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**INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS SERVICE COMMISSION HUMAN
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON TEACHERS
COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TETU SUB
COUNTY, NYERI**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the influence of TSC human resource management practices on teachers' commitment in Tetu Sub County, Nyeri. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, the target population comprised of all the 12 principals and 191 teachers from which 133 teachers and principals were selected. The study used a self administered questionnaire to gather primary data. Internal consistency method was determined using Cronbach's Alpha and lastly quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics using frequencies and percentages. The study showed that TSC's teacher performance appraisal (TPA) system for new and experienced teachers is designed to: promote teacher development; provide meaningful appraisals of teachers' performance that encourage professional learning and growth; identify opportunities for additional support where required; and provide a measure of accountability to the public. The study recommends that evaluation processes carried out by TSC should reflect what is needed to change to enhance commitment in teachers for more students to succeed.

Key words: *Rewards Systems, Performance Appraisal, Teachers Evaluation Function and Promotion Function*

INTRODUCTION

The strength of any profession depends upon the degree of commitment of its members to the goals and purposes of that organization, teaching being no exception (Ballou & Podgursky, 2007). Numerous authors and researchers agree that teacher commitment is central to the work of teaching and functioning of education system. Firestone and Pennell (2003) pointed out that teacher commitment has since 2000's become a topic of interest in education discourse. The word has been interchangeably used to mean quality teachers or dedicated teachers (Abd, Darmawan, & Keeves, 2010). Elliott and Creswell (2002) argue that teacher commitment and engagement

have been identified as amongst the most critical factors in the success and future of education. Teacher commitment is one of the most important aspects of performance and quality of school staff. According to Attinello, Lare and Waters (2006), teacher commitment distinguishes those teachers who are caring, dedicated, and who take the job seriously from those who put their own

interests first. According to Coladarci (2002), commitment to teaching was defined as the "teacher's psychological attachment to the teaching profession.

Joffress and Haughey (2008) suggest that teachers' commitment is a crucial factor to an effective school, teacher satisfaction, and retention. They claim that low levels of teacher commitment results into decreased student achievement tests, than in areas where teachers were found not to be committed to their responsibilities, learners performed poorly. It is important to note that teachers' commitment to their duties is quite significant to pupils' performance. Committed teachers tend to produce good results at national examinations. Bennel and Akyeangpong (2007) in the study entitled "primary teacher commitment and attractions," claims that teacher commitment takes three forms, with the most important one being professional commitment. They argue that a professionally committed teacher rates their teaching abilities very highly and are committed to their professional advancement.

The problem relating to HR functions such as recruitment and retention of quality teachers has been repeatedly reported in literature and government documents in different countries. For example, in the United States, there is a shortage of qualified teachers particularly in maths and science or special education. Moreover, there is continuing concern that professionals are leaving the teaching field much earlier in their careers than are professionals from other fields (Burke & Ng, 2006). The constant leaving of good teachers from the teaching profession to other careers, such as the business and government sectors suggests that teaching is not an attractive career to prospective and in-service teachers (Ingersoll, 2008; National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

Certainly there are many reasons accounting for the turnover of teachers. For some people, salary, status and working conditions may be determining reasons for them to join and stay or leave the teaching profession. Cappelli (2008) has pointed out that high rates of teacher turnover are often a result of teachers seeking to better their careers or teachers are dissatisfied with teaching as a career.

A. Statement of the Problem

According to National Center for Education Statistics (2002) teachers' turnover rate shows the first few years of teaching seem to be critical for novice or beginning teachers. Studies show that a fairly high proportion of teachers leave the teaching profession in the early years of teaching

and that some potential teachers do not join the teaching profession (Baker & Smith, 2007; Ingersoll, 2008). The National Center for Education Statistics (2007) also reported that across the nation 9.3% of public school teachers left before they completed their first year in the classroom and over 1/5 of public school teachers left their positions within their first three years of teaching. Recently in Tetu sub-county there has been an increasing tendency for school teachers seeking for early retirement or leave the teaching profession, many of them are well experienced, with 10 to over 30 years of teaching experiences owing to inadequacy in TSC human resource functions especially in relation to promotion, performance appraisal and teachers evaluation (Joffres & Haughey, 2008). The phenomenon has caused much concern in the public and the education sector.

