

## Reward Policy as Distributive Justice: The Case of Primary School Teachers in Uganda

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### Abstract

*This study focused on the effect of reward policy on distributive justice. Primary school teachers from 2009 expected to be rewarded with just salaries. When these were not forthcoming, teachers went on strike between 2009 and 2015. The analysis revealed that reward policy and teachers' union leadership ( $r(246) = .290, p < 0.01$ ) were closely associated; that teachers' union leadership advocated distributive justice ( $r(246) = .464, p < 0.01$ ). Using a hypothetical model, the total causal effect of reward policy on distributive justice was found to be 70%. Although salaries were raised in the 2013/2014 financial year, teachers were not satisfied. They continued demanding increment of 10% in the 2015/2016 financial year. This study therefore recommends that to supplement a reward policy that promotes distributive justice, the government should also adopt non-financial rewards. This is beneficial because when simulation was applied, it emerged that non-financial rewards would increase teachers' perception of distributive justice by 17%.*

Key words: **Reward Policy, Distributive Justice, Union Leadership, Non-Financial Rewards**

### Introduction

The centerpiece of the current study was to analyze the effect of reward policy on distributive justice with particular reference to primary school teachers in Uganda. The study was premised on the fact that, for quite some time, government had made changes in public servants' reward policies, including teachers, and consequently implemented salary increments on several occasions. However, teachers clamored for a fair reward so much that, on a number of occasions, they had to resort to industrial action.

### Concept of reward policy

Reward policy can be defined as '*all forms of financial returns and tangible services and benefits employees receive*' (Milkovich & Newman, 2004, p. 3). This definition implies that there are financial and non-financial rewards which employees expect. The financial rewards as provided for in the government policy include: base pay, allowances, gratuity, and performance-related pay. The non-financial rewards include: promotion, gifts, certificates of recognition and other benefits in kind. In every sector, rewards are based on the policies that owners put in place with the help of government.

A reward policy covers the whole spectrum of how workers are rewarded in accordance with their value in the organization. It is about both financial and non-financial rewards and embraces the strategies, policies, structures and processes used to develop and maintain reward systems (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2014). The implication here is that an employee reward policy is much broader than merely paying employees their wages. It involves strategies, procedures, structures and processes.

## Reward Policies for Primary School Teachers in East Africa

Uganda is a member of the East African Community (EAC). So it is prudent to compare the reward policies and the resultant pay for primary school teachers in the five countries of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. This suggests the prevalence of differences in policy and pay. The comparison is given in Table 1 below:

**Table 1: Average salaries for primary school teachers in 2013**

	Country	Number of primary school teachers	Monthly salary	Pay in US dollars
1	Burundi	36,557	BIF 65,058	\$42
2	Kenya	146,205	Ksh 26,499	\$302
3	Rwanda	40,299	Frw 98,000	\$142
4	Tanzania	175,449	Tsh 196,500	\$119
5	Uganda	129,651	UGX 250,000	\$95

Source: Internet

From the above table it is noted that Kenyan primary school teachers earned the highest salary (\$302) in the region. Rwanda is second, Tanzania third, Uganda fourth and Burundi last. Consequently, Ugandan primary school teachers tended to go to Kenya and Rwanda where the pay of was better than Uganda.

Although there were differences in the reward policies in the region, the salaries for primary school teachers had not been good enough. This assertion was based on the fact that teachers in Uganda, Kenya and Burundi were on strike in last several years (Biryabarema, 2013; Nikiza & Stecher, 2013; Chao, 2013). In some countries, the terms and conditions for primary school teachers had changed.

The purpose of a reward policy was to pay employees fairly, equitably and consistently in line with each employee's contribution to the organization's overall objectives. Fairness and equity as far as employment is concerned could be achieved by paying employees consistently according to their competence and contribution (Armstrong & Murlis, 2001).

### Trends in Primary School Teachers' Reward Policy

#### *Phase I: Reward Policy during Missionary Education 1800s up to 1962*

Primary schools were introduced in Uganda by Anglican and Catholic missionaries towards the end of the 19th century. Primary school teachers were paid about East African Shs70 per month in the 1950s. This was a good pay at the time because the cost of living was different then. In addition to that, there were allowances paid in recognition of special responsibilities. The policy further provided that "a teacher earning less than East African Shs70 per month would have one child studying free in a school where parents were employed" (*Native Anglican Church*, 1950, p.5). Primary education in Uganda was in the hands of missionaries for more than 70 years.

### *Phase II: Reward Policy for Primary School Teachers from 1963 to 1971*

Uganda attained independence from the British in 1962. The following year, 1963, the government set up the Ugandan Education Commission chaired by Professor Castle to make proposals for the new education policy. This commission drew members from several countries: United Kingdom, United States of America, India, Nigeria, Uganda and agencies especially UNESCO. This commission was set up following the World Bank report on manpower requirements in the country (*Uganda Government, 1963*).

The reward policy included free accommodation. The pupils used to help teachers carry out home-related activities like fetching firewood, water and growing food. During this period, that is the 1960s and 1970s, children paid fees at primary and secondary school levels but studied free when they joined University. Similarly, teachers received both financial and non-financial rewards.

### *Phase III: Reward Policy between 1971 and 1997*

The change in the reward policy came in the 1970s. In 1971, General Idi Amin Dada usurped power in Uganda. A year later he declared the economic war. As a result, the Ugandan economy plummeted tremendously. As a result, the government was not able to pay teachers well. Teachers could no longer meet the cost of living.

