

Determinants of Job Satisfaction and Retention of Special Education Teachers in Primary Schools in Nairobi County, Kenya

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Abstract: *The thrust of this paper was to examine determinants of job satisfaction and retention of special education teachers in Nairobi County, Kenya. The study was prompted by the fact that literature on job satisfaction shows that teachers are increasingly dissatisfied with their work. The study was premised on researches done on labour turn-over theory by Meyer et.al.(2003) and later by Barrington and Franco (2010) which isolates some critical factors that influence job satisfaction. A descriptive survey research design was applied. The sample consisted of 5 principals and 70 special education teachers yielding a total sample size of 75 to participate in the study. Mixed methods involving qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to generate data. The study revealed that majority of special education teachers in primary schools in the study locale were not satisfied with the terms and conditions for their job and reported that they were likely to leave in the next five years unless the situation improves. The major factors causing dissatisfaction among the teachers were of both intrinsic and extrinsic nature which included : lack of appropriate training and experience in special education setting, heavy workload due to rapidly growing student population, lack of administrative support and appraisal, and low remuneration as well as poor terms of service, amongst others. The study recommends that remuneration and terms of service for the teachers should be improved, refresher course and workshops be intensified , administrators to maintain 3-5 number of learners per special education teacher and planners and ministry of education should create more awareness on special needs education to the society.(262 words).*

Key Words: *Job satisfaction, teachers, learners with special needs, influencing factors, public special schools, quitting and retention, Nairobi County, Kenya.*

I. Introduction

Background Information

Job satisfaction as a social construct does not have a precise definition despite having drawn the attention of a number of researchers. This particular topic of job satisfaction interests both the people who work for or are associated with the organization and the people who study them (champion-Hughes,2011). Generally, although the term is relatively new, job satisfaction is considered to be the measure of an employee satisfaction or contention with their work (Rashid, Rab, Aman,HafizaShireen & Somia, 2013).This is said because not so long ago, jobs offered to a person were often only compatible with the persons' parents' profession(Rashid et.al, 2013; Kabir, 2011). Literature review provides diverse versions of the term, with other scholars contending that teacher job satisfaction may be defined as a teachers affective relationship to his or her teaching role and is a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from teaching and what perceives it is offering to the teacher (Zembylan & Panastasiou, 2006; Vasallo, 2014). According to Spector (1997), job satisfaction is defined as simply how people feel about the different aspects of their jobs. Additionally, Phillips and Connel (2003) and lai-Chai, Nik and Norliza (2013) contend that job satisfaction can be referred to as the degree to which employees are contend with the jobs that they perform. They explained that job satisfaction comprises of five factors, which are satisfaction with the work itself, salary, opportunity for promotion, supervision, and relationships with colleagues (Lai-Chai, et.al, 2013).

Notwithstanding the foregoing, globally, within four years of beginning to teach , over one half of all special education teachers either leave the profession altogether or transfer to general education. Perhaps as important, during this same four-year period those who remain in special education frequently migrate from one school to another seeking a more satisfying role and better working conditions (Billingsley, 2005). Special educators who are not satisfied with their job has low morale which has led to apathy, poor job performance, increased value for material rewards, dissatisfaction with school authorities, low turnover and constant shortages. The rate of attrition of special educators who are not satisfied with their job is particularly excessive

in high poverty urban schools due to fewer resources and poorer working conditions (Darling Hammond, L. & Young, P. 2000). Low salaries, inadequate support from school administration, students' discipline problems and limited faculty input into school all have a negative effect in special education teachers job satisfaction hence high rate of turnover and low retention rates.

Nonetheless, it is arguable that successful job satisfaction must be built bottom up i.e. identifying causes of voluntary turnover, reasons for retention and addressing identified causes of turnover, and reasons for retention. This is because replacing special education teachers is no easy task and trends suggest it will only be more difficult in the future. Yet, as documented by Giacometti (2005), obtaining and retaining teachers is a continuing concern that is facing the educational leaders at all levels. Literature on job satisfaction is also prolific and shows that teachers are increasingly dissatisfied with their work and this prompted the researchers to delve into this concept with a view to shedding light on the effect of job satisfaction on quitting and retention of special education teachers in public primary special schools in Nairobi City County.