Studies that have been carried out includes Karanja (2012) found that HR functions impact teachers' turnover and productivity in secondary schools in the private sector in Kenya. Namutebi (2006) who carried out a study on TSC reward management functions and commitment of teachers reported that there are a number of challenges affecting the use of rewards in ensuring the commitment of teachers in the secondary schools in Kajiado district in Kenya. Although other studies have been conducted on the human resource management functions in secondary school in Kenya, there exist little evidence of a study focusing on the same in Tetu sub-county. It is against this background that this study embarked to investigate the influence of teachers service commission (TSC) human resource management functions on teachers' commitment with special reference to secondary schools in Tetu sub-county and fill the existing knowledge gap.

B. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of Teachers Service Commission human resource management practices on teachers' commitment in Tetu Sub County, Kenya.

C. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- I. To examine how the Teachers Service Commission rewards systems influence teachers' commitment in Tetu sub-county.

- II. To determine the influence of Teachers Service Commission performance appraisal on teachers' commitment in Tetu sub-county.
- III. To establish how Teachers Service Commission teachers evaluation function influence teachers' commitment in Tetu sub-county.
- IV. To determine how Teachers Service Commission promotion function influences teachers' commitment in Tetu sub-county.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Concept of Employee Commitment

Delery and Doty (2006) argue that there are different forms of commitment to teaching. According to them, the nature and intensity of commitment to teaching depends on factors derived from personal and professional lives. Commitment is a word they use to distinguish those who are caring, dedicated, and who take their job seriously from those who put their own interests first. The professionally committed teachers take their job seriously and they get enjoyment from it (Elliott & Croswell, 2008).

Dessler (2000) observe that teachers who are committed are those who see their students' welfare; they care for, responding to, and meeting students' needs. They strived to improve on their practice and look at pedagogies and research. They also talk and listen to their children, at the same time they work as a team with others, appropriately prepared for their lessons, and are reflective practitioners. Another view shared by committed teachers is that teaching is not just a job. Teachers invest their personal time even outside school contact hours. They have made teaching as a lifestyle. They often contemplate on their class programmes and students while engaging in a range of personal activities like in shower, shopping, or watching television (Tyree, 2006).

B. Reward Systems and Teachers' Commitment

Past researchers such as Donaldson (2009) have found that there is a strong relationship between management incentives and risk-taking which would subsequently lead to employee commitment. Other studies that concur with this conclusion include (Chan, 2008) who argue that

compensation systems remain a method to commit employees to their organizations. Chan and Hui (2005) concurred that incentives should be incorporated to organization strategies as seen as a technique which organization can apply in order to achieve higher productivity in accordance with goals.

According to Day, Elliott and Kington (2005) incentive pay is pay tied to individual commitment and hence performance, profits and other measures of success. Organizations select forms of incentive pay to energize, direct or control employees' behavior. It is influential because the amount paid is linked to predefined behaviors or outcomes. Dessler (2000) mentioned that incentives are usually paid to specific employees whose work is above standard. Employee benefits, on the other hand, are available to all employees based on their membership in the organization. There are four types of benefit plans: pay supplements, insurance, retirement benefits and services.

C. Performance Appraisal and Teachers' Commitment

Performance Appraisal is the formal, systematic assessment of how well employees perform their jobs in relation to established standard (Huang, 2000). Fletcher (2008) defines performance appraisal as a variety of activities through which organizations seek to assess employees and develop their competence, enhance performance and distribute rewards. Studies that suggest that performance appraisals do result in increase in employee commitment hence organizational performance and productivity are (Zupan & Kase, 2005). This is because poor performing employees are identified during the evaluation cycle and given feedback on how to improve. They might also undertake some developmental activities for example, training in order to rectify performance. Delery and Doty (2006) point out that results oriented performance appraisals were strongly related to return on equity and other financial measures of performance.

Employees are motivated to work at a higher level by the offer of financial incentives that are contingent on their performance, and these financial incentives are important in encouraging the retention of high performing employees (Kessler & Purcell, 2002). When these positive outcomes are not generated, it is often concluded that the fault lies with the low quality of the Performance Appraisal process (Blau, 2009).

