

# The Role of Motivational Theories in Shaping Teacher Motivation and Performance: A Review of Related Literature

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**Abstract:** - Various scholars have theorised models of motivation, which laid a strong foundation for employers to motivate their employees. The purpose of this study was to review the motivational theories and explain their collective emphasis, with the ultimate aim of generating theoretical measures whose considerations and implementations could motivate teachers to improve quality of output in schools, as a measure of their work performance.

The study reviewed theories related to Hierarchy of Needs theory, Two-Factor theory, Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory, Expectant theory, Equity theory and the Goal-setting theory. The theories were reviewed, analysed thematically and discussed within the context of education and teacher motivation, which was the focus of the study.

The study found out that theoretical factors that influence teacher motivation and performance, relates to the work itself, rewards and compensation, the working environment and professional growth and development opportunities. Employers should ensure that these factors are well cultivated as they serve as motivators for teachers to work optimally and improve school performance.

**Keywords:** Hierarchy of Needs theory, Two-Factor theory, Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory, Expectant theory, Equity theory, Goal-setting theory, Motivation, Teacher motivation, teacher performance, Motivational theories.

## I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The concept of motivation has been defined by various scholars. Motivation is generally referred to as the energy of behaviours which condition the conduct of employees at the workplace (Legotlo, 2014; Ofoegbu, 2004; Steyn, 2002). Motivation can also be defined as the incentives and disincentives that influence employees' initial and sustained engagement in their work (Hynds & McDonald, 2010). Thus, motivation is the underlying force for employees' optimal performance.

In the context of teacher performance, Velez (2007) defines teacher motivation as an encouragement of teachers to do their best in the classroom. Similarly, Naomi, Ronald, Isaac and Raja (2012) conceptualised teacher motivation as the freedom to try new ideas to achieve appropriate responsibility levels. This freedom brings about the arousal and continuation of teachers' behaviours. In support of these views, Salifu and Agbenyega (2013) emphasise that teacher motivation refers to

the tangible and intangible working conditions that have the potential to influence teachers positively to demonstrate desirable behaviours leading to high quality professional practice.

Although quality teaching has become the focus of many education systems across the globe, Salifu and Agbenyega (2013) emphasises that more attention should be given to teacher motivation as this motivation pertains to quality teaching and improved learning outcomes in schools. Lack of teacher motivation results in shortages of teachers among schools and deteriorated school performance (Armstrong 2009; Urwick et al, 2005). Therefore, the motivation of teachers is very important as it directly affects learner performance which is closely related to the quality of education that the learners receive (Alam & Farid, 2011; Naomi et al, 2012). Hence, the need to motivate teachers is crucial to enable teachers to gain self-confidence and morale and enable learners to perform exceptionally. Poorly motivated teachers yield low learner achievement.

Various scholars have researched and written extensively about various theoretical frameworks, which can be used as the basis and guidance in motivating employees in the workplace. Employers have a responsibility of ensuring that teachers perform to the best of their abilities. Therefore, it is significant for employers to understand the theoretical frameworks underlying employees' motivation for correct application thereof. The theories of motivation, explanation and application, are thus the basis of this review article.

## II. THE FOCUS OF THE REVIEW

Quality teaching has become the ultimate goal of many education systems across the globe. To realise this goal, more attention should be paid to teacher motivation as this motivation pertains to quality teaching and improved learning outcomes in schools. Even though earlier scholars have fathered theoretical constructs which advance better insights on how teacher motivation can be nurtured for improved output, these theories are yet to be reviewed collectively in the context of teacher motivation, and have their main ideas consolidated into a contemporary, collective, motivational theoretical position. This theoretical position can then be used to inform how employees such as teachers, should be motivated to perform their work better.

In the context of this review, the following question comes to mind; how can motivation theories be used as tools to inform teacher motivation and performance? In addressing this question, this review paper sought to explain the collective constructs and emphasis of the various motivational theories. The ultimate aim was to generate theoretical measures whose implementations can be used to ignite teacher morale for improved quality of output in schools.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS ON EMPLOYEES' MOTIVATION

In line with Camp's (2001) interpretation of a theoretical framework as a basis that provides the underlying assumptions of the issue under research, this article outlines the theories underlying employee motivation. A theory is a strong foundation from which a phenomenon can be explained (Imenda, 2014). This article reviewed the theories relative to employee motivation. Various authors are in agreement that the concept of employee motivation relates to the set of processes that move an employee towards a goal (Hynds & McDonald, 2010; Legotlo, 2014; Ofoegbu, 2004; Steyn, 2002).

There are two types of motivation, namely, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to Gagne and Deci (2005), intrinsic motivation is the eagerness and curiosity to perform a task that an employee obtains from within oneself. Juxtaposed with intrinsic motivation, Mahadi and Jafari (2012) explains extrinsic motivation as the external forces that encourage an employee to execute a task. In comparative terms, intrinsic motivation comprises of the internal forces that make an employee execute a task, whereas extrinsic motivation

comprises of the external forces that motivate employees to execute a task.

