

Influence of Selected Motivational Factors on the Performance of Secondary School Agriculture Teachers in Imenti South District, Kenya

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Abstract

The performance of agriculture teachers in Imenti South District has been low compared to other districts. This has been characterized by a decline in the agriculture subject results. This might have been contributed by inadequate teacher motivation. The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of selected motivational factors on the performance of secondary school agriculture teachers in the district. The study used a cross-sectional research design. Fifty nine head teachers and fifty nine agriculture teachers were randomly sampled from 70 schools in the District. A structured questionnaire was used by the researcher to collect data from the respondents. Data was analyzed with the help of Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics specifically frequencies and percentages, and inferential statistics particularly Pearson's Product Moment Correlation were applied in data analysis. The hypotheses were tested at a 0.01 confidence level. The results also indicate that there is a positive correlation (0.444) between working condition and performance of agriculture teachers. Further, the study revealed a negative correlation (-0.416) between teaching load and performance of agriculture. A correlation analysis between interpersonal relations and performance of agriculture teachers revealed a positive correlation of 0.403 and a p-value of 0.01. The overall performance of agriculture teachers in the District has been fair for the last three years, however, this can be improved by reducing the teachers work load, improving the working conditions and interpersonal relations in the schools. The study recommends that the school administrators should equip the available workshops with appropriate tools and equipment and in schools without workshops; the administrators should construct them and equip them appropriately to facilitate effective teaching.

Key words: Motivational factors, working conditions, teaching load, interpersonal relations, performance.

Introduction

Motivation involves the energy and drive to learn, work effectively, and achieve potential (Martin, 2003). The motivation of a teacher is, therefore, very important as it directly affects the students. In order for teachers to maintain a high level of professional performance, they must assume personal responsibility for their own performance, growth and development (Alam, 2011). Teacher motivation is viewed as a variable which has a strong impact on learner's motivation (Gardner, 2005). The extent to which teachers are able to motivate their students depends on how motivated they are (Atkinson, 2000; Bernaus, Wilson, & Gardner, 2009; Guilloteaux & Dornyei, 2008). High motivation may enhance school teachers' efficiency and effectiveness leading to improved teacher and student performance (Kusereka, 2003). Teachers' low motivation may lead to apathy, reduced performance, request for transfers to other schools, increased value on material rewards, hostility to school officials, and working for promotion to other positions with better prospects (Frederick, 2001).

Nadeem, Rana, Lone, Maqbool, Naz and Ali (2011) observed that poor salary, excessive workload, poor infrastructure, lack of library facility, lack of teaching and learning material, teachers morale, working relations with staff and head teacher and working environment are the factors which affect the female teachers' performance negatively. Other factors include political interference, responsibilities at home, distance of residing area, stress, status of teacher and respect in society. Mohanty (2000) indicated poor pay, low status and morale as the key causes of poor performance and corrupt behavior in the public sector. Across the world, millions of teachers, most of them women, are working tirelessly for low wages educating the next generation. Further, Institute for International Economic Policy (2004) noted that teachers also complain about the lack of variety and role differentiation in their careers, the limited incentives for them to improve their practice and develop as professionals, and the limited linkages between their performance, teacher compensation and teacher development. Dinham and Scott (2000) also showed that factors that affect teachers' motivation include pay, interpersonal relations, authoritarian administration, teaching load, class size, supervision, promotion, student interest and behaviour, administrative efficiency, school facilities, community support and nature of the job.

Motivation is stimulated by a particular behaviour and satisfaction is the product of that behaviour. The level of intrinsic motivation stimulated by working with children, seeing their progress and achievement and making a contribution to society are among the factors attributed to teacher's satisfaction, and maintaining a good level of motivation in the job (Zembylas & Papanastasiou, 2003). Satisfaction tends to motivate teachers to aim for higher performance and achievement to fulfil their sense of accomplishment. Teachers need self-actualization because without it may lead to teacher burn-out and teachers therefore prepare to be provided with opportunities to enhance self-actualization.

Self-actualization is the full use and exploitation of talents, capacities and potentialities. Such people seem to be fulfilling themselves and to be doing the best that they are capable of doing.

