



# **The impact of the reward system on teachers' performance in public schools in Russia**

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## **Abstract**

The influence of the reward system on the employees' performance has been an important topic. The relation between these two concepts has been studied in different fields including teaching. The researchers highlight the significance of this type of analysis among teachers since they are the main element in the process of knowledge delivery which forms the global level of education. The previous studies were conducted in different countries and different types of educational institutions. This research aimed to analyse the relationship between the existing reward system and the performance of teachers working particularly in Russian public schools in order to understand how the current system works, what types of rewards are preferred and what could be improved in this area. A semi-structured interview was used as a principal data collection tool in combination with the volunteer self-selection technique of sampling. Participants' responses were studied through thematic analysis. Based on the findings, the study explored the relationship between rewards and performance, which types of monetary and non-monetary rewards are in favor, which of them influence teachers in public schools the most, and what current system is lacking. The research made additions to the existing works on a similar topic by uncovering other factors that impact teachers' performance besides traditional monetary and non-monetary bonuses. Finally, based on the findings, the study suggested possible improvements to the current system which include a recommendation to focus on particular rewards mostly preferred by respondents such as monetary bonuses, additional time off, organised activities and learning opportunities for teachers.

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### Research Methods and Dissertation

#### The impact of the reward system on teachers' performance in public schools in Russia

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This section is a supplement to the main assignment, to be used if AI was used in any capacity in the creation of your assignment; if you have queries about how to do this, please contact your lecturer. For an example of how to fill these sections out, please click [here](#).

### AI Acknowledgment

This section acknowledges the AI tools that were utilized in the process of completing this assignment.

Tool Name	Brief Description	Link to tool
Grammarly	A tool for checking grammar, spelling and punctuation	<a href="https://app.grammarly.com/">https://app.grammarly.com/</a>

### Description of AI Usage

This section provides a more detailed description of how the AI tools were used in the assignment. It includes information about the prompts given to the AI tool, the responses received, and how these responses were utilized or modified in the assignment. **One table should be used for each tool used.**

Grammarly	
Checking grammar spelling and punctuation	
Extra preposition	Another bonus that interviewees consider <b>as</b> a reward is organising different activities for teachers such as concerts, festivals and trips.

### Evidence of AI Usage

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## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Chapter 1 “Introduction”**

The researcher will outline a prior review of the analysed literature in the introduction chapter in order to familiarise the reader with the topic and purpose of the research. The chapter will also cover a research structure.

### **1.1 Background**

The proposed research is devoted to the influence of the reward system on teachers' performance in public schools in Russia. This topic is worth studying since numerous papers proved the strong connection between performance and reward systems in different spheres including teaching (Zhenyu, Zain, and Kasim, 2022, Musenze et al., 2013, and Osei-Owusu and Adu, 2020). Similar studies have been conducted before but not in Russia (Sarjana, Khayati, and Warini, 2016, Ibrar and Khan, 2015, and Kingi, Nyonje, and Macharia, 2020). This research will help to understand the connection between rewards and performance in the particular country and identify types of preferred bonuses and its impact on teachers in public schools.

The proposed study is based on previous research on the related topics. The main problem that was identified within the literature review is the lack of research on the topic narrowed by a particular type of organization and country which is useful in terms of tailoring the reward system based on the cultural and professional peculiarities of employees. The research purpose is to analyse the responses of teachers at Russian public schools received by completing the interview regarding the impact of the current rewards on the performance in their schools. This analysis will help identify the existing system's efficiency and provide suggestions on how it could be improved by its customization according to cultural and professional differences.

### **1.2 Structure of the study**

This study is structured as follows: introduction, literature review, research questions, research methodology, findings and analysis, and discussion and conclusion.

#### **Chapter I – Introduction**

The chapter outlines a background of the current situation in the researched sphere and states the subject and purpose of the study. Besides, the part presents the structure of the research.

#### **Chapter II – Literature Review**

It overviews research on correlated topics and findings applicable to the study. The literature review also provides an analysis of the education system in Russia which includes such subtopics as recent changes in the sphere, peculiarities of Russian teachers at public schools, place of rewards in the Russian education system, and types of rewards and their connection with performance. Analysis of existing studies is finished with the defining of the research gap.

#### **Chapter III – Research Question**

The third chapter outlines the research's aim and objectives that explain the need for the study. The part also states research questions that are aimed to be answered at the end of the research.

#### **Chapter IV – Research Methodology**

The part describes the research philosophy, approach, design and strategy, sample and data collection technique as well as clarifies how the chosen tools will be used in answering research questions.

#### **Chapter V – Findings and Analysis**

The main findings of the research and its analysis are outlined in this chapter.

#### **Chapter VI – Discussion and Conclusion**

The chapter summarises the key findings of the study and states research limitations. Furthermore, suggestions for future research on the related topic are provided in this part.

### **Chapter 2 “Literature Review”**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Within the review, the literature covering the connection between rewards and performance in the teaching sphere was examined. Overall, the authors of analysed papers state that there is a strong and positive impact of rewards on teachers' performance. Teachers are more motivated to perform better when they are satisfied with the rewards such as salary, promotion, bonus, recognition, appreciation, etc. For instance, researchers outline such positive aspects of rewards as turnover decreasing, reduction of pressure and increase in confidence (Kingi, Nyonje and Macharia, 2020). According to Sarjana, Khayati and Warini (2016) outstanding performance causes a higher level of education that motivates competition in the market and shows the country the beneficial side. Sadq (2020) highlights the importance of performance and reward management as a tool for recognising and understanding the role of employees in contributing and aligning with the company's goals. In all the reviewed papers, *quantitative research* in the form of a *questionnaire* was applied. The key variables that were used are *performance* and *reward system* including monetary and non-monetary rewards. However, some authors used more than two variables. For example, Sarjana, Khayati and Warini (2016) examined the impact of rewards not only on performance but also on the development of creativity, innovation and competence of teachers within performance to examine the influence of rewards on the quality of performance. The study of Musenze *et al.* (2013) is focused on the correlation between reward systems and *organisational performance*. The author assumes that due to increasing global competition, reward systems are the key to organisational performance growth. As a result, rewards make employees more committed which affects overall organisational performance. Further research will be conducted using a *qualitative method* to explore a complex social

phenomenon of the impact of rewards on teachers deeper, capture participants' experiences within given settings and time frames and generate richer and contextualized data to identify how cultural background influences the relation between variables.

The sample sizes in reviewed studies vary from seventy-two to eleven thousand respondents. Almost all research participants were teachers at schools and universities except for the research of Osei-Owusu and Adu (2020) where the authors examined answers of academic and non-academic staff especially senior members since according to the researchers, they are more experienced and insightful. The sample of respondents also differs in terms of the region. Some authors focused on one educational institution, for example, Sadq (2020) conducted research at Koya University, Iraq, or Ibrar and Khan (2015) – in a private school in Malakand, Pakistan. Some of the authors chose respondents from one region of the city, for instance, public schools in East Sub-County, Kenya (Kingi, Nyonje and Macharia, 2020) or Bekasi region, Indonesia (Sarjana, Khayati and Warini, 2016).

Examining representatives of different regions and educational institutions the researchers suggest Human Resource practitioners pay more attention to “custom-made reward systems” that are fair and acceptable (Musenze *et al.*, 2013). Ibrar and Khan (2015) also state that different employees have different needs about rewards. For this reason, the organisation's management team should carefully select the rewards that respond to individual demands. Sarjana, Khayati and Warini (2016) agree with the authors and state that rewards might better depend on different factors such as personality, organisational policies, and level of education.

Summarizing the ideas mentioned above, even though according to researchers the link between rewards and performance is not disputable, the school board should design and adapt a reward system in the educational institution that would work the most efficiently. For this reason, it should be adapted to cultural, professional and personal peculiarities.

As was mentioned earlier the authors of previous research examined only one region of their countries or educational institution in their studies (Ibrar and Khan, 2015, Kingi, Nyonje and Macharia, 2020, Musenze *et al.*, 2013, Osei-Owusu and Adu, 2020). The further study intends to examine the correlation between performance and reward systems in Russia since there is a lack of such studies. Respondents for the current research will be teachers at public schools. Public school is a pillar of lower-secondary and upper-secondary education in Russia since there are just a few private schools in the country (Potapova, 2017). For this reason, studying in public schools and direct interaction with teachers working there have a crucial impact on education in the country.

To have a clearer picture of the place and status of public schools and general education we will discuss the main peculiarities of the Russian education system in the next part.

## 2.2 Overview of Russian education system and schools

The Federal Ministry of Education oversees the formulation and implementation of education policies at all levels in Russia. Regional Ministries of Education are responsible for policy implementation at the local level. The education system in Russia consists of general, vocational, technical and tertiary education (Potapova, 2017). In this work, we will focus on general education.

General education consists of pre-school (1 year (optional)), elementary (4 years), lower-secondary (5 years), and upper-secondary education (2 years) which amounts to 11 years in total. Elementary education and lower-secondary education are compulsory (Potapova, 2017). According to Article 43 of the Russian constitution (The Constitution of the Russian Federation, 2001), every citizen has a right to a tuition-free education in state or municipal educational establishments (Potapova, 2017). There are several types of schools available in Russia which are public (state) and private schools. However, the number of private schools in the country is very limited, only 1% of 42,600 schools are private according to the data for 2015 (Potapova, 2017).

Almost every school in Russia provides the full spectrum of all stages of general education however some educational institutions, particularly in rural areas, provide only elementary or high-secondary education. Besides the mentioned differences, students and parents have an opportunity to enrol in some other types of schools which are evening schools, lyceums, gymnasiums, and schools for gifted children (Lisovskaya, and Karpov, 2020). Each of these schools can be public or private.

