

# Staff Development Opportunities and Turnover Intention of Public Secondary School Teachers in Meru County, Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

The study aimed at establishing whether there was any relationship between staff development opportunities and turnover intention of public secondary school teachers in Meru County. The study was a descriptive survey design where both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in data collection and analysis. A total of 518 respondents were involved in the study that included 503 secondary school teachers and 15 public secondary school principals. Staff development opportunities were examined to determine their relationships with the dependent variable, turnover intention. Data obtained from questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS version 21. Hypothesis was tested using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and chi-square goodness of fit at 95%,  $p < 0.05$ . The results of product moment correlation showed a negative linear relationship between the independent variable, staff development opportunities and the dependent variable, turnover intention. The results of tests of hypothesis using Chi-square corroborated by showing a significant relationship between staff development opportunities and turnover intention of public secondary school teachers in Meru County. The study concluded that teachers' motivation in secondary schools in Meru County is low with many teachers having low morale and low levels of commitment to their jobs due to failure of most schools and their employer, Teachers Service Commission to offer them opportunities for learning and development resulting to high turnover intention. The study recommends that the Teachers Service Commission, the Ministry of Education, and the various Boards of Management consider issues of staff development as a way of motivating and reducing turnover intention hence retention in teaching service.

**KEYWORDS:** Staff development opportunities, turnover intentions, motivation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background to the study

Motivation is the direction and persistence action and is a drive which make people to choose a certain action and not others and why they continue with a chosen action over a long period even when faced with difficulties and problems (Mullins, 2010; Luthans, 2011). According to Mba & Ikemefuna (2011), employee turnover usually occurs due to management's failure to motivate them. Many teachers in Sub-Saharan Africa are poorly motivated leading to job dissatisfaction, consequently low quality teaching. (Gatsinzi, Jesse, & Makewa, 2014). This as it was concluded by Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) leads to teachers motivation crisis brought about by issues of poor remuneration, inadequate opportunities for on job training and development among other issues.

Further, inadequate motivation of teachers results to poor accountability in teaching and low dissatisfaction with their work hence turnover intention (Bennell, 2007). According to Mary (2010), majority of teachers in Africa are demotivated due to unfavorable working conditions and lack of incentives such as training and development opportunities. This makes teachers in these countries to be disgruntled and

disappointed which would most likely trigger an eventual quitting of the teaching profession. Other studies also show that when motivation is low, teacher's work performance reduces. For example, Ingersoll (2001), found that lack of community support, poor opportunity for professional advancement, political meddling in teaching profession, large class sizes, student indiscipline, low administrative support and unsafe work environment were the major causes of demotivation, poor performance and low job satisfaction within the teaching profession resulting to high turnover intention.

Glewwe, Hamishek, Humpene and Ravina (2011), compare schools to factories that produce learning on the process of schooling and teaching (inputs). Further if education system provides quality inputs (teachers), then it is possible to produce quality outputs or products (students) which are only possible if the teaching profession is made attractive as well as desirable by meeting teachers' needs such as improving their job satisfaction and motivation. Aslami, (2013) agrees by asserting that teachers will not quit or think of quitting their jobs if they are appreciated for their

good work by being provided with opportunities for training and development among other incentives.

## 1.2. Objective

The objective of this study was to establish whether there was any relationship between staff development opportunities and turnover intention of public secondary school teachers in Meru County.

## 1.3. Hypothesis

H<sub>01</sub>: Staff development opportunities have no significant relationship with turnover intention of public secondary school teachers in Meru County.

## 1.4. Significance

The researcher hopes that the study findings will inform various educational stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, Teachers Service Commission, and administrators of educational institutions on the need to reduce teacher turnover intentions through increasing teacher motivation and organizational commitment by offering teachers opportunities for on job learning and development.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Staff development opportunities and employee turnover intentions

OECD (2009) describes professional developments as the various activities that help in raising workers skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics. As a result, it leads to promotional chances as well as enhancing their employability both within the organization and outside the organization (Meyer & Smith, 2003). According to Werner (2009), training and development aims at improving knowledge, skills and employees' attitudes towards their work. He further explains that training mainly involves provision of knowledge and skills to employees to perform specific tasks by changing attitudes of such employees. Origo and Nzonzo, (2011), on the other hand posits that staff development aims at long term preparation of employees' for more responsibilities and enhancing their capacity to perform their work better.

Studies (Echard & Berge, 2008; Huang, 2011), allude that effective training and development results to a culture of continuous improvement in performance which eventually leads to quality results in schools. Gary (2011) agrees by postulating that combining staff development with real life experiences as well as higher education programmes may lead to acquiring of a license or a certificate which could increase achievement in employees' professional growth in or out of the organization. Further, the success of a teacher can be determined by guidance and assistance of the school by mentoring through giving assignments which increase teachers' knowledge and skills at the school level. This leads to a reduction in turnover intentions.

