

Factors Influencing Teacher's Employees, Turnover in West Pokot District, Kenya

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Abstract

Turnover is a very critical issue and each organization should manage its rate. The main objective of this study was to determine the factors influencing TSC employees' turnover in West Pokot district. The specific objectives of the study were to determine the influence of factors such as leadership, remuneration, working conditions and geographical location on TSC employees' turnover in West Pokot district. This study was a descriptive survey, carried out in secondary schools in West Pokot district. The target population comprised a total of 268 secondary school teachers from a total of 30 schools. A sample of 80 respondents was selected using stratified sampling, simple random sampling and systematic random sampling. Questionnaires were the main tool of data collection. The findings indicated that the majority of the respondents felt that their contribution was recognised by the management, 67% of the respondents felt they were given plenty of freedom to decide on how to do their work and that working relations with the boss was not constrained. A majority felt their organization did not give them adequate and fair pay for the work they did as reported by 57%, a fact that led to TSC employees' turnover in West Pokot. A majority of respondents agreed that they were given adequate facilities and instruments to perform their duties and they worked in a safe and healthy environment as indicated by 42%. The employees said they would leave TSC given an alternative employment, and most of them (24% strongly agreed, some 50% agreed) were comfortable with the geographical location of their organizations. The findings concluded that

TSC employees in West Pokot were not given adequate and fair pay for the work they did, their pay did not compare favourably with what they could get elsewhere and pay increases were not handled fairly in comparison to other organizations. The pay did not make them happy and that the benefits package they received did not compare well with those in other organization. Therefore it was concluded by this study that the situations led to TSC employees' turnover in West Pokot. General recommendations were made to stem turnover of TSC employees in West Pokot district.

Key words: Employees, turnover, management, remuneration, working conditions

1.2 Introduction

The job of the Human Resource manager does not stop once employees are hired, trained and paid. Additional issues relate to retaining and maintaining a healthy, willing workforce - the human resource. This is because as turnover rates increases, so do the costs of replacement and loss of productivity (Fisher Schoenfeldt and Shaw, 2009). Employee turnover sometimes known as "labour turnover," "wastage" or attrition is the rate at which people leave the organisation (Armstrong, 2009). Well managed firms try to monitor their turnover rate and identify and manage causes for turnover (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin and Cardy 2010). Transfers are also considered as turnover. Dessler, (2009) refers to a transfer as a move from one job to another, usually, with no change in salary or grade.

For the purpose of this study, employee turnover was defined as the separation of the employee from their workplace through transfers from one organization to another that offer the same services, getting employed in different organizations that offer different services, resignation and study leave (Dessler & Varkey, 2011). The study emphasized voluntary separation whereby an employee, for personal or professional reasons, chooses to end the relationship with the employer (Dessler & Varkey, 2011)

Almost half of the teachers left the field after just five years. High teacher turnover rate was a big problem for America's public school. This attrition rate had grown by 50% for the past fifteen years (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1997). Secondary schools' charter teachers were almost four times more likely to leave. Turnover was highest at the neediest schools and leaders of such schools were in constant cycle of rebuilding their staff (Strauss, 2011). In London, many teachers were reportedly leaving the teaching profession for greener financial pastures in countries like Britain (Pillay, 2001).

The president of Gambian Teachers' Union reported a massive exit of teachers from the profession due to among other reasons a lack of adequate salaries (Kamara, 2002). In Uganda, top performing schools attracted some of the best teachers so that they bask in the glory of such schools (Education Watch Vol.019, 2007, P.1).

In Kenya, Mbugua and Reche, (2012) said that in Mwimbi division, Maara district for the last one year experienced a 50% turnover of teachers who were transferred once, 33.3% twice and 16% were transferred five times a year. Secondary school teacher transfer requests in Suba

district had been the highest at about 16.5%. Out of 38 newly recruited secondary school teachers since 2001 whose bonding period had not elapsed, 26% of them had already applied for transfers by December 2005. These figures were high and above the national annual average of 5% (Ariko & Simatwa, 2011). Therefore this study was to determine the factors influencing TSC employees' turnover in West Pokot district.

1.3 Literature Review

There has been an alarming increase in the rate of Teachers Service Commission employees' turnover in Kenya. There have been cases of departmental transfers lately, where TSC employees, especially teachers have left the teaching service to join other ministries (Teachers' Image Vol.13, 2007, P.7). The Teachers' Service Commission's chairman says the first group of employees who were employed under the five year rule have already worked in the areas of initial posting and are now asking to be posted out, mostly to their districts of birth (Teachers' Image Vol.13, 2007, P.7). For the last five years, 477 employees have been employed by the TSC in West Pokot district. Out of this 161 workers have left their stations for other places. Therefore the rate of turnover for TSC employees in this district stands at 33.75% (TSC West Pokot district Statistics).

