

**THE EFFECT OF CAREER PLATEAU ON THE ACADEMIC
PRODUCTIVITY OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL
TEACHERS IN KIKUYU DISTRICT, KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for award of a degree in any other University.

Sign:..........

Date 20/4/2012.....

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the three most important men in my life: My father Javan Azinga, my husband Robert Wanga, and my son Joshua Javan (JJ).

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish how the negative outcomes of career plateau affect productivity. The general objective of the study was to determine how career plateau has an influence on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District. The specific objectives were to determine; how stress and burnout, absenteeism, conflict with administrators, and the desire to leave the teaching profession have affected the academic productivity of teachers.

The Study was conducted in Kikuyu District, which is one of the 10 districts in Kiambu County. The other districts in this county are: Gatundu, Githunguri, Kiambu, East Kiambaa, Kiambu West, Lari, Ruiru, Thika East and Thika West. There were 26 public secondary schools in Kikuyu district. The target population consisted of 563 teachers from the 23 public secondary schools in the district. The researcher used stratified random sampling and simple random sampling to get the sample size of 141 teachers out of whom 110 teachers participated by responding to the questionnaire.

The research utilized descriptive design. Frequency counts, percentages, bar graphs, and charts were used in data analysis. The study established that, majority of the teachers 69 (63%) were last promoted between 2 – 15 years ago. This revelation clearly indicates that very many teachers have been experiencing career plateau in their profession. The results on teachers' assessment on job productivity show clearly that teachers who are exhibiting characteristics of career plateauing are among those teachers who are citing reasons for average and below average performance. The study leads to the conclusion that career plateau has caused many teachers to desire to leave the teaching profession. The study recommends that teachers should be motivated and good promotion policies developed.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Career Plateau as defined by the pioneers of the study on this subject “is the point in a career where the likelihood of additional hierarchical promotion is very low” Ference et al (1977). Another definition of career plateau is by Veiga (1981) who said, “It is the point at which future career mobility, including both upward and lateral moves, is in reasonable doubt because the length of time in the present position has been unduly prolonged.”

Productivity, according to the Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary, is “to result in or provide a large amount or supply of something; having positive results. In this study, teacher productivity refers to the extent to which the teacher’s work results in a large supply of a high mean in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination and co-curricular activities.

District Education Officer refers to the officer in charge of all educational matters in a district.

Public Secondary School refers to an institution for the middle level of Kenya’s formal education. This level consists of forms one to four.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kenya leaves one with many questions as one looks at the performance in the KCSE exams. Beyond the veneer of celebrations by the best performing schools and students in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations that were done in the year 2010, statistics released by the Kenya National Examinations Council mirror a different image, an indication of the direction in which secondary education is heading to. Whereas the examination was sat by 357,488 candidates, only 27 per cent obtained mean grade of C+ and above, which is considered the minimum university entry benchmark. A massive 154,830 students representing 43 per cent of the total candidature obtained D+, D, D- and E, the lowest grades in the KCSE ranking. To make the matter worse the number of candidates who obtained grades of D- and E last year stood at 47,405, compared to only 8,131 students who obtained the first two top grades of A and A-. Kigotho (2011).

With this dismal performance it was imperative to look at the input of teachers and how career development contributes to the performance of students in the national examination. It is interesting that after joining a career, one reaches a time in life where he/she loses interest in his/her once desired career. At this level, productivity dips. That is when it is said that such an individual has reached a career plateau “the point in a career where the likelihood of additional hierarchical promotion is very low,” Ference et al (1977). This original meaning is derived from the behavioral

concern of the employees. Lee (2003) came up with a definition that looks at career as the stage whereby the individual finds the work boring and provides no opportunities for knowledge and skills advancement.

There are negative outcomes associated with plateauing. Several scholars came up with findings that showed some of the consequences as higher absenteeism, less satisfaction with supervisors, health problems, stress, intention to leave the organization, low level of work satisfaction and organizational commitment, Ismail (2008).

Career plateau has a great effect on the productivity of employees. Holbeche, (1998) explains that many people may have been ambitious in the traditional sense but have reached the point when there is no longer an opportunity to progress up the hierarchy. This may have nothing to do with the person's skill or potential value to the organization. It may simply reflect the fact that few organizations even relatively hierarchical ones have senior positions for the majority of employees. As such, career plateaus have long been a structural reality. She further explains that in the past, plateauing tended to occur when people were in their forties, by which time they had usually achieved gradual progression and the signs of success that went with progression.

