



EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PRACTICES AND TEACHER PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA: A CASE OF BUSIA COUNTY

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Abstract:

Scholars assert that organizations that effectively implement employee recognition practices are likely to gain a competitive edge against rivals due to high motivation and retention rates of skilled and talented employees. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between employee recognition practices and teacher performance. The Systems theory and the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity theory informed this study. The study was anchored on a pragmatic paradigm and adopted a mixed methods approach to address the research questions. The study targeted 185 Principals, 185 HODs, and 1 CDE. The study categorized respondents into 3 strata (CDE, Principals, and HODs). Simple random sampling was then utilized to select a sample proportionate to each stratum. Schools were clustered based on 7 Sub- Counties in Busia County. The sample size of the study was 126 HODs, 19 Principals and 1 CDE. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. Piloting was conducted in 37 schools to refine instruments. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (correlation and regression) were employed. Analyzed data was represented in APA tables and Pie charts. The study found that there is a lack of a clear, systematic and comprehensive implementation approach to employee recognition in most schools in Busia County. It is clear that recognition and rewards are critical factors towards the establishment of a

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quality culture that appreciates and values the contribution of teachers and their accomplishments in service delivery. The findings of the study found that ($r = 0.917$, $p < 0.01$) an indication that there is a positive significant relationship between employee recognition and teacher performance. It was found that an adjusted R square value of 0.77 implies that employee recognition accounted to nearly 77% of the total variation in teacher performance. It was found that ($\beta = 0.917$, $t = 3.371$, $p < 0.05$), implying that employee recognition statistically and significantly predicted teacher performance; hence the study rejected the null hypothesis. The study concluded that a unit improvement in employee recognition is likely to result in an improvement in teacher performance by 91.7% ($\beta = 0.917$). The study recommended that there is a need for TSC and school management to strengthen the existing recognition system by developing mechanisms for frequent identification, recognition and administration of rewards in a more consistent, prompt, impartial and transparent manner in all public schools with a view to encourage improvement, promote creativity and innovation and enhance performance.

Keywords: employee recognition, teacher performance, job promotion, job enrichment, competitive benefits

1. Introduction

The world is changing rapidly, and organizations are currently operating in a very dynamic and highly competitive environment. Organizations are shaping up to remain effective and efficient by responding quickly to the changing employees' needs. Employee recognition practices have become inevitable in any organization, whether public or private, to keep employees aligned with business objectives. Scholars assert that employees can be driven to superior performance when employees feel their efforts are being recognized (Caroline, 2022; Omar *et al.*, 2021; Pancasila *et al.*, 2020). In addition, Eric *et al.* (2022) opined that employee recognition practices increase motivation, job satisfaction, improve self-esteem, and create a positive attitude toward the jobs, which consequently leads to better job performance. With careful implementation, employee recognition can be a game changer for organizations, especially as the demands for the workforce continue to evolve. Motivated employees take pride in their organizational membership and believe in the goals and values of the organization. Therefore, these employees display high levels of performance and productivity. Dissatisfied employees display characteristics of low productivity, absenteeism and high turnover (Patel, 2022; Richard, 2022; Saudagar & Candra, 2020)

Globally, employee recognition has moved from being a tactical activity to a total reward framework that goes beyond basic compensation and benefit propositions. Employee recognition is rapidly going digital in accordance with the demands of modern-day employees, and it has been developed with various demographic and cultural employees across sectors in mind. The changing workforce demographics have

compelled organizations to rethink their employee recognition strategies. The expectations of employees have changed. They expect instant recognition. Some of the key elements of effective employee recognition include that recognition must be specific, accurate, personal and well-communicated to make employees feel proud of their achievements. The employers are tasked with making recognition memorable to employees in order to develop a sense of belonging (Guriani *et al.*, 2022; Duka, 2022; Ismail *et al.*, 2021)

In Africa, organizations are still struggling with recognition as a tactical activity. This is compounded by the socio-economic status of most of the countries (Nyamubi, 2017). Management needs to rethink how they add substance to employee recognition experience to create a memorable moment for employees. When we hear of employee recognition, we think of salary increments and benefits. However, there are other practices that recognize employees. For instance, a simple saying of thanks, a round of applause, acknowledgement, gratitude, appreciation, and a warm smile can also become a good form of recognition that may boost the morale of employees. Caroline (2022) supports the view that rewards, especially non-financial rewards, if well managed, can be a source of competitive advantage and hence promote employee performance. Employee recognition should balance both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. This calls for all stakeholders to be involved, not just to be a management job, but the whole organization ought to embrace it, where individuals openly acknowledge peers, teams or managers for accomplishments.

