Board of Governors and Teachers' Performance in Government-Aided Secondary Schools in Amuru District: A Case Study of Pabo Secondary School

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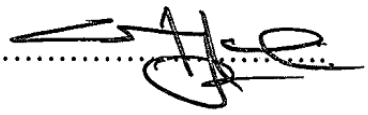
DES (KU)

A Dissertation Submitted to the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training, in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the Award of a Master's Degree in Educational Management of Gulu University

September 2026

Declaration

I, Charles Oola, hereby declare that this research dissertation (Board of Governors and Teachers' Performance in Secondary Schools in Amuru District) is original and, to the best of my knowledge, has never been submitted to any University or Institution for any award.

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Approval

This research dissertation, entitled "*Board of Governors and Teachers' Performance in Secondary Schools in Amuru District: A Case Study of Pabo Secondary School''* has been submitted for examination to the Graduate School under the supervision and approval of the following supervisors on behalf of Gulu University.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved wife Acan Lucy and children Olara Daniel Oola, Ouma Timothy and Rwotomiya Emmanuel.

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List of Acronyms

BOG - Board of Governors

DEO - District Education Officer

FGD - Focus Group Discussion

MoES - Ministry of Education and Sports

SD - Standard Deviation

SPSS - Statistical Package for Social Sciences

SS - Secondary School

UCE - Uganda Certificate of Education

UPE - Universal Primary Education

USE - Universal Secondary Education

Abstract

This study investigated the influence of Boards of Governors (BOGs) on teachers' performance in government-aided secondary schools in Amuru District, using Pabo Secondary School as a case study. The study was guided by three objectives: to investigate the influence of the governing role of BOGs on teachers' performance; to explore the influence of BOG financial rewards on teachers' performance; and to examine the influence of BOG non-financial rewards on teachers' performance. The study adopted a mixed-methods single-case study design, with a qualitative-dominant orientation, underpinned by Systems Theory and supplemented by motivation theories. Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire administered to 30 teachers, semi-structured oral interviews with 5 BOG members, 4 District Education Staff, and the Head Teacher, and two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with teachers. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression in SPSS version 25. Qualitative data were analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework. The findings revealed that the governing role of BOGs had a moderate positive influence on teachers' performance (mean = 3.17, $r = 0.489$, $p < 0.05$). However, qualitative evidence showed limited direct engagement between the BOG and teachers, inconsistent resource allocation, weak follow-up on accountability mechanisms, and a gap between strategic planning and implementation. Financial rewards were perceived negatively (mean = 2.21) but showed a moderate positive correlation with teacher performance ($r = 0.423$, $p < 0.05$). Teachers reported salary delays, absence of performance-based bonuses, lack of professional development support, and unequal distribution of available incentives. Non-financial rewards had a borderline positive perception (mean = 2.59), yet recorded the strongest correlation ($r = 0.512$, $p < 0.01$) and were the only statistically significant predictor of teacher performance in regression analysis ($\beta = 0.389$, $p = 0.021$). Recognition was valued but remained occasional, informal, and detached from BOG practice, while teachers felt excluded from decision-making. Together, the three BOG variables explained 34.5% of teacher performance variance. The study concludes that BOGs influence performance unevenly: non-financial rewards exert the strongest effect, governing roles follow, and financial rewards remain weakest due to structural and resource constraints. It recommends formalizing recognition, establishing a teacher engagement committee, systematizing performance tracking, mandating governance training, and addressing salary delays.

Chapter one

Introduction and Background to the Study

1.0 Overview

Worldwide, there is overwhelming pressure to improve teachers' performance in educational institutions (Dee & Wyckoff, 2015; Fitria, 2018). This is because teacher performance is critical in determining the quality of learning in secondary schools. This can be enhanced by identifying, facilitating, developing, and maintaining teachers' performance, among other ways, to achieve school goals (Sumarsono et al., 2019). This backdrop, therefore, forms the basis of this study. This specific chapter presents the background to the study, problem statement, purpose, and specific objectives of the study, research questions, hypothesis, conceptual framework, significance, and justification, scope of the study as well as operational definitions of key concepts used in the study.

1.1 Background to the study

This section is divided into four sub-sections, mainly historical, theoretical, conceptual, and contextual perspectives.

1.1.1 Historical Perspective

Globally, teachers' performance over the years has been identified among other factors that can influence general academic performance in a school environment (Akiri, 2013). In several European countries such as England, France and Denmark, the regulation of education systems has led to greater control over the work of teachers and the performance of both primary and secondary schools (Osborn, 2006). While most developing countries have varying learning needs, Avalos (2011) observed that teachers' performance is intertwined with the traditions, cultural morals, and policy environment and school conditions of a country. Specifically, in Sub-Saharan Africa, which greatly depends on the international donor community, teachers' performance has, over the past 10 years, been regarded as a factor of concern to achieve better performance in secondary schools (Alexander, 2008). In Uganda, Naluwemba et al. (2016) noted that fulfillment of people's needs and motivations fundamentally influenced teachers' performance.

Historically, education during the medieval era was mostly limited to the clergy and the nobility. Teachers in monasteries and cathedral schools played a significant role in educating the elite of society. One notable landmark during this period was the establishment of the University of Bologna in 1088, one of the oldest in the world that set a standard for higher education and influenced teaching practices in subsequent centuries. Equally, the work of notable scholar-teachers like Alcuin of York in the Carolingian Empire and Thomas Aquinas in the scholastic period contributed to the development of teaching methods and the curriculum (Ruegg, 2003). During the Roman era, Wraga (1993) observed that education was primarily for the elite class, and teachers played a crucial role in imparting knowledge to the youth. He also noted that the significant landmark during this era was the development of the Roman educational system, which included the trivium (grammar, rhetoric, and logic) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy). In such a case, teachers who were commonly known as litteratores, were meant to provide education in private schools or through private tutors for wealthier families. The Roman philosopher and statesman Seneca, who served as a tutor to Emperor Nero, exemplified the influence and importance of teachers during this period.

Furthermore, during the 19^{th}-21^{st} centuries, significant advancements were made in the field of education, leading to professionalization of teaching and the introduction of modern teaching methodologies. Darling-Hammond (2000) pointed out the establishment of normal schools, as a landmark event especially in the 19^{th} century. These schools trained teachers in pedagogy and subject knowledge. In the late 20^{th} and early 21^{st} centuries, the integration of technology in education and the move towards student centered learning in secondary schools across the world, have shaped teaching practices and boosted teachers' performance through improved and readily available teaching-learning resources (US-Department of Education, 2004)

Generally, Dahya et al. (2008) argued that teachers' performance heavily relies on teachers' form(s) of motivation and commitment, which should be the same case with private owned schools. However, all these among others are considerations and roles supposed to be engineered by the governing boards operating in respective secondary schools for effective performance of such educational institutions as a whole. This is line with the emphasis put forward by Kroll et al (1997), who argues that the role(s) played by a BOG, such as committee role and finance

expertise, are key to the general performance of a secondary school. This line of historical argument is what has guided this study, so as to explore the influence of the roles of BOG on teachers' performance in selected government-aided secondary schools in Amuru District.

1.1.2 Theoretical Perspective

This study was underpinned by Systems theory by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1901 - 1972). This theory states that a complex system is made up of smaller systems, and it is the interactions between them that create a complex system. It further assumes that certain underlying concepts and principles can be applied universally in different fields, even if those fields evolved separately.

In relation to this study, the Systems Theory views organizations (like schools) as open systems that interact with their environment. In this case, a secondary school in Amuru District interacts with external entities such as the government, community, Ministry of Education, and internal components such as the Board of Governors, teachers, and students. Hence, the Board of Governors represents a governance subsystem within this open system, and teachers form the instructional subsystem. Their performance and effectiveness depend on how these subsystems interact. Also, since the theory emphasizes that all components of a system are interrelated and interdependent, the BOG's decisions on resource allocation, disciplinary policies, and motivation schemes directly affect teachers' working conditions, morale, and ultimately their performance. Hence, a breakdown or inefficiency in the governance function (Board of Governors) disrupts teaching quality. Therefore, this theory was relevant to this study as it helped to analyze how the BOGs' composition, decision-making processes, communication channels, and resource control influence teacher effectiveness in Amuru's socio-educational context.

The study also draws on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Vroom's Expectancy Theory, and Adams' Equity Theory to explain how financial and non-financial rewards influence teacher performance. These theories are reviewed in detail in Chapter Two.

1.1.3 Contextual Perspective

The study was conducted in Amuru District. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports (2008), teachers' performance in Amuru District, especially in rural areas, is low. This is

manifested through limited teaching resources and instructional materials, low school revenue collections, and generally low motivation from school administrators and BOGs. This explains why there has been low academic performance in the district, arising from low performance of teachers. This is seen through low-quality education and poor students' academic performance in national examinations in Northern Uganda (Stephen, 2023).

The study focuses specifically on teachers' performance, defined as the extent to which teachers fulfil their professional duties, including regular attendance, quality of work, initiative, creativity, and commitment to school activities. Academic performance is treated as one outcome of teacher performance, not as the central topic. This ensures conceptual clarity and consistency throughout the study.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Globally, teacher performance at secondary schools has been influenced by numerous factors, among which include poor pay, job dissatisfaction, and less control, as identified by Hanushek and Rivkin (2007). In Uganda, the teachers' performance seems low as indicated by Mukasa and Owiny (2017), who noted that teachers working in impoverished areas often face additional challenges, including dealing with students from low-income families, which can affect their teaching effectiveness. Such challenges in the end diminish teachers' ability to perform optimally in their roles. Equally, the Annual Sector Report (2017), for example, highlighted about 10,000 teachers quitting mainly government-aided schools due to poor pay, among others. Specifically, in Amuru District, teachers in secondary schools seem unsatisfied with their teaching jobs. For example, as documented in the EMIS Statistics (2012), some qualified teachers in the district tend to go for further studies in other fields such as business, law, ignoring and turning down teaching offers.

In an ideal situation, teachers are supposed to exhibit a high level of commitment, regular attendance, and struggle for individual and learners' excellence as well as be enthusiastic to participate in all school activities. Teachers' performance at work would be productive, especially if the BOGs perform all their roles such that teachers would be motivated to freely engage in school activities within and outside the classroom, regularly attend school, be open to professional training and creative in a manner that stimulates teaching and learning activities.

Similarly, most teachers desire to be proud of their schools, to have a good relationship with other teachers and school managers (in this case BOGs), and to believe they have meaningful jobs. Hence, as observed by Hanushek and Rivkin (2007), teacher performance is influenced by multiple factors such as poor pay, job dissatisfaction, and weak supervisory controls, which could be the case at Pabo Secondary School in Amuru District. Against this background, what was not known about this study is the influence of the BOGs' statutory roles on teachers' performance in government-aided secondary schools in Amuru District. This study intended to address that gap.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of Boards of Governors (BOGs) on teachers' performance in government-aided secondary schools in Amuru District, a case study of Pabo Secondary School.

1.4 Specific objectives

1. To investigate the influence of the governing role of the BOG on teachers' performance in secondary schools in Amuru District.
2. To explore the influence of the BOG financial rewards on teachers' performance in secondary schools in Amuru District.
3. To examine the influence of the BOG non-financial rewards on teachers' performance in secondary schools in Amuru District.

1.5 Research questions

1. What is the influence of the governing role of Boards of Governors on teachers' performance in secondary schools in Amuru District?
2. What is the influence of the BOGs financial rewards on teachers' performance in secondary schools in Amuru District?
3. What is the influence of the BOGs non-financial rewards on teachers' performance in secondary schools in Amuru District?

1.6 Scope of the study

1.6.1 Content scope

The study focused on the Boards of Governors and teachers' performance in selected secondary schools in Amuru District. The study specifically investigated the influence of the governing role of the Boards of Governors on teachers' performance in selected secondary schools in Amuru District, and examined the influence of other independent variables such as financial rewards and non-financial rewards, respectively, on teachers' performance in secondary schools in Amuru District.

1.6.2 Time scope

The study covered a time scope from 2010 to 2023. This is a period of 13 years, in which teachers' and academic performance of secondary schools in the district have drawn close attention. The year 2010 was significant enough because it covered a period of peaceful settlement in the area, following the disastrous LRA war and its physical and psychological effects on the residents of the area under study. Similarly, 2023 was significant because it marked the actual period that this research commences, to generate productive insights about the phenomenon under study.

1.6.3 Geographical scope

This study was carried out in Amuru District, Pabo Secondary School, within the district. The district became operational in 2006 following the Ugandan Parliament Act of 2006, which approved its breakaway from the greater Gulu District (MOLG, 2017). The district is further bordered by Adjumani District to the Northeast, Gulu District to the East, Nwoya District to the South, Nebbi District to the southwest, and Arua District to the west. In particular, the study was carried out in Pabbo Sub-county within Amuru District.

1.7 Significance of the study

The study could contribute to a better understanding of the roles that the Boards of Governors play in influencing teachers' performance in selected secondary schools in Amuru District.