The previous studies show how career plateau has had negative effects on employees' performance and so this study has the intent of discovering how career plateau affects the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers. The recommendations given after the findings will enable the Ministry of Education and the Teachers Service Commission come up with strategies and policies that will enable teachers develop their career and be more fruitful in their work.

1.1.1 Kikuyu District

This study sought to find out the effect of career plateau on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu district. Kikuyu District is one of the 10 districts in Kiambu County. The other districts in this county are Gatundu, Githunguri, Kiambu, East Kiambaa, Kiambu West, Lari, Ruiru, Thika East, and Thika West. Based on statistics from the Kikuyu District Education's office, Kikuyu District has 26 schools among them, 15 mixed day, 2 mixed day and boarding, 4 girls' boarding, 1 girls' Day, and 4 boys' boarding. Singleton (1993) advises that the ideal setting for any study should be one that can be accessed easily by the researcher and it should permit instant rapport with the informants. The researcher chose the location because it was easily accessible. The researcher easily accessed information from the Kikuyu District Education office and from the schools. Apart from that, the population of the area is of cosmopolitan nature, which allowed generalization of the findings to some extent. Kikuyu District is home to two high performing national schools: Alliance High School and Alliance Girls High School. However, in the year 2000, the last school in the republic was from this District.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Whenever the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination results are announced each year, many people trust the media to reveal to them the best schools academically. The results of the form 4 candidates who sat for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary school examinations in the year 2011 as published in the Daily Nation Newspaper of March 1, 2012 indicated, schools that were top 10 in the nation. They had a commendable mean grade and performance index. These were, Maranda High, Alliance High, Alliance Girls, Starehe Boys, Mang'u High, Moi Girls' Eldoret, Kenya

High, MaryHill Girls, Pangani Girls and Starehe Boys respectively. The whole nation hailed the principals and teachers of those schools.

As corporate organizations of this century emphasize on productivity and profitability, most public secondary schools are slowly following in those footsteps. To public secondary schools, teacher productivity is the extent to which the teacher's work results in a large supply of a high mean score in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education exams. There is great pressure directed towards teachers to produce the highest mean score.

There is low academic productivity among public secondary school teachers. This study sought to establish if the low productivity could be because of the various negative outcomes of career plateau. Many scholars have researched on the effect of career plateau on employees in other professions. Consequently, the decision to carry out a study to see how career plateau has affected teachers in public secondary schools had an aim of coming up with remedial recommendations on how teachers could be assisted in view of the fact that they influence many young people. They shape future careers of the youth in schools.

Some scholars from outside Kenya have carried out research on Career Plateau. Examples of those scholars are Patrick Chang Boon Lee (2003) in 'Going beyond Career Plateau.' Ronald J. Burke and Aslaug Mikkelsen (2006) on 'Examining the Career Plateau among police officers.' Ismail (2008) has carried out research on the constructs, consequences and coping Strategies in relation to career plateau. There

are major gaps since most of the scholars have researched on Career Plateau in other professions, in other countries.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The **general objective** of this study was to find out the effect of career plateau on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. Establish the effect of stress and burnout, on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District.
- ii. Determine the consequence of absenteeism on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District.
- iii. Verify the effect of conflict with administrators on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District.
- iv. Establish the effect of the desire to leave the teaching profession on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions of the study were as follows:

- i. What is the effect of stress and burnout on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District?
- ii. What is the consequence of absenteeism on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District?
- iii. What is the effect of conflict with administrators on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District?

- iv. What is the effect of the desire to leave the teaching profession on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District?

1.5 Scope of the Study

The researcher carried out the study in Kikuyu District, which is in Kiambu County, located in the central region of Kenya. Kikuyu District is one of the 10 districts in Kiambu County. The other districts in this county are Gatundu, Githunguri, Kiambu, East Kiambaa, Kiambu West, Lari, Ruiru, Thika East, and Thika West District. The study was limited to teaching staff in public secondary schools employed by the Teachers' Service Commission. Kikuyu District has a total number of 26 public secondary schools and 563 teachers.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will benefit researchers, individual teachers, the Ministry of Education and the Teachers' Service Commission, and school administrators in the following ways: Individual teachers will be able to use the findings to work towards regaining career-building aspirations. The Ministry of Education together with the Teachers' Service Commission will use the findings of this study to formulate strategies that will motivate teachers who are on career plateaus and provide them with opportunities to develop their career. The school administrators will use the information to challenge teachers not to wallow in the miasma of career plateau but to tower above it to contribute to outstanding results in the lives of secondary school students. The study will also kindle the interest of future researchers to carry out further investigation in this field.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

With the introduction of performance contracting in the government sector, some of the respondents thought that collecting this information would victimize them, and were somewhat reluctant to answering some of the questions. The letter authorizing the researcher to collect data in Kikuyu District was helpful.