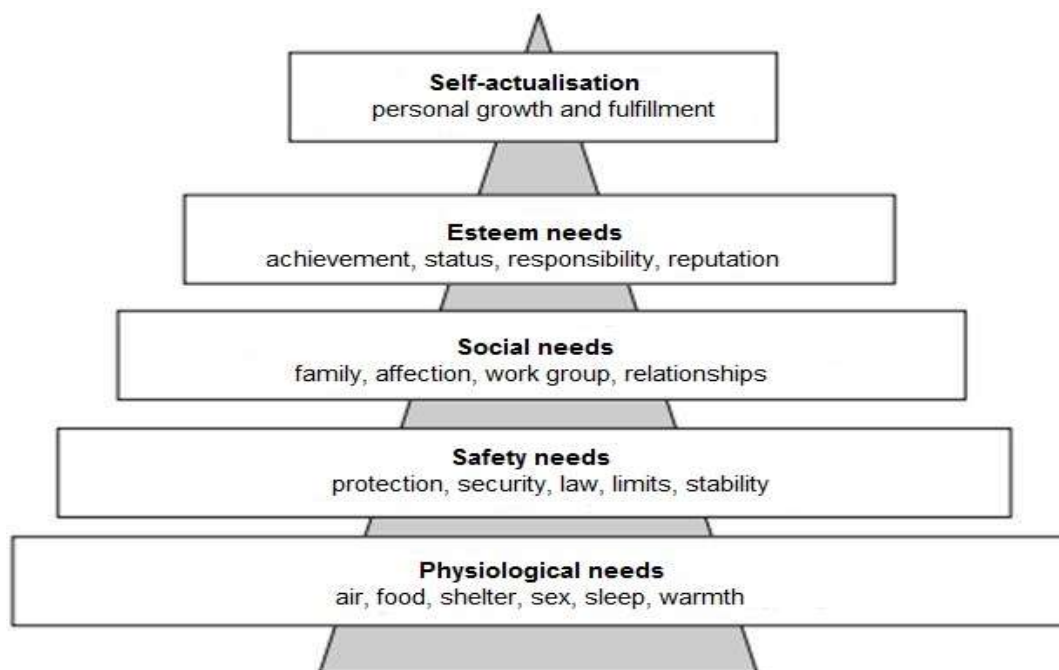
The intrinsic and extrinsic types of motivation are underpinned by a variety of theories. This review findings of this article was informed by the following theories, Hierarchy of Needs theory, Two-Factor theory, Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory, Expectant theory, Equity theory and the Goal-setting theory. These theories are now explained in detail in the next section.

#### 3.1 Hierarchy of Needs theory

Abraham Maslow is credited and well known for having developed a theory of human motivation known as Hierarchy of Needs theory. Maslow based his motivation theory on three assumptions. Firstly, there is always something that someone is trying to fulfil; secondly, a need fulfilled is no longer compelling as an unfulfilled need; and, thirdly, needs are arranged into five categories in an order of their priority (Van der Westhuizen, 1991). Maslow views some human needs as more powerful and important than others which then led him to divide human needs into five categories ranging from the most urgent needs to the most advanced needs.

Maslow's categories of human needs comprises of physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualisation needs (Crook, 1997; Van der Westhuizen, 1991). The central point of emphasis in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory is that low-level needs should be met first before high-level needs are met. Figure 1 below shows Maslow's classification of human needs in their order of importance.

Figure 1: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Source: Beardwell and Claydon (2007).

Figure 1 above shows the five categories of human needs according to Abraham Maslow. The hierarchy of human needs shows that basic human needs at the bottom of the hierarchy, are satisfied first before advanced human needs at the top of the hierarchy are satisfied. At the base of the pyramid are the psychological needs which human needs require for survival and be able to progress to the next level of needs. If psychological needs are not satisfied, employees may become ill and may not have the energy to execute tasks (Kaur, 2013). Organisations can satisfy psychological needs by providing employees with a basic salary and favourable working conditions such as air conditioning and cafeteria services (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008).

The second level of the hierarchy consists of safety needs which include protection from psychological and physical harm. Employees need a secure working environment where their safety is prioritised, and where they can work without anxiety and fear. Employees need to work in a safe working environment where they feel comfortable doing the work (Kaur, 2013). If safety needs are not met, employees work under fear of their own security and this compromise their productivity, subsequently leading to employees' turnover (Kazi & Zadeh, 2011). Organisations can satisfy safety needs by ensuring safe working conditions, fair rules and work security (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008).

The third level of the hierarchy comprises of the social needs. These needs relates to employees' desire to be loved, to be associated with, to belong to a group of people and feel appreciated, approved and wanted. When employees experience a sense of belongingness, they feel at ease to associate themselves with others and form relationships (Martin & Joomis, 2007). If social needs are not satisfied, employees will feel isolated and detach themselves from other employees. Such isolation and detachment conditions decrease employee morale and productivity. Organisations can satisfy social needs by providing opportunities for teamwork, encouraging group discussions as well as providing good mentoring possibilities to employees (Kaur 2013).

The fourth level on the hierarchy focuses on self-esteem needs. These include the need to have a status, to be respected and a need to be given an opportunity to show competence in problem solving, negotiation or any related area. If self-esteem needs are not met, employees will feel humiliated and deprived of the respect and authority they deserve (Martin & Joomis 2007). This humiliation affects employee motivation negatively, and cannot move to the next level since they feel they are not counted and their competencies are not recognised. Kaur (2013) emphasises that organisations can satisfy self-esteem needs through employee recognition, award programmes and promotions.

The fifth level focuses on self-actualisation needs. Self-actualisation needs relates to employees' need to be able to distinguish themselves from others as dictated by their

capabilities, competencies and achievements and be whom they aspired to become in life (Crook, 1997; Kaur, 2013; Martin & Joomis, 2007). If an employee works in an environment where there are no chances of realising their potential, employees can be demotivated, resulting in them looking for a better working environment where they will be able to realise their full potential and actualise the personality they aspired of becoming. Organisations can satisfy self-actualisation needs by involving employees in tasks that capitalise on employees' unique skills in order to stimulate employees' personal growth and self-development (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008).

### *3.1.1 Meritsof Hierarchy of Needs theory*

Overall, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory has been applauded for improving the understanding of human functioning and motivating human resources in organisations (Jerome, 2013). The hierarchy has inculcated an understanding of different human needs among employers and employees, and how these needs depends on one another. An understanding of the interdependence of needs enables employers to acquire an appreciation of which needs to take as priority in motivating their employees. A comprehension of the different needs' deficiencies, enables employers and leaders of organisations, such as school principals, to figure out the specific needs that needs to be satisfied for specific employees, such as teachers, in order for the employees to fit well in the organisation, such as a school.