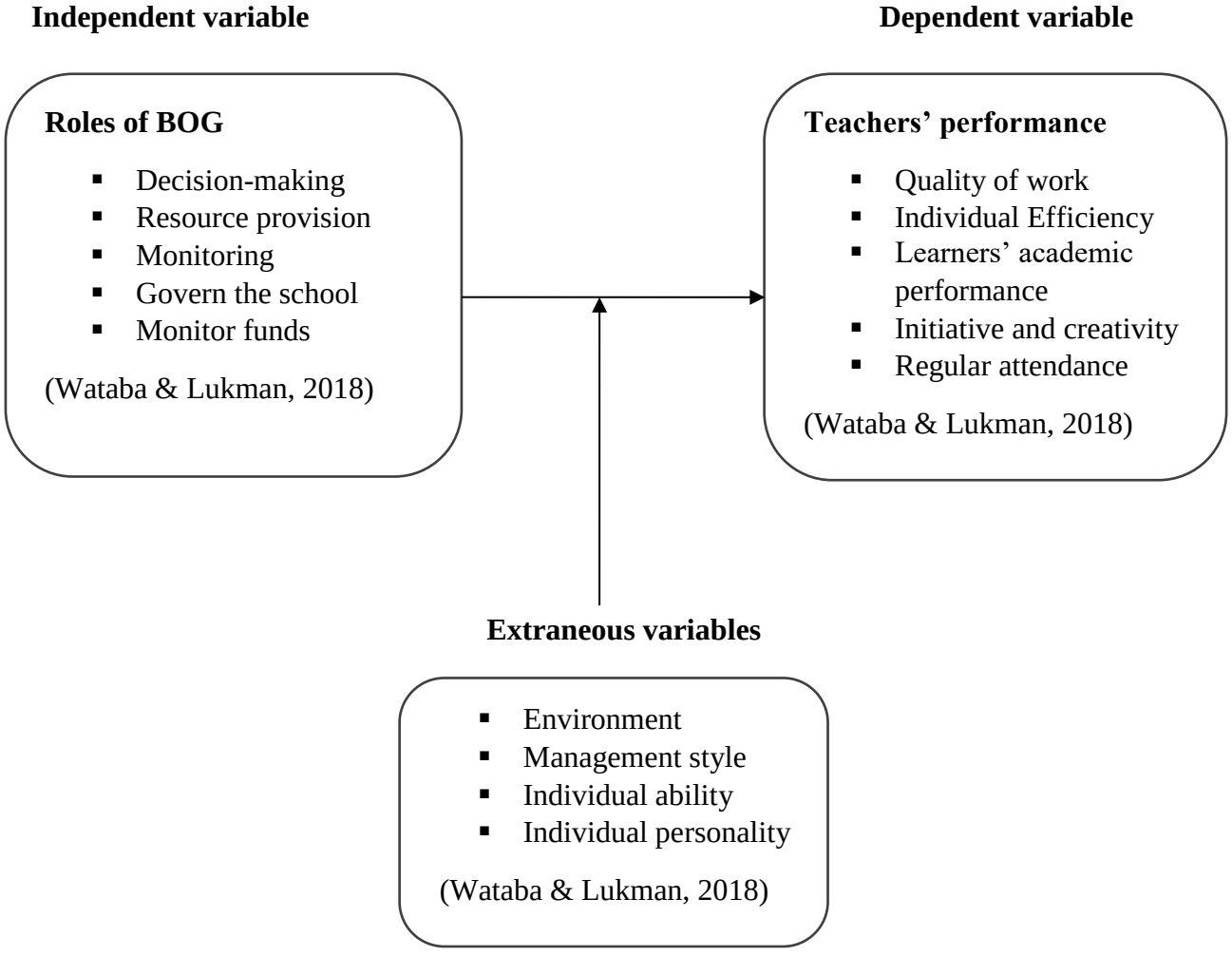
The study may provide insights into a better understanding of the numerous roles of BOGs in secondary school levels, and how these impact teachers' performance in Amuru District and Uganda as a whole.

The findings of the study could also help educational teachers in Amuru District, more so those who participated in the study, to improve and strengthen teachers' performance at the school level in Amuru District, Northern Uganda, and the entire country.

The study could provide a clear benchmark for responsible government agencies, such as the Ministry of Education and Sports, to introduce policies that could be used to enhance teachers' performance in secondary schools in Amuru District and Uganda as a whole.

1.8 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework illustrating BOGs' performance in secondary schools



Source: *Adopted from (*Wataba & Lukman, 2018*) and modified by the researcher*

From the conceptual framework above, teacher performance was conceptualized as consisting of quality of work, individual efficiency, learners' academic performance, regular attendance, initiative, and creativity, while the independent variable consisted of the roles of BOGs. The intervening variables consisted of aspects such as the environment, management style, and individual ability. (Wataba & Lukman, 2018).

1.9 Operational Definitions of Key Concepts

Board of Governors (BOG): A statutory school governance body established under the Education Act (2008) to oversee government-aided secondary schools in Uganda.

Teachers' Performance: The extent to which teachers fulfil their professional duties effectively, including regular attendance, quality of work, initiative, creativity, and commitment to school activities.

Financial Rewards: Monetary incentives such as salaries, bonuses, allowances, and training support provided to teachers.

Non-Financial Rewards: Non-monetary incentives such as recognition, involvement in decision-making, career development, and a supportive work environment.

Government-Aided Secondary School: A secondary school that receives government funding and is governed by a Board of Governors under the Education Act (2008).

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature. It is organized thematically, following the objectives of this study, and thus includes a discussion of literature on the following objectives: the influence of the roles of Boards of Governors on teachers' performance in secondary schools, the influence of financial rewards on teachers' performance, and lastly the influence of non-financial rewards on teachers' performance at secondary schools.

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Systems Theory

Systems Theory, developed by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1901–1972), views organisations as open systems composed of interconnected subsystems. The theory assumes that certain underlying concepts and principles can be applied universally in different fields. In a school setting, the BOG represents the governance subsystem, while teachers represent the instructional subsystem. The performance of teachers depends on how effectively these subsystems interact. If the governance subsystem fails to communicate, allocate resources, or provide feedback, the instructional subsystem will underperform. This theory justifies examining BOG–teacher interaction as a system relationship.

2.1.2 Motivation Theories

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory: This distinguishes between hygiene factors (salary, working conditions, job security) and motivators (recognition, achievement, growth, responsibility). Hygiene factors prevent dissatisfaction but do not motivate; motivators drive performance. In this study, financial rewards may serve as hygiene factors, while non-financial rewards serve as motivators.

Vroom's Expectancy Theory: This theory explains that teachers work hard when they expect effort to lead to performance and performance to lead to valued rewards. If teachers believe that no amount of effort will result in rewards, motivation declines.

Adams' Equity Theory: This explains that teachers compare their input–outcome ratio with others. Perceived inequity reduces motivation. In this study, unequal distribution of incentives may demotivate teachers.

Social Exchange Theory: Blau (1964) suggests that when teachers receive recognition and support, they reciprocate with higher commitment. This theory supports the finding that non-financial rewards influence performance.

2.1.3 Governance Theories

Stakeholder Theory: Freeman (1984) supports the inclusion of parents, teachers, local government, and foundation bodies in school governance. This aligns with the stakeholder model of BOG composition in Uganda.

Carver's Policy Governance Model: This argues that boards should focus on ends, policy, and accountability rather than day-to-day management. This model helps explain why BOGs should focus on strategic direction, resource allocation, and accountability rather than interfering in classroom teaching.

2.1.4 Justification of the Underpinning Theory

Systems Theory is the primary theory because it explains the interdependence between BOG governance and teacher performance. However, because the study also examines rewards, motivation theories are used as complementary lenses. This addresses the panel's comment that the theoretical review was missing and provides a robust analytical framework.

2.2 The Influence of the Governing Role of Boards of Governors on Teachers' Performance in Secondary Schools

Generally, management of educational institutions necessitates decisions on how best human and material resources are put into use in order to attain educational goals (Bloom and Krathwohl, 2020). Such decisions involve the identification of proper coordination of efficient practices to meet learning outcomes. In particular, management of educational institutions puts emphasis on how to ensure learning takes place under four key conditions as identified by Amakyi (2017).The gap left behind is contextual. Another study could be carried out in Amuru Dustrict. These include addressing decisions on; how to assure the presence of a safe and secured environment,

having the full complement of staff who adopt appropriate pedagogy to enact approved curriculum, how to acquire teaching and learning resources, and lastly how to harness human capital in the school community. Basing on these conditions, attaining the aims of education heavily relies on the nature of educational management. Owing to the fact that the decisions of an educational institution are not made by only one single individual, school head or the management team, Bush (2007) stresses that such decisions should instead be made by a joint organization of all the school stakeholders. Regarding teacher performance, existing research suggests that BoGs influence teacher performance through the development and implementation of school policies that promote or inhibit academic effectiveness. Policies regarding workload, professional development, and teacher appraisal, shaped by the BoGs, can enhance teacher performance by setting clear expectations and providing a supportive framework for success (Ngware, 2016).

However, studies by Amakyi and Bush (2022), do not differentiate between the management practices required for different educational levels (e.g., primary, secondary, tertiary). Management strategies may need to be tailored to the unique needs and challenges of different educational levels. Equally, they do not consider the impact of recent educational reforms or policies on the management of educational institutions. These reforms could include changes in curriculum, funding models, or accountability measures that have been implemented in recent years and their implications for management practices.

Although other scholars such as Kowalski (2012) recognizes the explicit role and support of every stakeholder in educational institutions, he however highly distinguishes the contribution of the school governing board, government directors and the school community (parents and or guardians). This observation means that the school governing board has an integral part in backing up the school administrators in their effort (s) to avail quality education. The gap left is contextual. Amakyi (2022) in particular defines the school governing board (BOGs) as a structure that upholds the canons of representative democracy within the school. He further adds that the BOGs with numerous stakeholder groups offers an environment for the public school and the citizenry to participate in the delivery of education. Hence, the role of BOGs in promoting teacher development and performance is crucial to enhancing teacher performance.

Boards that prioritize professional development opportunities for teachers contribute to their ongoing growth and skills improvement. Research shows that BOGs that facilitate workshops, training, and capacity-building programs for teachers are more likely to see improved teacher performance and student outcomes (Bush & Glover, 2016). Moreover, when BOGs acknowledge and reward teacher performance, it boosts morale, job satisfaction, and motivation, which in turn positively impacts their performance.

Similarly, Berry & Howell (2005) argue that the institution of the BOGs give voice to the school in participating in the delivering of public education, since public schools for example are funded from the public trust and the governing board setup permits increase in citizen participation and a means to hold schools accountable. Therefore, it is expected that Boards of Governors contribute to accountability structures by ensuring that teachers adhere to educational standards and fulfill their duties effectively. They provide oversight in the form of teacher appraisals, evaluations, and feedback systems. Research has demonstrated that when BOGs are active in these oversight roles, teacher performance improves due to the transparency and accountability instilled in the school's operations (Simatwa, 2017). This sense of accountability encourages teachers to maintain high standards of professionalism. However, the above studies however do not explore how the role of BOGs has evolved over time or how it might continue to change. With shifts in educational policies, societal expectations, and governance practices, the role and influence of BOGs could have experienced significant changes that need to be analyzed, particularly in the context of modern educational challenges and reforms. Likewise, they primarily reference theoretical and conceptual viewpoints without providing empirical evidence or case studies to support the claims made about the role of BOGs. More research is needed that includes quantitative and qualitative studies examining the effectiveness of BOGs in different contexts.

Campbell and Greene (as cited in Kowalski, 2012), observed that the governing board is supposed to ensure proper management control through the school head in making key decisions about the school in four broad areas. These mainly include; establishing a long-term vision for the school, implementing policies to create a climate that promotes excellence, introducing systems to guarantee accountability for students' learning outcomes, and lastly, serving as advocates to campaign for support for public education. The gap left is contextual. These are as well accompanied with supporting the school head to provide the best possible education and

educational opportunities for all learners by setting the strategic direction for the school. With these in place, when the BOGs set a clear vision and positive organizational culture, fostered by effective governance, it inspires teachers to align their efforts with the broader goals of the school to enhance their performance. Literature suggests that BOGs that emphasize a culture of excellence, collaboration, and continuous improvement create an environment where teachers feel motivated and supported to perform at their best (Caldwell, 2018). However, these findings were generalized using quantitative methods, which heavily relied on structured (closed questionnaires), ignoring the significant contribution of qualitative methods such as interviews and unstructured questionnaires to capture the exact feelings, beliefs and perceptions of the study participants regarding this phenomenon.

BOGs in schools also exist to serve an essential function of running schools. This is mainly positioned on guiding students' learning through the setting of vision and strategic direction for the school, creating policies, allocating resources, and monitoring academic achievement initiatives (Delagardelle, 2008). In the same line, Amakyi (2017) suggests that the BOGs carry out certain functions that for example involves setting the school's vision and aims, establishing and maintaining the school's culture of learning, creating the school's plans and policies, monitoring and evaluating school performance, and promoting self-evaluation to ensure the general improvement of the school. These findings, however, do not directly show the impact BOGs roles have on teachers' performance, creating a knowledge gap, which my study seeks to bridge.

