

International Journal of Academic Scientific Research
ISSN: 2272-6446 Volume 5, Issue 1 (February - March 2017), PP 227-236
www.ijasrjournal.org

Impact of Principals' Recognition on Retention of Secondary School Teachers' in Homa Bay County of Kenya

¹Lazarus Millan Okello*, ¹Manson Sichari, ²Florence Odera,

¹Department of Educational Psychology and Science, Rongo University, RONGO-KENYA

²Department of Curriculum Instruction and Media Studies, Rongo University, RONGO-KENYA

Corresponding author: Lazarus Millan Okello, PhD Student in Educational Psychology, Department of Educational Psychology and Science, Rongo University, P.O. BOX 103-40404, RONGO-KENYA.
E-mail: millan15@yahoo.com

Abstract

The present study investigated the impact of principals' recognition on retention of secondary school teachers' in Homa Bay County of Kenya. The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. For a population of one thousand eight hundred and one (1801) teachers, according to the table, three hundred and twenty (320) teachers were recommended to be appropriate and for a population of 295 principals, one hundred and sixty-nine (169) were appropriate. The researcher interviewed eighteen (18) principals picked from the six sub-counties including the two purposefully picked national schools in Homa Bay County. This study used questionnaires and interview schedule as the instrument of data collection. The researcher developed questionnaires and interview schedule to collect the data. Two sets of questionnaires were used; one for the school principals and another for the teachers. To enhance validity of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted in twenty selected schools in the neighboring Migori County. This involved the ten principals and two teachers from each school. In this study, internal consistency reliability of the instruments was obtained by computing Cronbach's alpha () using SPSS and a Cronbach's alpha of = .793 was reported. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in data analysis. The study reported that there was a significant plausible positive correlation between the two variables [$r = .604, n = 422, p < .05$], with more teacher recognition by the principal associated with high teacher retention rate. The study recommended that the School principals should avoid the use of autocratic style of leadership in the management of schools as it does not allow teachers to give off their best and discourages teachers from working with principals who displays this kind of leadership behavior.

Keywords: principal, recognition, retention, secondary school, teachers, Kenya

1. Introduction

In the United States of America (USA), reduction in school size and margining schools to improve the academic performance of learners is being used together with other incentives to move teachers from one school to the other (Keigher, 2010). Africa countries are equally employing different incentives to minimize teacher transfers; Mozambique for example, employs a system of extra financial bonuses for teachers to motivate them and retain them at their work stations; Lesotho, offers a flat bonus per month to teachers who teach remedial lessons with parents supporting the arrangement financially. Similarly, in Uganda, principals' offer varied motivational rewards to teachers other than the salary paid by the state (Kizito, Chumba&Kindiki, 2010). In Malawi, a strong association between the availability of housing within the school compound or next to the school and other extra financial benefits through promotion of welfare activities that are of financial gain to teachers has been reported (Kizito, Chumba&Kindiki, 2010). In Canada, (Mathews, 2003 cited in Tettey 2012) noted the rising concerns about mass

teacher transfer seekers facilitated by individual teachers from one institution to another. In this study, 68% of the academic personnel interviewed indicated that they wished to leave their work stations to other stations because their administrators were too harsh and authoritative in dealing with them. Out of the 504 respondents interviewed, 40% argued that they opted for transfers to other institutions because their requests for study leaves had not been approved at school level and recommendations for promotions were never done on merit but based on loyalty and relationship with the school administrator.

Adam's equity theory is based on the fact that teachers will exert a level of effort that they feel compares to the reward potential at school level. It concerns the perception that people have about how they are treated in their schools as compared with other teachers in other schools. The theory explains that teachers seek to maintain equity between the input they bring into the career of teaching the outcome they receive from it against the perceived inputs and outputs of other teachers in other schools. The theory argues that teachers expect to be rewarded and motivated in the same way that other teachers with the same qualifications in other institutions offering same services are to enable them be retained in the same system. Herzberg two factor theory posits that teachers are motivated by internal values rather than values that are external to the work.

