

# School Administrative Job Related Factors Influencing Commitment to Teaching among Primary School Teachers in Kenya

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## Abstract

Teaching as a career has been viewed by students who aspire to join colleges and even teachers in the field as a peripheral profession. For this reason, there is need to understand and to discover the nature and even possible sources of commitment. The purpose of the study was to investigate the Job factors which create positive attitudes towards the job when they are provided and Job factors which create negative attitudes towards the job when they are not provided. The design for the study was descriptive and ex post facto. The study was anchored on Eli Ginzberg's theory on occupational decision-making and commitment. The population of the study was primary school teachers. Thirty schools were randomly selected from three provinces. Three hundred and seventy two teachers responded to research instrument. Data analysis was done through descriptive statistics and inferential statistics namely Chi-square statistics. The study revealed that poor working conditions and terms of service were described as depressing the public image of the teacher and to relegate the profession to a lower status. Therefore, it is imperative for Educational planners to encourage strong parental and community support for the schools. Schools should be well equipped and sufficient classrooms provided. Further, the study established that: a large proportion of the teachers in the sample would continue being committed to teaching because of three major job factors 'Lack of alternatives'; chance to continue learning and job being close to home. Hence, teachers should not be allowed to stagnate or begin to look elsewhere for greener pastures but could be encouraged to develop within the profession.

## 1.1 Introduction

The provision of a well-educated, keen, competent, respected and contented force is by far the most important contribution that a nation can make to the schools (R.O.K, 1964). However, the staffing and recruitment of students has had far-reaching effects on the quality of teacher education institutions. In the eyes of many education officials teacher education has carried a strong stigma of inferiority compared to other aspects of education. It has often been a practice to point a finger at the students who join teacher colleges as those who have failed to go elsewhere. Even teachers in the field have never made a secret about this ( Indire and Sifuna, 1974). Teaching is viewed as a peripheral profession to which they could turn to if more lucrative and, invariably, urban commercial occupations failed to materialize (Timothy, 1972, 33).

Among the main justifications for investing in education in any economy is that education plays a crucial role in the development of human and natural resources by creating attitudes which inspire and expose an individual toward change and at the same time providing the necessary participatory skills. To achieve this goal, education must arouse interest in and emphasize those areas of endeavour which are relevant and significant to the development process and should be capable of generating a favourable attitude towards jobs in those sectors which seem to lag behind in development because of manpower bottlenecks.

Reformers may build schools, make changes in the structure and curricular; recommend or prescribe particular teaching methods or aids; in the end everything will depend on the teachers who will be responsible for applying them (Thomas, 1968). There has been a tendency on the part of the public alike, to neglect teachers' status, qualifications, professional identity and conditions of service. Primary teachers have been the victims of this negligent attitude. Their environment of work is (considered) one of the most depressing (Maleche, 1972).

### 1.1.1 Statement of the Problem

Primary teaching in African countries tends to be regarded as the first step on the social and economic ladder. The teacher has often to work in conditions which would daunt the bravest of the spirits. The cumulative effect is to depress the public image of the teacher and to assign the profession a lower status than it once enjoyed (Jones, 1962). The invidious comparison with people outside teaching is responsible for the perpetual state of dissatisfaction among teachers and to discard their posts at the first opportunity. Nothing is so important as putting new hearts into our primary school teachers (R.O.K, 1989).

### 1.1.2 Objectives of the study

Based in the foregoing introduction of the study, the purpose of this study was:

1. To study the factors which may determine commitment and non-commitment to teaching among

- primary school teachers in three districts in Kenya, namely; Kakamega, Nyeri and Keiyo-Marakwet.
2. To investigate the factors which might have led male and female teachers to choose teaching profession as a career;
  3. To investigate the job factors which may contribute to teachers' resignation among male and female teachers.

### 1.1.3 Theoretical Frame-work

#### Eli Ginzberg's Theory

Ginzberg and his associates theorized that occupational decision making is a continuous process which could be divided into three distinct periods in keeping with the personality development of the individual. Thus, Ginzberg proposed that occupational choice is a process; the process is largely irreversible, and compromise is an essential aspect of every choice. These propositions were analyzed in terms of three periods, namely: fantasy, tentative, and realistic (Eli Ginzberg, 1966, 47-57).

Fantasy Period: Ginzberg *et. al.*, argue that the youngster thinks about an occupation in terms of his "wish" to be an adult. He/she cannot assess his/her capacities or the opportunities and limitations of reality. He/she can be whatever he/she wants to be. His/her translations are therefore arbitrary.

Tentative Period: This is characterized by the individual's recognition of the problem of deciding future occupations. The solution must be sought in terms of probably future satisfactions and his colleagues maintained that the youngster's translation of future satisfaction is still almost exclusively in terms of subjective factors: interest, capacities and values.

