

## ABSTRACT

Performance in public secondary schools is believed to be influenced by factors such as school resources, teacher student ratio, learners' discipline and curriculum implementation. Inadequate performance in most public schools has jeopardized development in the affected areas including Ndhiwa Sub County. However, how teacher engagement practices such as professional development, workplace communication and reward system influence performance in these public schools is not known. This hence led to the need to investigate the influence of employee engagement practices on teacher performance. Specifically, the study sought to establish the influence of employee professional development on teacher performance, to investigate the influence of work place communication on teacher performance and to investigate the influence of school based reward on teacher performance. This study was anchored on social exchange theory and job performance theory. Correlational research design was used. Study population was 300 teachers and 34 principal. Yamane's formula gave a sample size of 170 out of teachers and 34 principals. The 34 schools were stratified into four divisions of Kobama, Ndhiwa, Kobodo and Riana. Simple random sampling was then used to obtain the sampled population. Questionnaire and an interview guide were used to collect information from teachers and principals respectively. Validity of the questionnaire was established through consultation with experts while a test- retest result achieved 0.74 Cronbach's alpha. From summary of the interview for the principals, majority agreed that there was need for professional development; however lack of funds hindered their support to teachers, communication in their schools were hierarchical. The schools basically used non-financial reward system. Regression of employee engagement practices and teacher performance revealed the following unstandardized coefficients. Professional development ( $B=.164, p=.003$ ) showing positively significant relationship between professional development and teacher performance, communication practices ( $B=.164, p=.018$ ) revealing existence of positive significant relationship between communication practices and teacher performance and rewards ( $B=.049, p=.274$ ) showing insignificant relationship between school based reward system and teacher performance. The value of  $R^2$  was .491 showing that 49.1% of teacher performance can be accounted for by employee engagement practices. This shows that professional development and communication practices when used, will improve teacher performance. The study recommends that professional development, workplace communication and reward system be increased to improve performance. The study suggests need for further research on other employee engagement practices to establish how they would influence teacher performance in public secondary schools. The findings would be appropriate in increasing teacher engagement.