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Original Article

Influence of Working Conditions on Performance of Support Staff in Secondary Schools in Nakuru County, Kenya

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Work Relationships,
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Public Secondary
Schools.*

This study assessed the influence of working conditions on the performance of support staff in public secondary schools within Nakuru County, Kenya. The objectives of the study were to: determine influence of work relationships and remuneration on work performance of support staff respectively. The study adopted the mixed methods research approach using the concurrent embedded design. Herzbergs' two-factor theory provided the theoretical framework with a target population of 3,258 comprising of 362 principals, 362 deputy principals and 2, 534 support staff. Yamanes' (1973) formula was used to determine a sample of 356 comprising of (40) principals, (40) deputy principals and (272) support staff who were selected by way of the stratified sampling technique. Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative and qualitative information from principals and deputy principals, while support staffs provided quantitative and qualitative information through semi-structured interview schedules. Quantitative data collected was analyzed descriptively and inferential statistics generated while qualitative data was analyzed thematically based on the research objectives. The findings show that: work relationships and remuneration had the Pearsons' correlation coefficient (R) of .724 and .678 respectively. The R^2 computed yielded values of .524 and .460 for working relationships and remuneration respectively suggesting that working relationships explained 52.4% of work performance of support staff while remuneration explained 46% of work performance. As a result of these findings, it was concluded that working conditions (work relationships and remuneration) moderately but positively influenced work performance of support staff in public secondary schools in Nakuru County. These findings are particularly important to School Boards of Management and the Ministry of Education who can utilize them to enhance work performance of support staff by enriching their working conditions. Further research to develop schemes of service for support staff across all public secondary schools is recommended in order to bolster their work performance.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions benefit greatly from having well-trained and well-equipped teaching and support personnel (OECD, 2012). Students' well-being is dependent on the work of support personnel, which is why recruiting and managing them should be simplified for maximum effectiveness (Littlecott et al., 2018). In this situation, the term "support staff" refers to all those members of staff who are not teachers, for example, teaching assistants, information and communication technology (ICT) technicians, laboratory technicians, pastoral support staff, special needs support staff, and foreign language assistants (Littlecott et al., 2018). In addition, there are also bursars, account clerks, secretaries, security officers, nurses and caterers.

Support staff in secondary schools offer essential services that help to maintain a healthy school community, to make sure the teaching and learning are conducive to the achievement of educational goals. Instead of providing clear rules for BOMs on how to manage and inspire their staff, the Ministry of Education has given them authority to govern themselves. Because of this, each school has a unique way of managing its support staff. A major source of concern recently has been the treatment of non-teaching employees in Kenyan secondary schools. Research by Muguongo and his colleagues in the Maara Sub-County of Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya, found that the performance of support personnel in schools is affected by a variety of factors such as insufficient education or professional growth;

lack of induction upon starting work; insufficient hours of work per week and being not valued as helpful staff members, compensation and training are some of the reasons why support staff is undervalued in schools (Muguongo et al., 2015).

Secondary school teachers in Kenya are engaged and reimbursed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), while support workers are employed and supervised by the Board of Management at each school (Ngeny, 2016). Section 59 of the Basic Education Act (2013) further specifies that every Board of Management must, per the Act, hire, reimburse, advance, dismiss, and even terminate the services of their personnel (Kanter & Oluchina, 2014). When an employee is given a wage that is deemed enough, they will be more likely to stay with the company and perform better (Calvin, 2017).

A study by Brown (2001) found that salary had a significant impact on work satisfaction. A study of what makes a workplace a happy place to work included 16266 workers and employees. The results demonstrated that the degree of work performance is affected by the number of wages provided to employees. According to other studies, raising the compensation of employees who work in low-paying jobs may have a positive impact. Reimbursement might have a detrimental impact on work satisfaction in certain situations.

Rahayu et al. (2019) observed that skilled and untrained personnel performed equally well. Other studies report mixed findings, for instance, Khan and Abdullah (2019) found that training has a detrimental impact on work performance and

overqualified employees performed worse than underqualified ones. In terms of satisfaction, Chaudhary & Bhaskar (2016) made established that untrained staff do not perform well. According to Horwitz (2008), employees who lack appropriate skills and efforts impact negatively on economic performance of their organizations. A good level of job performance can only be achieved via the retention of appropriate employees, according to Moseley Khan & Abdullah (2019).