Relevant studies indicate that the most common problem in most learning institutions currently is the lack of inclusion of recognition as a component of compensation (Fulton & Leech, 2014). Teachers' recognition allows the individuals to know and understand that their work is valued and appreciated, provides a sense of ownership and belongingness, improves morale, enhances loyalty and increases teachers' retention rate in the institution. Teacher's recognition is viewed as one of the key dependent variables of teachers' retention because it is understood to have a direct impact on teachers' retention. A positive impact is felt when one feels valued, satisfied and more engaged in an organization.

Fulton and Leech (2014) conducted a survey in Ireland about the level of recognition that employees receive for doing a good job at work. The study found 63% of employees who had no plans of transferring to other organizations because they were satisfied with their recognition, while 24% were not satisfied with the recognition by the organizations. Goldhaber (2014) in Canada did a study on the role of rewards by school principals on teacher retention: a case study of rural school set ups. The results indicated that for effective teacher recognition, it must be sincere, heartfelt and timely to be effective. Further findings indicated that regular expressions of appreciation by administrators and leaders towards encouraging teachers to reach the strategic goals of the institution enhance the individual teacher's performance and retention. Nyamekye (2012) in Ghana studied the impact of motivation on employee retention of bank workers at standard chartered bank. The result of the study showed that motivational factors such as salary and fringe benefits were rated as most important to the workforce of the bank followed by job security and relationship with co-workers. The three strategies rated most important to the workforce are recognition, training opportunities, openness and trust, promotional opportunities, and effective communication.

Asiamah (2011) in Ghana explored the effects of motivation on employee retention: A case of internal revenue service. According to the study findings 70.8% of the respondents said that they were not satisfied with their current motivation packages and were opting to transfer to other organizations to offer same services. Respondents strongly agreed that good manager-employee recognition can cause core employees to work longer in organizations. About 81.2% of the respondents were not satisfied with the mode of selection for training and development and this had led to feeling of inequity, de-motivation and labour turnover. Anangisye (2011) in Tanzania did a study on developing quality employee professionals in Busoga University. The results reinforced that University administrators should organize various motivational activities and events at the workplace to always bring workers

together. The study noted that individual employees should be asked to take charge of something at their work place, for example, assigning duties equally to all employees by recognizing their varied potentials. Engage the employees in productive tasks necessary for their overall development to enable them have positive attitude towards their work.

Lesomo (2013) in Kenya in his study on motivation to technical teachers for retention noted that incentives, perks, cash prizes are a good way to motivate the instructors. The teachers who have performed well consistently through their students in exams should be felicitated and recognized by the college principal in front of all the staff members as well as the management. Omeke and Onah (2011) equally pointed out that the principal needs to give a loud applause to the instructors whom their students constantly perform well in different courses. This is a good way to motivate the instructors for them to remain happy and work with dedication for a longer duration in their institutions. Atambo (2012) in Kenya investigated the role of employee recognition that can be tapped to improve performance at both individual and organizational levels at Kenyatta National Hospital. Among the key findings it was shown that recognizing the employee's accomplishments, through provision of career advancement opportunities translates into improved performance and job retention both at the individual and organizational levels. Pearson and Moomaw (2010) conducted a quantitative study with 171 Florida teachers to determine the relationship between teacher autonomy and four other constructs: job stress, job retention, empowerment, and professionalism. Teacher autonomy was separated into two dimensions, curriculum autonomy and general teaching autonomy. Correlations revealed curriculum autonomy was significantly and negatively related to job stress; moreover, general teaching autonomy was significantly and positively associated with teacher retention and professionalism.

Quaglia, Marion, and McIntire (2011) also conducted a study with 477 teachers from 20 rural Maine communities to determine differences between satisfied and dissatisfied teachers regarding their perceptions of school organization, empowerment, status, and attitude towards work at the same station. The researchers found that satisfied teachers experienced significantly more empowerment within their schools than teachers who are dissatisfied. A study carried out by Hirsch and Emerick (2014) on a sample of 570 American industrial workers on the effects of extra financial benefits made by administrators other than the normal monthly pay on trips or seminars and trainings motivates workers greatly. Most respondents noted that extra financial reward is one of the basic types of extrinsic rewards which cover the basic needs of income to survive (to pay bills), a feeling of stability and consistency (the job is secure), and recognition (my workplace values my skills).