### *3.1.2 Demerits of Hierarchy of Needs theory*

Despite the applause attributed to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, various researchers have pointed out significant flaws characterising the theory. One flaw is the lack of empirical evidence to support the theory (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977). This is because needs are socially acquired and may vary between races, ethnic groups, tribes and cultures, hence making empirical testing difficult to generalise, because human beings are not alike as the theory assumes them to be (Kaur, 2013).

Human beings are social-oriented in design, character and content, and this nature determines their preferences and orientation. This begs different needs and preferences of different people, at different time and at different intervals, making it practically impossible and biased to measure human needs on basis and preferences of a certain group of people in society. The needs of a specific group may not be used as representative sample for universal application due to the divergent, social nature of humanity.

Another flaw stems from the little support for Maslow's five needs categories and his satisfaction-progression hypothesis, that an employee is motivated to progress to the higher level need after a satisfied need at a lower level (Wahba & Bridwell, 1976). Satisfaction-progression hypothesis is contested by other motivational theorists who have grouped human needs into two and three categories respectively

(Alderfer, 1972; Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1993). Alderfer (1972) disputed Maslow's satisfaction-progression assumption, arguing that several needs can be achieved at the same time, and that unsatisfied need can result in a frustration-regression tendency, where an employee seeks further satisfaction of a lower level need if the fulfilment of the higher level need is not achieved, as opposed by satisfaction-progression tendency (Crooks, 1997). Hence, there is little evidence that supports Maslow's strict hierarchy and the fact that people satisfy only one motivating need at a time (Beardwell & Claydon, 2007).

A secondary need according to Maslow's theory, might be the primary needs according to some people. For example, if a person feels rejected and not welcomed in an environment, that person may not eat or feel protected, which Maslow needs classify as primary and secondary needs respectively. A person's sense of feeling welcomed might be more important and a priority, than the availability of food and shelter. Moreover, the ranking model of needs may not represent a motivation process but rather a value system, possibly relating to that of Maslow's own social group (Hofstede, 1980). Furthermore, Maslow's classification of physiological and safety needs may not be relevant to modern organisations as such needs are catered for by government legislation (Crooks, 1997). In terms of practical applications, it is argued that there is no correlation in Maslow's theory between employee motivation and employee performance (Beardwell & Claydon, 2007; Crooks, 1997).

Contrasted to the above limitations, this review established that there is correlation existing between employee motivation and employees' performance (Alam & Farid 2011; Naomi et al, 2012). Therefore, the Hierarchy of Needs theory is not only relevant for the sake of establishing how teachers' categories of needs as identified by Abraham Maslow, can be fulfilled, but also to fill gaps in literature as these gap relates to the correlation existing between employee motivation and employee performance as raised by various authors (Beardwell & Claydon 2007; Crooks, 1997).

### 3.2 Two-Factor theory

Fredrick Herzberg's motivation theory builds on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory with regard to categorising employees' work-related needs, named Two-Factor theory. In the context of Two-Factor theory, Herzberg categorised human needs into two main groups. Herzberg constructed a two-dimensional paradigm of factors affecting employees' attitudes about work (Gawel, 1997), as compared to Maslow's five-dimensional paradigm. Herzberg distinguishes these factors as motivators and hygiene factors (demotivators). These factors are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Herzberg's hygiene factors and motivators

Hygiene Factors	Motivators
Organisational policies	The quality of work itself
Supervision	Recognition for achievement

Work security	Opportunity for advancement
Interpersonal relations	Responsibility
Salary	Personal development
Working environment	Training

Source: Van der Westhuizen (1991)

Table 1 above shows that factors such as organisational policies, supervision, working conditions and salary are hygiene factors (demotivators). These are factors whose presence ensures that employees perform at a minimum level, but do not induce motivation which enables employees to perform optimally (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011). The absence of hygiene factors can create work dissatisfaction, but their presence does not necessarily motivate employees. On the contrary, Herzberg also identified factors such as the work itself, achievement and recognition as strong determinants of employee motivation. Herzberg called these factors motivators, because their presence energises employees to work hard.

#### 3.2.1 Merits of Two-Factor theory

Thomas Sergiovanni tested Herzberg's theory with teachers and concluded that achievement, recognition and responsibility contributed to teacher motivation (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). Two-factor theory has contributed substantially to school leaders' thinking of what motivates teachers by distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic factors. For example, teachers were demotivated as a result of poor interpersonal relations with learners and other teachers, unconstructive leadership styles, and ineffective school policies and administrative practices (Adjei & Amofa 2014). Therefore, the theory informs organisational leaders on how they can nurture hygiene factors to serve employees best and improve performance.