According to studies by Kahn and Heaphy (2014), the relational context at the place of work is very important because it creates a sense of belonging. It is also a show of whether employees take care of one another besides being connected and attached to the entire organization's management (Frost, Dutton, Worline & Wilson, 2000). Relations created amongst employees at the workplace is so important that they not only depict the aspect of caring for one another but also contribute to teamwork and productivity at the workplace. It is unlikely that employees who do not care about each other or have no relationship at all will be effective in their work (Frost et al, 2000). Places of work are social settings and constructive relationships can be built for the betterment of individual employees and the organization at large (Kahn & Heaphy, 2014).

Work relationships determine how information is passed within an organization. Poor work relationships among staff members result in poor services and low productivity which in turn affect overall staff performance. Furthermore, poor relationships in the workplace result in unnecessary conflicts that negatively affect key operations within an organization. It is therefore the duty of supervisors and the top management to detect any unhealthy kind of relationship and find better ways of rescuing the situation before it can escalate to irreversible levels (Kahn and Heaphy, 2014). In any ordinary working environment, employees should be encouraged naturally coexist and be free with each other as long as the daily business of the workplace is not negatively affected (Frost et al, 2000).

Good work relationships ensure that employees are allowed to take part in decision-making, especially on issues that affect them and the organization becomes a harmonious place to work in hence improving the support and morale of employees (Boon, Den Hartog, Boselie & Paauwe, 2011). Downward communication from the management ensures that workers are reminded of their expectations while upwards communication gives workers a chance to air their concerns and grievances. All these are aimed at maintaining or enhancing job satisfaction (Daljeet, Manoj & Dalvinder, 2011). Therefore, communication, whether upwards or downward is aimed at enhancing a healthy working culture and relationships not only among employees but also with top-level management. That way, it would be easy to coordinate various processes and address emerging welfare issues in an amicable way (Daljeet et al, 2011).

The use of a fair and justifiable form of monetary compensation by employers to their employees is very important. Employee motivation has been known to decrease whenever employees feel that their remuneration is unfair and not commensurate with the amount of effort they put in daily. As advised by Herpen et al (2005), employees generally perceive any form of performance appraisal system as a positive development. If they were to consider it as punitive, ambiguous, or unfair, it would likely make them lose their motivation, commitment, and performance drive.

Direct compensation is the financial benefits that are given to staff members for the services they render within the organization. Such benefits may include basic salary, leave allowance, house allowance, commuter allowance, medical allowance/insurance, and gratuity among others. Compensation systems can also be individual or group based. When compensation is provided in form of group incentives, the satisfaction extended to the group is similar to that of individual incentives. Group incentives also promote a culture of cooperation whereas individual incentives enhance competition among employees (Herpen et al, 2005).

According to Gupta (2014), there are different forms of direct compensation. These include basic salary which is the amount received by an employee for work done at the end of the day, week or month. It is money received after offering a service. House allowance is another direct compensation element in which organizations provide accommodation for their staff or provide some allowance every month to cater for the same Gupta (2014). There's scanty literature on how principals' remuneration practices influence work performance of support staff in public secondary schools hence the need for this study.

Statement of the Problem

In ideal situations, favourable work conditions boosts work performance and productivity. Research shows that employee work performance is a function of many factors including work relations, remuneration, work schedules and leaves. The performance of support staff in public schools in Kenya is questionable especially because their terms and conditions of service are not uniform. Support staffs are employed under different terms and conditions of service as determined by their school boards of management. Available empirical information on employee performance in schools tends to be biased towards teachers and school administrators. There's scanty empirical data on performance of support staff and the specific factors that influence their work performance in public secondary schools in Nakuru county. This existing gap hinders policy formulation on the terms and conditions of service for support staff who also play a critical role in the success of schools. Although the success of schools has often been measured by the performance of students in national examinations, existing empirical information attributes this success to teachers and school administrators and hardly is the role of support staff considered. Despite many intervention measures being put in place to address recommendations emanating from research studies on academic performance for schools, there are no marked improvements especially in public secondary schools in Nakuru

County for the last decade hence the need for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of working conditions on the work performance of support staff in public secondary schools in Nakuru County.

