

INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS ON TEACHER ATTRITION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Attrition of teachers has been a challenge facing most public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County Kenya. Research studies have been conducted to check on the factors that influence the attrition trend in Kenya but none has focused on specific teacher characteristics relating to their demographic features. This paper looks at various personal characteristics of teachers' influences attrition in public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The target population comprised of all public secondary schools principals (166), County Education officials (6), and teachers (30) who had been affected by attrition. Principals (50) and educational officers (6) were selected through purposive sampling methods while former teachers (30) were selected through snowball sampling methods. Data collection instruments included questionnaires, interview schedule and document checklist. The study found out that there has been increased trend of teacher attrition from various public primary schools in the county. It was found out that attrition rate was higher in boys' (M=3.39) school followed by girls (M=2.98) and the least was in mixed day (M=2.67) secondary schools. The study found out that most teachers who had left leave the teaching profession were males (65.0%) with 35.0% being female. Further, 80.0% of teachers who had left the profession were married with 59.0% of those who had left the profession aged between 41-50 years. In terms of working experience, 70.0% of the teachers who had left the profession, had been in service for between 20 years and above. The paper concludes that teacher characteristics in terms of gender, age, work experience and marital status contribute to attrition in public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County. The study recommends that appropriate measures need to be taken by the TSC to ensure that proper conditions of workplace and employment are created so as to retain the category of teachers who are moving from the profession in large numbers.

Key Words: attrition, secondary schools, teachers, characteristics, demographic

1. INTRODUCTION

UNESCO (2011) data show that many teachers are leaving their schools and the profession every year, particularly in poorer, lower-performing schools across the globe especially in Asia and Sub Saharan Africa. Wamukuru (2012) asserts that severe shortages currently exist, and there is a gap between demand and supply of teachers needed to ensure effective teaching in secondary schools in many countries across the world. Teacher shortages have therefore, become a major concern to educational authorities and should be addressed continuously by policy makers. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and a significant amount of research has shown, over a long period that the high levels of teacher attrition experienced by many countries have serious implications for the future of the teaching profession. Among others, the implications of teacher attrition are far-reaching financially for schools and learners (Mabeya, Gikuhi & Ntabo, 2019).

Across the world, United States of America has one of the highest attrition rates for teachers among developed countries. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future [NCTAF] (2007) estimated that the national cost of public school teacher turnover could be over \$7.3 billion a year. According to Darling-Hammond (1998), teacher attrition is at 30% within the first 3-5 years of entering the profession. In the United Kingdom, the attrition (wastage) rates for primary and secondary school teachers were 10.0 percent and 7.2 percent respectively in 2004 (Smithers & Robinson, 2008).

Wamukuru (2011) notes that in sub-Saharan Africa, teacher demand and supply have become a matter of regional concern. According to Egu (2011) attrition in the South Western part of Nigeria was at 1.5 % in 2004 estimating to 10% migration of teachers to other professions in the initial stage of the profession. In South Africa, Pitsoe and Machaisa (2012) contend that teacher attrition is not a myth and has been an ongoing global concern for years - its plethora of literature. Reviews of National Policies for Education South Africa 2008 suggests that working conditions, including professional teaching conditions, play a substantial role in decisions to leave teaching in a particular school or district, and they contribute to decisions to leave the profession altogether. Ministry of Education [MoE] data indicate that teacher attrition in Lesotho was 1.5 percent in 2004. In Namibia, UNESCO (2016) established that a total number of teacher attrition rate was of 11.7%, while other reports from the World Bank indicated that between (2006 and 2007) attrition ranged from 2.0% to 10.0% (Mulkeen, 2010). In Tanzania overall