Data collection coincided with end of term examination period. Administrators in some schools turned away the researcher claiming that the teachers were too busy and would not have time to fill the questionnaires, despite the researcher explaining that filling of the questionnaires would only take a few minutes.

Financial constraint was a limitation since Schools in Kikuyu District are far apart.

The researcher had to travel long distances to reach those schools.

The study focused on Kikuyu district, which may not have given a good representation of the population of the teachers in Kenya. The environmental factors in the teaching arena in Kikuyu district are different from those of other districts in other counties, so drawing conclusions based on data collected in Kikuyu District, may not have been sufficient.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature related to the study. The chapter contains the various definitions of career plateau, the concept of career plateau, consequences of career plateau and the conceptual framework.

2.1.1 Academic Productivity

The contribution of teachers in the academic productivity of secondary school students can leave one with many questions when he/she looks at the performance in KCSE. Glennerster et al (2011) indicated in their findings that overall, student performance in KCSE was poor. In 2008, only 25% of students scored at least a C+ on the KCSE, with girls being less likely than boys to score at least a C+. The performance was weakest in District schools, where only 11% of students scored at least a C+, compared to 43% in Provincial schools and 90% in National schools. The difference in performance across these types of schools partly reflects differences in facilities, teachers and other resources, but it also reflects the different levels of academic preparation of the students admitted to these schools.

Beyond the veneer of the celebrations by the best performing schools and students in the KCSE examinations that were done in the year 2010, statistics released by the Kenya National Examinations Council mirror a different image, an indication of the direction in which secondary education is heading to. Whereas the examination was sat by 357,488 candidates, only 27 per cent obtained mean grade of C+ and above, which is considered the minimum university entry benchmark. A massive 154,830 students representing 43 per cent of the total candidature obtained D+, D, D- and E,

the lowest grades in the KCSE ranking. To make the matter worse the number of candidates who obtained grades of D- and E last year stood at 47,405, compared to only 8,131 students who obtained the first two top grades of A and A-.

2.2 Definition of Career Plateau

Many people have come up with definitions of career plateau. The original meaning of career plateau largely derives from the behavioral concern of the employees. Ference et al (1977) defined career plateau as “a point in a career where the likelihood of additional hierarchical promotion is very low.” Kreuter (1993) refers to Career Plateau as a temporary flat point on the advancement continuum during the career of an individual. Lee (2003) defined Career Plateau as the stage whereby the individual finds the work boring and provides no opportunities for knowledge and skills advancement. The use of promotion, advancement, or position to define plateaued employees assumes a direct relationship between levels in an organizational hierarchy and job responsibility. As such, Career Plateau is an important milestone.

2.2.1 The Concept of Career Plateau

Literature outlines three types of career plateaus and each seemingly describes the sources of plateauing: structural, content, and personal, Ference et al (1977), Bardwick (1986): Duffy (2000). Structural plateau is complex and it occurs at the organizational level due to limited hierarchical movement. People who are organizationally plateaued may have the ability to perform well in higher-level job, but are unable to do so due to limited job openings. Structural plateau refers to position immobility. Content plateau occurs when an employee has mastered all of the tasks of his or her job. This form of plateau is more in the control of the employee rather than in the functions of the organization. Content plateau may be one of the

results of structural plateau, or may also occur among individuals who do not perceive the present job as the primary source of income or it may be the secondary occupation in the family. Content plateau has no connection with hierarchical position. Finally, personal plateau is the most dangerous. It is a situation where the employee lacks any direction, motivation, and enthusiasm in most of the activities related to work. Personal plateau may probably be due to intrinsic factors of an employee that has deep impact on the person's emotion, feeling, sense of control of what is appropriate and what is not about the job. The consequence of personal plateau is definitely on work outcomes. Related to this end, Lee (2003) introduced another construct, called professional plateau, defines as the point where employees find their jobs unchallenging and that they provide few opportunities for professional development and future employability.

Ismail (2008) explains that, career plateau is an important component of career development that adds to the dynamism of career research. It is a concern of employees and organizations since the phenomenon brings implications to not only the employees on how to adapt themselves in the organization but also to the organization in terms of strategies to manage the employees. Everyone reaches a career plateau at any time of his or her career, though the outcomes are more felt if the employees experience plateauing while they are still at the lower or middle level of the job hierarchy.