1. *Evening schools* deliver upper-secondary education for those who completed compulsory education and would like to apply for higher education. This option is available for children over 15 and adults who would like to continue tertiary education;
2. *Lyceums* offer special programmes in mathematics, sciences and law in addition to the general programme;
3. *Gymnasiums* are focused on humanities including learning two foreign languages;
4. *Schools for gifted children* are usually associated with fine arts and specialise in music, ballet and performing arts (Potapova, 2017).

Education in Russia is centralized, universal, compulsory and free which is a legacy of the Soviet system. After the ending of the Soviet Union in 1991, reformers attempted to change and decentralize the system getting rid of micromanagement and authoritarian character. Due to changes and transition from one system to another, the schools were opened for experiments and innovation including new textbooks and teaching methods (Chernykh and Parshikov, 2016). In the late 90s, legal and financial uncertainty and underfunding made schools charge fees and the

dual system of private (tuition-fee) and public (tuition-free) schools appeared (Potapova, 2017). Uncertainty about the education system status stimulated the government to create the “unified educational space” which included the introduction of national educational standards, the creation of a limited set of federally approved textbooks, the provision of state guarantees for access to free education and an application of the Unified State Exam (Lisovskaya and Karpov, 2020). Listed features can be named as a sign of returning to centralised Soviet system even though there were some elements of modernisation. For example, control over schools was reasserted between districts of Russia however regional liberties were severely restricted. Turning back to the Soviet system fully ended by acceptance of unified Federal State Educational Standards for primary and secondary education in 2013 (Lisovskaya and Karpov, 2020).

### **2.2.1 Recent changes in the education system**

Despite the centralised and controlled character of Russian schools, the education system is heavily influenced by technological progress and globalization (Mineev, 2013). The main directions of education development in the country are modernisation, life-long education, and the development of networking systems. Schools are also involved in the process of implementing new initiatives since general education is the base for any further education. More attention is paid to the personality of the student and teacher where freedom, creativity and partnership are highlighted (Chernykh and Parshikov, 2016). According to Mineev (2013), a stable education system is characterised by internal diversity and for this reason, the Russian education system also needs support for the diversification of the motives of cognitive and educational activities.

Speaking about changes in the education sphere, some main external and internal events that influenced it recently will be discussed further.

1. *Economic challenges* are one of the factors that caused funding cuts due to economic sanctions because of Crimea annexation in 2014 and the invasion to Ukraine in February 2022, which was followed by deteriorating exchange rates and a decrease in the prices of oil (Potapova, 2017).
2. The decline in demography caused a demographic crisis that resulted in plummeting school and university students. The number of secondary school graduates dropped by about 50%, from 1.46 million to 701,400 graduates between 2000 and 2015 (Gokhberg et al., 2016). The decrease in population motivated the government to stimulate the immigration of foreign students and claim the country as a higher education destination. Even though the overall number of students dropped in recent years, the completion rates in general education are high. 91% of students

completed upper-secondary education in 2017 according to the World Bank (The World Bank, 2020).

3. *The decrease in the labour force* resulted in a shrinking number of teachers in recent years. This change is caused by population decline which results in the aging of the workforce. Brain drain has also negatively influenced the level of workforce in the country after the events in Ukraine (Graphic detail, 2023).

4. *Corruption* affects the educational system heavily. According to the 2016 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, Russia is ranked 26<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries (EQS, 2023). Teachers are claimed to be one of the most vulnerable categories to corruption since they are regularly underpaid (Potapova, 2017).

5. *Motivation for studying abroad*. The government is currently motivating students to study abroad to return home and work for economic modernisation (Potapova, 2017).

Overall, it could be stated that despite the conservatism of the Russian education system, it is severely influenced by national and global events which change the focus of the main initiatives. Due to labour shortage, corruption and economic challenges, the government pays more attention to one of the main actors of the studying process – teachers.

### **2.2.2 Peculiarities of Russian teachers at public schools**

Further main features of Russian teachers will be discussed. One of the main expectations from the teacher is to be a good example for their students by obtaining broad-based knowledge mixed with a deep understanding of the subject they teach (Kalatzkaya, 2014). Yakhyaeva and Muskhanova (2022) state that another significant feature of a school teacher is professionalism which includes educational standard implementation, organisational problem-solving, professional competence, flexibility in changing educational conditions, and creativity. A teacher is also seen in a close connection with family since teachers work assumes interaction with parents, particularly regular parent-teacher meetings, and summarising family upbringing for more successful education outcomes (Yakhyaeva and Muskhanova, 2022). Based on the listed general features, it could be assumed that a school teacher performs several roles and must obtain a large number of characteristics to be considered a good specialist.

According to the research, the status of a teacher in the country is quite high since Russia is in fourth place on the Teacher Status Index Statistics (Dolton et al, 2018) which means that teachers are respected and play a significant role in society.

Conducted surveys showed that school teachers in Russia cannot be observed as a homogeneous group (Pinskaya, Ponomareva, and Kosaretsky, 2016). Teachers of general education include several age groups of representatives which differ in characteristics. Current research will be

focused particularly on young teachers. One of the reasons for this is the growth of the aging school workforce and the general shrinking of the labour force that was mentioned earlier. According to statistics, the average age of school teachers in 2021 is 44 (Statista, 2023). Today one of the major directives of the government is to support young teachers by salary increasing, providing mentorship and helping in the development of their professional skills (Pinskaya, Ponomareva, and Kosaretsky, 2016). The research shows that young teachers need additional help since they face challenges and barriers at the beginning of their career which affects the desire to continue their professional path (Pinskaya, Ponomareva, and Kosaretsky, 2016). According to statistics, more than 40% of teachers worldwide leave the profession within the first 10 years (Lindner, 2023). Speaking about Russia, 37% of teachers say that they would like to leave teaching within the next five years which is higher by 12% in comparison with The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (OECD, 2020). Based on this data, it could be stated that attrition is a global problem, and its patterns suggest that the quitting percentage is the highest among young teachers. These results are alarming and question teachers' retention policies and other factors that influence attrition such as satisfaction, motivation, and compensation levels.

According to the survey (OECD, 2020), most teachers chose the job since they see teaching as is socially significant occupation. A majority of young teachers in Russia tend to value the prestige of the profession (58.7%). This figure is higher in comparison with older teachers which is 41% (OECD, 2020). However, as it was mentioned before almost 40% of specialists are ready to quit in the first 5 years of work which returns us to the questions about turnover factors.

According to Watt et al. (2012), teaching as a profession mostly attracts individuals driven by a passion and love for this occupation which suggests that at the beginning teachers are highly motivated. However, the motivation and desire to stay in the profession can be affected by other aspects. Harfitt (2015) names several factors that affect young teachers' desire to leave the most which are an expectation of fast adaptation to the established contexts, lack of mentor support, complicated workload (marking, administrative work, classroom duties, report writing and lesson preparation), the increasing challenge of diversity in the classroom, greater technological demands on teachers, and the constant need for professional development and academic upgrading outside of school hours. Cooper (2006) added to this list "inadequate support from school administration, limited teacher input and influence over school policies, student motivation, and discipline problems". These factors according to the author's research influence stress levels and can lead to frustration, anger, and anxiety and impact the level of satisfaction from work (Harfitt, 2015).

The research showed that young teachers in Russia have much lower job satisfaction than their foreign peers, whereas other age groups are close in results to the international colleagues (Pinskaya, Ponomareva, and Kosaretsky, 2016). The level of satisfaction in turn impacts the motivation of a teacher and students' results (Pinskaya, Ponomareva, and Kosaretsky, 2016).

Summarizing previous points, it could be stated that the turnover of teachers affects not only specialists themselves but also students by disrupting the studying process's coherence, losing teaching quality and lowering studying outcomes. Besides that, high teacher turnover negatively impacts the education system itself since teacher attrition is an expensive process. To prepare new teachers, the government invests in tuition and cuts funding for other important activities within the sphere (Cooper, 2006). According to Harfitt (2015), for instance, in the United States, more than \$2 billion is spent on replacing teachers who leave the profession.

To influence turnover such tools as appraisal are widely used (OECD, 2020). Appraisal systems are meant to formally assess teachers, and encourage constant improvement of their practice by providing opportunities to acknowledge and reward teachers for their efforts. According to statistics majority (almost 100%) of teachers in Russia are regularly appraised (OECD, 2020). However, for appraisal to be beneficial, it must lead to some consequences. For instance, good performance can be connected to performance incentives, such as wage increases and financial bonuses.

### **2.2.3 Place of rewards in Russian education system**

Previously several aspects influencing teachers' performance and retention were mentioned however in this work we will pay special attention to rewards and their connection with performance since this question is less studied in the context of school education in Russia. There is numerous research on the link between performance and motivation (Kalatzkaya, 2014), satisfaction (Pan et al., 2015), practical knowledge (Yakhyaeva and Muskhanova, 2022 and Pinskaya, Ponomareva, and Kosaretsky, 2016) and assessment of teachers (Sadq, 2020).

The issue of turnover in the teaching sphere among young specialists was mentioned above and reward is one of the factors that affect turnover. According to the research about rewards in other spheres in Russia (Zeidlitz, 2004), money is the most related and important component of reward in the country. Employees in Russia consistently put monetary rewards (wages, bonuses and other monetary bonuses) on first place in the list of the most important motivating factors of their jobs (Linz, 2006). However, some other research states the significance of non-monetary rewards depends on the sphere, for instance, praise for a job well done and a feeling of accomplishment also positively influence employee morale (Linz, 2006).

Speaking about the Russian education system, one of its distinctive features is teachers' low salaries (Derkachev, 2015), and therefore, monetary rewards might be one of the strongest motivators for Russian teachers than for their peers in other countries. According to statistics, teachers' salaries in Russia are one of the lowest in the world (\$5,923), for example, in comparison with one of the highest salaries worldwide (\$77,491) in Switzerland (Dolton et al., 2018). Even in comparison with higher education teachers in Russia, general education teachers earn twice less (Statista, 2022).