State of Art Review

Labour Turnover or turnover is the rate at which an employer gains or loses employees. It also means how long the employees tend to stay. Employees are very important in any running business, without them the business would be unsuccessful. However more and more employees today are leaving a firm through attrition, dismissal or resignation. (Billingsley 2005).

High turnover can be harmful to a company's productivity. If skilled workers are often leaving, the worker population contains a high percentage of novice workers. Also high turnover rates of skilled professionals can pose as a risk due to human capital (such as skills, training and knowledge) lost. Notably, these employees are likely to be re-employed within the same industry by a competitor. Therefore, turnover of these individuals incurs both replacements cost to the organization as well as resulting in a competitive disadvantage to the business.

High turnover is usually caused by lack of career opportunities and challenges, conflict with the management or dissatisfaction with the job-scope. Other causes are when employees leave to advance their career with greater opportunities for training career and development, search for better compensation and benefit package as well as poor management.

To prevent Turnover, a company or organization is supposed to hire the best people with new talents and veterans and enable them reach company goals hence, maximizing the investment of each employees. Taking time to listen to employees and making them feel involved will create loyalty. In turn reducing turnover and allowing for growth.

The Government of Kenya in collaboration with UNESCO continue implementing interventions to overcome challenges of special need education like strengthening training institutions like KISE to be able to offer pre-service training (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO,2008). This training enables special educators to be able to handle special needs learners (Republic of Kenya/Kenya UNESCO, 2008). In addition, special education equips teachers with skills that will enable them to meet the needs of PWDs (People with Disabilities) in Cadre of Institutions.

Kenyatta and Maseno Universities train special educators in degree, masters and PHD levels both in regular and continuing education mode of learning. (Kenyatta University, 2005/2006). This has greatly contributed to tremendous expansion and quality of special educators with high skills. Sarcastically despite all these efforts by the GOK, the rate of attrition among special educators is still raising an alarm.

The general theories of labour can be applied to teachers of special education in Nairobi. There is high turnover on special education teachers leading to low retention rate. Teacher resource is of the most important input into the education system and therefore efficient management and utilization of teachers is critical to the quality of learning outcome and international efficiency.

Researchers and policy makers agree that high qualified teachers make a difference in student achievements (Darling – Hammond & Youngs, 2002). When qualified teachers leave, they are often replaced by individuals with less experience and quite possible without full qualification to teach the students.

Nationally between 7 and 15% special education teachers leave each year depending of the definition of attrition (Mcleskey, Tyles & Flippin, 2004). If 10% leave each year, administrators will have to replace ½ of their special educators in five years period. Special educators need the structures, resources and support necessary to carry out their responsibilities. Unfortunately, special educators are often not given the necessary supports, and many leave their position frustrated and discouraged.

Teachers who are not satisfied with their job has high turnover, not only in Nairobi City County. This is harmful to SNE (Special Needs Education) as skilled teachers are often leaving. It incurs both replacements cost to the government as well as lowering the quality of education. Hence Government is supposed to try as much as possible to prevent conditions leading to teachers, burnout due to result of job

dissatisfaction by taking time to listen to the teachers and making them feel involved so as to create loyalty and reduce quitting hence enhancing retention.

Job satisfaction should be enhanced as at this time when teaching is becoming more complicated and more demanding, the competition from other profession is increasingly draining away promising talents, especially women but ironically, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Cycles of shortages and suppliers of teachers have occurred at fairly regular intervals across Kenya and they fall mostly in several subject or service area of specialization. Furthermore, as result the status of teaching as a profession becomes questionable.

Job dissatisfaction has led the status of teachers so low that most elementary teachers are ashamed to identify themselves as teachers. Unable to eat properly, live and dress properly, receive proper medical care and experience leisure, special education teachers are becoming increasingly hopeless about enhancing their live. Most of these talents are leaving the teaching profession and are randomly looking for better paid and higher status alternatively. To add to this, the state tendency to continue to treat teachers as objects of manipulation through authoritarian decrees and techno-bureaucratic logic, then one understands why teacher education is an attractive option for most bright –young people.

