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Research Article

Influence of Primary School Teachers' Motivation on Pupils' Academic Performance in Federal Capital Territory Abuja Nigeria

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Abstract:

Background: The degree to which teachers are driven to teach is generally understood to be very important in how well students do in school, especially when they are first learning. In Nigeria's capital city, problems that keep happening, like not getting paid on time, not being paid enough, and not having many chances to learn more about their job, have caused worry about how these issues might affect how well elementary school students do in their studies.

Objective: This research delved into how the drive of elementary school teachers affects how well students perform academically in FCT Abuja, Nigeria. More precisely, it scrutinized the connections linking teachers' incentives, timely salary disbursements, compensation packages, opportunities for career advancement, and students' scholastic achievements within government-operated primary schools.

Methods: A descriptive survey research method was employed for this study. The total number of individuals in the study group was 12,627 elementary school educators distributed throughout the six Area Councils of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Three hundred elementary school educators were chosen utilizing a multi-step sampling process. A pre-designed questionnaire and a standardized form were the tools used to gather information. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation method was the statistical tool utilized to examine the data, with a significance threshold of 0.05, to evaluate four statements of no effect.

Result: The findings revealed significant positive relationships between teachers' motivation, prompt payment of salary, remuneration, professional development, and pupils' academic performance in primary schools in FCT Abuja, Nigeria.

Conclusion: The study concluded that teachers' motivation and related welfare factors are critical determinants of pupils' academic performance. It therefore recommends that Area Council Chairmen prioritize teachers' motivation, ensure prompt payment of salaries, improve remuneration, and strengthen professional development opportunities. In addition, the FCT Administration should transfer the management of primary school teachers from the Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to the Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB) for more effective administration.

Keywords: Motivation; Primary School Teachers; Pupils' Academic Performance

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the backbone of national development, and primary school provides the essential base for learning at all other levels. The effectiveness of any education system largely depends on the competence of its teachers. When the foundation at the primary stage is weak, it can negatively affect a learner's advancement in higher education (Kearney, 2020).

Teachers are central to realizing educational objectives; therefore, their motivation is vital for enhancing work performance. Motivation as a complex process that shapes an individual's decision to act, the effort applied, and the perseverance shown in achieving a goal. They emphasize that motivation involves not only the beginning of a task but also the intensity and consistency of effort, making it vital for effective teaching and learning (Naveed et al., 2022). Teacher motivation as a psychological condition that drives their enthusiasm, dedication, and persistence in fulfilling professional duties. They stress that this form of motivation is dynamic, changing with factors such as working conditions, recognition, and oportunities for professional growth (Liu et al., 2022).

Teacher motivation should be understood within specific contexts, as personal values and environmental influences largely determine why individuals choose and remain in the teaching profession. They contend that a context-sensitive understanding of motivation is essential for building theory and shaping policies that support teachers (Lena & Nikolov, 2025). Extending this argument, link teacher motivation to professional identity and personal values. They maintain that motivated teachers deliver higher-quality instruction, which in

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turn boosts student motivation, reduces burnout, and highlights the reciprocal relationship between teacher motivation and student outcomes (Zhu et al., 2018).

In this study, teachers motivation can be described as the internal drive and readiness of teachers to carry out their professional responsibilities, influenced by both financial (remuneration and incentives) and non-financial benefits. When combined, remuneration and incentives boost teachers' morale, dedication and job satisfaction, which in turn enhance teaching quality and contribute positively to pupils' learning outcomes (Franco, 2025).

Found that teacher motivation significantly impacts students' academic achievement, because motivated teachers tend to create more engaging learning environments and perform their duties more effectively (Nahid, 2023). Frequent teacher promotions improve performance by raising responsibilities and elevating professional status. They further stressed that when teachers are well-motivated through incentives, conducive working environments and fair remuneration, they demonstrate greater commitment to teaching, which in turn promotes meaningful learning experiences for students (Abah et al., 2022) .

