

Marital Status and Transfer of Service among Teachers in Public Primary Schools in Turkana County in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between marital status and transfers among the teachers in public primary schools in Turkana County in Kenya. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 246 non-resident teachers from 36 public primary schools. The data collection instruments were a questionnaire and an interview schedule. Self-administered questionnaire was given to the teachers while interview schedules were administered to head teachers who were purposively selected. The reliability level of 0.883 was obtained which met the reliability coefficient and threshold of 0.7 and above. Data was analyzed using an independent-samples t-test comparing the mean transfer intentions indices for the married and single teachers. The study found a significant difference between the means of the two groups. Therefore, the study recommended that Teacher Service Commission secretariat needs to be considerate during teacher placement so as to suitably place teachers where they can be most comfortable to avoid future transfers.

KEYWORDS: *Marital Status, Transfer of Service, Teachers, Public Schools*

1. INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the most important schooling input in the determination of learner achievement given the central role (Mackatiani et al, 2017). However, it has been a challenge for schools to retain competent and qualified teaching personnel in the face of competition from the industry (Likoko, Ndiku & Mutsotso, 2018). Carberry, Lee and Ohland (2010) proposes that marital status have an effect on turnover intention. Further, Lee (2012) observed that married women are more likely to quit their jobs probably because of family obligations.

In a similar study, Azim, Haque and Chowdhury (2013) attempted to identify the level of job satisfaction of employees in Bangladesh and to test whether job satisfaction level differs among employees in terms of their gender and marital status. Data were collected from 224 respondents. It was found that Bangladesh employees, irrespective of marital status, are 'moderately satisfied'. No statistically significant evidence was observed indicating differences in job satisfaction level between 'married' and 'unmarried'. It was also found that "marital status" do not play any

significant role in determining the level of job satisfaction in Bangladesh. In their study, Azim, Haque and Chowdhury (2013) focused on job satisfaction based on marital status, with limited information on teacher transfer intentions. The current study therefore, was geared towards filling the gap.

According Du Plooy and Roodt (2013) both explored the possible moderation effects of biographical and demographical variables on a prediction model of turnover intention. A secondary data analysis (SDA) was performed in a quantitative research tradition on the cross-sectional survey sample ($n = 2429$). Data were collected from a large South African Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector company ($N = 23134$). The results of the study confirmed significant moderation effects regarding marital status in the prediction equations of turnover intentions. However, the limitation is, as Mouton (2001) also pointed out, the fact that an SDA was performed. Possible data collection errors could not be controlled by the authors, and the

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study was restricted to the original research objectives. Another gap was that Du Plooy & Roodt (2013) focused on an ICT sector sample group. Although the sample size is large ($n = 2429$), generalizing the results to apply to the population outside the ICT sector company should be done with caution. Therefore, there was need for the present study to fill the gap.

In a separate study, Moa-Liberty, Adegboyega and Babatunde (2015) conducted a study on influence of socio-demographic variables and work-family conflict on turnover intention among Nigeria bankers. They employed ex post facto design involving two hundred and fifty (250) participants purposively selected across branches of five banks in Lagos. The multiple regression analysis significantly showed that marital status accounted for turnover intention. However, Moa-Liberty, Adegboyega and Babatunde (2015) did not show the comparison of transfer requests based on marital status, therefore to fill the gap, a t-test was used to determine whether the difference in mean level of transfer intentions between male and females was statistically significant.

Almalki, FitzGerald and Clark (2012) examined the relationship between quality of work life and turnover intention of primary health care nurses in Saudi Arabia. A cross-sectional survey was used in this study. Data were collected using Brooks' survey of Quality of Nursing Work Life, the Anticipated Turnover Scale and demographic data questions. A total of 508 PHC nurses in the Jazan Region, Saudi Arabia, completed the questionnaire ($RR = 87\%$). Descriptive statistics, t-test, ANOVA, General Linear Model (GLM) univariate analysis, standard multiple regression, and hierarchical multiple regression were applied for analysis using SPSS v17 for Windows. The results showed that nurses who have never married were more likely to indicate turnover intention. A possible explanation for this finding is that the nurses who have never married may have less family responsibilities so they do not have to consider moving family members when transferring to another organisation. However, Almalki, FitzGerald and Clark (2012) used a convenience sampling method that may limit generalization of the findings.

Additionally, Murupus and Kipkebut (2015) found that married employees were less likely to turnover than unmarried employees. Murupus and Kipkebut (2015) focused on employees in the commercial banks in Kenya. However, Murupus and Kipkebut (2015) did not indicate which instruments were used and the methodology employed. This makes it

difficult to generalize its findings to an entire population. In addition, the study did not indicate the sampling procedures used, the current study filled the gap using both probability and non-probability sampling to analyse the factors influencing teacher transfer intentions in public primary schools in Turkana County in Kenya.

2. Methodology

This research was carried out in Turkana County, which is comprises of the following sub-counties; Turkana South, Turkana North, Turkana East, Turkana West, Turkana Central, Loima and Kibish forming the County, the County headquarters is Lodwar Town, its area is about 77,000 square kms with a total population of about 840,000 people (Census report of 2009). Turkana County is one of the ASAL counties in Kenya. It is characterized with hot and relatively dry climatic conditions. There are pockets of irrigational farming, insecurity, fairly poor transport network. The County shares local boundaries with West-Pokot County to the South, Baringo County to the East, Samburu County to the North East and international boundaries with Uganda to the West, Southern Sudan to the North West and Ethiopia to the North.