According to Nieto (2003), self-actualization is the need for achieving full potential, personal and professional success and reaching the peak of satisfaction. The greatest enjoyment in teaching comes from seeing students who have achieved success academically, and in seeing the students developing their personal characters and identities (Dornyei, 2000). Excellent teachers are motivated to continue teaching because they are able to fulfill their personal accomplishment by seeing students' successes. Motivation is associated with satisfaction (Dinham & Scott, 2000).

Many factors influence the performance of teachers in Kenyan secondary schools. According to Kusereka (2003), the primary factor that contributes to good performance of teachers is strong motivation. Motivated teachers are often associated with producing motivated students with high achievements (Atkinson, 2000). Thus, in order to bring change to an educational system, factors that enhance teacher motivation are essential. Planning for such improvements would require the planner to know the existing state of teacher motivation and motivational factors affecting teachers' performance. Although the factors discussed have been identified to influence teacher motivation in Australia, Thailand, Northeast England and Korea, it was not clear whether the same factors affected teachers' motivation in Kenya and particularly Imenti South District. The three factors (working conditions, teaching load and interpersonal relations) were selected because in literature they have been viewed to have strong influence on teachers' performance. Therefore, this study aimed at establishing the influence of selected motivational factors on agriculture teachers' performance in Imenti South District.

Study Location

The study covered Imenti South District which has six administrative Divisions; Mitunguu, Nkuene, Abogeta East, Abogeta West, Igoji East and Igoji West. The District borders Maara District to the West, Meru Central District to the East, Mt. Kenya forest to the North and Tharaka District to the South. The District was found appropriate for the study because the researcher is knowledgeable about schools in the district. Also, no similar studies had been carried out in the District (DEO Imenti South, 2011). The District has 70 secondary schools all of which offer agriculture.

Materials and methods

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. A sample of 59 agriculture teachers and 59 school heads were selected for the study as recommended by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The list of schools was obtained from the District Education Office in Imenti South District which formed the sampling frame. Agriculture teachers with highest teaching experience were purposively selected and consequently the head teachers from their schools were also in the engaged in the study. The survey employed a structured questionnaire to collect the required data. Descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used to analyze the collected data with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences computer programme. The mean, frequencies and percentages were used to describe the variable characteristics while Pearson's product moment correlation was run to establish the correlation between the dependent and independent variables.

Results and Discussion

Profile of the Respondents

An assessment of gender of the respondents revealed that out of the 59 agriculture teachers who participated in the study, 54% were male while 46% were female. Further, out of 59 head teachers who were engaged in the study, 61% were male while 39% were female. The results further indicate that 49% of the agriculture teachers had attained degree and above, 44% were diploma holder and 7% were untrained teachers. Majority (92%) of the head teachers had a degree and above while only 8% were diploma holders.

An analysis of the school's categories of the respondents revealed that 35% were from day secondary schools, 44% of the respondents were from District secondary schools, 19% were from Provincial schools and 2% were from the National school in the District. According to the results, 41% of the respondents had taught agriculture subject for less than 5 years, 30% had taught the subject for a period of between 6 and 10 years, 19% had taught the subject for a period of between 11 and 15 years, 7% had taught the course for a period between 16 and 20 years, and 3% had taught the course for a period of over 20 years.

Working Conditions and Performance of Agriculture Teachers

The study assessed the availability of agriculture subject teaching aids, instructional materials, demonstration farm and their influence on the performance of teachers.

Availability of Instructional Materials and Teaching Aids

In a scale of 1 – 4, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a set of statements regarding the availability of instructional materials and aids for teaching agriculture. According to the results in Table 1, majority of the respondents (76%) indicated that the schools' workshop lacked adequate tools and equipment for teaching agriculture. The respondents (63%) stated that the inadequacy of teaching tools/equipment in their schools hindered their teaching effectiveness.

Further, the respondents (73%) also confirmed that the school farm made it easy for them to teach effectively. They (85%) also stated that their schools did not have enough audio-visual aids for teaching agriculture. Regarding instructional materials, 57% of the respondents stated that agriculture teachers had sufficient access to instructional technology including computers, printers and internet access. The respondents (68%) also felt that their schools' had enough agriculture reference books and textbooks which increased their teaching effectiveness. It also emerged from 86% of the respondents that teaching agriculture without practicals made their work difficult.

