

**FACTORS AFFECTING ADOPTION OF PERFORMANCE CONTRACTING
INITIATIVE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF THARAKA SOUTH
DISTRICT, THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Drastic and fundamental changes are increasingly occurring in the environment in which organizations operate. An obvious manifestation of the responses towards this turbulent environment is the introduction of performance contracting as part of the broader public sector reforms aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness in the management of the services. The main purpose of this study was to determine factors affecting adoption of performance contract initiative among public secondary schools in Tharaka South District.

The study adopted a descriptive research survey design in which qualitative and quantitative data were collected. The target population for this study was 12 head teachers, 36 HODs and 124 class teachers. A pilot study was conducted in Tharaka North District using 27 subjects. The data from the questionnaires were cleaned, coded and entered into the computer for analysis using Software package for Social Sciences version 17 for windows and descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. Specifically, frequencies, percentages, and means were used for quantitative data while qualitative data were discussed thematically. The results are presented in frequency tables. The study established that though most teachers acknowledge the importance of performance in bringing about significant improvements in service delivery and operations as well as increased transparency in operations and resource utilization, most of them lack adequate knowledge on aspects of performance contracting to enable them make informed decisions on whether to adopt or reject performance contracts. The main social factors found to be affecting the adoption of performance contracts among the teachers included: harsh working conditions, lack of proper understanding of pros and cons of performance contracting, poor relationship between some teachers and the administration, fear of change and lack of sensitization of the teachers by the government. The main political factors found to be affecting the adoption of performance contracts among the teachers included: inequitable distribution of resources to schools, lack of political goodwill and sabotage by the teachers' union. The main economic factors found to be affecting the adoption of performance contracts among the teachers included: Poor remuneration, inadequate teaching personnel for effective delivery and lack of a well thought-out reward system for the best performers by the government. This study recommends that; the government should allocate adequate resources to all schools to enable students compete favourably and improve in performance which most teachers think is a key indicator to effective service delivery and a component of performance contracting in the education sector, the government should develop a good scheme of service and better remuneration to entice teachers to adopt performance contract, the government should develop sound policy on performance contract based on staffing, learning resources, learning environment and students' entry behavior, the government should employ more teachers to enhance effective curriculum delivery in all schools. Teachers and other stakeholders should be educated on the importance of performance based management to clear misunderstandings and misconceptions that are currently held regarding performance contracts in the education sector. Further research could be replicated in other districts in order to establish any consistencies or variations in the findings. Also, research may be conducted to establish the impact of management practices on teachers or support staff job satisfaction in public secondary schools.