Stoner et al (1980) divided individuals who plateau into four categories: Learners or comers-individuals seen as having high potential for advancement but presently performing below standard. The most obvious examples are trainees who are still learning the ropes. Longer service managers recently promoted to new positions they

are yet to master are also to be included. Stars are individuals presently doing outstanding work. The combination of economic, social, and demographic pressures is causing plateaus to occur largely for managers considered as stars. Solid Citizens-individuals with present performance rated satisfactory to outstanding with little chances for future advancement. They are, perhaps, the largest group in most organizations and perform the bulk of organizational work. Deadwood-individuals with little potential for advancement currently perform at an unsatisfactory level. These people have problems, whether for reasons of motivation, ability, or personal difficulty. They are often the recipients of considerable attention, either for rehabilitation or for removal.

2.3 Causes of Career Plateau

Teachers, in comparison to managers are plateaued due to insufficient skills and abilities. They eventually become poor performers and develop negative job attitudes. Their performance suffers due to low levels of skills and abilities. In addition, absenteeism and turnover may increase Anderson et al (1980), Porter et al (1973).

There is an important distinction between plateau-ing and performance. The two are independent. A person who has reached a “terminal level” in an organization can be a good performer or a poor one. Similarly, people with continued advancement potential can also show strong or weak performance. The critical point is not that there will be an increase of plateau-ing in the future, but that growth and learning continues when a person has plateau-ed (Hall, 1985).

The lack of flexibility in terms of promotion and task variety leads to poor results in terms of satisfaction and commitment. This is even worse if the only perspective is to

stay in the same job and task for the rest of one's' working life. Individualized, flexible career systems must be preferred over standardized career systems. Flexibility occurs not only through vertical movement, but also through horizontal development like periodical job rotation, work in projects, and task variety. Similarly, the acquisition of influence and power – and thus the approach of a power centre – may occur as a career. Again, life-long tenure is questionable. Andreas et al (2002)

In schools, objective structural plateau-ed performers report more dissatisfaction with their task than others do, though not significant. Andreas *et al* (2002)

2.4 Effects of Career Plateau

Although the findings of research into career plateauing are not always consistent, plateauing has generally always been associated with negative consequences. Among other things, it has been linked negatively to employee satisfaction at work, affective commitment to the organization, work performance, and psychological well-being Chay et al (1995). In their research, Lapalme et al (2009) looked at the negative relationship between career plateauing and the employees' psychological health and affective commitment to the organization. Recent organizational restructuring has placed increasing pressure on employees and this has caused previously loyal workers to question their commitment to the organization and has challenged them to perform under stress, Hunter and Thatcher (2007). Research studies on career plateauing have in effect highlighted the influence of both types of career plateauing on employees' level of stress, depression and organizational commitment Allen et al. (1998), For example, some authors have shown that the more strongly employees believe they have reached a plateau, whether in terms of structure or content, the less committed they feel to their organization, Chay et al (1995). Empirical research has also

shown that employees on structural plateaus experience higher levels of psychological distress, mostly generated by increased levels of anxiety and lower morale, Burke (1989).

Career plateaus have consequences on employees. Plateaued employees can exhibit some of these characteristics: stress and burnout, absenteeism from work, health problems, financial mismanagement, and conflict with other employees or with supervisors. Ismail (2008) affirms that studies have indicated negative outcomes associated with plateauing could be consequences of Career Plateau. Plateaued employees have higher absenteeism and less satisfaction with supervisor, have more health problems, stress, greater intention to leave the organization and report low level of work satisfaction and organizational commitment, Chao (1990).

The consequences of ignoring Career Plateau can harm the employee and the organization. The ineffective person who is plateaued can be a source of difficulty for superiors, peers, and subordinates. In addition to direct costs of poor job performance, this individual may provide inadequate support to superiors; create additional work for peers and subordinates who must pick up the slack and work around the plateaued employee; block the promotional opportunities of others, and provide inadequate support to subordinate and/or peers. In contrast, the effective plateau-ee or solid citizen often receives little or no attention Stoner et al., (1980).

2.4.1 Stress and Burnout

McCormick et al (2011) conducted a study on teacher' attribution for stress and their relationship with burnout. They noted that whereas contexts like homes could

experience stress the study of burnout focuses on the workplace. Stress and burnout are conceptually distinct. Pines (1993) argued that whilst everybody experiences stress, not everyone experiences burnout. She described burnout in terms of a highly motivated individual experiencing an existential crisis: “You cannot burn out unless you were ‘on fire’ initially” (p. 386). Before burning out, workers expect to make a difference.

