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Level of Teacher Job Commitment among Public Secondary School Teachers in Konoin Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract:

For the curriculum to be implemented effectively, commitment of a teacher is obligatory. This is because; a committed teacher shows a low turnover intention, has high zeal, takes extra tasks and stays beyond working hours aiding students. This study was conducted to determine level of teacher job commitment among public secondary school teachers in Konoin sub-county, Kenya. This was in light of the concern that low teacher commitment was witnessed among secondary school teachers in Konoin sub-county. The main question that was answered by the study was; what is the level of teacher job commitment in secondary schools in Konoin sub-county? The study used a causal-comparative design while data was collected using questionnaires for teachers and interview schedule for principals. The study targeted 27 public secondary schools and 220 teachers in Konoin sub-county. 14 schools were randomly selected and principals from the sampled schools were automatic participants, 142 teachers were also selected randomly. Data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, and means. The study established that teacher commitment level was low with the majority of teachers (59.1%) indicating that they were never proud to be teachers and would quit teaching given a job with better terms in another profession. The study concludes that the poor work environment harms job commitment among public secondary school teachers. The study recommends the government to always endeavor to provide better terms for teaching profession in order to motivate teachers, raise their commitment to job, and retain them in the profession.

Keywords: Curriculum, turnover rate, commitment, teachers

1. Introduction

Teacher commitment is the aspiration to teach and stay in teaching. It is the teacher's continuous personal efforts rendered to the students, organization and the surrounding society regardless of the working conditions being experienced by the said teacher. This commitment is of critical significance to the triumph of an organization as it influences the key employee associated variables like low productivity, employee turnover, absenteeism, low morale, and other negative tendencies. To deliver quality education, teachers are indispensable players.

Even though various countries of the world give emphasis to sound educational policy formulation, curriculum implementation and evaluation, research show that less focus has been made to enhance teacher commitment Rahmatullah (2016). Emphasis has been put on policy framework to deal with shortages of teachers but zilch much is said concerning ways of addressing teacher commitment. This may mean that the teacher's working environment and desires in the developing countries have been disregarded. This therefore, may challenge the realization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The implication of this therefore, is that diminutive attention has been given to enhancing commitment of teachers so as to improve their efficiency in performance. Quality delivery of curriculum and evaluation practices has taken much attention as shown by the following studies.

Kristiansen, Trabjerg, and Reith (2015) did a study in Denmark to predict teacher commitment among special education teachers. They captured the school work environment conditions and investigated how motivational factors impacted on their commitment. They emphasized on how the promotion was done in schools and the leadership styles in the school. The research design employed by the study was descriptive design and the population consisted of 394 teachers who were sampled using stratified sampling to obtain a sample size of 140 participants. The finding of the study was that most of special education teachers were not being promoted on a fairground. School leadership was not giving constructive criticism but always threatening teachers. The study discovered that, commitment of teachers to teaching and to students was low because of low morale they have, and dissatisfaction with the school leadership. Their low commitment was reflected by regular absenteeism, lack of cooperation in the school, low syllabus coverage and their

intention to quit teaching. The study recommended equal treatment of teachers and the improvement of leadership styles. The study by Kristian was done in Denmark with the respondents being special education teachers while the current researcher was done in Kenya and the study targets, general education teachers.

A study was done by Hussein, W/Tegegn, and Teshome (2016) to investigate teacher job commitment to their learner, their teaching and their community in eastern Ethiopia. A mixed-method research design specifically concurrent embedded quantitative and qualitative methods was used. The sampled size in the study was 14 secondary schools and the respondents were 170. Study found low teacher commitment to learners, community and teaching because of low payment to teachers, lack of respect, and poor attitude to the teaching career, and fewer incentives. It, consequently recommended policymakers to work in partnership with the community to come up with incentive mechanisms, for example availing subsidized housing, means of transport and reducing taxations so to better teachers' income and raise motivation and hence teacher job commitment. Whereas study by Hussein, Tegegn and Teshome, was mixed-method research, the current researcher did quantitative research where it employed *expo facto* research design and used questionnaires in data collection.

