

Influence of Organizational Support on Teacher Retention in Public Primary Schools in Machakos County, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the influence of organizational teacher support on teacher retention in public primary schools in Machakos County. The study objective sought to establish the influence of organizational support practices on teacher retention in public primary schools in Machakos County. The study was based on Fredrick Herzbergs' Two-Factor Theory. Mixed method research approach using sequential type of design was employed to target 898 headteachers, 8768 teachers, a TSC Director of education and 9 TSC sub-county directors. The study adopted Census, stratified proportionate and simple random sampling techniques to select a sample of 90 headteachers and 382 teachers. The 9 TSC directors were selected using census sampling. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used for collection of data. To achieve quality data, the researcher prior to main data collection did piloting to gauge the validity and reliability of the tools used. The piloted schools were then excluded in the main data collection exercise. Descriptive statistics and inferential was used to analyze data with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Quantitative data was analyzed quantitatively as well as by using inferential statistics. Analyzed data was presented using frequency distribution tables. This was done by use of the Anova models and regression coefficients. Correlation analysis was done using Pearsons' Correlation Coefficient (r) and Pearsons' Chi Test (p) to determine the strength and significance level between the variables. The study findings indicated that there was statistically significant relationship between provision of organizational support practices to teachers and their retention; alpha level of 0.05, $F=1147.980$; $0.000 < 0.05$. The analysis of the qualitative data was done by organizing data in themes based on study objectives and presented in a narrative form. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education introduces a unit in curriculum or syllabus to teach induction and mentorship as a Core Professional subject. This would train or induct teachers on key determinants of teacher retention; like provision of organizational teacher support to enhance their required length of stay in a station. This would holistically promote quality performance in our public schools in Machakos County, Kenya.

Key Words: Determinants, Organizational practices, teacher retention, Public Primary Schools.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers contributed early towards the initiation and implementation of schools' vision and mission. Frequent teacher mobility is a big challenge if the school has to accomplish and realize its set goals. Armstrong (2006) observed the importance of resource management and proper utilization on teacher support issues to enhance their stay. The survey stressed on the emerging aspects of workforce management in successful institutions of learning and especially in the modern education sector. The study defines teacher retention as continuous and planned effort that organizations take to retain the experienced, knowledgeable, skilled and competent teachers. This is a clear indication that for any bright future, survival and success of the education of any Nation, teacher retention remains key determinant and needs significant support.

Teachers need to be secured, supported and given extrinsic motivation in schools. According to Hoisch (2001), retention of teachers and especially experienced, skilful and value adding type is not only beneficial to themselves but also earns school's reputation. Simon and Hinkin (2001), noted that teacher support practice is a good way of maintaining teachers for longer time and of which increases the learners' performance thus maintaining the school's stability. Hanushek (2002) in US revealed of great achievement impact when teachers participate in decision making on organizational teacher support issues. The survey described good organizational support practices as that approach that can influence teachers' stay, make them produce good results and improve on operations of an institution. Teacher retention is majorly affected by the kind of approach the organization practices and policy strategies on board. Most of the learning institutions have lost some of their senior most and experienced teachers due to failure to offer staff support. Many schools due to

ignorance have let their hard working, gifted and dedicated teachers strain beyond their abilities. Teachers like other workers require support in financial, social, marital and even in health situations.

Organizational support practices entirely concern teachers' interrelationship and other social movements working towards support to the teachers. Teachers do interact in their place of work and holistically collaborate in a wider scope. All this is for realization of a common organizational goal. In a school set up, the key coordinator of the working team, the surrounding community and the entire organization remains the head of the institution. According to Silbert (2005), the beginning teachers perceive the headteacher as an instructional master, the most experienced social life mentor, inductor and as the nearest professional supporter besides being the most able financial inductor and financier. The head of the institution by virtue of his status is viewed as a knowledgeable, skilful and the senior most who harbor manageable and accepted tactical leadership styles. This qualifies them in handling different categories of teachers' professional and social life challenges. Due to this therefore, such support is expected in the schools to foster quality leadership yielding to a healthy relationship between the staff and the supervisor; a very essential characteristic of leadership though rare and which may be lacking in most of our public schools. This organizational teacher support forms rich source of teachers' job satisfaction. This is a strong, healthy and very supportive determinant of teacher retention. This factor alone is enough to make teachers passionate about their stay, work and the profession. This increases teachers' intention to comfortably stay and work to realize the school's set goals

Teacher mobility and attrition has posed a challenge in the US leaving teaching and learning disturbed and disrupted. This is because about 44 states have been reported by a National report published by the US department of education 2017 as facing acute shortage of teaching staff. The Nation due to this was left to experience difficulties in bearing the costs and challenges of training and retaining teachers in rural areas. The reasons of the teachers to transfer out of the schools or leave the profession were cited as failure to the organization to offer necessary support to the teachers. Along with this, low salaries, learner indiscipline and even social isolation was also among the cited challenges. The study too noted some major factors behind the teachers' job dissatisfaction as the work overload, poor leadership and lack of collegial support. To improve on this phenomenon the survey recommended that the leadership undergo some institutional induction. This would include instructional support among other teacher empowerment and not leaving out teacher professional development support.