According to the statistics, only 32% of teachers in Russia are satisfied with their salaries which are lower than in OECD countries where the average is 39% (OECD, 2020).

Speaking about leaving statistics, the research shows that 60% of teachers leave their job for a higher-paid occupation which proves that one of the main reasons for quitting is low monetary rewards. This fact motivates us to study the current position of rewards, satisfaction from them and their influence on employee performance.

### **2.3 Rewards and performance**

As it was mentioned above, within current research the relationship between reward system and performance will be studied. In order to explore the connection between two terms – reward system and performance, they will be considered in more detail in this part.

Ngwa et al. (2019) state that individuals are motivated by their needs and desires therefore in order to impact employees and their performance, the company should identify these needs. Satisfaction of these desires through rewards helps to earn employees' commitment and achieve the goals of the organisation effectively (Chughtai, 2008). In its turn, the level of commitment and motivation depends on the reward's nature, and for this reason, bonuses in different companies may vary depending on the company's employees' desires (Ngwa et al., 2019). According to Pratheepkanth (2011), high motivation and commitment are parts of good performance and help employees focus on the development of their skills and achieve better results when their needs are satisfied.

#### *Rewards system definition and types of rewards*

In order to understand what the term *reward system* includes, we would consider several definitions provided by the researchers. According to Anusha and Lakshmi (2019), a reward system is any tool that a company uses to motivate and compensate its employees for performing particular actions at work well. Another definition provided by Okwuse and Ndudi (2023) states that a reward system is an implementation of procedures, practices and policies by a company to reward workers for their skills, competence, performance and market value. Andriani (2022) defines a reward system as a set of policies to encourage employees for their value, abilities,

skills and accountability to the organization. Summarising the definitions considered above, it could be stated that a *reward system* is a set of tools for compensating employees' high performance and skills. Okwuise and Ndudi (2023) claim another important condition for the successful operation of the reward system. The researcher says that rewards should be given timely and justified in connection with effective performance. In this case, there will be an exchange process between employees and the organisation.

Depending on the company's interests and needs, the reward system varies. The companies usually include in the system rewards given for those behaviours and goals that are expected to be performed by employees (Ngwa et al., 2019). However, as it was mentioned above, the individual interests of employees also play an important role in defining rewards in the organisation. We will study one of the classifications of rewards mentioned above which includes *monetary* or tangible and *non-monetary* or intangible rewards. *Monetary rewards* are direct financial rewards which include cash compensation for the completion of work or increased efforts of the employees (Anusha and Lakshmi, 2019). *Non-monetary* rewards are non-financial bonuses provided by the company which do not include cash (Anusha and Lakshmi, 2019). Okwuise and Ndudi (2023) state that the first type of bonus is the most common however not necessarily the most important one especially in the long term. According to the researchers (Armstrong, 2010, Okwuise and Ndudi, 2023, Jaghult, 2005, and Musenze, 2013), *monetary rewards* include salary, sales commission, annual or monthly bonuses and profit sharing; *non-monetary rewards* consist of company vacation benefits, promotion, learning and development opportunities, health care benefits, performance appreciation letters, flexible work hours, sabbatical leaves, free uniform, subsidised canteen and transport, gifts, praise and recognition.

According to the literature review, most reward systems are based on monetary rewards (Anusha and Lakshmi, 2019). However, researchers agree on the fact that an effective reward system should include both mentioned types of rewards (Armstrong, 2007, Ngwa et al., 2019, Ibrar, 2015, and Musenze, 2013) and they also should be personalised since if the rewards are too general they cannot satisfy needs of all employees, therefore, these bonuses are less valued.

#### *Relationship between rewards and performance*

According to the researchers, rewards play an important role in an organisation which includes attracting the right people, retaining and motivating employees in order to receive needed results from work (Otieno, 2006, Anusha and Lakshmi, 2019, Ibrar, 2015, and Andriani, 2022). On the other side, a poorly structured reward system or lack of rewards can cause low productivity, high turnover, a general indifferent attitude to job responsibilities and an unpleasant environment (Otieno, 2006). For this reason, it is necessary to design the right reward system that will satisfy

the needs of employees of a particular company. This will result in workers' desire to be creative, innovative, performance and achievement-oriented and higher commitment which directly influence the performance of the company itself (Ngwa et al., 2019).

Numerous researchers claim the strong link between performance and rewards (Armstrong, 2008, Andriani, 2022, and Okwuise, 2023). Previous research showed that if an employee is rewarded they tend to improve their performance (Ngwa et al., 2019, and Thomson & Rampton, 2003). Anusha and Lakshmi (2019) state that a reward system in an organisation can be considered not only an encouragement for employees but an instrument for tracking employees' performance due to the tight connection between rewards and performance. In order to study this link more precisely we will consider different definitions of the *performance*.

Andriani, 2022 says that *performance* is an outcome of work done by employees following work standards and organisation objectives. Another definition of performance says that it is a behaviour shown by employees within the work process and results achieved according to their job position. Summarising two definitions, it could be said that performance is the achievement of employees that was made within the company's standards and the role of the worker in the firm. Based on these definitions, it could be said that performance is significant for a company's success and meeting organisational objectives. It was claimed above that rewards tend to encourage employees to perform at higher levels. According to Andriani (2022), motivation is an important driver for performance since it makes employees work more and better to achieve the best results in their work. For this reason, a well-designed and personalised rewards system can generate employees' motivation which in its turn improves their performance and increases their productivity (Andriani, 2022). Based on the previous points it could be said that rewards influence both employees' performance and results and achievement of the company's goals in general which makes this relationship between the two mentioned phenomena important to study.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Summarising previous points, it could be stated that young teachers are an important part of the workforce in the country due to the current aging of labour and its shortage in Russia. As it was mentioned earlier young specialists do not stay long in schools and one of the main reasons for this is dissatisfaction with existing rewards. In order to understand the reasons for turnover deeply and influence it, the current reward system should be examined in more detail and its benefits and drawbacks should be identified. Based on this, some suggestions for its improvement could be made further. A strong connection between rewards and performance was claimed by researchers. And since teachers' work directly influences the level of knowledge of

their students, the relationship between these two phenomena – rewards and performance is important to study.

## **Chapter 3 “Research Question”**

### **3.1 Research aim and objectives**

The aim of this research is to analyse the impact of rewards on teachers’ performance focusing particularly on public school young teachers’ needs and interests, influenced by changes in this sphere in Russia. The study tends to assist in improving the current reward system which could positively affect the quality of educational services in the country. For this purpose, the relationship between the existing reward system in Russian public schools and teachers’ performance will be tested.

### **3.2 Research questions**

The research will provide answers to the following questions:

1. What reward type is the most preferable for teachers and why?

Two types of rewards will be examined: monetary and non-monetary.

2. What is lacking in the current reward system?

To identify what improvement in the current system could be made to make the system more efficient in terms of the positive influence on performance.

3. What most influences teachers’ performance in public schools?

To clarify which rewards a school board should focus on more and how preferences in rewards differ from teacher to teacher.

### **3.3 Research gap**

The aim and research questions were defined after analysis of the related studies and the research gaps. The connection between performance and different variables such as motivation (Kalatzkaya, 2014), assessment (Sadq, 2020), job satisfaction (Pan et al., 2015), and obtaining of practical knowledge (Yakhyaeva and Muskhanova, 2022 and Pinskaya, Ponomareva, and Kosaretsky, 2016) by teachers were studied previously. Since rewards are one of the most significant motivators of work in the country (Zeidlitz, 2004), it can be stated that this topic is worth studying. Besides this, no studies about the connection between performance and rewards for teachers in public schools in Russia were found.

## **Chapter 4 “Research Methodology”**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The part will describe the methods applied to the study for reaching its aims and objectives listed in the previous chapter. Blaikie (2000) considers the right chosen method for the research the most crucial part of the study. In order to define and explain the chosen methods gradually "Research Onion" suggested by Saunders et al. (2015) is used.

This framework illustrates the structure of the methodology part that scholars are advised to follow when conducting research (Saunders et al., 2015). The authors recommend starting with the outer layers of the Research Onion and gradually moving to the center. For this reason, the outline of the methodology begins with defining research philosophies, then moves to approaches, methodological choices, strategies, time horizons, and techniques and procedures. The chapter also includes the research's ethical considerations.

### **4.2 Research philosophy**

According to Saunders et al., 2015, there are four research philosophies which are positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism. The *Interpretivism philosophy* has been chosen for further research. This philosophy was developed for conducting particularly social studies to explore and understand different meanings that different people create and therefore formulate a deeper and richer understanding of the world itself (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). This approach is applicable for further research since it assists in uncovering how cultural background, workplace experience and other personal differences affect people's meanings (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Respondents can have different opinions about various types of rewards and their influence on performance. Unique opinions and experiences will assist in creating a fuller picture of the connection between variables – performance and rewards.

### **4.3 Research approach**

Saunders et al. (2015) name two types of study approaches which are inductive and deductive. *The inductive approach* is believed to be the best option for the current study. Azungah (2018) defines the approach as one that shows results based on collected evidence. The deductive approach otherwise begins with the concept and then confirms or denies it. The study's aim is to analyse the impact of rewards on teachers' performance depending on the type of school, and teachers' particular age needs and interests and to suggest actions for current reward system improvement. For this reason, the qualitative inductive approach will allow to analyse results of previous studies, based on it develop own assumptions and eventually compare the results of the current study with previous research in order to suggest possible improvements in the system.