3.1.3.3. *Stress and burnout in the classroom*

The results of this study suggest that for these teachers, the extent of stress attributed to the personal domain and the student domain predicts specific burnout dimensions. The student domain is a predictor of each of the three-burnout dimensions. Generally, the greater the stress attributed to the student domain, the greater the depersonalization, and vice versa. Arguably, teachers who generally perceive misbehaving students to be sources of stress are less likely to see them in terms of their individual humanity than if this were not the case. Similarly, if teachers are consistently experiencing stress from badly behaved students, this is likely to exact an emotional toll, as the teachers could experience a range of emotions, perhaps most notably, anger. Moreover, this could work in both directions, as emotion-charged teaching is less likely to be effective. Consistent with the scenarios described above, is the view that personal accomplishment as a teacher is likely to encompass, at least in part, successful management of student behavior, or, the latter is a necessary condition for accomplishment of other goals in the classroom, like effective teaching of content. Generally, the greater the stress these participants attributed to their personal inadequacy as teachers, the lower their sense of personal accomplishment, and vice versa.

Research on stress and burnout among teachers has recently received considerable attention, Travers et al (1993). Numerous studies have explored the specific conditions that make teaching stressful. These conditions can be categorized either as exogenous (i.e. unfavorable occupational conditions, excessive workload, lack of collaboration, etc.) or endogenous pressures (i.e. individual personality characteristics, disappointment and frustration that probably stem from unrealistic expectations that teachers hold, etc.). A long-term consequence of stress is occupational burnout, defined as a syndrome that results from chronic and extended occupational stress, characterized by physical, emotional, and attitudinal exhaustion, Kyriacou (1987). Individual differences influence teachers' vulnerability against stress. Stress levels may differ in relation to age and gender. Younger teachers present higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization as compared to their older colleagues. This reaction relates to young teachers' difficulty to activate the appropriate coping strategies in order to reduce the occupational stress imposed by the difficulties of their job, Byrne (1991). Moreover, female teachers experience higher levels of stress and higher job dissatisfaction that generally stem from the negative conditions in the classroom and the students' behavior, as well as work-family interface, Kantas (2001). Administrative factors that are related to the school organization and administration include limited support from the government, inadequate training, lack of information on contemporary educational issues, continuous changes in the curriculum and excessive demands from school administration and difficulty in interacting with parents, constitute serious sources of stress and exhaustion for teachers, Travers et al (1997).

Studies by Antoniou et al (2000); Kantas (2001), have indicated that Greek teachers experience considerably high levels of stress and psychosomatic symptoms. In order to investigate the levels of stress and burnout in the Greek population, the present study aimed to identify the specific sources of occupational stress of Greek primary and secondary school teachers, to assess their stress levels. Their study reveals that the main sources of stress experienced by Greek teachers relate to discipline problems and interaction with students and colleagues, in agreement with the documented sources of stress in the international literature. The most frequently reported occupational stressors of the Greek teachers refer to problems that are difficult to deal with in the classroom such as overcrowded classrooms, students' lack of motivation, poor achievement, and students' disciplinary problems.

2.4.2 Absenteeism

Absence behavior continues to attract researchers' attention, because of its prevalence among employees in many organizations, Steel (2003). Absenteeism is "any failure of an employee to report for or to remain at work as scheduled, regardless of reason" Cascio (2003). In some industries, reports show that employees were absent for about 10 percent of workdays, Harrison et al (1998). The cost of absenteeism has been estimated in the US at \$40 billion per year Gaudine et al (2001). Researchers' interest in absenteeism is in part due to the potentially important organizational and individual consequences of this behavior. Absent employees often, tend to be poor performers. Often, absentee employees expect colleagues to substitute and fill in, Martocchio (1994), thus becoming exposed to overload and other job-related stresses. Alternatively, recruitment of external substitute personnel, increases human resource costs. Absenteeism might reflect negative work norms, such as social loafing, and

lead to demoralization. In a broader perspective, absenteeism is part of withdrawal syndrome, Johns (2003), where employees react to undesirable working conditions by behaviors designed to distance themselves from work, including lateness and intent to leave.

Rosenblatt et al (2005) carried out a study in Israel to predict teacher absenteeism by personal background factors. In their findings they noted that, marital status, number of children, teaching seniority were not related to absenteeism, but age and educational attainment contributed significantly and negatively to frequency of absenteeism. The high explanatory power of prior absenteeism can be partially attributed to a shared experience of absentee culture Rentsch and Steel (2003). Teachers tend to adopt environmental norms regarding absenteeism, thus exhibiting similar behaviors.