Given the financial challenges primary schools faced, the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) took up the role of raising funds to pay teachers some allowances. The PTAs were initially set up in 1969 as Welfare School Associations (Mamdani, 1987). PTAs took on the role of raising funds for schools because the Economic War declared in 1972 made school financially incapacitated. The reward policy of the 1970s allowed government primary schools to raise money from parents. It became regular for schools to ask parents to make financial contributions towards school activities. The funds parents contributed would enable schools to meet the financial needs of a school. This included paying teachers' allowances. This situation obtained until 1997 when the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policy was introduced in the country (UBOS, 2010, p.55).

### *Phase IV: Reward Policy after the Introduction of UPE*

When UPE was introduced in Uganda in 1997, the pupils' enrolment grew from 3.1 million in the previous year (1996) to 5.3 million in that year. The UPE policy banned head teachers from levying any form of fees. Government seemed to suggest that it was able to pay salaries and that the reward given was to be enough to meet teachers' basic needs (Government of Uganda, 2008).

### *Phase V: Single Salary Spine Reward Policy*

In 2002 a Single Salary Spine Reward Policy was introduced and approved by government in 2006. It was deemed that this policy, which in a sense was a consolidated reward, would enable the civil servants to meet the cost of living. In the aftermath, that is 2008 and 2009, primary school teachers realized that the single reward policy was not good enough. For that reason, beginning with 2009, the teachers under the leadership of their Uganda National Teachers

Union (UNATU), intensified their demands to government for salary increment. From 2010 to 2015 there were teachers' strikes. In all these years, teachers demanded: (a) Fairness in reward; (b) Justice, and (c) a living wage. The factors that lead to the paucity of the reward were high inflation (Birungi, 2012) and unpredictable cost of living.

Uganda's public service reward policy contains scales and notches. This implies that there is an in-built annual increment, and that employees of different qualifications and levels of responsibility fall in different scales and notches. The above reward policy advocates a progressive reward system. Initially the progressive reward system was intended to encourage primary school teachers to embark on staff development programs. Teachers at Grade I were expected to upgrade to Grade II, and thereafter to Grade III. The pay for teachers with Grade III qualification was higher compared to those with lower grades of I and II. This progressive salary scale system had nothing to do with responsibility or performance. It is right to argue that teachers' reward in Uganda for a long time has not been performance-based. Rather it is qualification, seniority, and promotion to headteachership or deputy headteachership which influence the teachers' salary scale.

### **Justification of the Study**

The reward policy has always permitted the pay for teachers in Uganda to be revised upward during the general salary increments of civil servants. It is assumed that reward policy changes ensure distributive justice and creates a work environment that is congenial to employees. In spite of the above intention, primary school teachers in Uganda have not been happy with the reward policy. This is because the increments had been outpaced by the cost of living. In 2002, the Uganda Public Service Pay Reform Strategy was adopted by Public Service and was approved by Cabinet in 2006. This strategy was aimed at removing inequality in wages for similar graded jobs (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2013: 96-98). As if to make matters worse the motivation allowances they used to get at their schools were banned with the introduction of UPE in 1997. All these were interpreted as injustice by teachers.

The dissatisfaction of teachers is evidenced by the following instances:

- (a) In March, 2010, the primary school teachers in Masaka, western Uganda went on strike over non-payment. Similarly, on 23 June 2010 primary teachers in Gulu town in northern Uganda went on strike because they had not been paid for several months (Kafeero, 2013).
- (b) In 2011 Ugandan teachers declared strikes over salary increment. Teachers wanted a 50 per cent pay rise. On 20 July and 30 August, the teachers argued they wanted a living wage (Walukamba, 2011).
- (c) In February 2012, the primary school teachers demanded a living wage. In the same year UNATU announced a two-day strike over poor payment (Sentongo, 2012).
- (d) In September 2013 primary school teachers demanded a 20 per cent pay rise and when government failed to yield to their demands, they went on strike (Biryabarema, 2013). At the same time, the Secretary General of UNATU contended that the Uganda primary school teachers were the worst paid in East Africa because the average pay was UGX 250,000 or US\$97.16 per month.

- (e) In 2014 primary school teachers in Rakai and Kampala complained about delayed salary payment for the months of March, April and May.
- (f) Some teachers have been taking long without accessing the payroll, yet they work fulltime. This implies that they work and do not earn.

The teachers' union leaders, surmised that it was degrading for the government to increase salary of teachers in 2014 -2015 financial year by a mere UGX 30,000, or \$10 at that time, disregarding the exorbitant cost of living (Nakajubi, 2014). The UNATU leaders warned that the small pay rise may harm the teachers' morale and, consequently, Ugandan children would suffer to a deliberate academic catastrophe because they would not have qualified teachers. The salary increments, like the 15 per cent was far below the 30 per cent inflation situation. The primary school teachers concluded that there was no clear distributive injustice.

Besides the demands for pay rise and the concomitant strikes, some teachers left Ugandan primary schools and went to teach in Rwanda and Kenya where the pay was higher. Others stayed in the schools but reduced their commitment to professional responsibilities.

### **Objectives of the study**

In order to determine the effect of reward policy on distributive justice, this study aimed: (i) to assess the effect of UNATU leadership on reward policy; (ii) to analyze the effect of UNATU leadership on distributive justice; and (iii) to assess the effect of reward policy on distributive justice for teachers.

### **Literature Review**

This section of literature review examines the key variables of the study. These are: employee reward, distributive justice and UNATU leadership. The relationship between these variables is that when UPE was introduced in 1997, charging of any form of fees was prohibited (Government of Uganda 2008). It implied that Uganda was ready to implement a policy of providing free elementary education to its citizens. The policy of providing free education is supported by some authors (Anderson, 2013; Herman, 2014). In contrast, there are others (Leon, 2014; Statesman, 2014) who are opposed to this policy. They argue that parents should fund the education of their children.