Realistic Period: The individual recognizes that he/she must work out a compromise between what he/she wants and the opportunities which are available. Hence, this period is characterized by the impact of reality considerations on the decision-making process; it is greatly affected by sex and educational status of young adults. This period is characterized by a number of stages; exploration stage, the young adult is striving to link decision making to reality. In the crystallization stage, the individual has committed himself/herself of a vocational objective, at least to the extent of being able to direct his or her efforts henceforth to further his or her choice even though he or she remains uncertain about the detail. Ginzberg postulated that the final stage in the realistic period is specification, which involves specification and planning the area of choice (Ginzberg, 1951).

This theory, was however, modified slightly in 1972. Ginzberg and his associates proposed that:

1. Occupational choice is a process that remains open as long as one makes and expects to make decisions about his or her work and career.
2. While the successive decisions that a young person makes during the preparatory period will have shaping influence on his or her later career, so will the continuing changes that he or she undergoes in work and life.
3. People make decisions about jobs and careers with an aim of optimizing their satisfactions by finding the best possible "fit" between their priority needs and desires and the opportunities and constraints that they confront in the world of work ( Ginzberg, 1972).

Bailey and Stadt observed that, in Ginzberg's reformulated theory, there is a greater sensitivity to reality factors of income, sex, and race ( Bailey and Stadt, 1973).

## 1.2 Methodology

### 1.2.1 Population and Sample

The population for this study was Primary School Teachers. However, not all the teachers in the population took part in this study. Three districts were selected out of forty one districts to participate in this study. The selected districts were: Nyeri in Central Province, Keiyo-Marakwet in Rift Valley Province and Kakamega District in Western Province. The justification for choosing three districts only to be studied was based on financial constraints. The criterion for selecting the three districts was based on Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination (K.C.P.E). The mean rank score based on K.C.P.E. results was computed for all the districts in the country. The districts were grouped into three pools according to the order of mean rank position. Pool A: consisted of districts with mean rank position of less than or equal to thirteen ( $x \leq 13.6$ ). Pool B: consisted of districts with mean rank position ( $x > 13.6$  and  $x \leq 27.2$ ). Pool C: consisted of districts with mean rank position ( $x > 27.2$ ).

In each pool, simple random sampling method was applied in selecting one district. The selected districts were: Nyeri from Pool A. Keiyo-Marakwet from Pool B; and Kakamega District from Pool C.

Further selection of primary schools within each district took place. Ten primary schools from each district were selected to take part in this study. The selection of the schools within each district was done at random using the table of random numbers.

The data collected was analysed for both descriptive and inferential statistics. The statistical tests employed in the study were chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) and contingency coefficient. Hypotheses tested were rejected or retained at 0.05 level of significance.

## 1.3 Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

### 1.3.1 Findings Pertaining to factors which Influenced Teachers to Choose Teaching as a Career

Male teachers ranked the following five job factors as having influenced them to the choice of teaching as a career. In order of importance they were: (1) Lack of alternatives; (2) Job being close to home; (3) To earn a living; (4) Chance for further education; and (5) Influence of parents.

When female teachers were asked what job factors influenced them to the choice of career in teaching, the five most important reasons given in order were: (1) Love for children and to work with them; (2) There was no alternative; (3) Interesting and challenging work; (4) Favourite career; and (5) To build the nation.

These findings seem to suggest that primary school teaching was the choice of a large population of teachers who had restricted job opportunities. This is probably due to their low academic performance at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination or lack of knowledge about other careers. This can be observed from response 'There was no alternative'. From this observation then, it would seem that almost half of the teachers in the sample would ideally prefer a career other than teaching. However, comparing teachers by sex, female teachers showed more positive attitude towards choice of teaching than their male counterparts.

Research studies by (Smithers and Carlisle Ibid, 391), (Keith Ibid, 165). (Kinyanjui, Ibid, 1-22), concur with the findings of this study. These studies concluded that as far as post-secondary career was concerned, school leavers did not have complete freedom in deciding on their future careers.

### **1.3.2 Findings Pertaining to job factors which Influenced Teachers for Opting to resign or leave teaching profession**

The most important five job factors which influenced female teachers for opting to resign or want to leave teaching were ranked in this order: (1) Inadequate pay; (2) Too much work; (3) Lack of promotions; (4) Poor administration policies; and (5) term and conditions of service. However, male teachers ranked the factors influencing their resignation or wanting to leave in this order: (1) Inadequate pay; (2) Lack of promotions; (3) To avoid harassment; (4) Terms and conditions of service; and (5) Poor administration policies. When the headteachers were asked what factors would influence their resignation or departure from teaching, they ranked the following five factors in this order: (1) Inadequate pay; (2) Poor terms and conditions of service; (3) Class size and overload; (4) No recognition for work done; and (5) Poor methods of promotion by merit.