#### **4.4 Research methodological choice and design**

Heath and Tynan (2010) define research methodologies as ways of how information is collected and analysed. The three most popular types of research are qualitative, quantitative, and blended which is a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques. A *qualitative method* was chosen for the study. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), this type of research is usually referred to as naturalistic as the researchers need to conduct a study within a natural setting aiming to establish trust, participation, and access to in-depth involvement and study respondents' meanings and relationships between them. It is considered that the qualitative method is applicable for this research since it covers types of preferred rewards and the attitude of teachers towards them that suppose studying the meanings of participants.

Saunders et al. (2015) also present several research designs which are experimental, descriptive, cross-sectional, exploratory, and case study design. A mix of *exploratory* and *explanatory* design was chosen for the study. These designs are considered to assist in explaining the phenomenon of reward systems and performance from the point of view of teachers and explore the impact of rewards on teachers' performance. Moreover, the study will intend to identify the problem of the existing reward system and its advantages and disadvantages for suggesting possible ways for its improvement. In turn, a semi-structured interview will help to evaluate exploratory research, providing with responses more context for the study, and explanatory side, defining how variables interact with each other.

#### **4.5 Research strategy**

Since meanings within qualitative research derive from words and images and could be unclear, a *semi-structured interview* as the principal data collection technique will be used to clarify these meanings. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), semi-structured discussions are useful when conducting exploratory studies, and the author must discover more details on certain responses that differ from the intended queries. *Semi-structured interviews* will allow to start with key questions related to the topic and then, depending on the flow of the conversation, continue with a topic that received the biggest response. This approach will also allow omitting some topics or adding other ones for deeper exploration and more flexible navigation within the interview questions. Due to the different residence countries of the researcher and participants, the interviews will be conducted via Zoom platform.

#### **4.6 Sample of the research**

To conduct the study, the data was collected from a target population – young teachers working in Russian public schools. It was stated above that this category is most vulnerable in terms of turnover and currently government focuses on the support of young specialists in order to make

them stay in the profession. Since one of the reasons for quitting and low performance is a lack of satisfaction with rewards, this target population is considered to be suitable for the research. The technique chosen for the sampling is *volunteer*, particularly *self-selection*. The invitation to participate in the research was distributed among existing contacts of the researcher who are a part of the target population. The individuals who confirmed their participation formed a sample of eight teachers of Russian public schools living in six different regions, aged between 20 and 30 with work experience between 1 and 3 years.

For the successful interview conduction, a semi-structured interview guide was developed (Appendix 1). Then the first, pilot, interview was performed to spot flaws before conducting the study, test if instructions and questions were understood by participants and check the technical maintenance. It helped to notice that the rearrangement of questions would improve the flow of the interview and make the dialogue more coherent. The interview plan was used to guide the interview process, although its semi-structured nature allowed participants and the researcher to focus on interesting points that arose. Every interview was digitally recorded using a Zoom platform and lasted from 45 minutes to 1 hour. After completing each interview, the data was transcribed using Word for Windows.

#### **4.7 Data analysis**

The qualitative method was used to analyse the gathered data. Interviews were recorded and transcribed in order to examine the information. The collected material was analysed with the help of *thematic analysis* using Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-stage procedure which includes familiarisation with the data, coding it, creating themes, reviewing them, naming them, selecting relevant extracts and analysing them within the research question. It can be stated that the chosen method helps to summarise and arrange collected data in a required for the study way.

The gathered information was examined and initial findings were noted. After that, the findings were assigned to categories depending on the particular characteristics and relevance to the research questions. These identifiers helped to spot the most frequently emerging topics within the interviews. Data on these topics was thoroughly examined and reflected in the study.

#### **4.8 Time horizon**

Time horizon is a part that is also included in the “research onion”. It shows within what time the research was conducted. Saunders et al. (2015) name two types of time horizons which are longitudinal and cross-sectional. Longitudinal research implies a study conducted over a relatively long period of time. Speaking about cross-sectional time horizons, it is used for studies with a short time frame. Considering the one-year length of the course, a *cross-sectional* approach was chosen by the researcher.

#### **4.9 Reliability and validity**

Validity and reliability are crucial aspects of any research. For this reason, the concepts were considered for the creation of questions for the interviews.

According to Saunders et al., 2015, the validity of the research implies the relevance of the chosen methodology approaches and resources used for gathering data for answering the study's questions. As was mentioned above, the data technique chosen for the research is semi-structured interviews. It is important to state that using these approaches the collected information can lose its validity due to several reasons: researcher or participant prejudice, respondent mistakes, miscommunication and misunderstanding. In order to minimise these risks and their influence on study results, thorough preparation for each interview and maintenance of a comfortable and peaceful atmosphere were the main focus of the researcher. Furthermore, the interview questions for the current study were formulated based on the review of related studies and research about existing reward systems in the educational sector in order to ensure the validity of the research.

Speaking about the reliability of the study, Saunders et al., 2015 define it as the accuracy of chosen methods which provides results that can be compared with future or previous results in the same field. In order to provide reliability, the research includes a detailed description of the methodology applied and considerations for possible future research on the related topics.

#### **4.10 Limitations**

The technique chosen for the research has a few flaws. One of them is the presence of Russian-speaking respondents. Due to the required translation of the interview into English, it can be assumed that occasional misconceptions and mistranslations were possible within the process. Another drawback is connected with the format of the interviews. Online meetings were used in the study due to the different places of residency of the researcher and participants. In these settings, initial planning, scheduling of interviews and a large time commitment were significant. However, these limitations of the research were considered by the author, and for this reason, the researcher guarantees the accuracy of the collected information and its interpretation.

#### **4.11 Ethical Consideration**

Several measures were taken by the researcher in order to prevent any potential ethical issues. Ethical control is significant in the case of collecting information and interpreting it. Several procedures took place within the study in order to minimise any potential risks for respondents.

To guarantee that the collected data is safe and anonymous, an encoded gadget available only by the researcher was used for storing the virtual data. The researcher did not collect any details used for identifying participants or their workplaces.

After confirmation of participation, all attendees were provided with instructions and a consent form to read (Appendix 2). Both the researcher and participant had to sign the consent forms before conducting the interview. The signed consent forms are kept in the same encoded gadget. The participants are aware that collected data can be withdrawn at any time without penalty and will not be used in the study. Before the interview, the participants were aware of the research subject and were provided with a short description of the interview process in order to learn about their interest in the study and let them prepare for the interview to feel more confident. The researcher reviewed the NCI Ethical Guidelines and Procedures for Human Participants and completed the NCI Ethics Application form, which has been submitted for approval to the Ethics Committee. The researcher sees no problem with remaining true to the ethical guidelines.

## **Chapter 5 “Findings and Analysis”**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this section, the qualitative findings analysed through thematic analysis are presented. We will report the findings in relation to the monetary and non-monetary rewards mentioned by eight participants in the semi-structured interviews the most often. The attitudes of the participants towards these bonuses will be reported and a parallel between different types of rewards and teachers’ performance at schools will be drawn in order to state the connection between these two phenomena. Every interviewed teacher also shared some suggestions for possible changes and improvements in the current reward system which will also be presented below. In order to guide our analysis of qualitative data we have designed a model showing the relationship between the analysed phenomena which is illustrated in Figure 1.

Within the research, seven types of monetary and six types of non-monetary rewards were analysed. The findings suggest that six out of eight teachers prefer monetary rewards explaining it by an unequal relationship between salary and workload (Fig. 1). The need for higher payment makes teachers choose rewards in favour of monetary ones. However, all of the interviewed teachers stated that financial support is not the only priority for them another important reward for them is non-monetary, particularly time off, which is also caused by a large amount of work (Fig. 1). Some other factors not included in rewards category were named by participants as significant factors which influence their performance and illustrated in Figure 1. They are students’ achievements and learning opportunities.

Speaking about the connection between rewards and the performance of teachers, the interviewees stated that they do not feel substantial changes in the size or amount of effort that they put into their work after receiving rewards. This was attributed their considerable workload. As it was explained by participants, the amount of work is already excessive and besides

conducting lessons, it includes preparation for them, doing paperwork, filling in journals with grades, preparation of leisure activities for students and constant communication in messengers' chats with parents and students. Since the connection between rewards and performance is currently not strong, participants proposed some suggestions for the improvement of the current system which will make them feel better and help to gain a desire to put more effort into their work (Fig. 1).

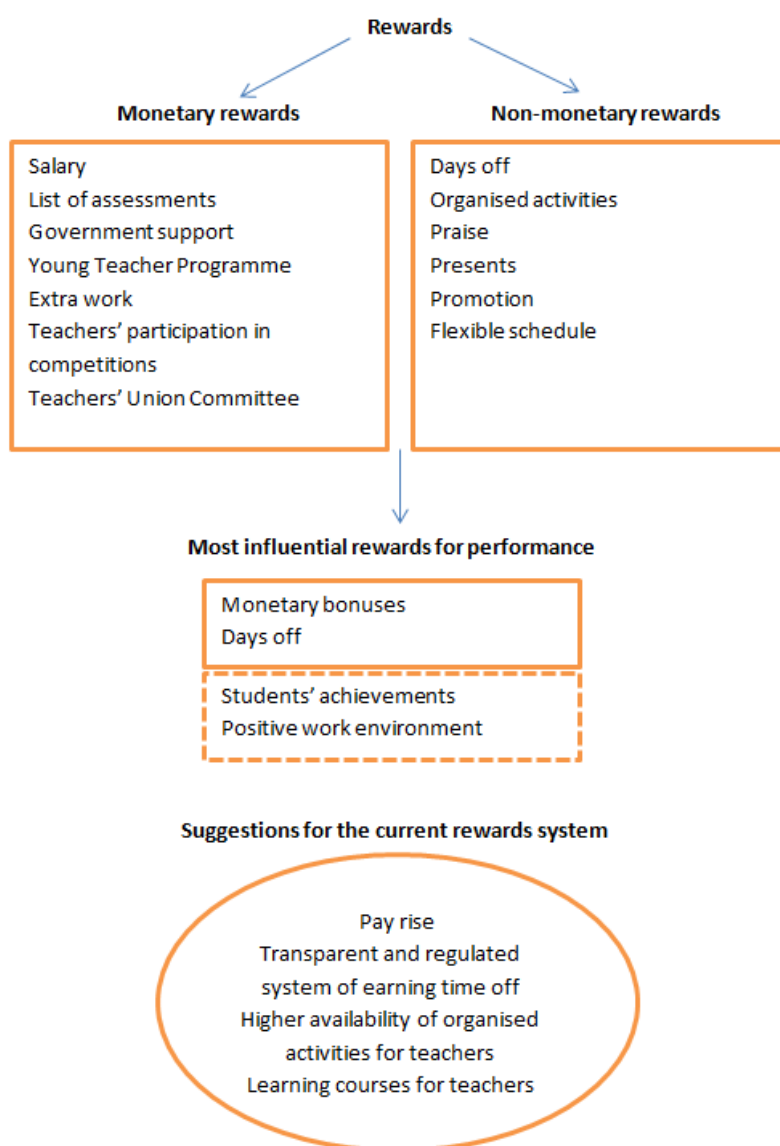


Figure 1: A summary of the theoretical relationship between Rewards and Performance of teachers in public schools in Russia and Suggestions for current system improvements

