

Motivational Strategies for Teacher Attraction and Retention in Nyeri County

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Abstract

Education is the key that unlocks opportunities in every human being's life as it creates a non-imitable resource. It is universally believed that the only inheritance one can leave for their offspring is education. This throws to the limelight, the main driver behind this crucial resource: the teacher. The background of the study highlights the declining trend in teacher retention and consequently a shrinking teacher workforce particularly in secondary schools. The objectives of the study were: to explain the background of teacher turnover, establish teacher turnover rate in a period of 1-10 years in Nyeri County, identify major push and pull factors in the teaching profession in Nyeri County and recommend strategies that can be used to retain teachers in Nyeri County. Literature reviewed brought to fore certain characteristics associated with recruitment. The study is based on Herzberg's two factor theory which distinguishes the hygiene factors as the most crucial in teacher motivation as opposed to motivational factors. The study findings highlight a myriad of pull and push factors impacting teacher turnover chief among them as teachers' pay, with other underlying factors like job

dissatisfaction, work environment, reward system, work overloads, resource provision, professional training and development and promotions. The study recommends that teacher motivational sessions be organized, teacher facilitation be effected and rewarding, recognition of teacher effort and formulation of attractive teacher retention policies by the government.

Key words: motivation, non-imitable resource, grievances, strategy, retention

Background

Teachers are a very crucial resource in an individual's life. SvenskaDagbladet (2010) considers teachers as the most important professionals more so in an economy that wants to achieve its vision. The 21st century has witnessed the world suffering a common problem denominator of a shrinking teaching workforce. It is a crisis that is demanding immediate attention in the midst of increased student's population and especially in Kenya where primary education is compulsory. The formation of counties has come with a variety of challenges, one of them being teacher imbalances in different counties. Teacher attraction is one thing in many regions but retention becomes a challenge. According to the U.S. department of education (U.S., 2000), teacher shortage is not caused by insufficiency of qualified individuals but by too many teachers leaving the teaching career. The same observation is made by Boser (2000) through a study carried out based on those students who acquired college degrees in 1992-1993. Approximately one out of five graduates joined the teaching profession in 1994-1995 but had left by 1996-1997.

Across many nations and particularly Africa, teacher shortage is common in almost all levels of learning and more so in primary and secondary schools. (Bland et al, 2004). It is every organization's preference to retain teachers once recruited but this does not always happen since according to Heller (2004), almost half of the teachers recruited leave their institutions for greener pastures in the first three to five years. Chief among the many reasons that can be attributed to the high turnover is pay and challenges associated with the teaching profession (Coggins&Deffenbaugh, 2013)

According to NASBE (National Association of State Boards of Education), (1998) American public schools face teacher shortage, reason being, not because there are no qualified teachers but basically because of teacher distribution. This misdistribution is pronounced in some particular geographical regions and specific specialties like special education, bilingual education and sciences (Darling-Hammond, 2001).

The problem of teacher attrition is not unique to developed countries for it is worse in sub Saharan Africa where the challenge of over enrolment demands for an increase in the number of teachers. In Gambia for example, to meet the number of teachers targeted, it had to double the current number of teachers (VSO, 2007). In the wake of every African country trying to improve economic development, and recognition of the role played by knowledge, school enrolment has intensively multiplied, overworking the teachers and demanding for recruitment of reinforcing teachers. In Lesotho, Education International (2007) found out that 40% of the primary school teachers were

unqualified. At the time, Lesotho had about 40,000 unemployed teachers and Zambia had 15,000 unemployed (Education International, 2007)

Statement of the Problem

While a teacher is one of the most important assets that a society can have, teacher turnover continues to escalate with minimal interference from policy makers. The numerous teachers strikes have not only caused a deterioration in schools' performance, but also made unpopular the vocation such that no student want to be associated with a teacher as a mentor, leave alone taking teaching as a preferred profession. This scenario relegates the profession to a pattern of unmotivated workforce which only remains in the career for lack of a better option. The main concern of this study is teacher motivational strategies that can minimize teacher attrition

Objectives

The following were the objectives upon which the study was based

- i) To explain the background of teacher turnover
- ii) To establish teacher turnover rate in a ten year period in Nyeri County
- iii) To identify major push and pull factors in the teaching profession in Nyeri County
- iv) To recommend strategies that can be used to retain teachers in Nyeri County

Literature Review

A lot of literature has been written on recruitment and retention of teachers. Reviewing of that literature is crucial in exposing the scenario on the ground and the expectations thereof. According to the U.S Department of Education (2000), school staff shortage is not caused by insufficient supply of qualified individuals but too many of them leaving the profession (Ingersoll, 1997). A case study was done in the U.S education department and whose findings indicated that one out of five of students who earned college degrees between 1992 to 1993 began teaching between 1994 to 1995 and had quit the profession by 1996 to 19997 (Boser, 2000).