#### 3.2.2 Demerits of Two-Factor theory

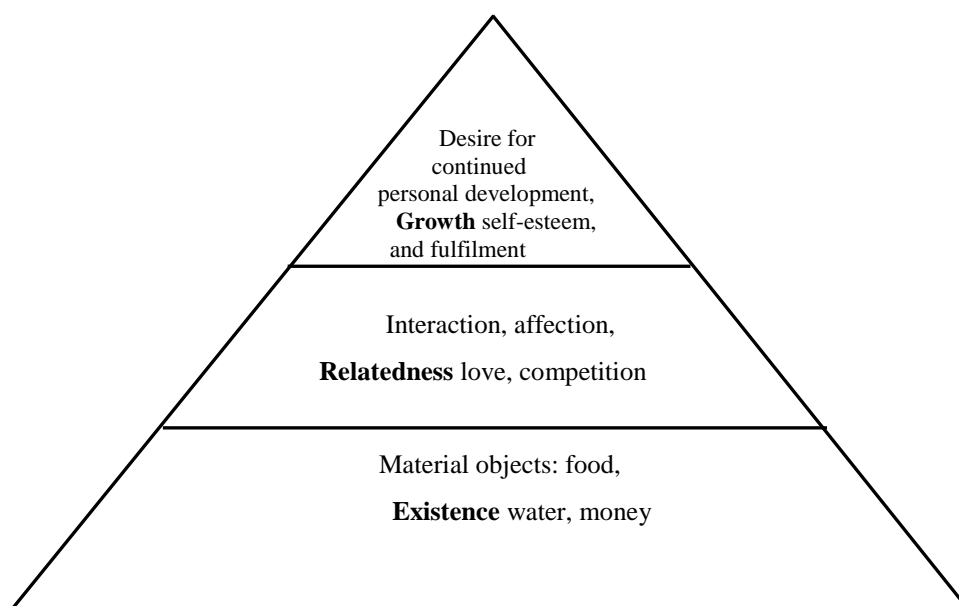
Similarly to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, critics of Herzberg's Two-Factor theory assert that Herzberg's Two-Factor theory focuses on employee satisfaction, instead of focusing on the actual employee motivation and employee performance (Lunenburg and Ornstein, 2008). The methodology that Herzberg used to obtain his hygiene factors and motivators was levelled as being too subjective and lacking empirical basis (Malik & Naeem, 2013). Another flaw with Herzberg's theory lies in the fact that hygiene and motivators are individual-based. A hygiene factor to one person, might be a motivators to another person, and vice versa. Therefore, the empirical criticism being levelled against Maslow's theory, can be well replicated to Herzberg's theory, due to the social nature of humanity. This criticism becomes more relevant for the mere fact that Herzberg's theory is pretty much a reduced hierarchical classification of Maslow's theory to a summary of factors that are not presented in a hierarchical fashion.

Distinguishing between hygiene factors and motivators, it becomes clear that hygiene factors are environmental factors, as they pertain to the context in which the work is done. On the other hand, motivators are factors relative to the content of the work being done by the employees. This review focused on both the context in which teachers work and the content of their work, and established how the context and content of teaching influenced teachers' motivation and subsequent performance.

### 3.3 Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory

Clayton Alderfer's Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory is an extension of Herzberg's and Maslow's theories of motivation. ERG summarises Maslow and Herzberg's theories and classifies human needs into three categories namely, existence, relatedness and growth needs. These needs are shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Alderfer's ERG theory



Source: Sharifzadeh (2015)

Figure 2 above illustrates that Alderfer concurs with Maslow pertaining to the hierarchical structure of human needs. However, Alderfer summarised and grouped Maslow's needs into three categories, thereby reducing Maslow's five-level hierarchy to a three-level hierarchy. The existence needs of Alderfer comprises all forms of physiological and material desires such as food, water and shelter. Alderfer's existence needs corresponds to Maslow's psychological and safety needs.

The relatedness needs of Alderfer's hierarchy include all needs that involve interpersonal relationships with fellow employees and supervisors. The relatedness needs correspond with Maslow's belongingness and self-esteem needs. The growth needs concern an individual's intrinsic desire to grow and fulfil human potential. Alderfer's growth needs correspond to Maslow's self-actualisation needs.

While Maslow believes in a satisfaction-progression hypothesis, Alderfer contends that several needs can be experienced at the same time. Alderfer disputes Maslow's notion that a satisfied need is no longer compelling as a motivator like an unsatisfied need, and proposed a frustration-regression hypothesis, whereby an individual will seek further

satisfaction of a lower level need if the fulfilment of the high level need is not achieved (Crooks, 1997).

#### 3.3.1 Merits of Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory

The ERG theory made a useful contribution to motivation theory, by reducing Maslow's five categories to three categories of human needs. Unlike satisfaction-progression hypothesis, ERG theory proves that a group of needs can be satisfied at the same time. In addition, employees may seek satisfaction of lower needs if high level needs are not achieved, and then derive satisfaction from a further satisfaction of a lower need.

#### 3.3.2 Demerits of Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory

Common with the criticism levelled against Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, Crooks (1997) emphasises that the ERG theory fails to address a number of issues of which the following two are the major ones. Firstly, human motivation is subjective, what is perceived by one person as a satisfying need may not be a satisfying need for another person. Secondly, not only do needs vary, but human behaviours as a

result of an unsatisfied or satisfied need may also vary. Therefore, it can be argued that employee behaviours such as turnover and transfer from one location to another might be a result of either satisfied or unsatisfied needs at the workplace.

### 3.4 Expectancy theory

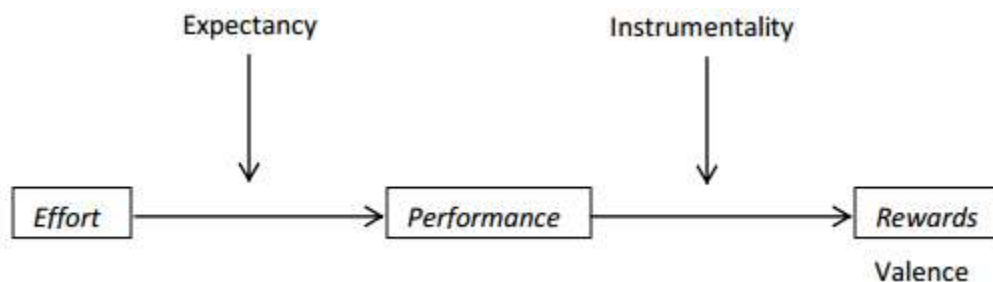
The needs theories for motivation by Alderfer, Herzberg and Maslow explain the contextual and content necessities that motivate employees in the workplace. Expectancy theory is concerned with the cognitive aspects and necessities involved with motivation and the way these cognitive aspects relate to each other (Lunenburg, 2011). The Expectancy theory was first developed by Victor Vroom then expanded and refined by Porter and Lawler. Expectancy theory is a cognitive process theory of motivation that is based on the idea that people believe there are relationships between the effort they put forth at work, the performance they achieve from that effort, and the rewards they receive for their performance (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). Employees are highly

motivated if they believe that good efforts will lead to good performance and good performance will lead to desired rewards.

