

Remuneration of Teachers in Government-Aided Secondary Schools in Kasese District

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Abstract

The research sought to investigate the remuneration of teachers in government- aided secondary schools in the Kasese district of western Uganda. A cohort of 234 teachers from 25 designated schools was selected through purposive and stratified sampling methods. A mixed-methods strategy that combined quantitative and qualitative approaches was utilized for data collection and analysis. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 24, while qualitative data were assessed through content analysis. The results indicate that the average level of compensation was relatively high, leading to a positive impact on teachers' performance. It is suggested that policymakers in the education sector concentrate on enhancing compensation packages to enhance teachers' effectiveness in their duties.

Keywords: Remuneration, Performance, Teachers, Government-aided Secondary Schools.

Background

Teacher remuneration encompasses the monetary and non-monetary compensation received by educators for their services to schools or educational institutions (Zikanga, Anumaka, Tamale, & Mugizi, 2021). This includes salary, bonuses, allowances, and other benefits provided in exchange for their dedication and work (Zikanga et al., 2021). Remuneration can include base pay, health benefits, pension plans, transportation allowances, and additional payments for responsibilities undertaken by teachers (Dewi et al., 2022).

In this study, remuneration was operationalized through benefits, incentives, and salary structures. A fixed salary is a regular payment to non-manual employees, not dependent on productivity level (Unger et al., 2020). Incentives like food allowances and overtime pay aim to motivate teachers and are linked to their performance (Maali, Ainamani, & Rwekaza, 2020). Non-cash incentives such as housing, training, and recognition are given to teachers to boost morale and productivity (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Enhanced remuneration has been shown to correlate with improved teacher performance across various studies (Zikanga et al., 2021; Idrees et al., 2019; Rokeman, Kob, & Sobry, 2023; Maali, Ainamani, & Rwekaza, 2020). It is crucial to assess the remuneration systems offered to teachers in the Kasese district, Uganda, to enhance their professional performance

Objective

To examine the remuneration of teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Kasese District.

Methodology

Research Design, Population and Sample Size

This study utilized a cross-sectional survey that incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and analysis. By combining these approaches, the study was able to gather a comprehensive dataset in a single visit. The research focused on 601 teachers from 25 government-aided secondary schools in the western region of Kasese District, Uganda. Among these, 234 teachers were interviewed using a standardized questionnaire, forming the sample. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with 18 educational stakeholders, such as the District Education Officer, Inspectors of Schools, Assistant Inspectors of Schools, Parent-Teacher Association chairperson, Chairman of the Board of Governors, and student leaders, to gain their insights on teacher compensation in government-aided secondary schools. Participants were selected using a combination of probability and non-probability sampling techniques in line with the original study.

Questionnaire and measurement

A structured questionnaire based on a four-level Likert scale was employed for data collection from individual participants to ensure consistency and clarity in responses. This Likert scale ranged from 0 to 3, with 0 indicating 'never,' 1 'occasionally,' 2 'frequently,' and 3 'almost always.' A similar approach has been successfully implemented in previous studies in Uganda. For the qualitative aspect, a flexible interview guide was used, and the interviews were conducted without strictly adhering to a predetermined format.

Data management and analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS version 24) was employed to code and analyze the data, providing a structured database for the study. Data quality checks were conducted daily post-data collection to rectify errors or missing information. Content analysis was utilized for qualitative data to identify themes and sub-themes, ensuring a coherent presentation of the findings. The results were summarized by noting the frequency of responses during interviews related to teacher remuneration and its impact on performance in government-aided secondary schools in Kasese District. Verbatim quotations were included to highlight key points and provide a comprehensive view of the remuneration situation in these institutions.

Ethical consideration

Prior approval for the study was obtained from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), and informed consent was sought orally from all participants before their involvement in the research. Participants were briefed on their rights to participate and assured of honesty and anonymity in the study's reporting.

Results

Characteristics of Participants

This section provides an overview of the participants, including teachers and various education stakeholders such as prefects, Board of Governors, Parent-Teacher Association members, District Education Officer, and Inspectors of Schools.