When the UPE policy was adopted in Uganda, school leadership in primary schools lost the say about remuneration for teachers. So the leadership of UNATU took up the role of mobilizing teachers to demand for fair pay and pressurize government to respond to those demands. The UNATU leadership based their demands on justice.

## **Policies on Financial and Non-Financial Rewards for Teachers**

A lot of literature has been written about reward management. Reward policy refers to both financial and non-financial benefits (Armstrong, 2009). In the public sector reward policy has involved periodic pay increments (Chieppo, 2012). There are policy provisions which emphasize financial rewards only for teachers (McCaig, 2013; Dolan et al., 2012). There is an observation that schools should have reward policies that provide bonuses to schools whose students perform well on standardized examinations (Palmer, 2003). In contrast, other educationists (Sammer, 2011; Anderson, 2012; Douglas, 2012; Gove, 2013) prefer policies that accord equal emphasis to non-financial rewards. These writers argued that non-financial rewards were cheaper than bonuses. The UNATU leadership supports the policy that provides financial rewards mainly. From this observation, the first hypothesis was derived as given below:

*H10* There is no significant relationship between UNATU leadership and reward policy

*H1A* There is a significant relationship between UNATU leadership and reward policy

### ***Leadership***

Leadership has been defined in as many ways as there have been people to define it. For example, Rauch and Behling (1984:46) and Yukl (2006) defined leadership in terms of a “process of influencing the activities of an organized group towards a goal achievement” (p. 9). Richards and Engle (1986) described leadership as “articulating vision, embodying values, and creating the environment within which things can be accomplished” (p. 206). The latter definition by Richards and Engle (1986) has resonance with UNATU leadership. From the definitions above, it can be concluded that leadership has four major elements: (i) ability to have influence on others; (ii) individual or collective efforts; (iii) actions; and (iv) achievement of objectives. These elements are expected of all organizations including employee organizations like UNATU.

Leadership in all categories of organizations is important for the following reasons: (i) to interpret the meaning of issues. (ii) to create agreement about objectives, priorities and strategies; (iii) to build task commitment and optimism; (iv) to build mutual trust and co-operation; (v) to strengthen collective identity; (vi) to organize and co-ordinate activities; (vii) to encourage and facilitate collective learning; (viii) to obtain necessary resources and support; (ix) to develop and empower people; and (x) to promote justice and morality. Yukl (2006) described the above ten objectives of leadership as the essence of leadership. The last one (x) links directly with the focus of the current study.

Within the educational setting, Coleman (1994) has pointed out that three conditions show that leadership really exists, namely: (a) availability of common goals; (b) existence of different roles including that of a leader; and (c) existence of systems and structures that allow the co-ordination of efforts to achieve the common goals. To have these conditions in place requires focus on both the people and the tasks to be achieved.

As far as Ugandan primary school teachers were concerned, their leadership was vested in UNATU. Leadership in UNATU is not limited to the General Secretary; it is also assumed by or delegated to others (Coleman, 1994). Following Coleman’s (1994) views, the current study adopts the broad view of leadership, that is, in addition to UNATU leaders, there are

other people who exercise leadership of teachers in the districts. This is justified because there are many teachers who need to be mobilized and sensitized. This implied that there was shared leadership. This type of leadership had been described in a variety of ways. Bolden (2011) likened it to distributed leadership. On the other hand, Yukl (1989), Pearce and Sims (2001), Pearce and Conger (2003), Carson *et al* (2007), Bergman *et al.* (2012) have all addressed the concept of shared leadership and its main characteristics. From the above discussion, the second hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2O Leadership of teachers' union has no significant effect on distributive justice

H2A Leadership of teachers' union has a significant effect on distributive justice

### ***Distributive Justice***

Justice is concerned with distribution of rewards, privileges and responsibilities (Rawls, 1999). This calls for what has been described as fairness, desert (that which is deserved), and entitlements (Sen, 2009). Justice is also defined as that which people deserve or what they have a right to. This takes various forms, for example, receiving a particular treatment, certain goods, enjoying certain prerogatives or freedoms (Chryssides & Kaler, 1996; Gin & Desa, 2014). All these forms of justice can be required of individuals, groups, society, etc. What is deserved may be beneficial or harmful. Therefore, justice can be interpreted as fair, equitable and appropriate treatment in the light of what is due or owed to persons. In the context of work, distributive justice refers to employees' perception of fairness in decisions and pay allocation (Saks, 2006). To be fair, the allocation must follow the reward policy (Kontakos, 2015). Although that is a logical argument, in the Ugandan case teachers did not perceive that distributive justice was being done (Birungi, 2012).

Distributive Justice thus concerns the ways benefits and burdens are shared out among people. It seeks to divide correctly things like wealth, power, property, and obligations between a number of people, groups or societies (Chryssides & Kaler, 1996). Correct division of things in society is referred to as social justice.

Distributive justice concerns what some consider to be socially just with regard to the allocation of goods in society. It is not only allocation of goods but also money. A society in which incidental inequalities in outcome do not arise would be considered a society guided by the principles of distributive justice (Stiglitz, 2012). The concept includes the available quantities of goods, the process by which goods are distributed, and the resulting allocation of the goods to the members of the society. Distributive justice has five norms which are: equity, equality, power, need and responsibility (Forsyth, 2006). The five norms are yet to be analyzed in relation to Ugandan teachers. In relation to primary school teachers the perception is that qualities, quantities and procedures are very good. They should be applied equally.