Zwilling (2012) established that non-cash rewards may be more effective in the longer term than financial incentives. This study was modeled on Burns and Stalk Contingency theory which focuses on how administrators change in response to demands of rapidly changing environment. Demir (2008) collected data from 218 teachers in Edirne, Turkey and used a five-point Likert scale to quantitatively measure the teacher's perception on remuneration and other financial benefits at school level in containing teachers transfers. The findings suggested that teachers' remuneration and extra monetary rewards contributes to teachers' self-efficacy and retention in several schools. Rosser (2012) also argued that salary based on once academic qualification, additional benefits and job security is an important personal issue that affects the satisfaction of secondary school teachers. However, like other scholars (Shoaib, Noor, Tirmizi & Bashir, 2011) observed that although much of the overall research on secondary school teachers suggests that money, in and of itself, is not the most important aspect of their work life and satisfaction, financial and other extra monetary benefits is one of the primary reasons why most teachers stay longer in particular schools without seeking transfers to other secondary schools.

The Kenyan Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has tried to control the teachers' transfer with very little success. Reports from the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) indicate that there is a high rate of teacher

transfers motivated by individual teachers and those that are directed by the employer. For example, Oyaro (2014), quoting data from KNUT, reported that between January and September, 2013, more than 7000 set of teachers had requested transfers to other schools citing several reasons ranging from family ties, conflicts between the principal and the teacher, poor relationship between the teachers of the same staff among many other reasons. This figure shows that about twenty teachers are requesting for transfers to other schools every day.

For instance, in December 2013, 3,471 personal transfer requests out of 11,834 requests across the country were granted while 1,493 were also transferred within the same year on balancing and needy cases creating a shortfall in several schools (Sass, 2006). Consequently, records from the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), Homa-Bay County Education Office, (2016) reveal that in the last three years, between 2013 to 2015, a total of over 1354 teachers have been transferred to schools of their demands without replacements made to the affected schools. There was need therefore to find out kind of reward mechanisms by school administrators at school level that may help in retaining secondary school teachers from transferring to other schools in Homa Bay County. Further there was need to find out the extent to which motivational reward at school levels relate to teacher transfers in the education sector. The present study investigated the impact of principals' recognition on retention of secondary school teachers' in Homa Bay County.

2. Research Methodology

The study adopted an ex-post facto research design. The ex-post facto research, then, is a method of teasing out possible antecedents of events that have happened and cannot, therefore, be engineered or manipulated by the investigator. For a population of one thousand eight hundred and one (1801) teachers, according to the table, three hundred and twenty (320) teachers were recommended to be appropriate and for a population of 295 principals, one hundred and sixty-nine (169) were appropriate. The researcher interviewed eighteen (18) principals picked from the six sub-counties including the two purposefully picked national schools in Homa Bay County. This study used questionnaires and interview schedule as the instrument of data collection. The researcher developed questionnaires and interview schedule to collect the data. Two sets of questionnaires were used; one for the school principals and another for the teachers. To enhance validity of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted in twenty selected schools in the neighboring Migori County. This involved the ten principals and two teachers from each school. In this study, internal consistency reliability of the instruments was obtained by computing Cronbach's alpha (α) using SPSS and a Cronbach's alpha of $\alpha = .793$ was reported. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in data analysis.

3. Findings and Discussion

The study investigated the impact of recognition by principals on retention of school teachers'. This was done by use of pre-designed Likert scaled questionnaire administered to both the principals and teachers. The items in the questionnaire explored constructs of recognition, which were rated from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1).

The views of the principals and teachers on the influence of teacher recognition on teacher retention were computed in percentage frequencies as in Table 1 and 2.

