

Public Schools in Northern Kenya: Perceived Security and Teacher Turnover

Sarah Likoko 

Lecturer, Department of Educational Planning & Management, School of Education, Kibabii University, Kenya

Risper Wepuhkulu

Senior Lecturer, Department of Curriculum & Pedagogy, School of Education, Kibabii University, Kenya

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Abstract:

Despite efforts to improve teacher retention, turnover is still a problem in Kenya's northern public schools. However, the consistency and continuity of teaching and learning processes are hampered by teacher turnover. These experiences prompted this study to investigate perceived security and teacher turnover in the public schools in the Northern region of Kenya. The target population included 89 non native teachers from public schools in the Northern part of Kenya. A sample 29 teachers (non-native) were selected using snowball sampling method. To collect data from

teachers a questionnaire was used. Weighted averages, percentages, means, standard deviations, correlation and linear regression were all used in the data analysis. The study concluded that the perceived security played a significant role in non-native teachers turnover in the Northern region of Kenya.

Keywords: *Perceived, Teacher, Turnover, Security.*

Introduction

Education has been identified worldwide as an important component that determines character and social economic development of any nation (Selina, 2012). High teacher movement have a negative effect on the sustained growth and development of any organisation and society (Adedamola, 2016). Arora (2012) asserts that high rate of teacher transfers impacts negatively on school improvement efforts for it disrupts the stability and continuity of teaching. Thus, qualified teachers are the most important schooling input in the determination of student achievement given the central role the teacher plays in the education sector (Biswakarma, 2016; Msengeti & Obwogi, 2015). However, educational institutions are finding it hard to retain competent and qualified teaching

personnel in the face of competition from the industry (Devrimci, Bozotok & Cicekli, 2013; Tymon, Stumpf & Smith, 2011). Therefore, educational authorities are expected to set up the measures to contain the situation in order to enhance development in the given country (Yimer, 2017).

Teacher transfers trends in US are influenced by among other things the students' racial composition and poverty ratings and as such many white teachers tend to move away from the inner city towards the more affluent suburbs or rural areas if they are to continue with the profession (Feng and Sass, 2008). Recruiting and retaining highly effective teachers has become a high-stakes endeavor for schools across the U.S (Keigher, 2010). For instance, Allen, Bryant & Vardaman (2010) pointed out that 14 percent of

American educators leave teaching after only one year, and 46 percent leave before their 5th year. The increasingly high volumes of entries, exits, and transfers in teacher labor markets have rendered the market dynamics difficult to understand and manage (Merrill, 2010). It is noteworthy from these studies that successful attempts in minimizing teacher transfer intentions in the USA have been due to teacher induction and mentoring, improvement of school safety and discipline, restructuring schools to make them smaller, recruitment of more teachers from the community they belong and the provision of retention bonuses (Council of the City of New York, 2004). In addition, Sohail et al., (2011) in the United States submitted that the cost of employee turnover often ranges from 50% to 200% of the employee's annual salary based on the type and level of job he/she holds. In Canada, it has been argued that one of the challenges that educational institutions will face over the next decade or so is on academic recruitment and retention. Similarly, in 21st century, Australian government face challenges in education sector in relation estimated academic exit, transfers and turnover (Ng'ethe, Iravo & Namusonge, 2012).

In Pakistan, professional and qualified teachers' retention has become a big challenge in recent years as a result of increased turnover rate (Shah et al., 2010). The higher education system is highly competitive with more than 135 institutions in public and private sector competing for the students and funding (Akhtar et al., 2015; Sohail, et al., 2011). In this scenario, having a capable, qualified and skilled academic staff on their payroll not only enhances their prestige and ranking in the country but also helps them enroll more students and be competitive. However, these educational institutions are competing among themselves as well as with the industry to attract and retain qualified employees. According to an estimate there is approximately 9 percent turnover of teaching staff in higher education institutions especially public sector universities (Akhtar, et al., 2015).

Invariably all educational institutions in Africa are confronted with the tremendous challenge of identifying, recruiting and retaining high caliber

staff, particularly the teachers (Bushe, 2012). Leaders of African learning institutions acknowledge the devastating impact of staff shortages on the goals of institutions of education. The leaders also warn that if something is not done very soon, the African academy will not only lose its ability to produce adequate personnel to support the countries' human resource needs, but also to uphold and protect the quality of intellectual life in the Africa region (Tettey, 2010). Similarly, teacher retention has become a major concern for South Africa, which is facing an aging workforce and limited prospects of recruiting and retaining young talented individuals (Robyn, 2012). Higher education institutions are also particularly vulnerable to losing their highly-qualified staff to the private sector and to other higher education institutions that offer better rewards and benefits (Van et al., 2013).

