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## **Job Factors that Influence Feelings of Commitment to Teaching among Primary School Teachers in Kenya**

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**Abstract:**

*The provision of a well-educated, keen, competent, respected and contented teachers is by far the most important contribution that a nation can make to schools. The staffing and recruitment of students has had far reaching effects on the quality of teacher education institutions. Teacher education has carried a strong stigma of inferiority compared to other aspects of education. It has often been practice to point a finger at the students who join teacher colleges as those who have failed to join else where. Teaching is viewed as a peripheral profession to which they could turn to if more lucrative and, invariably, urban commercial occupations failed to materialize. The teacher has often to work in conditions which would down the bravest spirits. The cumulative effect is to depress the public image of the teacher and to assign the profession a lower status. It may be hard to change this misconception of values, but, one of the essential parts of any successful development of education in Africa today is a return of a higher prestige and regard for teachers. For this reason, there is a great need to understand and to discover the nature and even possible sources of commitment in the teaching profession. The design for the study was descriptive and ex post facto. The study population was primary school teachers and the sample size was three hundred and seventy two (372). The data collected was analyzed with the aid of the computer. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. The study revealed that majority of the teachers would ideally have preferred a career other than teaching. The female teachers were more committed to teaching and were more likely to see their careers in education as involving teaching itself. The findings revealed that intrinsic and extrinsic job factors are equally important as motivators. A teacher is likely to be both committed to teaching and to have a positive professional self-perceptions after teacher training. Professional self-perceptions become more central to the commitment of teachers during training and that self-perception and commitment to teaching are dynamically inter-related.*

### **1. Introduction**

#### *1.1. Definition of Important Terms*

- **Commitment to Teaching Factors:** This study employs the definition of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Commitment to teaching factors are the job factors which create positive attitudes towards the job when they are provided. These are the factors which revolve around the actual doing of the job, the job content or intrinsic aspects of the job<sup>1</sup>.
- **Intrinsic job factors:** These are the job factors that revolve around the actual doing of the job, the job content or intrinsic aspect of the job.
- **Extrinsic job factors:** These are the job factors that revolve around the environmental setting on the job, the surrounding conditions, the job content or the extrinsic aspect of the job.

Occupational choice is a process that remains open as long as one makes and expects to make decision about his or her work and career. 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<sup>2</sup>. 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 dispose 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 the curriculum; recommend or prescribe particular teaching methods or aids; in the end everything will depend on the teachers who will be responsible for applying them<sup>3</sup>. There has been a tendency on the part of the government and 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<sup>4</sup>. The Kenya Education commission noted that:

*“Outside the urban areas, the majority of schools are of the mud and wattle type, with thatched roofs, and are erected and maintained by the local community at their own expense. In some areas, by means of local fund collections combined with voluntary labour buildings in permanent materials have been erected. The standard of these buildings is often good but the commission found far too many buildings of the semi-permanent type that were in a shocking condition. Such buildings inevitable hamper the teaching, depress the spirits of the children and sap enthusiasm of the teachers. In addition, classrooms were found without school furniture in which the children squatted on the floor and wrote on logs or earch ridges. Such furniture as existed was often so crudely made and unsuitably designed as to offer great impediments in the way of modern teaching methods<sup>5</sup>.*

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. The invidious comparisons with people outside teaching is responsible for the perpetual state of dissatisfaction among teachers and their tendencies to discard their teaching posts at the first opportunity<sup>6</sup>. Nothing is so important as putting new hearts into our primary school teachers.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

The major purpose of this study was primarily to study the factors which influence feelings of commitment to teaching among primary school teachers. The study sought to investigate the following:

- To investigate the job factors which might have led male and female teachers to choose teaching as a career.
- To study the factors which influence feelings of commitment to teaching among primary school teachers.
- To investigate the job factors which may contribute resignation among male and female teachers.

## 3. Research Questions

- How did male and female teachers identify factors leading them to choose teaching profession?
- How did the teachers identify the factors leading them to resigning or leaving teaching profession when grouped by the following variables:
  - Sex (male and female); and Designation (head teachers only).
- How did the teachers identify the factors influencing their feelings to commitment to teaching profession when grouped by the following variables: Sex (male and female); Designation (head teachers only).

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. The Study Design

The study was designed as an ex post facto research. An ex post facto research is defined as systematic empirical inquiry into which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulable. Inferences about relations among variables are made, without direct intervention, from concomitant variations of independent and dependent variables. What it means is that the investigator has to start with the observation of dependent variables and retrospectively study independent variables for their possible effects on the dependent variables.

### 4.2. The Study Variables

The independent variables of the study were: Gender (male and female); Age of the teacher; Academic qualifications of a teacher; Number of years in teaching and Locality of work (County).