Based on these findings, the job factor of 'Inadequate pay' is the most crucial factor which would make teachers to resign or leave teaching profession. This finding provides a basis for concluding that most teachers would want to resign or leave teaching on economic grounds. Further, the job factors of 'Lack of promotions'; 'poor terms and conditions of service'; 'poor methods of promotions' and 'poor administration policy' are significant job factors which are likely to influence the decision of teachers' departure to other avenues.

Among the many studies which support the findings of this study, (Maleche, Ibid.), (Orlich, Ibid.), and (Mooers, Ibid.), investigated why teachers left teaching profession. The studies concluded that the primary reason for leaving teaching was inadequate financial compensation. Lack of promotional opportunities in teaching was the second most important to inadequate salary. Further, the studies concluded that lack of clear promotional prospects in teaching profession leads to frustrations amongst teachers which results in seeking employment outside the teaching service as soon as opportunity arises. Poor working conditions and terms of service were described to depress the public image of the teacher and to assign the profession a lower status.

### **1.3.3 Findings Pertaining to Job Factors which Influenced Teachers to their Commitment to Teaching**

Six most important job factors which influenced male teachers to their being committed to teaching were ranked in this order: (1) Lack of alternatives; (2) Earn daily bread; (3) Chance to continue learning; (4) To build the Nation; (5) Better the future; and (6) Job being close home. However, the female teachers ranked the following job factors as influencing to their being committed to teaching in this order: (1) To earn daily bread; (2) Job is interesting; (3) Lack of alternatives; (4) Love for the job; (5) To build the Nation; and (6) Job being close home.

These findings provided a basis for concluding that a large proportion of primary school teachers would continue being committed to teaching as long as they don't have alternatives. This conclusion is based on the response 'Lack of alternatives' being ranked first among the male teachers and third among the female teachers. Further, the job factor of 'Job being close to home' indicated that some teachers would continue teaching as long as they are teaching in primary schools which are in their home areas probably due to economic reasons. However, on comparing teachers by sex, female teachers indicated that teaching was their ideal career. This is shown by the job factors 'Love for children and to work with them' and 'Interesting and challenging work'. For the case of male teachers, job factor of 'No alternative' ranked first among the factors which influenced the choice in teaching career. Therefore, the reasons for selecting a career in a certain field have some bearings on attitude towards the job.

### **1.3.4 Findings Pertaining to Job factors which influence teachers to their non-commitment to teaching**

Eight most important job factors ranked by male teachers as having influence on their non-commitment to teaching were in this order: (1) Slow process of ordering and supplying instructional materials; (2) Poor promotion methods by merit; (3) Inadequate pay; (4) Poor working conditions; (5) Lack of recognition for work done; (6) Poor administrative policies; and (8) External interference by public.

Female teachers indicated the factors influencing their non-commitment in this order: (1) Poor promotion methods by merit; (2) Inadequate instructional materials; (3) Poor housing arrangement; (4) Poor working conditions; (5) Frustrations by the public and administration officials; and (8) Lack of recognition for work done.

When the headteachers were asked what were the job factors which influenced their non-commitment to teaching, the following major eight factors were ranked in this order: (1) External interference by public; (2) Delay of supplies and maintenance; (3) Heavy teaching load; (4) Inadequate pay; (5) No opportunity for advancement; (6) No recognition and incentives for work done; (7) Too much work; and (8) Blame for students' failure.

Based on the above findings, we may conclude that, the non-commitment of primary school teachers is mostly caused by extrinsic job factors. The job factors cited of: slow process of ordering and supplying instructional materials; inadequate pay; poor working conditions; poor housing arrangement; lack of recognition for work done, external interference by public; frustrations by the public and administration officials and blame for students' failure cause teachers' morale to go down.

Supporting these research findings, (Remmert, Ibid. and Coverdale, Ibid.) concluded that, job itself, and administration are highly important factors that affect teachers' commitment. Second ranked factors were inadequate amenities and equipment, and absence of an independent educational commission. Third ranked factors in order of importance were promotion system, prestige with public, poor administration, supervision and promotion were among those factors that were ranked high as contributing to teachers' non-commitment.

Therefore, on the basis of these findings we may conclude that as teachers grow older in the job, they learn to adjust their expectations to more realistic levels and therefore become more satisfied with the available rewards.

### **1.3.5 Summary of Findings based on stated research hypothesis**

HO1: There is no significant relationship between primary school teachers' rating of their motivation to teaching and: (a) Teaching locality (District); (b) Sex; (c) Marital status; and (d) Job designation.

The null hypothesis was retained for the variable of sex, marital status and job designation. However, the null hypothesis was rejected for the variable of district and the alternative that: There is significant relationship between primary school teachers rating of their motivation to teaching and teaching locality of work was accepted.

Therefore, these findings imply that ratings of motivation to teaching varies across districts probably due to their consciousness towards education and community support to the schools.

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