Table 1: Availability of Instructional Materials and Teaching Aids

Statement/ item	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total	
	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%
The school workshop has adequate tools and equipment.	12	20.3	33	55.9	14	23.7	0	0	59	100
The inadequacy of teaching tools/equipment hinders my teaching effectiveness.	5	8.5	17	28.8	35	59.3	2	3.4	59	100
The school farm makes it easy for me to teach effectively.	5	8.5	11	18.6	42	71.2	1	1.7	59	100
My school has enough audio-visual aids for teaching agriculture	18	30.5	32	54.2	7	11.9	2	3.4	59	100
Agriculture teachers have sufficient access to instructional technology including computers, printers and internet access.	8	13.6	17	28.8	30	50.8	4	6.8	59	100
The school has enough agriculture reference books and textbooks which increases my teaching effectiveness	1	1.7	18	30.5	32	54.2	8	13.6	59	100
Teaching agriculture without practicals makes my work difficult.	3	5.1	5	8.5	41	69.5	10	16.9	59	100
I am satisfied with the geographical location of my school	2	3.4	3	5.1	39	66.1	15	25.4	59	100
Agriculture teachers have sufficient access to instructional materials, office equipment and supplies	1	1.7	4	6.8	44	74.6	10	16.9	59	100
The school environment is clean and well maintained to provide conducive teaching/learning atmosphere	0	0	5	8.5	28	47.5	26	44.1	59	100

The respondents (92%) also stated that they were satisfied with the geographical location of their schools. The results also indicate that agriculture teachers had sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials, office equipment and supplies e.g. paper, pens as noted by 91% of the

respondents. In addition, the respondents (91%) pointed out that their school's environment was clean and well maintained to provide a favourable atmosphere for teaching and learning.

Availability of Demonstration Farm

Agriculture subject is practical oriented and its effective teaching requires the learner participation in the various activities by actual doing. A school farm is therefore, necessary to facilitate practicals, projects and demonstrations (Wambua, 1996). When asked to indicate whether their schools had a farm, 68% of the respondents indicated that they had a farm while 32% were from schools with no demonstration farms as shown in Figure 3 and Table 8. This implies that majority of the secondary schools in the districts had demonstration farms.

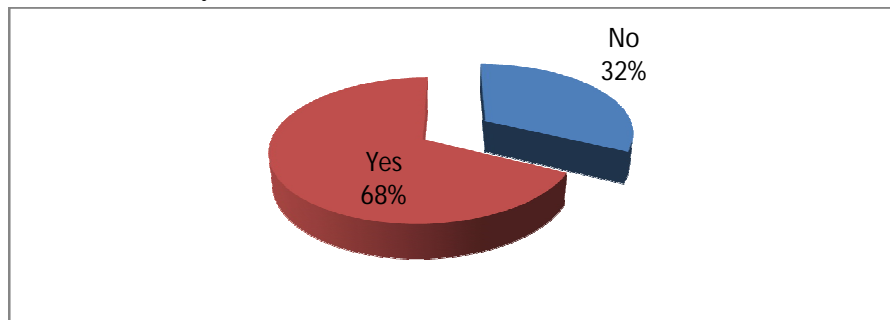


Figure 1: Percentage of schools with demonstration farms

General Working Conditions in Secondary Schools in Imenti South District

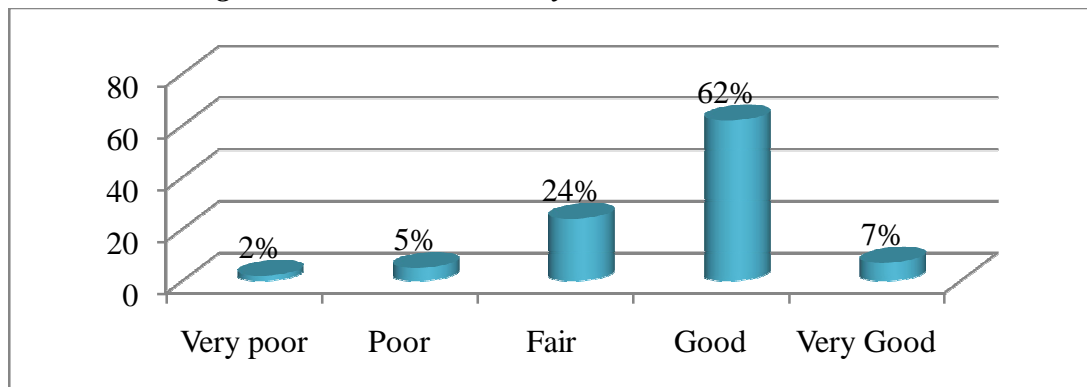


Figure 2: General working conditions in secondary schools in Imenti South District

An analysis of the general working conditions in the schools revealed that 2% of the schools had very poor working conditions, 5% had poor working conditions, 24% had fair conditions, 62% had good working conditions and 7% had very good working conditions as presented in Figure 2. This implies that majority of the secondary schools (69%) had favourable working conditions.