The dependent variables were factors assumed to influence feelings of commitment to teaching among primary school teachers were: Fourteen job factors from Herzberg's two factor theory were studied. **Intrinsic job factors:** Recognition; Advancement; Growth Advancement; Responsibility; Work itself; Achievement. **The extrinsic job factors:** Salary; Job status; Supplemental benefits; Organization and Administration policy; Fair and Competent supervisors; Rapport among teachers; Job Security and Working conditions.

### 4.3. Population and Sample

The population for this study was primary school teachers. Three provinces in Kenya participated in this study. One district from each province was chosen at random to participate in the study. Keiyo-Marakwet district was chosen from Rift Valley province; Kakamega district from Western province and Nyeri district from Central province. Ten primary schools from each district were selected to take part in this study. Three hundred and seventy two (372) teachers responded to the questionnaires. Data collected was analysed using frequency counts and percentages.

## 5. Findings

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

Ranking of Reasons by Male Teachers		Frequency of Responses	Percent of Responses
1.	No alternative	88	41.7
2.	Job close to home	48	22.8
3.	To earn a living	46	21.8
4.	Chance for further education	45	21.3
5.	Influence to parents	44	20.9
6.	To build the nation	43	20.4
7.	A noble profession	40	19.0
8.	Love to work with children	38	18.0
9.	Possibility of personal and profession growth on the job	38	18.0
10.	Influence of friends and teachers	34	16.1
11.	To promote education in our country	32	15.2
12.	Favourite career	32	15.2
13.	Interesting and challenging work	28	13.3
14.	Teaching as a stepping stone to other jobs	22	10.4
15.	To serve community	22	10.4
16.	Many holidays	20	9.5
17.	To be well informed all the time	16	7.6
18.	Good pay	16	7.6
19.	Enough job security	15	7.1
20.	Support parents	14	6.6
21.	No idea of other jobs	14	6.6
22.	Good terms of service	12	5.7
23.	To eradicate illiteracy	10	4.7
24.	Easily available job	9	4.3
25.	To work in the rural areas	8	3.8
26.	A simple job	7	3.2
27.	Regular salary	2	1.0
28.	To avoid frustrations	1	0.5

*Table 1: Male Teachers' Reasons for Choosing Teaching Profession (N=211)*

Ranking of Reasons by Female Teachers		Frequency of Responses	Percent of Responses
1.	Love for children and to work with them.	76	47.2
2.	There was no alternative	72	44.2
3.	Interesting and challenging work.	68	42.2
4.	Favourite career.	68	42.2
5.	To build the nation.	66	41.0
6.	To earn a living.	65	40.4
7.	Chance of advancement	60	37.3
8.	Job security	57	35.4
9.	Good and adequate pay	52	32.3
10.	Influence from parents and friends	48	29.8
11.	Good holidays for a mother	48	29.8
12.	Support family	42	26.1
13.	A suitable job for a woman	42	26.1
14.	Sense of responsibility in one's work	31	19.3
15.	Possibility of personal and professional growth on the job	28	17.4
16.	Good working conditions	24	14.9
17.	To work anywhere in the country	21	13.0
18.	Influence of teachers	18	11.2
19.	Job close to home	18	11.2
20.	Continuous learning	15	9.3
21.	To hope own children	12	7.5
22.	Sense of achievement	12	7.5
23.	Easy job to get	8	5.0
24.	Not informed of other careers	7	4.4
25.	To keep oneself busy	5	3.1
26.	A job in the rural areas	3	1.9
27.	Recognition	1	0.6

Table 2: Female teachers' Reasons for Choosing Teaching profession (N=161)

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 of 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 sample would ideally prefer a career other than teaching. However, comparing teachers by gender, female teachers showed more positive attitude towards choice of teaching than males.

## 5.2. Findings Pertaining to job factors which influenced Teachers for opting to resign or leave teaching profession

Ranking of Reasons by Female Teachers		Frequency of Responses	Percent of Responses
1.	Inadequate pay	72	44.7
2.	Too much work	48	29.8
3.	Lack of promotions	46	28.6
4.	Poor administration policies	34	21.1
5.	No house allowance for married women	34	21.1
6.	Terms and conditions of service	32	19.9
7.	To avoid harassment	30	18.6
8.	No chance for advancement	30	18.6
9.	Uncooperative parents	26	16.2
10.	Frustrations	24	14.9
11.	Not enough job security	20	12.4
12.	No recognition of work performed	18	11.2
13.	Unfair transfers	16	9.9
14.	External interference	8	5.0
15.	Nepotism (Tribalism)	6	3.7
16.	Unfriendly surroundings	6	3.7
17.	Less social amenities	5	3.1
18.	Retirement	5	3.1
19.	Self employ	4	2.5
20.	Travelling allowance arrangements	3	1.9
21.	Returning home	1	0.6
22.	Never to be called a teacher again	1	0.6
23.	Illness	1	0.6
24.	Job has no status	1	0.6