Teachers' efficacy directly influences learners, showing a strong link between teachers' performance and students' academic achievement. The extent to which students attain desired outcomes largely rests on the teacher's contribution. In the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, motivating primary school teachers through prompt salary payments and the provision of incentives increases the likelihood of them meeting professional expectations, thereby enhancing pupils' academic achievement (Capinding, 2022). On the other hand, inadequate motivation may result in teachers' underperformance, which can, in turn, hinder pupils' academic progress in the region's primary schools.

That when teacher motivation is low, commitment to core responsibilities diminishes, which in turn undermines students' academic performance (Pambudi, 2022). The subpar academic results of elementary students in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, could stem from educators' insufficient dedication, which frequently results from meager pay and scarce opportunities for skill enhancement. A noteworthy connection exists between educators' drive, career advancement, earnings, and History students' scholastic achievements in Ilorin (Kholifah et al., 2024). A notable positive association was observed between educators' inherent drive to instruct and students' inherent drive to acquire knowledge, with the manner in which teachers motivate and the connections they form with students playing a mediating role in this phenomenon, implying that teachers who are intrinsically inspired tend to cultivate classroom atmospheres that are more conducive to motivation and lead to greater participation from students (Zou, 2023). Similarly, reported a significant positive relationship between intrinsic teacher motivation and student academic performance in Kenyan secondary schools, indicating that teachers' internal drives meaningfully contribute to improved learner outcomes (Oluoch, 2022).

Teachers' remuneration is a key factor influencing the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools. When Area Councils, through the Local Education Authority (LEA), give priority to prompt salary payments, pupils' academic performance is likely to improve (Jiao et al., 2022). Fair treatment from employers encourages teachers to put forth their best efforts in carrying out educational responsibilities. Unfortunately, recent studies and reports indicate that in many parts of Nigeria, especially FCT primary teachers, frequently experience significant delays in salary payments, sometimes stretching for several months. These irregularities in remuneration negatively affect their morale and financial stability, often compelling them to embark on strike actions to demand their entitlements. Such disruptions interrupt the academic calendar and consequently undermine pupils' academic performance (Okoro et al., 2023).

Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Area Council Chairmen often overlook the professional development of primary school teachers, unlike what is provided for their counterparts in secondary schools. Councils that fail to offer incentives to primary teachers are also less likely to invest in their professional growth. Consistent engagement in workshops, seminars, and conferences helps teachers remain up to date professionally, thereby improving classroom practice and ensuring pupils benefit from quality instruction (HASSAN et al., 2025).

Recent research indicates that insufficient motivational supports such as limited access to professional development, low welfare benefits (including inadequate housing or car-loans), and delays in salary payments, significantly hinder teachers' effectiveness (Chima-uzosike, 2024). These deficiencies contribute to falling professional standards, reflected in poor lesson preparation, limited student assessment, weak overall performance, and rising cases of absenteeism (Sopekan & Folarin, 2022). Teachers' involvement in seminars, workshops, and in-service training has a direct impact on students' achievement. The insights gained from such programs enhance teachers' instructional methods, thereby improving their classroom performance (Nkepah, 2023).

Teacher motivation is a vital factor in improving pupils' academic achievement, as effective teaching and learning depend on skilled and motivated educators. In the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, however, primary school teachers often face neglect regarding prompt salary payments, promotion arrears, professional development, and other incentives from Area Council Chairmen. Although the FCT administration, the current Honourable Minister, has taken notable steps to enhance workers' welfare, particularly for secondary school teachers, the condition of primary school teachers remains challenging. They are excluded from several benefits available to their secondary counterparts, and their salaries are regularly delayed (Abiodun et al., 2025).

The neglect of primary school teachers has left many struggling financially, compelling them to seek additional sources of income (Raheem et al., 2024). Female teachers often turn to petty trading, while their male counterparts engage in motorcycle transportation ("Okada"), taxi driving, or farming, sometimes even during school hours. Such financial strain and lack of motivation diminish their dedication to teaching, leaving insufficient time for lesson planning and classroom delivery, which in turn hampers pupils' academic achievement in FCT primary schools (Dula & Osorno, 2022). By failing to provide equal treatment, Area Council Chairmen have created a clear divide between the motivation and welfare of primary and secondary school teachers. This imbalance threatens the very foundation of primary education in Abuja. It is within this context that the present study examines the influence of primary school

teachers' motivation on pupils' academic performance in the FCT (Roy & Sarkar, 2023).