## 5.2 Thematic analysis

### 5.2.1 Monetary rewards

In this part, monetary rewards will be discussed. Within the interviews, several monetary rewards were named and repeated by other participants. Further, we would consider activities

and monetary rewards for doing them that appeared in the research the most often – salary, list of assessments, government support, Young Teacher programme, extra work, teachers' participation in competitions and Teachers' Union Committee (Fig. 1).

### *Salary*

We would like to start a discussion about monetary rewards with *salary* since this is the main and the most tangible monetary bonus. The *salary* of a teacher consists of several parts which are pay for the number of hours that they have worked a month, pay for writing methodological literature (plans for lessons), checking students' written work and additional pay for being a classroom teacher if it is applicable to the teacher. Even though salary is compound teachers cannot increase it by doing more work within one of its components. The pay is defined by the regional government and is constant. The research participants proved this fact since, according to the collected data, seven out of eight teachers are not satisfied with their salary however at the same time two of eight teachers state that they understand that they work in a state organization and due to national belief about lower salaries in state corporations, teachers do not expect higher monthly pay.

*“Of course, we know that there is a stereotype that teachers get less money than they deserve. And I agree with this statement because as my colleagues say our work doesn't finish when we are out of school, we work 24/7 and I don't think that we deserve this amount of money. But unfortunately, we get this money from the government, and they think that it's okay and if you work in a state organization, you won't get a lot of money. You need to go to some private schools. It's only sad truth, I guess” (11).*

Due to the dissatisfaction of teachers with the salary, some other additional monetary rewards were introduced to the system and will be discussed further.

### *List of Assessment*

Next, the most often monetary bonus that was mentioned in the interviews that teachers can receive in public schools is based on filling out a form called “List of Assessments”. The document includes several categories that vary from region to region. For each performed activity and reaching particular results in each category teachers receive points which are then transferred in monetary bonus. Teachers fill in this form at the end of the school year or every half of the year depending on the school regulations. Based on the number of points that are registered in the form, teachers receive a monthly monetary bonus within the next school year. Teachers calculate their results and transfer them in points using a specific formula. Conversion of the points into money is the following: 10 points = 1,000 rubles.

*“And besides salary, in our school, we have a special system called “Points”, so they have different “costs”. It depends and changes from school to school. Every school has such a system. But in our school, for example, 1 point costs 100-150 rubles and you can get these points for satisfying different criteria. These criteria were approved by the administration and main teachers from the school. For example, you could receive points if you did all reports on time, if you had some specific events that you were participating in, if you had some publications, if you took part in different competitions or like scientific conferences also, I guess”. (I6)*

Even though the list of criteria differs from region to region, the research showed that several activities for receiving bonuses are the same in participants’ schools. According to the collected data, the most popular categories included in the “List of Assessments” are the following:

*1. Students’ participation in Olympiads (regional competitions), contests and conferences*

A teacher can receive points in this category not for any competitions. In order to receive points a teacher needs to choose a contest that is included in the special rating of Olympiads provided by the region’s government. It is important to mention that points are accrued only for the students who win a prize.

*2. Good exam results*

Teachers who teach students of 4<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades, which are considered graduation classes in Russia, can receive additional bonuses which are transferred in monetary reward in case their students pass final exams with good marks.

*3. Doing paperwork*

This category includes filling in forms and two types of journals with grades – paper and electronic journals on time.

*4. Keeping school equipment working*

If some equipment breaks in the teacher’s classroom, the administration of the school can withdraw points in this category. However, according to the collected data, not many teachers have their own classrooms, usually they rotate between classrooms, and for this reason, the withdrawal of points in this category occurs rarely.

*5. Floor supervision during breaks*

Teachers take shifts on the floor to keep the discipline during breaks between lessons. Within these shifts, teachers are responsible for the life and health of the students who are at the school hall of their supervision at that moment. If someone injures themselves, the teacher on the floor is in charge of providing medical care and is responsible for the incident.

*6. Spending and organising quality time for students outside the school*

Time with students can be spent doing different activities such as visiting museums and concerts, going to the cinema, and having trips to different places.

#### 7. *Students' academic performance*

This criterion correlates with the marks of students. If a teacher does not have students with unsatisfactory final marks, they receive points for this category.

#### 8. *Quality of knowledge*

This category shows a relation between the number of students with excellent final marks and the total number of students of the teacher.

#### 9. *Difference of grade point average (GPA)*

For this criterion, a teacher needs to compare the GPA of the previous year and the current year. If the GPA increases over a year, a teacher receives points.

Even though there are several opportunities for earning additional bonuses within the list of assessments which were mentioned above, according to the interviewees, six out of eight teachers consider them hard to receive due to their big workload. Teachers claim that they usually do not have time for additional activities since they already have numerous duties which include checking students' papers, filling in forms for school administration, preparing for the lessons, and constant communication with parents and students in group chats.

*"It's really hard to get them (bonuses), actually. This year we had some changes in this list of assessments at our school and it becomes harder and harder to get these bonuses, so I don't usually even try to get them, if I know that my students got some awards, of course, I write it down but if they didn't, I don't take it (the opportunity to receive the bonuses) because I have enough work for me to cover everything" (I2).*

Some participants also claimed that in their schools the system of points for these categories is not clear and transparent and the number of accrued points depends not on the teacher's results but on the salary of a teacher.

*"I believe that in most schools, particularly in my city, the calculation system doesn't work properly because it seems to me that points are calculated in a way the school administration wants it. For example, it looks like they consider the salary of teachers and cannot pay additionally more to someone who earns less than other teachers. They assign points according to the salary size. Even though we have this system of bonuses, I still do not understand how I could earn more because students of my colleagues participated and won competitions however, they did not receive any additional bonuses. I believe it happens because of the fact that money for the points is allocated by authorities of each school and some of them are not interested in it at all that is why it differs" (I4).*

Another participant of the research stated that experience plays a big role in receiving points and that for young teachers it can be hard to get points in comparison with experienced teachers.

*“Yes, we have a list of points, but it's hard to earn a lot of them. I don't know, maybe because of my age. I don't know how to earn many of them usually I have half of the maximum number or less than half... I think because they (more experienced teachers) know how to prepare students for the final tests if we are talking about the final test to get some good marks and maybe because they know better how to manage their time and for this reason, they have more publications. I was thinking that it's necessary to communicate with the teachers who have more experience and maybe they can give me some advice on it” (I7).*

It could be stated that it is possible for teachers to earn additional rewards through satisfying criteria from the list of assessments however this system has its drawbacks which are lack of clarity and high time consumption.

#### *Government support*

The next type of monetary reward that interviewees mentioned was financial support from the government. We decided to separate rewards for the list of assessments from government support since the size of the first type of bonuses differs from region to region since it is stated by local authorities while monetary bonuses from the government are the same around the country. The interviewed teachers claimed that they usually receive this bonus before big celebrations such as Teacher's Day and New Year. According to participants, the amount of money varies from year to year and cannot be defined precisely.

*“I call it “lottery” because you don't know how much money you receive and when. It's something from the government. We have these bonuses each year sometimes for Teacher's Day, sometimes for some holidays ... but the bonuses from the government are given usually for holidays or some other days but not always and you don't know the exact amount. One year it was one amount of money, the next year it was less or even more” (I2).*

One of the interviewees also mentioned one rule for receiving this type of reward. A teacher cannot take a sick leave within a month before getting the bonus. Otherwise, a teacher does not receive this bonus.

*“Yes, there's one interesting moment in these bonuses because if you skip lessons, for example, if you are sick or something like this a month before, you don't get anything” (I3).*

#### *Young Teacher Programme*

Another monetary reward that interviewed teachers mentioned was a monthly bonus for being a young teacher. This bonus is supposed to attract more young specialists to the sphere, according to the participants. Teachers who have just started their career receive a monthly pay which is about 2,000-2,5000 rubles within three first years of working at school. Teachers in public schools of any age are eligible for this bonus.

*"Yeah, we have one (bonus) for being young every month, but it is like 2,500 rubles or something like this" (I3).*

*"In Russia, you are a young teacher until 3 years of experience. – And it doesn't depend on the age? So you can just start your path in the sphere and you're a young teacher? – Yes, there are a lot of teachers who are 40 and they are "young teachers" (I1).*

Even though this bonus was designed to attract new young specialists and support recent graduates on their career paths, according to the interviewees, this bonus is considered not enough for these purposes due to the small size of the reward.

