

Influence of Organizational Support Initiatives on Teachers' Turnover in Public Secondary Schools in Naivasha Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract: *It is the expectation of every employee that the organization they work for show appreciation for their efforts. Human resource is invariably the most important asset for the organization as it is what brings about the coveted competitive advantage. The organization, on the other hand, finds itself indebted to its employees hence must reciprocate in various ways to provide compensation in form of support. Organizational support in form of monetary benefits, favorable working conditions, opportunities for personal growth as well as social security bring about job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Inadequate organizational support leads to the desire of employees to quit. The study sought to determine the influence of organizational support on turnover of secondary school teachers in Naivasha sub-County. The study employed ex-post-facto research design. The study targeted the 294 teachers working in the secondary schools within Naivasha sub-County, Kenya. A sample of 75 respondents was derived from the target population using simple random sampling method. Structured questionnaire which captured both the dependent and independent variables was used. A pilot study constituting 30 respondents was carried out prior to the main study in order to determine both the reliability and validity of the instrument. Reliability was tested using the Cronbach alpha coefficient while the content validity of the instrument was determined by seeking expert opinion of the University supervisors. The data collected was processed and analyzed using the SPSS. This was carried out both descriptively and inferentially. The findings indicated that there exists a moderately strong and positive relationship between career development opportunities and teachers' turnover. The findings led to rejection of the study hypothesis. It was also inferred that though career development in teaching profession can enhance teachers' retention, generally, career development opportunities moderately enhance the turnover of teachers in secondary schools. It is recommended that, as the schools present teachers with opportunities to advance their careers, they should also recognize their newly acquired qualifications by promoting them and enhancing their remuneration packages.*

Key words: Teachers' turnover, Employee retention, Career development, Organizational commitment, Organizational support, Turnover intentions

1. Introduction

Organizational support is one of the most important organizational concepts that keep employees in the organization, since it is the key factor in increasing job satisfaction and the organizational commitment of employees. On the other hand, organizational commitment and job satisfaction are equally important to customer satisfaction. Research on organizational support shows that as organizations are concerned about the commitment of employees to them, in the same way employees are also concerned with the commitment of organization to them. Organizational support is directly linked with three categories of favourable treatment received by employees. First, organizational rewards and favourable job conditions; second, fairness; and third, supervisor support. In return favourable outcomes are achieved such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment. All these relations support organizational support theory [14].

In today's business world firm's competitiveness is based on the competence of its human resource. In addition organizational support is very important for the development of the employees. In 1995, a meta-analysis of some 800 turnover studies was conducted and later updated. The analysis confirmed some well-established findings on the causes of turnover. These include: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, comparison of alternatives and intention to quit. Employee turnover is considered to be one of the persisting problems in organizations. In particular if it

involves quality employees who have worked for the organization for many years, high performers and experienced and loyal individuals. The turnover means that another organization may gain a new knowledge employee who can become its competitive advantage. The loss of knowledge thus is a threat for the former organization, which increases the significance of knowledge continuity.

Turnover intention differs from turnover in that actual turnover is a behavioral construct, referring to an employee actually leaving the organization. On the other hand, intentions are a cognitive construct and refer to an employee planning to leave. Alternatively, one who indicates a plan to stay might actually leave on what amounts to whim. However, a case is argued that it is more feasible to obtain a reliable and valid measure of turnover intent compared with actual turnover, primarily due to potential inaccuracies and unavailability of agency records. He also argues that intention is the single best predictor of actual turnover behavior. More recent research has typically used measures of turnover intent. Teacher shortages have become a major concern to educational authorities and should be addressed continuously by policy makers. Studies show that some countries have attempted to minimize teacher transfers through the use of incentives. Financial incentives, in the form of a hardship allowance, travel allowance, or subsidized housing, in addition to non-monetary incentives such as special study leave or better training opportunities have had positive impact on teacher retention [11]. Mozambique for example employs a system of financial

bonuses for teachers who locate in rural areas. A Volunteer Service Overseas study of teacher motivation in Zambia, Papua New Guinea, and Malawi found that low motivation results in high attrition rates, constant turnover, lack of confidence, varying levels of professional commitment, and a feeling of helplessness to either improve student outcomes or teachers' own situations. It is therefore necessary to find solutions on how teacher transfer request can be minimized.