Table 1. Views of the Principals on Recognition of Teachers

Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
Recognition by the school principals motivates teachers in their work	88(56.1%)	64 (40.8)	4(2.5%)	1(0.6%)	0(0.0%)	4.52	0.58
Recognition allows teachers to know and understand the value of their work	68(43.3%)	80 (51.0)	5(3.2%)	4(2.5%)	0(0.0%)	4.35	0.67
Regular appreciation by school principals encourages teachers to reach their strategic goals	77(49.0%)	68 (43.3)	6(3.8%)	6(3.8%)	0(0.0%)	4.38	0.74
Recognition by principals can be used to retain teachers	51(32.5%)	69 (43.9)	18 (11.5)	16 (10.2)	3(1.9%)	3.95	1.01
Teachers recognition through rewards motivates them to dedicate their time to teaching	93(59.2%)	54 (34.4)	6(3.8%)	4(2.5%)	0(0.0%)	4.50	0.69
Recognition enables teachers to feel competent and dedicated to teach in their schools	68(43.3%)	75 (47.8)	7(4.5%)	4(2.5%)	3(1.9%)	4.28	0.82
Recognition of teachers by principals are useful as they make decision to transfer or not transfer to other schools	48(30.6%)	69 (43.9)	18 (11.5)	20 (12.7)	2(1.3%)	3.90	1.02
Teachers who feel stagnated at job groups within a school seeks transfer to other schools	40(25.5%)	54 (34.4)	22 (14.0)	33 (21.0)	8(5.1%)	4.38	0.79
Teachers like working in schools where they are given tasks and left to work independently	62(39.5%)	66 (42.0)	12(7.6%)	13(8.3%)	4(2.5%)	4.19	1.01
Teachers like working in schools which offers extra financial benefits e.g. on extra and overtime lessons	82(52.2%)	57 (36.3)	10(6.4%)	5(3.2%)	3(1.9%)	3.54	1.22
Extra monetary rewards contribute to teacher's self-efficacy and retention	62(39.5%)	59 (37.6)	24 (15.3)	10(6.4%)	2(1.3%)	4.47	0.71

Key: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree, Std. Dev.-Standard deviation.Source: Survey data (2016)

The findings in Table 1 show that the principals who took part in the survey appreciated recognition as an important way of motivating teachers. Nearly all 152 (96.9%) the principal respondents at a mean of 4.52 and standard deviation of .58, held the perception that recognition by the school principals motivate teachers in their work, 68 (43.3%) of them strongly believed that recognition allows teachers to know and understand the value of their work and another 77 (49.0%) strongly held the opinion that regular appreciation by school principals encourage teachers to meet their targets and strategic goals. This agrees with Bahrami, Abbasi and Kajbaf (2013) who postulates that principals who normally double as managers as well as instructional leaders of their schools ought to

recognize the abilities articulated by different teachers to enable them feel competent and dedicated to teaching in such schools.

On the same note, the study findings show that about nine out of ten 143 (91.1%) of the principals who took part in the survey believed that recognition enable teachers to feel competent and dedicated to teach in their schools. It also emerged that recognition of teachers by principals are useful as the teachers make decision to transfer or not transfer to other schools, as was held by nearly three quarters 117 (74.5%) of the principals who participated in the survey, attracting a mean of 4.50 (SD=.69). This was in agreement with Fulton and Leech (2014) whose study postulates that teachers recognition allows the teachers to know and understand that their work is valued and appreciated. This study further noted that recognition provides a sense of ownership and belongingness improves morale; enhance loyalty and increases teachers rate of retention in a school. On the contrary, some 20 (11.5%) of the principals rejected the assertion that decision of a teacher to transfer or not to transfer is pegged on principal's recognition of the teacher.

The findings of the study show that there are various ways in which recognition is done ranging from the provision of gift, saying thank you, praise, financial benefits and appreciating their ideas. However, for teacher recognition to be effective it should be fair, appropriate to the contribution that was made and reflect the preferences of the teacher. A significant majority of 147 (93.6%) of the principals observed that teachers' recognition through rewards motivates the teachers more to dedicate their time to teaching. This was further reflected by high mean of 4.47 with standard deviation of .71. This confirms the findings of Nolan (2012) who stated that recognition is the best mechanism that school administrators can frequently use to encourage teachers' retention. The principals do this better in several ways, for example, through provision of gift cards and certificates, saying thank you and development opportunities. On the same note, it emerged from the study findings that many 139 (88.5%) of the principals generally believed that teachers like working in schools which offers extra financial benefits e.g. on extra and overtime lessons. Similarly, many of the principals held the perception that extra monetary rewards contribute to teachers' self-efficacy and retention, as was confirmed by 122 (77.1%) of the principals who took part in the study.