This research operates under the guiding principles of Robert House's Path Goal Theory of Leadership, first introduced in 1971. The central idea of the Path-Goal Theory of Leadership revolves around the ways leaders can motivate those they lead to successfully reach the objectives of the organization. This theory is built upon the expectancy theory of motivation, which posits that employees show a greater tendency to work hard towards established goals if they are confident the goals can be reached, certain they will be rewarded for reaching them, and find actual value in the rewards offered (Ampadu & Anokye-poku, 2022). Leaders foster such motivation by clearly defining objectives, outlining the path to success, eliminating barriers, and offering necessary support. According to the theory, effective leaders adopt leadership styles based on subordinates' characteristics and environmental conditions, while focusing on motivational factors. Leaders may employ any of four approaches: directive (task-oriented), supportive (relationship-oriented), participative (process-oriented), or achievement-oriented (status-driven) or a combination of these, depending on the situation (Bans-akutey, 2021).

This theory is particularly relevant to the present study as it provides a framework for understanding how employers can motivate both teachers and pupils to achieve educational goals. When primary school teachers in the FCT receive adequate motivation from their employers, their morale improves, enabling them to meet expectations and ultimately enhance pupils' academic performance.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

The descriptive survey method constitutes the research approach employed in this investigation. All 12,627 primary school teachers in seventy (70) primary schools within Abuja, consisting of 6,712 male teachers and 5,915 female teachers, formed the study's population. A total of 300 primary school teachers were selected as the sample for this research. To obtain the sample, the researchers utilized a multistage sampling strategy. The first stage involved simple random technique to select three (3) Area Councils from six Area Councils that comprised of Federal Capital Territory Abuja. The second stage involved the selection of five (5) primary schools from the three (3) selected Area Councils using stratified simple random sampling technique. The third and the last stage involved the selection of 20 primary school teachers from each of the 5 schools selected in three (3) Area Councils using purposive simple random sampling technique.

The instruments used for data collection were questionnaire titled "Primary School Teachers' Questionnaire (PSTQ)" and a pro-forma titled "Pupils' Academic Performance (PAP)". The questionnaire contained 20 items which was divided into four sections. Section A, B, C, and D contained items that were used to determine the relationship between teachers' motivation, prompt payment of salary, teachers' remuneration, professional development and pupils' academic performance. Pupils' sectional results were used as academic performance. The section A, B, C and D were rated on a modified Likert mode scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with weighted value of 4 to 1 respectively. Pilot test was carried out using primary schools that were not part of the study to ascertain its reliability. Cronbach Alpha was used to establish the reliability coefficient of 0.89. The r-value of 0.89 indicates a high reliability index for the instruments. Also, a pro-forma was used to collect primary data pupil results from 2020 to 2023. Data were analysed using Pearson product-moment correlation statistics at 0.05 level of significance to test the null hypotheses.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

There is no significant relationship between primary school teachers' motivation and pupils' academic performance in FCT, Abuja.

Tabel 1: Primary School Teachers' Motivation and Pupils' Academic Performance

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Teachers' Motivation	300	2.87	0.69				$H0_1$
Pupils' Academic Performance	300	9.42	3.48	298	0.815	.000	Not accepted

$p < .05$

Table 1 reveals the calculated r-value of 0.815 while p-value (.000) is lesser than the significance level (0.05) for 298 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between primary school teachers' motivation and pupils' academic performance in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja is not accepted. This indicated that there was a significant relationship between primary school teachers' motivation and pupils' academic performance in FCT, Abuja.

There is no significant relationship between primary school teachers' prompt payment of salary and pupils' academic performance in FCT, Abuja.