In Nigeria, two-thirds of its 36,134 academic staff positions in learning institutions remain unfilled due to the tough competition prevailing among organizations (Ng'ethe, Iravo & Namusonge et al., 2012). Similarly, Mhlanga et al., (2013) notes that Zimbabwe was rebuilding the quality of staff and the staffing levels in its education institutions after the economic meltdown. The rebuilding of quality staff entailed employing effective staff retention strategies. Wachira (2013) observe that with market transition and the opening-up of labour markets, alternate career paths are increasingly becoming open to current and potential educators. This has led to high level of mobility among the academic staff.

In Ghana, a policy that involved posting newly qualified teachers in pairs seems to work well. Another strategy in Ghana involved linking rural deployment with a teacher education outreach program, with the aim of helping female teachers to feel safe and have a greater sense of control over their deployment (Hedges, 2000). Pairing teachers up during posting as a measure of retaining teachers in a place for some time for they will share their problems and then encourage each other hence they stay a little longer than if they were posted singly. If the paired teachers happen to be of different gender,

then creation of families begin and this will be binding hence they will settle down as a family so there will be no need of transfer out of the area for it will be home. Mpokosa *et al.*,(2008) observed that non-salary incentives strategy in Mozambique in term of housing, health insurance, transport subsidies or bicycles, has helped to motivate teachers and increase the retention rates. Although specific numbers for teacher transfers in Malaysia remain unclear, a separate research finding indicated that the probability of a teacher transferring from a lower socioeconomic school to a school with higher socioeconomic status is four times higher than in the opposite direction (Krei, 2000). Due to this, it is clear that teacher retention in rural Malaysia is a serious problem. Unless swift interventions take place, millions of the most needy, rural Malaysian children will continue receiving poor quality instruction and will continue to fall behind. In Malawi, there is a great deal of teacher movement. In 2004 over 4000 teachers, or 10% of teacher's population transferred to other schools (Chabari, 2010 and Smollin, 2011).

Tanzanian government has to set strategies for teachers' motivation starting with the improvement of teachers' working environments. However, retention of academic staff in institutions of higher learning in Tanzania is low (Selesho & Naile, 2014). The United Republic of Tanzania (2013) asserts that despite efforts by the Ministry of Education to retain human resources, these institutions continue to experience very low academic staff retention. However, educational institutions in some parts of the world still lag behind, for instance, teacher institutions still face mega challenges in terms of maintaining talented staff especially in Uganda for example, suitable human resources are hard to nurture and locate, but can easily dissipate to other parts of the world causing a surplus in those areas and a shortage locally (Mayer et al., 2014).

In 2001, the Uganda government introduced a hardship allowance of 20% of basic salary for "hard-to-reach" areas (Mulkeen, 2005). The education Act 2008 explains how Uganda bases on the foundation that education plays a crucial

role in the national development and focuses on the moral, intellectual, ideological, cultural and socio-economic spheres which must be captured and controlled administratively by head teachers. In this aspect head teachers and other education stake holders play a vital role in the process but the transfer system always affect their performance since they are hardly consulted prior to their transfer. Education is accepted as central in liberating people from the vicious cycles of poverty, dependency, disease and ignorance. In Uganda it's the policy of the ministry of education to transfer its employees, especially teachers from one position to another and from one place to another. This is done to effect efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery within the ministry. Despite this, transfers have been marred by favouritism, corruption as well as nepotism (Nassali, 2000).

In the Kenyan context, the situation of high educator turnover is not any different from the global and regional trends (Orodho *et al.*, 2013). The situation is not different in Kenya, Teachers Service Commission has been committed to staffing all public schools with teachers and reducing teacher transfers. A bonding policy which restricts newly recruited teachers from transferring before the end of five years has also been put in place since 2001. Despite these measures, teacher transfer intentions are still high at an estimated rate of 10.9% (Arora,2012). Since 2018, Al-Shabaab has had a substantial negative impact on the education sector in Northern Kenya. The group started by targeting schools and killing teachers there. Due to the fact that the bulk of the teachers were outsiders and typically Christians, this has caused many of the teachers to leave the area. Al Shabaab views them as foreigners since it wants to drive out all non-Muslims from the region. Teachers are easy targets because they reside in areas where schools exist, as opposed to other non-natives such as politicians and businesses who reside in towns with better security. In light of this, a study was undertaken to investigate the influence of perceived security and turnover among the non-native teachers in public schools in Northern region of Kenya.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

In the public elementary schools in Northern part of Kenya, an ex-post facto research approach was used to examine the variables that influence teachers' intentions to move. Ex post facto analysis was the most effective research technique to apply for addressing the study's problems. Ex post facto is the term for a research technique where the independent variable(s) have already happened and the researcher begins by looking back at the dependent variable(s) to see if there are any potential connections or affects on the dependent variable (s) 2012 (Patten).