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents (N=234)

Characteristic	Frequency	Per cent
Gender		

Female	26	11.1
Male	208	88.9
Age		
18-30	24	10.3
31-40	110	47.0
41-50	63	26.9
50 and above	37	15.8
Marital status		
Single	45	19.2
Married	186	79.5
Divorced	01	0.43
Widowed	02	0.87
Years of service		
less than 5 years	24	10.3
5-10 years	86	36.8
11-15 years	66	28.2
16-20 years	27	11.5
above 20 years	31	13.2
Qualifications		
Grade V	64	27.4
Bachelors	144	61.5
Postgraduate	26	11.1

A total of 234 individuals took part in this study, comprising teachers from government-aided secondary schools and education stakeholders in the Kasese District. The data revealed that the majority of participants, specifically 208 (88.9%), were male, while the remaining 26 (11.1%) were female.

Moreover, the results indicated that 186 (79.5%) of the participants were married, 45 (19.2%) were single, 2 (0.87%) were widowed, and 1 (0.43%) was divorced.

Further findings unveiled that the majority of respondents, 86 (36.8%), had a teaching experience ranging from 5 to 10 years. This was followed by 66 (28.2%) participants with teaching experience between 11 and 15 years, with a minority of 24 (10.3%) individuals having less than five years of experience in the teaching profession.

Regarding educational qualifications, the majority, 144 (61.5%) participants, held bachelor's degrees in education, while 64 (27.4%) had a Grade V qualification (Diploma in Education Secondary), and the minority of 26 (11.1%) possessed master's degrees. Please refer to Table 7 for detailed findings.

Demographic Characteristics of Education Stakeholders

An analysis of the stakeholders' characteristics revealed that out of the three participants, two were male and one was female. All three were married, with one holding a bachelor's degree, another having a postgraduate diploma, and the third possessing a master's degree. Additionally, all three individuals had been engaged in their responsibilities for a period of at least 15 years. For further details, consult Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of educational stakeholders (N=3)

Participants' category	Sex	Age	Marital status	Education Level	Years of service
Area inspector of schools (1)	Male	54	Married	Post graduate diploma	34
District inspector of schools (2)	Male	49	Married	Master's degree	25
Area inspector of schools (3)	Female	38	Married	Bachelor's degree	17
Board of Governors member	Male	45	Married	Diploma	5
Board of Governors member	Female	49	Married	Bachelors	2
Board of Governors member	Male	58	Married	UACE	3
Board of Governors member	Female	41	Married	Bachelors	2
Board of Governors member	Male	60	Married	Certificate	6
PTA (1)	Male	44	Married	Bachelor's	2
PTA (2)	Male	52	Married	Diploma	5
PTA (3)	Female	47	Married	A'level	4
PTA (4)	Male	55	Married	Certificate	10
PTA (5)	Female	41	Married	Masters	4
Student leader (1)	Female	19	Single	Advanced level	
Student leader (2)	Male	20	Single	Advanced level	
Student leader (3)	Male	21	Single	Ordinary level	
Student leader (4)	Male	18	Single	Ordinary level	
Student leader (5)	Female	18	Single	Ordinary level	
Student leader (6)	Female	18	Single	Advanced level	
Student leader (7)	Male	20	Single	Ordinary level	

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Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Remuneration

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Remuneration Total Score	234	3	0.7	1.5	4

Based on a scale of 1 to 4, the average remuneration score was around 3 with a standard deviation of 0.7. The data in Table 4.3 suggests that teachers' remuneration is relatively competitive, evident from the mean score of 3 that closely aligns with the highest possible score of 4.

Qualitative Findings

Qualitative insights were obtained from various education stakeholders. These stakeholders included representatives from the Board of Governors (BOG), student leaders, School Inspectors, District Education Officer, as well as BOG and student representatives. Through extensive interviews, key themes emerged, such as salary, incentives, perks, teaching preparation, instructional content delivery, and assessment. The synthesis of findings from these educational stakeholders' interviews is highlighted in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of findings from educational stakeholders’ interviews

Themes	Sub-themes	Categories
Remunerations	Salary	Monthly basic salary
	Incentives	Marking allowances
		Remedial teaching allowances
		Supervision allowances
	Benefits	Training
		Accommodation

Theme I: Remuneration

The analysis in this theme delves into the perceptions of teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Kasese District on various remuneration packages offered to them. The predominant components identified in our research encompass salaries, incentives, and benefits provided to teachers in these educational institutions.

Sub Theme I: Salary

Within the realm of the Public Service of Uganda, teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Kasese District are eligible for a fixed monthly salary.

