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Job Factors that Create Feelings of Non-Commitment to Teaching Among Primary School Teachers in Kenya

Prof. Isaac Njuguna Kimengi

Department of Educational Foundations, Moi University, P.O. Box 3900 – 30100, ELDORET – Kenya

Email: kin7559@yahoo.com

Abstract

In many countries the man in the street may be forgiven for not thinking much of the teaching profession of the high percentage of untrained teachers in service and the ease with which they (people with subgrade qualifications) are admitted. The ideas seem to be current that anybody can teach [1:76–77]. It may be hard to change this mistaken sense of values, but, one of the essential parts of any successful development of education in Africa today is a return of a higher prestige and regard for teachers [2:12]. Primary teaching in African countries tends to be regarded as the first step on the social and economic ladder. The teacher has often to work in conditions which would daunt the bravest of the spirits. The cumulative effect is to depress the public image of the teacher and to assign the profession a lower status than it once enjoyed [3:6]. The purpose of the study was to: 1. Investigate factors which might have led primary school teachers to choose teaching as a career; 2. Investigate factors which create feelings of non-commitment to teaching. The design of the study was ex post facto. Population of the study was primary school teachers. The sample size was 372 teachers. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyse the data. Among the major findings the study revealed that teaching career was a choice of people who had no other alternative. Extrinsic job factors were the major causes of the feeling of job non-commitment: External interference; Delay of supplies and maintenance; Heavy teaching load; Inadequate pay; Poor methods of promotion; No opportunity for advancement; No recognition and incentives for work done; Too much work; Blame for Students' failure; Harassment; frustrations by the public and administration officials.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: kin7559@yahoo.com.

The study concluded that effort should be made to provide teachers with the chance to grow in their job through making use of their knowledge and experience and providing them with enriching experiences, seminars and advancement courses. Teachers should not be allowed to stagnate or begin to look elsewhere for promotion and greener pastures but could be encouraged to develop within the profession.

Keywords: Non-Commitment to Teaching Factors; Career; Theory.

1. Introduction

The subject of career choice is one the phenomena that has preoccupied the attention of career philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, social scientists and educators for several decades. Career refers to union of one's subjective and objective experience in self-system interaction [4:33]. As a result, several theories and hypotheses have been postulated and many research problems undertaken in an attempt to shed some light on the phenomenon of career development. A theory attempts to bring order and meaning to observation by providing a frame of reference for making observations; they give facts the meanings which make them useful [5:9]. Furthermore, theory permits rational questioning of phenomena and offers a starting point for the analysis of empirical data.

The theories discussed here, do not exhaust all on career development, but it is necessary to limit the discussion to a few.

Ginzberg and his associates proposed that:

1. Occupational choice is a process that remains open as long as one makes and expects to make decisions about his or her work and career.
2. While the successive decisions that a young person makes during the preparatory period will have shaping influence on his or her later career, so will the continuing changes that he or she undergoes in work and life.
3. People make decisions about jobs and careers with an aim of optimizing their satisfaction by finding the best possible "fit" between their priority needs and desires and the opportunities and constraints that they confront in the world of work [6:169-176].

Anne Roe's Early Determinants of Vocational Choice

Roe formulated a theory to explain the relationship between childhood experiences and vocational behavior. According to her theory, the emotional climate in the home, the interaction between parents and child, is of three types: emotional concentration on the child, avoidance of the child or acceptance of the child [7:212-217].

Roe believed that people choose their career because of things that happened when they were very young. Hence, children who had warm and accepting parent might later to choose to enter "person-directed" occupations, and conversely. In short, Roe postulated that when people became adults, they would choose to work in situations like those they enjoyed as youths. She believed that they would try to avoid the kinds of situations that brought them pain and discomfort. She proposed that a person who enjoyed people as a

youngster would want to work with people when he/she grew up. On the other hand, a person who had a hard time with others at youth would try to avoid person-directed occupations as an adult [8:215-216].

Analyzing Roe's contributions in this case, Bailey and Stadt reported that in a recent writing, Roe acknowledged that a person or not-person orientation is less in importance than she originally believed to have stated that "a person or not a person orientation is related to later major orientation, but does not be itself account for any large amount of variance" [9:61-82].