Literature available (Bergiel et al, 2009; Mello, 2009; Armstrong, 2010; Cunningham & Cordiero, 2007; Gupta, 2008; Kipkebut, 2010 ;Ngethe, 2013) conclude that staff development opportunities lead to attraction and retention of employees in an organization (school) because it enhances employee motivation. Further, such employees (teachers) job satisfaction is enhanced as they feel part and parcel of the organization hence more productivity. Muthama (2013) finds that those employees who are appreciated by being offered opportunities for learning and development have

little or no intention of leaving their jobs. The study's results indicate that 60% of the respondents were willing to stick in their current job if they were offered opportunities for learning and development by their organizations. Kwenin (2013) in a study on relationship between career development opportunities and employees retention in Vodafone Ghana found positive and linear correlation between career development opportunities and employee retention ( $r=0.387$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Samuel and Chipunza (2009) also found a strong association between training and development opportunities and employee retention.

Scholars (Deal & Peterson, 2009; McKenzie, et al, 2005) emphasize the importance of teacher professional development by arguing that it creates a forum which reduce teaching burden by improving teachers performance and commitment, while at the same time facilitating learning and building collegiality. According to Cha (2008) professional development opportunities leads to teachers' personal and professional growth increasing their capacity to perform effectively as teachers. Further, it provides opportunities for interaction with their colleagues hence enabling them to get fresh vision in and learning new teaching methods, new ways of assessment, new classroom management skills and use of modern technology in teaching.

Leah (2014) in a study on job satisfaction and motivation of teachers in Kiharu Sub-County found that for peoples' potential to develop, their self esteem require to be raised through being appreciated at work by being offered on job training and development. Nelson and Catherine (2015), Kadiresan et al (2015), and Jehanzeb et al (2013) also found that limited training and development opportunities impacted negatively on the employees by limiting their promotion and career advancement within the organization which eventually motivate such employees to think of quitting their current job. Meanwhile, Nguni, Slegers and Denessen (2010) expressed a different opinion by asserting that regular training and development opportunities increase employee's skills therefore raising their market value which in turn increases their mobility through transfers to other organizations or taking higher positions in other organizations or even quitting teaching to other employment areas all together.

## 3. Methodology

This study used a cross-sectional survey design. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches in data collection and analysis were employed. The researcher found this method useful because as proposed by Babbie (2010), the results emanating from such a study can easily be cascaded to the entire population as it involves observation of a sample from a cross-section of a population or phenomenon. The study population consisted of 2582 public secondary school teachers who included principals in 367 public secondary schools in Meru County.

Stratified proportionate sampling procedure was used to select twenty percent of the schools used in the study in each sub-county based on the number of schools in each sub-county. This was as proposed by Gay, Mills, & Airasian (2009), and Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who argued that social researchers recommend that 10 percent to 30 percent of the accessible population is enough and at least 30 cases are required per group for statistical data analysis. On that basis therefore, 73 secondary schools (55 day and 18

boarding) which are 20 percent of the total number of schools were used in the study. Using the same method 516 public secondary school teachers from a total population of 2,582 teachers in Meru County were randomly sampled to participate in the study.

Questionnaires for teachers were used to collect quantitative data from teachers. A closed ended questionnaire inform of 5-Likert scale based on a five point rating ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree were administered to teachers who participated in the study. The specific items of Likert scale were modified from Kipkebut (2010), Chew (2004) and Ng'ethe (2013). Qualitative data from the principals of secondary schools were collected using a well prepared interview schedule. Face to face interview with secondary school principals was to gather more information on the study variables and also to clarify various issues in relation to turnover intention affecting teachers in Meru County as they are the custodians of teachers' records as well as their supervisors. Questions included in the interview schedules were aligned to the research objectives which enabled the researcher to get the right information.

Questionnaires were validated through expert judgment. Two experts went through copies of questionnaires and gave the necessary advice on areas of improvement hence making the instrument more valid. Content validity was also ensured through a thorough review of related literature to identify the items required to measure the concepts or variables such as the level of remuneration among others.

A pilot study was done through administering 51 questionnaires to respondents who were not involved in the final study. According to Kimberlin and Winterstein (2008), a pilot study is necessary for testing reliability of data collection instruments. The researcher used 51 teachers who were not involved in the actual study for pilot study which is 10 percent of the sampled population of 516 teachers for the actual study as suggested by Connelly (2008) that a pilot sample should be ten percent of the sample projected for the larger parent study. After piloting, questionnaires were refined and items that required revision were done to make them more meaningful before the actual collection of data. Reliability (internal consistency) of the questionnaires was

then determined using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient method through the help of SPSS version 21. The Cronbach's Alpha value, ( $\alpha$ ); obtained for the variable was 0.939 which was deemed to be very reliable for the study.