Kenya is ranked 17th out of 54 countries in terms of efficiency in education sector based on students' performance, staff turnover, motivation and managerial competence (World's competitiveness report, 2009). As society and culture are changing, teaching has become a more demanding and intense profession. The increased pressure from government, parents and students often results in increased occupational stress, massive attrition and turnover among teachers. Since June 2003, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has been carrying out a balancing exercise to move teachers from overstaffed areas to understaffed areas but this exercise has faced major resistance. The purpose of this research is to explore the effects of organizational support on turnover among secondary school teachers in Naivasha sub-County.

2. Statement of the Problem

Previous research has demonstrated that teachers' working conditions affects their career commitment, turnover intention and behaviour [17]. Hitherto studies suggested that organizational support is positively associated with work attitudes and behaviors at both the individual and organizational. Despite the frequent posting of teachers by the government in the recent past, most of the secondary schools in Naivasha Sub-county remain largely understaffed due to teacher turnover. The shortage stands at sixty per cent and this is thought to be a major contributing factor to dismal performance of the schools in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE). The sub-County was ranked last in Nakuru County in the year 2012 and only a small number of candidates from the sub-County qualified to join public universities.

Teachers prefer to migrate to other parts of the county which have better social amenities such as roads; access to electricity, hospitals, banks, piped water among others. High teacher turnover forces schools to devote attention, time and financial resources attracting replacement of the teachers [15]. Some have resulted to hiring temporary staff some of who are inexperienced Form Four leavers or university students on long holidays at a low pay. A bonding policy which restricts newly recruited teachers from transferring before the end of five years has been put in place by the Ministry of Education since year 2001. Despite these measures, secondary school teachers' transfer requests in Naivasha sub-County have been on the increase. Currently, there are 55 transfer requests pending at the Naivasha DEO's office. Lack of organizational support within the schools is thought to contribute significantly to teacher's high turnover within the sub-County. This study, therefore, sought to investigate the relationship between organizational support and teachers' turnover amongst secondary school teachers in Naivasha sub-County.

3. Objectives

3.1 General Objective

To determine the influence of organizational support on turnover of secondary school teachers in Naivasha sub-County

3.2 Specific Objective

To determine the relationship between career development opportunities and teachers' turnover in public secondary schools

4. Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between career development opportunities and teachers' turnover in public secondary schools.

5. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework captures both the independent variables (career development opportunities) and the dependent variable (teachers' turnover). Moreover, in the context of the current study, a moderating variable (TSC policy) has also been included in the framework. Figure 1 illustrates the framework.

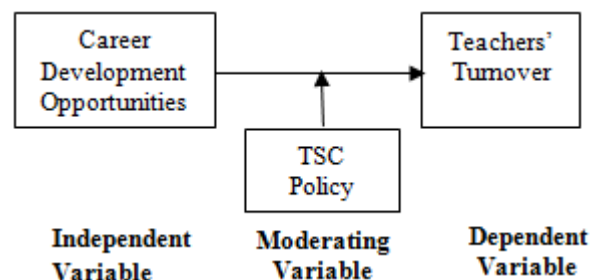


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The framework attempts to illustrate how the independent variable (career development opportunities) is linked to the dependent variable (teachers' turnover). In the context of the study, the TSC policy is the moderating variable and, as such, influences how career development opportunities affect the turnover of secondary school teachers.

6. Literature Review

This section presents a review of the theories and empirical studies touching on organizational support, in particular, career development opportunities vis-à-vis employee turnover.

6.1 Theoretical Literature

6.1.1 Social Exchange Theory

The theory was developed to understand the social behaviour of humans in economic undertakings. Social exchange theory is based on the idea that social behaviour is the result of an exchange process, whose purpose it is to

maximize benefits and minimize costs. The exchange can be understood in terms of material and non-material goods, such as the symbols of approval or prestige [8]. According to this theory, individuals consider potential reward and risks of social relationships. Further it implies that all human relationships are shaped by using a subjective reward-cost analysis and the comparison of alternatives. Someone who gives much will expect to get at least the same amount back from others and in return persons that receive a lot from others will be under pressure to give much back to them.