Expectancy theory is based on four assumptions (Lunenburg, 2011). Firstly, employees join organisations with expectations about their needs, motivations and past experiences. These expectations influence how employees react to the organisation. Secondly, an employee's behaviour is the result of conscious choice. This implies that employees' expectations determine their behaviour in organisations.

Thirdly, different employees want different things from the organisation, such as good salary, work security, advancement and challenges. Fourthly, employees will choose among alternatives to optimise personal outcomes for them. These assumptions and employee expectations led the expectancy theory to have three key elements, namely, expectancy, instrumentality and valence (Lunenburg, 2011). These key elements are shown in Figure 2.3 below.

Figure 3: The key elements of Expectancy theory



Source: Lunenburg (2011)

Figure 3 above shows that the expectancy is an employee's estimate of the probability that job-related effort will result in a given level of performance. Expectancy is based on probabilities and ranges from 0 to 1 (Lunenburg, 2011). If an employee sees no chance that effort will lead to the desired performance level, the expectancy is 0. On the other hand, if the employee is completely certain that the task will be completed given the effort made, the expectancy has a value of 1. Employee estimates of expectancy lie between two extremes, effort and performance. Between these two extremes, lies two null and alternate assumptions, of whether the efforts exerted will not produce the required level of performance (expectancy is 0), or the efforts made will produce the required level of performance (expectancy is 1).

Instrumentality is an employee's estimate of the probability that a given level of achieved task performance will lead to various work outcomes (Parijat & Bagga, 2014). As with expectancy, instrumentality ranges from 0 to 1. For example, if an employee sees that a good performance will always result in a salary increase, the instrumentality has a value of 1. If there is no perceived relationship between a good performance rating and a salary increase, then the instrumentality is 0. As cognitive processes, individual employees shape their own outlook of expectancy and

instrumentality as informed by the four assumptions explained above.

Valence is the strength of an employee's preference for a particular reward (Parijat & Bagga, 2014). Thus, salary increases, promotion, peer acceptance, recognition by supervisors or any other reward might have more or less value to individual employees. Unlike expectancy and instrumentality, valences can be either positive or negative. If an employee has a strong preference for attaining a reward, valence is positive. If the employee has a weak preference for attaining a reward, valence is negative (Lunenburg, 2011).

The total range for a valence is from -1 to +1, implying that the employee can have both a strong and a weak preference for attaining a reward. If an employee is not satisfied with the reward, valence is -1, if the employee is satisfied with the reward, valence is +1 (Parijat & Bagga, 2014). Theoretically, a reward has a valence because it is related to an employee's needs. This implies that employees are likely to perform because they have their needs satisfied that are important to them. Therefore, valence is closely linked to the needs theories of motivation by Alderfer, Herzberg and Maslow.

An employee is motivated to the degree that he or she believes that the degree of effort (expectancy), will lead to acceptable

performance standard, and performance standard achieved, will be rewarded (instrumentality), and the value of the rewards is highly positive (valence). Applied to this study which focused on teacher motivation, Expectancy theory is relevant as it will help in determining whether the efforts (expectancy) teachers exerted to increase their performance (instrumentality), indeed worth the rewards (valence) they receive.

#### *3.4.1 Merits of Expectancy theory*

The theory informs employers that motivation can be a cognitive process, from an employees' own perspective. How the employees conceptualise the works, informs the degree to which they will commit themselves in getting the work done. The theory informs employers to revisit the rewards given to employees, and makes them realistic to the level of performance achieved and degree of efforts invested. This help to create a balance between the efforts, performance and rewards, the imbalance of which will demotivate employees.

#### *3.4.2 Demerits of Expectancy theory*

The theory is cognitive-oriented and social in nature, thus making it difficult for employers to figure out the specific motivational needs for individual employees. This is because individual employees have different expectations and needs, known to them, which they would like to be fulfilled by the organisation. Motivation being individual based, also makes it difficult for individual employees to state to their employers, their unique expectations from the organisation, which might ignite their motivation. Employees may then keep quiet and carry on with what is available, which may compromise their motivation.

Due to the unique preference of needs, what matters for one employee such as job security, may not matter for another employee, who might be interested in salary increment. Thus, this theory might be complicated for application in work settings consisting of people of different origins such as, race, ethnicity, tribes, culture, norms and values. It is these origins which informs their expectations and assumptions in the organisation and how they would want to be motivated, and it is not always easy for employers to figure out the motivational needs for each and every employee or for a group of people of the same origin.

#### *3.5 Equity theory*

Another motivation theory similar to the Expectancy theory is Porter and Lawler's Equity theory, which asserts that employees hold certain beliefs about their work in relation to the inputs they invest in to obtain the outcomes (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). The inputs to employment refer to all the efforts that employees make to execute work. These inputs include education, experience and training (Hofmans, 2012). The outcomes of employment refer to all the rewards an employee receives for executing the work, and they include salary, promotions, job security and working conditions (De Gieter, De Cooman, Hofmans, Pepermans & Jegers, 2012).

Employees evaluate the fairness of their employment by comparing their ratio of outcomes to inputs, with the anticipation that the ratio of outcomes to inputs will be equitable. When the ratios are equal, employees feel that a fair and equitable exchange exists with the employer. When the ratios are not equal in the sense of inputs being equivalent to outcomes, employees experience the situation as one consisting of inequities which can reduce employee motivation.

If there are inequities, an employee may engage in certain behaviours to restore equity (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). An employee who feels underpaid may contribute less time and efforts to the job, whereas an employee who feels overpaid may work extra hours without pay. Alternatively, an underpaid employee can request a transfer or leave the organisation. Over payment as a positive inequity have motivated employees to increase their performance (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). In addition, overpayment inequity appears to work best with those who have a strong conscience and a sense of what is ethically appropriate. On the other hand, underpayment, as a negative inequity, causes absenteeism and turnover.