Hypothesis 1: *There is no statistically significance influence of working conditions on the performance of agriculture teachers.*

The hypothesis was tested using Pearson's Product moment correlation. This test was used to establish whether there exists a relationship between working conditions and performance of

agriculture teachers. As shown in Table 2, there is a positive correlation (0.444) between working conditions and performance of agriculture teachers.

Table 2: Pearson's correlation analysis between working conditions and performance of agriculture teachers

Variables		Schools' working conditions	performance of agriculture teachers
Schools' working conditions	Pearson Correlation	1	0.444(**)
	Significance(2-tailed)	.	0.000
	N	59	59
Performance of agriculture teachers	Pearson Correlation	0.444(**)	1
	Significance(2-tailed)	0.000	.
	N	59	59

** Correlation at 0.01(2-tailed).

The p-value is 0.000 and thus, less than the confidence interval of 0.01 hence establishing a significant relationship between variables. This implies that working conditions had a significant effect on performance of agriculture teachers' that is an improvement in the working conditions led to an increase in the teachers' performance. This confirms the findings of Arnold and Feldman (1986) who found that employees may feel that poor working conditions will only provoke negative performance, since their jobs are mentally and physically demanding. According to Luthans (2006), if people work in a clean, friendly environment they will find it easier to come to work. If the opposite should happen, they will find it difficult to accomplish tasks.

Teaching Load and Performance of Agriculture Teachers

The study also sought to determine the influence of teaching load on the performance of agriculture teachers. The study assessed the level of teaching load of agriculture teachers, number of candidates assigned to them and the influence of load on their performance.

Lesson Allocation per Week

The respondents were asked to indicate the number of lessons they taught per week. According to the results in Table 3, 12% of the respondents taught between 11 and 17 lessons per week, 29% taught between 18 and 24 lessons, 42% taught between and 40 lessons, and 17% taught between 32 and 39 lessons per week. The minimum recommended number of lessons per week for a teacher is 27 while the maximum number is 32. This shows that 17% of the agriculture teachers in the District were overloaded. The mean number of lessons per agriculture teacher in a week is 25.

Table 3: Lessons taught per week

Number of lessons	Frequency	Percentage	Nature of work load
11 - 17	7	11.86	Under load
18 - 24	17	28.81	
25 - 31	25	42.37	Normal load
32 - 39	10	16.95	Over load
Total	59	100	

Number of Candidates Prepared by each Teacher

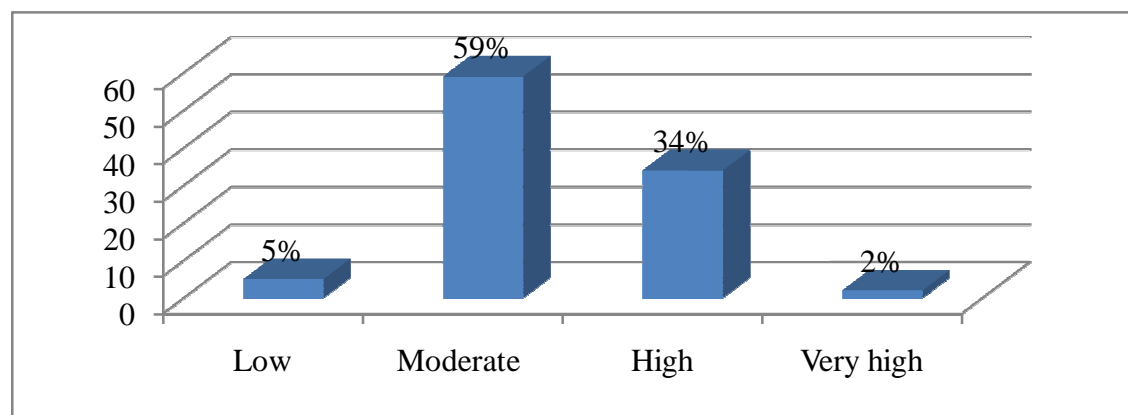
The study further assessed the average number of K.C.S.E candidates prepared by each agriculture teacher. The results in Table 4 indicate that 42% of the respondents prepared between 11 and 30 candidates every year, 34% prepared between 31 and 50 candidates, 24% prepared 51 student and above. This shows that 24% of agriculture teachers were handling a large number of candidates than the recommended student, teacher ratio of 1: 50. The average number of candidates that was being prepared by each teacher was 38.1017.