BOGs are expected to hold the school heads and the management team accountable. The accountability role of the school board is expressed by Naik (2012) in three functions. These mainly include; guaranteeing that there is a clearly stated vision and an institutional culture to support the strategic direction of the school, ensuring that there are clear-cut, defined tasks to be performed and adopted heads to perform the tasks, and lastly, there are financial management practices adopted to guide the financial operations of the school to assure financial stewardship. In this same thought, the BOGs also have an important strategic role to play in the management of the school. This strategic role spins around playing a supportive role to help the school head and staff in the provision of quality education and holding the school management team accountable for performance. Curry et al. (2018) acknowledges that school board members do

not directly educate students, but they do govern the entire process, and do influence the results of this process. Carver argues that school boards can increase school performance by focusing on setting broad policy goals, establishing clear expectations for staff, and holding staff accountable for performance. This will contribute to accountability structures by ensuring that teachers adhere to educational standards and fulfill their duties effectively. They provide oversight in the form of teacher appraisals, evaluations, and feedback systems. The gap left is contextual where another study could be carried out in Amuru district.

Research has demonstrated that when BoGs are active in these oversight roles, teacher performance improves due to the transparency and accountability instilled in the school's operations (Simatwa, 2017). This sense of accountability encourages teachers to maintain high standards of professionalism, and not only increases teaching effectiveness but also positively influences student outcomes (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Much as the above studies point out the roles of BOGs, they however do not discuss the challenges or limitations they might face in fulfilling these roles. Potential issues such as lack of resources, insufficient training, or conflicts of interest are not addressed, leaving a knowledge gap in understanding the obstacles that BOGs encounter in their governance roles. These among other gaps, will be addressed in my study.

Ranson (2011) is of the view that school boards exist to assure the quality of school leadership by providing strategy, scrutiny, and improving the working structures of the school towards improved learning environment, towards high students' academic achievement. This is in line with the argument that role of school boards, if they are to be appreciated must be seen in terms of maximizing the students' achievement levels in the schools (Wilkinson & Long, 2019). This in the end influences general performance of learners in the school and provides a basis to evaluate teachers' performance as a whole. This however, creates a knowledge gap different from my study, which directly seeks to use the influence of BOGs roles not necessarily students' performance in evaluating teachers' performance.

Kowalski (2012) suggests that when board members act as trustees, they understand their basic role and responsibilities, act professionally and with integrity and protect the confidential nature of school business, work as a team, commit the necessary time and effort, and focus their attention on serving the learners. From the position of being a trustee, board members ensure that

they do not use their membership on the board for personal gains. Kowalski (2012) further points out that board members declare all potential conflicts of interest in the discharge of their duties. Performance evaluations that include constructive feedback help teachers identify areas for improvement and professional growth. Well-designed appraisal systems can enhance teaching quality by setting clear performance standards and recognizing exceptional performance, which in turn motivates teachers to improve (Goe, 2013). When evaluations are linked to professional development opportunities, they become even more effective in promoting teacher growth and general performance at school. As such, board members bring their experience, life skills, and common sense to this task. Therefore, in everything they do, they aim to raise expectations of what can be achieved by all learners and strengthen the involvement of parents and the community. However, Kowalski's study assumes that all board members regardless of their cultural or societal backgrounds, can act as trustees with integrity, professionalism and focus on learners' needs.

Cultural norms and societal expectations might influence how board members perceive their roles and responsibilities. In some cultures, loyalty to family, clan, or community could conflict with the trustee role, creating a gap in understanding how cultural factors affect board members' behavior. Clearly, cultural norms often shape the composition and functioning of BOGs, influencing the kind of decisions they make regarding school policies and teacher management. In many societies, hierarchical and patriarchal norms can affect the selection process for board members, favoring individuals of a certain social status, age, or gender, which may impact governance effectiveness. Studies highlight that in societies where traditional or community leaders dominate decision-making, BOGs may reflect these hierarchies, sometimes prioritizing non-academic considerations (e.g., loyalty or status) over meritocratic or educationally sound decisions (Bush & Glover, 2016). This can lead to policies that either enhance or detract from teacher performance depending on the governance culture.

Education Act 2008 as amended, guarantees full operation of Boards of Governors (BOGs) in secondary schools to ensure the proper and effective management of such institutions. This means that these secondary schools are run under the advisory guidance of the BOGs which denote the Government of Uganda and hence advises the school administration on the Government's behalf. In general, the membership of the school board is drawn from varied

stakeholder groups which include; 5 members from the foundation body (including the chairperson and the vice), a representative from the local government, a representative from the lower council, 2 representatives from the parents, and one must be a treasurer, staff representatives (non and teaching staff), and a representative from the old students. Head teacher is an ex-official, including the Deputy Head teacher. This clearly indicates that teachers are involved in decision-making, making them to feel more valued and are more likely to take responsibility for their roles. This can improve their commitment and performance as they have a stake in the policies that affect their working conditions and teaching environment.

Stakeholder model of selecting school board members is opposed to the skill-based model. This is similar to the argument by Connolly et al. (2017), who supports the idea of having various groups which are specifically invited to be represented on the school board. Furthermore, James and Sheppard (2014) acknowledge that although this model promotes transparency and upholds democratic participation, it may suffer the burden of not getting an assembly of best expertise. However, in this particular case, the focus is not on a person being selected based on skills or expertise, but rather because the person belongs to a particular stakeholder group. Owing to all these arguments on the existence and notable roles of BOGs by numerous scholars, it is worthy to conclude that BOGs play key roles in not only influencing teachers' performance, but also the performance of learners and the schools as a whole. While the above studies mention the potential lack of expertise in the stakeholder model, it does not delve into the implications of this gap for school governance and decision-making. The above studies do not explore how the absence of skill-based selection might impact the strategic decisions made by BOGs, the quality of educational leadership, or the ability to address complex challenges in schools. There is a content gap in analyzing the trade-offs between representation and expertise in BOG selection.

2.3 The Influence of the BOGs Financial Rewards on Teacher Performance in Secondary Schools in Amuru District.

Aiyedun (2020) defines the teacher as a professional individual who has undergone different training in teaching and has been tested in an examination in higher education and come out successful. Therefore, it is expected that he or she is a well-trained individual that is well aware of the responsibilities involved in teaching and carrying out other academic activities in an educational institution. These responsibilities are in the form of preparing the lessons, organizing

the instructional resources and delivering the lessons. The teacher further assesses and evaluates the students in tests and examinations (Aiyedun & Ogunode, 2020). However, to effectively achieve these, the influence of financial rewards on teachers' performance more so in secondary schools is worthy a factor to consider.

Existing literature on teachers' performance shows that it is a key factor in influencing the quality of learning. Teachers' performance in particular can be in the form of the teachers' implementation of the duties or obligations when teaching in school, and other main tasks of providing education and learning (Sumarsono et al., 2019). As such, it is necessary to identify teachers' performance, facilitating, developing and maintaining it to achieve the school goals. Achieving these will mean helping learners too in achieving good results and their general achievements in education (Augustine et al., 2019). These call for rewards for teachers, in order to motivate them to their full potential at work. In particular, financial rewards in the form of salary rise, gifts and promotions, are necessary to achieve effective teachers' performance and the general academic performance of learners at secondary schools. This clearly is different from my study, which intends to include both financial and non-financial rewards as one of the roles of BOGs, to determine their influence on teachers' performance.

Similarly, Munga (2013) stressed that one form of financial rewards to motivate teachers is the efficiency rewards, which they argue that, raises education results in education institutions. He also added that in schools with such rewards, learners perform much better, since teachers tend to work harder by administering extra homework and class activities, giving practice tests and remedial classes, than their counterparts in schools without such forms of rewards. Other scholars add that when such rewards are maintained, schools are likely to get and keep good instructors (Makhuzeni and Barkhuizen, 2015). Situations where such rewards are removed, learners' performance declines (Chepkwony and Oloko, 2014), indicating the integral part that such rewards play in influencing teachers' performance at secondary schools.

Bawalla and Adenugba (2021) challenge that, if a school which cares for its teachers as a useful resource, fully recognize the things that raise their morale. In particular, Shakir and Zamir (2014) emphasize that the financial rewards can boost recognition, of teachers who accomplish their work or yield better grades than their counterparts. This form of recognition can also be in the form of presents, promotions, salary increment and bonuses (Khan et al., 2010).

From the above observation of the existing literature on this phenomenon, financial rewards are indeed one of the major strategies that schools use to raise the efficiency of teachers and the quality of the output in terms of general performance of learners in secondary schools.

2.4 The Influence of the BOGs Non-financial Rewards on Teachers' Performance in Secondary Schools in Amuru District

Olatunde-Aiyedun and Ogunode (2021a), observed that non-financial rewards and continuous professional development programmes or capacity development programmes designed have been found to improve the capacity of employees in an organization. Capacity development programme in this case is a special programme within an organization, intended to meet the capacity gap of an employee in an organization.

Olatunde-Aiyedun & Ogunode (2020), define teacher professional development programme as a programme developed for the teacher in all the educational institutions with the aims of improving their capacity in delivering of lesson, mastery of subject, classroom management and teaching methodology. However, the study left a contextual gap where another study could be carried out in Amuru district. Hoque et al. (2020) add that teacher professional development activities are carried out to improve the ability of teachers when teaching so that it has an impact on increasing teachers' growth and performance that leads to the success of students.

Olatunde-Aiyedun & Ogunode, 2021b), observed that teacher capacity development programme can be realized through seminars, conferences, workshops, orientation and in-service trainings. The aim is to help them improve their classroom teaching for effective learning of students. The impact is the net effect on the teaching learning process which is measured on the basis of teaching of those whose capacity were built in different projects in relation to their teaching in classrooms that is observed. The gap left is contextual and another study could be carried out in Amuru district. The importance of teacher development for secondary school teachers includes among others; aiding teachers to deliver academic services very well, boosting teacher confidence and increasing his/her commitment to work. These in turn help to keep teachers with current issues and development in curriculum changes and reforms, upgrading the teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching methodologies and it helps teachers to be effective and efficient in resources management in education.

Dolores and Ernest (2018), observed that teachers who continuously go for professional development programmes perform well and discharge their responsibilities well, thus emphasizing teachers' professional development as crucial to changing classroom practices, improving schools and bettering pupils' learning outcomes. Poor performance of teachers is due to lack of frequent in-service training, lack of teaching and learning materials, lack of incentives and motivation and improper supervision. Gaps left here are contextual and temporal and so another study could be carried out in the year 2024 in Amuru district.

Wardoyo et al., (2017), observed that non-financial rewards in the form of benefits that come with organizational structure and activities, also highly influence teachers' performance. For example, sharing knowledge between teachers to solve immediately any small problems that may arise. Regular meetings held at school at least once a week with school staff and BOGs members bridge any communication gaps that may arise. (Hamel et al., 2019). The gap left is contextual and another study could be carried out in Amuru district.

Sakerani et al. (2019), observed that low teachers' performance and, consequently, low academic performance in secondary schools can be caused by other factors attributed to teachers themselves, other than non-financial rewards of the BOGs. The high rates of absenteeism by teachers, lateness, and possibly attending lessons when tired or even unprepared could impact on both their performance and the academic performance of learners in secondary schools. Aydin et al. (2015), identified other factors that affect teachers' performance, such as low teacher compliance with the norms and ethics of the teaching profession, salary earned, teachers' needs, time at work, teachers' qualifications and the school head's policy in place at school.

2.5 Research gaps

Clearly, existing studies mention the potential lack of expertise in the stakeholder model (Connolly et al., 2017), however, they do not delve into the implications on school governance and teachers' performance. Financial rewards are indeed one of the major strategies that schools use to raise the efficiency of teachers (Augustine et al., 2019), but less focus has been put in the context of rural secondary schools like in Amuru District. Lastly, Non-financial rewards also influence Teachers' performance in secondary schools (Olatunde-Aiyedun and Ogunode, 2021a),

but there is a contextual gap for the case of Amuru District. These gaps, among others, are what the study intends to address based on the existing specific objectives of the study.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focused on the methods and approach that were used in the study. The chapter thus elaborates on the research design, study area, study population, sample size, data collection methods, data collection procedures, data collection instruments, data analysis, limitations and delimitations to the study, as well as ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Approach

The study adopted a mixed-methods approach with a qualitative-dominant orientation. The qualitative approach captured respondents' experiences, perspectives, opinions, views, values, and practices. The quantitative approach complemented qualitative findings by providing statistical evidence for relationships between variables. The mixed-methods approach was appropriate because the research questions required both breadth (quantitative) and depth (qualitative); triangulation enhanced the validity of findings; qualitative data helped explain quantitative results; and the complex nature of educational governance required multiple perspectives.

