

# **Does Career Progression Nudge Labour Mobility Intentions of Teaching Personnel in Teachers Service Commission (TSC) Tertiary Institutions in Kenya?**

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## **Abstract**

This study sought to identify whether career progression has an effect on labor mobility intentions of teaching personnel in Teachers Service Commission (TSC) Tertiary Institutions in Kenya. The limitation was that one factor was researched on hence not fully representative. Beneficiaries were government, other scholars, TSC and school managers. This study adopted descriptive research design. The target population was from all the TSC teachers in the TSC Tertiary institutions in Kenya. The study did stratified random sampling of institutions, 356 sample size was used. Questionnaires collected data. A pilot study of 36 questionnaires was done to determine reliability and validity which was verified when all variables had a Cronbach Alpha of 0.7 and above while the content validity of the instrument was determined by seeking credible opinion of the study supervisors. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used and reporting was done through tables and figures. The response rate was 80%. The results revealed a significant negative relationship between career progression and labour mobility intentions. It also recommended that Kenyan government addresses some of the

issues highlighted to ensure a motivated workforce to attract and retain more teaching personnel who will stay and not leave. The study encourages scholars to use same variable or more to test results in different sectors.

**Keywords:** Career Progression, Labour Mobility Intentions, Teacher Service Commission (TSC), Tertiary Institutions

### **Introduction**

The study sought to evaluate the drivers of labor mobility intentions of Teachers Service Commission (TSC) Tertiary Institutions teaching workforce which have been escalating leading to them exiting in search for greener pastures. The study by Klasen observed a substantial impact of employee turnover on economic growth based on data from East Asia, Africa, South Asia and the Middle East. It subsequently concluded that employee turnover in education and management has a direct impact on economic growth because it triggers change in management lowering the average quality of human capital (Tariq & Riaz, 2013). A moderately large number of all beginning teachers usually leave this profession after five years of teaching. The consistent teacher's turnover result into teacher shortage for increased student populations. Many studies of the West have provided evidence of teachers' shortage issues in schools of various countries in the United States (US), Netherlands and Hong Kong (Tehseen and Ul Hadi, 2015).

In most developing countries the situation is relatively bad. Reports in countries such as South Africa, Zambia, New Guinea and Malawi indicated that the problem had become disastrous as posited by (Xaba, 2003). He further reported that the president of the Gambian Teachers' union reports a massive exit of teachers from the profession due to amongst other reasons, a lack of adequate salaries, allowances, housing and promotion (Waititu, 2013). Not only is there a shortage of qualified teachers in Kenyan secondary schools, but also teachers are leaving the profession to take up non-teaching employment (Oketch and Ngware, 2012; Orodho, 2013). Labour mobility intention differs from turnover in that actual turnover is a behavioral construct, referring to an employee actually leaving the organization. On the other hand, intentions are a cognitive construct and refer to an employee planning to leave. Alternatively, one who indicates a plan to stay might actually leave on what amounts to whim. However, a case is argued that it is more feasible to obtain a reliable and valid measure of turnover intent compared with actual turnover, primarily due to potential inaccuracies and unavailability of agency records. It is also argued that intention is the single best predictor of actual turnover behavior (Muchemi *et al.*, 2014). For the purpose of this study, labor mobility intentions (LMI) refers to the determination an employee has to leave their work station for another due to one reason or another. Mobility can either be geographical or occupational.

Geographical mobility is when an employee decides to move from one station of the same organization to another in a different geographical location while occupational mobility is when the employee changes from one job to another. Training and development is one aspect that leads to career progression. It is a function of human resource management concerned with organizational activity aimed at bettering the performance of individuals and groups in organizational settings. Many workers, dream about moving their way up the ladder of success and to reach a point at which they can have all the perks and toys they want and all the leisure time to play with those toys. However, most never realize those dreams (Matuson, 2015).

### General Objective

The main objective of this study was to carry out an evaluation on the precursors of labor mobility intentions of teaching personnel in TSC Tertiary institutions in Kenya.