People will terminate or abandon the relationship as soon as the costs outweigh the benefits. The viability of social exchange theory is based on the assumption that individuals recognize one's life situations and notice each one's needs. It also refers to the principal of reciprocity, whereby privileges granted by one are returned by the other. In this context we look at the employing firm as an individual and the employee as the second one where the two are in a relationship. The interaction between humans will be noticed consciously and in some way reciprocated. The willingness to generate an advance performance will be responded with a payback, either soon or with a time delay [3]. This theory is relevant to the study in that teachers are willing to give back to the organization as much as they receive and where their expectations are not met there arises the need to move out of the job or seek alternative stations.

6.1.2 Organizational Equilibrium Theory

The equilibrium of an organization means the capacity to maintain efficiency of an organization. Organizations are dependent on the continuity of participants' contributions and in order to maintain this, organizations have to offer equitable inducements it is asserted that, if the personal sacrifice is bigger than the inducements he gets, then the person will withdraw his contributions and will leave the company. It is argued that the achievement of organizational equilibrium contains the condition that the sum of contribution of all employees ensures the kinds and quantity of necessary inducements. However, he did not consider the functions of the organization, such as the process of creation, transformation or exchange of utilities. In relation to this study when teachers feel that the support they are getting from their employer does not match the sacrifice they make to the employing organization they feel they have to move out.

6.2 Empirical Literature Review

This section, in tandem with study objectives, looks into empirical studies touching on both organizational support and employee turnover.

6.2.1 Career Development Opportunities

In addition to meeting physiological needs, employees also have a desire to extend their potential and develop their capabilities in organizations, or in other words, to satisfy their needs for growth and self-actualization. In accordance with the Teachers Service Commission Act, Section 35(2) (b) every teacher should regularly undertake career progression and professional development programs. Likewise, successful organizations promote continuous professional development throughout employees' career to

achieve intended organizational and individual goals and people take jobs where they are entrusted with important tasks and professional development chances that also lead to personal growth [4].

Career development and life-long learning activities in nursing promote job satisfaction, increased retention of nurses and enable continued provision of high-quality care [5]. Dissatisfaction with promotion and training opportunities has been shown to have a stronger impact on nurse turnover than workload or pay [16]. As in many other professions promotion of teachers is directly linked to an incremental remuneration structure based on hierarchical job groups which determine upward mobility. Teacher promotion is an important issue particularly because pay levels in education unlike in the business world are relatively fixed leaving promotion as an important reward tool through which teachers can strive to meet standards set by their employers. It is observed that low prestige, negative image and inadequate appreciation of value of teachers work in most sub-Saharan countries where many schools do not provide role models to help teachers grow professionally [9]. They attributed this to low motivation of experienced teachers.

Admission of students in Kenya to different secondary schools considering their level of academic achievements in primary school and as such may provide a basis of motivation and de-motivation respectively particularly due to the ranking of schools according to performance in national examinations which entrenches disparities that condemns some schools. This may explain why most promotions to deputy principal and principals by TSC in Kenya are done through transfer of teachers from established schools to less established schools hence less consideration of teachers in 'small schools' with necessary experience and qualifications. It was found out that low promotion opportunities, advancement, recognition and general difficulties in upward mobility in the teaching profession among Kenyan secondary school teachers was causing job dissatisfaction. Application of policy on promotion of secondary school teachers in Kenya does not seem to cater for the variety of school categories, thus eliciting concerns among teachers and stakeholders as to the criteria and consequent role of the promotion process.