2.4.3 Conflict with Administrators

Research has shown that relationships at work (i.e. how well people get along with one another at work) influence employees' well being and job satisfaction. One of the critical needs of an employee is to maintain relationships with other in the work place, Kelly (2002). High quality relationships also make it possible for employees to gain more social support and social resources from supervisor or co-workers to accomplish tasks, Bourdieu (1986). For example, Edwards et al (1999) found that employees' work attitudes and well-being would improve as actual relationships approach and even exceed the preferred state. The relationship among actual relationships, preferred relationships, and well-being shows primarily the effect of 'conversation' or 'carry-over' because good relationships at work can be conserved as a long term

resource to benefit employees work attitudes and wellbeing, and it also may help them get enough resources to fulfill other needs at work.

Plateaued teachers may fail to see their responsibility on their career advancement and decide to see the administrators as causes of their misery; this may lead to frequent conflicts with the school administrators. The conflict may immobilize academic productivity.

2.4.4 Desire to Leave the Profession

Susu (2008) in his research explains that an appreciation of the benefits of maintaining a stable teaching staff in the school and an understanding of teacher career development stages helps to shed light on the causes, consequences and control of teacher turnover in primary schools. This applies to the teachers in secondary schools too. Griffin (1987) observes that a stable teaching staff is consistently associated with school success unlike one characterized by large numbers of entrances and exits that prohibit meaningful school change.

2.5 Empirical Review

It should be noted that though a number of studies have been conducted on career plateaus, the causes of the plateaus and the effects of career plateaus on the performance of employees, none has researched on the consequences of career plateaus among teachers in Kenya, especially in public secondary schools.

Choy et al (1998) conducted a study on employee plateauing and work place attitudes. In their study, they elected to use the length of time in which a person has worked in the same position (with the same job description) as a measure of mobility. Researchers have tended to take what appears to be the average time that a person should be at a grade before he/she is moved either vertically or horizontally. In their

study, the time stipulated was seven years. However, they say not all career plateauing is due to the organization. The person may decide that he/she has reached his/her desired career level and no longer wishes to move upwards or sideways, Bardwick (1986). Another group is prevented from obtaining promotion by management. These are employees whom immediate supervisors consider too valuable to lose because of their particular skills, experience, and knowledge. Their promotion chances are jeopardized because management keeps them in the same job and therefore they lack the exposure to developmental opportunities, which would allow them to move either vertically or horizontally. Such a process can have serious consequences in the future for the particular worker, not only could he/she become plateaued but his./her skills could become outdated with the rapid technological change and thus become a candidate for redundancy at the next organization downsizing.

Andreas et al (2002) conducted a study on the effects of the concept of career plateaus on performance, work satisfaction, and commitment, which carried out at the Vienna University of Business Administration. Their findings regarding performance are in accordance with other studies. It is not clear to them whether there is no difference or if the self-assessment of work-related criteria hinders reliable ratings. On the other hand, the difference in working time for the work-content dimension but not the structural component is plausible. While the effect of task stagnation on satisfaction with the task is surprising, they found it interesting to see the major effects on satisfaction with individual development occur only on a dual subjective plateau with no effect of the objective dimension. They assumed the influence of

compensating effect of the two subjective dimensions. On the one hand, interesting tasks may compensate for the scarcity of promotion opportunities, while routing work can be understood as an unavoidable period until the next promotion-which provides the prospect of a more challenging task

Chang et al (2003) conducted a study among engineers in Singapore. They researched on how to go beyond career plateau by using professional plateau to account for work outcomes. Their findings showed that, career plateau is associated with two outcomes-namely, career satisfaction and job satisfaction. The results also showed that career plateau relates to outcomes such as career and job satisfaction, but does not relate to turnover intentions. Currently, even though there may have been indications that employees have become less optimistic about organizational careers, and that employees may have changed their attitudes toward career plateau, the results indicate that career plateau is still a relevant concept. They stated that, wherever possible, organizations should communicate to their employees the available career paths and help them achieve their career goals. The two scholars pointed out that employers need to recognize that career plateau is not an outdated concept. Engineering professional in Singapore has not lost interest in organizational careers. It pays, therefore, for employers to take care of their employees' career.

Burke et al (2006) carried out a study on career plateau among the police officers in Norway. Their study examined the career plateau in a large sample of police officers. Plateauing has been identified as a significant concern in police forces Cooper, (1982); McGinnis, (1985a, b), a problem compounded by the fact that upward

mobility in the form of promotion is particularly important to police officers McDonald, (1983). The general hypothesis underlying this investigation was that plateaued officers would indicate less work satisfaction and greater psychological distress. Individuals who eventually become career plateaued, as well as individuals who do not, appear to be as equally mobile as when they begin their careers, Viega (1981). However, by the time of their third promotion, eventually plateaued individuals begin to spend longer periods in this job, and in later jobs, than their non-plateaued colleagues do. Thus, plateauing is a developmental process. The findings in the study, while not able to demonstrate cause and effect, shed some light on issues of change over time. The data collected showed that career plateaued police officers reported a more negative work setting as well as greater stress at work. This was accompanied by greater work alienation, less job satisfaction and greater intention to turnover. It was clear that the experiences of the career plateau were associated with negative work experiences and outcomes.