### Specific Objective

To find out whether career nudges labor mobility intentions of teaching personnel in TSC Tertiary institutions in Kenya.

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between career progression and labor mobility intentions of teaching personnel in TSC Tertiary institutions in Kenya.

### Literature Review

#### *Theoretical Review*

#### ***Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad and Herma Theory – 1951***

This theory proposes that a development path leads to career choice. Vocational choice is influenced by four facts namely: the reality, the influence of the educational process, the emotional and individual values factors. There are three stages that individuals pass through: fantasy, tentative and realistic. In the fantasy stage, the child is free to pursue any occupational choice. The cumulative effect of the process is the transition process in which the adolescent begins the career choice process, recognizes the consequences and responsibility of that choice. The realistic stage on the other hand has three sub-stages: exploration, crystallization and specification. In the exploration stage one restricts choice based due to personal likes, skills and abilities. In the crystallization stage an occupational choice is realized Savickas and Lent (1994). The institution managers in TSC tertiary institutions should allow teachers to climb the professional ladders by promoting hardworking and deserving teachers to positions of responsibility in order to address the need to progress career wise.



Figure 1.0 Conceptual Framework

Besides being a highly competitive environment, the corporate world could be pretty volatile and unpredictable. If one has been working hard and not reaping the rewards they rightfully deserve, it would be wise not to leave one's career in the hands of fate and hope it intervenes. Set a career on the right path and push it along, ensuring that it continues to grow. Leaders ultimately want someone they can trust to do a job for them. If they know the individual is professional, credible and works in the best interests of the organization, then they will rely on them to take on managerial positions. Most leaders also want to ensure that the people who are looking to rise up the ranks are able to deliver and have a track record of success. Management is also about inspiring, leading and retaining the leaders of the future, so bosses will want to ensure that their own management structure is able to groom those underneath them to provide a pipeline of future management talent.

Career advancement is usually not handed out to anyone on a silver platter so knowing how to take advantage of potential opportunities and going that extra mile is key in moving up up the ladder. If a company's promotions are based strictly on merit, then one's peers and subordinates should not be in a position to be jealous because if they had performed as well as one had, then they would also be in the running for the promotion (Walters, 2015). The name of training and development has been debated, with the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) arguing that "human resource development" is too evocative of the master-slave relationship between employer and employee for those who refer to their employees as "partners" or "associates" to feel comfortable with. Eventually, the CIPD settled upon "learning and development", although that was itself not free from problems, "learning" being an over-general and ambiguous name. Employee promotion is another aspect considered vital in an employee's career progression (Patrick, 2000).

Employees who receive praise or recognition for their work accomplishments end up high morale and positive workplace attitudes. Employee recognition rewards include: verbal praise, award ceremonies and public announcements for a job well done among others. Workplace recognition rewards occur frequently such as at the end of the day, week or at the conclusion of the sales month. In order to realize effectiveness at the workplace, there is need to understand the psychology of praising others for their good work, to apply the principles of employee recognition and to encourage others to initiate it in their working relationships. Appreciation is a fundamental human need like Maslow (1950) posited in his hierarchy of needs. Employees respond to appreciation expressed through recognition of their good work because it confirms their work is valued. When employees and their work are valued, their satisfaction and productivity rises, and they are motivated to maintain or improve their good work and ultimate profits attained. Praise and recognition are essential to an outstanding workplace.

When employees are recognized it leads to increased individual productivity, there is also greater employee satisfaction and enjoyment of work - more time spent focusing on the job and less time complaining. It also brings about direct performance feedback for individuals and teams. It creates higher loyalty and satisfaction scores from customers, teamwork between employees is enhanced, retention of quality employees increases – lower employee turnover. Employees can be recognized by giving sincere thanks which is more important than receiving something tangible. Employees enjoy recognition through personal, written, electronic and public praise from those they respect at work, given in a timely, specific and sincere way. This day-to-day recognition is the most important type of recognition (Harrison, 2015).