Objectives of the Study

This study achieved the following two objectives:

- Determined the influence of working relationships on the performance of support staff in public secondary schools in Nakuru County.
- Established the influence of remuneration on the performance of support staff.

Research Questions

This research answered two research questions:

- What is the influence of working relationships on the performance of support staff in public secondary schools in Nakuru County?
- What is the influence of remuneration on the performance of support staff in public secondary schools in Nakuru County?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted in public secondary schools in Nakuru County to unravel the grey issues bedeviling performance of support staff. The study employed the mixed-methods research approach that calls for a deliberate mix of data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation methods using the concurrent embedded research design (EMM) (Creswell, 2013). Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected at the same time and mixing of the quantitative strand within the primacy of a qualitative approach occurred during data collection, data exploration, data analysis and data visualization respectively. Predetermined and planned quantitative and qualitative methods were used at the start of the research process, and the procedures were implemented as planned.

The research was carried out in Nakuru County which is located in the Great Rift Valley and is bordered on the west by Kericho and Bomet, on the north by Koibatek and Laikipia, on the east by Nyandarua, on the south by Narok and on the southeastern part by Kajiado and Kiambu counties respectively (Google Maps-2024). The target population was 3,258 comprising of 362 principals, 362 deputy principals and 2534 support staffs. According to Oyolla et al. (2021), Kenyan public secondary schools, on average, employ about 7 support staff; hence, a minimum of 2534 support personnel were estimated for all public secondary schools in Nakuru County. Using Yamanes' (1973) formula, a sample of 356 was determined.

The study employed the use of semi-structured questionnaires for principals and deputy principals respectively while semi-structured interview schedules were used to collect information from support staff. The instruments were subjected to internal and external validity tests to examine if they measured what they intended to measure. The questionnaires were also statistically tested using Cronbach's alpha. The dependability coefficients obtained were above 7 which is considered dependable by Heale and Twycross (2015). The pilot test's reliability coefficients indicated that the research instruments were trustworthy for use in data collection.

Quantitative data collected was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme (Version 26). Descriptive statistics like percentages, means and standard deviations were generated to describe the distribution of data collected. To determine the associations among variables according to the objectives of the study, inferential statistics were obtained using the linear regression models for work relationships and work performance and remuneration and work performance respectively. These linear models were developed to measure the strength of the relationships between sub-variables of working conditions and work performance. Eventually, a standard multiple regression model was used to measure the

combined influence of working conditions on work performance of the support staff. The multiple linear regression model was expressed as:

$$W = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \epsilon$$

Where,

W=Work performance of support staff

β_0 = Constant term (predicted value of dependent variable (work performance of support staff) if the composite of independent variable (working conditions) is zero

β_1 = Contributions of working relationships

β_2 = Contributions of remuneration of support staff

x_1 = Working relationships

x_2 = Remuneration of support staff

ϵ = Standard error (other variables that may affect work performance of support staff but are not included in the model and will be assumed not to interfere with work performance of support staff e.g. characteristics of support staff, school policies, community influence and government policies)

Two composite variables of working conditions were evaluated in terms of their predictive power on work performance of support staff. The standard multiple linear regression model was used to determine R-Square (R^2) which is the coefficient of determination of the amount of variability explained in work performance of support staff in working conditions. The model also established the regression weight (Beta) which is the amount of contribution of a variant of working conditions while holding other variables constant (Creswell, 2013). The analysis of beta weight **β** made it possible to determine which of the working conditions had a larger contribution to the work performance of support staff in public secondary schools in Nakuru County.

The beta weight also indicated the change in working conditions for every unit change in work performance of the support staff. The significance of each beta coefficient was established at $\alpha=.05$

level of statistical significance (Creswell, 2013). A positive coefficient indicated that the mean of the working conditions tends to increase when the value of work performance increases and vice versa.

This study was approved by all applicable research committees and licensed by NACOSTI. Participants voluntarily consented to be involved in the study and were treated anonymous and confidential which are key ethical considerations (Yip et al., 2016). Each data source used was accurately cited and referenced and the plagiarism test conducted that yielded an acceptable similarity index of less than 20.

