# Perceived School Culture and Teachers' Job Performance in Government Aided Secondary Schools in Sheema Municipality, Uganda

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*Abstract: The purpose of the study was to explore the influence of perceived school culture on teachers' job performance in government aided secondary schools in Sheema municipality, Uganda. The study was quantitative and adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from 252 respondents using census strategy. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze objectives 1 and 2. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to test the relationship between perceived school culture and teachers' job performance. The study findings revealed that 77.4% of the teachers reported strong school culture and 22.6% reported moderate levels of school culture. It was revealed that 91.2% of teachers reported high levels of job performance while 8% reported moderate levels of job performance. The study established that positive significant relationship exists between perceived school culture and teachers' job performance (r = .29, p < .01). The findings agree with studies conducted by Bukhuni and Iravo (2015), Edelstein (2012) and Kamaroellah and Mubarak (2019). The study findings, however, disagree with Ghanney et al (2017). The study recommended that the ministry of education should come up with clear training programs for teachers to teach them about the vitality of upholding strong school cultures in their schools to boost job performance.*

*Keywords: School culture, Job performance, teachers, secondary schools, Sheema Municipality, Uganda*

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## 1. Introduction

School culture is one of the oldest, most complex and important concepts in education. In relation to school improvement, it has also been one of the most neglected. School culture considers the basic essence of an organization's culture to be, "the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken-for-granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment" (Bhengu & Mthembu, 2014). Culture describes the way the institution operates and acts as a screen or lens through which the world is viewed. In essence, it defines reality for those within a social organization, gives them support and identity and creates a framework for occupational learning (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016).

Each school has a different reality or mindset of school life, often captured in the simple phrase "the way we do things around here". It also has its own mindset in relation to what occurs in its external environment (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012). Culture is, thus, "situationally unique", as can be seen in the example of two ostensibly similar secondary schools, located in the same area and drawing from the

same population, with the same number of students attending them. These two schools view these students, their work and external constraints they face in very different ways. A school's culture is shaped by its history, context and the people in it (Badri, Amani-Saribaglou, Ahrari, Jahadi, & Mahmoudi, 2014).

Like the larger social culture, a school culture results from both conscious and unconscious perspectives, values, interactions, and practices, and it is heavily shaped by a school's particular institutional history (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and other staff members all contribute to their school's culture, just like other influences such as the community in which the school is located, the policies that govern how it operates, or the principles upon which the school was founded (Ali, Sharma, & Zaman, 2017).

Schein (1985) provides a more specific definition of organizational culture by emphasizing its elements as "pattern of shared values, norms, beliefs, artifacts, underlying assumptions and value systems among a group of people. According to Schein, the values reflect the philosophy, ideology, moral and ethical codes, goals, ideas and standards of the organization, including basic essentials that provide judgments regarding what is wrong and what is right. Organizations possess a cultural perspective that is centered on a system of values that define patterns and functions of the organization (Parsons, 1960). The key functions identified by Parsons as essential to the organization's cultural perspective and driven by its value system comprised of; goal achievement, change management, teamwork and agreement on values. Goal achievement is the manner in which the organization establishes goals and mobilizes resources to attain these goals. Change management relates to the way an organization can adapt to changes in goals and procedures while teamwork pertains the way members relate to each other and their commitment to the organization.

In this study, school culture meant the extent to which teachers manage changes in schools, extent to which goals are achieved, extent of coordinated teamwork, extent to which students' needs are satisfied and the extent of agreement on values like respect for one another, in different school settings. This is in conformity with Kaggwa (2008) who defines school culture as a set of cultural unique behavioural conduct that differentiates a school from other schools in the same locality.

Teachers' job performance mainly depends on the teacher characteristics such as knowledge base, sense of responsibility, and inquisitiveness; the student characteristics such as opportunity to learn and academic work; the teaching factors such as lesson structure, and communication; the learning aspects such as involvement

and success; and the classroom phenomena such as environment and climate, and organization and management. If the teachers take care of these factors, their performance can be enhanced to the optimum level (Rao & Kumar, 2004).

Proxies implemented by states and districts of Nigeria to determine teacher quality have been woefully inadequate. Teacher entrance and exit, examination scores, years of experience, advanced degrees, and teaching credentials are either not related to student achievement or ratings of teacher effectiveness (Robbins, 1993). Leigh and Mead (2005) clearly bring out the fact that the quality of teaching has come down gradually world over, the skills of teachers have come down due to outdated preparation on the part of the teacher and stagnant compensation schemes by the management of the educational institution.