Table 4: Average number of K.C.S.E candidates prepared by each teacher

No. of Candidates	Frequency	Percentage	Nature of class size
11 -30	25	42.37	Under
31 - 50	20	33.90	Normal
51 and above	14	23.73	Over
Total	59	100.00	

Level of Teaching Load

An assessment of the level of teaching load of the agriculture teachers revealed that 55% of the respondents handled a low load, 59% had a moderate load, 34% had a high load and 2% had a very high load as presented in Figure 3. This shows that 36% of the respondents had a high teaching load which might have affected their performance.

**Figure 3: Level of teaching load of agriculture teachers in Imenti South District**

Hypothesis 2: *There is no statistically significance influence of teaching load on the performance of agriculture teachers.*

A Pearson's Product Moment Correlation test was run establish the influence of teaching load on performance of agriculture teachers. According to the results in Table 7, there is a negative correlation (-0.416) between teaching load and the performance of agriculture teachers in secondary schools. This means that as the teaching load increases the performance of the teacher declines.

Table 5: Pearson's Correlation analysis between teaching load and performance of agriculture teachers in Imenti South District

		Teaching load	Performance of agriculture teachers
Teaching load	Pearson Correlation	1	-.416(**)
	Significance(2-tailed)	.	.001
	N	59	59
Performance of agriculture teachers	Pearson Correlation	-.416(**)	1
	Significance(2-tailed)	.001	.
	N	59	59

** Correlation at 0.01(2-tailed).

The p-value is 0.001 and thus, less than the alpha of 0.01 hence establishing a high significant relationship between variables. This implies that that teaching load had a significant effect on performance of agriculture teachers. The results are in line with Dexter, (2007) argument that agriculture teachers manage enormous enterprises in the school farm, supervise farm workers, students' projects and organize fieldtrips for students which make their career challenging. Therefore, such work becomes too demanding which is a de-motivating factor.

Interpersonal Relations and Performance of Agriculture Teachers

The study also examined the influence of interpersonal relations on the performance of agriculture teachers. To address the objective, the status of interpersonal relationships and the influence of the relationships on the performance of agriculture teachers were assessed.

Status of Interpersonal Relations in Schools

In a scale of 1 – 4, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with a set of statements regarding the interpersonal relations at their work place. The results in Table 16 indicate that most of the respondents (88%) disputed claims that they had more abilities than their colleagues.

Table 6: Interpersonal relations in secondary schools in Imenti South District

Statement/ item	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total	
	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%
I have more abilities than my colleagues	7	11.9	45	76.3	6	10.2	1	1.7	59	100
I work harmoniously with all teachers in my school.	0	0	1	1.7	47	79.7	11	18.6	59	100
I talk freely with my fellow teachers, principal and the deputy principal.	2	3.4	2	3.4	39	66.1	16	27.1	59	100
The school head is often sensitive about my needs.	0	0	7	11.9	40	67.8	12	20.3	59	100
There is team work among members of staff and the school administration.	0	0	5	8.5	33	55.9	21	35.6	59	100
The school head is very supportive in my work.	0	0	8	13.6	35	59.3	16	27.1	59	100
My teaching job promotes my relationship with the community.	0	0	9	15.3	40	67.8	10	16.9	59	100

They (98%) also indicated that they worked harmoniously with all teachers in their schools. Additionally, they (93%) indicated that they talked freely with their fellow teachers, principal and the deputy principal. The results further show that the school heads were often sensitive about the teachers needs according to 88% of the respondents. The respondents (91%) also confirmed that there was team work among members of staff and the school administration. Most of the respondents (86%) also acknowledged the support of their head teachers. According to 75% of the respondents the teaching job promoted good relationship with the community.