RESULTS

This study recorded a response rate of 96% since data was collected from principals, deputy principals and support staff in 38 out of the 40 schools that constituted the sample. Participants in two schools did not participate because it was not

possible to get all the categories after several visits during the study. This response rate was considered adequate for analysis of quantitative and qualitative data respectively. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) and Kothari (2014) response rates of 50% for data analysis are recommended with 60% being generally good but response rates of 70% and above are deemed to be excellent.

The sample size for this study was 356 comprising of 40 principals and deputy principals respectively and 276 support staff. Table 2 presents data of principals and deputy principals according to their gender. In each of the schools of the study, 7 support staff were purposively selected and interviewed according to their category as either accounts staff, administrative assistants, library assistants, laboratory assistants, cooks, security guards and cleaners. Table 1 presents a summary of the support staff who were interviewed.

Table 1. Percentages of principals and deputy principals by gender

Gender	Principals and their deputies			
	Principals	Deputy principals	Total	%
Male	27	23	52	68
Female	11	15	24	32
Total	38	38	76	100

Source: Field Data

Statistics in Table 1 show that there were more male principals and deputy principals than females across public secondary schools in the 11 sub-counties in Nakuru County. At least there

were representation of both gender in each of the 11 sub-counties. Male support staff were also more compared to females as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Percentages of support staff according to their category and gender

Category of support staff	Gender			%
	M	F	total	
1. Account assistants	26	12	38	14.3
2. Administration assistants	14	24	38	14.3
3. Lab assistants	27	21	38	14.3
4. Library assistants	26	22	38	14.3
5. Cooks	28	10	38	14.3
6. Cleaners	23	25	38	14.3
7. Security guards	27	13	38	14.3
Total	139	127	266	100.1

Source: Field Data

Table 2 shows that females constituted of 48% of the support staff while 52% of the support staff were males. Although males were majority in all

the categories, the gap was narrow for laboratory and library assistants and cleaners. In each of the schools, seven support staff were interviewed. It

took about five minutes to interview one support staff.

Influence of Work Relationships on Performance of Support Staff

The first objective of this study was determine the influence of working relationships on the performance of support staff in public secondary schools in Nakuru County. Principals were asked to state the nature of relationships that existed between them as representatives of the school board of management (the employer) and the support staff. Principals rated their work relationships with support staff on a five-point Likert scale on which they stated their level of agreement with five statements formulated for this purpose. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of principals' responses.

Table 3 shows that most principals strongly agreed with all five statements with percentages ranging from 61%-66%. The average percentage of principals who strongly agreed was 62%. There was also a significant percentage of principals who agreed with the five statements on their relationships with the support staff. On average, 34% of the principals agreed with the statements. Cumulatively, the results show that 96% of the principals agreed that their relationships influence work performance of their support staff. A small percent 2% of principals were indifferent while another 1% disagreed strongly especially with the fifth statement that there was respect between them and support staff. **Key: SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; N=Neutral; D=Disagree SD=Strongly Disagree**

Table 3: Percentages of influence of work relationships on work performance

Statement	Frequency									
	SA	%	A	%	N	%	D	%	SD	%
1. Principals are team leaders	23	61	15	39	0	0	0	0	0	0
2. Support staff do not have trust deficit	23	61	13	34	2	5	0	0	0	0
3. Principals have constant open communication with support staff	25	66	12	32	1	3	0	0	0	0
4. Principals have good rapport with support staff	24	63	13	34	0	0	1	0	0	0
5. There's reciprocal respect between principals and staff	23	61	12	32	1	3	0	0	2	5
Average %		62%		34%		2%		-		1%

Source: Field Data (N=38)

From the embedded qualitative question in the questionnaire for principals, one principal who strongly disagreed stated that:

"Some of these support staff have become so familiar with me such that sometimes they show disrespect openly. The fact that we interact freely and even support different soccer teams has given them gusto of abusing me in the ambit of outcomes of soccer matches. One staff called me a 'toothless bulldog that will be suffocated to death' in reference to the soccer team I support"

The feedback from deputy principals was similar to that of principals except that 66% of them 'agreed' compared to 34.2% for the principals. The percentage of deputy principals who

disagreed was also relatively high at 16% compared to less than 1% for principals. This differences of opinion might be as a result of amount of relationship time spent between support staff and deputy principals. Support staff were likely to interact with deputy principals most of the time since they are their immediate supervisors.