On the same note when the views of the teachers were sought on the influence of recognition on teachers' transfers, it came out clearly that most of them held similar opinion just like their principals, as was reflected in Table 2.

Table 2. Views of the Teachers on Influence of Recognition on Teachers Retention

Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
Recognition by the school principals motivates teachers in their work	146 (55.1%)	89(33.6%)	10(3.8%)	15 (5.7%)	5(1.9%)	4.37	0.89
Recognition allows teachers to know and understand the value of their work	143(54.0%)	109 (41.1%)	4 (1.5%)	7 (2.6%)	2 (0.8%)	4.48	0.66
Regular appreciation by school principals encourages teachers to reach their strategic goals	177(66.8%)	74 (27.9%)	7 (2.6%)	4 (1.5%)	3 (1.1%)	4.60	0.64
Recognition by principals can be used to retain teachers	93 (35.1%)	102 (38.5%)	32 (12.1%)	29 (10.9%)	9 (3.4%)	3.92	1.09
Teachers recognition through rewards motivates them to dedicate their time to teaching	169 (63.8%)	72 (27.2%)	6 (2.3%)	10 (3.8%)	8 (3.0%)	4.47	0.89

Recognition enables teachers to feel competent and dedicated to teach in their schools	130 (49.1%)	103 (38.9%)	10 (3.8%)	12 (4.5%)	10 (3.8%)	4.29	0.92
Recognition by principals are useful for teachers as they make decision to transfer to other schools	85 (32.1%)	93 (35.1%)	38 (14.3%)	29 (10.9%)	20 (7.5%)	3.78	1.18
Teachers who feel stagnated at job groups within a school seeks transfer to other schools	95 (35.8%)	67 (25.3%)	38 (14.3%)	52 (19.6%)	13 (4.9%)	4.37	0.91
Teachers feel motivated when empowered and involved in school decision making process	162 (61.1%)	73 (27.5%)	16 (6.0%)	8 (3.0%)	6 (2.3%)	4.32	0.88
Teachers like working in schools where they are given tasks and left to work independently	127 (47.9%)	97 (36.6%)	16 (6.0%)	10 (3.8%)	15 (5.7%)	3.69	1.25
Teachers like working in schools which offers extra financial benefits e.g. on extra and overtime lessons	141 (53.2%)	82 (30.9%)	18 (6.8%)	17 (6.4%)	7 (2.6%)	4.44	0.87
Extra monetary rewards contribute to teachers' self-efficacy and retention	139 (52.5%)	71 (26.8%)	21 (7.9%)	23 (8.7%)	11 (4.2%)	4.37	0.89

Key: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree and Std. Dev. - standard deviation
 Source: Survey data (2016)

The findings of the study established that a significant majority, 235 (88.7%), of the teachers who took part in the study were in agreement that recognition by the school principals motivates teachers in their work. This point of view was equally held by more than nine out of ten, 241 (91.0%), of the respondents who held that teachers recognition through rewards motivates them to dedicate their time to teaching in particular schools. This further affirms the earlier findings by Nyamekye (2012) in Ghana who noted that motivational rewards to bank workers such as salary and fringe benefits were the most important to the employees retention followed by security and relationship with co-workers. This view generated a mean of 4.47 and a standard deviation of 0.89, which was considerably high.

Similarly, it came out clearly from the findings of the study that teachers feel encouraged and motivated when they are appropriately involved in decision making on matters of the school. This was reflected by most, 162 (61.1%), of the teachers who took part in the survey who strongly agreed that teachers feel motivated when empowered and involved in school decision making process. This gives an extended application of Ariko and Othuon (2012) whose findings pointed out that introducing motivational bonuses and involving teachers in decision making at school levels contributes greatly to minimizing teachers' requests for transfers from one school to another.

A significant majority of 252 (95.1%) of the teachers were of the belief that recognition allows teachers to know and understand the value of their work and more than a third, 177 (66.8%), others strongly held that regular appreciation by school principals encourages teachers to reach their strategic goals. Findings that was incongruent with Fulton and Leech (2014) whose findings noted that recognition allows the individuals know and understand the value of their work which provides a sense of belonging and ownership which enhances loyalty and retention of employees. On the same note, 233 (88.0%) of the teachers who were sampled for the survey observed that recognition enables teachers to feel competent and dedicated to teach in their schools.