Level of Interpersonal Relationships in Imenti South District Secondary Schools

When asked to rate the level of interpersonal relationships in their schools, 2% rated it poor, 10% rated it fair, 76% rated it good and 12% rated it very good as illustrated in Figure 6 and Table 17. This shows that the interpersonal relationships in Imenti South District secondary schools were high.

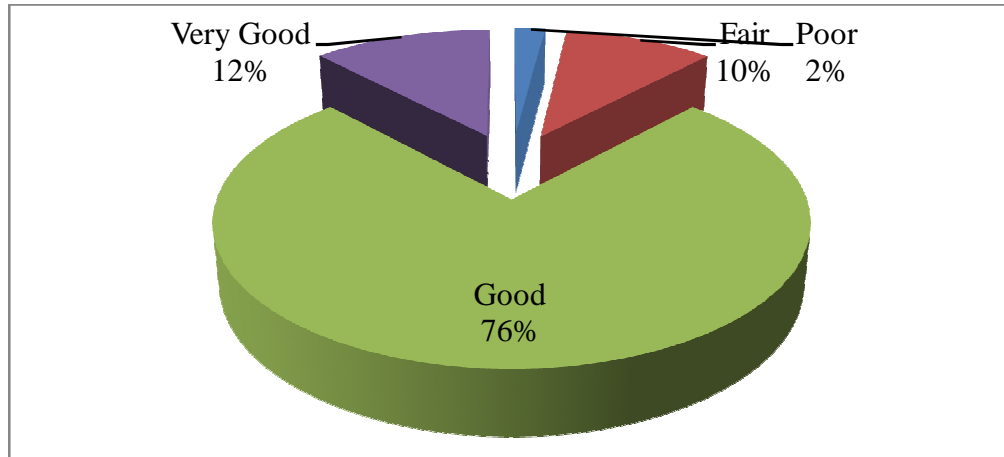


Figure 4: Level of interpersonal relationships in Imenti South District secondary schools

Hypothesis 3: *Interpersonal relations do not significantly influence the performance of agriculture teachers.*

A Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the influence of interpersonal relations on performance of agriculture teachers. According to the results in Table 18, there is a positive correlation (0.430) between interpersonal relations and the performance of agriculture teachers in secondary schools. This means that as the interpersonal relationships increases the performance of the teacher also increases. The p-value is 0.001 and thus, less than the alpha of 0.01 hence establishing a high significant relationship between variables. This implies that interpersonal relationships had a significant effect on performance of agriculture teachers. The results are in line with Woods (2002) findings that teachers strongly desire interaction with colleagues; support of the principal, appropriate workload consistent with their competency, a stable work environment and access to teaching materials required. Birch and Ladd (1997) found that students who had closer relationships with teachers were better adjusted academically than students with conflicted teacher-student relationships. Ryan and Grolnick (1986) found that students who perceived their teachers as personally positive and supportive were more likely to feel a greater sense of competence and to be more intrinsically motivated.

Table 7: Pearson’s Correlation analysis between interpersonal relationships and performance of agriculture teachers in Imenti South District

		Interpersonal relations	Performance of agriculture teachers
Interpersonal relations	Pearson Correlation	1	.430(**)
	Significance(2-tailed)	.	.001
	N	59	59
Performance of agriculture teachers	Pearson Correlation	.430(**)	1
	Significance(2-tailed)	.001	.
	N	59	59

** Correlation at 0.01(2-tailed)...

Performance of Agriculture Teachers in Imenti South District

Performance of agriculture teachers in the District was measured by computing a performance index. The index had captured three components that is syllabus coverage, agriculture subject mean scores over a period of 3 years and their performance in non teaching duties as evaluated by the school's head teacher.

Performance Index

The teacher performance index was then computed by getting the aggregate score for performance of expected duties as evaluated by the head teacher and then the score for syllabus coverage depending on when the teacher covered the syllabus and K.C.S.E agriculture subject mean score for three years (2009-2011). The head teacher was supposed to evaluate the agriculture teacher by a scale of 1- 4 where 1 denote Poor, 2-Fair, 3-Good and 4-Excellent. A performance indicator for the teacher's responsibilities was then got. Coverage of the syllabus by end of form three (3) a teacher got a score of 5, end of first term of form four a score of 4, end of second term score of 3, third term before they sit for KSCE score 2 and non coverage score of 1. Subject mean scores for the three years were also calculated. The three values (performance indicator for the teacher, score for syllabus coverage and mean of the mean scores) were added up to get a single index for the teacher. This formed the Teacher performance index (see appendix C).