### **Empirical Review**

Nyamubarwa (2013) in the study "I am considering leaving soon" – Turnover Intentions of Academic Librarians in Zimbabwe on career reported that career growth is a key ingredient in shaping employee motivation, growth and commitment. As Lambert & Hogan (2009) observed, career progress creates stress on employee's perception of the worth of his career prospects in the organization. A lack of career progress in organizations has therefore been cited as yet another factor that influences employee turnover decisions. In organization where there are clear career ladders and there are vast opportunities for career growth and opportunities, employees are likely to stay than in organizations where employee careers are immobile and there are no opportunities for career growth.

Whereas the Holland's career typology theory has the strongest criticism as being based on gender bias because females tend to score in three personality types (artistic, social and conventional). Robbins et al (2009) have criticized McClelland's theory stating that it has less practical effect than other theories. This is due to McClelland arguing that the three needs are subconscious, meaning that we may be high on these needs without knowing. Measuring them too is not easy (Charlesdan, 2014).

Mutune and Orodho (2014) in the study teachers' turnover: what are the explanatory variables in public secondary schools in Mbeere south sub-county cite that teaching is still the poorest paying jobs in the country. Quality teachers cannot be retained under the current terms and conditions of service. These cadres of teachers feel they can be paid much better if they worked in the private sector or other ministries, other than Teachers Service Commission (Orodho et al., 2013). Asgharian et al (2013) in their study "examining the effect of workplace friendships and job embeddedness on turnover intention, the case of Mashhad as a tourist destination in Iran" note that, literatures investigating the correlation of turnover intent and actual turnover are in existence.

Labor turnover is caused by availability of new employment opportunities in the competitive sector; personality clash between the worker and the supervisor; transfer of organization misfits from one department to another; when an organization changes its operation system leading to reduction in manufacturing of a product hence loss of jobs and where the worker decided to take an early retirement. The worker is enticed by the retirement package (Mutune and Orodho, 2014).

### **Methodology**

This study adopted descriptive research design. This is because it understands the characteristics of a group in a given situation, and/or help make certain simple decisions (Sekaran, 2013). The study targeted 4848 TSC tertiary teachers in the TVET and TTCs institutions in Kenya. It used a sampling frame of all the TSC tertiary institutions from the national TVET and TTCs staffing officers. It categorized the institutions into the former eight provinces since the counties are too many (47). The study used purposive sampling through research assistants to assist collect data. The study did a 10 % stratified random sampling of the TSC tertiary institutions and also sampled the teachers to ensure that every county and the individuals were fairly represented.

The sample size was 356 lecturers. Questionnaires were the main tools for this survey because they enabled collect a lot of information within a short time from numerous respondents. Questionnaires were used to carry out pilot study so as to test clarity by the respondents. Reliability measurement was carried out using a statistical coefficient; Cronbach's Alpha which is recognized as a good direct measure of internal reliability. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Lastly data was presented through frequency distribution tables, pie charts and bar graphs to show percentages.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Response Rate**

A total of 360 questionnaires were administered, the sample size being 356. Due to the research being nationwide, it was a challenge to get back all questionnaires. However a considerable number of 286 questionnaires were returned which amounted to 80%.

### Pilot Study Results

Reliability of the measures through Cronbach's Alpha test for all the variables was also carried out (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). According to Cooper and Schindler (2011) a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.8 and above is satisfactory while Mugenda (2012) noted an Alpha of 0.6 and below is considered to be poor. This study therefore found it fit to adopt a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.7 and above. Career progression variable had three sub variables which were measured using three, two and one items anchored on a five point Likert scale. It had a Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) of 0.779. The content validity of the instrument was determined through seeking credible opinion of the experienced study supervisors.