The support staff were asked to state how their relationships with principals and deputy principals affect their work performance. Most of the support staff indicated that their relationships with deputy principals affected their work performance more compared to their relationships with principals. Their responses were thematically analyzed and tabulated as presented in Table 4.

The support staff also provided their own performance assessment within this context.

Table 4 shows that more support staff 41% indicated that their relationships with principals influenced their work performance positively compared to 24% for deputy principals. Cumulatively, 65% of the support staff were positively influenced by either the principals or

deputy principals. In the same vein, the performance of 35% of the support staff was negatively influenced by their relationships with both principals and deputy principals. Interviews with the support staff who indicated negative relationships with both their principals and deputy principals revealed that the support staff were despised.

Table 4: Thematic analysis of influence of relationships on work performance

Question: *How does your relationships with the principal and deputy principal affect your work performance?*

Category of staff	Principal		Deputy Principal		Total
	Positively <i>f</i>	Negatively <i>f</i>	Positively <i>f</i>	Negatively <i>f</i>	
Account clerks	17	3	5	13	38
Lab assistants	6	12	12	8	38
Library staff	7	14	16	1	38
Secretaries	15	8	11	4	38
Security guards	21	5	9	3	38
Cleaners	20	3	7	8	38
Cooks	22	6	5	5	38
TOTAL	108	51	65	42	266
%	41	19	24	16	100

Source: Field data (N=266; *f*=Frequency)

For instance, one of the cleaners interviewed stated:

“The principal and his deputy always despise us especially cleansers. One day I heard the principal advising students to work hard so that they do not end up like me. I felt so bad and this incident made me lose my self-esteem and confidence before the students because I was constantly reminded of failure. The truth is that I passed my exams at primary school level but could not proceed because my parents passed on at a young age. I hate both the principal and deputy and whenever I see them, I feel like quitting my job. I am so demoralized”

This theme was highlighted by support staff across all the seven categories. The support staff expressed their views that both the principals and their deputies were disrespectful to them and this was expressed openly before teachers and students. Other staff indicated that they have learnt to withstand demeaning behaviours from them because they had children to take care of. One of the security guard observed that:

“I don’t care what the principal or his deputy does or say about me. I have been in this school for 22 years and has worked with 5 principals and deputies who are long gone. I can tell you that the ones we have in this school now are the worst. They just eat by themselves and have forgotten us. There’s no problem, they will also go like the rest”

Some support staff did not have strong negative views on relationships with the principals and their deputies. The interviews revealed that some staff had strong positive sentiments on relationships with principals and their deputies. The accounts clerks and secretaries seemed to have positive sentiments on their principals and deputy principals. For instance, one of the accounts clerk stated:

“My relationship with the principal has been cordial. The principal helps me whenever I ask for assistance from him. He has supported me to pursue my part time training and soon I will complete my professional training as an accountant. The deputy is equally ok. I have

very good working relations with both of them”

School secretaries generally expressed positive sentiments on relationships with their principals and their deputies. In all instances, the support staff seemed to identify with the principals and their deputies on account of their past situation that required assistance from either of them. The support staff tended to have positive relationships

with principals and deputy principals who helped them solve their problems in the past.

Using a linear regression model to measure the strength of the relationship between working relationships and work performance of support staff, The Pearsons' Correlation Coefficient obtained was $R=.724$ which indicated a moderate strong positive relationship between the variables as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Regression model summary on work relationships and work performance

Predictor variable	Regression statistics	Work performance
Working relationship	R	.724
	R-Squared (R^2)	.524
	Adjusted (R^2)	.078
	Beta (β_1)	.110
	p-value	.032
	Standard error of Estimate (ϵ)	.861
	Constant (β_0)	3.332

($n_1=72$; $n_2=266$: n_1 =Principals and deputies; n_2 = support staff. $\alpha=.05$) **Source:** Field Data

Table 5 shows that R^2 computed yielded a value of .524 suggesting that working relationships explained 52.4% percent work performance of support staff in public secondary schools in Nakuru County. The adjusted R^2 also indicates that working relationships explained 7.8% of the variation in work performance and its lower than R^2 predicted which was the expectation because adjusted R^2 is usually lower than predicted R^2 due to incorporation of data characteristics such as sample size, data pairs and degree of freedom (Orodho, 2016).