Monthly Basic Salary

Our investigation determined that teachers in Kasese District consistently receive their monthly salaries punctually and at an acceptable frequency. Nevertheless, the geographical challenges unique to the district present a significant barrier. Notably, the Ministry of Public Service has yet to officially acknowledge Kasese District for the provision of extra benefits to teachers working in remote areas. While salaries are disbursed in a timely manner, the demanding work environment in Kasese District detracts from the motivation of educators in fulfilling their professional duties.

In today's context, the disbursement of teachers' salaries operates efficiently, ensuring timely payment. However, a predominant issue arises due to the inaccessibility of many areas within Kasese District. Regrettably, our district and its workforce have not been included in the scheme offering benefits for hard-to-reach regions. (Quote from a 54-year-old male Area Inspector of Schools).

Similarly, a board member echoed these sentiments, stating:

The actuality is that the government has streamlined the process of disbursing teachers' salaries. Teachers receive their payments promptly and without delay. Although challenges persist in terms of sufficiency, we remain optimistic about progress. (Quote from a 45-year-old male member of the board of governors).

Furthermore, a PTA member shared the following perspective:

In contrast to the past, when salary payments were frequently tardy, the government has enhanced its systems. Teachers now receive their salaries punctually. Despite modest remuneration compared to other professions, teachers benefit from timely payments. (Quote from a 55-year-old male PTA member).

Theme II: Incentives

From the interviews conducted, it was noted that teachers are provided with incentives as part of their remuneration packages to boost their performance. An analysis revealed that certain schools offer teach-

ers remedial teaching allowances, marking allowances, and supervision allowances

Remedial Teaching Allowances

Research indicated that overtime allowances are not mandated by policy. However, individual schools adopt various approaches based on their circumstances to support their teachers. A respondent mentioned:

"The government's policy does not incorporate overtime allowances for teachers. To address this, schools independently devise solutions tailored to their resources. Schools create supplementary funds for remedial teaching, separate from regular funds. They assign a staff member responsible for transparently managing these collections." — A 49-year-old male District Inspector of Schools, Kasese District.

Concerns regarding overtime were also expressed by a board of Governor's representative:

"We would ideally like to offer teachers overtime compensation, especially those involved in remedial teaching due to their significant dedication. However, limitations in funding hinder our ability to do so. This provision is not part of the government's plans, and many parents face economic hardships, making it difficult even to send their children to school." — A 49-year-old female Board of Governors member.

Marking Allowance

It was discovered that some schools utilize funds from Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) collections to provide marking allowances and other incentives for teachers. An educational stakeholder stated:

"Teachers do not receive standardized allowances beyond their regular monthly salary. However, schools vary in their arrangements based on PTA contributions from students, which consider the socio-economic background of the school. For example, Bwera Secondary School may offer marking allowances, a practice less common in rural schools like Kyabarungira." — A 54-year-old male Area Inspector of Schools.

Supervision Allowances

PTA funds are allocated in some schools to support the supervision of the teaching and learning processes by teachers. An educational stakeholder shared:

"While these funds are indeed limited, they are equitably distributed to critical areas like examination supervision. Notably, these provisions are more prevalent in affluent urban schools." — A 54-year-old male Area Inspector of Schools.

Sub-Theme II: Benefits

Research findings indicated that teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Kasese District receive various benefits in some schools, including training and accommodation.

Training

Among the benefits extended to teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Kasese District is training. Various types of training are provided to teachers, as highlighted by a stakeholder:

"Continuous Professional Development activities are typically organized internally at the school level, with individual schools arranging internal training. However, at the national level, the policy does not specify training, with the exception of scientific fields that have regional programs coordinated by head

teachers. Notably, certain programs such as FEM, ASSHU, and SESEMAT are specifically tailored for individuals like Directors of Studies, head teachers, deputies, and science educators. However, arts educators have not benefited from such programs." — From a 54-year-old male Area Inspector of Schools.

Training

Training sessions are tailored to individuals' areas of specialization. For example, SESEMAT focuses specifically on science teachers in the region. This program stands as the sole initiative in our area, as highlighted by an Area Inspector of Schools, aged 38.

Furthermore, a student leader pointed out that SESEMAT examinations are regularly conducted within the term, indicating the ongoing professional development of teachers in government-aided secondary schools in Kasese District.