Further, allocation of vacancies for promotion and selection of a small group of teachers for promotion does not seem to be clear. These sentiments were echoed by the Kenya Education Sector Integrity Report which observed apparent slow promotions of teachers. The Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET) questioned the value of SMASSE (in-service training program for Science and Mathematics teachers) noting that the program does not earn merit during promotions. SMASSE Project is a joint venture between the Kenya government through MoEST, and Government of Japan through JICA initially on pilot basis. SMASSE Project is mainly involved in In-Service Training (INSET) of Serving Teachers in Mathematics and Science in Secondary Schools in Kenya. Some teachers take up to twenty years before promotion beyond the common establishment grade (L) [10] unsuccessfully attending interviews even when qualified and with necessary

experience hence, the tendency to seek avenues for upward mobility outside their profession [12]. Promotion opportunities in Kenya have remained relatively few for over two decades [13], suggesting that less attention may have been paid to their potential negative effects on the teaching profession.

6.2.2 Teachers' Turnover

Studies report – more or less as a side effect of the main research question on the effects of turnover. The main problem is the direction of the relation between HR-practices and firm performance in a chain of restaurants. He found negative correlation coefficients between labor turnover and restaurant profitability varying from negative 20 to negative 28. In a study of the effects of changes in the model of industrial relations of emergent Silicon Valley enterprises, the relation between labour turnover and firm performance was investigated.

Organizational commitment is described as an individual's level of loyalty toward his/her organization. In yet another study, it was determined that organizational commitment is negatively related to turnover intention. Other factors causing turnover include: being placed in non-challenging jobs, lack of promotion opportunities, lack of a future career plan, and lack of support from managers and colleagues, and sluggish career advancement [1]. It was further observed that emotional exhaustion; lower levels of intrinsic job satisfaction and dissatisfaction with salary and promotional opportunities were the main predictors for turnover intention. It is showed that job satisfaction is significantly negatively related to turnover intention, and the impact of which is reduced in the following order: work remuneration, working conditions, job prospects, working relationships, working environment and a few others.

A half of teachers who quit leave the teaching profession outright ("leavers") and a half switch schools ("movers"). There is disagreement about whether or not the turnover rate in teaching is high in relation to other professions [7]. Regardless of whether or not turnover is high in relation to other professions, there are a number of reasons to support the argument that the nature of turnover in most schools is detrimental to school quality. Regardless of whether or not turnover is high in relation to other professions, there are a number of reasons to support the argument that the nature of turnover in most schools is detrimental to school quality. For one, there is clear evidence that teachers with strong academic backgrounds are most inclined to leave the profession. Regarding the empirical literature on teacher retention, it is concluded that the teachers with higher measured ability have a higher probability of leaving.

A second reason is that attrition is highest among teachers that are new to the profession. Past research found teachers make important gains in effectiveness in their first three years and smaller gains over the next few years. Given that almost 50% of teachers leave the profession within their first five years many teachers are leaving the classroom before they have developed into optimally effective practitioners. Moreover, exiting new teachers are often replaced by similarly inexperienced teachers and consequently students

in schools with high turnover may rarely be exposed to experienced teachers.

Turnover affects many of the organizational conditions important to effective schooling, such as instructional cohesion and staff trust. Effective schools hold shared beliefs in similar instructional goals and practices. Schools with high turnover are challenged to develop a shared commitment towards the same goals, pedagogy, and curriculum. The constant churning of teaching staff makes it difficult to collaborate, develop standard norms of practice, and maintain progress towards common goals. This can lead to fragmented instructional programs and professional development plans that must be adapted each year to meet the needs of a teaching staff in constant flux. High turnover also makes it difficult for teachers to build relational trust, which is critical towards productive collaboration in schools [6]. In addition to the costs of turnover to school quality, there are also important pecuniary costs associated with teacher attrition and mobility. These costs include money spent to exit the teacher from the school, recruit and hire a new teacher and/or fill the vacancy with a substitute until a new teacher can be hired, and train the new teacher.

7. Research Methodology

The study employed ex-post-facto research design. This is because the researcher did not manipulate the independent variable. In any case, the manifestation of that variable had already occurred and the researcher had to study them in retrospect for their possible effects on the dependent variable. 294 teachers from the 29 public secondary schools in Naivasha sub-County constituted the target population. From this population, a sample of 75 respondents was drawn using simple both Nassiuma's formula and simple random sampling method. Structured questionnaires consisting of questions on a Likert scale were used to collect the primary data which was exclusively used in the study.