Another study was conducted by Mkumbo (2012), on teacher attachment to, and practice of, the teaching profession among Tanzanian teachers. The study aimed at examining commitment of teachers to the teaching in six regions in Tanzania. Focus group discussion was used to collect data where 24 groups participated and five to nine participants were from each group. The study found out a devastatingly low teacher job commitment. The study further stated that many teachers did not willingly join the teaching profession but they were forced by the eagerness to find employment and they also lacked requisite qualification to join other careers of their choices. The study recommended government to better teachers' working environment for instance by providing houses facilities and social welfare services. The study by Mkumbo, differ from the current study because Mkumbo collected data using a focus group discussion which is qualitative research whilst the current researcher did a quantitative study in Kenya using questionnaires to collect data.

Another study was done by Mwesiga and Okendo (2018), to investigate the degree of teacher commitment in secondary schools in Kagera, Tanzania. The study applied a convergent parallel research design using a population of 32 principals and 320 secondary school teachers. The sample size of 250 respondents: 20 principals and 230 teachers were sampled using probability and non-probability sampling techniques. The study used questionnaires, document analysis, and interview guide to collect data. The findings indicated high level of commitment when it comes to teachers observing professional responsibilities of teaching. Their study also noted that teacher job commitment was restricted by many challenges, for example, insufficient training, incompetent head of school, lack of motivation and poor work environment. The study recommended school principals to handle issues to deal with leadership and teacher commitment effectively. While Mwesiga and Okendo did a mixed-method study employing convergent parallel design, the current researcher differ with them since present study was quantitative study where *expos facto* design and simple random sampling were used. Secondly, Mwesiga and Okendo study was done in the Kager region in Tanzania whilst the present study was done in Konoin sub-county Kenya.

In Kenya, another study was done by Mazaki (2017), to examine the effect that the working environment has on teachers' morale among primary school teachers in Kimumu ward. The study employed correlation research design, sample of 16 primary schools and 108 respondents participated in the study. Findings of the study showed that primary schools in Kimumu ward had poor physical school conditions where some classrooms were leaking and not well ventilated. The study further stated that primary school teachers especially those under BOM were complaining about the delays in the payment of their salaries. Teachers were dissatisfied with infrastructural facilities in various schools and the general environment where offices were not well-equipped. The study established that the commitment and morale of teacher to teach in the ward was low, teachers did not want to be associated with the schools they were teaching in and their attitude toward school was negative because they were not satisfied. The study, therefore, recommended that school stakeholders to partner with the community to improve the environment of the schools in the ward. Head-teachers were also encouraged to always pay teachers on time to raise their morale for teaching. Whereas Mazaki's study was co relational and was done in primary schools in Kimumu, the current researcher did quantitative research in secondary schools in Konoin sub-county using *expos facto* design.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The aspect of teacher commitment is very crucial in influencing the processes of teaching and learning. This is because, a committed teacher is willing to aid students during their extra time, utilize their class time profitably, and cooperates with parents for the betterment of the students' lives. Professionally, committed teachers are expected to remain dedicated and loyal to the teaching profession until retirement regardless of the challenges they may experience. In Konoin sub-county, it is not as per the expectation, teachers are reported to be leaving teaching for other professions, others are resigning from teaching for private businesses while others applying for early retirement. Those still in teaching, are displaying withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism, lateness reporting to work, and un-cooperation (Kimutai & Marindany, 2016).

Understanding various factors that can make a teacher stay in the teaching profession until retirement is of huge interest to policymakers and educators given global high teacher attrition rates, and shortages especially in science subjects (Ingersoll & Stuckey, 2014). In the USA, 40 to 50 percent of teachers employed, exhibit low commitment and later exit teaching within five years (Loeb, Darling-Hammond & Luczak, 2015). A study done in Kenya by Maxwell, (2015) revealed that 35% of teachers are lost annually due to various reasons ranging from resignation, assignment of non-

teaching job in other ministries and others quitting to join private sectors. The decline in teacher dedication to work, productivity and increased turnover rate in the Konoin sub-county is a matter of great public concern (Kimutai & Marindany, 2016).