Job satisfaction is also depicted in salary. Teachers with low salaries were more likely to move than those with higher salaries (Spector, 1997). They also change jobs to find a better match e.g students taught type of service delivery, philosophy of programme and so on. In addition school climate that are poor triggers teachers to quit (Lai-Chai, 2013). Also inadequate administrative support is linked to more role problem, less job satisfaction, increased stress, lower level of commitment and fewer professional development opportunities. These are some of major reasons related to job satisfaction that are given by special education for leaving their profession(Hull, 2004, Ingersoll, 2001).

Lack of colleague support, less professional development, problem with teachers roles, greater diversity on case load, isolation and inadequate resources all contribute to less job satisfaction and attrition of special educators in addition young special educators are more likely to leave than older teachers(Vesallo,2014). Also, personal reasons unrelated to work contribute to special educators' attrition e.g. family move, child rearing, illness, retirement etc (Giacenti, 2005).

Special educators who are less satisfied with their jobs are more likely to leave than those who are more satisfied. In addition, teachers with less job satisfaction stay in teaching not because they enjoy but due to reasons like work schedule is compatible with family responsibilities, the teacher is the sole bread winner and cannot find a better position as to close his/her home among others. Job satisfaction should be improved by directing effects towards recruiting and hiring high-quality teachers, establishing strong induction programs and proving high quality professional development opportunities. This enhances retention (Zemblas & Panastasiou, 2006).

Information on effect of job satisfaction, in retaining special education was essential to this study because it acts as a guide in the consideration that greater efficacy, vigor and energy cannot be imposed on unwilling teachers. Hence (Billingsley, Pyecha, Smith-Davis, Murray and Hendricks 1995) cited special educators' reason for leaving are not rarely due to single work problem rather they leave because of multiple interacting problems. In addition, school- based management where school staff are free to chat their own course is one way of restructuring education system. It is based on assumption that units closer to the client understand their needs better than remote control office or state policy makers (Hess, 1992).

Literature review also reviews that professionals and leaders should intend to raise job satisfaction through raising the status and reward of teaching, attract more able and intelligent people to the field and allow teacher greater control over the content and conduct of their work. This will highly improve special education teachers' retention.

Statement of the problem

The foregoing literature has revealed that obtaining and retaining quality teachers is a continuing concern that is facing various governments as well as the education leaders at all levels. There is a growing debate about whether the concern lies with a shortage of teachers entering the field or with retaining teachers once they begin their careers (Hull, 2004). Yet, despite the rationale for enhancing retention measure, such as creating promotion opportunities among teachers, there is still a problem of low rates of retention among special education teachers (Billingsley, 2005) less job satisfaction is leading to teacher's shortage and particularly excessive in high poverty urban schools due to fewer resources and poorer working conditions (Darling Hammond, L & Young, P.2000).

As such, the problem of job satisfaction of special education teachers will persist with its adverse consequences. It is essential to fully understand ways of enhancing job satisfaction and the factors leading to low retention rate in public primary special schools in Nairobi, City County as it will be a step towards planning, Implementation and evaluation of education programme. **Purpose and objective of the paper**

The purpose of this paper is to analyze effects of job satisfaction in quitting and retention of special education teachers in Nairobi City County. This paper has three objectives, namely:

- (1) To estimate whether or not special education teachers' experience has effect on job satisfaction on quitting and retention of special education teachers.
- (2) To find out whether the remuneration package and administrative support determines the effect of job satisfaction in quitting and retention of special education teachers.
- (3) To estimate the contribution of other factors in job satisfaction on quitting and retention of special education teachers.

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on Labour Turnover Theory cited by Meyer (2003) and later elaborated by Billingsley (2005) which contends that there are common principles or fundamentals upon which good retention practice is built. It shows effects of job satisfaction and factors contributing to high retention and also factors leading to quitting of workers hence leading to low retention (Billingsley, 2005). Teachers are intrinsically motivated if an institution embraces factors leading to high job satisfaction. On the other hand if vice-versa happens, teachers are less committed, seek other employment, transfer to general education, quit the profession altogether or go to home making / child rearing and / or return to school to gain more knowledge which will give them potential opportunity to have better job in future.