This condition in the recent years for the teacher has led to very few growth opportunities and inadequate compensation structures. The condition is worse with disadvantaged students who require excellent teachers but have the least capability. Leigh and Mead (2006) in their suggestion for lifting performance of teachers, have emphasized the need for periodical performance appraisal just as it is in the corporate or business organization. Teachers need to be periodically evaluated and the compensation structure will have to be based on performance. An effective policy needs to be developed in order to modernize and enrich teacher quality for hiring, evaluating and compensating (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006).

Aacha (2010) describes performance of teachers as the teacher's ability to integrate experience, teaching methods, instructional materials, knowledge and skills in subject matter delivery to students both inside and outside the classroom.

On the other hand, Obilade (1999) states that teachers' job performance can be described as "the duties performed by a teacher at a particular period in the school system in achieving organizational goals. In this study, teachers' job performance meant the ability of teachers to perform their prescribed duties. Teachers' job performance was operationalized as scheming of work, lesson planning, involvement in extracurricular activities, involvement in discipline management, involvement in guidance and counseling, participation in staff meetings, lesson delivery/actual class teaching, maintenance of records of work and teachers' physical presence in school.

# 2. Literature Review

Bukhuni and Iravo (2015) carried out a study to establish the effect of school culture on employee performance in public secondary schools in Bungoma North sub-county, Kenya. The study included 36 head teachers and 140 teachers from 36 public secondary schools. The study findings revealed that employee performance was more likely to be enhanced in schools with established cultures. The study further revealed a significant direct relationship between school values like, employee collaborations and employee performance. Discrete indicators like beliefs, convictions, values, norms, philosophy, mission, vision, goals, assumptions and moral values also contribute to higher performance of a school (Deal & Peterson, 1999)

A positive and strong school culture motivates teachers, increases academic achievement by students, increases job satisfaction, commitment and cooperation among teachers, increases teachers' dedication to work (Lima, 2006). The six basic components of culture in schools with high achievement among teachers are; shared vision, traditions, collaboration, shared decision making, innovativeness and communication (Goldring, 2002). In a related study, Gruernet (2000) reveals that collaborative school culture is effective in building cooperation, confidence, purpose and team spirit, leading to creativity and productivity in a school. Higher performance of teachers and students in schools is basically attributed to effective and strong cultures whereas negative cultures lead to poor performance (Westhuizen, Mosoge, Swanepoel, & Coetsee, 2005). The existing culture in a school may either serve as a hindrance or boost towards achieving school results. According to Lomax (1996), there is little chance for school improvement unless the issue of school culture is directly addressed. The development of a strong school culture leads to higher performance of the institution through increased participation of teachers and other stakeholders in the school affairs (Morrish, 1996).

According to Edelstein (2012), factors that reflect the school's culture like goal achievement, shared ideology or mission, cohesion and collaboration among teachers, tend to increase job performance and effectiveness of teachers. Related studies by Clark and Mills (2005) reveal nine features of usually effective schools, in which school culture is mentioned first. According to Clark and Mills, an effective school is characterized by an orderly environment with interpersonal relationships, discipline, collaboration, consensus, participative approach to decision making and all these cultures enhance commitment of staff members so that they perform their duties with due diligence.

School culture formation makes all members of the school to get involved, making them able to identify and agree on the values, beliefs, ambitions, intentions and purposes of the school and then individually or in small groups develop key words to encapsulate these values that constitute the school culture (Newson, Scott, & Turk, 1993). According to Hopking et al (1994), effective schools exist within a climate of supportive culture. In a related study, Glasser (1995) asserts that cultural conditions like change management and goal achievement are necessary for the growth and expression of employee potential.

According to Deal and Kennedy (1983), school cultures can improve educational productivity. Culture provides an internal cohesion that makes it easy for teachers to teach, students to learn and for parents, administrators and the rest of the school community to contribute to instructional processes. School culture determines how the school needs to function to become effective. School culture impacts teachers' engagement by influencing the kind of attitude students demonstrate towards schooling and participation in school activities (Brady, 2008). Kruse and Louis (2009) further add that the culture of a school plays a significant role in fostering its outcomes, including teacher effectiveness.