A growing area of research has examined teachers' commitment to teaching with an aim of understanding various reasons influencing them to choose and persist in teaching (Kitching, Morgan & Leary, 2014). A study conducted in Canada revealed that Workload, physical environment, duties, and policies contribute to special education teachers feeling increased stress, decreased job satisfaction, and decreased commitment (Billingsley, 2016). Furthermore, research done by Rothstein (2015), concluded that low teacher commitment to the job was a result of fewer incentives, low attitude towards teaching, low respect, and low salary. A study was done by Gameda, Fekede, and Tynjala,(2015) discovered that poor remuneration and failing to recognize and commend work well done, de-motivate teachers and make them less dedicated. The majority of 80% of the teachers from the Mwatate sub-county pointed out that, teachers increase their attachment to school activities when they were involved in decision making (Joram 2018). There lacks any documented data establishing the influence of the work environment on teacher commitment in public secondary schools. This study, therefore, seeks to fill that gap by examining the level of teacher job commitment among public secondary school teachers in the Konoin sub-county, intending to create an enabling environment for teachers.

2. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Konoin Sub-County in Bomet County, Kenya. The design used by the study was a causal-comparative design. The study targeted teachers and principals from 27 public secondary schools in Konoin Sub County. Therefore, the study's population comprises of 220 public secondary school teachers and 27 principals from Konoin Sub County. Principals were targeted in this research since they were responsible for the management of the school environment. The total target population was 247 participants.

Simple random sampling was used to randomly select 14 public secondary schools in the sub-county. Random sampling was chosen for its select sample without bias and also ensures every subject (school) has an equal and independent chance of being sampled.

In determining teachers' sample size, the Slovin's formula was adopted. According to the formula, precision $p = 0.5$ given a 95% confidence level, the sample size is therefore calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

N = target population size

n = sample size

e = precision level (margin error of study set at $\pm 5\%$).

When the formula is used for the study's population, Then $N=220$ with $\pm 5\%$ margin error. Where a 95% confidence level is assumed and $p = 0.5$, then the sample size is obtained as:

$$n = \frac{220}{1 + 220(0.05^2)} = 141.9$$

Since items for selection are human beings (teachers), then, whole numbers must be assumed, a sample size of 142 teachers was arrived at after rounding off 141.9 to 142.

A sum of 14 public secondary schools was sampled to be used in the study. The sample size selected from each school therefore, was calculated using Krecji and Morgan's (1970) formula which follows:

$$s = \frac{XS}{P}$$

s = is the sample size of teachers from every selected school

X = is the population size of teachers in a school

S = is the total sample size for the study

P = is the total population size of all the public secondary schools

When the sampled size per school has been determined, the required number of teachers in that school was then selected randomly. Sampling randomly gives every teacher in the school an equal chance of being included in the sample. The sample of principals consisted of all principals from the selected public secondary schools. This means that each principal whose school participated in the study was by default a respondent too. This, therefore, makes a total of 14 principals.

Interview schedules for principals and questionnaires for teachers were used to collect data. After the collection and presentation of all the data, coding was then done as per the research questions guiding the study. The data was then entered into a computer for analysis. The analysis of the data was quantitatively where descriptive as well as inferential statistics were used. Descriptive statistics used were; standard deviation, mean, percentages, and frequencies. Triangulation of data (from teachers and principals) was done to validate the findings.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Level of Teacher' Job Commitment

The study investigated the level of teacher job commitment in Konoin sub-county. To accomplish this, participants were asked to state whether they were proud to be teachers. They were further asked to state if they were ready or not to quit the teaching profession given a better paying job in another profession. The results are presented in sub-sections below:

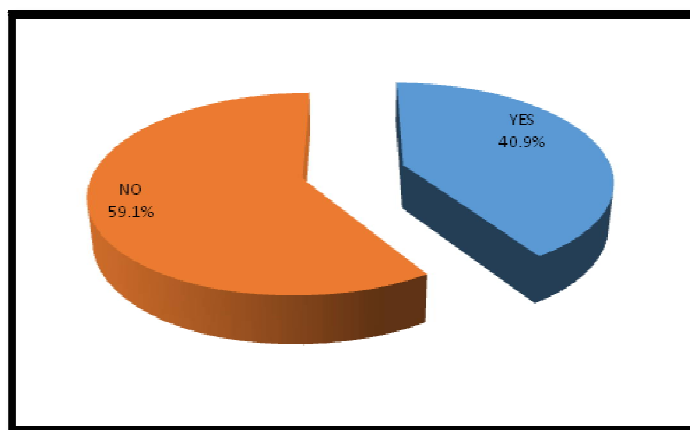


Figure 1: Teachers' Responses to 'Are You Proud of Being a Teacher?'