John Crites' Theory

John Crites conceptualized vocational choice as a two-dimensional process in which choice is based increasingly upon considerations of reality factors as well as developmental processes. Applying a reality-based continuum, ranging from none to considerable, he showed that the degree of reality associated with vocational, career or occupational aspiration preference and choice was fairly low at the earlier age level and that these variables differed from interest more than they differed from each other. Crites attributed this difference to the fact that at an earlier age, the individual had just begun to differentiate between occupations and to assess his or her chances of success in them. He accentuated that as the individual got older he or she became more aware of the realities which placed the individual's choice was more often than not based on reality. This "exclusion" process became more obvious as the individual got older.

Crites argued forcefully that there was a tremendous amount of continuity in the choice that occurred between the ages of 15 and 16 years, when preferences and choices were based more on reality. Crites aptly observed that as the individual reached his or her early twenties, the "exclusion" process ended with the selection of an occupation. He stressed that this stage of choice was more realistic, since it was based primarily on factors of reality [10:79-321].

Herzberg's theory

Herzberg et. al. through experimentation found out that a clear picture emerged of the fundamental distinction between motivation and hygiene sets of factors. One set of factors revolved around the actual doing of the job, the job content or intrinsic aspect of the job. The other set of factors revolved around the environmental setting on the job, the surrounding conditions, the job content or the extrinsic aspect of the job. They found that the intrinsic factors clustered around Achievement, Recognition, Work itself, Responsibility and Advancement. These factors are determiners of job commitment or "satisfiers". The extrinsic factors were found to cluster around Organization Policy and Administration, Supervision – Technical, Salary, Personal Life, Job Security, Status, Interpersonal Relations with supervisors, Interpersonal Relations with Subordinates, Interpersonal Relations with Peers, Interpersonal Relations with supervisor, and Working conditions. These are the factors which contribute to non-commitment or dissatisfiers.

Herzberg's theory states that, theoretically, individuals operate from a neutral point, that is, they possess neither positive nor negative attitudes towards their jobs. Then the gratification of certain factors, called motivators, increases job satisfaction (commitment) beyond the neutral point, but when not gratified, the motivators lead to

only a minimal dissatisfaction. On the other hand, then hygiene factors are not gratified, negative attitudes are created, producing job non-commitment. The gratification of the hygiene factors leads only to minimal job commitment. Consequently, all motivators combined contribute to job commitment than to job non-commitment [11].

Research studies have not been conclusive on Herzberg's two factor theory. Dunnette [12] found content items to be of significant important as elements whose absence would create a desire to leave the subjects' present positions in a research and development organization. Further the study found that the same elements were related to both satisfaction and dissatisfaction, Wernimont [13:41-50] studying accountants and engineers as did Herzberg et al found that both content and context items can be sources of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction, with content items being more potent both as satisfiers and dissatisfiers. Bloom and Barry [14:291-294] performed a factor analysis of black blue-collar workers' responses to the Work Attitude Survey, a 40-item questionnaire containing 20 content and 20 context items that were rated on a 5-point Likert-type Scale. The resulting factors showed an intermingling of both content and context items. The findings showed that hygiene factors were more important to the black workers than to the white workers. Bloom and Barry then concluded that the two factor theory may be too simple to encompass the concepts of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, at least in the blue-collar black workers. It may be that the two factor theory is less useful when one considers low status work. Dunnette, Campbell and Hakel [15:356-71] found that content and context elements and overall job satisfaction, Hulin and Elements [16] found that content elements acted as both satisfiers and dissatisfiers.

The main theme of most theories and research studies is that career decision making is a complex and intricate matter, it is influenced by such factors as personality, interest and environment, and it is based more often than not on reality but compromised as the individual gets older. Research studies have not been conclusive on the role of dissatisfiers and satisfiers on motivation to work and job non-commitment. Therefore this study intends to bridge this gap.

2. Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study was to:

- Investigate factors which might have led primary school teachers to choose teaching as a career;
- Investigate factors which create feelings of non-commitment to teaching;

3. Methodology

The design of the study was an ex post facto research. An ex post facto research design is systematic empirical inquiry into which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulable. Inferences about relations among variables are made, without direct intervention, from concomitant variations of independent and dependent variables. [17:379] What it means is that the investigator has to start with the observation of dependent variables and retrospectively study independent variables for their possible effects on the dependent variables. The research design was chosen because the study was not confined merely to the collection and

description of data but sought to investigate and establish the existence of certain relationships among the variables under investigation. Hence, the design was selected to satisfy this aspect of the study.

