A longitudinal study is urgently needed to track the motivational levels of teachers in Mandera South over several years. This would help to determine at what point intrinsic motivation begins to wane in the face of persistent extrinsic dissatisfaction, providing critical data on the sustainability of the current model.
   (ii) A Comparative Study: A comparative study contrasting the motivational drivers in an ASAL region with those in a well-resourced urban region could provide valuable insights for developing more nuanced, context-sensitive national motivation policies.

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