In Kenya, the public sector and organizations are struggling with recognition as a tactical activity, just like other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Kenya government, through the TSC, has put in place various initiatives to recognize reward and sanction performance in the teaching service, such as Teachers of the Year (TOYA) and Principals of the Year (POYA), letters of recognition, among others. The administration of such initiatives has been in an ad hoc manner and piecemeal. The absence of a harmonized framework for the administration of performance rewards and sanctions has made it challenging to provide and implement employee recognition. Teachers, like other employees, deserve to be recognized by their employers for exemplary performance in their field of work. The primary purpose of teacher recognition is to reinforce positive attributes and competencies that affect learning outcomes. However, dissatisfied teachers display characteristics of low productivity, absenteeism and high turnover. The TSC measures teacher performance based on lesson attendance, learner progress, and teaching standards outlined in the TPAD tool (TSC, 2012; TSC, 2020; TSC, 2018).

2. Statement of the Problem

The performance of teachers is critical in the implementation of the curriculum and in enhancing the quality of education in the country. However, there have been challenges in providing quality learning opportunities in schools emanating from teacher absenteeism, which has compromised the quality of teaching in the education sector

(Bulletin *et al.*, 2012). Data from the Ministry of Education baseline survey report (2019) in Kenya revealed that the rate of teacher absenteeism was 30.2% in the targeted schools. The highest absenteeism rate was at 21.2% for periods of 2 days and below, while 6.5% of the teachers were absent for 3-5 days. This prompted the introduction of various measures like performance recognition, reward, and sanction policy frameworks for teaching services to improve the standards and quality of education in all public schools. Appreciation of employees' efforts increases their motivation and job satisfaction, improves self-esteem, and creates a positive attitude toward their jobs, which consequently leads to improved teacher performance in terms of curriculum implementation. However

The foregoing studies, Anderson & Brown (2020) and Nderitu *et al.* (2021) maintain that employee recognition practices are linked with teacher performance and may increase the motivation, efficiency and commitment of teachers. Caroline (2022) supports the view that rewards, especially non-financial rewards, if well managed, can be a source of competitive advantage and hence promote employee performance. It is upon this background that this study seeks to determine whether employee recognition practice, specifically job promotion, job enrichment and competitive benefits) has an impact on teacher performance. By bridging existing gaps and contributing to the literature, the current study enhances academic understanding and holds potential policy implications. It offers actionable insights for educational institutions and policymakers striving to optimize teacher performance through employee recognition practices.

3. Methodology

The study was anchored on a pragmatic paradigm and adopted a mixed methods approach to address the research questions. The study targeted 185 principals, 185 heads of departments in 185 public secondary schools in Busia County, and the county director of education. A sample size of 126 heads of departments, 19 principals and the county director of education were selected through stratified random sampling. The strata included county director of education, principals and heads of departments. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect primary data. A pilot study was conducted in 37 schools in Bungoma County. The KMO results for all factors were above the 0.5 minimum threshold, indicating the acceptable degree of sampling adequacy for all factors. Construct validity was tested using the (AVE) Average Variance Extracted and Max(R)H Maximum Shared Variance as a measure of convergent validity and discriminant validity. All factor loading for AVE and MaxR(H) values were above 0.5, and a minimum threshold was established (Santos & Cirillo, 2021). Therefore, this indicates that constructs in the study have an acceptable degree of discriminant validity and convergent validity. Content validity was established by expert judgment. Pilot results were incorporated into the final instrument to help improve the validity and reliability of the instruments.

4. Research Findings and Discussions

The study's objective was to establish the relationship between strategic human resource management practices and teacher performance in public secondary schools. To achieve this, the study subjected the respondents to similar questions on questionnaires on a five-point Likert scale of 1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Moderate, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly Agree. The results were obtained in frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Results of descriptive statistics are presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2. Further analysis was done, and the results of correlation and regression are presented in Figure 4.1, Table 4.3, Table 4.4, Table 4.5, and Table 4.6.