TSC employees' attrition represents the loss of experienced staff from the system especially where those who are leaving the profession are more successful or more qualified workers. It may have the effect of leaving a less capable pool of staff in the classroom. It may also lead to demoralization among the employees remaining. High rates of turnover are expensive in terms of additional recruitment costs, lost production costs, increased cost of training replacement employees, loss of know-how and customer goodwill (Armstrong, 2009).

The general objective of this study was to determine the factors influencing TSC employees' turnover in West Pokot district. Specifically, the study described the influence of factors such as leadership, remuneration, working conditions and geographical location on TSC employees' turnover in the district. It was important to determine the factors influencing Teachers Service Commission employees' turnover as such findings would enable TSC and other stakeholders in education to formulate policies that would ensure staff retention and ultimately improve performance in education.

Conceptual Framework

Independent variables

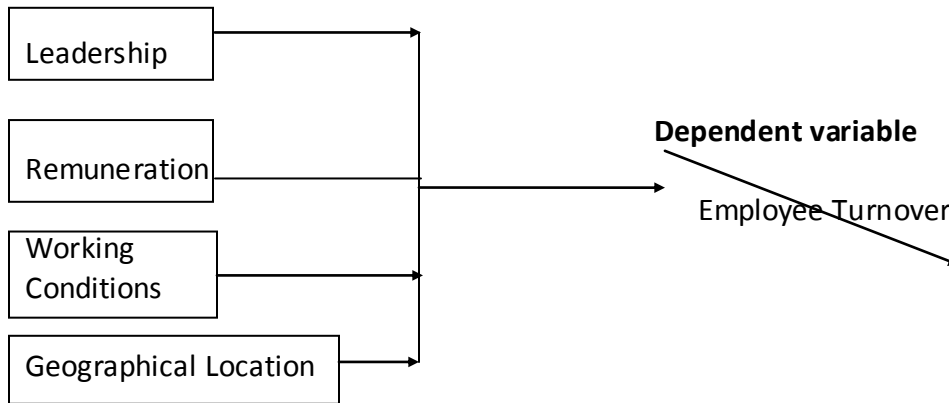


Figure 2. 1: Conceptual framework

1.3.1 Variables Overview

There were two important variables which influenced the outcome of this study. The first category of variables fell under independent variables. The independent variables in this study were grouped into leadership, remuneration, working conditions and geographical factors. The second variable was the dependent one which is employee turnover.

Leadership is one of the critical factors that can lead to increased turnover. Employees favour leadership that creates mutual respect between them and their superiors. Aspects of leadership include relationship with supervisors, relationship with peers, supervision, recognition of employees' efforts and administration (Brox, 2012).

Employees will quit their work if they feel that they are not well remunerated. This is by being paid an adequate salary and availing to them other benefits such as house allowance, commuter allowance and insurance services. Starters will only stay in organizations that pay them a low salary because they are desperate to get a job. After a little while, they will start looking for better paying jobs in other organizations and this will result to increased turnover (Fisher, Schoenfeldt and Shaw 2009).

Employees would like to work in comfortable work places where there are adequate facilities such as buildings, furniture, work instruments and also where health and safety measures are observed. Adverse work conditions will lead to increased turnover. (Handelsman, 2009).

Some of the geographical locations of organizations are very harsh for the employees. Such locations include semi-arid areas, areas with poor infrastructure and areas prone to floods and diseases. Employees will only work in such places because they are desperate for money but once they are a bit stable financially, they will move to other organizations in areas of their choice thus increasing the turnover rate (MacDonald, 2012).

1.4 Research Methods

This study was conducted through descriptive survey research design. This type of research design attempts to describe systematically, a situation, problem, phenomenon, or provides information about an issue, or describes attitudes towards an issue (Kumar, 2005). The design was suitable for the study because the study aimed to describe the factors influencing TSC employees' turnover in West Pokot district. The design enabled the researcher to study the relationship between the two variables, that is, turnover and factors influencing TSC employees' turnover.

This study was carried out in secondary schools in West Pokot district. The target population comprised a total of 268 secondary school teachers from a total of 30 schools. A sample of 80 respondents was selected. Stratified sampling was used to group the schools into strata of boy schools, girl schools and mixed day schools. Simple random sampling was used to select the schools from each strata and systematic random sampling used to select teachers from each school. Questionnaires were the main tool of data collection.