D. Teachers' Evaluation and Teachers' Commitment

Teacher evaluation refers to reports based on one or two classroom visits using a checklist, rating form, or anecdotal record (Loup, Garland, Ellett, & Rugutt, 1996). Subjective evaluations by trained professionals and objective performance data have been identified by Rockoff & Speroni (2010) to play an important role when designing evaluation systems for teachers. This was determined with a quantitative study measuring the impact new teachers in New York City have on student achievement. Evaluation data from 4,221 math and English teachers was collected and divided into three categories of teachers: subjective evaluations of new teachers by mentors, subjective evaluations from an alternative certification program (New York City Teaching Fellows), and objective evaluations of first year teachers based on 3rd to 8th grade student achievement tests during the years 2003-2008. The study found that teachers who receive higher subjective evaluations in their first year of teaching or in a mentor program prior to hire produce higher gains in student achievement. Though this study was relevant to the current study it focused on new teachers in New York City and not on teachers' commitment. There is need that a similar study is carried out in developing countries like Kenya.

E. Promotion

Schools categorization in Kenyan portraying different status for not only the students but also teachers provides divergent perceptions and attitudes. According to Kamau (2003), secondary school teachers' morale depends in part, on students' achievement with high achievers motivating teachers. Accordingly, admission of students in Kenya to different secondary schools considering their level of academic achievements in primary school may provides a basis of motivation and de -motivation respectively particularly due to the ranking of schools according to performance in national examinations which (Republic of Kenya, 2005b) entrenches disparities that condemns some schools. This may explain why most promotions to deputy principal and principals by TSC in Kenya are done through transfer from established schools to less established schools hence less consideration of teachers in 'small schools' with necessary experience and qualifications. Durey (1976) makes an observation on 'uncompetitive promotion' from outside the institution noting that it reduces the morale of the teachers working in the school where the vacancy arose.

I. Theoretical Framework

The study is founded on Equity theory (Johnston, Mckeown & McEwen, 2009) which is concerned with the perceptions people have about how they are being treated as compared with others. To be dealt with equitably is to be treated fairly in comparison with another group of people (a reference group) or relevant other person. Equity involves feelings and perceptions and it is always a comparative process. It is not synonymous with equality, which means treating everyone the same, since this would be inequitable if they deserve to be treated differently.

Equity theory states, in effect, that people will be better motivated if they are treated equitably and demotivated if they are treated inequitably. It explains only one aspect of the processes of motivation and job satisfaction, although it may be significant in term of morale. There are two forms of equity: distributive equity, which is concerned with the fairness with which people feel they are rewarded in accordance with their contribution and in comparison with others; and procedural equity, which is concerned with the perceptions employees have about the fairness with which company procedures in areas as performance appraisal, promotion and discipline are being operated.

This theory is useful to this study as it emphasizes on the need for fairness when it comes to remuneration. It also emphasized on equity and fairness in procedures of promotion, appraisal, evaluation and discipline issues all of which need to be taken seriously by the Teachers Service Commission.

II. Conceptual Framework

The section presents a visual representation of the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables of the study.

