

The provision of a well education, keen, competent, respected and contented teaching force is by far one of the most important contribution the Government of Kenya can make to the schools. However, teaching a career has been viewed by students who aspire to join colleges and even teachers in the field as a peripheral profession. It may be hard to change this misconception of values, but one of the essential parts of any successful development of education in Africa today is a higher prestige and regard for teachers. For this reason, there is a great need to understand and discover the nature and even possible sources of commitment and non-commitment in the teaching profession.

The task of this study was primarily to investigate the job factors, which may influence feelings of commitment to teaching among primary school teachers. The design for the study was descriptive and ex post factor. The population for this study was primary school teachers in three districts, namely: Nyeri, Kakamega and Keiyo-Marakwet. Ten primary schools that were present at the time when the researcher visited each school represented the sample of this study. Three hundred and seventy two teachers responded to the research instrument. Statistical package for the social science programme (SPSS) was used. The statistical tests employed in he study were chi-square (χ^2) and contingency coefficient. Hypotheses tested in the study were rejected or retained at 0.05 level of significance.

The study revealed that; (1) Almost half of the teachers in the sample would ideally prefer a career other than teaching. (2) Female teachers showed a more positive attitude towards a career in teaching than males. (3) The job factor of 'inadequate pay' was cited as the most crucial factor, which would make teachers to resign or leave teaching. (4) Majority of the teachers in the sample would continue being committed as long as they were teaching in primary schools, which were in their home areas. The job factors mostly cited as having influence on non-commitment were: (1) Slow process of ordering and supplying instructional materials; (2) Poor working conditions; (3) Poor housing arrangement; (4) Frustrations by the public and administration officials; and (5) External interference by public. Suggestions to solutions of some of these problems were given by respondents and have been incorporated in the study.

The study had the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. Most teachers in the sample would opt to resign to leave teaching profession on economic grounds. The job factor of 'inadequate pay' was cited especially by male teachers as the one, which would influence their departure from teaching. Therefore, this finding implies that if the question of adequate pay is not seriously addressed to, the teaching profession may risk continued loss of manpower that is difficult to replace within a short time. Therefore, the educational planners should consider reviewing teachers' salaries structures with intent to increasing them.
2. Teachers are not contented with promotion opportunities that are available and the methods used in promoting teachers. This finding implies that lack of clear promotional prospects may lead to frustrations among teachers, which might result in seeking employment outside the teaching service as soon as opportunities arise. Hence there is need for the Ministry of Education to review the policies governing the methods of promotion of primary school teachers.

3. Poor working conditions and terms of service were described as depressing the public image of the teacher and the to relegate the profession to the lower status. This finding seems to imply that teaching profession will most likely continue losing qualified and committed teachers and also fail to recruit or attract younger and more diverse manpower for education. Therefore, it is imperative for the Ministry of Education to encourage strong parental and community support for the schools. Schools should be well-equipped and sufficient classrooms and permanent houses for teachers built.

4. A large proportion of the teachers in the sample would continue being committed to teaching because of three major job factors: 'Lack of alternatives'; 'chance to continue learning and job being close to home'. The findings imply that primary school teachers hope to advance themselves academically so that they may be able to secure jobs in other more lucrative fields.

Therefore, teachers should not be allowed to stagnate or begin to look elsewhere for promotion and green pastures but could be encouraged to develop within the profession. Further, the findings suggest that teachers should be posted to their home districts immediately after training. Within the district, a teacher should be given the preference of teaching in the primary school closest to his or her home.