



The Influence of Teacher-Related Factors on Job Satisfaction among Primary School Teachers in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Teaching profession has been hit by a wave of a high teacher turnover resulting in shortage of teachers and high workload due to high pupil enrolment as a result to the introduction of Free Primary Education in Kenya. The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of teacher-related factors on job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Nandi County, Kenya. The objective of this study was to investigate the effects of teacher-related factors on job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Kenya. This study adopted an explanatory survey design based on the qualitative method. The study targeted all primary school teachers in Nandi North Sub-County, Nandi County, Kenya. The researcher used stratified and simple random sampling to select respondents (n = 321). The main data collection instrument was the focus group discussion for the teachers. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and reported in narrations and quotations. Most of the respondents in the discussion group said that they enjoyed teaching as a profession because they felt good when they model young children. The teachers attributed low job satisfaction to lack of career growth. It was noted that teachers stagnated in one job group for longer than anticipated. The teachers also reported that they were overworked due to teacher shortage in their schools. For educators, this study underlines the importance of individual motivation as a source of individual job satisfaction.

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1.0 Introduction

Job satisfaction is positive orientation of an individual towards the work role which he/she is presently occupying and the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating one's values. It is basically an individual matter and refers to what one expects from his or her job and when there is mismatch between what is expected and what is received then dissatisfaction occurs. Due to high job demands there is significant impact of stress on teachers' mental and physical health, which in turn leads to job strains. According to Woolfolk and Burke (2005) there are varieties of factors that can influence a person's level of job satisfaction like pay, promotion system, working conditions, leadership, social relationships and the job itself. Low job satisfaction can lead to increased job mobility and more frequent absenteeism, which may reduce the efficiency of teaching amongst primary school teachers (Greenberg & Baron, 1995).

According to Panda and Mohanty (2003) the teacher is the pivot of any education system. Teachers who are satisfied with their work typically display higher levels of motivated behavior and performance as well as lower levels of stress, anxiety, and job satisfaction (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Caprara, Barbaranelli, Steca, & Malone, 2006; Greenglass & Burke, 2003). The satisfaction that teachers gain from their work may be experienced individually, but teaching is not practiced in a social or cultural vacuum. Job satisfaction and motivation are influenced by teachers' interactions with

colleagues and students, but these two factors may also be influenced by cultural values (Huang & Van de Vliert, 2004). It has been noted by the researcher that teachers whose schools perform better academically are motivated to teach and thus display high levels of job satisfaction.

In addition, a study in Bahrain by Al-Khalefa (1999) observed work conditions, salaries and allowances, status of physical education, supervision, school facilities, workload and career development to be the major causes of stress for physical education teachers. Teachers who become burned out may be less sympathetic toward students, may have a lower tolerance for frustration in the classroom, may plan for their classes less often or less carefully, may fantasize or actually plan on leaving the profession, may feel frequent emotional or physical exhaustion, may feel anxious, irritable, depressed, and in general, may feel less committed and dedicated to their work (Farber & Miller, 1981). Kenyan primary school teachers usually go on strike demanding better pay implying that most of them are not satisfied with their work and remuneration. This can be shown by the higher number of teachers who have opted for employment in the newly devolved county governments.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Teaching profession in Kenya has lately been hit by a wave of high teacher turnover and attrition resulting to shortage of teachers in primary schools and high workload due to high pupil enrolment as a result of the introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE). Distress has been linked to

dissatisfaction with job and to negative affective and professional consequences. Factors like excessive work, lack of administrative and parental support, staff-student relationship, disciplinary problems, lack of students' interest, overcrowded classrooms and public criticism of teachers and their work may cause teacher stress. Teacher job satisfaction can have economic and personal implications as it may lead to stress-related employee absenteeism, burnout and a negative impact on pupil outcomes. In Kenyan public primary schools, there is an existence of high teacher turnover and attrition with most teachers looking for other well-paying jobs like being employed under the new County Governments. However, this study therefore attempted to establish the influence of selected teacher-related factors on job satisfaction. Further, there is no published systematic study on why most teachers want to quit teaching for other jobs which this study investigated.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to establish the influence of selected teacher related factors on job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Nandi County, Kenya.

1.3 Research questions

The study was guided by the following research question:

1. What is the effect of the selected teacher-related factors on job satisfaction among primary school teachers in Nandi County, Kenya?

2.0 Methodology

This study adopted an explanatory survey research design. This qualitative study was designed to investigate the influence of teacher-related factor on job satisfaction. Focus group discussions was use to explore the in-depth feelings of the teachers towards the teaching profession. The researcher carried out focus group discussion with three groups comprising of eight teachers each. The researcher made sure the groups were fairly represented by using random sampling. Focus group discussion is a form of group interview where a researcher or a moderator facilitates a discussion with a small group of people on a specific topic (Morgan, 1988). It combines both elements of individual interviews and participant observation (Krueger & Casey, 2000) and involves six to eight people who have something in common.

2.1 Study area and participants

This study was conducted in public primary schools in Nandi North Sub-County, Nandi County. The Sub-County has 152 public primary schools and it is among the five Sub-Counties forming Nandi County. The Sub-County borders Uasin-Gishu County to the North and East, Kakamega County to the West and Nandi Central Sub-County to the South. All primary school teachers in Nandi North Sub-County, Nandi County were targeted. The researcher used stratified random sampling to selected 312 teachers across the sub-county.

2.2 Data analysis

The qualitative data from focus group discussions was transcribed, thematically classified and arranged before it was reported in narrations and quotations. Constant comparison analyses were used to analyze data from the three focus group discussions.