Table 4.1: Teacher Performance

Teacher Performance	1		2		3		4		5		Mean	Std Deviation
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %		
The teacher demonstrates high subject mean scores for the past five years	12	9.6%	77	61.1%	13	10.4%	9	7.2%	14	11.2%	2.51	1.144
Teacher demonstrates high lesson attendance rating	7	5.6%	8	6.4%	10	8%	21	16.8%	79	63.2%	4.27	1.169
The teacher demonstrates mastery of subject content knowledge in the classroom	20	16%	7	5.6%	78	62.4%	11	8.8%	9	7.2%	2.95	0.875
The teacher carries out learner assessment and provides regular feedback on learner progress	10	8%	83	66.4%	15	12%	9	7.2%	8	6.4%	2.37	0.968
Teacher demonstrates ability to use learner centered teaching and learning methodologies	18	14.4%	64	51.2%	25	20%	8	6.4%	10	8%	2.43	1.069
Teacher demonstrates ability to prepare and maintain of professional records based	8	6.4%	16	12.8%	16	12.8%	70	56%	15	12%	3.56	1.070

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on the syllabus												
Teacher demonstrates ability to diversify instruction methodologies to meet needs of learners	9	7.2%	12	9.6%	81	64.1%	15	12%	8	6.4%	1.83	1.284
Teachers demonstrates high rating on lesson observation tool	14	11.2%	8	6.4%	14	11.2%	79	63.2%	10	8%	3.05	0.911

Source: Field Data, 2023.

From Table 4.1, it was observed that respondents 12(9.6%) strongly disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high subject mean scores, 77(61.1%) disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high subject mean scores, 13(10.4%) neither agree nor disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high subject mean scores, 9(7.2%) agree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high subject mean scores and 14(11.2%) strongly agree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high subject mean scores years. On average (Mean = 2.51; Std. Dev. = 1.144), this indicates that the majority of mathematics teachers in Busia County have been experiencing dismal mathematics mean scores for the past five years.

It was observed that respondents 7(5.6%) strongly disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high lesson attendance rating, 8(6.4%) disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high lesson attendance rating years, 10(8%) neither agree nor disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high lesson attendance rating years, 21(16.8%) agree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high lesson attendance rating years and 79(63.2%) strongly agree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high lesson attendance rating. On average (Mean = 4.27; Std. Dev. = 1.169), this indicates that the majority of mathematics teachers in Busia County have had high lesson attendance ratings for the past five years.

It was observed that respondents 20(16%) strongly disagreed that mathematics teachers demonstrate mastery of subject content knowledge in the classroom, 7(5.6%) disagreed that mathematics teachers demonstrate mastery of subject content knowledge in the classroom, 78(62.4%) neither agree nor disagree that mathematics teacher demonstrate mastery of subject content knowledge in the classroom, 11(8.8%) agree that mathematics teacher demonstrate mastery of subject content knowledge in the classroom and 9(7.2%) strongly agree that mathematics teacher demonstrate mastery of subject content knowledge in the classroom. On average (Mean = 2.95; Std. Dev. = 0.875), this indicates that the majority of mathematics teachers in Busia County have high mastery of subject matter knowledge in the classroom for the past five years.

It was observed that 10(8%) respondents strongly disagree that mathematics teachers carry out learner assessments and provide regular feedback on learner progress, 83(66.4%) disagree that mathematics teachers carry out learner assessments and provide regular feedback on learner progress, 15(12%) neither agree nor disagree that mathematics teacher carry out learner assessment and provides regular feedback on learner progress, 9(7.2%) agree that mathematics teacher carry out learner assessment and provides regular feedback on learner progress and 8(6.4%) strongly agree that mathematics teacher carry out learner assessment and provides regular feedback on learner progress. On average (Mean = 2.37; Std. Dev. = 0.968), this indicates that the majority of mathematics teachers in Busia County have a low ability to carry out learner assessments and provide regular feedback on learner progress for the past five years.

It was observed that respondents 18(14.4%) strongly disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate the ability to use learner-centered teaching and learning methodologies, 64(51.2%) disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate the ability to use learner-centered teaching and learning methodologies, 25(20%) neither agree nor disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate ability to use learner-centered teaching and learning methodologies, 8(6.4%) agree that mathematics teacher demonstrate ability to use learner-centered teaching and learning methodologies and 10(8%) strongly agree that mathematics teacher demonstrates ability to use learner-centered teaching and learning methodologies. On average (Mean = 2.43; Std. Dev. = 1.069), this indicates that the majority of mathematics teachers in Busia County have been experiencing challenges in the use of learner-centered teaching and learning methodologies for the past five years.