Researcher's Voice and Perspective: The researcher adopted an interpretivist-pragmatic stance. Ontologically, the study assumes that reality is socially constructed by participants (teachers, BOG members, district staff) while also acknowledging measurable relationships between variables. Epistemologically, the researcher interacted with participants to co-construct knowledge through interviews and focus groups, while also collecting quantitative data to identify patterns. The researcher's voice is reflexive and transparent: first-person language is used when describing methodological choices and positionality, while third-person language is used when reporting findings and discussing literature. This clarifies the researcher's perspective and addresses the panel's comment on voice and perspective.

3.2 Research design

The study used a single case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' performance at Pabo Secondary School. According to Yin (2014), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context.

The case study design was appropriate because the study focused on one school (Pabo Secondary School) as a bounded system; the research questions were “what” and “how” questions about BOG influence; the study required understanding contextual factors affecting teacher performance; the researcher had no control over behavioral events; and the researcher used a bounded approach that confined the case study in terms of time (2025) and space (Pabo Secondary School); and multiple data sources (questionnaire, interviews, FGDs) allowed triangulation and in-depth understanding.

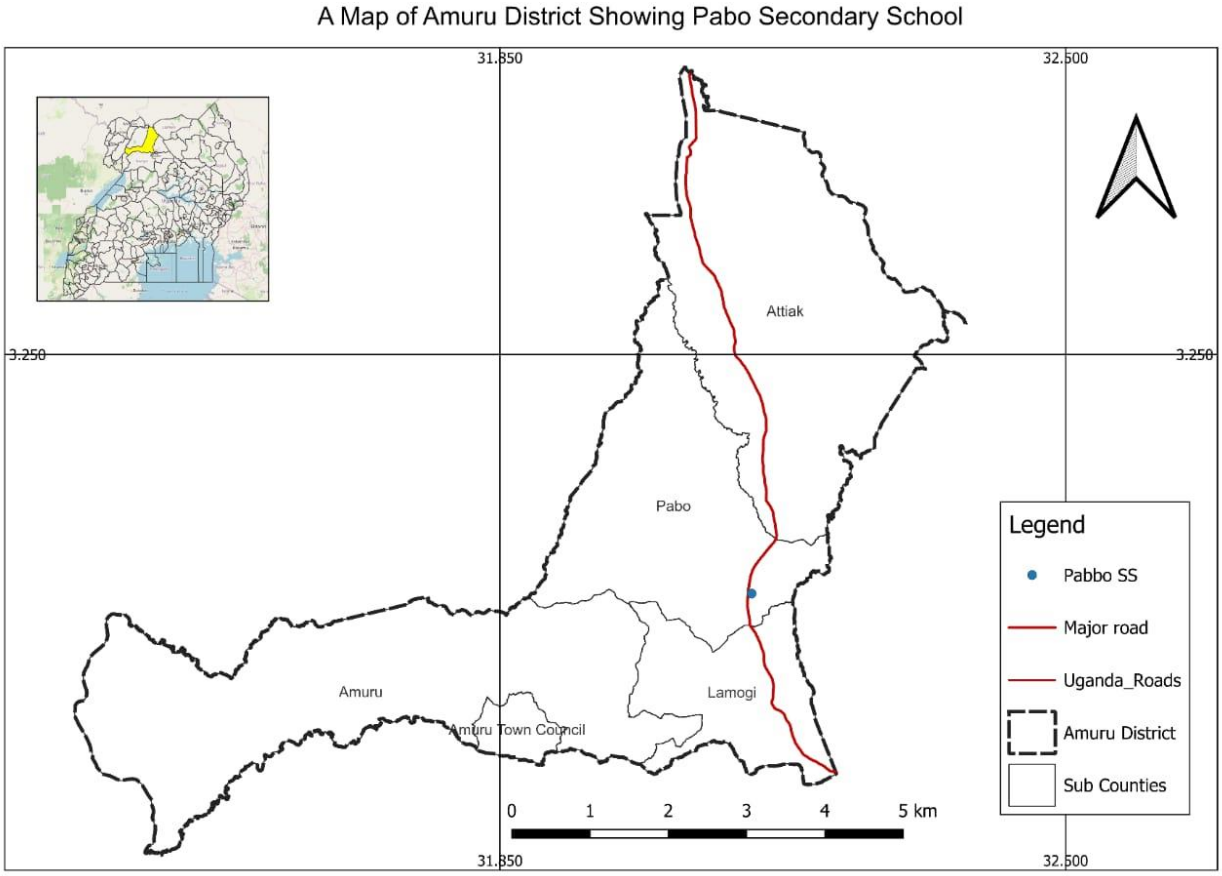
3.3 Study area

The study was conducted in Amuru District, specifically at Pabo Secondary School in Pabo Sub-county. Amuru District became operational in 2006 following the Ugandan Parliament act approving its breakaway from greater Gulu District (MOLG, 2017).

Pabo Sub-county is located approximately 45 kilometers from Gulu City. The area is predominantly rural, with agriculture as the main economic activity. Pabo Secondary School is a government-aided school offering O-level and A-level education. The school was established in 1998 and has approximately 600 students and 35 teachers. A map of Amuru District showing Pabo Sub-county and the school location is provided in Appendix A.

The selection of this study area was based on: Previous studies indicating low teacher performance in the area, accessibility to the researcher, willingness of school administration to participate, and the typicality of the school as representative of rural government-aided schools in Northern Uganda.

Figure 1: A map of Amuru District showing Pabo Secondary School



Source: *Extracted by the Cartographer, Kiigwe Beatrice (2026)*

3.4 Study population

Korb (2012) defines a study population as a group of individuals, objects, or items from which samples are taken for study. This definition of a sample population proposes that after identifying the unit of study, the researcher identifies the target population and the group of people that the researcher wants to use in enriching the study under exploration. Precisely, Dahabreh et al. (2020) define a target population as a subset of the trial-eligible or sample population. Thus, the target population for this study comprised: 35 teachers at Pabo Secondary School, 7 BOG members of Pabo Secondary School, 10 District Education Officers in Amuru District, and 1 Head Teacher of Pabo Secondary School. The total target population was 53 individuals.

3.5 Sample size

The study used a non-statistical method of purposive and simple random sampling to select the study sample size as supported by (Flick, 2014). The selection of the number of teachers considered in this study was made carefully and diligently during the field scouting phase that precedes the actual fieldwork, which identified Pabo Secondary Schools in the case study area. As such, the study used a sample size of 41 respondents. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select respondents.

Table 1: Sample Size Distribution and Sampling Techniques

Category of Respondents	Target Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Secondary School Teachers	35	30	Simple random
BOG Members	7	5	Purposive
District Education Staff	10	5	Purposive
Head Teacher	1	1	Purposive
Total	**53**	**41**	

Source: Field Data Collection by the Researcher, 2025

Justification for Sampling Techniques:

Simple random sampling for teachers: Ensured every teacher had an equal chance of selection, reducing bias and increasing representativeness.

Purposive sampling for BOG members, DEOs, and Head Teacher: These respondents possessed specific knowledge and positions relevant to the study. Purposive sampling ensured the researcher selected individuals who could provide rich, relevant information.

The sample size of 30 teachers was determined based on the principle of data saturation in qualitative research and the need for adequate statistical power for correlation analysis.

3.6 Data collection methods

The study used three data collection methods:

Closed-ended questionnaire survey: Administered to 30 teachers to collect quantitative data on perceptions of BOG roles and teacher performance.

Semi-structured interviews: Conducted with BOG members (5), DEOs (5), and the Head Teacher (1) to collect in-depth qualitative data.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Two FGDs were conducted with teachers (8-10 participants each) to explore collective experiences and generate rich qualitative data.

Multiple methods enabled triangulation, enhancing the validity and reliability of findings.

3.7 Data collection Tools and Procedures

The study used oral interviews and Focus Group Discussions and closed-ended questionnaires. These will help get in-depth information on teacher performance in the case study area.

3.7.1 Semi-Structured Oral Interviews

Three semi-structured interview guides were developed to collect qualitative data from key stakeholders. The BOG Member Interview Guide explored issues of composition, roles, challenges, and perceptions of teacher performance. The Head Teacher Interview Guide examined BOG-teacher relationships, governance effectiveness, and recommendations for improvement. The District Education Officer (DEO) Interview Guide captured district-level perspectives on BOG performance, challenges, and policy context. Interviews were conducted with five BOG members, the Head Teacher, and four District Education Staff. Each interview was recorded with consent and transcribed for thematic analysis, providing deeper insights into governance practices and their impact on teacher performance.

3.7.2 Focus Group Discussions

Two focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with teachers to capture collective experiences and perceptions. The FGD guide covered topics such as BOG meeting frequency, structure and operation, roles in supporting school functions, experiences with BOGs, limits to their operation, motivating factors, and the provision of financial and non-financial rewards. Each FGD involved 8-10 teachers and was moderated to encourage open dialogue. Discussions were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically. This procedure allowed triangulation of data,

complementing the questionnaire and interviews by highlighting shared concerns and group dynamics in teacher-BOG interactions.

3.7.3 Closed-ended questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data from teachers. It comprised five sections: Section A gathered demographic information on gender, age, teaching experience, and qualifications; Section B contained eight items measuring teachers' perceptions of the governing role of Boards of Governors (BOGs); Section C included seven items assessing teachers' views on financial rewards; Section D had eight items focusing on non-financial rewards such as recognition and involvement; and Section E measured self-reported teacher performance using two items. All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was administered to 30 teachers at Pabo Secondary School, ensuring standardized responses suitable for statistical analysis.

3.9 Data analysis

3.9.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. The subsequent procedures included:

Descriptive Statistics: Means and standard deviations were calculated to determine teachers' perceptions of BOG roles and teacher performance. A mean score of 1.00-2.50 was interpreted as negative, 2.51-5.00 as positive.

Inferential Statistics: Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analyzed relationships between variables.

Multiple Linear Regression determined the combined influence of independent variables on teacher performance.

3.9.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. First, familiarization was achieved by reading and re-reading interview and focus group transcripts to gain a deep understanding of the content. Second, initial codes were systematically generated from the data to capture meaningful features. Third, these codes

were organized into potential themes that reflected broader patterns. Fourth, the themes were reviewed against both the coded extracts and the entire dataset to ensure coherence and consistency. Finally, the themes were refined, named, and clearly defined to capture their essence. The data collection procedure involved conducting semi-structured interviews with five BOG members, the Head Teacher, and four District Education Staff, alongside two focus group discussions with teachers. All sessions were audio-recorded with consent, transcribed verbatim, and subjected to this thematic analysis process, ensuring that the qualitative findings complemented the quantitative results and provided deeper insights into the influence of Boards of Governors on teacher performance.

3.10 Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instruments

3.10.1 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which a data collection instrument measures what it claims to measure (Malunda & Atwebembeire, 2021).

Content Validity: The instruments were reviewed by three supervisors and two experts in educational management to ensure items covered all study constructs. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated at 0.89, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70.

Construct Validity: The instruments were based on the conceptual framework and operational definitions, ensuring items measured intended constructs.

Face Validity: A pilot study was conducted with 5 teachers (not part of the main study) to check the clarity, appropriateness, and comprehensiveness of items.

3.10.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which a data collection instrument consistently measures a given concept (Malunda & Atwebembeire, 2021).

Internal Consistency: Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated for each section of the questionnaire: Section B (BOG Governance): $\alpha = 0.84$; Section C (Financial Rewards): $\alpha = 0.79$; Section D (Non-Financial Rewards): $\alpha = 0.86$; Section E (Teacher Performance): $\alpha = 0.82$. All coefficients exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating good internal consistency.

3.11 Research procedure

The following procedure was followed:

Obtaining clearance: An introductory letter was obtained from the Dean, Faculty of Education, Gulu University.

Seeking permission: Permission was sought from the Amuru District Education Officer and the Head Teacher of Pabo Secondary School.

Pilot study: The questionnaire was piloted with 5 teachers from a neighboring school to identify ambiguities and estimate completion time.

Main data collection: Questionnaires were distributed to teachers during staff meetings and collected after 3 days. Interviews were scheduled at respondents' convenience, lasting 30-45 minutes, and FGDs were conducted in the school staffroom, lasting 60-90 minutes

Data management: Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness. Interviews were audio-recorded (with consent) and transcribed.

3.12 Limitations and delimitations to the study

The following limitations were identified in the study, alongside the strategies employed to address them:

Single Case Study. As a case study of Pabo Secondary School, the findings are context-specific and cannot be generalized to all secondary schools across Amuru District or Uganda. This limitation is explicitly acknowledged in the research report, and the study proactively recommends further comparative research to test these findings in broader settings.

Self-Reported Data and Response Bias. Teacher performance data was self-reported, which inherently carries the risk of social desirability bias. Furthermore, some teachers may have been reluctant to candidly criticize the Board of Governors (BOG) for fear of potential repercussions. These risks were mitigated by guaranteeing total participant anonymity and triangulating self-

reported data with qualitative insights from other stakeholders, such as District Education Officers and the Head Teacher, to ensure a more balanced and accurate picture.