According to the results in Table 19, 2% of the teachers scored between 26 and 35, 0% scored between 36 and 45, 7% scored between 46 and 55, 15% scored between 56 and 65, 39% scored between 66 and 75, 34% scored between 76 and 85, and 3% between 86 and 95. This shows that majority of teachers (73%) scored between 66 and 85, meaning that the performance was fairly good.

Table 8: Performance of agriculture teachers in Imenti South District

Scores	Frequency	percent
26- 35	1	1.7
36-45	0	0.0
46-55	4	6.8
56-65	9	15.3
66-75	23	39.0
76-85	20	33.9
86-95	2	3.4
Total	59	100

When asked to indicate the period they completed the agriculture syllabus, 13% of the respondents stated that they completed the syllabus in form four third term, 70% completed the syllabus by the end of second term in form four, 14% completed the syllabus by the end of form four first term and

only 3% completed the syllabus by the end of form three as depicted in Figure 7. This implies that majority of the respondents (87%) completed the syllabus by form four second term.

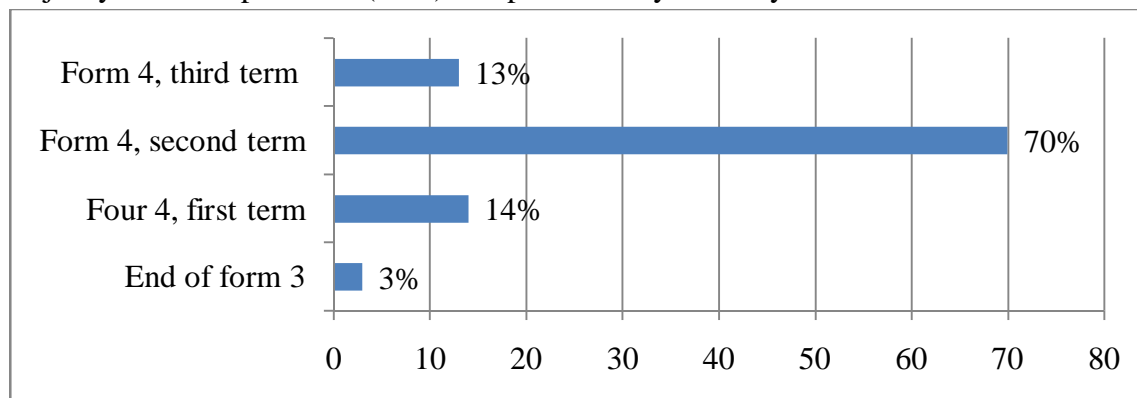


Figure 5: Agriculture syllabus coverage in Imenti South secondary schools

4.6.3 Agriculture Subject Means Scores

An analysis of the agriculture subject means scores from 2009 to 2011 in Imenti South District indicate that the scores ranged from 2.80 to 12.00 as shown in Table 21. The results indicate that majority of the schools have been getting a score of between 6.00 and 8.00 in the subject. The average scores for 2009, 2010 and 2011 are 6.13342, 6.35906 and 6.70548 respectively.

Table 9: Agriculture subject means scores in Imenti South District from 2009 to 2011

Agriculture subject mean score	2009		2010		2011	
	Frequency	percent	Frequency	percent	Frequency	percent
Less than 3.00	0	0	2	3.39	2	3.39
3.00 – 5.00	32	54.24	27	45.76	21	35.59
6.00 – 8.00	24	40.68	24	44.07	28	47.46
9.00 - 11.00	3	5.08	2	3.39	8	13.56
Above 11.00	0	0	2	3.39	0	0
Total	59	100.0	59	100.0	59	100.00
	<i>Mean score = 6.13342</i>		<i>Mean score = 6.35906</i>		<i>Mean score = 6.70548</i>	

Performance of Agriculture Teacher in Non Teaching Duties

In a scale of 1 – 4, the respondents (head teachers) were asked to rate the performance of the agriculture teachers with regards to other duties other than teaching. The results are shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Performance of agriculture teachers in non teaching duties

Responsibilities	Poor		Fair		Good		Excellent	
	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%	Fq	%
Participate in the development of the school farm	0	0	11	18.6	46	78.0	2	3.4