Some studies have revealed that the relationship between many cultural attributes and high job performance has not been consistent over time (Sorenson, 2002). According to Burke (2008), changes in school culture are either positive or negative and these changes in culture affect every aspect of the school. Further studies concur with Burke since norms guide attitudes and behavior of members of a school and they act as strategies to bring about change and improve productivity of the school (Hoy & Miskel, 2008). Deal (1985) asserts that school reform policies are only successful when tied to school culture. Sarason (1996) further noted that if change is to improve the climate and outcomes of schooling for both students and teachers, then some features of the school culture need to be changed or else, the well-intentioned efforts get futile.

Ghanney, Antwi and Humu (2017) conducted a study in Ga south municipality, Ghana to investigate the effect of school culture on teachers' job performance in private and public basic schools. Ghanney, Antwi and Humu collected quantitative data from 46 teachers using census sampling. The study findings revealed that school culture was a good predictor of teacher job performance. The study further revealed that adaptability culture significantly contributed to teacher job performance whereas involvement culture that involves team orientation did not significantly contribute to teacher job performance.

Some scholars have revealed that establishment of a culture of professional learning communities is a good strategy for improving schools and helping students to learn at high levels. The professional learning communities help

teachers collaborate and build social relations to discuss their profession to enable them to perform their fundamental duty of getting committed to the learning of every student (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010). DuFour et al (2010) further explains that professional learning communities have a collaborative culture made of collaborative teams working interdependently to achieve common goals of impacting their classroom practices, hence better outcomes for learners, staff and the school as a whole.

Some studies on effective schools reveal that clarifying and reaffirming the goal of a school makes the school effective (Lezotte & Snyder, 2011). The clarity of the goals among members makes them to be more effective by establishing priorities and guiding decisions (Lickona & Davidson, 2005). The school goal helps members to create a compelling, attractive and realistic future of what they wish the school to become, hence the staff is able to drive the school to where it hopes to be when the goal is shared (Blanchard, 2007). School values as a constituent of school culture, are collective commitments that answer the question "how must we behave to create a school that will achieve our purpose?" (DuFour, et al, 2010). DuFour argues that when members understand the purpose of their school, know where it is moving to and pledge to act in certain ways to move it in the right path, they do not need prescriptive rules and regulations to guide their daily work. According to Fullan (2001a), creation of a school community with shared commitment increases its effectiveness.

MacNeil, Prater and Busch (2009) support the notion that schools with good cultures have highly motivated teachers who have greater success in terms of student performance and outcomes. In a related study, Omusonga, Kazadi and Indoshi (2008) revealed that there was a strong correlation between school culture and students' performance in French language as a result of teacher participation in French co-curricular activities such as observance of French days, music and drama festivals. Many teachers in unfavorable school cultures lack commitment to their social systems and this inhibits teacher collaboration, motivation, problem solving, community building and achievement.

According to Kamaroellah and Mubarak (2019), school culture has a significant influence on work satisfaction and motivation which then influence job performance. The best employee is really satisfied with his job and this employee will show his best performance (Ferris and Brymer, 1999, as cited in Kamaroellah and Mubarak, 2019). Nakanwagi (2016) conducted a study in Wakiso district to examine the influence of school culture on students' academic performance in private secondary schools. The study findings revealed that school culture in form of strategic

direction sets standards and helps to galvanize the efforts of all staff members towards a common goal. Owens (2004) adds that school culture informs teachers as to what it means to teach, what teaching methods are available and approved for use, what learners are like, what is possible or not. The school culture plays a significant role in defining for teachers, their commitment to task; it evokes the energy of teachers to perform their tasks; loyalty and commitment to the organization and its ideals.

Sergiovanni (1984) revealed that in successful schools, culture serves as a compass setting to steer people in a common direction, provides a set of norms that define what people should accomplish using suitable techniques, provides source of meaning and significance for teachers, school heads, learners and others as they work. Schools with strong cultures have a "vision" of excellence while those with weak cultures lack understanding, determination and drive to accomplish assignments (Sergiovanni, 1984). Cheng (1993) carried out a study in Hong Kong to observe the cross-sectional relationship between school culture and organizational characteristics. The study findings revealed that schools with strong cultures are effective, characterized by higher teacher job commitment, higher teacher morale, all which culminate into higher teacher job performance. Schools with weak and ineffective cultures on the other hand, had low teacher job commitment, low teacher morale and low job performance.

# 3. Methodology

## 3.1 Research Design

The study used a cross-sectional survey design. This study design was used because it typically involves collection of data at one point over a short period of time to provide a "snapshot" of the outcome and characteristics associated with the population (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013).