It was observed that respondents 8(6.4%) strongly disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate the ability to prepare and maintain of professional records based on the syllabus, 16(12.8%) disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate the ability to prepare and maintain professional records based on the syllabus, 16(12.8%) neither agree nor disagree that mathematics teacher demonstrates the ability to prepare and maintain of professional records based on the syllabus, 70(56%) agree that mathematics teacher demonstrate the ability to prepare and maintain of professional records based on the syllabus and 16(12%) strongly agree that mathematics teachers demonstrate the ability to prepare and maintain of professional records based on the syllabus. On average (Mean = 3.56; Std. Dev. = 1.070), this indicates that the majority of mathematics teachers in Busia County have a high ability to prepare and maintain professional records based on the syllabus for the past five years.

It was observed that respondents 9(7.2%) strongly disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate the ability to diversify instruction methodologies to meet the needs of learners, 12(9.6%) disagree that the mathematics teacher demonstrates the ability to diversify instruction methodologies to meet needs of learners, 81(64.1%) neither agree nor disagree that mathematics teacher demonstrates the ability to diversify instruction methodologies to meet needs of learners, 15(12%) agree that mathematics teacher demonstrates the ability to diversify instruction methodologies to meet needs of learners and 8(6.4%) strongly agree that mathematics teacher demonstrate ability to diversify

instruction methodologies to meet needs of learners. On average (Mean = 1.83; Std. Dev.= 1.284), this indicated that the majority of mathematics teachers in Busia County have inadequate ability to diversify instruction methodologies to meet the needs of learners for the past five years.

It was observed that respondents 14(11.2%) strongly disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high ratings on lesson observation tools, 8(6.4) disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high ratings on lesson observation tools, 14(11.2%) neither agree nor disagree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high rating on lesson observation tool, 79(63.2%) agree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high rating on lesson observation tool and 10(8%) strongly agree that mathematics teachers demonstrate high rating on lesson observation tool. On average (Mean = 3.05; Std.Dev. = 0.911), this indicates that the majority of mathematics teachers in Busia County have recorded high ratings on lesson observation tools for the past five years.

Based on the teaching standards and learner progress as a measure of teacher performance in the current study, majority of mathematics teachers in Busia County uphold high teaching standards such as regular lesson attendance, preparation and use of professional documents, mastery of subject content and conduct lesson observations. However, the majority of mathematics teachers in Busia County are experiencing challenges in the diversification of instruction methodologies to meet the needs of learners, challenges in the use of learner-centered methodologies, challenges in improvisation of locally available teaching aids and consequently are recording dismal mathematics mean score as provided in learner progress reports on the TPAD tool.

The researcher sought more information from critical informants (Principals and CDE) about the status of teacher performance in schools. When respondents were asked about the reasons why the majority of schools recorded high lesson attendance and high lesson observation ratings, the subject mean scores for mathematics for the past five years were low. The following are some of the responses after conducting interviews.

“The County is committed to ensuring compliance with teaching standards and continuously monitor, evaluate teacher performance. This is because the performance of teachers is critical in the implementation of the curriculum and in enhancing the quality of education outcomes in schools. However, most teachers in mathematics subjects based on TPAD report at the County level, face challenges in terms of inadequate pedagogical knowledge and skills.”

“Most teachers in mathematics subjects lack creativity and innovation in making and using locally available teaching and learning aids based on lesson observations. The teachers often make requisitions for purchase of commercial models, when finances are limited in school, they resort teacher-centered methodologies in teaching and learning mathematics.”

Based on the TPAD ratings report of Busia County, teachers have complied with most of the teaching standards because the county continuously monitors and evaluates the teaching standards in the schools. However, the mean scores in mathematics seem to be dismal because the majority of teachers lack appropriate professional support to improve their pedagogical knowledge and skills.

