

School Leadership As Determinant Of Teacher Transfer Intention In Public Secondary Schools In Mbita And Suba Sub-Counties, Kenya

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Abstract: *Teacher transfer intention, precursor to any transfer requests, impedes professional motivation to exert optimum work effort towards achieving school goals. This results in a drop in excitement with regular work activities to their learners' disadvantage. However, if granted, there would be underlying costs in pedagogical disturbance from teacher replacement, recruitment and cohesion activities. To mitigate this, among other concerns, since 2001, Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) has school-based teacher recruitment system that assumes that teachers apply for employment in schools of choice. Despite this effort, teacher transfer requests in Mbita and Suba Sub-counties {formerly one district named Suba by 2012} were at a high average, fluctuating from 29(29.5%) in 2009, 21(20%) in 2010, 27(22.7%) in 2011, 43(17%) in 2012, and 62(29%) in 2013. This was above the highest Homabay County average of 12.2% in the said period. Literature posits that School Leadership and Facilitation underpins staff stability, hence the need to investigate the extent to which, together, they determine teacher transfer intention. The study was anchored on Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) which stipulates that intentions are precursors of actual behaviour. Transfer intention was determined based on Mobley's Employee Turnover Intention Model (Mobley, 1977) to identify actual relevant teachers for the study population through a baseline survey. Saturated Sampling technique was then used to select 232 teachers with transfer intention and 26 teachers without transfer intention and Purposive Sampling technique for 28 headteachers and one County Staffing Officer (CSO). Questionnaire and interview were used for data collection. Regression analysis was used for quantitative inferential data while qualitative information was considered according to themes in an on-going process as they emerged. Study response rate was 222(97%) teachers with transfer intention, 23(88%) teachers without transfer intention, 23(82%) headteachers and 1(100%) County Staffing Officer. The study concluded that at Adj.R² of 0.010 with significance of 0.079, α 0.05; with 1.0 % variance, and t score of -1.76 directionality, there was no significant relationship between School Leadership and Facilitation and teacher transfer intention in Mbita and Suba Sub-counties. It recommended that to address teacher transfer intention, school administrators should minimally focus on School Leadership and Facilitation. Instead, they should consider other factors such as: teacher promotion, interpersonal relations, lack of proper housing for teachers in school surrounding, insecurity, putting up better schools for teachers' children, and improving on electrification. In addition, they should lengthen the non-transfer bond from 5 year period for newly recruited teachers to enhance length of tenure, and employ teachers whose homes of origin was near the school location.*

Key Words: *Intention, Work Environment, Leadership, Facilitation, Supervision, Mbita and Suba,*

I. Background

Headteacher leadership influences teacher work environment (Ladd, 2011). However, organizations are shy to measure leadership input (Jha&Jha, 2013). These are drawn from Koech, Tikoko and Chemwei (2014) who found out that in Baringo District, institutional factors underlying teacher turnover were: old, dirty, leaky or unavailable classrooms, staffroom, teacher toilets and housing. In this respect, school leaders play a pivotal role. In institutional management through supervision of staff and their attendant activities besides facilitating goal oriented school activities.

There are various school leadership theories that may apply for teacher management. For instance, Bush and West -Burnham (1994) cited in Ratanssi (2010) describe five major theories which may serve as the basis to the school's administration work. These approaches are bureaucratic, collegial, political, subjective and role ambiguity theories. However, these theories lack emphasis on guidelines necessary for headteacher effectiveness in schools (Boyd, et al., 2009). According to Grissom (2011), failing school principals rely on

theory parse, later discovering that to succeed, they should draw leadership practices from theory to favourably manipulate their subordinates.

Leadership behaviour positively enhances worker Organizational Identification (OI) (Kutilek, et al., 2010) and teacher perception of school tone (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). In this regard, Patchen's (1970) OI theory identifies its three components: organizational feelings of solidarity; attitudinal and behavioral support; and perception of shared characteristics with other members. To achieve this, a headteacher may role model the ideal to be observed by subordinates, or may be the frame of alignment by interpreting their variations into a complementary congruency (Paton, 2010). The three OI tenets (Patchen, 1970) as argued by Schrodt (2009) may result from organizational communication.