## 3.2 Participants

Census strategy was used to select the schools and teachers where all full-time teachers found at their stations participated in the study. 65.5% were males and 34.5% were females. 66.1% had bachelor's degree holders, 19.9% were diploma holders, 8.4% had post graduate diplomas and 5.6% had master's degrees. 38% were aged between 30 and 39, 28.4% aged between 40 and 49, 24.8% were aged 30 and below and those above 50 were 8.8%. Majority of the respondents (48.6%) had spent at least six years in the teaching service while only 27.7% had spent 4 to 6 years, 17.3% had spent 1 to 3 years, and the rest less than a year.

## 3.3 Data Collection Tools

Self –administered questionnaires were used to collect data from study participants. With perceived school culture, a thirty-item Organizational Culture Assessment Questionnaire (OCAQ) with a validity of 0.96 and reliability of 0.89 adapted from Sashkin and Rosenbach (2013) was employed. This was based on a five-point Likert scale. With teachers' job performance, a sixteen-item Teachers' Job Performance Scale (TJPS) with a validity of 0.849 and reliability of 0.87 adapted from Kigenyi & Kakuru (2016) was used. This was also based on a five-point Likert scale.

## 3.4 Reliability and Validity

Content validity was established through inter-judgement. Four judges rated the items on a two-point scale of Relevant(R) and Not Relevant (NR). The content validity index was calculated by summing up the items considered relevant divided by the total number of items in the questionnaire. Organizational Culture Assessment Questionnaire (OCAQ) had a validity of 0.96 and Teachers' Job Performance Scale (TJPS) had a validity of 0.849 were used, which were all above 0.70 making the scale valid.

The reliabilities of the instruments were determined using the Cronbach's Alpha provided by SPSS. Internal consistency of the instruments was determined by piloting the questionnaire to 10% of the study population (Connelly, 2008) for those who will not be part of the actual study. The questionnaire was administered twice to the same population and the two scores were correlated using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. A Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.89 was obtained for Organizational Culture Assessment Questionnaire (OCAQ) and 0.87 was obtained for Teachers' Job Performance Scale (TJPS).

## 3.5 Data Collection Procedure

An approval was sought from Mbarara University of Science and Technology Research Ethics Committee (MUST-REC). Permission was sought from Municipal Inspector of Schools and the head teachers of the respective government aided secondary schools. Consent was then sought from the respondents and thereafter administered questionnaires. Data from the structured questionnaire was coded by assigning values to responses and entered into SPSS version 20.0. Percentages were employed to describe the socio-demographic data of teachers. Descriptive analysis was used to generate means for objective one and two. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the association between perceived school culture and teachers' job performance.

## 4. Results and Discussion

**Research question 1: What is the perceived school culture in government aided secondary schools in Sheema Municipality?**

Mean scores in reported school culture ranged between 2.70 and 4.80 with a mean of 3.98 (SD = .42). The largest percentage of teachers (77.4%) reported strong school culture and 22.6% reported moderate levels. No significant mean differences in school culture were found among teachers of different; age groups ($F = .113$, $p = .953$), education level ($F = .200$, $p = .896$), teaching experience ($F = 1.175$, $p = .320$), and gender ($t = .391$, $p = .076$).

**Research question 2: What is the level of teachers' job performance in government aided secondary schools in Sheema Municipality?**

Mean scores in reported teachers' job performance ranged between 2.50 and 5.00 with a mean of 4.17 (SD = .44). Majority of teachers (91.2%) reported high level of job performance and 8.8% reported moderate levels of job performance. In terms of demographic variations (see table 1), teachers' job performance was independent of age ($F = .502$, $p = .68$), gender ($t = .117$, $p = .140$), and time spent in service ($F = .746$, $p = .525$). However, statistically significant differences were found between teachers of different academic qualifications ($F = 7.204$, $p = .000$). Teachers with post graduate diplomas and master's degrees reported higher performance levels than all other groups.

**H₀ Hypothesis: There is no statistically significant relationship between perceived school culture and teachers' job performance in government aided secondary schools in Sheema Municipality**

Pearson Correlation Coefficient between perceived school culture and teachers job performance was significant ($r = .29$, $p < .01$). There was a weak positive correlation between perceived school culture and teachers' job performance (see table below). School culture explained only 8.4% of the variance in teachers' job performance ($R^2 = .084$). The null hypothesis which states that *"There is no statistically significant relationship between perceived school culture and teachers' job performance in government aided secondary schools in Sheema Municipality"* was therefore rejected.