The p-value was .032 which is lower than the statistical significance level set at $\alpha=.05$ to measure the significance level of the relationship between work relationships and work performance of support staff in public secondary schools in Nakuru County. The contribution of working relationships to work performance of support staff was indicated by the beta weight ($\beta_1=.110$) which shows that one unit change in working relationships is expected to cause .110 change in work performance.

These findings emphasize the assertion by Kahn and Heaphy (2014) that places of work are social settings and constructive relationships should be built for the betterment of individual employees and the organization at large. Poor social work

relationships can bring conflicts as was reported by some interviewed support staff. Communication plays an important aspect in enhancing good social work relationships and some indications from support staff showed that there were communication mistakes from principals and their deputies that affected performance. The significance of communication in the work place is underscored by Daljeet, Manoj and Dalvinder (2011) who concluded that communication, whether upwards or downward is aimed at enhancing a healthy working culture and relationships not only among employees but also with top-level management.

Influence of Remuneration on Work Performance of Support Staff

The second objective of this study was determine the influence of remuneration on the performance of support staff in public secondary schools in Nakuru County. Principals were asked to state the salaries and allowances they paid their support staff and this information was supported by their payrolls. For each support staff, the principals provide the gross remuneration in Kenya shillings per month which were cumulated for a year to determine the annual remuneration figure for every employee. Average percentage remuneration were calculated per category of

support staff. Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics on the percentages of remuneration per staff category in public secondary schools in

Nakuru County. The remuneration brackets were: 1= ≤ K.shs 60,000 pa; 2=60,001-120,000 pa; 3=120,001-240,000 pa; 4= >240,001 pa.

Table 6: Percentages of remuneration per support staff category

S/N	Staff Category	F	Annual Remuneration Brackets								Total %
			1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	
1	Accounts clerks	38	0	0	1	3	27	71	10	26	100
2	Lab assistants	38	1	3	11	29	22	58	4	11	100
3	Library assistants	38	1	3	30	79	6	16	1	3	100
4	Secretaries	38	3	8	21	55	11	29	3	8	100
5	Security guards	38	8	21	27	71	1	3	0	0	100
6	Cleaners	38	14	37	23	61	1	3	0	0	100
7	Cooks	38	5	13	19	50	14	37	0	0	100
Total		266	34	-	132	-	82	-	17	-	-
Average (%)			-	13	-	50	-	31	-	6	-

Source: Field data. (N=266; F=Frequency)

Table 6 shows that on average, 50% of the support staff received annual remuneration of between 60,001-120,000 shillings. This included 79% of library assistants, 71% of security guards, 61% of cleaners and 50% of cooks respectively. A significant percentage of cleaners 14% and security guards 8% had their annual remuneration of less than K.shs 60,000/= implying that their average monthly pay was K.shs. 5,000/=. The accounts clerks were paid relatively high with 26% earning an annual remuneration of over K.shs. 240,001/=.

Based on these remuneration figures, support staff were individually interviewed to collaborate the figures and present their views on how the remuneration affected their work performance either positively, negatively or not at all. A three-

point Likert scale was thus used and updated by the researcher during the interview and the descriptive statistics presented in Table 7. The table shows percentages of support staff who stated how their remuneration influenced their work performance.

Table 7 shows that most of the support staff 56% were indifferent with no clear indication on how their work performance was affected by their remuneration. Significantly, 18% of the staff indicated that their current remuneration influenced their performance positively. The interviewer sought to establish reasons why the support staff provided their feedback and interestingly, those who were positive with their remuneration stated that they had received pay increases recently.