H3O Employee reward has no significant effect on distributive justice

H3A Employee reward has significant effect on distributive justice

### Conceptual Framework

State the conceptual relationship between independent and dependent variables. In this diagram below, employee reward is the independent variable, leadership is the moderating variable while distributive justice is the dependent variable.

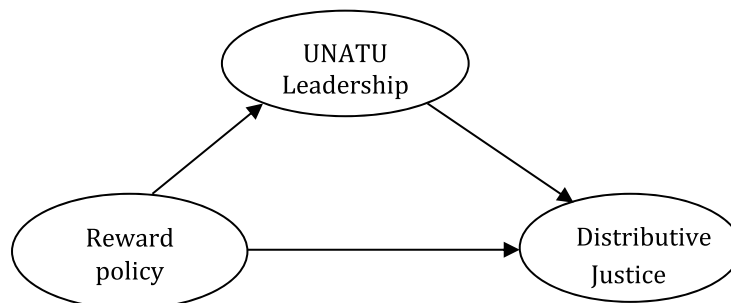


Figure 1: *Relationships of variables as conceptualized by the author*

There are authors (Armstrong & Murlis, 2001; Nakacwa et al, 2005; Ssali, 2011) who have written about rewards and distributive justice as illustrated in this section. However, they do not discuss the relationship between the three variables and more so in a Ugandan setting.

### Methodology

#### Unit of analysis

The population of interest consisted of primary school teachers in Wakiso and Kampala districts. The teachers in the Ugandan government primary schools were the unit of analysis for the current study. The total number of respondents was 246. The sample was considered sufficient following the rule of the thumb which states that in social science research any sample between 30 and 500 is sufficient to produce credible results (Roscoe, 1975).

#### Data collection

A cross-sectional research design requires one to use several data collection methods. In that regard, the following methods were used:

*Questionnaire:* A questionnaire was designed according to the objectives and variables. It was designed in such a way that respondents had a list of possible options or answers from which they ticked. The questionnaire as a tool was preferred because it is an appropriate instrument for any survey research. Questionnaires were administered to teachers to get the necessary information. The respondents provided answers in a pre-determined order (Saunders et al, 2009). The instrument had sections labelled A, B, C and D. The sections are summarized in Table 3 below.



**Table 3: Sections of the questionnaire**

	Section	Items
A	Personal variables	6
B	Reward	9
C	Leadership	9
D	Distributive justice	9
Total	33	

The questionnaire, the main tool in this study employed 33 items. Apart from items on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, the rest of the items were on the Likert type scale. This scale served as a measurement for the effect of employee reward and distributive justice. The Likert scale used was: (i) Strongly Disagree = 1; (ii) Disagree =2; (iii) Neither disagree nor agree = 3; (iv) Agree=4; and (v) Strongly Agree=5.

**Validity and Reliability instruments**

**Validity:** An expert rated the items using 4=very valid; 3=valid; 2=valid only to a small, 1= not valid at all, to ensure that the research design fully addressed the research objectives that were achieved. Validity is concerned with the idea that the research design fully addresses the research objectives (White, 2002). In the current study, validity was established through a validity test using the Content Validity Index (CVI). These were computed as follows:

$$\frac{3+4}{1+2+3+4}$$

The product of the CVI test was 0.873. Since conventional research wisdom requires that a good research have a CVI of  $\geq 0.7$  (Amin, 2005; Saunders et al, 1997), that is, either equal or greater than 70%. This implied that the individual questions posed were relevant and valid.

**Reliability:** Reliability in this study tried to show that each section produced results which are reliable. This was determined by using SPSS to work out the Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of each section on the questionnaire. The reliability alpha needed to be greater than 0.75 for the study to be regarded exhaustive. The cut-off point for most social science research should be  $[\geq] 0.75$  (Sullivan, 2001). They accurately measured the scales used in the study. For the current study, the test of Cronbach alpha yielded results as given in Table 4.

**Table 4: Results of reliability test**

	Scale	Cronbach alpha
1	Employee reward	.803
2	Leadership	.734
3	Distributive justice	.812
	Average alpha	.783

The scales for main variables of the study were the only ones that were considered. They each had an alpha score that was greater than 0.75 which is recommended for social science

research (Sullivan, 2001). The average alpha was 0.783. The implication of all this is that the scales used to measure fees policy, reputation and quality were reliable and consistent.

## Analysis of Findings and Discussion

### Reward policy in Uganda

The reward policy in Uganda especially for public servants like the primary school teachers is incremental in nature. Changes are usually introduced as a revision of the existing policy. This is normally done when the national budget is being read in the month of June every year. In Uganda, the fiscal year runs from July to June. Teachers in government primary schools fall in the salary scale U6 and U7. The salary scales depend on the level of a teacher's professional training. The teachers have been paid as follows:

**Table 5: Amounts of pay primary school teachers receive**

Scale	Level	2011/2012	percentage increase	2012/2013	Percentage increase	2013/2014
		UGX	%	UGX	%	UGX
U6	Upper (T)	333,717	8	360,414	4	374,830
	Upper (B)	299,129	8	323,059	4	335,982
U6	Lower (T)	304,612	8	328,981	4	342,140
	Lower (B)	277,844	8	300,071	4	312,074
U7	Upper (T)	267,686	15	307,839	4	320,153
	Upper (B)	224,188	15	257,817	4	268,129
U7	Lower (T)	205,035	15	235,790	4	245,221
	Lower (B)	173,119	15	199,087	14	227,240

Sources: *Salary structure for 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2014-2015*

It can be noted from Table 5 that the government reward policy provided salary increment. The increments were often dwarfed by high rates of inflation. For instance, in 2012/2013 the salary increase was 4% on average but the inflation was 8.4% (UBOS, 2013). So there was a variance of 4.4%. In 2010/2011 the salary increment was about 11.5% but the inflation reached

the highest level of 30.48% (Businge, 2011). When the inflation was significantly higher than the salary increment, it meant that with the low pay, primary school teachers were not able to meet the cost of living. It was also noted by UNATU (2013) that the teachers' pay in Uganda was exceptionally low, and the entry level salary was insufficient for a single person's basic subsistence. This, coupled with continuous issues of late or non-payment of wages, made teachers resort to industrial action from 2011 to 2015.