Table 2: Primary School Teachers' Prompt Payment of Salary and Pupils' Academic Performance

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Teachers' Prompt Payment of Salary	300	2.55	0.71				$H0_2$
Pupils' Academic Performance	300	9.38	3.27	298	0.799	.000	Not accepted

$p < .05$

Table 2 reveals the calculated r-value of 0.799 while p-value (.000) is lesser than the significance level (0.05) for 298 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between primary school teachers' prompt payment of salary and pupils' academic performance in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja is not accepted. This indicated that there was a significant relationship between primary school teachers' prompt payment of salary and pupils' academic performance in FCT, Abuja.

There is no significant relationship between primary school teachers' remuneration and pupils' academic performance in FCT, Abuja.

Table 3: Primary School Teachers' Remuneration and Pupils' Academic Performance

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Teachers' Remuneration	300	2.41	0.83				$H0_3$
Pupils' Academic Performance	300	9.64	3.39	298	0.628	.000	Not accepted

$p < .05$

Table 3 reveals the calculated r-value of 0.628 while p-value (.000) is lesser than the significance level (0.05) for 298 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between primary school teachers' remuneration and pupils' academic performance in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja is not accepted. This indicated that there was a significant relationship between primary school teachers' remuneration and pupils' academic performance in FCT, Abuja.

There is no significant relationship between primary school teachers' professional development and pupils' academic performance in FCT, Abuja.

Table 4: Primary School Teachers' Professional Development and Pupils' Academic Performance

Variable	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Teachers' Professional Development	300	2.61	0.59				H04
Pupils' Academic Performance	300	9.35	3.90	298	0.811	.000	Not accepted

$p < .05$

Table 4 reveals the calculated r-value of 0.811 while p-value (.000) is lesser than the significance level (0.05) for 298 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between primary school teachers' professional development and pupils' academic performance in Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja is not accepted. This indicated that there was a significant relationship between primary school teachers' professional development and pupils' academic performance in FCT, Abuja.

3.2 Discussion

Findings from the first hypothesis showed a significant relationship between primary school teachers' motivation and pupils' academic achievement in FCT Abuja, Nigeria. Evidence suggests that intrinsic motivation tends to exert a stronger and more sustainable influence on pupils' achievement than extrinsic motivation. Teachers who are internally driven are more likely to prepare engaging lessons, adopt innovative methods, and invest emotionally in their pupils' success, even in the face of limited material rewards. Found that teachers' intrinsic motivation for teaching was significantly and positively correlated with students' intrinsic motivation for learning, with teacher motivating style and teacher student relationships mediating this effect, suggesting that internally driven teachers foster more motivating classroom environments and better student engagement. Similarly, reported a significant positive relationship between intrinsic teacher motivation and student academic performance in Kenyan secondary schools, indicating that teachers' internal drives meaningfully contribute to improved learner outcomes (Oluoch, 2022). However, extrinsic factors cannot be ignored. Inadequate remuneration, delayed promotions and poor working conditions, issues documented by the FCT Universal Basic Education Board (UBEB), often dampen teacher morale and reduce job performance. Thus, while intrinsic motivation may be a stronger predictor of sustained teacher effectiveness, a combination of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators yields the best results. Well-designed extrinsic incentives (such as fair salaries, recognition, and training opportunities) can reinforce intrinsic drives and create an enabling environment for effective teaching.

The results of the second hypothesis indicated a significant relationship between the prompt payment of primary school teachers' salaries and pupils' academic

achievement in FCT, Abuja, Nigeria. Timely salary payments enhance teachers' commitment to their profession, which consequently improves pupils' performance. In essence, regular and prompt payment of teachers' salaries or entitlements is a key determinant of pupils' academic outcomes in primary schools. Teacher motivation is low, commitment to core responsibilities diminishes, which in turn undermines students' academic performance.

The results of the third hypothesis showed a significant relationship between primary school teachers' remuneration and pupils' academic achievement in FCT, Abuja. Regular payment of teachers' entitlements motivates them to perform effectively in the classroom, which in turn enhances pupils' performance. Thus, remuneration is a critical factor influencing teachers' classroom effectiveness. FCT primary teachers frequently experience significant delays in salary payments, sometimes stretching for several months. These irregularities in remuneration negatively affect their morale and financial stability, often compelling them to embark on strike actions to demand their entitlements.