The researcher sought information on employee recognition practices. The respondents were expected to respond to a variety of questions. Their views were measured on a five-point Likert scale, which was given in numerical values: (1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly Agree). The analysis is shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.2: Employee Recognition

Employee Recognition	1		2		3		4		5		Mean	Std. Deviation
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %		
The school offers competitive benefits to teachers	16	12.8%	67	53.6%	21	16.8%	9	7.2%	12	9.6%	2.62	1.076
The school recommends the promotion of teachers with exemplary performance	4	3.2%	2	1.6%	40	32%	68	54.4%	11	8.8%	4.03	0.784
The school recognise the creativity and innovation of teachers	13	10.4%	14	11.2%	69	55.2%	18	14.1%	11	8.8%	4.03	1.003
The school values teachers' contribution towards change of perceptions	17	13.6%	11	8.8%	64	51.2%	24	19.2%	9	7.2%	3.40	1.047
The school delegates duties.	13	10.4%	14	11.2%	20	16%	73	58.4%	5	4.0%	3.46	1.054
The school facilitate training as KNEC examiner	7	5.6%	72	57.6%	14	11.2%	22	17.6%	10	8%	2.43	0.906

Source: Field Data, 2023.

From Table 4.2, it was observed that respondents 16(12.8%) strongly disagree that the school offers competitive benefits to mathematics teachers with exemplary performance for the past five years, 67(53.6% disagree that the school offers competitive benefits to mathematics teachers with exemplary performance for the past five years, 21(16.8%) neither agree nor disagree that the school offers competitive benefits to mathematics teachers with exemplary performance for the past five years, 9(7.2%) agree that the school offers competitive benefits to mathematics teachers with exemplary performance for the

past five years and 12(9.6%) strongly agree that the school offers competitive benefits to mathematics teachers with exemplary performance the past five years. On average (Mean = 2.62 Std. Dev. = 1.076), this indicates that the majority of schools in Busia County offer low competitive benefits to recognize improvement in a number of quality grades in national examinations.

It was observed that respondents 4(3.2%) strongly disagree that the school recommends promotion of mathematics teachers with exemplary performance, 2(1.6%) disagree that the school recommends promotion of mathematics teachers with exemplary performance, 40(32%) neither agree nor disagree that the school recommends promotion of mathematics teachers with exemplary performance for the past five years, 68(54.4%) agree that the school recommends promotion of mathematics teachers with exemplary performance for the past five years and 11(8.8%) strongly agree that the school recommends promotion of mathematics teachers with exemplary performance. On average (Mean = 4.03; Std. Dev. = 0.784), this indicates that the majority of schools in Busia County highly recommend the promotion of mathematics teachers with exemplary performance.

It was observed that respondents 13(10.4%) strongly disagree that the school creates a positive work environment that recognizes creativity and innovation of mathematic models and methodology, 14(11.2%) disagree that the school creates a positive work environment that recognizes creativity and innovation of mathematic models and methodology, 69(55.2%) neither agree nor disagree that the school creates a positive work environment that recognize creativity and innovation of mathematic models and methodology, 18(14.4%) agree that the school creates a positive work environment that recognize creativity and innovation of mathematic models and methodology and 11(8.8%) strongly agree that the school creates a positive work environment that recognize creativity and innovation of mathematic models and methodology. On average (Mean = 3.46; Std. Dev. = 1.003), this indicates that the majority of schools in Busia County rarely recognize mathematics teachers who demonstrate creativity and innovativeness during the Kenya Science and Engineering Fair.

It was observed that respondents 17(13.6%) strongly disagree that the school values teachers' contribution towards change of negative perception of mathematics among learners, 11(8.8%) disagree that the school values teachers' contribution towards change of negative perception of mathematics among learners, 64(51.2%) neither agree nor disagree that the school values teachers' contribution towards change of negative perception of mathematics among learners, 24(19.2%) agree that the school values teachers' contribution towards change of negative perception of mathematics among learners and 9(7.2%) strongly agree that the school values teachers' contribution towards change of negative perception of mathematics among learners. On average (Mean=3.40; Std. Dev. = 1.047), this indicates that the majority of schools in Busia County value teachers' contribution towards the change of negative perception of mathematics among learners for the past five years.

It was observed that majority respondents 13(10.4%) strongly disagree that the school assigns a teacher additional responsibilities for exemplary performance, 14(11.2%) disagree that the school assigns a teacher additional responsibilities for exemplary performance, 20(16%) neither agree nor disagree that the school assigns a teacher additional responsibilities for exemplary performance, 73(58.4%) agree that the school assigns a teacher additional responsibilities for exemplary performance and 5(4%) strongly agree that the school assigns additional responsibilities for exemplary performance. On average (Mean = 4.03; Std. Dev. = 1.054), this indicates that the majority of schools in Busia County assign teachers' additional responsibilities for exemplary performance for the past five years.