### Factor Loading Analysis

Factor analysis is an independence technique. Its primary purpose is to define the underlying structure among the variables in an analysis (Ncedo, 2013). According to Kimtai et al (2014) factor loadings greater than 0.30 meet the minimal level; those of 0.40 are considered more vital and if the loadings are 0.50 or higher, then they are considered highly significant. This study hence adopted 0.5 and above factor loading. Career progression variable had three sub variables which were measured using three, two and one items anchored on a five point Likert scale. The factor loading of the items in the questionnaire were as displayed chronologically in table 1.0.

Table 1.0

*Factor analysis measures for all the variables*

	For the items factor loading	Variable
Career progression		
CP 1	0.802 (Training and development)	
CP 2	0.792 (Training and development)	
CP 3	0.732 (Moving up the rank)	
CP 4	0.609 (Praise and promotion)	
CP 5	0.599 (Praise and promotion)	
CP 6	0.588 (Training and development)	

Career progression was operationalized through three sub variables; training and development, praise and promotion and opportunity to moving up the rank, which were further itemized by the data collection, tool as the three tables below display the results. This was done on a fivepoint likert scale.

### Training and Development

In reference to whether there exists impartial professional advancement, 61.5% of the respondents as displayed by table 2.0 disagreed, while 16.8% remained neutral and 21.7% agreed. In regard to training opportunities being communicated and sufficient facilitation done, 63.3% disagreed, 14.3% were neutral and 22.4% agreed. On training opportunities offering relevant teachings, 36.4% disagreed, 23.8% were neutral and 39.9% agreed. On

average 53.7% disagreed, 18.3% were neutral while 28% agreed. This alluded to the fact that training offered was not sufficiently facilitated and that there was impartial professional advancement. The study was in agreement with the findings of other scholars (Ncedo, 2013; Smith, 2010) in that perpetual training and development of the employees leads to increased productivity. These also boost the skills of the workers and subsequently reduce their need to leave. In yet another study, with regard to career path development, it inferred that lack of a clear professional advancement leads teacher turnover (Waititu, 2013). According to Mobley, factors such as added responsibilities, staff training, performance and evaluation as well as the company's succession plans are suggested to reduce labour mobility (Kuria et al., 2011). All these studies being in harmony with the findings of this study, it was clear therefore that training and development is essential for employees' job satisfaction, higher productivity in the organization and hence curb labour mobility intentions.

Table 2.0

*Response on career progression; training and development*

Training and development items	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Total
raining opportunities for all teachers in all departments	26.9	34.6	16.8	17.5	4.2	100
Training opportunities communicated and sufficient facilitation done	24.1	39.2	14.3	17.5	4.9	100
Training opportunities offer relevant teachings	11.2	25.2	23.8	33.6	6.3	100
Average %	53.7		18.3		28	

### **Praise and Promotion**

With regard to promotion opportunities being fairly allocated and on meritocracy as displayed by table 3.0, 62.9% disagreed, 20.3% were neutral and 16.7% agreed. On whether TSC promotion method and process is impartial, 50% disagreed, 26.2% were neutral and 23.8 % agreed. On average 56.4% disagreed, 23.3% were neutral while 20.3% agreed. This implied that majority of the respondents were discontent with their promotion status. This study was in congruence with findings of a study which posited that majority of the respondents proposed issues that would cause teacher turnover were promotion opportunities available among others (Mutune and Orodho, 2014). It also agreed with another study in that lack of career growth in the profession was why some staff was considering leaving the profession (Nyamubarwa, 2013). It was hence concluded that the TSC needs to avail sufficient and timely promotion vacancies to teachers. Some even confessed to have stayed in the same job group for over ten and fifteen years.

Table 3.0

*Response on career progression; praise and promotion*

Praise and promotion items	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Total
Promotion opportunities fairly allocated and on meritocracy	31.8	31. 1	20. 3	13.6	3.1	100
Impartial TSC promotion method and process	21.7	28. 3	26. 2	17.5	6.3	100
Average %	56.4		23. 3		20. 3	

**Opportunity to Move up the Rank**

With regard to impartial professional advancement, 50.7% disagreed, 22% were neutral while 27.2% agreed (table 4.0). This suggested that most of the respondents had not had a chance to rise up the rank. The study results concurred with the findings that career satisfaction has a direct influence on employee turnover intentions (Ongori, 2007). It was also in agreement with the findings that, the main issues likely to trigger turnover included; the opportunity available for them to grow professionally among others (Mutune and Orodho, 2014). It was therefore intimated that opportunities to allow career progression should be availed to teachers.