The findings from the fourth hypothesis indicated a significant relationship between primary school teachers' professional development and pupils' academic performance in FCT, Abuja. Professional development activities such as seminars, conferences, and workshops enhance teachers' skills and update their knowledge, enabling them to adopt modern teaching strategies and remain globally competitive. This, in turn, positively impacts pupils' academic achievement. The result is consistent (Chima-uzosike, 2024). who argued that insufficient motivational supports such as limited access to professional development, low welfare benefits (including inadequate housing or car-loans), and delays in salary payments, significantly hinder teachers' effectiveness.

3.2.1 Implication

The study implies that pupils' academic achievement in primary schools Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja is closely tied to teacher motivation, timely salary payment, adequate remuneration, and professional development. Ensuring teachers' welfare boosts their commitment and classroom effectiveness, which improves learning outcomes. Conversely, neglecting these factors weakens the foundation of primary education and negatively impacts the entire education system. Hence, policies that prioritize teacher motivation and professional growth are essential for quality education and national development.

3.2.2 Research Contribution

The findings of this study contribute significantly to understanding factors that influence pupils' academic performance in primary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The observed significant relationships between teachers' motivation, prompt payment of salary, remuneration, and professional development with pupils' achievement highlight that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors play a critical role in shaping learning outcomes. Specifically, motivated teachers who receive timely and adequate financial incentives and participate in continuous professional development are more likely to deliver effective instruction, sustain high morale, and engage pupils meaningfully. These results provide empirical support for policies and administrative practices that prioritize teacher welfare, timely remuneration, and professional growth, demonstrating that investments in teachers' motivation and development directly enhance educational quality and students' academic success. Collectively, the study offers both theoretical and practical insights into how teacher-focused interventions can optimize learning outcomes in primary education.

3.2.3 Limitation

One limitation of this study is its geographical scope, as it was conducted only in selected public primary schools across the six Area Councils of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Consequently, the findings may not be fully generalizable to primary schools in other regions of Nigeria, particularly rural areas or states with differing educational policies and administrative structures. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data from teachers through questionnaires, which may be subject to response bias, including overestimation or underestimation of motivation levels and professional practices. The cross-sectional design also limits the ability to establish causal relationships between teachers' motivation, remuneration, professional development, and pupils' academic performance. Finally, the study did not consider other contextual or student-related factors, such as classroom size, parental involvement, or school infrastructure, which could also influence pupils' academic outcomes.