*"Russia wants to attract young teachers somehow and I don't think it's enough for young teachers to go to this profession and join us because it's just 2,000 rubles." (I5).*

#### *Extra work*

It was mentioned earlier that teachers have a big workload and most of the time they do not have time for additional activities. However, some of the additional work is obligatory for teachers, for instance, taking more hours and substituting another teacher during their time away. Even though this work is rewarded, according to the interviewees, teachers receive less money for it than for their own working hours.

*"You get less money for these specific hours, and you waste your time... We get less money for these extra hours than we get for our usual working hours. So, it's not rewarding at all for us to overwork" (I2).*

Even though substituting another teacher is an opportunity to receive bonuses, for two out of eight interviewed teachers system of covering other teachers' classes is still unclear, and they are not sure how these hours are paid.

*"I substituted a teacher once and I do not know if I was paid for it or not ... I was asked to work on Saturday, and I was told that they would pay me for it, but no one paid me. Allegedly the teacher I substituted should have given me some of the money from their salary for it. But I did not approach her and did not say that she needed to pay me money back because I worked for her. After that another teacher substituted me for a few days when I couldn't work but no one told me that I needed to give the money to this teacher" (I4).*

Since there are a limited number of teachers of the particular subject at school, the substitution of a colleague is treated as obligatory. And even though a headmaster cannot make a teacher substitute for another one, the refusal to do extra work can influence the assignment of working hours for the teacher in the future unfavourably, according to interviewees.

*"Of course, you can say that you won't take these extra classes during the day for a sick colleague, but it won't look good, and the boss will remember it, the administration will*

*remember it and you will lose something at the end and maybe even your own (working) hours for the next year” (I2).*

#### *Teachers’ participation in competitions*

Another reward that teachers can receive is a bonus for participating in professional competitions. One of the popular contests is Teacher of the Year. The contest includes several stages where teachers show their skills. There are different nominations for teachers of different school subjects and also teachers from other educational institutions such as kindergartens, colleges and universities. The competition is quite intense since there are several stages where teachers compete with participants from the whole country. According to the interviewed teachers, they spend not only their spare time on participation which they are lacking as we stated earlier but also additional money for preparing for the contest. Teachers do not usually have a choice to participate or not if they are chosen by the administration of the school. Despite expenses and extra working time, teachers who took part in this competition claim that the reward is worth it. Participants who reach the final stage receive a monetary reward amount of which depends on the quantity of stages that the teacher completed, and what is more important, according to the interviewees, the status of the participant or the winner of the contest is highly regarded by colleagues, students and parents.

*“And, during the 1st stage, you get nothing, only stress. But in the end, they pay you for each step. And our headmaster, he is the winner of this contest too, understands how much you should spend on it. And not only time but money. So, at the end of this contest, he gave me some money. And the city also pays, and the region pays and if you are the winner, you will get about 400,000 rubles. You also get the first teaching category. So that's cool because you don't have to prove that you are good enough by participating in other contests and seminars. So just win the contest and then you will have the first category. Well, and of course, you get endless respect from your colleagues” (I5).*

#### *Teachers’ Union Committee*

Some other additional monetary and non-monetary support is provided by the Teachers’ Union Committee which is an organisation that protects the interests of its members. Teachers need to pay a monthly membership fee in order to join the Union. Besides defending the interests and rights of teachers, and receiving the fee from members, the organisation creates fund money from which it spends on monetary and non-monetary bonuses for teachers on special occasions. The amount of the reward depends on the representatives of the Teachers’ Union Committee at the particular school and on the number of its members.

*“Since I am a member of the organisation, Union’s representatives are supposed to protect my rights in case of arguments with parents or school administration for this, I pay them one percent of my salary per month, so that I can receive the bonuses. The size of the bonus varies from school to school it depends on the head of this union in the school, and the number of members because the more people there are, the bigger the fund is and the more money you can receive. Teachers usually receive money or gifts for New Year, International Women’s Day, and Teacher’s Day and by the end of the school year. But in our school, they gave us money” (I4).*

Even though the membership fee is the same for all teachers and for this reason all members receive the same bonus, one of the interviewees mentioned a case when the distribution of bonuses was quite unfair.

*“The size of the bonus seems to be the same for everyone, but once I heard that someone received more than others. Let’s say every member in the school received 2,500 rubles and one person received 15,000 rubles. Presumably, it was a teacher who was building a house at that time, and he needed money for reconstruction works, however, we did not find out who it was” (I4).*

The monetary rewards listed above are the most often received by teachers in public schools in Russia. It could be stated that even though there are multiple different opportunities how to earn additional rewards to the salary, teachers usually do not have enough time to do extra activities due to the heavy workload. Another drawback of existing monetary rewards is the non-transparent and sometimes not fair system of accrual of bonuses. Not all teachers know how they can earn additional rewards and how their results are calculated since in most cases it depends on the school’s administration. For this reason, teachers are not always motivated to participate in extra activities.

### **5.2.2 Non-monetary rewards**

The other type of reward that is considered is non-monetary rewards. Similarly to monetary rewards, types vary from school to school and region to region. In this part, the most significant non-monetary rewards, according to the interviewees, will be discussed which are days off, organised activities, praise, presents, promotion, and flexible schedule (Fig. 1).

#### *Days off*

One of the most popular non-monetary rewards in public school is additional days off. The system of assigning extra time off may vary from school to school since the decision about approving days off is made by the school administration. Teachers can receive them for different types of work including substituting another teacher, monitoring students during the Unified State Exam, attending events after work and on holidays, working without sick leave,

participating in competitions and monitoring elections since most of the polling stations are located at public schools. Teachers can use additional days off only during school holidays when students are off school.

*“Yes, I can get some days off. For example, if we have a school break for students, teachers have to go to work and do some paperwork. But you can get some deals if you are overworking. For example, if one teacher gets ill, you can teach their class and you will get days off and not work during their period (of a school break). You can also get them if you are participating in some school events. It's like added days for your vacation in summer. Also, they give us 3 days, if you were not sick while working during the school year” (I7).*

In some cases, this reward is used instead of monetary rewards however teachers are happy with this option and willing to do some extra work for receiving days off because of the necessity of some additional free time.

*“So, also you, you may have these days off, while working during the exams. But this is the wish of our headmaster. He wants to thank us somehow so that's why he gives us about 5 days off for 5 exams, but this amount is different from year to year. This year we will see how much we will get because we are paid 20 rubles for working on exams and everyone understands that it's not enough. And I'm happy that at least our administration thinks this way and gives us these days off” (I5).*

### *Organised activities*

Another bonus that interviewees consider a reward is organising different activities for teachers such as concerts, festivals and trips. Teachers like this type of reward since one of the biggest issues in the job is lack of free time however even when they receive their days off, they need to plan their time. With this reward, according to the participants, they have some options prepared for them and they do not need to spend time on planning their spare time. It is seen as an opportunity to take off the constant responsibility that teachers experience at school every day.

*“And also, in our school, they (students) give us some I don't know how to say... festivals... maybe something like that. For example, for teachers they organise some concerts. And it's also, I think, a great thing not only from our children but our administration, sometimes they invite some bands to give us a concert. I really appreciate it. (I7)*

### *Praise*

The next non-monetary reward that was named one of the most important for teachers is praise, especially praise from their colleagues and a headmaster.

*“Yes, it's very nice to hear from senior colleagues that you did great” (I5).*

However, teachers mentioned that in most cases praise and gratitude are usually expressed in a formal and quite dry way and for this reason are taken for granted.

*“Talking about gratitude, we can say that we are said “thank you” if we have done some additional work. But it's just... I wouldn't say that it's not emotional “thank you” but still, it's just “thank you so much, you are great” it is kind of formal” (I6).*

### *Presents*

Another non-monetary bonus which is gifts from the administration of the school, parents and students is considered a common way of expressing gratitude for teachers' work. The traditions of what kind of presents to give vary from school to school however most popular choices are bouquets of flowers, sweets and gift cards on special occasions such as International Women's Day, Teacher's Day, New Year and the start and the end of the school year. The participants state that they appreciate presents as a gratitude gesture and especially it is more pleasant to receive them when it is something unique and made by the students.

*“Talking about students from primary school, they always give you a flower or a certificate for 500 rubles or 1,000 rubles to any shop, for a cosmetic shop, something like that that also motivates by the way. When parents appreciate you, that also motivates you. But you know talking about recognition, when you see that all teachers of that group, who teach this group received the same gifts, you understand that it's not about recognition, it's about just saying thank you, that's all. Yeah, but individually some students can give you a bar of chocolate or sweets. Not flowers, but some small gifts, something like that” (I6).*

### *Promotion*

The next non-monetary reward was named only by one of the participants however it is still considered an important opportunity for those who would like to continue their development in the sphere. There are several opportunities for teachers to get promoted. Teachers can become a classroom teacher, methodologist, head of methodological department, director of studies and headmaster. However, promotion in school, according to the interviewees, does not always depend on the teachers' performance and results of work. Sometimes it is based on some personal circumstances of the teacher.

*“Promotion doesn't only depend on productivity and efficiency. Sometimes it depends also on the subjective view of the administration board, maybe your family state and your plans for the future in this school. For example, I understood that I would not get a promotion in this school because I was honest with them and I told them I would be working here only for three years because I'm doing my Master's degree and after that, I will go to get a PhD. I'm getting a PhD*

*and I am prone to work at the university. So that's why I will have to go away from this school” (I6).*

#### *Flexible schedule*

Teachers usually follow strict schedules due to the school curriculum however in some cases such as studying part-time while working, a teacher can be granted a flexible schedule in order to attend exams and work on college tasks however it depends on the responsiveness of the administration.