Starcher (2006), in France observed a very strong relationship between leadership practices and organizational achievement, organizational commitment and teacher retention. He pointed out that poor leadership opens to poor relationship between the teachers, organizational commitment and their retention. This strongly affects retention of not only the beginning but also the experienced teachers thus affecting institutional performance. The study sampled 221 teachers. Statistical analysis technique using Macro Mediate development from Hayes and Preacher (2013) was applied. This is because every worker does experience either emotional or financial difficulties which require institutional support from time and again. In the stations where this practice is denied of teachers, their morale goes down and this may trigger their intention to transfer to places with better organizational support (Moslow, 1859). Manson (2015) in Australia cited incidences where the education sector experienced understaffing after a good number of teachers sought transfers to those institutions with good and supportive policies. Teachers in the current study revealed of having gone through psychological suffering after failing to get some financial help from their immediate bosses at the time of need.

Perrachione et al (2008), in a study noted that there were some teachers in South Africa who had even stayed in the same schools for well over even 10 years. When asked to state their reason for the stay; in response the teachers associated this act with the organizational support they received from their immediate leadership. The survey also noted of the unique social amenities and professional supportive services offered by the leadership as the key determinants that influenced their retention.

In a different empirical study, Gomba (2017) on the factors influencing teachers' retention in rural areas in Zimbabwe and that which had much of a contrary observation noted that teachers' best reasons for their stay were to: provide care and support to their families, job security, warm support from colleagues and the administration. A group of the teachers reported that due to their being not marketable, sought just to remain in schools to earn simple living for their families. The study targeted all teachers who had taught in one school for over 10 years. It used audio taped and transcribed interviews to collect data and presented the findings in tables, charts and means. Good number of the interviewed teachers pointed out that the factors which affected them most were self-sacrificial leadership from their headteachers (Ruggieri & Abbete (2013). These teachers revealed of their high intention rate of stay in the stations. According to them, much of the comfort was contributed by collegiality and the leadership that offered them psychological support, social support and financial assistance at times of need. It was noted that some good and empathizing headteachers would even go out of their way and offer their precious resources to the staff and even to learners. This motivated the teachers, a factor that reduces chances of intention to look for a transfer (Perrachione et al. 2008). The study recommended on the institutional strategies that would prioritize on recruitment, training and retaining of the best quality of the gifted teachers.

A survey was conducted in Kenya by the Ministry of education (MOE, KESI, 2010) to investigate on enhancing quality education through Effective Teacher Support in a programme entitled; School Based Teacher Support (SBTS). The Kenyan Government being a nation that is highly committed in quality education to its citizens and education being one of the economic pillars initiated this survey to investigate and strategize on organizational teacher support programmes. The research aimed at finding and setting out strong strategies of improving institutional and instructional teacher support. A programme that would lead to teacher job satisfaction that is required for teacher retention in Machakos County, Kenya (MOE 2020; Kimeu, 2010).

II. Statement of the Problem

Economic development in Kenya relies majorly on education of its citizens. This makes education one of the country's stronghold pillars and as such, learning institutions are not only given the first priority but also the lion share during government's resource allocation. Administrators in these institutions execute their leadership duties in different styles with the overall objective being to achieve the desirable performance. When the administrative roles are not spelled out clearly, teacher retention in schools become a challenge. Teacher mobility ends up affecting learning and other institutional operations. When this happens, it becomes a big challenge to the headteachers for they may not have major influence over the teachers' transfer intentions. Organizational teacher support practices and majorly on provision of instructional materials and teacher professional development (TPD) is important in providing teacher job satisfaction. Schools that join their teachers in the modeling of the learners' character make teachers' work easy and enjoyable. Learners' good discipline make teachers to feel supported and opt to even overstay comfortably in one station. The current study has noted that despite the Teachers Service Commission review of teachers' remunerations, transfer intentions are increasingly realized. Many teachers wish to change work stations an act that makes the heads of institutions extremely challenged. This is when some of their experienced and performing teachers secretly manipulate for transfers sometimes from the employer's agents. The transfer exercise is a docket well controlled by the employer, the TSC. The great assumption by the employer being that any trained primary school teacher is capable of handling any subject in any level. The same argument becomes an advantage to the teachers seeking to transfer and so make use of the loop. When their requests are approved and in case the systems in the filling up of the gaps left by the successful transferring teachers delay, the whole institutional operations is affected. This is a serious and big challenge to schools not only in Machakos County but across the public primary schools in Kenya. The failure of the schools to offer teacher support in time results to not only lose of the experienced teachers but also bring about learner indiscipline. When this happens, the few teachers left behind before replacement (if any) are faced with severe work overload. Organizational teacher support practices in public primary schools can greatly reduce teacher indented mobility. Premature teacher transfers also bring about poor implementation of government policies. For instance the Country's new education programme, the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) which demands teachers to holistically work with the learner for proper subject interaction.