3.2.4 Suggestions

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, suggestions are made to improve teacher effectiveness and pupils' academic performance in primary schools. First, educational authorities and school administrators should prioritize enhancing teachers' motivation through both intrinsic and extrinsic means, including recognition, incentives, and supportive work environments. Second, prompt and regular payment of teachers' salaries should be ensured to maintain morale, commitment, and instructional effectiveness. Third, adequate remuneration and welfare packages should be provided to attract, retain, and motivate highly qualified teachers. Fourth, sustained professional development programs, such as workshops, seminars, and in-service training, should be institutionalized to continuously upgrade teachers' knowledge and pedagogical skills. Finally, policymakers should consider implementing a holistic teacher-focused strategy that addresses motivation, welfare, and professional growth simultaneously, as this combination is likely to produce the most positive impact on pupils' academic achievement in primary schools.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that a significant relationship exists between primary school teachers' motivation, prompt salary ment, remuneration, professional development, and pupils' academic performance in primary schools within the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. When teachers' financial needs are not met by their employers, they become demoralized, leading to poor performance. Consequently, pupils' academic achievement is jeopardized, and if the foundation of primary education is weak, it will inevitably affect subsequent levels of education.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors contributed significantly to the conception and design of the study. The first author led the elopment of the research framework, instrument design, data collection, and ini drafting of the manuscript. The second author contributed to data analysis, interpretation of results, and critical revision of the manuscript for intellectual content. The third author supported literature review, validation f research instruments, and data management. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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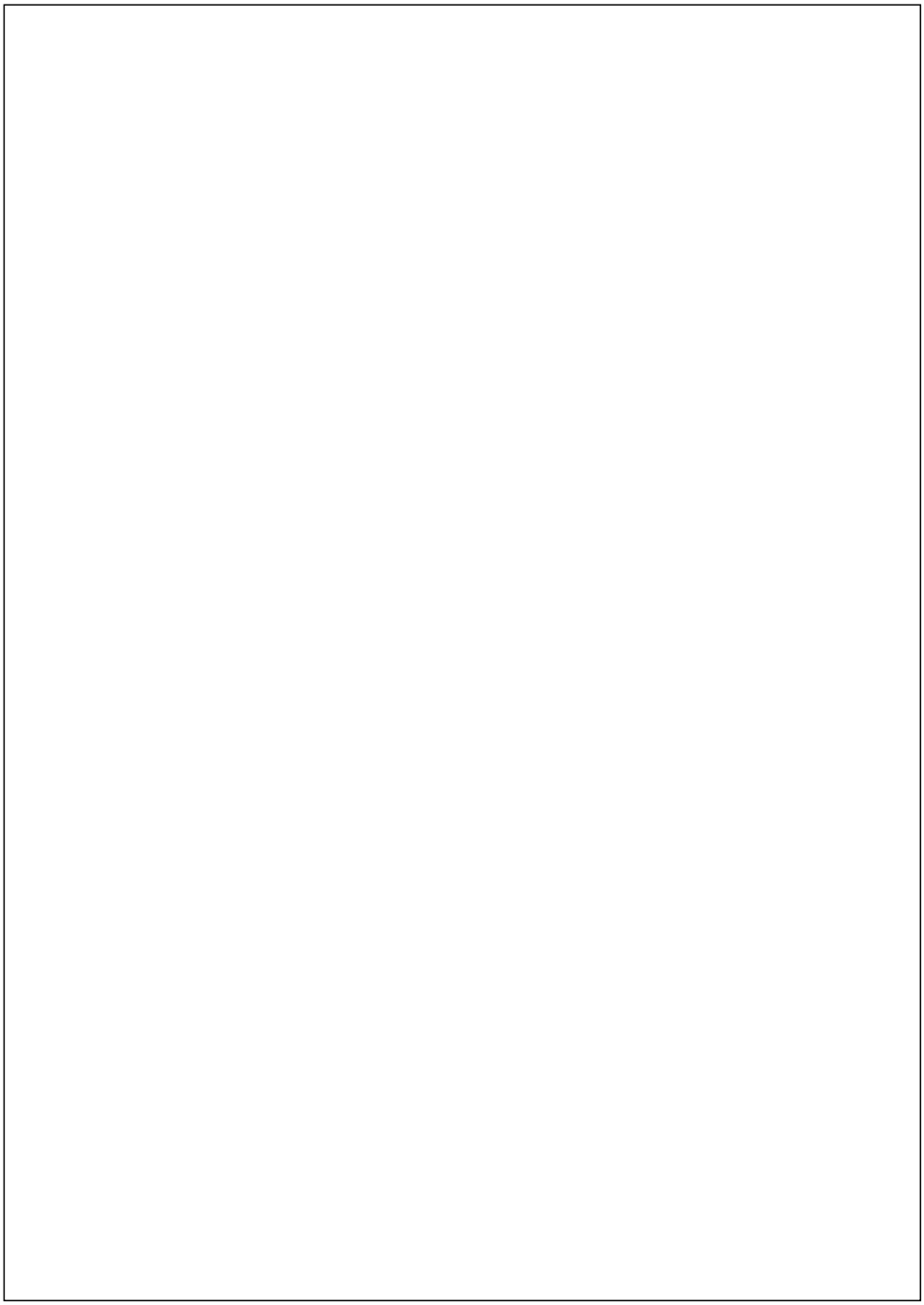
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