3.1 Population and Sample

The population for this study was the Kenya Primary School Teachers. However, not all the teachers in the population took part in this study. Three counties were selected at random out of forty seven to participate in this study. The selected counties were Nyeri, Keiyo-Marakwet and Kakamega. Further selection of primary schools within each county took place.

Ten primary schools from each county were selected. The selection of the schools within each county was done at random using the table of random numbers. Kerlinger defined this as the “method of drawing a portion (sample) of a population or universe so that all possible samples of fixed size n have the same probability of being selected. [18:118]” This approach is regarded by many statisticians to be the most practical and free of bias. For instance, Kerlinger observed that:

“a sample drawn at random is unbiased in the sense that no member of the population has any more chance of being selected than any other members.
[19:119]”

3.2 Administration of the Research Instrument

The researcher communicated in writing to the headteachers of schools selected informing them of the need of the research two weeks before the actual field visit. This was to enable the headteachers to inform their staff about the research. The researcher visited each of the selected schools personally for a period of about two days, depending on the size of the school and the co-operatives of the staff. The following general characteristics were observed by the researcher as he visited the schools.

3.3 Data analysis

The data was analysed with the aid of the computer. Frequency counts and percentages were used to analyse the data.

3.4 Limitations

Limited to teachers who were present within these schools at the time of conducting the research

4. Results of the study

2.0 Factors which might have led primary school teachers to choose teaching as a career.

Table 1: Male Teachers' Reasons for Choosing Teaching Profession (N=211)

Ranking of Reasons by Male Teachers		Frequency of Responses	Percent of Responses
1.	No alternative	88	41.7
2.	Job close to home	48	22.8
3.	To earn a living	46	21.8
4.	Chance for further education	45	21.3
5.	Influence to parents	44	20.9
6.	To build the nation	43	20.4
7.	A noble profession	40	19.0
8.	Love to work with children	38	18.0
9.	Possibility of personal and profession growth on the job	38	18.0
10.	Influence of friends and teachers	34	16.1
11.	To promote education in our country	32	15.2
12.	Favourite career	32	15.2
13.	Interesting and challenging work	28	13.3
14.	Teaching as a stepping stone to other jobs	22	10.4
15.	To serve community	22	10.4
16.	Many holidays	20	9.5
17.	To be well informed all the time	16	7.6
18.	Good pay	16	7.6
19.	Enough job security	15	7.1
20.	Support parents	14	6.6

21.	No idea of other jobs	14	6.6
22.	Good terms of service	12	5.7
23.	To eradicate illiteracy	10	4.7
24.	Easily available job	9	4.3
25.	To work in the rural areas	8	3.8
26.	A simple job	7	3.2
27.	Regular salary	2	1.0
28.	To avoid frustrations	1	0.5

Table 2: Female Teachers' Reasons for Choosing Teaching Profession (N=161)

Ranking of Reasons by Female Teachers		Frequency of Responses	Percent of Responses
1.	Love for children and to work with them.	76	47.2
2.	There was no alternative	72	44.2
3.	Interesting and challenging work.	68	42.2
4.	Favourite career.	68	42.2
5.	To build the nation.	66	41.0
6.	To earn a living.	65	40.4
7.	Chance of advancement	60	37.3
8.	Job security	57	35.4
9.	Good and adequate pay	52	32,3
10.	Influence from parents and friends	48	29.8
11.	Good holidays for a mother	48	29.8

12.	Support family	42	26.1
13.	A suitable job for a woman	42	26.1
14.	Sense of responsibility in one's work	31	19.3
15.	Possibility of personal and professional growth on the job	28	17.4
	Good working conditions		
16.	To work anywhere in the country	24	14.9
17.	Influence of teachers	21	13.0
18.	Job close to home	18	11.2
19.	Continuous learning	18	11.2
20.	To hope own children	15	9.3
21.	Sense of achievement	12	7.5
22.	Easy job to get	12	7.5
23.	Not informed of other careers	8	5.0
24.	To keep oneself busy	7	4.4
25.	A job in the rural areas	5	3.1
26.	Recognition	3	1.9
27.		1	0.6

4.1 How did male and female teachers rank the factors leading them to choose the teaching profession?

The findings of this question were tabulated in Tables 1 and 2. The ten most frequently selected factors by male and female teachers when asked to indicate what factors led them to the choice of career in teaching were as follows:

The factors frequently selected by male teachers were in this order: (a) Lack of alternative; (b) Job being close to home; (c) To earn a living; (d) Chance for further education; (e) Influence of parents; (f) To build the Nation; (g) A noble profession; (h) Love to work with children; (i) Possibility of personal and professional growth on the job; and (j) Influence of friends and teachers.