Objective of the Study

The study was guided by the following specific objective:

1. To establish the influence of organizational support practices on teacher retention in public primary schools in Machakos County.

1. Hypotheses of the study

H_{01} : There is no statistically significant relationship between organizational support practices and teacher retention in public primary schools in Machakos County.

III. Literature review

Perrachione (2008), noted that elementary teachers' perception on job satisfaction and retention in a school is all about the organizational teacher support offered. The study sampled randomly 300 school teachers and analyzed data using multiple linear regression and qualitative design. Silbert (2005), reported of some of the teachers who had worked in one station for over 30 years and were not even willing to change. The reason given was that the head of the institution was so understanding and supportive. One who would occasionally go out of his way even to an extent of risking his job to offer juniors a fatherly support. Chen (2021), revealed that a good supportive leadership has that kind of behavior characterized of self-sacrificial leadership; a practice which is very rare but important in any Organization. A leader who leads with the organizational staff needs in mind. This provides extra job satisfaction. The interviewed teachers revealed the comfort they got from the headteachers who whole-heartedly recognizes all as members of the Organization. Leaders who offer possible support during needy moments. This study sought to investigate the influence of such organizational support

practices to teachers. The key areas such as instructional material support to teachers, provision of teacher professional development support and provision of organizational support in managing pupils' discipline.

Provision of organizational support in managing pupils' discipline.

The head of institution by virtue of his status is perceived to possess a wealth of knowledge and tactical skills required to manage different categories of learner-teachers challenges. Institutional support practice is expected to foster quality leadership resulting in the required relationship between the pupils, staff and the supervisors. Acheson (2018), in support stated that teachers' retention is affected by organizational work load, stress, health and by learners' character. On leadership support practices to teachers, Gomba (2017) recommends that teacher supervision and appraisals be conducted as a supportive exercise and in a manner not to intimidate or to instill fear to teachers.

A sound learner character in any institution determines the outcome level of achievements.

According to Benjamin (2019), in the 21st century teacher effectiveness in classroom is realized as a result of teacher professional development. Learning institutions should support their teachers to upgrade on modern emerging technology issues and especially the digital learning. Organizations that fail to offer teacher professional development support, risk losing their experienced staff to institutions that sponsor their teachers. A school of good pupil character attracts and retains not only teachers but teachers of required substance.

Institutional discipline is always a collective responsibility of all stakeholders, Richardson and Fallon (2001). Leadership that fails to support teachers during incidents of learner indiscipline crisis provides a weak zone, thus opening chances of teacher intention to move to other schools that offer this essential teacher support. Silbert(2005), affirms that organizational teacher support practices of managing learner discipline not only affects the newly employed teachers but also the experienced. Quality learning and teaching in a classroom is all about utilization and application of varied teaching and learning aids. Organizations that provide teachers with instructional materials make teaching and learning easy, real and enjoyable to both the learner and the teachers. Amadioha (2018), observed that much of learner indiscipline arises from failure to cope and follow with what is being taught in class.

IV. The research methodology

A mixed method approach was adopted in this study to establishing the influence of organizational teacher support practice to teacher retention. The main study objective was to investigate the influence caused by organizational teacher support practices on teacher retention in Machakos County. The rationale of applying qualitative and quantitative design in this research was because it allows computation of huge data(Gray 2002). The study targeted 898 headteachers and 8768 teachers and 10 TSC directors. Using stratified proportionate simple random sampling technique, 382 teachers, 90 headteachers were selected while 9 TSC directors were censured. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. The research tools were piloted in 7 schools and two TSC Directors in an effort to validate and test reliability of the tools applied, Thabane (2010). However, those involved in the piloting were exempted from the main study thus, affecting slightly the sampled size.

The collected quantitative data was analyzed quantitatively as well as using inferential statistics. Results were reported using frequency distribution tables. Qualitative data was analyzed by organizing data in themes based on the study objectives and presented in a narrative form. Pearson's Correlation(r) analysis was used to determine the strength or the significant level of relationship between dependent and independent variables. The study findings indicated a strong relationship between the variables thus $t(320)=1.76$; $p<0.05$ $\beta=0.613$ and from Table 3 there is a clear indication that there was statistical relationship between the variables $0.000<0.05$. This is an implication that organizational teacher support practices could significantly predict teacher retention in public primary schools in Machakos County Kenya.