The two scholars are in agreement that compensation, personal and professional development opportunities and other incentives are important in enhancing job satisfaction, attracting people and making them happy (Meyer et.al, 2003; Billingsley 2005). In addition, how any organization or company treats its employees, what it expects of them and how people relate to one another contribute immensely to the level of job satisfaction of workers. The workplace also determines their decision to stay in the company. On the other hand low salaries, inadequate support from school administration, student discipline problem and limited input into faculty or school decision all contribute to high rates of turnover hence low rates of retention (Billingsley, 2005). This may lead to poor performing of learners and teachers hence leading to attrition of special education as well as special education teachers in public primary special schools in Nairobi City County. Turnover translates among other things in shortages in education supply, cost in retirement, training and mentoring, poor learning performance due to disruption of planning programmes and continuity as well as overcrowded classes (Hallis, 1999). It is also implicit that special education teacher's job satisfaction is also influenced by teacher's experience, available instructional resources and the teaching strategies.

II. Research Methodology

A descriptive research of the survey type was adopted for this study. Descriptive approach was thus used to establish opinions of teachers and headteachers regarding the level of job satisfaction of teachers in special education institutions. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) as well as Orodho (2012) have described descriptive research as one that focuses on the incidence, distribution and interrelationships between study variables of interest. The subject of the study consisted of 5 public special primary schools in Nairobi City County. The study targeted 70 special education teachers and 5 head teachers in the county who handled learners with special needs. The teachers were randomly selected and the 5 head teachers were purposively included in the study sample since they were assumed to be in good position to suggest strategies of job satisfaction in matters related to quitting and retention of special education teachers in public primary special schools in the county as senior educational officers in their schools. Data was collected using two questionnaires which had closed ended questions and open ended questions. One was for the head teachers and the other was for the special education teachers. The questionnaires were divided into two parts. Part 1 was used to gather data of respondent and school data such as age, sex, academic qualification and experience. Part two was to gather information on job satisfaction on quitting and retention of special education teachers teaching in public primary special units in Nairobi City County.

To ascertain reliability, the test re-test technique was employed by the researchers where questionnaires were administered to 2 head teachers and 5 teachers from neighboring districts not included in the study. The researcher revisited the school after three weeks for a second re-administration. The results from the two test administrations' were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. Correlation coefficients of .823 and .894 for headteachers and teachers, respectively, were considered adequate to declare the instruments reliable for the study (Orodho, 2012). Data was collected in two phases with phase one focusing on administration of questionnaires while phase two involved intensive interviews with headteachers in the sampled schools. The quantitative data collected using questionnaires was coded and entered in the computer for analysis using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Qualitative data collected through interviews was transcribed, analyzed thematically and reported in narrative and direct quotes.

III. Findings And Discussions

Teaching Experience of Teachers and Headteachers

The first objective of this paper was to examine the extent teaching experience of teachers and headteachers determine their job satisfaction. Table 1 carries data which indicates that a majority of special education teachers are of long serving experience with at least 61 percent having served for fifteen years. An equally large proportion, constituting 20 percent had served for between 16 and 20 years, with 5.7 percent having recorded over 26 years of continuous service. Similarly, 60 percent of the headteachers in the sample had served in that administrative position for over 7 years. The overall picture painted by the results in Table 1 is that majority of both teachers and headteachers sampled had long teaching experience in teaching inn special educational institutions.

Table 1: Teaching Experience of Teachers and Headteachers

Title	Duration (years)	Frequency	Percent (%)
Special Education Teacher	1-5	4	5.7
	6-10	15	21.4
	11-15	24	34.3
	16-20	14	20.0
	21-25	9	12.9
	26 and above	4	5.7
	Total	70	100.0
Head teachers	1-5	2	40
	7-9	1	20
	10-12	1	20
	22 and above	1	20
	Total	5	100.0

It emerged that experience is not a factors negatively effecting job satisfaction and explaining causes of quitting and/or retention of special education teachers. Thus with the more experienced teachers still in the teaching profession, it is arguable that the least experienced teachers were more likely to leave as they are not used to challenges in Special Needs Education than their counterparts who are more experienced. It is also apparent that the root cause of the dissatisfaction does not directly lie with the level of qualification of the teachers.