Descriptive statistics such as the mean, standard deviation and percentages were estimated for all the variables of study and the information presented inform of frequency tables and percentages. The report of the analysis of the Likert scale results were done through what is referred to as the "collapsing response" by Gwavuya (2011) by adding the responses of strongly disagree percentage with those of disagree responses (SD+D) and the strongly agree with the Agree (SA+A) and also the mean and standard deviations of all the variable items. Statistical packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 was used to assist in data analysis. To test the stated hypothesis, inferential statistics were also computed in the second stage of data analysis. Chi-square goodness of-fit and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) were used to test hypotheses at 95 percent level of confidence and 5 percent level of precision.

#### 4. Results and discussion

A total of 503 out of the expected sample size of 516 staff in the teaching profession in Meru County responded to the questionnaires. This represented a highly significant response rate of 97.48 percent. This was in agreement with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who suggested that, a 50 percent response rate is adequate, a 60 percent response rate is good and a 70 percent and above response rate is very good. At the same time 15 principals of secondary schools were sampled for face to face interview out of 73 public secondary schools sampled for this study.

##### 4.1. Descriptive statistics

The objective of this study was to establish whether there was any relationship between staff development opportunities and turnover intention of public secondary school teachers in Meru County.

Three items were used to study this objective on a Likert scale 1 to 5 where 1 is strongly agree and 5 is strongly disagree as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 Relationship between Staff development opportunities and teacher turnover intentions of secondary school teachers**

	Mean	SDev.	N	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
The school invests in staff development opportunities for teachers which motivates me to continue teaching in this school	2.47	1.277	502	4.8	25.0	11.7	29.0	29.4
Teachers go through staff development programs every academic year which motivates me to continue teaching	2.30	1.236	502	3.4	21.5	10.9	30.2	34.0
Staff development opportunities provided by this school motivates me to stay in teaching longer	2.16	1.172	502	2.8	16.7	10.6	33.1	36.9

The descriptive statistics in Table 1 show that, 58.4 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed that their schools invest in staff development opportunities while 29.8 percent strongly agreed and agreed with another 11.7 percent not sure. This item had a mean rating of 2.47 and a standard deviation of 1.277. Therefore the results show that majority of secondary school teachers in Meru County have no opportunities to attend any professional development

due to their schools' inability or lack of prioritization leading to dissatisfaction which could lead to turnover intention. According to results in table 1, 64.2 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed that teachers in their schools go through staff development programs every academic year while 24.9 percent strongly agreed and agreed with another 10.9 percent not sure. The mean rating of this item was 2.30 and standard deviation of 1.236. The



descriptive results also indicate that a majority of respondents (70 %) disagreed and strongly disagreed that staff development opportunities provided by their schools motivates them to stay in teaching longer, while only 19.5percent agreed and strongly agreed with another 10.6percent not sure. The mean rating for this item was 2.16 and standard deviation of 1.172..

The reports of interviews with secondary school principals agree by stating that teachers are happy with the teaching profession when they are provided with an opportunity for academic and professional development since it improves their skills, capacity and experience in teaching leading to low intention to quit teaching. A principal of a newly established public day secondary school expressed this sentiment about staff development opportunities;

- Teachers in the newly established day secondary schools are not happy.
- This is because such schools do not have resources to sponsor them for training and learning opportunities as compared to teachers teaching in bigger schools.
- Such teachers are demotivated and therefore are always looking for a way out of these schools either through seeking for transfers to other better schools,
- seeking for alternative jobs and some going for further studies to boost their employability elsewhere.

Literature reviewed agreed with these findings. For example, Ingersoll (2001) observed that poor opportunities for professional development, among other factors as major causes of low teacher motivation, dissatisfaction with the teaching job and generally high turnover intentions among teachers. OECD (2009) also reported that effective professional development from organizations help teachers to deal with their dissatisfaction and other factors such as beliefs, attitudes, and self efficacy. They further argue that retaining teachers in such conditions particularly with no or inadequate school and professional support and also being stuck with overcrowded classes, overwhelming schedules, planning lessons and evaluating classrooms activities, teachers are unable to connect with other colleagues and hardly have any time to think about their personal and professional growth leading to a lot of stress hence high turnover intentions.