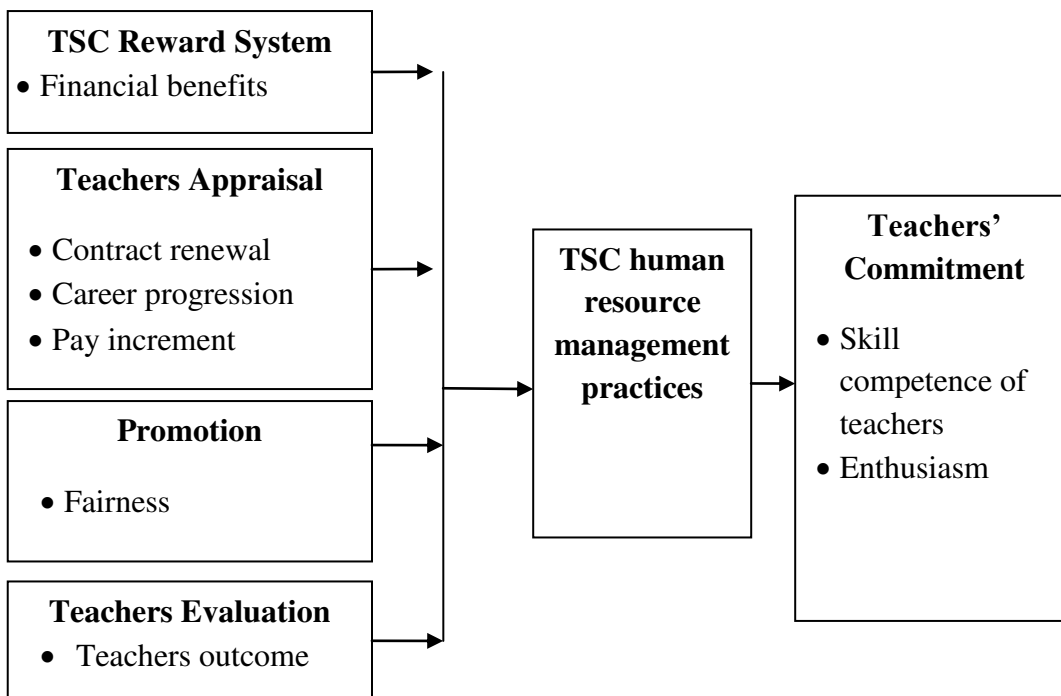


Figure 2. 1: Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Tetu sub-county has 12 public secondary schools. The target population comprised of all the 12 principals and 191 teachers. This population is chosen because it was assumed to have adequate knowledge of the subject under investigation and the research variables under investigation. The study sample size was made of 133 respondents and used a self administered questionnaire to gather primary data. Questionnaires are a fast way of obtaining data as compared to other instruments (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Questionnaires give the researcher comprehensive data on a wide range of factors. Both open-ended and closed ended items will be used. Questionnaires allow greater uniformity in the way questions are asked, ensuring greater compatibility in responses. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics using frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data was analyzed by arranging them according to the research questions and

objectives. Data was analyzed and recorded using frequency distribution and percentages while the findings were presented in tables and figures.

FINDINGS

From the data collected, out of the 133 questionnaires administered, 111 were filled and returned, which represents 83.4 percent response rate. This response rate is considered satisfactory to make conclusions for the study. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) observed that a 50 percent response rate is adequate, 60% good and above, while 70% rated very good. This implies that based on this assertion, the response rate in this case of 82.3% is therefore very good.

The study revealed that teachers who have high career aspirations view their jobs as preparation for higher jobs. This finding agrees with Schneider, Gunnarson and Wheeler (1992) that promotional opportunity is important to job commitment. Schneider (1992) cited that employees who perceive few opportunities for advancement have negative attitudes toward their work and their organizations.

According to Sutter (2013) the importance of career advancement to job commitment is that teachers who have high career aspirations view their jobs as preparation for higher jobs. This is consistent with the thinking of Gorton and Kalamani (1985) who wrote that many teachers expect to have jobs as principals.

The study also showed that the teachers believed that they will someday be promoted. This finding agrees with Sutter (2013) that because many teachers believe they would someday be promoted, they view their current jobs as preparation for higher ranking jobs and are satisfied in their current positions. According to Nwachukwu (2000) it is possible that the direct effect of a teachers career aspirations and opportunity for advancement on teachers commitment may be negative in that the higher the desire of a person to be promoted, the less satisfied the person may be with the current position; however, several writers do not support this hypothesis (Sutter, 1994). This study concludes that as teachers become older, career Aspirations and opportunity for advancement decrease because they have become more satisfied with their current positions, and the opportunity to advance seems less likely than it did when they were younger

According to the findings 45% of the teachers and principals strongly agreed that their advancement in rank or position is associated with higher pay. While advancement in rank or

position is associated with higher pay, and thus is an extrinsic motivator, opportunity for advancement is considered an intrinsic motivator. The opportunity to advance means more to a worker than material gain. Vroom (1982) interpreted promotional opportunity as a desired, positive, personal goal. He stated that promotional opportunity is a goal most workers desire and that an individual's performance is related to the degree to which the individual believes that being promoted is related to performance on the job and how strongly the individual desires the promotion.

The study showed that TSC's teacher performance appraisal (TPA) system for new and experienced teachers is designed to: promote teacher development; provide meaningful appraisals of teachers' performance that encourage professional learning and growth; identify opportunities for additional support where required; and provide a measure of accountability to the public.

From the findings majority 25(55%) strongly agreed that teachers' appraisal determines contract renewal. This finding is in line with Mutegi (2009) observations that TSC performs teachers' appraisal activities to ensure that all teachers have documented evidence of their competency and by providing a documented process to deal with instances where a teacher's performance is unsatisfactory and determine contract renewal or termination.