Remuneration and Terms of service of teachers

Table 2 carries data on the perceptions of teachers regarding their level of satisfaction with the remuneration and terms of service. Majority of special education teachers 59 (84.3%) and 3(60%) head teachers revealed that they were not satisfied with remuneration package they are given as compared to their qualification. It is thus evident that over half of the teachers and headteachers were not happy with the terms and conditions of service, especially for teachers in special education institutions.

Table2: Level of satisfaction with remuneration and terms of service of teachers

Remuneration	Teachers (f)	Parentage	Headteachers (f)	Percentage
Yes	11	15.7	2	40
No	59	84.3	3	60
Total	70	100.0	5	100

This finding is in tandem with the finding of Evans (1999) and Hannerberg (2010) who concur that the effect of extrinsic factors such provision of positive reinforcement to the employees such as raising their salary, giving them compliments, giving them more important and acceptable working conditions all work towards motivating teachers and keeping on their jobs as satisfied and more productive workers.

Administrators support received by Teachers

Figure 1 carries data on the perceptions of teachers regarding administrative support received from school managers. Over half of special education teachers reported that the school mangers do not provide adequate resources needed in teaching learners with special needs.

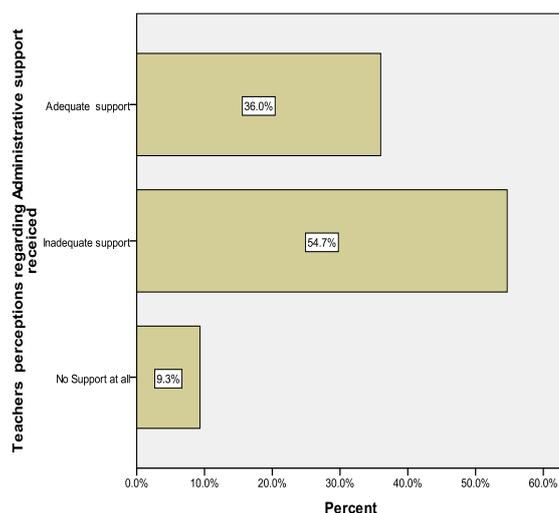


Figure 1: Teachers perceptions regarding administrative support

While about one third of the teachers were of the opinion that the administrative support was adequate, less than 10 percent declared that there was completely no support received. These findings were in agreement with the headteachers during interviews. In fact, over 80 percent of the headteachers confirmed that the teachers who teach in special education institutions do not receive the expected support to deal with the wide range of learners with special needs.

The foregoing indicates that the workplace significantly determines their decision to stay in the company or workplace. It is evident that school managers were giving very minimal administrative support to teachers as had been earlier reported by Billingsley (2005). He specifically averred that inadequate support from school administration, student discipline problem and limited input into faculty or school decision all contribute to high rates of turnover hence low rates of retention (Billingsley, 2005; Lai-Chai, 2013).

The findings of this study are in tandem with that of Meyer et.al (2003) and Billingsley (2005) with regards to effects of compensation, personal and professional development opportunities and other incentives on job satisfaction. It is imperative that these factors are important in enhancing job satisfaction, attracting people and making workers and by extension teachers happy (Meyer et.al, 2003; Billingsley 2005). In addition, it is logically arguable that how any organization or company treats its employees, what it expects of them and how people relate to one another contribute immensely to the level of job satisfaction of workers. The workplace also determines their decision to stay in the company. On the other hand low salaries, inadequate support from school administration, student discipline problem and limited input into faculty or school decision all contribute to high rates of turnover hence low rates of retention (Billingsley, 2005).

Other related Factors Affecting Job satisfaction

Finally, teachers and head teacher who were not satisfied with the remuneration package were requested to list down reasons / suggestion on same. The respondent gave multiple responses as depicted in Table 2. From the results carried in Table 3, it is evident that the most highly ranked source of dissatisfaction among both teachers and headteachers were the low salary package and the heavy workload as a result of the exponential growth in pupil population in schools in the country. Other reasons cited included: low recognition of the work of teachers since other workers in the civil service earn comparatively higher salaries, special duty allowance for special education teachers too low and not commensurate to the work done, learners’ health problems in special education institutions too involving, nature of learners make them unable to cope, amongst others.