#### 4.2. Inferential statistics

As part of data analysis, inferential statistics were generated which aided in testing the stated null hypothesis,  $H_0$ : The staff development opportunities have no significant relationship with turnover intentions of public secondary school teachers in Meru County. The hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and Chi-square goodness of fit at 95 percent level of significance and 5 percent level of precision. The null hypothesis suggests that the independent variable, staff development opportunities and the dependent variable, turnover intention are independent of one another. The researcher was interested in finding out whether there was any relationship between staff development opportunities and turnover intention of public secondary school teachers in Meru County. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) was used to test the strength and direction of relationship between the independent variable (staff development opportunities) and the dependent variable (turnover intention) while Chi-square was used to determine

the significant level of relationship between the two variables, the independent and the dependent variable.

##### 4.2.1 Pearson correlation between staff development opportunities and teacher turnover intentions

The correlation results are as shown in Table 2. The results show a negative linear correlation ( $r = -0.371$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between the independent variable (staff development opportunities) and the dependent variable (turnover intentions of secondary school teachers in Meru County). This implies that staff development opportunities and turnover intention of secondary school teachers in Meru County have a significant negative correlation meaning an increase in staff development opportunities results to a corresponding decrease in turnover intention of public secondary school teachers and the reverse is true. This also agrees with literature reviewed that staff development opportunities have an impact on employee retention because it constitutes an important part of organizations contract with employees which deepen attachment of employees to an organization (Bergiel et al, 2009; Mello, 2009; Boyd et al, 2009; McKenzie et al, 2005).

The results are also in tandem with Kwenin (2013) who in a study on the relationship between career development opportunities in Vodafone Ghana Ltd found a strong correlation between career development opportunities and employees retention ( $r = 0.387$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ).

**Table 2. Pearson Correlation between staff development opportunities and teacher turnover intentions**

		SDO	ITL
SDO	Pearson Correlation	1	-.371
	Fig (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	502	502
ITL	Pearson Correlation	-.371	1
	Fig (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	502	502

##### 4.2.2 Test of hypothesis, Chi-Square goodness of fit

The results of test of hypothesis by chi-square for the staff development opportunities and turnover intention of secondary school teachers in Meru County as shown in table 3 agree with the results of Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The results show that the Pearson Chi-Square of 36.398 with 4 degrees of freedom and associated p-value (Asymptotic significance) was 0.000 which is very highly significant at  $p < 0.005$ . This is an evidence against the stated null hypothesis, hence it was rejected. A conclusion was made that staff development opportunities have a significant relationship with turnover intention of public secondary school teachers in Meru County. This means that an increase in learning and development opportunities for public secondary school teachers in Meru County will result to improved job satisfaction hence a reduced turnover intention of such teachers and vice versa. This agrees with the findings of Yula (2014) that providing of a room for career development for teachers increases chances for such to remain in the teaching profession.

**Table3 Chi-Square results for staff development opportunities and turnover intentions**

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	36.398 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	34.829	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	35.117	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	502		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.29.			

## 5. Summary and Conclusions

The objective of this study was to establish whether there was any relationship between staff development opportunities and turnover intention of public secondary school teachers in Meru County. The quantitative descriptive results show that majority of teachers in Meru County are not happy with their schools because they are not able to provide staff development programmes. These results were corroborated by qualitative results from interviews with school principals who posited that many secondary school teachers are not happy with their schools' inability to provide staff development programs hence would be willing to move to schools that are capable of offering such programmes.

The results of inferential statistics (Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation) show that staff development opportunities and turnover intention of public secondary school teachers in Meru County have a significant negative (inverse) correlation ( $r = -0.371$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This implies that improvement of staff development opportunities corresponds with an equivalent decline in teacher turnover intentions and vice versa. The Pearson Chi-Square test of hypothesis (36.398 with 4 degrees of freedom,  $p = 0.000$ ) corroborates by concluding that staff development opportunities are significantly related to turnover intention of public secondary school teachers in Meru County. The findings therefore indicate that offering teachers opportunities for learning and development reduces turnover intention and improves teacher retention in secondary schools. Most of the reviewed literature agree with the findings of this study that lack of opportunities for on job training and development are major causes of turnover intention of secondary school teachers among other employees in other organizations.

## 6. Recommendations

The study recommends that the school Boards of Management, the Teachers Service Commission and the Ministry of Education should fast track and enhance staff development by creating opportunities for learning and upgrading the pedagogical skills for teachers on a regular basis through sponsoring teachers to attend courses and workshops at Kenya Education Management Institute and other institutions such as the Kenya School of Government. This would raise motivation and job satisfaction, eventually resulting to high morale and reduction of turnover intention among secondary school teachers. It would also enhance retention in the teaching service.

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