

The relationship between punctuality and improved academic performance in public schools

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**Abstract:** This research paper is based on a survey carried out in public schools under the northern geographical regions of Tshwane in South Africa. The research work was conducted in order to measure the perception of teachers working in public schools about the relationship between punctuality at school and improved academic performance among young learners attending public schools. The study was conducted by gathering data from 147 teachers working in public schools. About 70% of teachers who took part in the survey indicated that there was a significant association between punctuality and improved academic performance among learners attending public schools.

**Keywords:** Punctuality, Academic performance, Perception, Learners in public schools

**Introduction and background to study**

This research paper is based on a survey carried out in public schools under the northern geographical regions of Tshwane in South Africa. The research work was conducted in order to measure the perception of teachers working in public schools about the relationship between punctuality at school and improved academic performance among young learners attending public schools. The study was conducted by gathering data from 147 teachers working in public schools. The study conducted in Tshwane North District public schools by Worku (2022) has found that public schools with low pass rates were characterised by lack of punctuality at school, absenteeism, and dysfunctional school governing boards, strike actions taken by trade unions, and ill-equipped libraries and laboratories. The study conducted by Baruth and Mokoena (2016) has shown that the quality of teaching and learning and academic performance are undermined due to violence and indiscipline in South African public schools and strike actions taken by trade unions. The authors have shown that learners are made to lose valuable learning opportunities due to strike actions taken by trade union. The study conducted by Mouton, Louw and Strydom (2013) has shown the need for curriculum review in South African public schools. The authors have found that there is a dire need for ensuring satisfactory alignment between the needs of South African industry and business and the educational curriculum used for teaching learners in South African schools.

Bokana and Tewari (2014) have identified major obstacles to successful teaching and learning in South African universities. Examples of such obstacles are poor background in mathematics, science and English. The authors have argued that it is necessary to ensure quality learning and teaching at primary and high school level in order for undergraduate level students to master vocational, artisan and technical skills Badat and Sayed (2014) have argued that academic quality and integrity have fallen since the mid-1990s due to lack of discipline, disregard for good corporate governance, dysfunctional school governing boards, and lack of relevance between the curriculum used for training learners and requirements of potential employers in the job market.

Spaull (2019) has shown that poorly resourced public schools lag behind adequately resourced public and private schools significantly in terms of pass rates. The key differential factors are the quality of teachers, the ability to pay market-related salaries and employee benefits, the quality of school level leadership, and the ability of principals to ensure adequate work ethics and discipline at the workplace. The study conducted by Mestry (2017) has shown that it is necessary to support school principals adequately so that they can manage public schools effectively. The

author has shown that inadequate support to principals results in inability to ensure good academic leadership and satisfactory academic performance in public schools.

**Methods and materials**

The design of study was cross-sectional and descriptive. Data was collected from 147 teachers working in public schools located in the northern geographical region of Tshwane in South Africa by using a self-administered questionnaire. The research was conducted by employing quantitative techniques that are statistical in nature. The key purpose of study was to explore the relationship between punctuality at work and satisfactory academic performance by learners going to public schools.

**Results of study**

Table 1 displays the general profile of teachers who participated in the research. The table shows that about 70% of teachers who took part in the survey indicated that there was a significant association between punctuality and improved academic performance among learners attending public schools. The percentage of male teachers was 60%. About 24% of teachers were aged between 21 and 30 years. About 31% of teachers were aged between 31 and 40 years. About 22% of teachers were aged between 41 and 50 years. About 22% of teachers were aged 51 years or more. Only one teacher had a Doctoral degree. The percentage of teachers who had Bachelor’s degrees was 47%. The percentage of teachers who had Diplomas was 30%. The percentage of teachers who had Master’s degrees was 7%. The percentage of teachers who had Honours degrees was 10%. The percentage of teachers who possessed post-matric certificates was 6%.

The percentage of teachers who had served for 5 years or less at the time of study was 51%. The percentage of teachers who had served for 6 to 10 years was 23%. The percentage of teachers who had served for 11 to 15 years was 12%. The percentage of teachers who had served for 16 to 20 years was 7%. The percentage of teachers who had served for 21 or more years was 7%.

**Table 1: Profile of teachers**

Personal characteristics of teachers	Percentage
Belief that punctuality at school is essential for ensuring academic performance	Yes: 70.07% No: 29.93%
Gender of teacher	Male: 59.86% Female: 40.14%
Age category of teacher	51 years or more: 21.09% 41 to 50 years: 21.09% 31 to 40 years: 30.61% 21 to 30 years: 24.49%
Academic qualification of teacher	Doctoral degree: 0.68% Master’s degree: 6.80% Honours degree: 9.52% Bachelor’s degree: 46.94% Diploma: 29.25% Post-matric certificate: 6.12% Grade 12 certificate: 0.68%
Length of service as a public school teacher	21 or more years: 6.80% 16 to 20 years: 6.80% 11 to 15 years: 12.24% 6 to 10 years: 23.13% 5 years or less: 51.02%

Table 2 displays percentages for attributes such as taking pride in teaching. About 91% of teachers indicated that they took pride in public school teaching. About 92% of teachers indicated that they felt appreciated and adored as a teacher by members of the community. About 88% of teachers indicated that they were provided with the

resources and teaching materials they needed in their schools. About 10% of teachers indicated that they experienced work-related stress at the workplace.