Cross-Sectional and Temporal Design. Data was collected at a single point in time in 2025, which limits the ability to infer definitive causal relationships or track how BOG-teacher dynamics evolve over the long term. The analysis is therefore framed as a snapshot, with the report recommending longitudinal research to track these relationships over time and better establish causal links.

Small Quantitative Sample. The study utilized a sample of 30 teachers, which inherently limits statistical power and the ability to detect small effects. However, this sample size was deemed appropriate for the depth required in a qualitative-heavy case study; the limitation is balanced by the rich, thematic depth provided by the qualitative interviews and focus group discussions.

Researcher Subjectivity and BOG Perception Gap. In the interpretation of qualitative data, the researcher's subjectivity may have introduced unconscious bias. To mitigate this, the study utilized rigorous triangulation across multiple data sources and subjected the findings to continuous supervisor review. Additionally, the study noted that it did not systematically measure how BOG members perceive their own effectiveness compared to the perceptions held by teachers; this perception gap has been identified as a key area for further research.

3.13 Ethical considerations

This is the level of observation that leads to actions that are personal and professional during research activity (Fleming and Zegwaard 2018); this entails researchers to carefully mind about dignity of their subjects and publishing the information researched (Akaranga and Makau 2016). The researcher followed the principles that govern the research process, such as the relationship between the researcher and the respondents, the appropriate methodology of data collection, interpretation, and discussion of data in a logical manner. Upon successful defense of the proposal, the researcher obtained clearance from the faculty of education and humanities, local council 1, and the Head Teacher's Office to carry out the research. The researcher further obtained informed consent in verbal and/or written form from all research participants before the commencement of any research activity.

3.14 Chapter Summary

This chapter justified the case study design and clarified the mixed-methods approach. It described the study area, population, sample, data collection, analysis, validity, ethics, and limitations. The next chapter presents the findings.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Findings

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of findings and the interpretation of data collected from Pabo Secondary School. The chapter is organized around three specific objectives, integrating both quantitative and qualitative findings. Qualitative quotations are indented and attributed for clarity.

4.1 Response Rate

Table 2: Response Rate of Respondents

Category of Respondents	**Targeted**	**Actual**	**Response Rate (%)**
Secondary School Teachers	30	30	100%
BOG Members	5	5	100%
Education Staff at the District	5	4	80%
Head Teacher	1	1	100%
Total	**41**	**40**	**97.6%**

Source: *Field Data, November 2025*

From the table above, the 97.6% response rate is excellent. Only one Education Staff at the District was unavailable due to official travel. However, according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012), a response rate above 70% is excellent for social science research.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 3: Demographic Profile of Teacher Respondents (n=30)

Variable	**Category**	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Sex	Male	16	53.3

	Female	14	46.7
Age Group	20-29 years	5	16.7
	30-39 years	12	40.0
	40-49 years	9	30.0
	50 years and above	4	13.3
Teaching Experience	1-5 years	8	26.7
	6-10 years	12	40.0
	11-15 years	7	23.3
	16+ years	3	10.0
Highest Qualification	Diploma	6	20.0
	Bachelor's Degree	18	60.0
	Master's Degree	6	20.0

Source: Field Data, November 2025

The gender distribution (53.3% male, 46.7% female) reflects a relatively balanced representation typical of secondary schools in Northern Uganda. The age distribution shows the majority (70%) are between 30-49 years, representing a mature workforce. Regarding experience, 66.7% have 6-15 years of experience, indicating stability. The qualification profile is encouraging, with 80% holding at least a bachelor's degree.

4.3 Objective 1: Governing Role of BOGs and Teacher Performance

4.3.1 Quantitative Findings

Table 4: Teachers' Perceptions of BOG Governing Role (n=30)

Item	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	BOG provides clear strategic direction	3.57	1.16	Positive

2	BOG ensures accountability	3.28	1.19	Positive
3	BOG plays active role in curriculum oversight	3.07	1.16	Positive
4	BOG monitors teacher performance and provides feedback	3.06	1.24	Positive
5	BOG effectively allocates resources	2.83	1.22	Positive
6	BOG advocates for teacher welfare	3.21	1.17	Positive
7	BOG provides regular feedback on school performance	3.06	1.23	Positive
8	BOG governance has improved overall school performance	3.32	1.19	Positive
	Overall BOG Governance	**3.17**	**0.43**	**Positive**

Scale: 1.00-2.50 = Negative; 2.51-5.00 = Positive

Source: Field Data, November 2025

The overall mean of 3.17 (Positive) indicates that teachers generally perceive BOG governance positively. Item 1 (strategic direction) received the highest mean (3.57), suggesting the BOG has been effective in establishing vision. Item 5 (resource allocation) received the lowest (2.83), reflecting resource constraints common in rural schools.

4.3.2 Qualitative Findings on BOG Governing Role

Theme 1: Limited Direct Engagement Between BOG and Teachers

Teachers consistently reported that the BOG rarely interacts directly with them:

"The BOG meets only once per term. They come, sit with the head teacher in his office, and leave. We rarely see them or get feedback from them about school matters." (Male Teacher, 6 years' experience, FGD). Another participant added: *"The last time I spoke to any BOG member was during my interview for this job three years ago."* (Female Teacher, 4 years' experience, FGD)

This finding reveals a gap between the BOG and teaching staff, because according to Bush and Glover (2016), effective school governance requires regular communication between the governing body and staff.

Theme 2: Inconsistent Resource Allocation

A teacher explained: *"We lack basic teaching materials like charts and laboratory equipment. We reported this to the head teacher, who said he would inform the BOG. That was two terms ago. Nothing has changed."* (Male Teacher, 10 years' experience, FGD)

The Head Teacher provided context: *"The BOG has to make difficult decisions with very limited resources. The capitation grant is often delayed and insufficient. The BOG tries to prioritize, but we cannot meet all needs at once."* (Head Teacher, Interview)

These findings reflect the reality of resource constraints in rural Ugandan secondary schools.

Theme 3: Weak Implementation of Accountability Mechanisms

A BOG member acknowledged: *"We receive reports from the head teacher every term. We discuss them and make recommendations. But I admit, follow-up is not always consistent. We are busy people with our own jobs."* (BOG Member, Interview)

An Education Staff at the District offered a broader perspective: *"Most BOGs in Amuru District lack adequate training on their governance roles. They don't fully understand their mandate beyond signing documents and approving budgets."* (Education Staff at the District, Interview)

Theme 4: Gap Between Strategic Planning and Implementation

Regarding this finding, the Head Teacher explained:

> *We have a five-year strategic plan that the BOG helped develop. The problem is implementation because of funding gaps. For example, the plan said we should have a library by last year, but we still don't have one.* (Head Teacher, Interview)

A teacher expressed frustration:

"They talk about strategic plans in meetings, but we don't see changes on the ground. What is the strategy worth if it's not implemented?" (Male Teacher, 8 years experience, FGD)

Theme 5: Superficial Curriculum Oversight

During an interview with a BOG member, he stated:

"We ensure that the school follows the national curriculum. The head teacher presents the curriculum implementation plan each term, and we approve it." (BOG Member, Interview)

However, a teacher offered a contrasting view:

"The BOG has no idea what happens in our classrooms. They do not know if we will finish the syllabus or not. The BOG is completely disconnected from the actual teaching and learning process." (Female Teacher, 12 years' experience, FGD)

Table 5: Summary of Qualitative Themes on BOG Governance

Theme	**Key Finding**
Limited direct engagement	BOG meets only once per term; teachers rarely interact with BOG members
Inconsistent resource allocation	Basic teaching materials lacking; BOG faces financial constraints
Weak accountability implementation	Reports received but follow-up inconsistent; BOG members lack training
Planning-implementation gap	Strategic plans exist but funding gaps prevent implementation
Superficial curriculum oversight	BOG believes they oversee curriculum; teachers disagree

4.4 Objective 2: Financial Rewards and Teacher Performance

4.4.1 Quantitative Findings

Table 6: Teachers' Perceptions of Financial Rewards (n=30)

Item	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	BOG ensures timely salary payment	2.45	1.18	Negative
2	BOG provides performance-based bonuses	1.92	1.26	Negative
3	Teachers receive exam performance incentives	2.10	1.15	Negative
4	Teachers receive financial support for training	2.40	1.23	Negative
5	Financial rewards have motivated improved performance	2.35	1.15	Negative
6	Financial incentives distributed equitably	2.18	1.21	Negative
7	Financial incentives improved student outcomes	2.15	1.22	Negative
	Overall Financial Rewards	**2.21**	**0.46**	**Negative**

Source: Field Data, November 2025

The overall mean of 2.21 (Negative) indicates that teachers are dissatisfied with financial rewards. Item 2 (performance bonuses) received the lowest mean (1.92), suggesting these are nonexistent. Item 1 (salary timeliness) scored 2.45, the highest but still negative, indicating salary delays are common.

4.4.2 Qualitative Findings on Financial Rewards

Theme 1: Chronic Salary Delays and Impact

Regarding this theme, a teacher expressed: *"Last term, our salaries were delayed by two full months. During that time, we were struggling. How can you expect a teacher to perform well when they don't know when they will be paid?"* (Male Teacher, 10 years experience, FGD)

Equally, the Head Teacher acknowledged: *"Sometimes there are inconsistencies in payment of salaries in many government schools. The BOG has brought this up at district meetings, but they have no direct control over the payroll system."* (Head Teacher, Interview)

Theme 2: Absence of Performance-Based Bonuses

A teacher stated: *"There is no such thing as a bonus here. Whether you are Teacher of the Year or the worst performer, your pay is the same. Why should I work extra hard when there is no reward?"* (Male Teacher, 12 years' experience, FGD)

On the same theme, the Head Teacher further explained: *"We have discussed performance bonuses in BOG meetings, but the conclusion is always the same: we don't have the money."* (Head Teacher, Interview)

Theme 3: No Support for Professional Development

A teacher explained: *"I wanted to pursue a master's degree last year. I asked the BOG if they could contribute. They said they had no budget for that. I had to use my savings and take a loan."* (Male Teacher, 9 years' experience, FGD)

Theme 4: Lack of Exam Performance Incentives

On this theme, one of the male teachers stated: *"In some schools, teachers get a bonus for every student who scores a first grade. Here, nothing. We have had students who scored Division One, but the teacher who taught them got nothing."* (Male Teacher, 14 years' experience, FGD)

Theme 5: Unequal Distribution of Available Incentives

A teacher noted: *"The only 'financial reward' we ever get is the annual Staff Party. But even that is not distributed equally. Senior teachers get more than junior teachers."* (Male Teacher, 4 years's experience, FGD)

Table 7: Summary of Qualitative Themes on Financial Rewards

Theme	Key Finding
Chronic salary delays and inconsistency in payment	Delays of up to two months; BOG has limited control over government payroll
Absence of performance	No performance-based bonuses exist; BOG lacks funds

bonuses	
No professional development support	Teachers finance their own training; no BOG budget for development
Lack of exam incentives	No bonuses for good exam results; BOG hasn't resolved debate
Unequal distribution	Available incentives distributed inequitably; senior teachers favoured

4.5 Objective 3: Non-Financial Rewards and Teacher Performance

4.5.1 Quantitative Findings

Table 8: Teachers' Perceptions of Non-Financial Rewards (n=30)

Item	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
1	BOG publicly recognizes teacher achievements	2.60	1.16	Positive
2	BOG creates career advancement opportunities	2.50	1.13	Neutral
3	Teachers involved in decision-making	2.33	1.21	**Negative**
4	BOG creates a supportive working environment	2.68	1.16	Positive
5	BOG celebrates teacher efforts	2.55	1.16	Positive
6	Non-financial recognition motivates my performance	2.70	1.13	Positive
7	BOG encourages leadership responsibilities	2.48	1.16	Neutral
8	I am satisfied with my job as a teacher	2.90	1.05	Positive
	Overall Non-Financial Rewards	**2.59**	**0.42**	**Positive (Borderline)**

Source: Field Data, November 2025

The overall mean of 2.59 is just above the positive threshold. Item 8 (job satisfaction) received the highest mean (2.90), indicating teachers maintain satisfaction despite challenges. Item 3 (decision-making involvement) received the lowest (2.33), indicating exclusion from decisions.

4.5.2 Qualitative Findings on Non-Financial Rewards

Theme 1: Occasional and Informal Recognition

A teacher further stated: *"Sometimes during Speech Day, the head teacher mentions teachers who performed well. But that's not from the BOG directly. The BOG members just sit there."* (Male Teacher, 8 years' experience, FGD).

Theme 2: Exclusion from Decision-Making

A teacher expressed: *"The BOG makes decisions about the school without consulting us. Last year, they changed the school calendar without asking teachers. We had already made travel plans."* (Female Teacher, 9 years' experience, FGD)

The Head Teacher responded: *"The BOG involves teachers through the staff representative on the board. That person is elected by teachers and attends all BOG meetings."* (Head Teacher, Interview).