**Pearson Correlation Coefficient between perceived school culture and teachers' job performance**

| | | Perceived school Culture | Teachers' Job Performance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Perceived School Culture | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .290** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 221 | 213 |
| Teachers' Job Performance | Pearson Correlation | .290** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 213 | 239 |

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Discussions

The study findings showed that strong cultures exist among government aided secondary schools in Sheema municipality especially coordinated teamwork and satisfaction of students' needs. The findings further reveal that there are high levels of job performance among teachers in government aided secondary schools in Sheema municipality. The study findings revealed that a significant relationship exists between school culture and teachers' job performance. The findings agree with a study conducted by Bukhuni and Iravo (2015) who conducted a study in Bungoma North sub-county, Kenya to establish the effect of school culture on employee performance in public secondary schools. Their findings revealed high levels of job performance in schools with strong and established cultures. It further revealed that there was a direct relationship between school culture attributes like teacher collaboration and job performance.

Cheng (1993) conducted a study in Hong Kong to examine the cross-sectional relationship between school culture and organizational characteristics, including job performance. The findings revealed that schools with strong cultures were characterized by high levels of job commitment, teacher morale and job performance. It was further revealed that schools with weak cultures had low levels of job commitment, morale and job performance. Cheng's findings especially on the relationship between school culture and job performance are in consonance with the findings of the present study that revealed a positive significant relationship between perceived school culture and teachers' job performance.

Ghanney, et al (2017) conducted a study in Ga south municipality, Ghana, to investigate the effect of school culture on teachers' job performance in private and public secondary schools. Ghanney, et al collected quantitative data from 46 teachers using census. The findings revealed that some dimensions of school culture like change management contributed to teacher job performance. This agrees with findings of the present study it comprised of

dimensions of school culture like change management and also revealed a significant relationship between school culture and teachers' job performance. However, in the same study, Ghanney, et al (2017) revealed that teamwork did not significantly contribute to teachers' job performance thus disagreeing with the findings of this study.

The findings further agree with Edelstein (2012) who asserted that factors that reflect the school's culture like goal achievement, shared mission cohesion and collaboration among teachers, tend to increase job performance. The findings also agree with Kamaroellah and Mubarak (2019) whose study revealed that school culture has a significant influence on work satisfaction and motivation which then influence job performance.

The major study limitation was that the study only focused on a quantitative research approach and this narrowed the researcher's understanding of the relationship between school culture and teachers' job performance. The study dwelt on only teachers and therefore, generalizing the results to other staff should be done with caution. The study was carried out in only government aided secondary schools and the results may not easily be generalized for private secondary schools.

The research findings will assist school head teachers to uphold strong and good cultures, abandon weak and poor cultures and strengthen weak cultures where necessary and possible to boost job performance among teachers for increased teacher efficiency and effectiveness. The study findings will help teachers to understand the vitality of a school culture and work towards maintaining and strengthening meaningful school cultures. For policy makers, the understanding of school culture may be of paramount importance in the education management process and the findings may help them to come up with better strategic policies that can promote positive school culture that may improve teachers' job performance.

The aim of the study was to explore the relationship between perceived school culture and teachers' job performance in government aided secondary schools in Sheema municipality. The study findings revealed that school culture has a positive significant relationship with teachers' job performance, implying that strong cultures promote better performance of jobs by teachers and weak cultures negatively affect teachers' job performance levels.

# 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

## 5.1 Conclusion

The study findings showed that strong cultures exist among government aided secondary schools in Sheema municipality especially coordinated teamwork and satisfaction of students' needs.

The findings further reveal that there are high levels of job performance among teachers in government aided secondary schools in Sheema municipality and this differs from Nsubuga (2008) and the Sheema Municipality Statistical Abstract (2019).

School culture significantly relates to teachers' job performance, implying that strong cultures promote better performance of jobs by teachers and weak cultures negatively affect teachers' job performance levels.

## 5.2 Recommendations

1. School administrators, Board of Governors and other stake holders should put in place strategies to maintain high job performance among teachers through practices like proper definition of goals and school mission and vision, delegation, use of good human resource management practices and motivation among others.

2. The Ministry of Education and Sports should come up with clear training programs for teachers so that they are taught about the vitality of upholding strong cultures in their schools in a bid to support higher job performance.

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