It was observed that respondents 75.6%) strongly disagree that the school offers opportunities to train as KNEC examiners, 72(57.6%) disagree that the school offers opportunities to train as KNEC examiners, 14(11.2%) neither agree nor disagree that the school offers opportunities to train as KNEC examiners, 22(17.6%) agree that the school offers opportunities to train as KNEC examiners and 1(8%) strongly agree that the school offers opportunities to train as KNEC examiners On average (Mean = 2.43; Std. Dev. = 0.906); this indicates that majority of schools in Busia County do not facilitate mathematics teachers to train as KNEC examiners for the past five years.

Based on information provided by HODs in Busia County on the aspect of employee recognition, it can be observed that teachers have been recommended for promotion, teacher experience job enrichment when they are assigned additional responsibilities such as HODs and HOS, specifically those who demonstrate exemplary performance in the subject. However, the majority of schools have made very little effort to recognize teachers who make positive contributions by changing learners' negative attitudes and negative perceptions about mathematics, teachers who demonstrate creativity and innovativeness during Kenya Science and Engineering and teachers who strive to increase quality grades in national exams to train as KNEC examiners and award them with other significant competitive benefits.

The researcher sought more information from critical informants (Principals and CDE) about implementation of employee recognition practices in schools. When respondents were asked about the reasons why the school has not offered satisfactory competitive benefits to teachers who post exemplary performance in the national exams and teachers who make positive contributions towards learner progress at school. The following were the findings of in-depth interviews of principals and CDE:

"The County, in line with TSC policy, regards recognition and rewards as critical factors towards the establishment of a quality culture that appreciates and values the contribution of teachers and their accomplishments in service delivery with a view to encourage improvement, promote creativity and innovation and enhance quality performance. However, there is no clear guideline by the County to implement recognition and rewards for teachers at the school level."

“The school BOM at its own discretion recognizes and rewards teachers who post quality grades in KCSE examinations based on availability of funds in school. Teachers who wish to train as KNEC examiners or advance in professional knowledge meet their own cost because the County lacks clear financial guidelines for the school to support such teachers.”

Based on information provided by the key informants on employee recognition, Schools in Busia County are yet to develop and implement recognition strategies consistently and fairly, such as school BOM facilitating teachers to train as KNEC examiners with a view to encourage improvement, promote creativity and innovation and enhance quality performance.

4.1 Correlation Analysis

The study sought to understand the strength and direction of the relationship between employee recognition and teacher performance. Therefore, the Pearson moment correlation coefficient was adopted to determine if these variables were correlating. The correlation co-efficient (r) ranges between -1 and +1. A positive relationship means that when in-service training improves, teacher performance also improves. Correlation also tests whether (r) is significant ($p < 0.05$). The findings are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Correlation between Employee Recognition and Teacher Performance

		Employee Recognition	Teacher Performance
Employee Recognition	Pearson Correlation	1	.917**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	125	125
Teacher Performance	Pearson Correlation	.917**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	125	125

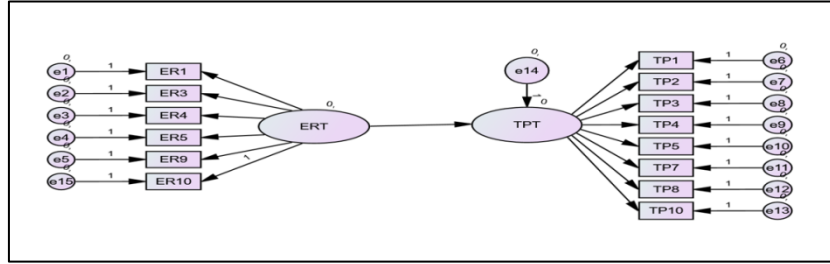
From Table 4.3, the findings of Pearson Correlation analysis ($r = 0.917$) indicate that there is a positive relationship between employee recognition and teacher Performance. The study tested whether the obtained correlation coefficient was significant. It was found that ($p < 0.05$) implying that there is a significant relationship between employee recognition and teacher performance.

4.2 Testing Hypothesis

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between employee recognition and teacher performance

The Structural Equation model was used to test the hypothesis in order to establish the relationship between employee recognition and teacher performance. The Structural Equation model was also used to test whether the independent variable predicts the dependent variable. The model is illustrated in Figure 4.1. The findings are shown in Table 4.4, Table 4.5 and Table 4.6.

Figure 4.1: Conceptual Model: Employee Recognition and Teacher Performance



Source: Field Data, 2023.