The study found as shown in figure 1 that 56(40.9%) of the respondents were very proud to be teachers. While 81(59.1%) of the respondents were never proud to be teachers.

When respondents were asked if they would quit teaching given a job with better terms in other professions, the responses were as follow:

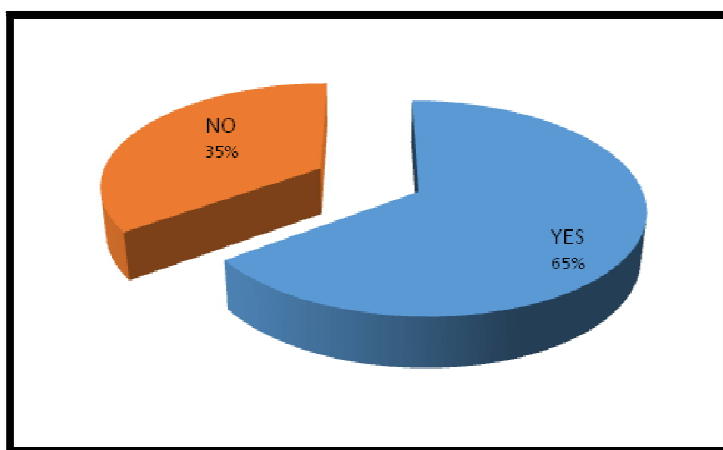


Figure 2: Teachers' Responses to 'Will You Quit Teaching Given a Job with Better Terms in Other Professions?'

The results indicated that 89(65%) of the teachers were ready to quit teaching given a job with better terms in other professions. While 48(35%) of the teachers were never ready to quit teaching no matter better payment.

Results indicated that only 40.9% of the teachers were proud to be teachers and only 35% were never ready to quit teaching even when given a job with better terms in other professions. This percentage of the proud teacher not ready to quit teaching is minimal and below average. This, therefore, may imply that the majority of the teachers were not happy with teaching career and they were in the profession since they didn't meet the qualification for other professions of their first choice or because they were compelled by the ease to get a job as indicated by (Mwesiga & Okendo, 2018).

The study additionally sought the opinion of participants on the commitment level of teacher to the job. Participants were asked to indicate their response on a scale of 1 to 5, which ranges from 'Very Untrue', 'Untrue', 'Somewhat true', 'and True' up to 'Very true'. Results were as shown below:

		VUT	UT	SWT	T	VT	\bar{X}	SD
I have a proper pride in my school.	Freq	9	21	71	20	16	3.09	1.014
	%	6.6	15.3	51.8	14.6	11.7		
I will be so happy to remain a teacher for the rest of my career.	Freq	12	38	64	16	7	2.77	0.949
	%	8.8	27.7	46.7	11.7	5.1		
I like discussing the teaching profession positively when with people in other careers	Freq	23	29	67	13	5	2.62	0.994
	%	16.8	21.2	48.9	9.5	3.6		
I am afraid of exiting my job without having another job lined up.	Freq	6	19	43	49	20	3.42	1.041
	%	4.4	13.9	31.4	35.8	14.6		
There are very few options to consider quitting teaching	Freq	9	20	50	44	14	3.25	1.042
	%	6.6	14.6	36.5	32.1	10.2		
I embrace the value of being loyal to on career (teaching).	Freq	12	41	53	21	10	2.82	1.035
	%	8.8	29.9	38.7	15.3	7.3		
I always desire to teach without prioritizing economics needs.	Freq	50	42	31	10	4	2.09	1.070
	%	36.5	30.7	22.6	7.3	2.9		
I feel like those problems in the teaching profession are my own.	Freq	19	52	40	20	6	2.58	1.041
	%	13.9	38.0	29.2	14.6	4.4		
I don't regret the choice of being a teacher in my life.	Freq	26	60	34	13	4	2.34	0.987
	%	19.0	43.8	24.8	9.5	2.9		
I am not well informed about what is going on in the school	Freq	3	10	26	53	45	3.93	1.005
	%	2.2	7.3	19.0	38.7	32.8		

Table 1: Level of Teacher Job Commitment

Results indicated that the majority of the respondents were afraid to quit the job without having another lined up (\bar{X} = 3.42, SD= 1.041), teachers have few options for them to leave teaching (\bar{X} = 3.25, SD= 1.042). The implication of this then may be, many teachers were in the teaching profession because they had no other options and because of the economic needs. This agrees with the findings that only 10.2% of respondents had a desire to continue teaching without economic needs (\bar{X} = 2.09, SD= 1.070). As explained by Theory of Work Adjustment (Dawes and Lofquist, 1984), teachers need compensation for the work performed and for them to apply their knowledge and skills to the task required to perform school must meet their needs.