As cited by a 19-year-old male student leader, when our science teachers attend training sessions, they return with SESEMAT exams, a practice that has been consistent at our school.

Accommodation

In Kasese District, it was observed that the majority of schools lack proper accommodation for teachers due to insufficient infrastructure. Some schools attempt to address this issue by offering cost-sharing arrangements for selected teachers. Here are direct quotes illustrating this finding:

Many schools in Kasese District, particularly those in remote regions like Mahango and Kyabarungira, lack teacher housing. As explained by a 49-year-old male District Inspector of Schools in Kasese District, teachers posted to these areas must fend for themselves due to the absence of nearby trading centers.

Regarding accommodation, a students' leader highlighted that most teachers choose to reside in nearby trading centers rather than at the school premises.

Only three teachers reside within the school premises, while the rest seek accommodation in nearby trading centers. An 18-year-old student leader mentioned uncertainty about whether the school management covers these accommodation costs.

In contrast, a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) member from a specific school mentioned that their institution provides sufficient accommodation for teachers. According to the 52-year-old male PTA member, the presence of on-site housing contributes to the school's high performance by minimizing absenteeism among teachers.

Discussion

Based on the findings, it was deduced that instructors in government-aided secondary schools in Kasese District receive relatively competitive salaries. This was supported by the participants' above-average mean scores, indicating favorable remuneration through salary, additional payments, housing benefits, and recognition. The outcome aligns with Zikanga et al. (2021), implying that teacher compensation in western Uganda is reasonable and includes various benefits such as housing and training opportunities.

Conversely, research by Didit and Nikmah (2020) and Putra et al. (2020) suggests that employee work engagement is not solely tied to salary. Hence, our study addresses this by examining a comprehensive range of monetary and non-monetary incentives that motivate teachers in government-aided secondary

schools. The gap in existing research lies in the insufficient exploration of these dual aspects from varied perspectives

Teachers placed in remote and challenging locations in Uganda receive increased compensation and extra support to assist them in overcoming the obstacles inherent in their roles. According to the Workers Compensation Act Cap 225 of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda, this encompasses provisions for housing assistance in areas where it is costly or scarce, remote location allowances to offset the elevated living and transportation costs, and hardship allowances to alleviate challenges present in regions with inadequate infrastructure. Additionally, teachers stand to benefit from extended healthcare coverage to minimize heightened health risks, retention bonuses to incentivize job retention, and tailored training initiatives to address specific educational challenges encountered in these regions. By attracting and retaining skilled educators in isolated areas, these measures aim to enhance educational accessibility and quality. Interestingly, despite the geographical and security challenges of being in close proximity to the unstable Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the Kasese district and its education sector are not classified as hard-to-reach regions in Uganda. While the direct impact on teachers' welfare remains unverified, there appears to be little distinction between Kasese and other districts considered under this compensation scheme, such as Bundibugyo and Ntoroko.

Summary

The survey indicates that the compensation for teachers, including salaries, overtime allowances, accommodation, food stipends, and recognition, was reported to exceed the average expectations among respondents. However, variations in compensation packages amongst schools exist, with the exception of the uniform monthly salary provided by the Ugandan government. Notably, despite Kasese district being deemed a hard-to-reach area, teachers in government-aided secondary schools do not fall within the scope of the Compensation Act Cap 225 of 2000, resulting in a discrepancy in teacher remuneration within government-aided secondary institutions in western Uganda's Kasese district.

Recommendations

Addressing disparities in benefits and incentives, reflective of the socio-economic backgrounds of schools, is crucial. Particularly, in Kasese District where many rural secondary schools are located in economically marginalized and challenging mountainous areas, the current oversight of not categorizing Kasese as a hard-to-reach region under public service standards warrants immediate attention. It is imperative that the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Public Service rectify this categorization to ensure equitable treatment for teachers within the district.

The government of Uganda, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Public Service Ministry, should formally recognize Kasese district as a hard-to-reach area given its significant geographic challenges. This adjustment would facilitate fairer remuneration packages for teachers in the region, thereby addressing existing discrepancies. Moreover, enhancing teacher welfare in Kasese secondary schools by providing adequate breaks, meals, and essential amenities can promote teachers' longevity in their roles, aiding student learning and overall performance. Enacting policies to augment the budget for teachers' welfare through parliamentary channels could further support these initiatives.

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