Table 2 : Reasons for low teacher and headteacher dissatisfaction

Reasons / Suggestions	Freq.	%
Too much work load	22	23.7
Learners health problems too involving	5	5.3
Nature of learners make them unable to cope	3	3.2
Special duty allowance is too small	7	7.5
Low recognition of teachers as other civil servants in same grade earn more	14	15.0
Need for recognition for promotion	2	2.2
Rise the salary as it is too little	38	40.9
Poor condition for working	2	2.2

Interviews with Headteacher one revealed the following:

Job-dissatisfaction had led special education teachers to advance in higher education i.e. masters and PhD level and they are quickly being absorbed to other better paying professions such as banks, marketing organizations, NGOs among others. In addition, majority of those teachers are furtherer their studies in areas not related to education.

The foregoing citation implies that unless this issue of lack of job satisfaction is addressed, the government will be losing more by providing basic education and training opportunities which are acting as a solid foundation for the special education teachers to promote themselves in future to other areas for their own benefit. Hence, it is crucial to know how many teachers are leaving due to negative job satisfaction and what they do upon leaving.

The headteacher two had this version regarding reasons causing dissatisfaction amongst teachers: Most teachers derive satisfaction by matters intrinsic to the role of teaching such as student success, counseling students, positive relationships with parents and students, and personal career growth as many now flock the parallel degree programs in pursuit of higher certification.

The foregoing citation implies that teachers' empowerment through promoting job satisfaction is a condition of reform and it is only teachers themselves who must chose to rethink and revive teaching. A growing country must adopt a trend towards the use of innovative methods to upgrade the quality of untrained and undertrained teachers in slum and remote areas. The state needs native born teachers who can easily enter classrooms without having to negotiate culture and language differences.

According to headteacher four, the following contrasting reasons need to be kept in mind as affecting teacher satisfaction:

External factors such as salaries, outlawed tuition to make some extra coins, holiday teaching and incentives, and working hours did not rank highly in terms of satisfaction levels. In fact, the headteacher counseled that people need and should make their own lives better or worse, but what they think, how they feel and what they do are strongly shaped by the context in which they live and teach or work...

From the foregoing interviews with headteachers and questionnaire responses from teachers, the following can be deduced as a summary of what special education leaders can do as a strategy to retain special educators. These include:

- (i) Establishing conducive relationship between teacher, headteachers and community;
- (ii) Providing incentives for teachers in terms of higher salaries
- (iii) Providing emotional support and avenues for professional advancement;
- (iv) Creating a welcoming school environment and recognition of work done;
- (v) Listening to the teachers and implementing their suggestions;
- (vi) Encouraging relationship building among special and general education teach
- (vii) Providing assistance with organization time management and stress.

IV. Conclusion And Recommendation

The thrust of this study was to examine the determinants of job satisfaction and retention of special education teachers in primary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. The overall conclusion made from the results of the study is that if teachers are satisfied, the service quality will improve and will the teacher satisfaction. It was also evident that the experience of special education teachers influences job satisfaction which affects quitting as those special education teachers with the little experience are more likely to quit while those with high experience seem to be contented and least likely to quit the profession.

Majority of special education teachers and head teachers are not satisfied with the current remuneration package. This was cited as the major challenge and it negatively affects retention of special educators. Administrators rarely give appraisals and rarely recommend special educators and head teachers for promotion hence poor administration negatively affects job satisfaction leading to low retention of special educators. Majority of special educators are not satisfied with their job and feel overworked and reported they are likely to leave in the next 5 years.

On the strength of the foregoing findings from the study, it is recommended that:

1. Teachers handling learners with special needs should be given higher remuneration as they handle more complex learners. This will enhance their job satisfaction and also motivate and enhance their effectiveness in implementation of education programmed to learners with special needs. It will also reduce the rate of turnover of special trained teachers.
2. Teachers handling learners with special needs should be given refresher course and workshop, also training course in term of capacity and quitting.
3. Policy planners and ministry of education should create awareness on special needs education to the society.

4. Special education teachers in lower levels of professional qualification should pursue higher levels of special training.
5. Head teachers should maintain the recommendation 3-5 numbers of learners with special needs per special education teachers. As it is currently majority special educators are not satisfied with their job and feel overworked and reported they are likely to leave in the next 5 years.

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