A study by Hare and Heap (2001), adds weight to the same findings that a quarter of all beginning teachers leave the classroom within the first four years especially in teaching fields of special education, Mathematics and science. Ingersoll (2000) observed that the turnover is as high as 50 % in schools located in high poverty areas. The same study indicated that the teachers known to leave fast are intelligent and effective teachers.

Ingersoll (2001) noted that students' performance varied from one school to another due to many reasons but chief among them were those related to teachers. This gives a confirmation that teachers are very significant to a student's academic performance. Current research has appreciated the relationship that exists between teacher retention and students' performance (Nye, Konstantopoulos & Hedges, 2004).

Darling-Hammond (2000) observed in his study on teacher retention that there was a profound relationship between increased years of service and teachers effectiveness in teaching. This view was confirmed by Croninger, King Rice, Rathbun, & Nishio, (2007), that teachers with more than five years teaching experience are more effective than those with less. It should be noted that for a school to get the appropriate teachers who can be retained in the institution, effective recruitment and retention plan has to be adopted.

There are certain characteristics associated with recruitment that assure teacher attraction, motivation and retention as is advocated for by (Morehart, 2001; Webb & Norton, 2008; Streisand & Toch, 1998; Boyd, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2005). The first characteristic is that there recruitment should be a continuous process not pegged on immediate requirement for teachers but rather a proactive venture through giving continuous positive highlights of positive elements of county and schools so as to attract potential teachers. Creating awareness about schools and teaching in exhibitions and other trade fairs would stamp recruitment

Secondly, a package of recruitment materials indicating county schools and their sites, county philosophies, curriculum features, tuition preparation among others should be developed and which should augmented by scheduling of county and school visits to create a positive image about the school and teaching so as to avert misconception or stereotypical believes held in respect of certain schools.

Liaisons should be formed between local colleges and secondary schools to encourage students who join those who join the teaching profession by allowing them to witness the beauty in teaching and treating them well when under attachment or internship. There should also be formation of prospective/future teachers' clubs in schools to expose potential teachers to first hand teacher experiences

Guiding Theory-Hertzberg's two factor theory

The study is guided by Hertzberg's two factor theory or motivator-hygiene theory by behavioral scientist, Fredrick Herzberg (1959), which comprises of two sets of factors. There exists in every organization, job factors that create employee satisfaction and others that cause dissatisfaction. The two sets are: hygiene factors (The term "hygiene" is used to mean that these are maintenance factors) which refer to job factors that are essential for motivating workers at the workplace. They do not lead to satisfaction but their absence leads to dissatisfaction. Examples are pay, company policies, fringe benefits, physical working conditions, paid insurance, interpersonal relations and job security.

The second set of factors is motivational factors which cause employee satisfaction. These are: recognition, sense of personal achievement, personal growth and promotional opportunities, responsibilities, challenging work, recognition for one's achievement, responsibility, involvement in decision making and sense of importance to an organization. Based on the observations made from the pull and push factors impacting on teacher attrition, the theory clearly discloses the main reasons why teachers leave the

profession. Primarily, teachers are concerned with the hygiene factors which are their basic concerns and secondly, the motivational factors.

The two factor theory has implications. Managers must guarantee adequacy of both hygiene factors and motivational factors to avoid employee dissatisfaction and also make work interesting, challenging but rewarding to entice workers to contribute unreserved efforts. In other words, ensure they create job enrichment.

Based on findings from a study by Darling-Hammond (2001) reviewed earlier in the study, personal goal achievement ranked as the highest satisfier with 26% while recognition ranked second with 50%. The dissatisfiers were derived from a study conducted in 12 African countries, Kenya being one of them. The major categories were workload and working hours, general classroom conditions, management support, school location, distance to work and living arrangement. From the study, the conclusion made confirms the importance of motivational factors to employees and in this case, teachers.

Study Design and Methodology

The study used descriptive research design which as is advocated for by Orodho (2005), enables ease of gathering, summarizing, interpreting and presenting data. Purposive (also called judgmental, selective or subjective sampling method) (which is an appropriate non-probability sampling method), was used to sample five high schools in Nyeri county to form the study respondents. The county director of education in Nyeri

County was interviewed. The questionnaires were dropped and picked and an interview scheduled with the county director. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics and the results presented in tables.

Study population

A total of 30 respondents from 5 schools and 1 county director of education formed the study sample.