**Table 2: Perception about working conditions and professional pride**

Attribute	Percentage
Taking pride in the teacher’s profession	Yes: 91% No: 9%
Feeling appreciated and adored for work done as a teacher	Yes: 92% No: 8%
Feeling adored for work done as an educator	Yes: 92% No: 8%
Availability of adequate resources for teaching learners properly in classrooms	Yes: 88% No: 12%
Experience of work-related stress at school	Yes: 10% No: 90%
Commitment to upholding educational values and principles at the workplace	Yes: 90% No: 10%
Perception about the competency of school principals	Yes: 52% No: 48%

Table 3 presents percentages for perceived qualities of school level leadership from line function managers from the point of view of teachers. About 73% of teachers had the perception that their line function managers were competent enough as leaders. About 44% of teachers had the perception that their line function managers were considerate enough to learners and teachers alike. About 56% of teachers had the perception that their line function managers were good team players. About 91% of teachers had the perception that their line function managers had adequate personal integrity. About 92% of teachers had the perception that their line function managers took appropriate disciplinary action against underperforming teachers. About 88% of teachers had the perception that line function managers took decisions in the best interest of learners. About 52% of teachers had the perception that line function managers appreciated helpful suggestions from their subordinates.

**Table 3: Assessment of perception on the quality of school level leadership**

Perception held on the quality of school level leadership	Percentage
Line function managers are competent enough as leaders	Yes: 73% No: 27%
Line function managers are considerate enough to learners and teachers alike	Yes: 44% No: 56%
Line function managers are good team players	Yes: 56% No: 44%
Line function managers have adequate personal integrity	Yes: 91% No: 9%
Line function managers take appropriate disciplinary action against underperforming teachers	Yes: 92% No: 8%
Line function managers take decisions in the best interest of learners	Yes: 88% No: 12%
Line function managers appreciate helpful suggestions from their subordinates	Yes: 52% No: 48%

Table 4 assesses perceptions held by teachers about the level of commitment their line function managers show to their subordinates. About 70% of teachers had the perception that their line function managers were willing to accept valuable suggestions from their fellow colleagues. About 43% of teachers had the perception that their line function managers were willing to accept valuable suggestions from their subordinates. About 54% of teachers had the perception that their line function managers promoted awareness before taking disciplinary action against

underperforming teachers. About 91% of teachers had the perception that their line function managers were willing to protect whistle-blowers at all times. About 90% of teachers had the perception that their line function managers were trustworthy enough in the eyes of teachers who report to them. About 90% of teachers had the perception that their line function managers showed enough empathy to their subordinates and fellow colleagues. About 52% of teachers had the perception that their line function managers encouraged their subordinates to seek support from their fellow colleagues and other Departments.

**Table 4: Assessment of perceived commitment to work**

Perception held on commitment to work	Percentage
Line function managers are willing to accept valuable suggestions from their subordinates	Yes: 43% No: 57%
Line function managers are willing to accept valuable suggestions from their fellow colleagues	Yes: 70% No: 30%
Line function managers promote awareness before taking disciplinary action against underperforming teachers	Yes: 54% No: 46%
Line function managers are willing to protect whistle-blowers at all times	Yes: 91% No: 9%
Line function managers are trustworthy enough in the eyes of teachers who report to them	Yes: 90% No: 10%
Line function managers show enough empathy to their subordinates and fellow colleagues	Yes: 90% No: 10%
Line function managers encourage their subordinates to seek support from their fellow colleagues and other Departments	Yes: 52% No: 48%

Table 5 shows percentages on the extent to which line function managers are committed to work-related issues. About 73% of line function managers made the effort to discuss work-related issues with their subordinates. About 66% of line function managers were committed enough to enforce relevant regulations and guidelines with no fear or favour at all times. About 69% of line function managers made the effort to personally discuss operational needs and requirements with their subordinates. About 48% of line function managers made the effort to personally discuss career path growth opportunities with their subordinates. About 76% of line function managers made the effort to personally discuss issues related to training needs with their subordinates. About 85% of line function managers actively supported their subordinates to improve their teaching skills. About 55% of line function managers actively supported their subordinates to go the extra mile in meeting the learning needs of their learners.

**Table 5: Perceived commitment of line function managers to work related issues**

Perception held about the commitment of line function managers to work related issues	Percentage
Line function managers make the effort to discuss work-related issues with their subordinates	Yes: 73% No: 27%
Line function managers are committed enough to enforce relevant regulations and guidelines with no fear or favour at all times	Yes: 66% No: 34%
Line function managers make the effort to personally discuss operational needs and requirements with their subordinates	Yes: 69% No: 31%
Line function managers make the effort to personally discuss career path growth opportunities with their subordinates	Yes: 48% No: 52%
Line function managers make the effort to personally discuss issues related to training needs with their subordinates	Yes: 76% No: 24%
Line function managers actively support their subordinates to improve their teaching skills	Yes: 85% No: 15%
Line function managers actively support their subordinates to go the extra mile in meeting the learning needs of their learners	Yes: 55% No: 45%

## Discussion of results

The main finding of study is that about 70% of teachers who took part in the survey indicated that there was a significant association between punctuality and improved academic performance among learners attending public schools. About 91% of teachers took pride in the teachers' profession. About 92% of teachers indicated that they felt appreciated and adored as a teacher by members of the community. About 88% of teachers indicated that they were provided with the resources and teaching materials they needed in their schools. About 10% of teachers indicated that they experienced work-related stress at the workplace.

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