However, a teacher countered: *"The staff representative does not have time to consult other teachers before votes are cast. It's token representation, not real involvement."* (Male Teacher, 11 years' experience, FGD).

Theme 3: No Professional Development Opportunities

A teacher explained: *"I have been teaching here for ten years. I am still a classroom teacher. There is no career progression unless the head teacher retires."* (Male Teacher, 10 years' experience, FGD).

Theme 4: Mixed Perceptions of Working Environment

One teacher appreciated improvements: *"The physical environment has improved. The BOG renovated two classrooms last year and connected the school to the grid."* (Male Teacher, 6 years' experience, FGD).

Another expressed concerns: *"The BOG has not addressed the lack of staff accommodation. Most of us rent houses in the trading center and walk long distances."* (Female Teacher, 4 years' experience, FGD).

Theme 5: Recognition Motivates Performance

A teacher stated: *"When the BOG chairperson shook my hand at the last Speech Day and said 'well done' in front of everyone, I felt proud. It made me feel valued. I worked harder after that."* (Female Teacher, 12 years' experience, FGD).

Theme 6: Job Satisfaction Despite Challenges

A teacher explained: *"I am satisfied because I love teaching, not because of what the BOG does. Seeing my students learn and succeed gives me joy."* (Male Teacher, 14 years' experience, FGD).

Table 9: Summary of Qualitative Themes on Non-Financial Rewards

Theme	**Key Finding**
Occasional and informal recognition	Recognition happens during Speech Day; not systematic
Exclusion from decision-making	Teachers feel excluded; the staff representative is considered a token
No professional development	No career progression pathways; no mentorship programs
Mixed working environment	Infrastructure improved, but staff housing is lacking
Recognition motivates	Even informal recognition has a positive motivational

	effect
Job satisfaction remains	Teachers are satisfied due to their love of the profession, not BOG efforts

4.6 Correlation Analysis

Table 10: Correlation Matrix (n=30)

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. BOG Governance	3.17	0.43	1.000			
2. Financial Rewards	2.21	0.46	0.542**	1.000		
3. Non-financial Rewards	2.59	0.42	0.638**	0.491*	1.000	
4. Teacher Performance	3.60	0.74	0.489*	0.423*	0.512**	1.000

Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$ level (2-tailed)

Correlation is significant at $p < 0.01$ level (2-tailed)

Source: Field Data, November 2025

Interpretation: All three independent variables have significant positive correlations with teacher performance. Non-financial rewards have the strongest correlation ($r=0.512$, $p<0.01$), followed by BOG governance ($r=0.489$, $p<0.05$), then financial rewards ($r=0.423$, $p<0.05$).

4.7 Regression Analysis

Table 11: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.587	0.345	0.271	0.632

Source: Field Data, November 2025

Interpretation: The R Square of 0.345 indicates that the three independent variables together explain 34.5% of teacher performance variance.

Table 12: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5.234	3	1.745	4.367	0.013
Residual	9.948	26	0.383		
Total	15.182	29			

Source: Field Data, November 2025

Interpretation: The F-statistic of 4.367 ($p=0.013<0.05$) indicates the model is statistically significant.

Table 13: Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized B	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.234		2.456	0.021
BOG Governance	0.289	0.312	1.987	0.058
Financial Rewards	0.198	0.241	1.567	0.129
Non-financial Rewards	0.412	0.389	2.456	0.021

Source: Field Data, November 2025

Interpretation: Non-financial rewards ($\beta=0.389$, $p=0.021$) are the only statistically significant predictor of teacher performance. BOG governance approaches significance ($p=0.058$). Financial rewards are not significant ($p=0.129$).

4.8 Key Informant Perspectives

Education Staff at the District Perspective:

"We have been trying to train all BOGs in the district, but we lack funds. Without training, we cannot expect BOGs to perform optimally." (Education Staff 2).

"The BOG at Pabo is not the worst I have seen. They do hold meetings and make decisions, but they could do much better in terms of teacher engagement." (Education Staff 3).

Head Teacher Perspective:

"The BOG members are well-intentioned people who want the best for the school. But intention is not enough. We need more proactive engagement with teachers. Non-financial rewards cost nothing but require effort." (Head Teacher).

BOG Member Perspective:

"We hear the teachers' concerns. Some issues are beyond our control, but others we can address. We will discuss these findings in our next meeting and see what we can do differently." (BOG Member).

4.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented quantitative and qualitative findings. For Objective 1, BOG governance had a positive perception (mean=3.17) and a moderate correlation (r=0.489). For Objective 2, financial rewards were perceived negatively (mean=2.21) but showed a moderate correlation (r=0.423). For Objective 3, non-financial rewards had a borderline positive perception (mean=2.59) and the strongest correlation (r=0.512). Regression showed non-financial rewards as the only significant predictor. The next chapter discusses these findings.

Chapter Five

Discussion of Findings

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings presented in Chapter Four, drawing connections to existing literature, theoretical frameworks, and the contextual realities of Pabo Secondary School. The chapter is organized systematically: first, a detailed discussion of findings for each objective, integrating quantitative and qualitative results; second, conclusions drawn from the evidence; third, actionable recommendations for various stakeholders; fourth, areas for further research; and finally, the contributions of the study. The discussion is structured to answer the three research questions while highlighting agreements, contradictions, and unique contributions to knowledge. Each subsection begins with a summary of key findings, followed by a comparison with existing literature, a theoretical interpretation, and practical implications.

5.1 Discussion of Findings

5.1.1 Governing Role of BOGs and Teacher Performance

The study found a moderate positive influence of BOG governance on teacher performance (mean=3.17, r=0.489). This aligns with Delagardelle (2008), who argued that effective school boards provide strategic direction, and Simatwa (2017), who found that active BOG oversight improves teacher performance through transparency and accountability. In terms of statutory roles under the Education Act (2008), the BOG at Pabo Secondary School partially fulfils strategic direction, curriculum approval, and accountability structures. However, qualitative data revealed significant implementation gaps. The positive perception of BOG governance aligns with Delagardelle (2008), who argued that effective school boards provide strategic direction. Item 1 (BOG provides clear strategic direction) received the highest mean (3.57), supporting this. At Pabo Secondary School, the BOG appears to have established a vision and strategic framework that teachers acknowledge, even if implementation is inconsistent.

The moderate positive correlation (r = 0.489) between BOG governance and teacher performance is consistent with Simatwa (2017), who found that BOGs active in oversight roles contribute to improved teacher performance through transparency and accountability mechanisms. This suggests that when BOGs perform their governance functions effectively,

teachers respond positively. The correlation, while moderate, is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that this relationship is unlikely to have occurred by chance.

The finding that the BOG ensures accountability (Item 2, mean = 3.28) aligns with Berry and Howell's (2005) observation that BOGs contribute to accountability structures by ensuring teachers adhere to educational standards. The Education Act (2008) of Uganda mandates BOGs to oversee school management, and Pabo's BOG appears to be fulfilling this mandate to some degree.

Kowalski's (2012) observation that board members should act as trustees, understanding their roles and acting professionally, is partially reflected in the findings. Teachers acknowledged that the BOG provides strategic direction and accountability structures, suggesting that board members understand their basic responsibilities.

The study argues that the positive quantitative scores may reflect teachers' low expectations rather than strong governance performance. The BOG at Pabo Secondary School fulfils statutory roles on paper but falls short in meaningful engagement, monitoring, and follow-up.

5.1.1a Contradictions and Unique Findings

Despite the positive quantitative scores, qualitative data revealed significant contradictions that challenge the interpretation that BOG governance is truly effective. This is perhaps the most significant finding of this objective: the divergence between what teachers report on Likert scales and what they express in interviews and focus groups.

(i) Contradiction 1: Strategic Direction Exists, but Implementation Fails

While Item 1 received the highest mean score (3.57), qualitative data revealed that strategic plans are not being implemented. The Head Teacher admitted:

> *We have a five-year strategic plan that the BOG helped develop. The problem is implementation because of funding gaps. For example, the plan said we should have a school laboratory by last year, but we still don't have one.*

This gap between planning and implementation suggests that the BOG may be judged by teachers based on intentions rather than outcomes. Teachers may be rating the BOG positively because they appreciate that a plan exists, even if that plan is not realized. This phenomenon—

rating based on effort rather than results has been documented in other resource-constrained contexts where expectations are low.

(ii) Contradiction 2: Perceived vs. Actual Teacher Engagement

The quantitative data showed that Item 7 ("BOG provides regular feedback on school performance") scored 3.06, which is positive but modest. However, qualitative data painted a different picture:

> *The BOG meets only once per term. They come, sit with the head teacher in the boardroom, and leave. We rarely see them or get feedback from them about school matters. Sometimes we don't even know when they have visited the school.* (Male Teacher, 6 years' experience, FGD).

This contradiction suggests that teachers may be using different reference points when answering quantitative versus qualitative questions. On a Likert scale, a score of 3.06 might indicate "sometimes" or "occasionally." In interviews, teachers had the opportunity to explain that "occasionally" means once per term with no direct interaction. The mixed methods approach thus revealed a depth of understanding that quantitative methods alone would have missed.

(ii) Contradiction 3: Accountability Structures Exist but Are Weakly Implemented

The BOG member acknowledged:

> *We receive reports from the head teacher every term. He presents the academic performance data, financial statements, and the challenges the school is facing. We discuss these reports and make recommendations. But I admit, follow-up is not always consistent. We are busy people with our own jobs and families.*

This finding extends the work of Amakyi and Bush (2022), who found that many school boards in developing countries have formal structures but lack effective implementation mechanisms. The study views that the problem is not the absence of accountability structures but rather their inconsistent application.

An Education Staff at the District provided a systemic explanation:

Most BOGs in Amuru District lack adequate training on their governance roles and responsibilities. They don't fully understand their mandate beyond signing documents and approving budgets. The Ministry has tried to conduct training, but it hasn't reached all schools, including Pabo. Without proper training, how can we expect them to effectively monitor teacher performance?

This points to a systemic issue: BOG members are appointed based on stakeholder representation (parents, foundation bodies, local government) rather than governance expertise. As Connolly et al. (2017) noted, the stakeholder model promotes transparency and democratic participation but may not assemble the best expertise for effective governance.

(iv) Contradiction 4: BOG and Teachers Disagree on Curriculum Oversight

A BOG member stated:

"We ensure that the school follows the national curriculum. The head teacher presents the curriculum implementation plan each term, and we approve it."

However, a teacher offered a contrasting view:

The BOG has no idea what happens in our classrooms. They don't know if we will finish the syllabus or not. They don't check our schemes of work. The only person who does that is the head of the department and sometimes the deputy headteacher. The BOG is completely disconnected from the actual teaching and learning process.

This fundamental disagreement reveals that the BOG's understanding of "curriculum oversight" is limited to approving documents, while teachers understand "oversight" as direct engagement with classroom realities. The BOG may believe they are fulfilling their mandate, while teachers believe the BOG is failing. This perception gap has significant implications for BOG effectiveness.

5.1.1b Theoretical Interpretation through Systems Theory

Theoretically, the Systems Theory, as articulated by Von Bertalanffy (1973), provides a powerful lens for understanding these findings. The theory posits that organizations are open systems composed of interconnected subsystems. For the system to function effectively, these subsystems must interact regularly and maintain feedback loops.

The finding that teachers rarely interact with the BOG indicates a breakdown in the necessary interactions between subsystems. As the theory emphasizes, all components of a system are interrelated and interdependent. The BOG's decisions on resource allocation, disciplinary policies, and motivation schemes should directly affect teachers' working conditions, but if teachers are not engaged in these decisions or even informed about them, the interdependence breaks down.

The weak implementation of accountability mechanisms suggests that the feedback loops essential for system functioning are not operating effectively. In a well-functioning system, the BOG would provide feedback to teachers (through performance evaluations, recognition, etc.), and teachers would provide feedback to the BOG (through reports, suggestions, etc.). At Pabo, these feedback loops are weak or absent.

The theory also helps explain the resource allocation challenges. As an open system, Pabo Secondary School interacts with external entities such as the Ministry of Education, which provides capitation grants. When these external inputs are delayed or inadequate, the entire system suffers. The BOG cannot control these external factors, but it can advocate for better resourcing of a function that teachers feel the BOG has not performed effectively.

However, while Systems Theory provided a useful framework, the findings also reveal its limitations. The theory assumes a level of rationality and order that may not exist in real school settings. At Pabo, the BOG and teachers operate with different understandings of roles, different expectations, and different information. The theory does not adequately address these power dynamics and perception gaps. Moreover, the theory's emphasis on interdependence may overstate the BOG's actual influence. The BOG cannot control salary payments (a government function), cannot create resources that don't exist, and cannot compel teacher performance without cooperation. The theory's assumption that subsystems can be effectively coordinated is challenged by the structural limitations of the Ugandan education system.