Table 4.0

*Response on career progression; opportunity to moving up the rank*

Moving up the rank item	SD %	D %	N %	A %	SA %	Total
Impartial professional advancement (climbing up the ladder)	20.3	30. 4	22. 0	21.3	5.9	100

**Inferential Statistics****Correlation Analysis of Career Progression Against Labour Mobility Intentions**

Correlation test shows the strength of the association between variables used. Inter correlations coefficients ( $r$ ) were worked out by the means of Pearson's Product Moment.  $R$

within 0.10 to 0.29 was regarded as indicating a low degree of correlation,  $r$  bearing 0.30 to 0.49 was regarded as indicating a moderate degree of correlation and  $r$  of 0.50 to 1.00 was regarded as a high degree of correlation (Norizan, 2012; Cohen, 1996). Pearson correlation test was conducted to verify existence of relationship between the career progression and the labour mobility intentions of TSC tertiary institutions teaching personnel. It resulted in a strong and negative linear correlation which is significant between career progression and labour mobility intentions (an  $r$  coefficient of  $r = -0.853^{**}$ ,  $p < 0.002$ ) as presented in table 6.0 This signifies that, when the career progression increases, the labour mobility intentions of the teaching personnel of the TSC tertiary institutions decrease.

The findings are in congruence with those of a scholar Izamoje (2011), in that there is a relationship whether positive or negative because he found a statistically significant positive correlation between employees' levels of job enrichment and frequency of labour mobility ( $r = .162$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ). Which led to the suggestion that, the higher the levels of employees' job enrichment the more increased their frequency of mobility. The results of this study still coincided with those of yet another study that observed a significant weak positive correlation between job mobility and promotion satisfaction ( $-0.183^*$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ) (Ncede, 2013). It however disagreed with the findings which advanced that there exists a moderately strong and positive relationship ( $r = 0.310$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) between career development opportunities and teachers' turnover (Muchemi et al., 2012).

Table 6.0

*Correlation analysis of career progression and labour mobility intentions*

Variables	Pearson correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
WSLMI and WSCP	- 0.853**	0.002	286

Where WSLMI is weighted summation of labour mobility intention and WSCP is weighted summation of career progression.

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Implication to Research and Practice**

The following recommendations were arrived at: TSC should diversify ways to prevent the teaching personnel from being attracted elsewhere, like timely and impartial promotions opportunities. In addition promotions and particularly those given to individuals who head institutions should only be given to deserving persons, who are visionary, selfless, impartial and most importantly those that have learners at heart. TSC should enhance training programmes through giving more study leaves, remunerating well those who have acquired extra skills like masters and PhD among other things in order to differentiate itself as an organisation and gain a competitive advantage through retention of skilled employees.

**Conclusion**

Career progression had a significant negative relationship with labour mobility intentions of TSC tertiary institutions teaching staff in Kenya. Interpreted as, whenever the teachers got opportunities to rise career wise, got recognized, praised, given opportunities to train by the institution where they work, it boosts their morale subsequently reducing need to leave. They will be loyal to the employer. Even though other studies found a contrary opinion of a positive

relationship with turnover due to increased skills that make them more competitive (Muchemi et al., 2014).

### **Future Research**

The study can also be done in other sectors since the study limited itself to TSC tertiary institutions teaching staff. The results of the overall regression model showed that the career progression explained 72.7% of the variation in labour mobility intentions of teaching personnel of TSC tertiary institutions in Kenya. This subsequently creates a gap for other scholars to explore those other factors influencing labour mobility intentions of teaching personnel of TSC tertiary institutions in Kenya.

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