Females frequently selected factors contributing to the choice of teaching in this order: (a) Love for children and to work with them; (b) Lack of alternative; (c) Interesting and challenging work; (d) Favourite career; (e) To build the Nation; (f) To earn a living; (g) Chance of advancement; (h) Job security; (i) Good and adequate pay; and (j) Influence from parents and friends.

Interpretation

The findings of this research question seem to suggest that primary school teaching was the choice of people who have or think they had restricted opportunities. This observation is drawn from the response “There was no alternative”. From this observation, it would seem that most teachers in the sample would prefer a career other than teaching. However, comparing teachers by sex, female teachers indicated more positive attitude towards choice of teaching than males. This is inferred from the response of “Love for children and to work with them” and “interesting and challenging work” by female teachers.

4.2 Factors which create feelings of non-commitment to teaching.

The results of this research objective are tabulated in Tables 3, 4 and 5. Male teachers frequently selected factors influencing their non-commitment to teaching in this order: (1) Slow process of ordering and supplying instructional materials; (2) Poor promotion methods by merit; (3) Inadequate pay; (4) Poor housing arrangements; (5) Harassment; (6) Poor working conditions; (7) Too much work; (8) Lack of recognition; (9) frequent supervision and administrative policies; and (10) External interference by public.

Female teachers frequently selected the following factors as influencing their non-commitment to teaching in this order: (1) Poor promotion methods by merit; (2) Inadequate pay; (3) Slow process of ordering and supplying instructional materials; (4) Too much work; (5) Poor housing arrangement; (8) Poor working conditions; (9) Frustrations by the public and administration officials; and (10) Lack of recognition for work done.

The headteachers frequently selected the following factors as influencing their non-commitment to teaching in this order: (1) External interference; (2) Delay of supplies and maintenance; (3) Heavy teaching load; (4) Inadequate pay; (5) Poor methods of promotion; (6) No opportunity for advancement; (7) No recognition and incentives for work done; (8) Too much work; (9) Blame for students’ failure; and (10) Frequent changes in the syllabus.

Interpretation

The findings of this study show that most teachers in the field have developed negative attitudes towards teaching because of mainly extrinsic job factors. This observation is drawn from the responses: “Slow process

of ordering and supplying instructional materials”; “External Interference by public”; “Poor promotion methods by merit”; “Inadequate pay”; “Poor housing arrangements”; and “Harassment and frustrations by the public and administration officials”.

Table 3: Male Teachers’ response to Factors Found in Teaching profession which create Feelings of Non-Commitment (N=211)

Ranking of Factors by Male Teachers		Frequency of Response	Percent of Response
1.	Slow process of ordering and supplying instructional materials		
	Poor promotion methods by merit	60	28.4
2.	Inadequate pay	60	28.4
3.	Poor housing arrangement	58	27.5
4.	Harrassment	58	27.5
5.	Poor working conditions	54	25.6
6.	Too much work	54	25.6
7.	Lack of recognition	52	24.6
8.	Frequent supervision and administration policies	36	17.1
9.	External interference (Public)	30	14.2
10.	Embarrassment	28	13.3
11.	No chance for advancement	26	12.3
12.	Frustrations (by public and administration)	24	11.4
13.	Poor parent-teacher relations	22	10.4
14.	No fringe benefits	20	9.5
15.	Unnecessary blame	18	8.5
16.	Unfair transfers	16	7.6

17.	No over-time	16	7.6
18.	Poor pupils discipline	12	5.7
19.	Lack of team work (No cohesion)	12	5.7
20.	Work not challenging	9	4.3
21.	Frequent changes in syllabus	9	4.3
22.	Extra-curricular activities	6	2.8
23.	Class load	6	2.8
24.	Lack of freedom	4	1.9
25.	Not enough job security	4	1.9
26.	Lack of subject specialization	4	1.9
27.		2	1.0