3.0 Findings and Discussion

3.1 Opinion on Teaching Profession

The researcher carried out focus group discussion with three groups comprising of eight teachers each. Focus group discussion helped the researcher to understand how teachers

feel or think about the teaching profession. The discussion started first based on the general aspect of teaching as a profession.

Several themes emerged during the analysis and were organized based on the objectives of the study. The focus group discussion started by requesting the participants to talk about what makes teaching a good profession to work with and the some of the positive aspects of working as a teacher. Most of the respondents in the discussion group said that they enjoyed teaching as a profession because they feel good when they model young children especially those who teach in lower primary. This is captured by one of the participants who made the following statement:

Whenever you teach a new concept you feel good when they grasp it and always appreciate what they learn because they will always want to share with

I`others what they have learnt (Teacher, Zone 1)

The discussants in the focus groups were in agreement that as a teacher, you feel good when you make learners achieve their potential. When asked to give their opinion on the positives of teaching as a profession; one overriding theme emerged: Job security. The general feeling among the focus group discussion members was that teaching as a profession had job security. The respondents were in agreement that compared to other professions one was assured of the future of teaching as a career. They pointed out that teaching as a profession did not suffer from the uncertainties such as job cuts, retrenchments, and redundancy. Thus, the groups were of the opinion that the permanent and pensionable aspect of teaching was a big plus to the profession. One of the members in the focus group discussion asserted that:

Teaching as a profession is good in that there is a job security (Teacher, Zone 3)

For the negatives on the teaching profession most of the group members felt that teachers are handling too much workload. The member felt that on top of other administrative duties, most teachers are given a very heavy teaching load in classes that have that have high enrollment. One member of the focus group discussion was quoted pointing out that:

One teacher takes care of a classroom of over fifty learners which is not easy to manage (Teacher, Zone 2)

There is frustration for some teachers who are given transfers always from their homes yet the house allowances they received could not cater for the high rents in urban centers and cities sent. The respondents attributed the many industrial actions to these types of frustrations.

There was also the negative feeling that promotions are not by systematic and forthcoming. This is because most teachers stay in one grade for a long time; some even retire in the same grade of P1.

The respondents also felt that there is interference from stakeholders like the parents and church. Some teachers said that some parents may just accuse the teacher of underperformance when the child is not performing yet they don't bother to understand what the problem is.

In most primary day schools' absenteeism of learners is very high thus making the teacher demoralized.

You keep going forth and back in the syllabus (Teacher, Zone 1)

The group discussions felt that what makes them still hold onto the teaching profession is that they don't have another alternative especially the young ones but the elderly

said that they just have to be contended because they can no longer think of changing jobs.

The performance of learners makes the teachers satisfied with teaching. When the learners are disciplined and when the stakeholders appreciate your work during the annual general meetings. The focus group discussions suggested that for teaching profession to be good and be admired, enumeration should be improved. Teacher service commission should employ more teachers so as to reduce workload.

The teacher service commission and ministry should consult all stakeholders before the implementation of new concepts like the implementation of the laptops. If all stakeholders had been consulted it would have kicked off smoothly. Teachers should be given in service courses at least once every two years because knowledge is dynamic.

3.2 Gender and Job Satisfaction

The members of the focus group discussion and those interviewed were required to give their opinion on their level of satisfaction with teaching as a profession. The results were then analyzed based on the gender of the respondents. This was done to determine whether there was a discernable pattern in their responses based on their gender. The results indicated that the level of satisfaction was not significantly different based on the gender of the respondent. Thus, both genders were equally satisfied or not satisfied with the teaching profession. It was therefore concluded that gender has no influence on the satisfaction levels of teachers.

3.3 Age and Job Satisfaction

The selection of the participants in for the focus group discussion and those to be interviewed was done in such a way as to have diversity in the ages being reflected. This enabled the study to get views of the participants on job satisfaction from respondents of varied ages. In the focus group discussion, the respondents were required to discuss whether age had a bearing on the level of job satisfaction as teachers. The results indicated that the members who were older tended to be indicated that they are not satisfied with the teaching profession as compared to the younger teachers. The same was also the case for those who were interviewed. The conclusion drawn from these results is that as the teachers stayed more and more in the teaching profession, they tend to be less satisfied with the profession. The study therefore concluded that this could be attributed to some unmet expectations from the teaching profession.

3.4 Education Level and Job Satisfaction

The level of job satisfaction was investigated based on the level of education. The respondents or members of the focus group discussion and interviewees were chosen in such a manner to have variation in the level of academic/professional achievement attained.

The discussions indicated that those with lower qualifications were more satisfied with teaching as a profession as compared with those with higher qualifications. It was noted that the teachers who had the requisite minimum teaching qualifications of P1 as stipulated by the employer Teachers Service Commission were more satisfied than those who had higher qualification like undergraduate and postgraduate. The study therefore concluded that higher educational qualifications negatively affected level of job satisfaction in the teaching profession. The possible explanation of this could be that the teachers who have higher qualifications tend to view themselves as worthy of teaching at higher levels than in the primary schools.

4.0 Conclusion

From the discussion of the major findings of the study, it is concluded that:

It is concluded that gender has no influence on the satisfaction levels of teachers. The teachers attributed low job satisfaction to lack of career growth. It was noted that teachers stagnated in one job group for longer than anticipated. The older teachers tended to be indicated that they are not satisfied with the teaching profession as compared to the younger teachers.

The teachers also reported that they were overworked due to teacher shortage in their schools. This had the net effect of having the teachers having to work for long hours without a break and hence job dissatisfaction.

5.0 Recommendations

From the findings of this study, the researcher made the following recommendations.

It is recommended that the teachers employer, need to motivate the teachers to love teaching profession through improved schemes of work because teachers with higher educational qualifications had lower level of job satisfaction in the teaching profession.

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