Supervise farm work	1	1.7	4	6.8	52	88.1	2	3.4
Patron of YFC-gives guidance assists where necessary in organizing club activities	1	1.7	11	18.6	38	64.4	9	15.3
Acts as a liaison between the school and surrounding farming community, various agricultural institutions	0	0	27	45.8	30	50.8	2	3.4
Consulted on purchase of farm inputs wherever necessary	0	0	22	37.3	29	49.2	8	13.6
To prepare the various documents that help teaching agriculture effectively (scheme of work, lesson plan and record of work)	0	0	12	20.3	30	50.8	17	28.8
To prepare the necessary teaching aids and materials (do advance planning)	0	0	0	0	28	47.5	31	52.5
Initiate and maintain agricultural projects	0	0	2	3.4	40	67.8	17	28.8
Maintain agricultural facilities, equipment, material and tools	0	0	9	15.3	37	62.7	13	22.0
Make arrangements for various activities that would help teach agriculture effectively e.g. educational tour/trips	0	0	0	0	43	72.9	16	27.1
To translate the objectives of the agriculture course	0	0	0	0	53	89.8	6	10.2
Effective classroom teacher	0	0	0	0	35	59.3	24	40.7
Undertakes agriculture practical's	0	0	0	0	43	72.9	16	27.1

According to the results in Table 22, agriculture teachers were rated good in the following activities; participation of agriculture teachers in the development of the school farm by 78% of the respondents, supervision of farm work by 88% and linking between the school, surrounding farming community, various agricultural institutions by 51% of the respondents, consultations on the purchase of farm inputs were concerned by 49% and preparation of the various documents that helps in effective teaching (scheme of work, lesson plan and record of work) by 51% of the respondents.

The respondents (53%) rated the teachers regarding preparation of necessary teaching aids and materials (do advance planning). They were also rated as being good with regards to; initiation and maintenance agricultural projects by 68%, maintenance agricultural facilities, equipment, material and tools, making arrangements for various activities that would help teach agriculture effectively

e.g. educational tour/trips by 73%, translation of the objectives of the agriculture course by 90%, effectiveness in classroom teaching by 59% and undertaking the necessary agriculture practicals.

Conclusions

The overall performance of agriculture teachers in the District has been fair for the last three years, however, this can be improved by reducing the teachers work load, improving the working conditions and interpersonal relations in the schools. The District's average K.C.S.E mean grade for agriculture subject ranged from 6.13342 (C plain) to 6.70548 (C+) between 2009 and 2011, which is a poor score compared to other Districts in the country.

The working conditions that enable agriculture teachers to teach more effectively include appropriate and fair teaching assignments, continuing professional development, instructional materials, office equipment and supplies, facilities and resources, and principals' leadership. It is palpable from the results that majority of the secondary schools in Imenti South District have fairly good working conditions for teaching. However, most of the schools lack well equipped workshops which hindered effective agriculture subject teaching and hence poor results as compared to other Districts in the country. The situation is worsened especially by lack of schools' farm in a number of schools.

The teaching load of an agriculture teacher in the District is generally high in terms of the number of lessons handled per week however; he/she prepares a small number of K.C.S.E candidates every year. Despite the fact that the teachers view the high load as a manageable challenge, it is clear from the results that high teaching load negatively affects the performance of an agriculture teacher.

The interpersonal relations among agriculture teachers and their colleagues in secondary schools in the District were good. The relationships were characterized by; team work among members of staff and the school administration, free interaction among all members of staff, school heads were often sensitive about the teachers' needs and good relationship with the community. Interpersonal relations in schools serve a critical role in the development and maintenance of trust and positive feelings in the institutions. Although, the quality of interpersonal relationships alone is not enough to produce good teacher performance, it can significantly contribute to it.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study made the following recommendation;

- Agriculture teachers should make use of the surrounding community in the teaching of agriculture since some schools in the District lack demonstration farms and well equipped agriculture workshops for instructional purpose.
- Although, the working conditions in Imenti South District secondary schools are fairly good, the school administrators should equip the available workshops with appropriate tools and equipment. In schools with no workshops, the administrators should construct them and equip them appropriately to facilitate effective teaching.

- Despite the fact that the interpersonal relationships between teachers and their colleagues, and teachers and students were fair. There is need for school administrators to continue encouraging and maintaining a behaviour that is associated with the modelling and nurturing of interpersonal relationships that encourage student success.

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