Table 3: Female Teachers' Response to reasons for Wanting to leave Teaching (N=161)

Ranking of Reasons by Male Teachers		Frequency of Responses	Percent of Responses
1.	Inadequate pay	104	49.3
2.	Lack of promotions	55	26.1
3.	To avoid harassment	49	23.2
4.	Terms and conditions of service	47	22.3
5.	Poor administration policies	46	21.8
6.	Too much work	46	21.8
7.	No recognition of work performed	44	20.9
8.	Found better job	40	19.0
9.	Frustrations	36	17.1
10.	No chance for advancement	30	14.2
11.	Uncooperative parents	26	12.3
12.	Retirement	22	10.4
13.	External interference	22	10.4
14.	Unfair transfers	20	9.5
15.	Transportation problems	18	8.5
16.	No fringe benefits	16	7.6
17.	Nepotism (Tribalism)	14	6.6
18.	Unnecessary blame	8	3.8
19.	Not enough job security	8	3.8
20.	Illness	8	3.8
21.	Unfriendly surrounding	6	2.8
22.	Travelling allowance arrangements	6	2.8
23.	Class size (50 children)	3	1.4
24.	Never to be called a teacher again	3	1.4
25.	Return home	3	1.4
26.	Lack of specialization	2	1.0
27.	Further education	2	1.0

Table 4: Male Teachers' reasons for wanting to leave the Teaching profession (N=211)

The most important five job factors which influenced female teacher for opting to resign or want to leave teaching were ranked in this order: (1) Inadequate pay; (2) Toomuch work; (3) Lack of promotions; (4) Poor administration policies; and (5) No house allowance for married women. 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 factors 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.

### 5.3. Findings pertaining to Job factors which influenced Teachers to their Commitment to Teaching

Ranking of Reasons by Male Teachers		Frequency of Responses	Percent of Responses
1.	Lack of alternatives	98	46.5
2.	Earn daily bread	92	43.6
3.	Chance to continue learning	62	29.4
4.	Build the nation	46	21.8
5.	Better future	44	20.9
6.	Job close to home	42	19.9
7.	Love for job	38	18.0
8.	Job security	36	17.1
9.	Adequate pay	32	15.2
10.	Chance for advancement and achievement	30	14.2
11.	Good working conditions	26	12.3
12.	Love for children	26	12.3
13.	Teaching is a noble job	18	8.5
14.	Social relations	18	8.5
15.	Job is interesting	16	7.6
16.	Sense of responsibility	14	6.6
17.	Challenging job	12	5.7
18.	Friendly administration	10	4.7
19.	Job is pensionable	10	4.7
20.	Old age	8	3.8
21.	Hope for conditions to improve	6	2.8
22.	Chance to reach in any part of country	6	2.8
23.	Extra-curricular activities	4	1.9
24.	Freedom to do own things	2	1.0
25.	Student achievement	2	1.0
26.	Chance for tribal integration	2	1.0
27.	Good surroundings	1	0.5
28.	Support family	1	0.5
29.	Status on the job	1	0.5

Table 5: Male Teachers' Response to Factors Influencing Feelings of Commitment towards Teaching profession.

Ranking of Reasons by Female Teachers		Frequency of Responses	Percent of Responses
1.	Earn daily bread	46	28.6
2.	Job is interesting	42	26.1
3.	Lack of alternatives	42	26.1
4.	Love for job	40	24.8
5.	Build the nation	38	23.6
6.	Chance for advancement and achievement	38	23.6
7.	Job close to home	36	22.4
8.	Good working conditions	33	20.5
9.	Adequate pay	32	19.9
10.	Job security	28	17.4
11.	Chance to continue learning	25	15.5
12.	Love for children	25	15.5
13.	Challenging job	20	12.4
14.	Friendly administrators	16	9.9
15.	Chance to teach in any part of the country	10	6.2
16.	Sense of responsibility	9	5.6
17.	Teaching is a noble job	8	5.0
18.	Social relations	8	5.0
19.	Special interest	5	3.1
20.	Good surroundings	4	2.5
21.	Chancel for tribal integration	3	1.9
22.	Student achievement	3	1.9
23.	Freedom to do own thing	2	1.2
24.	Support family	2	1.2
25.	Service to God	1	0.6

Table 6: Female Teachers' Response to Factors Influencing Feelings of Commitment towards Teaching Profession (N=61)

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 to 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 to home.