In August 2011, UNATU negotiated with President Museveni who committed to raise the primary teachers' pay by 50%. This was to be paid in three fiscal years: 2012/2013 to increase by 15%; 2013/2014 to increase by 25%; and in 2014/2015 to raise by 10%. The first 15% was paid promptly but the 25% was not paid in 2013/2014 until there were a series of industrial actions; then it was eventually paid in the 2014/2015 fiscal year. UNATU's negotiation with President Museveni indicated that the reward policy in Uganda was so fluid that it required the head of state to intervene.

In June 2014, increment of salaries for primary school teachers was as indicated in Table 6. The increment for 2014 is compared with the salary scale of 2013.

**Table 6: A comparison of salary scales of 2013 and 2014**

	Monthly pay in 2013/2014	Monthly pay in 2014/2015	Percentage increase
U6 lower	382803	489,988	28%
	378,203	487,574	29%
	373,604	485,685	30%
	371,304	482,695	30%
U7 Upper	374,148	467,685	25%
	367,659	457,574	24%
	361,798	452,247	25%
	356,076	445,095	25%
	350,496	438,119	25%
	345,074	431,309	25%
	339,741	424,676	25%
	334,557	418,196	25%
	330,493	413,116	25%
Entry point for Grade III teachers	326,508	408,135	25%
Teachers on trial terms (U7 Lower)	227,240	284,050	25%
Non-formal teachers on trial terms (U8 lower)	159,035	198,793	25%

Source: Circular Standing Instruction No.2 of 2014

The salary scales in Table 6 reflected the pay for both trained teachers and support staff

who were not trained. The teachers on trial are normally described as licensed teachers. The implication was that when the trained teachers were not enough, the licensed teachers assisted in a number of ways just as a fulltime trained staff would do. For most notches, the increment was 25% apart from those in U6 where the increment exceeded 25%. Although the increment was high, the purchasing power of the shilling was already low. This meant that the salary increment did not improve the teachers' standard of living. The head teachers' salary scales approved by the 2014 reward policy are given in Table 7 below:

**Table 7: The primary school head teachers' pay in 2014:**

Category of school leaders	Scale	Salary per month UGX	
1	Head teacher	Upper U4	799,323
2	Head teacher	Lower U4	611,984
3	Deputy Head teacher	Upper U5	608,822
4	Deputy Head teacher	Lower U5	511,617

Obviously the salary scales of primary school leaders are higher than the scales in Table 6. The increments of 2014 make the rewards for the head teachers and deputies much higher than they had been in the previous years. In spite of the apparent increment, it is worth noting these were not living wages. A living wage can be described as that a pay which enables an employee to afford the basic needs of life so as to enjoy a safe, decent standard of living within a particular community.

### **Reward Policy and Teachers' Union Leadership**

Leadership is very important for organizational effectiveness. The effectiveness is marked by a vision and a followership. An effective organization is one that responds to the needs of the members and to changes in the environment. To achieve such effectiveness leadership must be good.

UNATU was registered in March 2003 following a transformation of the Uganda Teachers' Association (UTA) into a Trade Union to fulfil a dual role of professional development and trade unionism. UNATU is affiliated to Education International (EI), Pan African Teachers' Centre (PATC) and Ugandan National Union of Teachers (UNUT). UNATU is a statutory organization registered under the Trade Union Act. By 2011, UNATU had 80,000 registered members out of the approximate potential of 160,000 teachers on government payroll.

The objectives of UNATU can be summarized into a mission to promote and protect the social, intellectual, economic and professional interests of the teachers as a pre-requisite to quality public education. These objectives are pursued by the UNATU leadership. The leadership of UNATU has been instrumental in organizing teachers' industrial action. Under the Uganda Constitution of 1995 and the Trade Union Act of 2000, it is a trade union body which could challenge the reward. With the introduction of the UPE in 1997, the authority of school leaders reduced markedly. So only UNATU could put up a strong challenge to government.

### Qualification-Seniority-Responsibility-based Pay System

In Uganda there is no performance-based pay as it is in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (Harvey-Beavis, 2003). Instead, what exists in Uganda is what is referred to in this study as qualification-seniority-responsibility-based pay system. This system has the following characteristics:

1. *Qualification*: Payment according to professional training level one has attained. The teachers without professional training earn the least pay; then Grade II; Grade III and Diploma holders are paid in different scales. The higher the training the more one is paid.
2. *Seniority*: Teachers are paid according to seniority. Given the annual increments, the longer one stays in the teaching profession, the more one earns.
3. *Responsibility*: Payment for additional responsibility; a teacher is paid an additional pay, for instance, when he/she becomes a head of school or deputy head teacher.

The above payment system can be described as a qualification-seniority-responsibility based pay system. This system does not motivate primary school teachers to perform to their best because there is no performance-based pay. However, before the introduction of UPE in 1997, primary school fees were levied on each pupil. This money would be used to supplement the meagre remittances from government. Some of it would be used to pay allowances to teachers. In Table 8 it is indicated that teachers at various levels used to earn some allowances on top of the salary. These allowances differed from school to school. The commonly remunerated roles are summarized in Table 8.