#### *3.5.1 Merits of Equity theory*

The theory strikes the balance between the work done and the rewards given to employees. This prevents inequity in the workplace and ensure a realistic reward to employees for the work done. The theory informs employers of the certain behaviours that employees may display, and realise that it might be a result of inequities in the organisation. This may then attract remedies from employers to eradicate inequities in the organisation.

#### *3.5.2 Demerits of Equity theory*

Similar to the criticism levelled against social nature and cognitive basis of the expectancy theory, it is argued that the judging of fairness by employees in the equity theory lacks credibility since it is based on employees' own perceptions which may not necessarily be valid (Hofmans, 2012). Another criticism of equity theory is the inability to predict what employees regard as inequity and which methods employees will use to restore equity. This makes it difficult for employers not to be aware of the areas of inequities from employees' perspectives in order to implement appropriate measures to address such inequities (Grant & Shin, 2011).

#### *3.6 Goal-setting theory*

The Goal-Setting theory emphasises that organisations and employees set goals which direct their attention and actions (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008). The goal-setting theory was pioneered by Edwin Locke and Gary Latham, and emphasises the importance of organisations in setting goals that lead to high performance and motivated employees. Goal-Setting theory states that challenging goals mobilise energy, lead to higher efforts and increase productivity. Locke believes that goals motivate employees to develop strategies that will

enable them to perform at the required level. Accomplishing a set goal can lead to employee satisfaction and increased motivation. On the contrary, if the goal is not accomplished it can result in frustration and lower levels of motivation.

Applied to the context of this study which focused on teacher motivation, it can be argued that schools which do not set challenging goals are likely to have low levels of performance, since teachers do not set high targets to achieve. This result in low teacher motivation and low learner performance. Teachers may also set their own goals to pursue which may require them to leave the schools in pursuit of attaining their goals.

### *3.6.1 Merits of Goal-Setting theory*

The theory informs employees that motivation is not the sole responsibility of the employer, but that employees too are responsible for setting goals relative to their work, which they should aspire to attain. The theory emphasis the need for employers and employees to mobilise resources and craft common organisational goals that all employees should strive to achieve. The goal in itself, is a motivating factor, as it has to be achieved, the absence of which remain a demotivating factor as there is nothing to be achieved.

### *3.6.2 Demerits of Goal-Setting theory*

Different employees may have different goals to achieve which may not be in line with organisational goals. Such employees may remain motivated to achieve individual goals other than organisational goals, especially if the organisational goal carries no weight for them. It is also difficult for employers to determine who to employ and whose conduct will be in tandem with the organisational goals, as all prospective employees usually commits to be loyal to the organisational ideals, values and goals. Since employees join organisations with different expectations, upon employment employees may set own goals to achieve other than that of the organisation. This deviate goal setting may compromise organisational quality of output.

## **IV. THEORETICAL THEMES INFLUENCING TEACHER MOTIVATION AND PERFORMANCE**

The above discussions of the different motivational theories informed a focus on the themes which influence teacher motivation. These themes relates to; the work itself, rewards and compensation, working conditions and professional growth. These themes are discussed next, as answers the review sought to uncover and explain.

### *4.1 The work itself*

An investigation into the relationship between the quality of work life and employee motivation in Tehran, found that the quality of the work improves employee motivation (Sasan & Yahya, 2012). Similar findings also revealed that teachers who experience satisfaction at their school or satisfaction with the profession of teaching are motivated to remain in the profession (Beverly, Vicki & George, 2008). This implies that

the nature and quality of the work teachers are involved in plays a vital role in their motivation. However, Beverly et al (2008:3) contradict the idea of satisfaction at school and put more emphasis on professional loyalty. The authors argue that teachers who choose teaching as their profession because of inherent professional values and loyalty to the profession are more satisfied and motivated than those whose entry into the profession is solely for economic reasons.

Job satisfaction acts as a motivation to work as it results in a positive psychological effect for employees as a consequence of their happiness and feeling of content with their work (Rao, 2005; Saleem, Mahmood & Mahmood, 2010). Job satisfaction enhances job involvement resulting in loyalty and commitment which leads to better performance by employees (Wright & Pandey, 2005; Velnampy, 2008). Therefore, it is clear that employees who are satisfied with their work are also motivated employees.

Authors such as Horwitz, Heng and Quazi (2003) makes Herzberg's theory more pertinent on teacher motivation by confirming that employees are motivated by challenging work and support of management, which Herzberg classified as motivators. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory as it applies to self-actualisation as the highest need for humans is hailed by Saleem et al, (2010) and Locke and Latham (2004) who emphasises that challenging work is the best motivator as it enables employees to be more competitive, work with efficiency and utilise their full capabilities.

Employees aspires for work characteristics such as a meaningful job, sufficient remuneration, job security, good relationships with colleagues, recognition and credit for work well done, opportunities for promotion and advancement, a comfortable, safe and attractive work environment, competent and fair leadership, and reasonable order and directions from authorities (Islam & Ismail, 2008).

These job characteristics and needs finds relevance in the ERG theory, due to correlations with employees' needs for meaningful 'Existence', which communicates to meaningful work, remuneration and job security. These job characteristics also entails employees' 'Relatedness' needs, which include good relationships with colleagues, recognition, and credit for work well done, as well as employees' 'Growth' needs, which covers opportunities for promotion and advancement. On this basis, a fulfilling work should be characterised by assembling all the different needs of employees. This ensures that employees are not deficient of any work-related needs not met.

In meeting these needs, Caulton (2012) urges employers to listen to their employees, value and respect their employees' dignity, inputs and contributions to work in order to develop and sustain employees' positive mind-sets about their work. The importance of a positive mind-set about the work and workplace relates to the fact that employees regard their work as a place to find personal meaning, stability, positive relationships and positive feelings (Cartwright & Holmes,

2006; Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002; Wagner & Harter, 2006). Job satisfaction in education results in higher levels of teacher retention and high levels of performance (Christopher, 2014; Dugguh & Dennis, 2014; Giacometti, 2005). Thus, job satisfaction and loyalty to the profession and its challenging nature in the sense of utilising teachers' full potential, are indeed motivators for teachers to stay committed to their teaching service.