Ismail (2008) conducted a study to identify the constructs, consequences, and coping strategies in career plateau. She noted that career plateau is an important component of career development that adds to the dynamism of career research. It is a concern of employees and organizations since the phenomenon brings implications to terms of strategies to manage the employees. Everyone reaches a career plateau at any time of his or her career, though the outcomes are more felt if the employees experience plateauing while still at the lower or middle level of the job hierarchy. Her article aimed at examining the constructs of career plateau since the understanding of those

constructs is important to both the employers and employees as both have their roles in managing career plateauing.

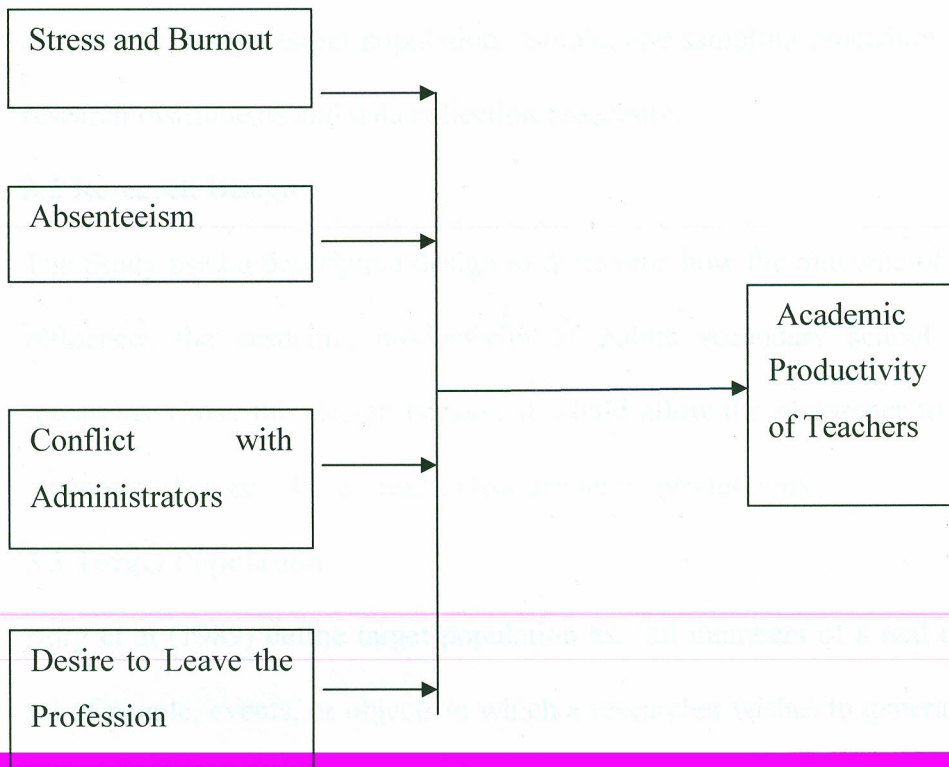
Lapalme et al (2009) noted that most research has studied the direct consequences of plateauing. While some recent studies have tried to assess the moderating effect of factors likely to mitigate or reduce the negative influences of career plateauing Chao (1990). The perception of support in the work place may be one important factor in explaining the negative effects of career plateauing. Theoretical research has shown that managers, because of their limited resource, tend to concentrate their attention on the organization's rising stars and problem employees, Ference et al (1977). As a result, most plateaued employees, who generally continue to perform well at work, end up being pushed aside. Bardwick (1986) has suggested that the resulting sense of abandonment could be a source of declining motivation and psychological distress.

Smith (2009) conducted a study to explore career plateau as a multi-faceted phenomenon and wanted to understand the types of career plateau experienced by accounting professionals in Australia. The participants in her study highlighted that they experienced all three types of Bardwick's (1986) career plateauing: structural, content, and life plateauing. The type of plateau experienced by participants was influenced by both their stage in life and their stage in career, and on their definitions of career and success. The structural plateau tended to relate to objective definitions of the life and content plateau related to subjective conceptualizations of success, i.e., a lack of work-life balance or personal growth and development. The research

revealed that some participants used their career plateau as an opportunity to reenergize and redirect their career paths.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1: the Effect of Career Plateau on Academic Productivity



Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Source: Researcher (2012)

Career plateau is a position that one may reach in his career. It has several aspects, which are negative outcomes. Some of which are: stress and burnout, absenteeism, conflict with administrators and the desire to leave the profession. These outcomes have an effect on the academic productivity of teachers.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives details of the methodology that used in conducting the study, such as research design, target population, sample, and sampling procedure, description of research instruments and data collection procedure.