**Table 8: Roles that attracted remuneration before UPE policy**

	Role	Yes	No
1	Headship of a school	√	-
2	Deputy headship of a school	√	-
3	Class teacher	√	-
4	Being a teacher in a school	√	-
5	Teaching a particular subject	-	√
6	Other roles	√	-

Source: Interview responses

All the allowances associated with the roles in Table 8 were scrapped when UPE came into effect in 1997. Without salary increment, teachers considered the scrapping of PTA financial contribution a case of injustice. That was why during the industrial action in 2009 to 2015, teachers demanded “justice”. Leadership at school level had lost the mandate to organize financial resources for the teachers. Therefore, the connection between reward policy and leadership was severed and so was the connection between reward and distributive justice. School leadership would make an attempt at distributive justice before 1997, but after that, it became practically impossible for school leaders to promote distributive justice. This explains why the leadership of UNATU took up the role of organizing industrial action and demanding justice as far as pay was concerned.

## Results of the Test of Hypothesis 1 on reward policy and UNATU leadership

The first null hypothesis (H1O) of the current study stated that; ‘there is no significant relationship between reward policy and UNATU leadership’. This hypothesis was tested first by Pearson’s Correlation. This produced results which indicated that there was a low positive significant relationship between reward policy and leadership [ $r(246) = .290, p < 0.01$ ]. This meant that reward policy and leadership support each other. That is, the more UNATU leaders played their role of engaging government more effectively on teachers’ salaries, the more likely that government would respond and implement a more favorable reward policy for teachers.

The above hypothesis was also subjected to a simple linear regression test in order to determine how much reward policy explained teachers’ attitudes towards UNATU leadership. The test yielded an Adj. R2 of .080. This translated into 8%. It could be inferred therefore that reward policy explained 8% of the teachers’ appreciation of UNATU leadership.

Furthermore, the regression matrix also gave results that proved the linearity between reward policy and teachers’ positive attitude towards UNATU leaders [ $F(1, 244) = 22.421, p < 0.01$ ]. From this, one can infer that any unit increase in reward policy leads to a corresponding positive attitude towards UNATU leadership. For that reason it is right to conclude that reward policy increases teachers’ positive appreciation of their trade union leaders. This was so because head teachers had been banned from raising funds for their schools (Government of Uganda 2008).

Without the role of the UNATU, it was less likely that an individual teacher would have achieved the increment they obtained.

Regression matrix results revealed further that reward policy influences teachers’ attitudes towards their union leaders ( $\beta = .290, p < 0.01$ ). From this statistic, it can be rightly concluded that the null hypothesis was rejected but the alternative one (H1A) which stated that: “There is a significant relationship between reward policy and UNATU leadership in Uganda” was supported. UNATU began to demand for pay rise in 2009. In 2011 UNATU demanded a 100% increment and threatened to stage a nation-wide strike. President Museveni negotiated with UNATU and committed 50% increment to be in three instalments of 15%, 25%, and 10%. In 2012/2013 the 15% was paid, but in 2013/2014 the 25% increment was not paid because it was not budgeted for. UNATU again organized nation-wide strikes (Mugerwa, 2013). In response, government accepted to pay the increment in 2014 (Nalugo, 2014). Again in 2015/2016 the last percentage of 10% increment was not budget for. So UNATU embarked on a nationwide strike (Nassaka, 2015). Government realized that it had no money to increase their salaries in the budget read on June 11. Instead, it was agreed that UNATU calls off the strike, government would give not only 10% increment but 15% in financial year 2016/2017. This meant that teachers would end up with 55% salary increment between 2011/2012 and 2016/2017 financial years. Without UNATU leadership, it would have been hard for individual teachers to demand such pay rise and cause government to respond positively as it did.

## Relationship between UNATU Leadership and Distributive Justice

As already stated, UNATU provided leadership that demanded salary increment for primary school teachers in all public schools. UNATU led the negotiations with government, carried out mobilization of teachers countrywide, and acted as key spokes-organ for the teachers.

### Results of Test of Hypothesis 2 on Leadership and Distributive Justice

The second null hypothesis (H<sub>20</sub>) read that, "Leadership has no significant effect on distributive justice for teachers". When this hypothesis was tested, the results indicated that there was a positive significant relationship between leadership and distributive justice [ $r(246) = .464, p < 0.01$ ]. The deduction from this statistic is that the more effective the UNATU leadership, the more distributive justice the teachers are likely to realize. UNATU's leadership had the ability to stand up for the rights and aspirations of their members – the teachers. As a result, government responded positively by granting the salary increment.

The regression test further revealed that the Adj. R<sup>2</sup> was .212 which became 21% effect of leadership on distributive justice. Leadership therefore is a strong cause of distributive justice for teachers in the country. Linearity was also tested and it produced results which showed that there is a linear relationship between leadership and distributive justice [ $F(1, 244) = 66.9141, p < 0.01$ ]. So if the leadership of UNATU is improved further, it also affects teachers' perception of distributive justice accordingly. Hence, if we get better leaders at UNATU, the teachers will believe that these good leaders will fight for distributive justice on their behalf.

The results of regression revealed that leadership helped teachers to form positive attitudes towards distributive justice ( $\beta = .464, p < 0.01$ ). From these results it can be concluded that the second null hypothesis was rejected. So it was the alternate hypothesis (H<sub>2A</sub>): "Leadership of UNATU has a significant effect on teachers' perception of distributive justice" which was supported.

### Distributive justice and reward policy

The motif of distributive justice is concerned with the ways in which benefits and burdens are shared out among people. It seeks to divide correctly these benefits and burdens between a number of people, groups in a particular setting. Correct division of things in society is often referred to as social justice.