The County had been marginalized in terms of education since independence, it has only thirty two secondary schools and about three hundred and sixty primary schools. Illiteracy rate and levels in the County has remained high above 70 percent with only small fraction of 26 percent who have had access to education. The county is among the poorest regions in Kenya, 94% of the people live under poverty (Oxfam, 2008). This is one of the leading challenges facing the county as a result of weak central support to education by parents by extension government. Most school leavers do not like joining the profession, the few who had joined the profession have applied/requested for transfer either outside the county or transfer of services to other government ministries and organizations.

The study area was selected because the County has been under the spell of understaffing and the few available teachers always requested for transfer (Akija, 2015). It is due to these that the researcher chose to carry out a research in this area of study on how the Teachers Service Commission (government) can minimize the teacher's intentions for transfers in the County. Turkana County was selected as a representative of other ASAL Counties in Kenya. It was therefore believed that the study area gave a wide and varied view of the phenomenon under study. Although there have been many other studies carried out in the study

area, none was on this phenomenon of measures to minimize teachers’ transfer intentions, it was therefore believed that the study area gave a wide and varied view of the problem under study. It is a research of its own kind in the study area. This area was selected to establish measures used to minimize teachers’ transfers intentions in public primary schools in Turkana County.

2.1. Research Design

Trochim (2005) defines a research design as a plan, structure and strategy of investigation to obtain answers to research questions and control variance.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Marital Status of respondents

The study set out to establish the marital status of respondents since this can determine the intention to move out of the county especially when they establish marital relationships in other counties. The results are presented in Fig.1 below

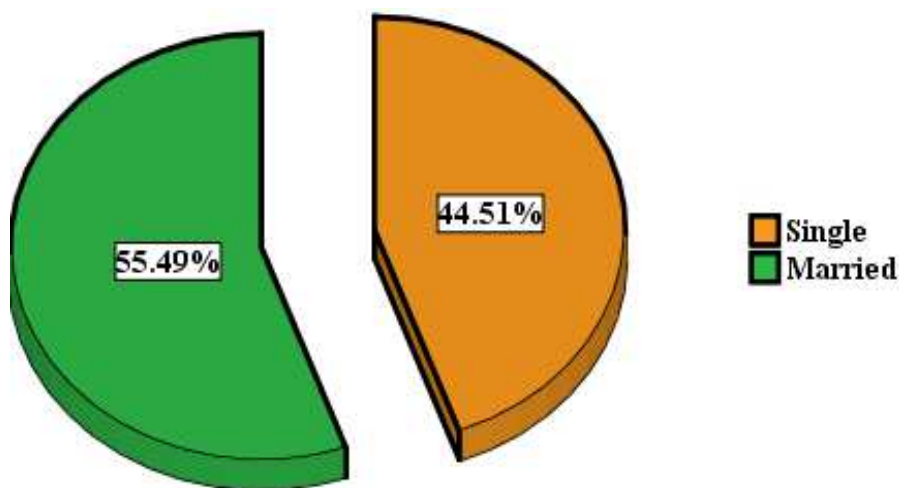


Fig1 Marital status of the respondents

Fig.1 shows that a larger proportion represented by 55.49% of the respondents was married as opposed to 44.51% who were single. However the proportion of the single teacher can significantly affect the intention to leave Turkana County once new relationships are established.

3.2. Influence of Teacher Marital Status on Transfer Intentions

In order to determine the influence of teacher marital status on transfer intentions, the independent samples t-test was computed to determine the difference between the means of single and married teachers in the county. The mean transfer intent indices for each category were computed and the results are as shown in Table 1

Table 1. Group Statistics for Transfer Intent based on Marital Status

	Teacher Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean
Transfer Index	Single	81	13.0123	3.40402	.37822
	Married	101	13.2871	4.24343	.42224

Source: SPSS Output

The results in Table 1 show that married teachers had a higher transfer index of 13.2871 with a standard deviation of 0.42224 than single teachers with a mean transfer index of 13.0123 with a standard deviation of 0.37822. The results show that the transfer intentions were higher among the married teachers than single teachers in the public primary schools in Turkana County

To determine if there was a statistically significant difference in the transfer intention means between the married and single, a Levene’s test of homogeneity of variance and independent samples t-test were conducted. The results are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Independent Samples Test of Difference in Transfer Intent Means between Married and Single Teachers in Public Primary Schools

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances			t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	11.568	.001	-.473	180	.037	-.27478	.58062	-1.42048	.87091
Equal variances not assumed			-.485	180.0	.028	-.27478	.56687	-1.39334	.84378

Source: SPSS Output

From Table 2, an independent-samples t-test comparing the mean transfer intentions Indices for the married and single teachers found a significant difference between the means of the two groups ($t(180) = -0.473, p < 0.05$). The mean of the married teachers transfer intent Index ($m = 13.2871, sd = 4.24343$) was significantly higher than the mean of the single teachers transfer intent Index ($m = 13.0123, sd = 3.40402$).

The findings in Table 2 were supported by responses from interviews held with the head teachers in the schools included in the study. Majority expressed that female teachers, and especially married ones. One of the head teachers' remarked;

"..... yes, most teachers from other counties are usually uncomfortable working in the school. The ladies keep seeking permission to visit homes and spouses out of the county....."

Implying that teacher marital status significantly influences the transfer intentions in public primary school in Turkana County, with married teachers having higher intention to leave Turkana County than single teachers. The findings in Table 2 contradicts those of Likoko, Ndiku & Mutsotso (2018) who observed that marital status doesn't affect turnover intention. Likoko et al. implies that intentions to transfer amongst the teachers who were single does not differ significantly from those who were married and does not differ significantly from those who were separated/divorced.

4. Conclusions

The findings of this study have demonstrated that marital status has statistically significant relationship with transfers of service among teachers in public primary schools in Turkana County.

Recommendations

The study therefore recommended that future transfer of service would be reduced by recruiting teachers from the locality and deploying them next

to their families or where they can be most comfortable.

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