V. Research findings

The study sought to investigate determinants of teacher retention in public primary schools in Machakos County. The objective of the study was to investigate the influence of Organizational support practices and teacher retention in public primary schools in Machakos County. For the study to achieve the objective, teachers were requested to state their statistical significant relationship between Organization support practices and their retention in public primary schools in Machakos County. Their response were recorded in the Tables 1, 2. and Table 3.0

Table 1. Regression Model for Organizational support practices and their retention

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.885 ^a	.783	.782	.571

a. Predictors :(constant), organizational support practices

Regression outcome in Table 1 shows that the relationship between organizational teacher support practices and teacher retention was positive but moderate ($R=.783$) because R^2 was not equal to zero ($R^2 \neq 0$), but within 0 and 1. Also, an adjusted R^2 gives more prediction and so adjusted R^2 implies .782 interpreted as 78% of the variation in teacher retention in public primary schools in Machakos County. This could be as a result of the organizational teacher support practices in influencing teachers' retention in the linear model. In testing whether this model was significant in enabling the prediction, the overall model significance was established and analyzed in the ANOVA table shown in Table 2.

Table 2: ANOVA Model for Organizational support

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	374.571	1	374.671	1147.980	.000 ^b
	Residual	104.86	319	.326		
	Total	478.657	320			

a. Dependent Variable: Teacher retention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Organizational Support practices

The relationship was significant when "F column" value gave out to a beta which was equal to zero ($\beta=0$) and not significant when the "F column" value yielded to a beta whose significant value was not equal to zero ($\beta \neq 0$). The model identified in Table 2 was indeed significant in making the prediction that organizational teacher support practices could predict their retention, at alpha level of 0.05, $F=1147.980$; $p < 0.05$. This is because beta was equal to zero ($\beta=0$). This is an implication that organizational teacher support practices could significantly predict teacher retention in public primary schools in Machakos County.

Table 3 is the analysis of the regression Coefficients done in order to establish the relative strength of prediction of the study of independent variables upon the dependent variable.

Table 3: Organizational support and teacher retention

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Hypothesis Testing Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.257	.603		3.750	.000
	Organizational support	.613	.347	1.260	1.765	.078

a. Dependent Variable: Teacher retention

Table 3 shows the regression coefficients of the independent variables (Organizational support practices) based on standardized and unstandardized coefficients (beta). From the analysis it is observed that organizational support practices had a significant prediction strength on teacher retention $t(320) = 1.76$; $p < 0.05$ $\beta = .613$. This is an implication of teacher retention increment of 0.613 per every increased unit of Organizational teacher support practices. Therefore the findings indicate that, teacher retention greatly depends on organizational teacher support practices.

To accept or uphold the hypothesis, the acceptance level of significance was 0.05. The levels of significance of the coefficient model rating greater than 0.05 is an indication that the independent variable (organizational support practices) did not influence the dependent variable (teacher retention). Contrary to this, if the level of significance rated less than 0.05, then organizational teacher support practices on teachers was found to influence their retention.

From Table 3, it is noted that there was statistical relationship ($0.000 < 0.05$) between Organizational support practices and teacher retention. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that "there is no statistically significant relationship between organizational practices and their retention in public primary schools in Machakos County" was rejected at 0.05 level of significance and so alternative hypothesis which stated that "there is statistically significant relationship between organizational support practices and their retention in public primary schools in Machakos County" was upheld.

A conclusion was drawn based on the findings that; institutional organizational support practices and teacher retention are statistically dependent.

VI. CONCLUSION

As per the study objective finding, it was concluded that organizational support practices to teachers has a strong influence on teacher retention in public primary schools in Machakos County. This is realized when the leadership develops sense of humor to the staff challenges as they pursue their line of duty. Newly and even the experienced teachers require continued support from their seniors ranging from organizational mentorship, social support, professional, financial and even in modeling of the learners' character. From Table 3. the observation is that there is a strong relationship between the variables; $t(320)=1.77;p=0.000<0.05$. Modern digital technology requires intensive improvisation and a lot of organizational support in terms of teaching and learning materials, equipment, internet accessibility and affordability is a requirement. This is a challenge and so a requirement that may not only be in Machakos County but across the country.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended that the leadership in schools practice organizational support to teachers. The study too recommended that the Ministry of Education introduces unit on induction and mentorship in the curriculum and syllabus in Teacher Training Colleges and Universities across the country. The unit should be a Professional and Examinable subject to intensively train teacher trainees.

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