The Study Area

The major towns in the Northern Kenya are Maralal, Lodwar, Lokichogio, Anglomania, Marsabit, Wajir, Garissa and Bura. Wajir and Lokichogio have airports with daily scheduled flights from destinations in Kenya. Wajir also has flights to Somalia and Lokichogio has flights to Sudan.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The study's sample, which included all the 29 teachers (29 non-native), who was selected using

snowball samplings method (Orodho, 2012). data was collected using a questionnaire tool.

Results

Perceived Security and Teacher Turnover

The study's goal was to examine how teachers working in public schools in the Northern Kenya felt about their personal security and whether they intended to leave.

The following hypothesis was tested:

H₀: There is no statistically significant influence of perceived security on teacher turnover in public schools in the Northern Kenya

The non-local teachers were asked to rate their opinions against six statements on a five point likert scale, with a score of 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree," in order to ascertain the extent to which teacher perceptions about security influenced affected their turnover. As frequencies and weighted averages, the ratings were examined. Table 1, which follows, displays the outcomes.

(SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, U- Uncertain, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree)

Table 1. Teacher Perceptions about Security

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD	Σfi	$\Sigma fiwi$	$\frac{\Sigma fiwi}{\Sigma fi}$
School location is insecure	2	14	5	8	0	29	97	3.34
This region is unsafe	3	16	3	7	0	29	102	3.52
Feels unsafe working here	4	9	8	8	0	29	96	3.31
Security threat is real	7	14	2	6	0	29	109	3.76
Teachers' safety is not guaranteed	3	15	8	3	0	29	105	3.62
The community is unfriendly	7	10	6	6	0	29	105	3.62

Source: Field Data, 2021

When the instructors were asked to rate the assertion that the location of the school is unsafe, 16 (55.2%) said they agreed with it, compared to 8 (27.6%) who disagreed and 5

(17.2%) who were unsure. The weighted average for the claim was 3.34, suggesting that the majority of non-local teachers believed that school locations lacked security.

19 people (65.5%) said they agreed that in the Northern is unsafe for work, while 7 people (24.1%) disagreed. Only 3 people, or 10.3%, were unsure of the assertion. The statement's weighted average was 3.52, indicating that teachers generally rated the region as dangerous for employment.

The assertion that the respondents felt unsafe working in the region had to be rated by the respondents as well. Even though 8 (27.6%) disagreed with the assertion and a comparable percentage were doubtful, the majority of respondents—more than half—were either unsure or disputed that they feel dangerous working in the Northern Kenya. The weighted average was 3.31, which suggests that most respondents thought it was risky to work in the in the Northern Kenya region.

When asked to rate the claim that a security threat exists in the Northern Kenya region, a majority of 21 people (72.4%) said they agreed with it, while only 6 people (20.7%) disagreed and 2 people (6.9%) were unsure. As a result, the rating had a high weighted average of 3.76, indicating that the respondents believed the region posed a security danger.

18 people (62.1%) agreed with the assertion that teachers' safety was not guaranteed in Northern Kenya region, while just 3 people (10.3%)

disagreed. 8, a sizable minority (27.6%) were unsure. This suggests that there is generally agreement about the statement, which can reflect that the issue of teacher safety is not equally dispersed throughout the northern Kenya. With a weighted mean of 3.62, the statement's results show that the majority of non-local teachers believed that their safety was not guaranteed in the region.

The respondents were then asked to rate how unfriendly they thought the neighborhood was. 17 out of the sample (58.6%) agreed with the statement, compared to 6 (20.7%) who disagreed and an equal number who were unsure. Again, there was a considerable split in view, and although though the statement's weighted average was 3.62, it may be inferred that the issue was not distributed equally throughout the northern region of Kenya.