In spite of the above positive work anticipations by employees, which include teachers, the job can also be a place of frustration and disengagement for many employees (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006). This is because employees are faced with demands of increasing expectations by stakeholders to produce more for less reward, often with fewer resources and unclear expectations in an environment with limited support services (Covey, 2004; Shuck & Wollard, 2008). This is what Herzberg (1993) refers to as hygiene factors as these factors cause employee dissatisfaction at the workplace and ultimately low morale and motivation. These work frustrations also relate to Vroom's Expectant theory insofar as requiring from employers to provide employees with reasonable work demands and with remuneration that is equivalent to the work demands and that meets the expectations of the employees.

When employment needs are not met, employee stress increases, resulting in disengaged employees in the workplace (Cartwright & Homes, 2006; Harter et al, 2002). Disengaged employees distance themselves from the rational and emotional components of work (Akinfolarin & Akomolafe, 2011). Disengaged employees are physically present at the workplace, but they do not have the energy and passion to execute their work, thereby compromising output (Shuck & Wollard, 2008).

Disengagement from work results in employees starting to withdraw from their working teams and eventually from the work. Applied to teacher motivation, teachers' attrition and poor performance in schools, can be attributed to the absence of appropriate teacher motivation strategies with regard to profession-related fulfilments such as motivating teachers to have passion towards their work.

#### *4.2 Rewards and compensation*

A study conducted in Nigerian public schools on the influence of teacher incentive on learner performance, revealed that teachers who are motivated as a result of an incentive teach more effectively than those teachers who are not motivated at all (Akpan, 2013). Carraher, Gibson and Buckley (2006) are stressing for an effective reward system to retain the high performers in the organisation and reward should be related to their productivity.

Rewards can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic rewards are rewards inherent to the work itself like the satisfaction experienced from completing a task successfully, experiencing appreciation from authorities and autonomy,

while extrinsic rewards are tangible rewards external to the work itself like remuneration, bonuses, fringe benefits, and promotions (Gagne & Deci, 2005; Mahadi & Jafari, 2012). In order to maximise the performance of employees, organisations should formulate a reward system policy to increase and sustain employee motivation (Hafiza, Shah, Jamsheed & Zaman, 2011).

Rewarding employees relates to the Expectant theory, which emphasises that employees are more likely to strive in their work if there is an anticipated reward they value in return for the work done. Fulfilling work-related needs such as reasonable remuneration, recognition for good work done, participation in decision making and a generally conducive working environment reaffirms Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory relating to basic and esteem needs. The fact that teachers ranked wages and salaries as their most important motivational factor (Adjei & Amofa, 2014), proves the hierarchical functioning of Maslow's needs theory, which is thus relevant. School managers should ensure that teachers' remuneration is reasonably serving as a motivational factor.

When teachers feel that they are not paid according to their capabilities and performance, they will be demotivated, resulting in serious repercussions against learner performance. Schools should therefore provide all the essential fringe benefits to their employees and pay teachers according to their qualifications and capabilities in order to increase their work motivation and performance.

#### *4.3 Working conditions*

A physical environment that is conducive to teaching and learning enhances work performance and serves as a motivating factor for both learners and teachers (Akpan, 2013). In many developing countries, teachers' physical working conditions are not supportive and thus lower their motivation and commitment to teach (Gatsinzi et al, 2014). One of the factors inhibiting motivation and a positive teaching and learning environment is overcrowded classrooms. The factors accompanying over-crowded classrooms such as a less supportive parent community and less disciplinary control over learners, results in demotivated teachers (Ingersoll, 2001; Okuni, 2003). In many instances, lack of proper housing for teachers also serves as a demotivating factor. With regard to proper housing, many teachers teaching in rural environments have to resort to makeshift housing since schools have no accommodation for staff (Alam & Farid, 2011; Gatsinzi, Jesse & Makewa, 2014).

An attempt at solving the problem of overcrowded classrooms by teaching some learners of the same class in the morning session while others are taught in the afternoon session impacts negatively on teachers in terms of commitment and motivation. As the same teachers teach both sessions, such practice creates harsh working conditions for teachers (Gatsinzi et al, 2014).

Related to overcrowded classrooms is the lack of sufficient instructional materials accompanied by unsupportive management, and the perception of being devalued by the society (VSO, 2003). Buckley, Schneider and Shang (2004) found the quality of school facilities as an important predictor of teacher retention and attrition. Teachers who are dissatisfied with the quality of their physical working conditions seek employment at other schools with more supportive environments (Buckley et al, 2004; Gatsinzi et al, 2014).

Salifu and Agbenyega (2013) emphasise that to ensure teachers' commitment to their duties, it is important that their physical and material working environment be improved by reducing class size for effective classroom management, providing adequate teaching and learning materials to facilitate pedagogical delivery, making available enough furniture to cater for every learner, ensuring an opportunity for professional upgrading and paying teachers' salaries that are reasonable to guarantee them decent lives. Such working conditions could enable both the attraction and retention of teachers of high academic quality into the teaching profession.

The quality of the working environment and working conditions determine the motivation of teachers by dictating whether teachers should leave or remain in the teaching profession. The views of Buckley et al (2004) and Gatsinzi et al (2014) on teachers seeking employment elsewhere for career growth represent the realities of Alderfer's (1972) ERG theory. Applied to teacher motivation, teachers could leave the environment in which their existence, relatedness and growth needs were not met and pursue careers in working environments that were supportive of their aspiring needs. Working conditions should therefore be made favourable in order to motivate and retain teachers.