In the current study the focus was on reward policy being able to ensure that the individual teacher lived happily in his or her profession. This reward policy is not merely about reward, but also should have an effect on other variables, especially distributive justice. It was noted during the field investigations that teachers felt that as they work fulltime, they deserve a salary that enables them meet all their basic necessities. These include: food, water, accommodation, electricity, medical care, travel, communication and clothing. Distributive justice also means that the teachers must earn the amount of money that enables them to meet the cost of living. The cost of living requires employers, including government, to pay a living wage. If that is not done, then teachers become disgruntled which usually culminates into industrial action.

## Cost of living in Uganda in 2014 /2015

The cost of living is going to rise as tough times ahead show the depreciating shilling push up the price of fuel. The increase of fuel and food prices often determines the inflation and generally the cost of living. Cost of living refers to the average costs of consumer goods and services. These vary between different urban and suburban residential areas. Cost of living indexes tend to compare the expenses an average person can incur in order to acquire food, shelter, transportation, energy, clothing, education, healthcare, child care and entertainment in a given area. In this research that area is Uganda. The said costs are given in table 9 below.

**Table 9: Cost of living as at 2014/2015**

Items	Quantity	Amount per month
1	Accommodation 1 room	50,000
2	Electricity 426.10 x 100 units	42,610
3	Water 1,213 x 10m <sup>3</sup>	12,130
4	Food	
	- Breakfast 5000 x 30 days	150,000
	- Lunch 10,000 x 30 days	300,000
	- Evening snack 5000 x 30 days	150,000
	- Supper 10,000 x 30 days	300,000
5	Medical Treatment of common illnesses once a month	40,000
6	Travel / transport 10,000 x 30 days	100,000
7	Communication Airtime, email, etc.	50,000
8	Clothing Monthly saving	20,000
9	Personal effects Toothpaste, soap, razors, salon, etc., per month	20,000
Total: cost of living per month		834,740

Source: Bank of Uganda, 2013

It can be noted that cost of living in Uganda for a single individual was UGX834, 740 in 2015. However, the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports contended in 2012 that, under the prevailing cost of living, a modest budget for a primary school teacher amounted to UGX657, 000. Consequently, the Ministry of Education and Sports proposed that the pay for teachers at the minimum be raised to UGX500, 000, up from UGX 310,000 (Businge & Lule, 2012).

### Result of test of Hypothesis 3 on reward policy and distributive justice

The third hypothesis (*H3O*) stated that, “Reward policy has no significant effect on distributive justice for teachers”. To test this hypothesis, both correlation and regression analyses were executed. The results of the correlation revealed that there was a positive significant effect of



reward policy on distributive justice [ $r(246) = .574, p < 0.01$ ]. The clear implication here was that when primary school teachers are given better reward, they are likely to interpret it as distributive justice.

Further test of the regression matrix showed that there was a linear relationship between reward policy and distributive justice [ $F(1, 244) = 120.117, p < 0.01$ ]. The other regression results were  $\beta = .574, p < 0.01$ . From this statistic it is possible to note that reward policy is a major contributor to teachers' perception of distributive justice. The model summary yielded an Adj.  $R^2$  of .327. This implied that reward policy contributed 32% to teachers' perception of distributive justice.

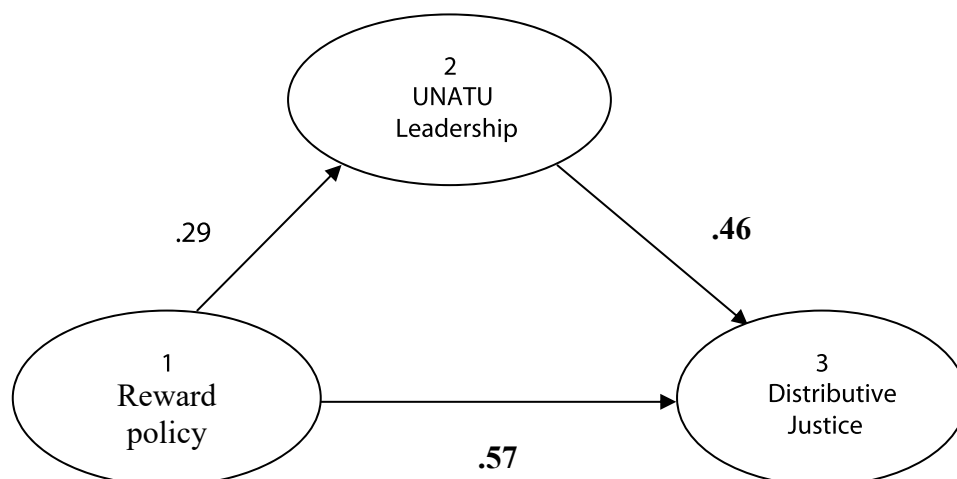
In view of the above analysis, it is proper to conclude that the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternate hypothesis ( $H3A$ ) which stated that reward policy has a significant effect on distributive justice for primary school teachers was supported.

### Hypothetical model for reward policy and distributive justice

The hypothetical model was used to determine the overall effect of reward policy on distributive justice. The hypothetical model therefore provides a reliable explanation that distributive justice is a function of reward policy, that is,  $DJ = f(ER)$ . In the explanation the following are taken into account:

- (a) Determining variables – in the model there is an independent variable (reward policy), and moderating variable (UNATU leadership), and a dependent variable (distributive justice).
- (b) Establishing causal paths – the causal paths relevant to variable (3) which is distributive justice are paths from (1) to (2) to (3); and from (1) to (3).
- (c) Stating assumptions – e.g. all relations are linear,
- (d) Variables are measured linearly left to right.