Table 7: Percentage influence of remuneration on work performance per category

S/N	Staff Category	F	POS	NE	NEG		NEG	%
			POS	%	NE	%		
1	Accounts clerks	38	5	13	18	47	15	39
2	Lab assistants	38	7	18	21	55	10	26
3	Library assistants	38	12	32	20	53	6	16
4	Secretaries	38	9	24	26	68	3	8
5	Security guards	38	6	16	23	61	9	27
6	Cleaners	38	1	3	21	55	16	42
7	Cooks	38	8	21	21	28	9	24
Total		266	48	-	150	-	68	-
Average (%)			-	18	-	56	-	26

Source: Field data (F=Frequency; POS=Positively; NE=No effect; NEG=Negatively)

One of the library assistants stated that:

"I was promised that my salary could increase after working for two years and three months ago, I received an additional 5,000/- increase on my salary. Although the pay is still small, I am encouraged to perform better. The principal is a good person because he kept his promise" (SS.37)

Other support staff who were of the same opinion were secretaries SS.17; SS.15; SS.22, accounting clerks SS.2; SS.17; SS.33 and SS.36. One of the accounts clerk specifically stated that:

"I came into this school as an intern. I have been earning almost half of what I am earning now. It has been difficult balancing the pay to meet my personal obligations. Last month, I was given an increment and it's still not enough but it's better than nothing. I can now concentrate on my work although I will still continue with my hassles whenever I have the opportunity to do it" (SS.17).

Similar sentiments were provided by security guards SS.13; SS.23; SS.32; SS.37 and Cooks SS.12; SS.25; SS.29 and SS.36 respectively. One of the security guards was happy with the remuneration and stated that:

"I have worked in this school for the last five years without a salary raise. I am particularly happy that when the new principal came in, she doubled salaries for all security guards because we were badly underpaid. If it were not for my farming and small business activities when I am not on duty, I could not have made it with the small salary I was earning. Atleast I feel more comfortable to do my work well" (SS.23).

The scenario was a bit different for support staff who were categorical that their remuneration had no impact on their performance either positively or negatively. The support staff were asked further questions to clarify their position. A significant number of support staff confessed that they were engaged in other activities that generated more income for them, SS 14; SS.17; SS.22; SS.31; SS.38 respectively. One cook stated:

"I operate a food kiosk with my wife. I get on to my business as soon as I leave the school after work and when schools are on holidays. The salary I get here is small but I used it to get a loan to pay fees for my children. Some of the money I used it on my business. I do my work normally and even if they increase or don't increase my salary, I don't see how I will work more than what I am doing. Our work is tricky, if you don't perform you lose it. I have seen three cooks lose their jobs for non-performance in the few years I have been here" (SS.22).

One of the accounts clerk also indicated that he was comfortable in his work. He attributed it to his canteen which he was operating in the school. the staff stated that:

"I really don't see any problem with my work. I do my normal duties well and I stay in the school. I run the school canteen and pay the school a little money at the end of the month. I make five times profit from my canteen than my salary. Infact, I have bought land and my car using the profits I get here. I attribute everything to my work. If I were not for my working here as an accounts clerk, perhaps I couldn't. have gotten the opportunity of running the canteen. I love my job. (SS.15).

Similar sentiments also came from one of the laboratory assistants. She also indicated that she worked part-time in a private hospital and a lab technologist. She stated that:

"I spend most of the time when I am not here at the local private hospital. I work on part-time as a lab technician. The proprietor calls me for my services whenever there's a client. The principal and everyone here knows it and they have no problem with that since the hospital also serves our students and even staff whenever they need health services. It's like the hospital is part of the school. I love my work both in school and in the private hospital. I don't have a problem with my school salary and my performance is ok" (SS. 17).

Support staff who confessed that their remuneration affected their work performance negatively appeared to have a common characteristic. Most of them did not have an alternative stream. Some recounted previous incidence where they tried to do some business or work for extra income in vain. One of the security guards recounted an incident where all his salary disappeared in betting. He stated that:

“My friend does win prizes daily through betting. I eagerly followed the events and one day I was convinced to try my first bet. I was so convinced that I would win but what happened created bad memories that I will never forget. I will never make such a mistake. I will stick to my work and although I get so little pay, it’s worthwhile. Sometimes I get tips from some good visitors and teachers which keeps me going. My work performance is good because the principal likes me so much. Even the deputy like me because they often tip me. I don’t think I am doing well because of the salary. I am naturally hardworking, with or without the salary, it’s my nature. (SS.12).