Table 4: Female Teachers' Response to the Factors Found in Teaching profession which create Feelings of Non-Commitment (N=161)

Ranking of Factors by Female Teachers		Frequency of Responses	Percent of Responses
1.	Poor promotion methods by merit	46	28.6
2.	Inadequate pay	44	27.3
3.	Slow process of ordering and supplying instruction materials	36	22.4
	Too much work		
4.	Poor housing arrangements	34	21.1
5.	Harassment	32	19.9
6.	Poor working conditions	32	19.9
7.	Frustrations (by the public and administration)	30	18.6

8.	Lack of recognition	27	16.7
9.	Poor parent-teacher relationships	27	16.7
10.	Unnecessary blame	22	13.7
11.	External interference (Public)	18	11.2
12.	Class load	18	11.2
13.	No chance for advancement	17	10.6
14.	Frequent supervision and administration policies	16	9.9
15.	Poor pupil discipline	12	7.5
16.	Extra curricular activities	10	6.2
17.	Frequent changes in syllabus	8	5.0
18.	Embarrassment	6	3.7
19.	Lack of teamwork (No cohesion)	4	2.5
20.	Lack of freedom	3	1.9
21.	Class size (50 children)	3	1.9
22.	No fringe benefits	3	1.9
23.	Unfair transfers	3	1.9
24.	Poor press	3	1.9
25.	Holiday duties	2	1.2
26.	Poor communication	2	1.2
27.	Poor environment	1	0.6
28.		1	0.6

Table 5: Headteachers' Response to the Factors Found in Teaching Profession which create Feelings of Non-Commitment (N=30)

Ranking of Factors Influencing Non-Commitment to Teaching by Headteachers		Frequency of Responses	Percent of Responses
1.	External Interference	12	40.0
2.	Delay of supplies and maintenance	8	26.7
3.	Heavy teaching load	6	20.0
4.	Inadequate pay	6	20.0
5.	Poor methods of promotion (Merit)	5	16.7
6.	No opportunity for advancement	5	16.7
7.	No recognition and incentives for work done	4	13.3
8.	Too much work	4	13.3
9.	Blame for students' failure	4	13.3
10.	Frequency changes in syllabus	4	13.3
11.	Fault finding committee members	2	6.7
12.	Too many new methods of teaching	1	3.3
13.	Nepotism in appointing headteachers	1	3.3
14.	Lack of even distribution to staff in schools	1	3.3
15.	No housing allowance for married women	1	3.3

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The findings of this study showed that five major job factors influencing teachers for being non-committed to teaching are: (1) Slow process of ordering and supplying instructional materials; (2) External interference by public; (3) Poor housing arrangement; (4) Harassment and frustrations by the public and administration officials; and (5) Poor administration policies. Schools should receive

instructional materials ordered before the beginning of every term. This will boost teachers' morale since learning materials facilitate teaching and learning.

2. Effort should be made to provide teachers with the chance to grow in their job through making use of their knowledge and experience and providing them with enriching experiences, seminars and advancement courses. Teachers should not be allowed to stagnate or begin to look elsewhere for promotion and greener pastures but could be encouraged to develop within the profession. If this is not done we risk stagnating our education system.

3. Teachers should be posted to their home counties immediately after training. Within the counties, teachers should be given the preference of teaching in the primary school closest to their homes. If this policy is implemented, it will not only minimize the problem of shortage of teachers' houses but also increase human relations among parents and teachers.

4. The study revealed that almost half of the teachers in the sample would have preferred ideally a career other than teaching. Therefore, this finding implies that primary school teaching was the choice of people who feel or who may have failed to secure other job opportunities. Further, the findings on reasons for a choice in teaching career, have shown that teaching profession was an ideal career for female teachers, while male teachers used teaching as a stepping stone to more green pastures.

5. A clear policy should be established to govern the primary schools' administration. External interference by public should never be allowed in schools' administration. In addition, headteachers should adopt a policy of seeking teachers' opinions before making school decisions. The headteachers on their part should adopt a policy of moderating such opinions before implementing them. Such a policy would boost the teachers' morale and it may subsequently make them feel part of the school administration.

6. The findings and conclusions of this study have demonstrated that intrinsic and extrinsic factors are equally important as motivators.

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