More than 25% of the teachers in North Carolina perceived that the determined and facilitative involvement of school leadership in their work-life activities were main reasons for their intention to stay despite evident personal discomfort; a return for the good done to them (CCSRI, 2007). In this regard, despite criticism by US cabinet who thought that president Lincoln's office was too open for all and sundry, and himself too much of a listener to peoples' concerns, Godwin (2013) identifies such leadership accessibility as a strength which may be emulated for successful educational leadership.

"Lincoln knew that by making himself accessible not only to well-wishers but also to grumblers and complainers he made the constituents feel valued and connected to the political process.... Rather, Lincoln seemed much more like a leader in touch with his constituents, a leader who genuinely understood the concerns of those he governed... Educational leaders could learn from Lincoln's example. Giving time and a listening ear requires a sacrifice of both time and energy, certainly, but a leader who will make that sacrifice will find himself surrounded by stakeholders who are more likely to follow him. Accessibility is more of receptiveness than of mere presence. "Saying your door is open does not mean accessibility, walk out to meet others!" "

Characteristics of schools in hardship areas include location in: troubled cities, high poverty communities and flood prone areas (World Bank, 2005; OECD, 2011). In this light, studies conducted in Suba District identified reasons for teacher transfer requests to include: fear of contracting HIV/AIDS, to join family, lack of electricity and inadequate teaching facilities (Ariko & Othuo, 2012); fear of night-runners, detached headteachers and lack of opportunities for paid tuition (Chacha, 2012). In West Pokot District, teachers fear cattle rustlers (Chepkemboi, et al., 2013). In Limuru District, a non-hardship area, teachers fear insecurity, enhanced by "mungiki" terror gang menace which mugs, robs, and kills (Waititu, 2013). In Sierra Leone and Nepal, teacher retention challenges were due to wars of political insurgency (Boe, et al., 2008). These studies agree that despite geographical hardships that may be experienced by a teacher, headteacher leadership has a significant role in controlling teacher motivation to seek transfer. However, they did not address the extent to which School Leadership determines teacher transfer intention, which was the focus of this study.

Deton (2009) in a study of teachers' perceptions of how leadership styles and practices of principals influence their job satisfaction and retention in USA explored the details of Fullan (2007), five leadership practices for effective school reform. He concluded the following: that educational leaders must be morally purposeful, must understand that change is a complex process that requires a variety of strategies; must invest in respectful and collaborative relationships; and must appreciate the importance of knowledge building, its sharing by adopting coherence building. This study will explore beyond the scope of Deton (2009) by examining the relationship between school Leadership and Facilitation, part of which there is headteacher leadership practices, and teacher transfer intention.

In many respects, the principal is the most influential individual in a school (KSSHA, 2013). For instance, Pitsoe and Machasia (2012) asserted that headteacher leadership shapes School Climate. They cited a study in which teachers expressed desire for headteachers who were visible, supportive, positive in their interaction with teachers, and clear communicators. In this study, 59% of the teachers were dissatisfied; and by the third year 22% and by fourth year 67% of the subjects of study had moved away, a sign of increased turnover with increased stay. To the quitters, headteachers were arbitrary, abusive or unsupportive. Unlike the descriptive longitudinal study, this was a correlational and descriptive cross-sectional study which sought to determine the extent to which School Leadership influenced teacher transfer intention in secondary schools in Mbita and Suba Sub-counties.

*For this study, School Leadership was considered together with Leadership Facilitation; this refers to teacher supervision practices, and provision of teaching facilities and amenities.

II. Results And Discussion

To source overview information as regards how teachers with transfer intention in Mbita and Suba Sub-counties secondary schools perceive their School Leadership and facilitation as it might be related to teacher transfer intention, respondents were asked to indicate 2 main reasons which would make teachers to seek transfer from their school. A total of 444 responses were generated from 222 teacher respondents. These were

classified into two; those which constitute School Leadership and Facilitation 14(3.2%) responses and those outside School Leadership and Facilitation 430(96.8%) responses as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Reasons Likely to Inspire Transfer Intention among Public Secondary School Teachers According to Teachers with Transfer Intention in Mbita and Suba Sub-counties