Similar sentiments were expressed from cleaners SS.10; SS.14; SS.30 and SS35 respectively. However, there were more strong expressions from secretaries and female cleaners and library assistants. The female staff complained of discrimination in terms of salary compared to some of their colleagues who were given better pay because of having casual relationships with

the principal or teachers. One of the lab assistants commented that:

“So long as the principal is here, all female support staff are his casual friends. Some of these staff are married but are shameless and careless. These relationships are public knowledge even to our students. Sometimes it’s demeaning to hear that your junior colleague is paid more than you. I simply lack morale and will quit if I get an opportunity to do so. (SS.14).

The qualitative data obtained was mixed with some staff positive, negative and non-committal on the effect of remuneration on their work performance. The work environment appeared depended on the principals’ management practices. In some schools, the support staff were happy while in others they were disgruntled and helpless with no avenues for solving their grievances. Substantial number of staff seemed to have discovered how to maneuver their way through these circumstances by engaging in other income generating activities.

Using a linear regression model to measure the strength of the relationship between remuneration and work performance of support staff, The Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient obtained was established at $R=.678$ which indicated a moderately strong positive relationship between the two variables as shown on Table 8.

Table 8: Regression model summary on remuneration and work performance

Predictor variable	Regression statistics	Work performance
Remuneration	R	.678
	R-Squared (R^2)	.460
	Adjusted (R^2)	.031
	Beta (β_2)	.210
	p-value	.042
	Standard error of Estimate (ϵ)	.398
	Constant (β_0)	4.221

(n=266; support staff. $\alpha=.05$)

Source: Field Data

Table 8 shows that R^2 computed yielded a value of .460 suggesting that remuneration explained 46% percent work performance of support staff in

public secondary schools in Nakuru County. The adjusted R^2 also indicates that remuneration explained 3.1% of the variation in work

performance and its lower than R^2 predicted which was the expectation because adjusted R^2 is usually lower than predicted R^2 due to incorporation of data characteristics such as sample size, data pairs and degree of freedom (Orodho, 2016).

The p -value was .042 which is lower than the statistical significance level set at $\alpha=.05$ to measure the significance level of the relationship between remuneration and work performance of support staff in public secondary schools in Nakuru County. The contribution of remuneration to work performance of support staff was indicated by the beta weight ($\beta_2=.210$) showing that one-unit change of remunerations causes .210 change in work performance of support staff.

Literature reviewed in this study underscored the significance of motivating employees for enhanced productivity (Gupta, 2014). While there are many literatures on work performance for professional and skilled employees in educational settings (for example, Nyakundi & Orodho, 2020), there's limited data on work performance for unskilled and semi-skilled support staff in public secondary schools. Nyakundi and Orodho carried out a study on influence of teacher competence of work performance of teachers in public secondary schools in Kisii County. They established that teacher competence had a low but positive influence on work performance. The finding of this current study that remuneration explains 3.1% of the variation in work performance of support staff at $p=0.042$ level of significance contributes to the existing literature.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study two conclusions were reached: First, the finding that work relationships significantly influence work performance of support staff implied that the social interactions between principals, their deputies and support staff impacts on the work performance of the latter. It is thus imperative that deliberate effort be made by the two school administrators to enhance the quality of their interactions with all support staff through direct communication and holding of frequent meetings

with them and encouraging their interactions in social events jointly with teachers and students.

Secondly, principals' remuneration practices were found to have a significant positive relationship with work performance of support staff. Support staff were found to engage on other income generating activities and did not fully concentrate on their school duties. The schools should therefore consider compensating support staff atleast to the minimum statutory levels.

Recommendations for policy and further research

The significance of working conditions on work performance of support staff in public secondary schools in Nakuru County is emphasized by the findings of this study. There are several implications of these findings on policy development and further research:

Policy recommendations

The findings of this study points to the following policy areas:

- The Ministry of Education in conjunction with school management boards should consider developing a comprehensive compensation framework for all support staff in public secondary schools. This can be done at regional or county level so that there are clear guidelines and or scheme of service for different cadres of support staff in schools.
- The school administration (principals and deputy principals) should deliberately involve support staff in all social activities of the school so that they also feel part of the school team. Exclusion of the staff is likely to hinder their work performance given the fact that social work relationships have been found to impact on work performance.

Recommendations for further research

The findings of this study lead to the recommendation of further research to assess the influence of support staff on productivity of public secondary schools in Nakuru County. Similarly, a comparative study should be

conducted in private and public secondary schools to provide more insight on the situation in the two school situations.

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