Aggregation of Variables of Teacher Perceptions about Security

To create indices that may assess felt security, the ratings for each item measuring the two teacher views of security were added up. The values of the indices ranged from 12 to 28. Values above 20 suggest that the in the Northern Kenya was insecure, which raised concerns about teacher safety. Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics for the variables.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Variable of Perceived Security

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teacher Security Index	29	12.00	28.00	21.1724	5.10650
Valid N (list wise)	29				

Source: SPSS Output

The average rating for the variable, 21.1724, with a standard deviation of 5.10650, as shown in Table 2, suggests that security concerns were a top priority in the region (m=21.1724, sd=5.10650).

Simple Regression Analysis of the Influence of Teacher Perceptions about Security in the Northern Kenyan Public Schools on Turnover

To ascertain the impact of teachers' perceptions

of their own insecurity on turnover, a straightforward regression analysis was performed. The following format might be used to present the regression model for this goal:

$$T_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 P_1 + \epsilon$$

Where T_i - denotes the transfer intentions which is the dependent variable

While the independent variables (Predictors) are

P_1 - Teacher perceptions about security

ϵ - Error term

α_1 is the regression coefficient for the predictor variable while α_0 is the constant. Interpreting the results of simple regression analysis, the study considered were the Coefficient of multiple determination (R-squared), the F-statistic in the

ANOVA Table, the regression coefficients and beta values.

The Coefficient of Multiple Correlations and the coefficient of determination were used to calculate the proportions of variation in teacher turnover that may be attributable to variations in views about security in in the Northern in Kenya. Table 3 presents the findings.

Table 3. Model Summary for Regression of Teacher Perceptions about Security on Turnover

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.736 ^a	.542	.525	4.66491

Note: a. Predictors: (Constant) Teacher Security-Index

Source: Spss Output

The result in Table 3, reveal a strong correlation between teacher perceptions about security and (R=0.736). The model also has a coefficient of determination, $R^2 = 0.542$ which indicates that the independent variable (teacher perceptions about security) explain up to 54.2% of the variations in turnover. This implies that the

model satisfactorily fits the data.

The goal of the study was to ascertain whether variations in turnover intentions could be significantly predicted by the independent variable. F-statistic and One-way ANOVA were applied. Table 4 below shows the results.

Table 4. Model ANOVA Test (N=29)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
1	Regression	694.582	1	694.582	31.918	.000 ^b
	Residual	587.556	27	21.761		
	Total	1282.138	28			

Note: a. Dependent Variable: Turnover Index; b. Predictors: (Constant), Teacher Security Index

Source: SPSS Output

According to Table 4 ($F_{(1,27)} = 31.918$, $\rho < 0.05$), the independent factors of teacher perceptions of security in the Northern Kenya significantly explain the variations in turnovers.

The evaluation of the collinearity of the independent variable and an investigation of the regression coefficients made up the other portion of the regression analysis. The values are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Regression Coefficients and for Independent Variable

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.522	3.756		1.204	.039
Teacher Security Index	.975	.173	.736	5.650	.000

Source: SPSS Output

The Table 5 also shows the test for significance of the coefficients α_0 and α_1 using the t-statistic at a significance level of 0.05. Both the coefficients were statistically significant. The coefficient for perceptions about security (α_1) was statistically significant with a $t_{(1,29)} = 5.650, p < 0.05$.

Based in Table 5, the study rejects the null hypothesis (H_0) that 'There is no statistically significant influence of perceived security on teacher turnover in public schools in the Northern Kenya'. A Simple linear regression calculated to predict teacher turnovers based on perceptions about security found a significant regression equation ($F_{(1,27)} = 31.918, p < 0.05$) with $R^2 = 0.542$. The prediction equation for teacher turnovers in the Northern Kenya public schools was:

$$T_i = 4.522 + 0.736P_1$$

It implies that other things remained constant, their feelings of security in the region can be responsible for 73.6% of turnovers.

The findings in table 5 concurs with those of Agus, *et al.* (2019) who explored a relationship between job insecurity, work-related stress, and the work environment and intention to leave a company's supplier security system in Indonesia. However, Agus, *et al.* (2019), who provided support for the present study, concentrated more on employment stability. As a result, the current study focused on personal safety as a way of addressing the gap.

Conclusion

The results of the study show that perceived security significantly influences teacher's turnover in the Northern of Part of Kenya.

Recommendations

Teachers Service Commission needs to minimize teachers' turnover in public schools in the Northern Kenya region by recruiting and mentoring of teachers from the locality.

The government should assist in reducing insecurity and ensuring teacher safety in the region

Conflict of interests

Authors declared no conflict of interest.

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