5.1.2 Financial Rewards and Teacher Performance

This objective explored how financial rewards from the BOG influence teacher performance at Pabo Secondary School. The study found a negative perception of financial rewards (mean=2.21), yet a moderate positive correlation with teacher performance (r=0.423). This

paradox is possibly because even the limited financial rewards that exist (for instance, occasional recognition allowance, Staff Party contribution) may still have a positive motivational effect. Teachers may be responding to the presence of any financial reward, however small, rather than the adequacy of rewards. Equally, the positive correlation might reflect teachers' belief that good performance will eventually lead to financial rewards, even if rewards are not currently adequate. This psychological contract perspective suggests that teachers are investing in future returns.

The finding that salary delays negatively affect teacher performance aligns strongly with Mukasa and Owiny (2017), who noted that teachers in impoverished areas face additional challenges that diminish their ability to perform optimally. The Annual Sector Report (2017) highlighted about 10,000 teachers quitting mainly government-aided schools due to poor pay. At Pabo, teachers reported salary delays of up to two months, which undoubtedly affects their financial stability and, consequently, their focus on teaching.

The absence of performance-based bonuses at Pabo reflects a common challenge in Ugandan public schools. Munga (2013) found that efficiency rewards raise educational outcomes because teachers work harder by administering extra homework, practice tests, and remedial classes. The lack of such rewards at Pabo likely contributes to the low motivation expressed by teachers. As one teacher stated, "*There is no such thing as a bonus here. Whether you are Teacher of the Year or the worst performer, your pay is exactly the same. Why should I work extra hard when there is no reward?"* This sentiment captures the demotivating effect of flat compensation structures where performance is not recognized financially.

The finding that teachers receive no financial support for professional development aligns with the broader literature on resource constraints in developing countries. Olatunde-Aiyedun and Ogunode (2021a) observed that capacity development programs improve employee performance, but such programs require financial investment that many schools cannot afford. A teacher's experience illustrates this:

> *I wanted to pursue a master's degree last year. I asked the BOG if they could contribute even a small amount towards my tuition. They said they had no budget for that. I had to use my savings and take a loan.*

This finding clearly indicates that this teacher financed his own professional development, which is inequitable and may deter less financially secure teachers from pursuing further qualifications.

5.1.2a Contradictions and Unique Findings

(i) Contradiction 1: BOG's Limited Control Over Salaries

A significant contradiction emerged between teacher expectations and BOG capabilities. Teachers expect the BOG to address salary delays, but the BOG has limited power over the central government payroll system. As one BOG member stated:

> *We are aware of the salary inconsistencies, and we sympathize with the teachers. As a BOG, we have raised this issue at the District Education Committee meetings. But honestly, our hands are tied. The government is the employer, not us. We can't pay salaries from school funds because that would be illegal.*

This creates unrealistic expectations that may undermine BOG's legitimacy. Teachers hold the BOG accountable for something the BOG cannot control. This finding adds nuance to the literature, which often assumes that BOGs have direct control over teachers' compensation. In the Ugandan context, teacher salaries are a central government function, and BOGs have only advocacy roles, not payment authority.

(ii) Contradiction 2: Absence of Bonuses Due to Financial Constraints, Not Lack of Will

The qualitative data revealed that the absence of performance-based bonuses is not due to a lack of BOG will but due to genuine financial constraints. The Head Teacher explained:

> *We have discussed performance bonuses in BOG meetings, but the conclusion is always the same: we don't have the money. The school has no income-generating project. All our revenue comes from government capitation grants and a small amount from parents' contributions. These funds barely cover operational costs, let alone bonuses.*

This finding challenges the implicit assumption in some literature that BOGs can simply choose to provide financial rewards. At Pabo, the BOG has discussed bonuses but concluded that they cannot afford them. The problem is structural poverty, not institutional neglect.

(iii) Contradiction 3: Exam Incentives Debated, Not Dismissed

The Head Teacher revealed that the issue of exam incentives is not simply a matter of no money, but also a philosophical debate:

> *The issue of exam incentives has been on our BOG agenda multiple times. Some members support it, others oppose it. Those who oppose it argue that it would create a 'commercial' mentality among teachers, where they only care about exams and not about holistic education. It's a philosophical debate that we haven't resolved.*

This finding adds a layer of complexity to the financial rewards discussion. Even if resources were available, the BOG is divided on whether performance-based pay is educationally desirable. This reflects a broader debate in educational policy about the merits and drawbacks of merit pay for teachers.

5.1.2b Theoretical Interpretation through Systems Theory

From the Systems Theory perspective, the financial rewards findings highlight the interdependence of the school system with its external environment. The BOG cannot control government salary payments because the school is an open system influenced by external factors (the central government, the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Public Service). This supports the Systems Theory assumption that organizations interact with their environment and cannot fully control all variables affecting their functioning.

The weak financial reward system also demonstrates how a breakdown in one subsystem (financial resources) affects another subsystem (teachers' performance). As the theory predicts, inefficiencies in governance functions disrupt teaching quality. In this case, the "input" of financial resources into the school system is inadequate and unpredictable, leading to suboptimal "outputs" in terms of teachers' performance.

However, the theory's assumption of homeostasis (systems striving for equilibrium) is challenged by the chronic nature of financial constraints. The school system has not been able to achieve equilibrium; instead, it operates in a persistent state of resource scarcity. This suggests that Systems Theory may need to incorporate concepts from other theories (such as resilience theory) to fully explain how systems function under chronic stress. The study concludes that

financial rewards have a negative influence on teacher performance because they are inadequate, delayed, and inequitably distributed. However, the BOG faces genuine structural and resource constraints that limit its ability to provide meaningful financial rewards. Salary delays are a government problem, not a BOG problem. Teachers' expectations of the BOG regarding financial rewards may be unrealistic, given the BOG's limited authority over salaries. The BOG needs to manage these expectations through transparent communication.

5.1.3 Non-Financial Rewards and Teacher Performance

This objective examined how non-financial rewards influence teacher performance. This objective yielded the most compelling findings, as the study found a borderline positive perception of non-financial rewards (mean=2.59) and the strongest correlation with teachers' performance (r=0.512). Non-financial rewards were the only significant predictor in regression analysis (β=0.389, p=0.021). The study supports that non-financial rewards are superior for fostering teachers' performance because they offer a cost-effective, sustainable alternative to monetary incentives that remains viable even during financial instability. This finding aligns strongly with Wardoyo et al. (2017), who observed that non-financial rewards such as benefits from organizational structure and activities influence teachers' performance. The mean score of 2.70 for Item 6 ("Non-financial recognition motivates my professional performance") supports this, even though recognition is currently infrequent.

The finding that teachers are excluded from decision-making (Item 3, mean = 2.33) is consistent with Gann's (2015) argument that effective school governance requires involving teachers in decisions that affect their work. The lack of such involvement at Pabo Secondary School likely contributes to the frustration expressed in qualitative data.

The finding that teachers maintain job satisfaction despite challenges (Item 8, mean = 2.90) aligns with research on teachers' resilience. Aydin et al. (2015) found that factors beyond salary, such as love for the profession, affect teachers' satisfaction. As one teacher stated, "*I am satisfied because I love teaching, not because of what the BOG does. Seeing my students learn and succeed gives me joy."* This narrative implies that for this teacher, professional satisfaction is derived from the internal reward of students' success rather than external administrative or material support provided by the Board of Governors. The study argues that this intrinsic motivation is a valuable resource that the BOG should nurture, not take for granted.

5.1.3a Contradictions and Unique Findings

(i) Contradiction 1: Token vs. Meaningful Representation

A significant contradiction emerged between BOG perception and teachers' reality regarding decision-making involvement. The Head Teacher stated, "*The BOG involves teachers through the staff representative on the board. That person is elected by teachers and attends all BOG meetings. So in theory, teachers are represented."*

However, a teacher countered, *"The staff representative doesn't have time to consult other teachers before votes are cast. It's token representation, not real involvement."* This disconnect between BOG perception (representation exists) and the teacher's reality (representation is token) is a major finding with practical implications. The BOG believes they have fulfilled their obligation by including a staff representative; teachers believe this is insufficient.

(ii) Contradiction 2: Recognition Exists but Is Unsatisfactory

The BOG believes they recognize teachers. A BOG member stated, *"During Speech Day, we give awards to the best-performing teachers based on exam results. We also give certificates of appreciation to teachers who have served the school for many years."*

However, teachers find this recognition inadequate:

> *Sometimes during Speech Day, the head teacher mentions teachers who performed well in the previous year's national exams. But that is not from the BOG directly. The BOG members are present, but they don't say anything. They just sit there.*

The issue is not the absence of recognition but its quality. Teachers want recognition that feels personal, specific, and meaningful, not generic praise delivered by the head teacher while BOG members sit silently.

(iii) Contradiction 3: Recognition Motivates, So Why Not Do More?

Teachers explicitly stated that recognition motivates them:

> *When the BOG chairperson shook my hand at the last Speech Day and said 'well done' in front of everyone, I felt proud. It was not money, but it made me feel valued. I worked harder after that because I knew my efforts were noticed.*

Despite the low cost and high impact of non-financial recognition, teachers report that such gestures are rare, creating a puzzling disconnect between theory and practice. This oversight likely stems from a combination of factors: the Board of Governors may lack awareness of the profound value teachers place on appreciation, remain stuck in administrative habits, fear that selective recognition could foster perceptions of favouritism, or simply lack a formal, systematic process to consistently identify and reward exemplary performance.

(iv) Unique Finding: Job Satisfaction Despite Challenges

The finding that teachers maintain job satisfaction (mean = 2.90) despite the challenges documented in this study is noteworthy. This suggests that teachers' satisfaction is driven by factors other than BOG performance. As one teacher explained: "*I am satisfied because I love teaching, not because of what the BOG does."* This intrinsic motivation is a protective factor that prevents teachers from leaving despite difficult conditions. However, the BOG should not assume this satisfaction will last indefinitely. Over time, chronic dissatisfaction with BOG practices could erode even intrinsic motivation.

5.1.4 Theoretical Interpretation

From the perspective of Systems Theory, the findings confirm the interdependence between the governance subsystem (BOG) and the instructional subsystem (teachers). The weak feedback loops between BOG and teachers demonstrate system dysfunction. When the BOG provides recognition, it sends positive feedback that reinforces desired teacher behaviours. When teachers are excluded from decision-making, negative feedback loops are established that can lead to system dysfunction.

The finding that non-financial rewards are the strongest predictor of teachers' performance supports the Systems Theory emphasis on interdependence. Even when financial resources (inputs) are inadequate, effective communication and recognition (processes) can still produce positive outcomes. This is a hopeful finding for resource-constrained schools, indicating that a school can improve teachers' performance without money.

However, the theory's assumption that all subsystems can be effectively coordinated is challenged by the BOG–teachers perception gaps documented in this study. The BOG believes

they are doing enough; teachers disagree. This suggests that Systems Theory needs to incorporate concepts from communication theory to fully explain how information is transmitted, received, and interpreted differently by different actors. The theory's assumption of homeostasis (systems striving for equilibrium) is also challenged by the chronic nature of financial constraints. The school system has not been able to achieve equilibrium; instead, it operates in a persistent state of resource scarcity. This suggests that Systems Theory may need to incorporate concepts from resilience theory to fully explain how systems function under chronic stress.

Motivation theories help explain why non-financial rewards outperform financial rewards. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes hygiene factors from motivators. Financial rewards may prevent dissatisfaction but do not motivate; non-financial rewards such as recognition and achievement drive performance. Vroom's Expectancy Theory explains that teachers work hard when they expect effort to lead to valued rewards. If teachers believe that no amount of effort will result in financial rewards, motivation declines. Equity Theory explains that unequal distribution of incentives demotivates teachers. Social Exchange Theory suggests that when teachers receive recognition and support, they reciprocate with higher commitment.

Chapter Six

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

6.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the evidence, contributions to knowledge, actionable recommendations for various stakeholders, areas for further research, and a final conclusion. It addresses the panel's comment that the research report should conclude with a comprehensive summary.

6.1 Summary of the Study

This study investigated the influence of Boards of Governors (BOGs) on teachers' performance in government-aided secondary schools in Amuru District, using Pabo Secondary School as a case study. The study was guided by three objectives: to investigate the influence of the governing role of BOGs on teachers' performance; to explore the influence of BOG financial rewards on teachers' performance; and to examine the influence of BOG non-financial rewards on teachers' performance.

The study adopted a mixed-methods single case study design with a qualitative-dominant orientation, underpinned by Systems Theory and complemented by motivation theories. Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire administered to 30 teachers, semi-structured oral interviews with 5 BOG members, 4 District Education Staff, and the Head Teacher, and two Focus Group Discussions with teachers. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression in SPSS version 25. Qualitative data were analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework.