*“Talking about the flexible schedule, if you are getting your master’s degree or bachelor’s degree, you can ask for a flexible timetable. But it's not 100% that you will have it. For example, I have, let's say, a so-called methodological day, the day where we, as it was planned, should self-educate. Usually, we have it as a day off during the week, so you can ask for this day off every week on a mandatory basis if you have some studying and my school respects these requests. They try not to disturb you on this period or not to give you any additional work” (I6).*

It could be stated that there are several options of non-monetary rewards available for teachers. The most preferable ones are additional time off and organised activities due to the necessity of having more quality spare time.

Summarising teachers’ opinions about rewards and their examples, it could be said that accessibility of the rewards in most cases depends on the school administration, particularly the headmaster. For this reason, the system of accrual of bonuses differs and can sometimes be unclear and biased which demotivates teachers from earning additional rewards. However, as it was stated earlier some of the additional activities are obligatory which is why teachers still receive some of the rewards even though they do not participate in competitions, for instance. In the next part, the influence of these rewards on teachers’ performance will be discussed in more detail.

### **5.3 Influence of rewards on teachers' performance**

Based on the collected data, teachers claim that only two types of rewards impact their performance and motivate them to put more effort into work which are illustrated in Figure 1. These rewards are monetary bonuses and days off. Besides them, within the research, some other factors influencing teachers’ performance were discovered and will be also reported further.

#### *Monetary bonuses*

Monetary rewards were claimed as the most significant ones by seven out of eight interviewed teachers. It was explained by the fact that the salary of teachers is not high enough and it is pleasant and useful to have an additional monetary bonus.

*“Well, as far as I know, all of my colleagues and myself included prefer, of course, monetary rewards. Well, the teacher's salary is not really high, unfortunately. And that's why we have interest in monetary bonuses for our work” (I2).*

#### *Days off*

Five out of seven teachers stated that monetary rewards which are additional bonuses for extra work such as substituting colleagues, preparing students for competitions or monitoring exams are good however, despite the fact that they would like to work more for more money, they usually do not have time for extra work since as it was mentioned before teachers' work does not finish when they leave the school – they keep in touch with students and prepare for lessons often in their spare time. For this reason, the participants stated that they would prefer having more days off rather than monetary rewards in order to rest properly and gain more energy for this extra work.

*“But I would also like to have non-monetary bonuses just days off if I overworked. It would be great if our school accounted for the hours that we overworked and gave us a day off if we worked, for example, 7 extra hours. Even if we have our vacation for 56 days every summer, sometimes you can't even rest the whole period because you must be at work for example on the 25th of August. And, you have some (vacation) days left but you don't know when you can use them during the year because the workload is really huge” (I2).*

The rewards mentioned above such as monetary bonuses and days off, according to the participants, do not impact the teacher's performance much.

*“Personally, well, they (rewards) don't really change (anything) for me because I have a lot of work, a lot of hours and I do my best. I try to do my best and even if I get more money, I can't do more than I have already done. So, there are some limits for my health or my time and so on” (I2).*

According to the interviewees, teachers already do as much as they can, given the workload and available time that they have. For this reason, the existence of some other factors that impact teachers' work significantly was discovered which are students' achievement and good work environment (Fig. 1).

#### *Students' achievements*

Four out of eight teachers consider representatives of the job highly motivated and passionate people who still need monetary rewards for living however the main factor that impacts their desire to perform better and put more effort into their work is the results of their students. For them, a mission to educate and play an important role in students' lives is the main reward and motivator.

*“It's a hard question. So, if I say that I work only for my wish not for money, no, money is very important especially when we talk about rest and holidays. So, I want to travel, and I want to spend money on my holidays, and I need this money. But if we talk about what motivates me more, I think the best reward for me, is my students, my graduate students who come back to school and say thank you, thank you for yelling or pushing us. Thank you for teaching, now I know English I have good marks and it is easy for me to start college. And it means a lot to me that I do good things, I teach and educate” (I5).*

#### *Positive work environment*

Another factor that was mentioned by participants as an important condition of good and productive work is the team, its support, and the good atmosphere at school. If they are satisfied with the workplace environment, they are eager to perform better. This factor, according to the interviewees, plays a significant role, especially for young teachers. The participants rate the importance of good communication with colleagues even higher than communication with students and parents since young specialists often need advice and support at the beginning of their careers, and it is vital to have sympathetic colleagues who are ready to help. Even sharing the first wins and fails is important for young specialists and in general feeling a part of the team and support is significant for them.

*“I was very motivated with his (headmaster's) support and support of my colleagues because to do it (teaching) on my own would be hard. And I just couldn't do that. And I think the team in our school is the reason why I'm still here. So, the atmosphere, your work atmosphere is very important. It's more important than money than children because you'll work with these people even more than with children” (I5).*

As we can see, some other factors rather than rewards impact teachers' performance even more. For this reason, the participants were offered to suggest some ideas for improving the current system of rewards in order to make it more satisfying and motivating.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for rewards system improvement**

The interviewees suggested the following ideas for the system changes: a higher salary, more possibilities and a more transparent scheme for receiving additional days off, more accessible organised activities and courses for teachers (Fig. 1).

#### *Pay rise*

Participants claimed that a higher payment for work would help to attract more young specialists to teaching.

*“Yeah, I guess because we work 24/7, they have to give us more money for all the efforts” (I3).*

However, interviewees also state that in case of a salary increase young specialists should undergo a more complicated hiring procedure which could include not just the interview but testing of practical tasks for making sure that the candidate's level of knowledge matches work requirements.

*“Well, I have some friends from other spheres, and I don't know much about their reward system, but I think in teaching a great solution is just to make our salaries bigger. That's what I see in my friends' experience like they have higher salaries and that's why they want to work more. They don't work for both, salary and bonuses. They work just because they are paid enough. And they are happy with that. So I think that it would solve many problems in education because if we have bigger salaries, young teachers will come to schools, but there should be some rules for young teachers, maybe some tests. Yeah, they need some professional challenge. I think there should be a contest among teachers who apply for the job” (15).*

#### *Transparent and regulated system of earning time off*

Another suggestion is related to designing a clearer and more regulated system of earning additional days off. Even though seven out of eight interviewed teachers have the opportunity to receive days off for extra work, not all of them understand how to earn them exactly.

*“So we have 56 days (of vacation) and you can add days off to it. It's a good option but sometimes teachers can't understand how to earn them (days off) because teachers from a primary school, don't usually replace teachers and they just can't earn these days off. And they don't work on exams, how can they get them? And this system is not clear because it is based on our headmaster's decision. For this work you may have a day off but for other work – no. I think we should have some rules just to make sure that everyone knows how it works, and it is not just based on our headmaster's will”.*

#### *Higher availability of organised activities for teachers*

Organisation of free time, particularly providing teachers with tickets to events and trips, was named as another suggestion for a rewards system improvement. One of the participants mentioned that there are some actions of the government that are made in this direction however implementation takes time. The initiative is about issuing a special card for teachers which would allow them to visit events in state museums, theatres and cinemas for free.

*“I don't know once a semester or once a year at least a trip somewhere would be wonderful. And another initiative was proposed by our authorities. Now in Russia, we have a Pushkinskaya card which gives money to students and teenagers to go to cultural organisations, but it would be a card for teachers only. And we would also have some money on it. But what are the details? I don't know. They just said that the previous year was the Teachers' year here in Russia and they*

*proposed this idea and what's the implication? What's the future of this proposal? I don't know. We're waiting for this. It would be really cool” (16).*

#### *Learning courses for teachers*

One more non-monetary reward that teachers would like to receive is training in order to learn about new approaches, exchange experience with colleagues and practice their skills. Two participants out of eight mentioned that they are provided with courses however the learning is usually consists only of theoretical knowledge and based on outdated information which is repeated every year and the course does not give an opportunity to apply their knowledge practically within the learning process.

*“I have only one (suggestion), maybe when the school pays for your courses that you would like to visit because I think it's great when a teacher wants to improve their skills and when the school can help with it. It's a great reward for the teacher because you can see that the school is interested in your learning. So, if you are more experienced in your subject, you can give more to your students” (17).*

The mentioned suggestions teachers would like to see implemented in the system of rewards in the future. These additions, according to the participants, could make teachers more satisfied and motivated and help to gain resources for putting more effort into their work.

## **Chapter 6 “Discussion and Conclusion”**

### **6.1 Discussion**

After analysis of interviews conducted with the teachers, the following conclusions could be made. The performance of teachers is impacted by both monetary and non-monetary rewards. Within the research seven monetary and six non-monetary rewards most often named by participants and their influence on teachers’ performance were studied. It was discovered that some types of rewards have more impact on teachers’ work in comparison with others (Fig. 1).

*Monetary bonuses* and *time off* were named as the most significant ones. Preference of *monetary rewards* was explained by dissatisfaction with the size of the current rewards since it does not match the workload that supports the findings of related works (Derkachev, 2015 and OECD, 2020).

*Having more spare time* was also named as an important factor influencing the performance due to the large amount of workload and the necessity to work 24/7 since teachers are in constant communication with students and parents. The participants explained that despite teachers’ passion for work and desire to develop, learn and do extracurricular activities for their students’ better results, in most cases they do not have time for these activities. For this reason, additional

time off is a priority for teachers. The participants also mentioned that the system of earning time off is not always clear and transparent which makes this reward hard to receive. This factor is also connected with monetary bonuses since there are many opportunities for teachers to earn rewards however the lack of free time and energy often stop teachers from using them.