A pilot study was carried out prior to the main study in order to authenticate both the reliability and validity of the research instrument. 10 teachers drawn from public secondary schools in the neighbouring Gilgil sub-County which is also within Nakuru County were piloted. The findings of the reliability test indicate that all variables were reliable since they returned Cronbach alpha greater than 0.77 ($\alpha > 0.77$). Content validity of the research instruments was also established in order to make sure that they reflected the content of the concepts (employee turnover and organizational support) in question.

7.1 Data Processing and Analysis

Data collected was coded and analyzed to facilitate tackling the research objectives and testing the hypotheses. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 software was used in analyzing data using descriptive and inferential statistics. Given that the data collected was on a Likert scale, the descriptive statistics were in form of mean and standard deviation. On the other hand, the inferential statistics were in form of the Pearson's correlation coefficient. The findings were then presented in form of tables that essentially

captured both the descriptive and inferential statistical results.

7.2 Research Findings

Out of the 75 questionnaires issued to the sampled respondents, 66 were satisfactorily filled and returned. This equalled to 88% response rate. Some of the respondents failed to fill the questionnaires because they were inaccessible when the filled questionnaires were being collected.

7.2.1 Descriptive for Career Development Opportunities

The researcher sought to investigate the opinions of the respondents on issues associated with career development opportunities for secondary school teachers. Table 1 shows the results of the analysis. According to the study findings, the respondents agreed (mean ≈ 4.00) with four issues touching on career development opportunities. That is, teachers regularly undertake career progression and professional development programs; career development in teaching profession can enhance teachers' retention; SMASSE program does not influence teachers' promotion; and career development opportunities are no sufficient to prevent teachers' exodus from the profession. On the other hand they disagreed (mean ≈ 2.00) that TSC regularly promotes continuous professional development through a teachers' career. Furthermore, respondents were indifferent (mean ≈ 3.00) that teachers' promotion is directly linked to incremental remuneration structure based on job groups and academic qualifications; and that school administration encourages and motivates teachers to attend training programs in terms of time, budgetary support and other resources. In most of the aforementioned issues, the respondents held extreme opinions. This is evidenced by the findings returning standard deviation greater than 1.000 (Std Dev. > 1.000).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Career Development Opportunities

	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Teachers Regularly Undertake Career Progression & Professional Development Programs	1	5	3.71	1.225
TSC regularly Promotes Continuous Professional Development throughout a Teacher's Career	1	5	1.92	.997
Career Development in Teaching Profession can Enhance Teachers' Retention	2	5	3.98	.774
Teachers' Promotion is Directly Linked to Incremental Remuneration Structure based on Job Groups and Academic Qualifications	1	5	3.08	1.418
SMASSE Program does not Influence Teachers' Promotion	1	5	3.64	1.432
School Administration Encourages & Motivates Teachers to Attend Training Programs in Terms of Time, Budgetary Support & Other Resources	1	5	3.48	1.126
Career Development Opportunities are not Sufficient to Prevent Teachers' Exodus from the Profession	2	5	4.29	.855

7.2.2 Descriptives for Teachers' Turnover

The study further described the factors regarding teachers' turnover in form of mean and standard deviation. The descriptive findings are indicated in Table 2. The findings showed that respondents were affirmative (agreed; mean ≈ 4.00) on all aspects touching on employee turnover with exception of one. As such, therefore, the respondents agreed that high turnover makes it difficult for teachers to build rational trust; employee turnover is highest among teachers new to the profession; turnover could be reduced by meeting teachers' demands; teachers with strong academic backgrounds are the most inclined to leave the profession; turnover can be caused by lack of promotion opportunities, lack of administration's support and sluggish career advancement; and that turnover amongst teachers is high relative to other professions. On the other hand, it was on average, disagreed (mean = 2.06) that staff turnover is more prevalent in rural than urban schools.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Teachers' Turnover