This study recommends that secondary school boards must make every effort to ensure that teachers comply with TSC TPA system. Board requirements are mandated by legislation and regulation, with the goal of promoting teachers' professional growth and development that in turn can lead to improvements in student achievement.

From the findings 64% strongly agreed Teachers' appraisal determines career progression. Actively participating in each appraisal is vital to a teacher's ongoing growth and development. For new teachers, the appraisal process builds on the orientation, mentoring, professional development, and training provided to help them develop into confident and proficient secondary school teachers. For experienced teachers, it provides an effective and supportive way to help them improve their teaching practice.

From the findings teachers' appraisal result in increased commitment. The TSC performance appraisal system helps strengthen schools as learning communities where teachers have the chance to engage in professional exchanges and collaborative inquiries that foster continuous growth and development. Professional dialogue and collaboration are essential to the creation and maintenance of a healthy school culture.

The study revealed that teachers' evaluation has substantially improved instruction or expanded student learning thus improving teaching commitment. The study also showed that the evaluation processes carried out by TSC reflects what is needed to change to enhance commitment in teachers for more students to succeed. This findings are in line with Sofia (2013) findings that the TSC's teacher performance appraisal (TPA) system for new and experienced teachers is designed to: promote teacher development; provide meaningful appraisals of teachers' performance that encourage professional learning and growth; identify opportunities for additional support where required; and provide a measure of accountability to the public.

The study further revealed that teachers' appraisal determines contract renewal. This finding is in line with Mutegi (2009) observations that TSC performs teachers' appraisal activities to ensure that all teachers have documented evidence of their competency and by providing a documented process to deal with instances where a teacher's performance is unsatisfactory and determine contract renewal or termination.

The study found that majority of the teachers believes if they work hard they would be promoted to a higher rank. This finding is in line with Day (2004) that commitment of teachers in teaching are influenced by their motives in taking up teaching as a career, their confidence level, efficacy and concerns in teaching. Qualified teachers lacking the motivation to teach often have little enthusiasm and driving force in their work. When a teacher has taught for some time, work may become routinized. Consequently, interest decreases and the teacher fails to work to his/her full capacity and becomes less effective. In concrete terms, the result is lack of planning, resistance towards change, and general negligence. Thus; understanding the motives of teachers in choosing teaching as a career and maintaining teacher motivation in the teaching profession is an important issue if we are concerned about teachers' commitment and quality of education.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that TSC promote teachers and promotion is done on merit. Also the study revealed that teachers in Tetu Sub County believed if they work hard they would be promoted to a higher rank, they are encouraged to seek further educational training and that they are aware of criteria used to select teachers for promotion and that they are provided with relevant training. However, the respondents were neutral over the statement that the TSC has put procedures in place for fair promotions and lastly the study concludes that majority of the teachers were not satisfied with their position.

The study concludes that teachers who have high career aspirations view their jobs as preparation for higher jobs. The study also revealed that job related advancement opportunities would increase teachers' commitment.

Also the study concludes that evaluation processes carried out by TSC reflects what is needed to change to enhance commitment in teachers for more students to succeed. Teachers' appraisal result in increased commitment. The study concludes that teachers' appraisal determines contract renewal and also determines career progression. Lastly, the study concludes that teachers' appraisal does not necessarily affects pay increments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study showed that teachers' promotion is done on merit. This study recommends that TSC should ensure that the promotion procedures put in place are fair. Ngalyuka (2003) found out that low promotion opportunities, advancement, and recognition and general difficulties in upward mobility in the teaching profession among Kenyan primary and secondary school teachers was causing job dissatisfaction.

The study recommends that TSC should implement a systematic, effective, and sustainable teacher supervision and evaluation process that enhances commitment in teachers. Also the study recommends that evaluation processes carried out by TSC should reflects what is needed to change to enhance commitment in teachers for more students to succeed.

This study recommends that TSC should continue carrying out performance appraisals to improve teachers' commitment and productivity. This is because poor performing employees are

identified during the evaluation cycle and given feedback on how to improve. They might also undertake some developmental activities for example, training in order to rectify performance.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

While this study successfully examines the variables, it also presents rich prospects for several other areas to be researched in future. The present study was only confined to a specific Sub County. It would however be useful to carry out a similar study in other Counties. This study focused on teachers' commitment in Tetu Sub County in Kenya. It would be useful to carry out the same type of research across East Africa and beyond and see whether the same results would be replicated.

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