Figure 4.1 represents a conceptual model illustrating the relationship between employee recognition and teacher performance.

Table 4.4: Model Summary: Employee Recognition and Teacher Performance

Model Summary	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.917 ^a	.840	.770	2.92951

a. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Recognition

From Table 4.4, it can be observed that the adjusted R square value of 0.77 implies that employee recognition accounted for nearly 77% of the total variation in teacher performance. In order to determine whether the model provides a better fit to the data, the F-test of overall significance was computed, and the results are shown in Table 4.16.

Table 4.5: ANOVA Employee Recognition and Teacher Performance

Model	Sum of Squares	df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	97.543	1	97.543	11.366	.001 ^b
Residual	1064.171	124	8.582		
Total	1161.714	125			

a. Dependent Variable: Teacher Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Employee Recognition

From Table 4.5, the ANOVA test results were (F (1,124) =11.366, P<0.05), an indicator that the model is a good fit for the study dataset.

Table 4.6: Coefficients^a Employee Recognition and Teacher Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	16.382	1.966		8.331	.000
	ER	.346	.103	.917	3.371	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Teacher Performance

The coefficient results in Table 4.6 show that ($\beta = 0.917$, $t= 3.371$, $p<0.05$), implying that employee recognition statistically and significantly predicted teacher performance; hence, the study rejected the null hypothesis. In addition, $\beta= 0.917$ indicates that a unit

improvement in employee recognition is likely to result in an improvement in teacher performance by 91.7%.

The rejection of the null hypothesis in the current study, indicating a significant relationship between employee recognition and teacher performance, aligns with a growing body of research emphasizing the positive impact of recognition initiatives on teacher outcomes. Roberts & Johnson (2018) demonstrated that well-designed employee recognition programs significantly correlated with increased teacher performance across various educational settings. Additionally, Garcia *et al.* (2019) found that employee recognition practices were positively associated with heightened teacher performance levels, underscoring the role of acknowledgement and appreciation in fostering a conducive work environment for educators. The current study's findings harmonize with this existing evidence, providing additional empirical support for the notion that employee recognition initiatives contribute significantly to improvements in teacher performance. In contrast to the present study, there are researchers who have reported inconclusive or contrasting findings regarding the relationship between employee recognition and teacher performance.

Anderson & Brown (2020) conducted a meta-analysis that yielded mixed results, suggesting that the impact of employee recognition on teacher performance may vary based on factors such as the nature of the recognition program, organizational culture, and individual preferences. This divergence in findings underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of the dynamics between employee recognition and teacher performance. The current study adds to this ongoing discourse by supporting the rejection of the null hypothesis, emphasizing the potential positive impact of employee recognition on teacher performance while acknowledging the need for further exploration of the contextual and individual factors influencing this relationship. To contextualize these findings within the Kenyan educational landscape, research has explored the impact of employee recognition on teacher performance in local schools.

A study by Kiptum & Nyambegera (2019) in Kenya aligns with the current research, emphasizing the positive effects of well-implemented employee recognition programs on teacher performance. However, it is crucial to consider the cultural and organizational nuances within Kenya, as highlighted by Nderitu *et al.* (2021), who found variations in the effectiveness of recognition practices across different regions in the country. These regional studies contribute additional layers to the complexity of the relationship between employee recognition and teacher performance, emphasizing the importance of understanding and addressing contextual factors within diverse educational settings in Kenya.

5. Conclusion

The study concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between employee recognition and teacher performance. A unit improvement in employee recognition is likely to result in an improvement in teacher performance by 91.7% ($\beta=$

0.917). Effective and efficient employee recognition practices are crucial to good employment relationships, as all employees expect their efforts to be recognized by their superiors and colleagues. Good performance and achievement can only be acknowledged by the use of appropriate recognition initiatives that are meaningful to the recipient.

6. Recommendations

The study recommended that there is a need for TSC to develop a policy framework that can strengthen the existing recognition and rewards system by developing mechanisms for identification, recognition and administration of rewards in a more consistent, prompt, impartial and transparent manner with a view to encourage improvement, promote creativity and innovation and enhance quality performance and teamwork. Therefore, effective teacher recognition practices must be linked to a result-based performance management system, which enhances the maintenance of the teaching standards. It is very important that management, the Ministry of Education, and its agencies take the issue of reward systems very seriously. Staff performance would increase substantially if they are adequately compensated according to the quality and quantity of work done.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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