	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
High Turnover Makes it Difficult for Teachers to Build Rational Trust	1	5	4.06	.839
Employee Turnover is Highest among Teachers New to the Profession	2	5	3.85	1.140
Turnover could be Reduced by Meeting Teachers' Demands	2	5	4.23	.941
Teachers with Strong Academic Backgrounds are the Most Inclined to Leave the Profession	2	5	3.52	.808
Staff Turnover is more Prevalent in Rural than Urban Schools	1	5	2.06	.943
Turnover can be Caused by Lack of Promotion Opportunities, Lack of Administration's Support & Sluggish Career Advancement	1	5	4.20	.996
Turnover amongst Teachers is High relative to other Professions	1	5	3.59	1.136

7.2.3 Effect of Career Development Opportunities on Teachers' Turnover

In line with the specific objective and research hypothesis, the study sought to find out the relationship between career development opportunities and teachers' turnover in secondary schools. Table 3 illustrates the results of the pertinent analysis. The findings of the correlation analysis indicate that there exists a moderately strong and positive relationship ($r = 0.310$; $p < 0.05$) between career development opportunities and teachers' turnover. In other words, the more teachers are availed with career development opportunities, the more they are likely to leave the teaching profession especially in secondary schools. The findings led to the rejection of the research hypothesis (H_0) which stated that there is no significant relationship between career development opportunities and teachers' turnover in public secondary schools. The study findings may be explained by the allusion that career development enables teachers to be too skilled and qualified to be retained by secondary schools; and as such are likely to leave for other institutions and all organizations where their hitherto

qualifications will be commensurate to the new job demands and remuneration.

Table 4.8: Effect of Career Development Opportunities on Employee Turnover

		χ	y
χ	Pearson Correlation	1	.310*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.011
	n	66	66
y	Pearson Correlation	.310*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.011	
	n	66	66

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2- tailed)

Key: χ = Career development opportunities

y = Teachers' turnover

8. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The section presents the major descriptive and inferential findings. Pertinent conclusions are then drawn. Ultimately, relevant recommendations are suggested.

8.1 Summary

The respondents agreed with four issues touching on career development opportunities. That is, teachers regularly undertake career progression and professional development programs; career development in teaching profession can enhance teachers' retention; SMASSE program does not influence teachers' promotion; and career development opportunities are no sufficient to prevent teachers' exodus from the profession. On the other hand they disagreed that TSC regularly promotes continuous professional development through a teachers' career. Furthermore, respondents were indifferent that teachers' promotion is directly linked to incremental remuneration structure based on job groups and academic qualifications; and that school administration encourages and motivates teachers to attend training programs in terms of time, budgetary support and other resources. In most of the aforementioned issues, the respondents held extreme opinions. The findings indicated that there exists a moderately strong and positive relationship between career development opportunities and teachers' turnover. The research hypothesis was, thus, rejected.

The findings showed that respondents concurred on all aspects touching on teachers' turnover with exception of one. As such, therefore, the respondents agreed that high turnover makes it difficult for teachers to build rational trust; employee turnover is highest among teachers new to the profession; turnover could be reduced by meeting teachers' demands; teachers with strong academic backgrounds are the most inclined to leave the profession; turnover can be caused by lack of promotion opportunities, lack of administration's support and sluggish career advancement; and that turnover amongst teachers is high relative to other professions. On the other hand, it was on average, disagreed that staff turnover is more prevalent in rural than urban schools.

8.2 Conclusions

It was inferred that though career development in teaching profession can enhance teachers' retention, generally, career development opportunities moderately enhance the turnover of teachers in secondary schools. This is due to the argument that career development enables teachers to be too skilled and qualified to be retained by secondary schools; and as such are likely to leave for other institutions and all organizations where their hitherto qualifications will be commensurate to the new job demands and remuneration.

8.3 Recommendations

It is recommended that, as the schools present teachers with opportunities to advance their careers, they should also recognize their newly acquired qualifications by promoting them and enhancing their remuneration packages, otherwise there will be a likelihood of their quitting the secondary schools of teaching profession altogether.

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