Responses indicated that majority of teachers were not well informed on what is happening in the school. This may indicate that many teachers were not concerned of other activities in school or were not cooperating with their school administration, only 16.8% of the respondent were glad to spend the rest of career as teachers (\bar{X} = 2.77, SD= 0.49), this could be because many did not willingly joined the teaching profession but were forced by eagerness to find the employment and lack of the requisite qualification to join other careers as explained by Mkumbo (2012). In agreement with findings of Mazikas' (2017) study, many discussed teachings negatively (\bar{X} = 2.62, SD= 0.994), and few teachers felt that teaching problems were their own (\bar{X} = 2.58, SD= 1.041), while only 12.4% of the respondents found the decision of being a teacher as the best decision in their lives.

Based on the above responses and results' analysis, it is clear that the many teachers were not dedicated to their job. This agreed with Hussein, W/Tegegn, and Teshome (2016) findings, which reported low teacher commitment to the job as contributed by unfavorable school working environment and the low status accorded to the teaching profession by the government and the society.

Finally, the researcher sought the opinion of the principals on the extent to which teachers were committed to the job in their schools. The responses of principals provided below on the job commitment aspects were rated on a scale ranging from 1 to 5 starting with 'Very Untrue', 'Untrue', 'Somewhat true', and True 'up to' Very true'.

		VUT	UT	SWT	T	VT	\bar{X}	SD
Teachers always cover their syllabus on time.	Freq	1	2	7	4	0	3.00	0.877
%		7.1	14.3	50	28.6	0		
Teachers rarely absent themselves from school unless with genuine reason.	Freq	0	3	5	4	2	3.36	1.008
%		0	21.4	35.7	28.6	14.3		
Teachers are always punctual to attend lessons, staff meetings and even assemblies	Freq	2	5	4	3	0	2.57	1.016
%		14.3	35.7	28.6	21.4	0		
Teachers are proud (happy) of what they are doing	Freq	2	4	5	2	1	2.71	1.139
%		14.3	28.6	35.7	14.3	7.1		
Teachers in my school prepare their schemes of work on time	Freq	3	3	5	2	0	2.43	1.016
%		21.4	28.6	35.7	14.3	0		

Table 2: 'Principal Responses on Level of Teacher Job Commitment'

The responses from principals indicated that syllabus coverage by teachers and scheme of work preparation were fair, absenteeism by teachers was low (\bar{X} = 3.36, SD= 1.008). As indicated by Mwesiga and Okendo (2018), teachers are highly committed when it comes to observing professional rules and responsibilities of teaching. The interpretation of this can be that, teachers follow professional rules due to fear of punishment. On the other hand, results reported low punctuality to attending classes, assemblies and staff meetings (\bar{X} = 2.57, SD= 1.016), and finally low pride of what they do in school (\bar{X} = 2.71, SD= 1.139).

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

From the results in the study, it was concluded that teachers in the sub-county had low job commitment levels. The majority of the teachers were not proud of their profession and their schools. Many of the teachers were not happy with teaching career and they were in the profession since they didn't meet the qualification for other professions of their first choice and some were compelled by the ease to get a job. Additionally, only a few of them valued remaining loyal to the profession and few teachers enjoyed discussing teaching in a positive way with people outside it. Based on the results of the research questions, the government should always endeavor to provide better terms for teaching profession in order to motivate teachers, raise their commitment to job, and retain them in the profession. Teachers need to be provided with good working conditions since this encourages them to stay on the job and be committed to their duties. The facilitative physical working environment should be provided for teachers as well as appropriate and equity reward system to attract qualified teachers. This will make them be psychologically attached to the institutions, remain on the job and be loyal to the institution. This may increase productivity as a result of high commitment. Finally, the work environment in schools should be improved and always strives to make it conducive since it was established that work environment affects the level of teacher job commitment.

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