Findings

From the study findings on the number of teachers that leave the profession, the results obtained were as indicated below

Table 1: Number of teachers that join and leave schools/profession in the stated periods

Period		1 year	3-5 years	6-10 years	Above 10 years	Total	Cumulative %
County director's responses	JOIN	700	1600	5000		7300	
	LEAVE	349	600	2160		3109	43
Teachers responses	JOIN	77	112	169	254	612	
	LEAVE	59	109	134	175	477	78
Average percentage							61

From table 1, it is noted that, during the specified periods, a total 7,300 teachers join the profession and 3,109 leave in Nyeri County according to the statistics in the county education offices. In the secondary school level, 612 teachers cumulatively join while 477 leave during the same period. For the two levels of data collected, 43 % of teachers leave according to the county education offices while 78 % leave in the school level. This serves to explain why there is always an outcry of teacher shortage.

Table 2: Summary of Major Findings

	Factors	Percentage (%)
Attracting Factors (Pull Factors)	Improved remuneration	11
	Surety of getting the job upon training	13
	Lack of other opportunities	15
	Long holidays in April, August and December	10
	Interaction with youth which makes the teacher vibrant and youthful	3
	To nurture young people/passion	6
	Profession has security of tenure	16
	Duration and content for training not difficult	4
	Teaching is a calling	4
	Family background	2
	Low JAB cutoff points/academic grades	6
	It is a noble profession	2
	Corruption free	2
	No response	6
Factors That Cause Teachers To Leave (Push Factors)	Frustration from lack of promotion/stagnation	13
	No motivation	10
	Monotony of work	3
	Availability of better paying jobs	13
	Difficulty in handling the young	1
	Starting own businesses	1
	Demanding profession/tight schedules; no social life	1
	Policies without consulting teachers	3
	Pressure to perform	7
	Low remuneration	18
	Alternative jobs after further education	1
	Insecurity	1

	Transfers/Retirement	3
	Delayed salaries	1
	Poor teacher-government relations	4
	Negative attitude of the profession by community	1
	intimidation/demotivation from authorities especially T.S.C/parents/undisciplined learners	1 7
	Postings in remote areas	3
	Greener pastures	4
	Poor infrastructure/facilities/working conditions	3
	Change of curriculum	1
Recommended Strategies For Retaining Teachers	Harmonization of remuneration of teacher pay with other employees	10
	Better pay	21
	Minimal political interference	2
	Improve terms and conditions	4
	Organize motivational sessions for teachers	2
	Avail appropriate teacher facilities	2
	Reward effort/promote	12
	Government formulates attractive policies for teachers	4
	More teachers to reduce workloads to a ratio of 1:35	5
	Reduce pressure of performance	2
	Treat teachers with dignity and Fairness in appraisal and promotion	9
	Boosting security understanding	2
	In war-torn areas	2
	Stop teacher intimidation by T.S.C	3
	Positive attitude towards profession	3
Conducive working environment	3	
Immediate employment after graduation	2	

	Decongest public schools classes	2
	Effect the 50-60 % to invoke intrinsic motivation	2
	Avoid biasness in transfers & employment	2
	Allowances for extra work in boarding schools	2
	Regular inclusion of emerging/contemporary issues in curriculum	2
	Eliminate exam cheating to accord schools their fair grades without standardizing	2

Conclusion

The findings from the study direct to the following conclusion

Background on teacher turnover

Teacher turnover rate is a widespread problem all over the world and similarly, Kenya has a problem of teacher imbalance in the counties. Teacher attraction is generally challenged by teacher retention and approximately one out of five graduates leave the profession in the first two to three years of their employment.

Teacher turnover rate in a ten-year period

From the findings, 61 percent of the teachers that join the profession leave within the first ten years of employment into the teaching profession in Nyeri County. This leads to the conclusion that motivational factors must be identified that would not just attract but also retain teachers

Major pull and push factors

Amongst the several factors outlined as impacting on teacher retention, the following were paramount. Pull factors: improved remuneration, lack of other opportunities, improved remuneration, and surety of getting teaching job upon training, long holidays in April, August and September, security of tenure and the low Joint Admissions Board cut off points for one to be admitted for a teaching course.

Push factors identified were: lack of promotion/stagnation, lack of motivation, availability of other paying jobs, low remuneration, and intimidation from authority, parents and undisciplined learners

Recommended strategies for teacher retention

The following were recommended as the strategies for retaining teachers: harmonization of remuneration with other employees' particularly civil servants, better pay, reward and promotion based on effort (merit), treating teachers with dignity and fairness in appraisal and promotion.

Recommendations

The following is recommended based on the study objectives.

Background on teacher turnover

Based on the review of the background of teacher turnover, it is recommended that the policy makers adopt intervening measures to curb teacher attrition.

Teacher turnover rate in a period of 1-10 years

The policy makers and teacher management should endeavor to improve on and also augment teacher attraction pull factors as they minimize the push factors

Major pull and push factors

It is recommended that the government improves teacher pay packages, promote teachers based on merit and immediately reduce teacher intimidation from authorities, parents and undisciplined learners

Recommended strategies for teacher retention

Emphatic recommendations are made to policy makers, parents and students pointing at salary harmonization, merited promotions and according teachers their deserved dignity.

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