Reasons likely to inspire transfer intention among teachers according to teacher respondents		Frequency N=222		% Respondents	
Reasons within School Leadership		1	4	3	. 2
1	Poor headteacher leadership	1	4	6	. 3
Reasons outside School Leadership		4	3	0	9 6 . 8
1	Too many lessons; burdensome teaching load	2	2	9	. 9
2	Use of pit-latrines and old, inadequate staffroom	1	4	6	. 3
3	Taking too long to be promoted	1	1	5	. 4
4	Poor staff relations	9		4	. 1
5	Discrimination in appointments and favours	8		3	. 6
6	Poor staff housing	7		3	. 2
7	Student indiscipline	4		1	. 8
8	Lack of proper housing in the surrounding	1	4	0	6 3 . 1
9	Distance to town; recreation/ hospitals/ schools	5		3	2 3 . 9
10	To join family	3		7	1 6 . 7
11	To seek marriage partners	2		8	1 2 . 6
12	Too many funerals; too much disease/ illness	2		5	1 1 . 3
13	Lack of electricity	3		2	1 4 . 4
14	Fear of night runners	2		2	9 . 9
15	Thugger / theft / robbery	1		6	7 . 2
T o t a l		4	4	4	1 0 0 %

The responses in Table 1 were categorized into 16(100%) areas out of which 1(6.25%) were under School Leadership as indicated by 14(6.9%) of the 203(100%) teacher respondents. When asked to suggest ways in which the reasons inspiring the desire for transfer may be overcome, the study revealed that according to 14(100%) respondents it was wholly the responsibility of the headteacher in addressing poor headteacher leadership. According to 11(78.6%) respondents, headteachers should adopt a participatory approach to School Leadership and Facilitation, while to 3(21.4%) respondents, headteachers should benchmark with successful case studies of School Leadership. Accordingly, this reveals that to the teacher, problems regarding School Leadership and Facilitation have their solutions within the ambit of the headteacher himself; otherwise, the headteacher is 100% to blame for poor School Leadership. To this extent, a headteacher may control teacher transfer intention.

In this regard, the County Staffing Officer (CSO) argued that regardless of the number of seminars and workshops, and however detailed headteachers' management guidebooks may be, the role of the headteacher in school management may never be exhausted. This was supported by 1(4.3%) headteachers who lamented that they are expected to be super-human; pre-empting all teacher difficulties, having appropriate formulas in time to alleviate or solve them, and be receptive to blame in case of anomaly or failure. In this regard, 21(100%) teacher interviewees and 1(4.3%) headteachers seemed to support this position by arguing that a headteacher in a school should be more experienced and mature in age to be able to play pseudo-parenting role to all in his charge whenever the need arose. Arguments as posited here-to-fore reveals that the headteacher is expected to be a reservoir of wisdom, knowledge and resources at all times to provide solutions to both foreseen and unforeseen school circumstances. Respondents were in agreement that a consultative headteacher easily prevents challenges associated with poor leadership. In addition, teachers who were not intending to transfer indicated that it was due to non-expiry of the TSC non-transfer 5-year bond according to 11(52.4%), and because they were near their home area according to 14(66.6%). Therefore their reasons were not connected with headteacher leadership.

Data derived by use of School Leadership and Facilitation was subjected to correlation; one sample test, paired sample test, and regression analysis. This was meant to determine relationships as may be necessary to meet the purpose of this study. The findings were reported in Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5 as follows:

Table 2. One Sample Tests on School Leadership and Facilitation Rating Levels. Teacher Transfer Intention Mean Score for Mbita and Suba Sub-counties Public Secondary Schools

School Leadership and Facilitation Rating Score	N	TI Score Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	% Respondents
Very Low 1.00-1.49	43	3.3963	.43266	.06598	51.475	42	.000	3.39628	21.18
Low 1.5-2.49	140	3.2146	.42810	.03618	88.847	139	.000	3.21457	68.96
High 2.5-3.49	20	3.1890	.49337	.11032	28.907	19	.000	3.18900	9.85
Very High 3.5-4.0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
TOTAL	203	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100.00

The results imply that the lower the School Leadership and Facilitation rating score, the higher the Transfer Intention mean, indicative of a negative linear association. The highest Transfer Intention mean was registered by those with High rating at 3.39 who scored 0.18 points above those with High rating at 3.21. These in turn scored more than those with High rating at 3.18, by 0.03 points. Therefore the Very Low rating in respect of School Leadership and Facilitation rating scored less than the High rating by 0.21 points. However, 0(0%) respondents with High rating. This finding is in agreement with arguments of Boyd, et al. (2009) that if work environment was made pleasant, voluntary teacher transfer requests reduced by over 77% due to reduction in work related stress.