Even though most participants prefer two types of rewards mentioned above, they also stated that rewards in general do not make a big difference in their performance since given the current workload they already do their best. Although teachers would like to earn more bonuses, in most cases they do not have time to do additional activities to receive them. Besides the discussed rewards, teachers stated that their performance is influenced even more by other factors such as *students' achievements* and *positive workplace environment* (Fig. 1). According to the participants, these elements play an important role in the desire of teachers to put more effort into their work. The significance and motivation for *students' good results* in studying are conditioned by teachers' passion for work and the desire to educate and share knowledge. In terms of the *workplace environment*, the participants claimed that when applying for a job and searching for a school to work at, they focus on the team rather than salary. For eight out of eight interviewed teachers relationships with colleagues are the most important factor for choosing a workplace. According to the interviewees, the support and good relationships are significant, especially for young teachers who need advice and guidance during their first years at school. Besides, according to the teachers, some of the analysed rewards are distributed among teachers by a headmaster or school's administration, for this reason, it is important to have a fair and responsive head of the school who reacts to teachers' needs and understands them.

Due to not big influence of current rewards on teachers' performance, the participants were offered to share ideas for improvement of the bonus system which are illustrated in Figure 1. Some of the ideas were connected with the existing rewards. First of all, teachers would like to *have monetary bonuses increased* causing it by the size of the workload. All of the participants agreed that the pay does not match the amount of work. Another suggestion is connected with *designing of clearer system of earning time off* making sure that every teacher has an opportunity to receive additional days off. In the analysis, such non-monetary reward as *organised activities for teachers* was mentioned however only two of eight participants have this reward in their schools. The rest interviewees showed their interest in this type of bonus explaining it by the need for quality spare time that was mentioned earlier and the opportunity not to think about planning during their rare days off. The final suggestion is not connected with any of the analysed and mentioned during the interviews rewards, which are *learning opportunities for teachers*. In order to receive better results from their students, teachers need to have regular training for upgrading their skills. The participants suggested providing more practical and up-to-

date courses where they could exchange experience with colleagues and improve their work. According to the interviewees studying motivates them to implement new approaches and work harder.

## 6.2 Conclusion

The aim of the research was to explore, explain and understand the relationship between existing rewards and performance of teachers in public schools in Russia considering peculiarities of cultural background and type of educational institution.

Within the analysis, the most influential for performance types of rewards were explored. Based on this data, we designed the model that reflects them (Fig. 1). Following the structure of the model, each mentioned type of reward was explained using collected data. Based on the participants' responses, the most preferred rewards were identified which are *monetary bonuses* and *time off*. Besides monetary and non-monetary bonuses, some other factors were named as significant conditions of good performance – *students' achievements* and a *positive work environment*, these were uncovered and explained. Additionally, in order to understand what the current system is lacking and provide teachers with rewards that would influence their performance positively, the participants were asked to offer suggestions for the current system improvement.

The following ideas were suggested:

1. *pay rise*;

The study showed that the current teachers' pay in public schools does not influence their performance positively. The participants stated that the relationship between their salary and the workload is unfair. Even though the interviewees claimed that money is not the main factor in teaching however it is still a significant part of the life of every person. The participants also mentioned that higher pay would attract more young specialists to the sphere, which is one of the main goals of the government currently;

2. *transparent and regulated system of earning time off*;

It was found that one of the priorities for teachers is quality time off due to the significant workload. Several participants even claimed that they would prefer days off over monetary bonuses. Even though the study reported that some schools have a system for earning additional time off, in some of the educational institutions it is still unclear and not all teachers can use this opportunity;

3. *higher availability of organised activities for teachers*;

As it was mentioned above, time off is important for teachers and since they do not have much spare time, they would prefer to have organised activities not to spend time on planning their

days off. Among possible organised activities going to the concerts, theatres and trips with colleagues were named. In case of planned events for teachers, they could use this opportunity and use their days off without spending time on thinking about what to do;

4. *learning courses for teachers;*

Teachers understand that they constantly need to develop in order to keep up with the progress. The participants claimed that they appreciate when the school invests in teachers' professional growth and provides them with learning opportunities. Even though some of the interviewees stated that they have courses provided by the school, they consider them outdated and only theory-based which usually include lectures and presentations without any further discussion. The participants would like to have more focus on the practical application of their skills and knowledge and exchange their experience with colleagues.

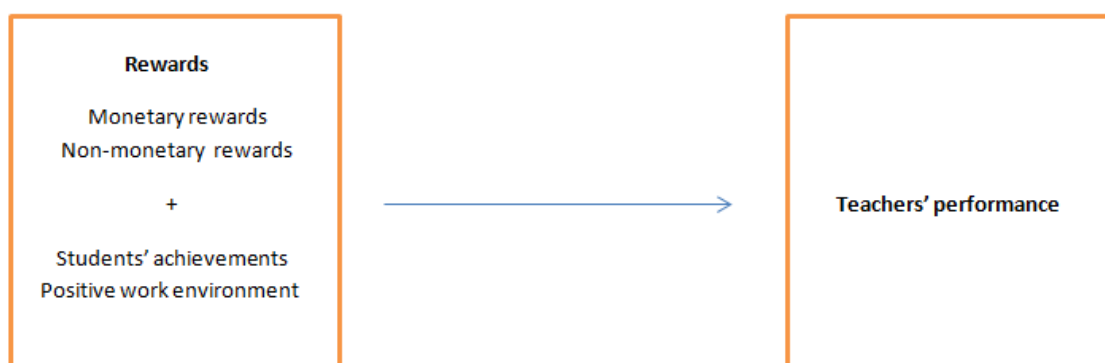
This part of the study helps to understand what alterations the government can implement in the existing system of rewards which could positively affect the quality of educational services in the country. The government and school administrations could invest more in the factors mentioned above and make these rewards more accessible for teachers by creating transparent regulations and rules for earning and providing these rewards.

In connection with previous work on a similar topic, the findings proved that the importance of monetary rewards in public schools in Russia is high due to the unfair match between workload and pay (Derkachev, 2015 and OECD, 2020). This reward was explored and explained in more detail than earlier presenting seven different types of monetary bonuses that teachers are currently receiving (Fig. 1). Another point made in similar works was proved which is the government's focus on attracting young specialists to schools (Pinskaya, Ponomareva, and Kosaretsky, 2016), particularly through monetary rewards. However, it was discovered in the current research that this financial support is not enough to make young teachers interested in staying in the profession for long.

Besides the importance of monetary and non-monetary rewards, a significant addition to the existing findings was made which is the impact of other factors on teachers' performance such as *students' achievements* and *work environment* which turned out to be crucial for specialists. Therefore, the number of important factors influencing teachers' performance was extended and could be studied further. This connection is illustrated in Figure 2.

Summarising findings and discussion of the study, it could be stated that the objectives of the research were achieved successfully and several additions to the existing findings were made which is uncovering other factors that influence teachers' performance positively except monetary and non-monetary rewards – students' achievements and good work environment. Moreover, the study presented the ideas that school administration and the government could

implement in the current reward system. Such factors as a more transparent and clear system for receiving additional time off, available organised activities and learning opportunities for teachers are claimed to impact teachers' performance more effectively based on the research.



*Figure 2: A summary of the relationship between monetary, non-monetary and other rewards and performance of teachers in public schools in Russia*

### **6.3 Limitations**

The objective of the work was to explore the relationship between rewards and teachers' performance in public schools around the country, explain current rewards and their types and understand if the influence of present bonuses is positive. Despite the collection of rich data on the current situation with the rewards and their impact on teachers' work, the study has its limitations.

This research is limited to the participants from only six regions of Russia, including eight participants – teachers from public schools self-selected among existing contacts of the researcher. It was stated earlier in the study that some of the rewards vary from region to region. For this reason, further quantitative research with a larger sample and with the help of the list of interview questions included in the current study that may become a foundation for further survey could test our findings and obtain data for generalisation of the current situation with rewards in the whole country. In this case, our model (Fig. 1) could be checked and extended due to possible differences between schools in various regions.

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## *Appendix 1*

### *Interview questions*

An initial short introduction to the study including objectives of the research and description of the interview plan was conducted at the beginning of each meeting.

#### **Personal information**

1. What is your age?
2. How long have you been teaching? Have you worked in only one school? Did you have any other experience like tutoring or working in private schools?
3. What subject/subjects do you teach? What is the age of students that you teach?
4. Why did you choose this job in the first place?

#### **Current reward systems and attitude toward them**

5. Please describe the reward system in your school. What does it include?
6. Does the reward system include only monetary rewards (salary and bonuses)? If not, what non-monetary rewards (promotion, coupons, flexible schedule, healthcare benefits, gratitude, gifts, paid studying, or additional days for vacation) do you have in the school?
7. Are non-monetary rewards common in your school?
8. What do teachers earn rewards for?
9. Are there any specific rewards for young teachers who have started a career path recently?
10. What behavior do you think the current reward system encourages/discourages?
11. Do you think there is a good match between teachers' workload and the current reward system?
12. What kind of rewards do you prefer and why?
13. Why do you think schools have a reward system? How do you understand the purpose of the reward system in your company?
14. Do you get rewards regularly?
15. How do you feel after receiving a reward?
16. Did you notice that you put more effort into your work after receiving any rewards? If yes, please specify / If not, what usually influences your productivity?
17. What are the differences between the reward system in your school and other places of work of, for example, your acquaintances? Would you like to have something similar in the school?
18. What is the reward system in the school lacking, in your opinion?
19. Do you have any other comments about rewards in your school?

**Thank you for taking the time to answer the questions!**

## *Appendix 2*

### *Consent form*

- I \_\_\_\_\_ voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves collecting information about my personal experience in receiving rewards for work in public schools in Russia.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree with my interview being audio-recorded/video-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research, my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview that may reveal my identity or the identity of the people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the dissertation.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that I or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities – they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio and video recordings will be retained in the researcher's computer and only Svetlana Kurganova will have access to it until the exam board confirms the results of Svetlana Kurganova's dissertation.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for five years from the date of the exam board.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalisation, I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

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Signature of research participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_