The paths for the hypothesized empirical model



The paths in the hypothesized model above establish the following relationships:

- (1) A positive significant relationship between reward policy and UNATU leadership
- (2) A positive significant relationship between UNATU leadership and distributive justice
- (3) A positive significant relationship between reward policy and distributive justice

The results were as the paths coefficients indicate:

	Paths	Variable	coefficients
P21	=	reward policy and leadership	.29
P32	=	leadership and distributive justice	.46
P31	=	reward policy and distributive justice	.57

Variable 1 (reward policy) is the only exogenous variable because it has no arrows pointing to it. This leaves two endogenous variables in the model, that is variable 2 (leadership) and variable 3 (distributive justice). Each of these variables is explained by one or two variables.

### Effects of decomposition

The paths coefficients were used to decompose correlations in the model into direct and indirect effects corresponding to direct and indirect paths reflected in the arrows of the model. This is based on the rule that in a linear system the total causal effect of variable A on variable B is the sum of the values of all the paths from A to B. Distributive justice is the dependent variable while reward policy is the independent variable, the indirect effects and calculated by multiplying the paths coefficients for each path from reward policy to distributive justice

$$= \text{reward policy} \rightarrow \text{leadership} \rightarrow \text{distributive justice}$$

$$= .29 \times .46 = .1334 \quad \equiv .13$$

So, .13 is the total indirect effect of reward policy on distributive justice, plus the direct effect of .57. The total causal effect of reward policy on distributive justice is (.13+.57) .70. In view of the above model, it is appropriate to infer that reward policy is a major determinant of the distributive justice. The other factors which account for the remaining .30 should be only peripheral in the matters of distributive justice in a workplace.

Although the total causal effect of 70% is moderate, there is some discontent about the salaries paid to primary school teachers. This is evidenced by the teachers' industrial actions in 2010; in 2011, in 2012; and in 2013 (Agaba, 2014; Akweteireho, 2009; Olaka, 2010; Nuwagaba, 2011; Businge, 2011; Biryabarema, 2013). The industrial actions were settled when there were successful negotiations between UNATU and government over teachers' salaries.

### Recommendation: Use of non-financial rewards

The Uganda Government in the 1990s took a deliberate decision to consolidate the remuneration to civil servants including teachers. With this policy, the non-financial rewards for teachers in government primary school were abolished. The consolidated salary is not satisfactory. Teachers have always felt that they have not had distributive justice. That is why teachers have on many occasions resorted to industrial action as an expression of their dissatisfaction.

The non-financial rewards include: housing; meals at school; education support for biological children; career development opportunities; non-financial recognition, and employee development and training.

It has already been observed that introducing non-financial rewards can create perceptions of the overall fairness of a rewards program. Fairness is treated as being synonymous with justice. This is why Rawls postulated that “justice was fairness” (On the principles of justice as fairness, Rawls (1971) argues that social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: (a) They are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; (b) They are to be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society, the difference principle (Stanford, 2012). Since the primary school teachers are among those paid the meagre salaries, they are among the least advantaged as far as pay is concerned.

The hypothetical model confirmed that the total causal effect of reward policy on distributive justice is 70%. In order to improve the effect of reward policy on distributive justice and eliminate the disapprovals pointed out earlier on, this study recommends the adoption of the non-financial rewards model.

#### **Simulating the contribution of the non-financial rewards model**

How much the use of the non-financial rewards model can contribute to concretizing distributive justice can be determined by carrying out a simulation? The simulation is carried out in the following steps:

- Step 1 the percentage of total causal effect is subtracted from 100%. In this study, the total causal effect from the hypothetical model is 70%. So 100% minus 70% leaves 30%.
- Step 2 the product in step 1 above is multiplied by the direct effect. In the current study, this is  $.30 \times .57 = .17$ . So the contribution of the non-financial rewards model is 17%.
- Step 3 The product in step 2 is added to the total causal effect in order to derive the total causal effect after simulation. In this study the 17% is added to the 70% giving a final figure of 87%.
- Step 4 Conclusion based on the simulation is that it is viable to adopt the non-financial rewards model because it promises to add value (17%) to the employee reward which is purely financial as an effect on distributive justice.

#### **Conclusion**

This study focused on the effect of reward policy on distributive justice. Teachers like all civil servants expected to be rewarded with just salaries. When these were not forthcoming teachers resorted to industrial actions between 2009 and 2015.

The analysis was executed and the following outcomes were realized. Although government has been paying teachers' salaries, and giving them increments every year, the increments have been always outpaced by inflation. So the real value of the increment was not obtained. Furthermore, the salaries given to primary school teachers, even when increased by 25% in 2014, did not match the cost of living in the country.

The study noted that in order for the primary school teacher to earn a salary which allows him or her to meet the cost of living, the salary needed to be increased by 83% for the lowest paid teaching staff. This increment would not be sustainable, so the best option is to provide non-financial rewards. Using simulation, it emerged that the use of non-financial rewards would contribute 17% to the teachers' perception of distributive justice.

### Lessons learned:

- (i) When a public policy is weak, unsatisfied parties make a recourse to the head of state.
- (ii) Changing a public policy without clear program of implementation causes a miasma.
- (iii) Complaints and industrial actions are some of indicators of a failed public policy.
- (iv) Unity is strength, NATU was able to be taken seriously because all members spoke with one voice through their leaders.
- (v) Non-financial rewards are still useful and can go a long way to ameliorate the shortcomings in the financial rewards.
- (vi) The recommendation to provide non-financial rewards to teachers is a policy reversal which is possible and plausible.

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