It was also necessary to find out how School Leadership and Facilitation rating scores related with corresponding teacher Transfer Intention scores. This was achieved by subjecting the scores to Paired Sample Test. The outcome was as in Table 3.

Table 3. Paired Samples Test Scores based on School Leadership and Facilitation Rating versus Teacher Transfer Intention Scores for Mbita and Suba Sub-counties Public Secondary Schools

School Leadership & Facilitation	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Leadership: Very Low vs. TI score 1	43	-2.19372	.46737	.07127	-2.33756	-2.04989	-30.779	42	.000
Pair 2 Leadership: Low vs. TI score 2	140	-1.34754	.47467	.04041	-1.42744	-1.26763	-33.349	139	.000
Pair 3 Leadership: High vs. TI score 3	20	-.41400	.57245	.12800	-.68191	-.14609	-3.234	19	.004

Table 3 reveals that that with regard to School Leadership and Facilitation, the relationship between the scores based on rating level were as follows:

- i. Very Low rating respondents had a mean score of 2.21 with a Standard Deviation of 0.43, a t-score of -46.0 with a df of 78 and significance level of .000 at 0.05 alpha.
- ii. Low rating respondents had a mean score of 1.42 with a Standard Deviation of 0.49, a t-score of -29.5 with a df of 107 and significance level of .000 at 0.05 alpha.
- iii. High rating respondents had a mean score of 2.19 with a Standard Deviation of 0.47, a t-score of -4.61 with a df of 15 and significance level of .000 at 0.05 alpha.

Just like in the case of Paired Samples Test between overall School Leadership and Facilitation rating score and teacher Transfer Intention score, the outcome is directionally negative for all pairs. This implies that increase in School Leadership score results in decrease in teacher Transfer Intention. It could be noted that the category of Very Low rating ranking was inversely related to the category of High ranking. This implied that those with Very Low rating had high teacher Transfer Intention Scores as opposed to those with High scores, who had low teacher Transfer Intention scores. However, these results were inconclusive with regard to revealing the relationship between School Leadership and Facilitation and teacher Transfer Intention.

The study sought to determine the extent to which School Leadership and Facilitation influenced teacher Transfer Intention. This was done by subjecting the scores to regression analysis. The findings are as displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. Summary of Regression Results for School Leadership and Facilitation vs. Teacher Transfer Intention Rating Scores for Public Schools in Mbita and Suba Sub-counties Secondary Schools

	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	Std Error Est.	MnSq	F	Sig. ^A	B	Std Error	β	t	Sig.
Constant								3.437				
SLF	.123 ^a	.015	.010	.436	.592	3.108	.079 ^b	-.115	.113	-.123	30.529	.000
					.190				.065		-1.763	.079

K E Y Sig.^A - ANOVA statistics significance
 B - Unstandardized coefficients Std E - Standard error of estimate
 β - Standardized coefficients F_o - Observed ANOVA statistic
 R - Multiple correlation coefficient t_o - Observed t statistic
 R² - Variance of total variance $\hat{\alpha}$ - 0.05 alpha
 Adj. R² - Improved approximation of R² C o n . - C o n s t a n t

Table 4 reveals that as regards School Leadership and Facilitation in Mbita and Suba Sub-counties Secondary Schools Adj. R² 0.010 with a significance of 0.079, $\hat{\alpha}$ 0.05 indicates that it accounts for 1% of variance in teacher Transfer Intention. This leaves 99.0% to other factors, including errors of measurements. Hence, if you manipulate School Leadership and Facilitation independently, you may alter teacher Transfer Intention by 1%.