The findings revealed that the governing role of BOGs had a moderate positive influence on teachers' performance (mean = 3.17, $r = 0.489$, $p < 0.05$). Qualitative evidence showed limited direct engagement between the BOG and teachers, inconsistent resource allocation, weak follow-up on accountability mechanisms, and a gap between strategic planning and implementation. Financial rewards were perceived negatively (mean = 2.21) but showed a moderate positive correlation with teacher performance ($r = 0.423$, $p < 0.05$). Teachers reported salary delays,

absence of performance-based bonuses, lack of professional development support, and unequal distribution of available incentives. Non-financial rewards had a borderline positive perception (mean = 2.59), yet recorded the strongest correlation ($r = 0.512$, $p < 0.01$) and were the only statistically significant predictor of teacher performance in regression analysis ($\beta = 0.389$, $p = 0.021$). Recognition was valued by teachers, but it was occasional, informal, and not systematically linked to BOG practice. Teachers also reported exclusion from meaningful decision-making. Collectively, the three BOG variables explained 34.5% of the variance in teacher performance.

6.2 Conclusions

6.2.1 Objective One: BOG Governing Role

The study concludes that the governing role of BOGs at Pabo Secondary School has a moderate positive influence on teachers' performance. While teachers perceive BOG governance positively overall, significant gaps exist between policy and implementation. The BOG provides strategic direction and accountability structures on paper, but these are not consistently implemented or communicated to teachers. In terms of statutory roles under the Education Act (2008), the BOG partially fulfils strategic direction, curriculum approval, and accountability structures, but falls short in monitoring, staff welfare, and meaningful participation. The positive quantitative scores may reflect teachers' low expectations rather than strong governance performance.

6.2.2 Objective Two: Financial Rewards

The study concludes that financial rewards from the BOG have a negative influence on teachers' performance. Teachers are dissatisfied with salary timeliness, absence of performance bonuses, lack of professional development funding, and unequal incentive distribution. However, correlation analysis paradoxically suggests that even limited financial rewards have positive relationships with performance, indicating that teachers would respond positively to improved financial incentives. The BOG faces genuine structural and resource constraints that limit its ability to provide meaningful financial rewards. Salary delays are a government problem, not a BOG problem. Teachers' expectations of the BOG regarding financial rewards may be

unrealistic, given the BOG's limited authority over salaries. The BOG needs to manage these expectations through transparent communication.

6.2.3 Objective Three: Non-Financial Rewards

The study concludes that non-financial rewards have a significant positive influence on teachers' performance. Non-financial rewards were the strongest predictor of teachers' performance. Teachers value recognition, but it is currently too infrequent and informal. Teachers are excluded from meaningful decision-making, creating frustration. However, teachers maintain job satisfaction due to an intrinsic love for the profession. Unlike financial rewards, non-financial rewards are within the BOG's control and require minimal resources.

Overall Conclusion: The study concludes that while the Board of Governors at Pabo Secondary School does influence teachers' performance, the impact varies significantly by role: governing duties offer a moderate positive influence, financial rewards show current weakness despite high potential, and non-financial rewards provide the strongest positive impact. Collectively, these BOG variables account for 34.5% of the variance in teacher performance, indicating that while governance is a critical factor, roughly two-thirds of performance is driven by external elements (65.5%) such as individual teachers' characteristics, head teachers' leadership, community support, government policy, and the region's historical context, which necessitate a realistic assessment of the BOG's reach. From a Systems Theory perspective, the findings confirm the interdependence between the governance and instructional subsystems, yet highlight that the model must be refined to account for structural limitations, such as government payroll and resource scarcity, that inherently restrict the BOG's capacity to fully coordinate school operations.

6.3 Contributions of the Study

By placing Pabo Secondary School as the case study in Amuru District, this study demonstrates that Boards of Governors in resource-constrained schools exert a measurable but uneven influence on teacher performance. While BOGs provide strategic direction, they fall short in consistent accountability, teacher engagement, and financial support. Crucially, the research shows that non-financial incentives such as recognition, involvement, and a supportive

environment are the only statistically significant drivers of teacher performance. This finding offers a replicable, low-cost governance strategy, especially for rural, post-conflict schools. The study thus provides a diagnostic framework for schools in Amuru District to review governance practices, prioritise non-financial interventions, and manage expectations about salary control, positioning BOGs as active though constrained agents of teacher motivation and school effectiveness in Northern Uganda.

The study provides significant contributions across six key areas:

i. Empirical Contribution: This research offers original empirical evidence regarding the relationship between Boards of Governors and teacher performance within a rural Ugandan secondary school, a context that remains significantly under-researched. By shifting the focus from urban and Western settings, the study provides a vital look at how governance functions in unique, localised environments.

ii. Methodological Contribution: The study demonstrates the high value of utilising a mixed-methods approach in educational governance research. By triangulating quantitative data with qualitative insights, the research uncovered critical contradictions that would have remained invisible had a single-method approach been applied.

iii. Practical Contribution: The findings provide actionable recommendations specifically tailored for BOGs operating in resource-constrained settings. By emphasising that effective management can be achieved through low-cost, non-financial interventions rather than purely monetary ones, the study offers strategies that are both feasible and grounded in the direct experiences of teachers.

iv. Theoretical Contribution: This research extends Systems Theory by highlighting the practical limits of BOG influence, particularly regarding external factors like government payroll and chronic resource scarcity. By identifying these limitations, the study suggests necessary refinements to the theory, ensuring it is more applicable to the structural realities of developing country contexts.

v. Policy Contribution: The study provides evidence-based insights to inform the Ministry of Education policies regarding BOG training, systematic teacher recognition, and salary

management. Notably, it establishes that non-financial interventions are highly cost-effective, offering a clear argument for prioritising these strategies in national education policy.

vi. Contextual Contribution: Finally, the research documents the specific governance challenges facing BOGs in post-conflict Northern Uganda. It illustrates how a unique environment defined by resource scarcity, limited training opportunities, and the legacy of historical trauma creates a complex governance landscape that requires localised, nuanced solutions.

6.4 Recommendations

6.4.1 Recommendations for the Board of Governors

i. Formalise recognition by replacing ad-hoc praise with a consistent, low-cost system such as public commendation or letters of appreciation to leverage the proven impact of non-financial rewards on performance.

ii. Establish an engagement committee to create a formal bridge between the Board and staff to ensure teachers are included in school decision-making, addressing the current governance gap.

iii. Communicate transparently about salary limitations and the BOG's limited control over government payroll to manage teacher expectations realistically.

iv. Advocate for resources by consistently raising resource constraints at district and national levels to improve school funding.

6.4.2 Recommendations for the Ministry of Education and Sports

i. Mandate BOG governance training to shift board members from passive administration to informed, active governance.

ii. Streamline payroll by prioritising the elimination of structural salary delays to remove the primary external barrier to teacher motivation and school stability.

iii. Allocate funds for school-level recognition programmes and income-generating projects to support rewards.

6.4.3 Recommendations for School Management (Head Teacher)

i. Nurture intrinsic drive to create a supportive climate and professional development opportunities that reinforce the internal joy of teaching, which serves as a teacher's primary motivator.

ii. Systematise performance tracking by implementing a transparent monitoring framework to provide the BOG with the objective data necessary to fairly reward and recognise high-performing staff.

iii. Support teacher participation in decision-making by ensuring the staff representative has time to consult other teachers before BOG meetings.

6.5 Areas for Further Research

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the following areas for further study have been identified:

i. Investigating how the influence of BOGs on teachers' performance varies across different districts in Northern Uganda to determine if the Pabo Secondary School experience is representative of the broader region or an outlier.

ii. Exploring the differences in how BOGs (or Boards of Directors) in private schools influence teachers' performance compared to government schools, with a focus on identifying private-sector practices that could be adapted for public institutions.

iii. Examining whether the significance of non-financial rewards as a motivator shifts between rural and urban school environments and determining if teachers in different settings respond to these incentives with varying levels of intensity.

iv. Investigating successful non-monetary reward strategies implemented in other rural, resource-limited schools across Uganda to identify replicable best practices for motivating teachers without direct financial input.

v. Evaluating how specific training variables such as programme duration, curriculum content, and delivery methods correlate with improved governance outcomes and subsequent teacher performance to determine the most effective approaches for capacity building.

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Appendix 1: Map of the Study Area

Appendix 2: Informed consent forms

Study Title: "Board of Governors and Teachers' Performance in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Amuru District"

Researcher / Investigator: Oola Charles

Institutions: Department of Education Management and Administration, Gulu University, Uganda

Introduction:

This form explains the study in which you have been asked to participate. After all your questions have been answered, you decide if you want to voluntarily participate. If you do, you will be asked to sign this form, and you will receive a copy.

Summary and purpose of the study:

The study is interested in, as the title already says, "Board of Governors and Teachers' performance in Government-aided Secondary Schools in Amuru District". Specifically, it will focus on the influence of the governing role of Boards of Governors on teachers' performance at secondary schools, the influence of financial rewards on teachers' performance at secondary schools, and the influence of non-financial rewards on teachers' performance in secondary schools. The overarching goal is to better examine the influence of the roles of Boards of Governors on teachers' performance in secondary schools in Amuru District.

Sponsors of the research project:

The project is funded individually by the researcher Mr. Oola Charles.

Procedures:

Your participation in this study will take the form of *(to be indicated by the researcher)*:

a) participation in the context of oral interviews
b) open ended questionnaire
c) a focus group discussion

Who will participate in the study?

You have been selected to participate in this study because you fulfil the requirements for participation in this study, i.e., you live in the designated study area and are a member of a selected secondary school. You have been chosen to participate in an individual interview, answering of open-ended questionnaires, and/or a focus group discussion which will last for approximately 30 minutes.

Risks/discomforts:

There are no foreseeable risks of harm or discomfort that will arise from your participation in this study. In case of an interview or focus group discussion, your only discomfort will be the inconvenience in terms of time spent.

Benefits:

Potential benefits of participation in the study include receiving information regarding the influence of roles of Boards of Governors on teachers' performance at secondary schools in Amuru District.

Confidentiality:

The researcher will ensure confidentiality to respondents.

Name of Participant (P): ……. Sign: ……

Researcher (R): …… Sign: ……..

Appendix 3: Oral Interviews for Education Staff at the District, members of BOG and the Head teacher

1. What are Boards of Governors?
2. What roles do they play at secondary schools?
3. What is their structure and mode of operation?
4. What experiences have you faced with the Boards of Governors, as:
    a) a teacher?
    b) An administrator?
5. Are there specific limits to the operation of the Boards of Governors? If yes, what are they and how are they explained?
6. What other factors motivate teachers to work at school?
7. What is the impact of teachers' performance on students' performance?
8. What financial and non-financial rewards does your school and Board of Governors offer to teachers?

Appendix 4: Focus Group Discussion for the secondary school teachers

1. How regularly does your school's Board of Governors meet?
2. What is their structure and mode of operation?
3. What main roles do they play to support the operations of the school?
4. What experiences have you had with the Boards of Governors, as:
    a. a teacher?
    b. An administrator?
5. At your school, are there specific limits to the operation of the Boards of Governors? If yes, what are they and how are they maintained?
9. What factors have been put in place to motivate teachers to work at school?
10. What financial and non-financial rewards does your school and Board of Governors offer to teachers?

Appendix 5: Closed-ended Questionnaire for the secondary school teachers

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION *(Tick the appropriate option)*

1. Gender:
   ☐ Male
   ☐ Female
2. Age:
   ☐ 20–29
   ☐ 30–39
   ☐ 40–49
   ☐ 50 and above
3. Highest level of education:
   ☐ Diploma
   ☐ Bachelor's Degree
   ☐ Master's Degree
   ☐ Others (specify): ……..
4. Teaching experience:
   ☐ Less than 1 year
   ☐ 1–5 years
   ☐ 6–10 years
   ☐ Over 10 years

SECTION B: GOVERNING ROLE OF BOGs AND TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE

Please tick the most appropriate response.

Statement	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1. The BOGs are actively involved in monitoring teachers' work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. BOGs provide constructive feedback that enhances my performance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The BOGs support the implementation of academic programs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. BOGs influence teacher discipline in the school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. The presence of BOGs ensures professional accountability.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION C: FINANCIAL REWARDS FROM BOGs AND TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE

Please tick the most appropriate response.

Statement	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1. BOGs provide financial incentives to recognize good performance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. BOG-sponsored bonuses motivate me to work harder.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. BOGs offer allowances for extra duties such as coaching or clubs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Timely financial rewards from BOGs boost my morale and job satisfaction.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Lack of financial support from BOGs negatively affects my performance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION D: NON-FINANCIAL REWARDS FROM BOGs AND TEACHERS' PERFORMANCE

Please tick the most appropriate response.

Statement	**SA**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**
1. BOGs recognize teachers publicly for their efforts and achievements.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. BOGs support teachers' participation in professional development programs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. BOGs commend teachers' good performance during school functions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. I feel valued when BOGs express appreciation for my teaching efforts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Non-financial support from BOGs helps improve the school environment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix 7: Dissemination plan

Throughout and after the successful completion of this research study, the findings/results shall be disseminated to the communities, academia, partners, and policymakers through the following channels:

a) Research report
b) Publication of results in form of an article in an appropriate peer-reviewed journal
c) Community and public engagement in the research area, e.g., through the organization of discussion formats regarding BOGs
d) (Contributions to) Policy briefs
e) (Contributions to) Newsletters