It came out from the findings of the study that recognition by principals can be used to retain teachers; this fact was held by 195 (73.6%). In addition, more than two thirds, 180 (67.2%), of the teachers supported the assertion

that recognition by principals are useful for teachers as they make decision to transfer to other schools. This point of view was further expressed by 162 (61.1%) of the teachers who felt that teachers who feel stagnated at job groups within a school seeks transfer to other schools (mean of 4.37 and standard deviation of .91). These findings reinforces the outcome of the results noted by Dockel (2011) that teachers like working in stations that provide them with opportunities to be promoted to new and challenging positions and that teachers who feel stagnated in their positions within particular schools generally aren't motivated and will transfers from such schools to other school.

The findings of the study indicated that teachers like working in schools where they are given tasks and left to work independently, as confirmed by 224 (84.5%) of the teachers who took part in the study. These findings affirms the earlier research by Saragih (2011) whose study noted that job autonomy improves performance as teachers feel trusted to perform the task. This perception leads to an increased level of intrinsic motivation to teachers and the outcome is teachers work efficacy and retention. Further, it was established that teachers like working in schools which offers extra financial benefits, for instance, on extra and overtime lessons. This came out clearly as 210 (79.3%) of the teachers who took part in the survey were in agreement that extra monetary rewards contribute to teachers' self-efficacy and retention, at a mean of 4.37 and standard deviation of .89.

To establish whether there was any statistical impact of teacher recognition by principals on teacher retention, an inferential statistics was used to test the null hypothesis that "there is no statistically significant impact of teacher recognition by principals on teacher retention". The relationship between teacher recognition by principals and teacher retention was examined using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. The preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. The correlation analysis results were presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation between Teacher Recognition by Principals and Teacher Retention in Secondary School.

		Teacher Retention
Teacher Recognition	Pearson Correlation	.604**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	422

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 recaps the results of Pearson Moment Correlation on the influence teacher recognition by principal on teacher retention in secondary schools in Homa Bay County. The results show that there was a significant plausible positive correlation between the two variables [$r = .604$, $n = 422$, $p < .05$], with more teacher recognition by the principal associated with high teacher retention rate. Since there was a statistical significant positive relationship was proven (sig. level $< .05$), the hypothesis that there is no statistical significant impact of teacher recognition by the principal on teacher retention in secondary schools in Homa Bay County was consequently rejected.

However, to find of how much variance the two variables shared a coefficient of determination was calculated. Given that the two variables correlated at $r = .604$, they shared $.604 \times .604 = .364 = 36.4$ per cent of their variance. There is sizable overlap between the two variables. This means that teacher recognition by the principals

helps to explain about 36 per cent of the variance in respondents' scores on the perceived teacher retention scale. This is quite a respectable amount of variance explained by a single independent variable, ignoring other independent variables. It was therefore concluded that teacher recognition by principal has a bearing on the decisions teachers make regarding transfer to other schools; more than a third of the teachers' transfer or retention is accounted for by teacher recognition by the principals. A principal who have good rapport with teachers and always recognize and accept their views is most likely to retain many of their teachers in the school.

4. CONCLUSION

The study determined the impact of teacher recognition by principals on retention of secondary school teachers in Homa Bay County of Kenya. The largest beta coefficient of .469 was obtained from teacher recognition by the principal, implying that this intrinsic variable made the strongest unique contribution to explaining the dependent variable, when the variance explained by all other variables in the model was controlled for.

The study established that nearly all the principal respondents held the perception that recognition by the school administrators motivate teachers in their work and allows teachers to know and understand their the value of their work and meet targets and strategic goals. The study equally established that recognition by school principals provides a sense of ownership and belongingness to teachers, improves their morale, enhance their loyalty to work and increases their rate of retention in a school. School principals should avoid the use of autocratic style of leadership in the management of schools as it does not allow teachers to give off their best and discourages teachers from working with principals who displays this kind of leadership behavior.

The Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education and school board of managements should put in place functional teacher professional development strategies and favorable work environment for teachers to reduce current turnover rates in most schools by teacher's transfers to other schools.

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