Model of prediction: $P^{TI} = 3.437 + -0.015 SLF$

* P^{TI} refers to Predicted Transfer Intention

* SLF refers to School Leadership and Facilitation

The fact of the relationship being insignificant was similarly the impression created when 23(100%) teachers without Transfer Intention respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on an ‘agreement’ scale as regards whether School Leadership and Facilitation rated ‘high’ in their schools. The outcome was as displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Teacher without Transfer Intention Perception. as Regards School Leadership and Facilitation in their Schools

“ My school rates high in...” the following elements of School Leadership and Facilitation	1	2	3	4	T	Mean
Teacher supervision practices						
Consistency in giving fair performance feedback	13	7	3	0	36	1.6
Encouraging open communication with teachers	15	7	0	1	33	1.4
Involving teachers in monitoring and evaluation of themselves	6	6	11	0	51	2.2
Leadership ‘feed-forward’ and feedback structures	11	10	2	0	27	1.2
Sub - total Average	-	-	-	-	-	1.6
Provision of teaching facilities and amenities						
Equitable and fair distribution of instructional resources	16	3	4	0	34	1.5
Encouraging use of diverse methods of teaching and learning	5	7	10	1	53	2.3
Having an inventory relevant to teacher instructional activities	16	5	0	1	30	1.3
Responding appropriately to teaching deficiencies	7	11	6	0	47	2.0
Sub - total Average	-	-	-	-	-	1.8
Total Mean	-	-	-	-	-	1.7

KEY:

1=1.0-1.49 Strongly Disagree (SD);

2=1.5- 2.49 Disagree (D);

3=2.5-3.49 Agree (A);

4=3.5-4.0 Strongly Agree (SA)

T= Total Sum

The finding as indicated in Table 5 reveal that the 23(100%) teacher without Transfer Intention respondents realize a mean score of 1.7 ‘disagree’ in respect of School Leadership and Facilitation. Since this category of teachers do not intend to go on transfer from their schools despite the low score as regards this variable, it may be deduced that School Leadership and Facilitation rating does have little significant relationship with teacher Transfer Intention. This finding disagrees with Grissom (2011) who propounds that school leadership is key to teacher retention. This he explains to be because, headteachers give directions and necessary support during work-related quagmire that may hinder achievement of school goals. He cites Mobley (1977) who postulates that under normal circumstances all employees desire success, in whose absence, turnover desire is fuelled. Such turnover intention may be noticed in dwindling levels of employee commitment and identification with the organizations they serve.

III. Conclusion

The study set out to determine whether there was a relationship between School Leadership and Facilitation and teacher transfer intention in public secondary schools in Mbita and Suba Sub-counties in Kenya. It found out that based on data from School Leadership and Facilitation and teacher transfer intention rating scales, there was no significant relationship; only at 1.0% variance leaving 99.0% to other factors, including errors of measurement. This means that regardless of how much School Leadership and Facilitation is manipulated, teacher transfer intention may only minimally either get worse or better. Despite this finding that School Leadership and Facilitation only accounts for a minimal 1.0% variance, it is still important to optimize this minimal contribution attributed to teacher supervision practices and provision of teaching facilities and amenities; this would be to optimize the 1.0% role it plays. This non-significance was further confirmed by the fact that when asked to give reasons which may inspire their transfer, only 14(6.9%) teacher respondents indicated reasons within School Leadership and Facilitation domain. An additional indicator is that teachers without Transfer Intention impress an unpleasant School Leadership and Facilitation score but still do not intend to seek transfer from these schools. It is therefore, mainly, the other reasons that they identified that need to be addressed to control teacher transfer intention. Major ones identified among them were: lack of proper housing in the surrounding; distance to town for recreation, hospitals and schools; lack of electricity; fear of night runners; thuggery; and taking too long to be promoted; lengthen the non-transfer bond from 5 years; and employ teachers whose home locality was near the school.

IV. Recommendations

School managements to enhance teacher supervision practices, besides enhancing the provision of teaching facilities and amenities. School managements to work together with relevant school locale stakeholders to address factors outside specific school teacher work environment that non-the-less influence teacher transfer intention. These include: lack of proper housing in the surrounding; distance to town for recreation, hospitals and schools; lack of electricity; fear of night runners; thuggery; and taking too long to be promoted.

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