These finding provide 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' indicate 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 gender, 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 bearing on attitude towards the job.

## 6. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

- The findings of this study revealed that almost half of the teachers in the sample would have preferred ideally a career other than teaching. Therefore, this finding implies that primary school teaching was the choice of people who feel or who may have failed to secure other job opportunities. Further, the findings on reasons for a choice in teaching career, have shown that teaching profession was an ideal career for female teachers, while male teachers used teaching as a stepping stone to more green pastures. This implication is inferred from the findings on reasons given for the choice of teaching career and job factors which would influence the departure of teachers from teaching profession. The job factors of: 'Love for children and to work with them'; 'Interesting and challenging work and Favourite career' ranked first, third and fourth, respectively among female teachers. Among male teachers, the job factors of: Lack of alternative, To earn a living, and chance for further education ranked first, third and fourth respectively.
- On the basis of these findings and implications drawn, the researcher would recommend more job opportunities in teaching career be made available to those girls who aspire to enter teacher colleges. To attract and retain male teachers in teaching profession, conditions and terms of service needs to be reviewed frequently.
- The study shows that most teachers would want to resign or leave teaching profession on economic grounds. The job factor of 'Inadequate pay' was cited especially by male teacher as the job factors which would influence their departure from teaching. Therefore, this finding implies that if this question of adequate pay is not seriously addressed the teaching career or profession may risk continued loss of manpower that is difficult to replace within a short time.

- Therefore, the Educational Planners should consider reviewing teachers' salaries structures with intent to increasing them from time to time.
- The finding and conclusions of this study have shown that teachers are not satisfied with promotion opportunities that are available and the methods used in promoting teachers. The job factors of 'Lack of promotion opportunities' and 'poor promotion methods by merit' ranked second and fifth among the make teachers on job factors which would influence them for opting to resign or leave teaching career. This finding implies that lack of clear promotional prospects in teaching profession may lead to frustrations amongst teachers which might result in seeking employment outside the teaching service as soon as opportunity arises. Based on this conclusion and implication, the researcher suggests that:
- There is need to review the policies governing the methods of promotion of primary school teachers. Supporting this recommendation, Karugu<sup>7</sup> conducted a research study on primary school teachers' views on promotion and recommended that there was need to make promotion procedure open and remove the cloak of secrecy which currently surrounds it.
- 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. The job factor of 'poor working conditions and terms of service' ranked fifth for both male and female teachers on job factors which influence teachers to non-commitment to teaching. Although good teaching and pleasant school atmosphere cannot in any way be equated with the type of facilities available, nevertheless facilities should meet some basic standards for effective teaching and learning to take place. This finding seems to suggest that teaching profession will most likely continue losing qualified and committed teachers but also fail to recruit or attract younger and more diverse manpower for education. Therefore, the researcher recommends that:
- There ought to be strong parental and community support for the schools through the Parents Teachers Association (P.T.A) and School Committees. The two bodies should ensure that; schools are well equipped; there are adequate classrooms and sufficient permanent houses for teachers.
- The findings of this study have shown that a large proportion of the teachers in the sample would continue being committed to teaching because of three major factors: These factors are: Lack of alternatives; Chance to continue learning and Job being close home. These finding seem to suggest that primary school teachers are more likely to resign or leave teaching career as soon as a more lucrative job opportunity arises. Further, the findings imply that primary school teachers hope to advance themselves academically so that they may be able to secure jobs in other fields. Hence, the following suggestions have been recommended.
  - More effort should be made to provide teachers with the chance to grow in their job through making use of their knowledge and experience and providing them with enriching experiences, seminars and advancement courses. Teachers should not be allowed to stagnate or begin to look elsewhere for promotion and greener pastures but could be encouraged to develop within the profession. If this is not done we risk stagnating our education system.
  - Teachers should be posted to their home districts immediately after training. Within the district, teachers should be given the preference of teaching in the primary school closest to their homes. If this policy is implemented, it will not only minimize the problem of shortage of teachers' houses but also increase human relations among parents and teachers.
  - Teachers identified the job factor of 'Lack of alternatives' as one of the major factors that would make them keep their jobs. Since this would be contradictory with teachers' identifications of the national need to 'Build the Nation', this researcher therefore recommends to the educational planners and decision-makers to evolve ways and means of retaining talented teachers and making education career more attractive by providing both intrinsic and extrinsic job factors as supported by literature cited and findings of this study.
- The findings and conclusions of this study have demonstrated that intrinsic and extrinsic job factors are equally important as motivators. Hence it is imperative for educational administrators to equally consider both of these job factors for maintenance or retention and commitment of the teachers.

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