1.5 Findings

The findings indicated that the majority (54%) of the respondents felt that their contribution was recognised by the management, 67% of the respondents felt they were given plenty of freedom to decide on how to do their work and 54% agreed that working relations with the boss was not constrained, while majority, 34% of respondents felt that they got adequate support from their bosses therefore this did not affect the turnover of employees in West Pokot. 59% agreed that they got on well with colleagues. The employees were of the opinion that criticisms they received from their superior about their work were fair as they were based on facts and not opinions as reported by 55% of the respondents. In decision making respondents said that they would bring about improved delegation and democratic management systems.

The results of this study concluded that leadership was not the main factor triggering TSC employees' turnover in West Pokot district as their contribution was recognised by the management, they were given plenty of freedom to decide on how to do their work, working relations with their bosses was not constrained since they got adequate support from their bosses, respondents got on well with colleagues and that criticisms they received from their superiors about their work were fair as they were based on facts and not opinions.

The analyses showed that majority of the respondents felt their organization did not give them adequate and fair pay for the work they did as reported by 57%, a fact that led to TSC employees' turnover in West Pokot. The majority of the respondents felt that their pay did not compare favourably with what they could get elsewhere and also that pay increases were not handled fairly in comparison to other organizations. The respondents felt the pay they received did not make them happy and were of the opinion that the benefits package they received did not compare well with those in other organizations and therefore this was considered as a factor that led to their turnover from TSC employment. The study found out that: TSC employees in West Pokot were not given adequate and fair pay for the work they did, their pay

did not compare favourably with what they could get elsewhere and pay increases were not handled fairly in comparison to other organizations. Also the pay they received did not make them happy and that the benefits package they received did not compare well with those in other organization. Therefore it was concluded by this study that poor remuneration led to TSC employees' turnover in West Pokot district.

The findings showed that the majority of the respondents would leave TSC given an alternative employment as evidenced by 29% who strongly agreed that they would consider leaving, 39% who also agreed; a majority of the respondents indicated that they would move to non-governmental organizations, public service and higher institutions of learning because of better remuneration and working conditions there. It was evident from 53% of the respondents that there were employees who had left the organization in the last one year. The departures created workloads for those who remained behind leading to low morale among them. From the responses it was clear that there were employees who had left the organization in the last one year. It was evident that the majority of the respondents would leave TSC given an alternative employment; a factor that would contribute to employee turnover. This study concluded that the employees of TSC working in West Pokot had a desire to leave if they were given an alternative employment.

The findings of this study indicated that TSC employees in West Pokot district did not work under pressure from their organizations management and clients. Also they were given adequate facilities and instruments to carry out their duties and that they worked in a safe and healthy environment. Therefore, this study concluded that the situations did not lead to TSC employees' turnover in West Pokot district.

Most employees (24% strongly agreed, some 50% agreed) were comfortable with geographical location of their organizations. The majority (21% of the respondents strongly agreed and 40%) agreed to the question of TSC employees in West Pokot not experiencing problems due to geographical location of their place of work. The findings indicated most of the respondents had no problems with the geographical location of their organization and that they were comfortable, meaning was not the probable cause of turnover from TSC in the area.

1.6 Conclusion

The findings of this study concluded that leadership was not a major factor that contributed to TSC employees' turnover in West Pokot, Even so, there is need to address some concerns. For instance, employees should be allowed to make more decisions as to how they should conduct their work so that they are able to enjoy their work more. This would lower the rate of employee turnover from West Pokot district.

Most TSC employees in West Pokot district expressed a desire to leave their organizations for others thus increase the rate of turnover. The study recommends TSC employees should be remunerated fairly. Their pay should be the same as that of other employees of the same cadre in other organizations. The work place conditions should also be improved so as to compare with that of other organizations. These will minimize the turnover of TSC employees in West Pokot district.

Working conditions was also not a major cause of employee turnover. The study though recommends that there should be job enrichment by the TSC, through provision of a conducive atmosphere and provision of adequate facilities and instruments to enable the employees carry out their duties. Such steps will help stem turnover of employees in the district.

In addition, geographical location of the work place was not the major cause of turnover of TSC employees in West Pokot district. Still, the study recommends that benefit packages such as hardship allowance should be made attractive to employees so as to enable them work in geographical locations in West Pokot. If well packaged the allowance will not only stop turnover but will attract other employees into the area.

However, the major factor influencing turnover of these employees was poor remuneration. TSC should give employees a competitive remuneration that contains what employees would view as adequate and fair when they compare it with what other organizations pay employees of the same cadre. A fair, adequate and equitable pay will ensure that employees are happy with what they are paid and their turnover from West Pokot district is minimised.

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