#### *4.4 Professional growth*

Scholars reveal that effective schools are successful in creating professional environments that enable teachers to accomplish their tasks, to participate in decisions affecting their work, to have reasonable autonomy in executing their duties, to share a common purpose, to receive recognition, to be treated with respect and dignity by others, to work together as colleagues and to be provided with ample staff development opportunities to help them develop their horizons further (Gatsinzi et al, 2014). This results in teachers being creative, persistent and committed to their work as teachers' professional conduct and work performance is influenced by motivational factors that are aligned to their professional needs (Nzulwa, 2014). If teachers' motivation is not in line with teachers' professional needs, teachers do not exhibit desired professional conduct. Hence professional development programmes should be tailored to meet teachers' professional needs and aspirations (Alam & Farid, 2011).

Teachers experience professional satisfaction and growth differently. In the United Kingdom, teacher motivation and satisfaction are related to working with learners while

dissatisfaction is related to work overload, poor remuneration and recognition by society (Gatsinzi et al, 2014). Other studies reveal that teachers prefer to be motivated by factors such as professional training, incentive and salary commensurate with their qualification, and they are demotivated by learners' poor behaviour and teachers' low socio-economic status (Alam & Farid, 2011; Ud Din, Tufail, Shereen, Nawax & Shabbaz, 2012). Henceforth, professional related factors and reasonable compensation packages can help to retain high performing teachers who are highly motivated (Nzulwa, 2014).

Teacher motivational factors are in line with Herzberg's Two-Factor theory of motivators and demotivators, in that; enjoying the content of the work itself (working with learners) represents a motivator, whereas the context of the work (work overload, learners' behaviour and socio-economic status) refers to demotivators. For teachers to be highly motivated, they need a high level of professional autonomy, an intellectual challenge and a feeling that they are benefiting the society (Gatsinzi et al, 2014).

Teachers' turnover and low performance can be attributed to a lack of professional autonomy and intellectual challenge in their profession. Teachers' need for intellectual challenge can be related to the Goal-Setting theory, in the sense that if a specific school does not have clear-cut goals, teachers will be prompted to set their own goals that challenge their intellectual and professional capabilities. As a result, some teachers may desert their schools in pursuit of their goals. The argument is that when teachers are motivated intellectually, such as having a set goal to achieve, they remain responsible and committed to their profession (Salifu & Agbenyega, 2013). A high sense of teacher responsibility and professional commitment could improve learner performance.

#### **V. SUMMARY**

This article reviewed the theoretical frameworks on motivation, which could be applied to motivate teachers at schools. The theories reviewed relate to Hierarchy of Needs theory, which grouped human motivational needs into a hierarchy of five categories, according to their level of priority in human satisfaction. Similar to Hierarchy of needs theory, is a Two-Factor theory, which describes motivation as a function of two factors, motivators and demotivators. Motivators are job-content related, whereas demotivators are job-context related. Existence, Relatedness and Growth (ERG) theory is another motivational theory which minimised the five hierarchical levels of Hierarchy of Needs theory into three levels, namely, existence needs, relatedness needs and growth needs.

Expectancy theory emphasises that employees exert a degree of efforts in their work, with the expectation that their degree of efforts will produce a desired standard of performance, and that the achieved level of performance will be justifiably rewarded. Not far from the Expectancy theory is the Equity theory, which seeks to strike the balance between the job done and the rewards given to employees. The study also reviewed

Goal-setting theory, which asserts that employers and employees should set realistic goals and be motivated to achieve the set goals.

The analysis of the reviewed theoretical frameworks culminated into four main themes which influence teachers' motivation and performance. These themes relate to; firstly, the work itself, such that employers should ensure that the content of the job is satisfying and instil passion and commitment among employees. Secondly, teachers should be justifiably rewarded and compensated for the work they do, in order for them to be motivated and retained in the teaching profession. Thirdly, the working condition of teachers should be made conducive and supportive to teaching and learning, in order to retain a motivated teaching force, dedicated to the improvement of school performance. Fourthly, teachers are motivated by opportunities for professional development and growth in order to keep themselves abreast with latest trends in their field. The theories provide sound basis on how the above mentioned themes can be applied in school settings, in pursuit of a motivated teaching force for improved productivity.

## VI. CONCLUSION

It is a foregone deduction that motivational theories can be contextualised into the education setting. The theories offers motivational frameworks that can be applied in education to motivate teachers and increase their standard of performance. The motivational theories as diverse as they are, covers a wide spectrum of issues and needs that might be of interests for employees such as teaches, and how such issues can be nurtured. It is important that employers are well informed with the various theories of motivation, and apply the theories in their work setting to motivate their employees for improved quality of output. The fact that organisation such as schools, experience staff turnover periodically, and attain performance levels that are not quite impressive, can be attributed to inadequate conceptualisation and application thereof, of the various motivational theories in their work environment. Good comprehension of the motivational theories and correct application thereof may be useful in ensuring motivated workforces in organisation such as schools.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the above findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

- Employers such as directorate of education should ensure that the teaching profession is made attractive to prospective employees so that employees enjoy the job itself. The teaching profession can be made a meaningful job and attractive by paying attention to work characteristics such as, sufficient remuneration, job security, recognition and credit for work well done, opportunities for promotion and advancement. A job with a good blend of these characteristics with

instil interest, confidence and commitment among teachers to remain in the teaching profession.

- The Ministry of education should maximize the rewards and compensation strategies such as incentives and fringe benefits, to ensure that teachers are well rewarded and compensated for the work done. The rewards should be realistic to the work done, and should be given well on time.
- The working environment such as schools, should be made conducive not to compromise the safety and security of teachers and their learners. The government should provide sufficient infrastructures and facilities to render teaching and learning effective at schools.
- The Ministry of education should provide ample opportunities for teachers to take part in professional development endeavours. Interventions such as study bursaries and exchange programmes may motivate teachers to commit to the teaching profession, while keeping themselves abreast with the latest trend in their field.

The successful consideration and implementation of the above recommendations, could be useful in motivating teachers at schools, to teach effectively and improve school performance through increased learner achievements.

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