3.2 Research Design

The Study used a descriptive design to determine how the outcome of career plateau influences the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers. The researcher chose this design because it would allow the researcher to describe what outcomes of career plateau lead to low academic productivity.

3.3 Target Population

Borg et al (1989) define target population as, 'all members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events, or objects to which a researcher wishes to generalize the results of the research study.' The target population for this study consisted of all the 563 teachers in the 26 public secondary schools in Kikuyu District.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Sampling is a systematic selection of representative cases from the larger population. The purpose of sampling is to get accurate empirical data at a fraction of the cost of examining all possible cases. The Sample size in this study comprised of 141 teachers and one Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. The researcher used stratified random sampling and simple random sampling since it was not feasible to cover all the 563 teachers. Fowler (2002) explains that stratification means that specific characteristics of individuals represented in the sample and the sample reflects the

true proportion in the population of individuals with certain characteristics. Creswell 2009 suggests, 'indicate the number of people in the sample and the procedures used to compute the numbers. The researcher chose 50% of the schools in each stratum and randomly selected 25% of the population of teachers in each stratum as shown in the table below.

Table 3.1 Sample size from each stratum

Stratum	Teachers' Population	25% Sample Size
Boys Boarding	137	34
Girls Boarding	158	40
Girls Day	16	4
Mixed Day	217	54
Mixed Day/Boarding	35	9
Total	563	141

Source: Kikuyu District Education Officer's Office (2012)

3.5 Data Collection Tools and Instruments

The research used the following instruments to collect data: secondary data from the Ministry of Education, Teachers' Service Commission, Kikuyu District Education Office, and the Kenya National Examinations Council. The researcher collected primary data through:

Questionnaires

Teachers filled questionnaires designed with the intention of collecting data concerning their demography, training, experience, promotions, and dedication to duty, examinations, and attitude towards the teaching profession. The researcher used the questionnaire to collect data because it offers considerable advantage in the administration; it presents an even stimulus potentially to large numbers of people simultaneously and provides the investigation with an easy accumulation of data. Gay (1992) maintains that questionnaires give respondents freedom to express their views or opinion and to make suggestions. Besides, it is anonymous and anonymity helps to produce more candid answers than is possible in an interview.

3.5.1 Piloting

Piloting is testing of the instruments by trying them in the field. To enhance validity and reliability of the instruments, the researcher conducted a pilot study in one school from Kajjado North, District. Creswell (2009) recommends, 'indicate the number of people who will test the instrument and the plans to incorporate their comments into final instrument revisions. The researcher incorporated the comments of the eight teachers who participated in the pilot study in the final instrument revisions, which enabled the researcher to get diversified views from another district. The testing was important in establishing the content validity of the instrument and revised some questions after piloting.

3.5.2 Validity

According to Borg et al (1989), validity is the degree to which a test measures what it purports to measure. All assessments of validity are subjective opinions based on the judgment of the researcher Wiersma (1995). Creswell (2009) suggests that, to use an

existing instrument, describe the established validity and reliability of scores obtained from past use of the instrument. The pilot study helped to improve face validity and content of the questionnaire tool.

3.5.3 Reliability

Gay (1992) asserts that, reliability is the degree to which a test consistently measures what it measures, while Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) define reliability as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trial. The pilot study was done enhance reliability. The researcher reviewed the literature in the research done by other people, journals, and books to demonstrate reliability for the authors quoted, report measures of consistency with the topic that of study.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher obtained an introduction letter from Kenyatta and clearance from Kikuyu District Education Office to visit schools in the district to collect data. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires to some schools and got a friend who was willing to administer some questionnaires to other schools. The researcher visited the school administration of the selected schools to explain the purpose of the research, sought permission to administer the questionnaire to the teachers, and gave the respondents the questionnaire assuring them that the researcher would maintain strict confidentiality as far as their responses were concerned. The researcher gave the respondents one week to respond.

3.7 Data Analysis

The researcher used Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) as an aid to analyze data and utilized both qualitative and quantitative analyses to analyze the

numbers of teachers on career plateau by choosing specific negative outcomes of career plateau. Appropriate descriptive statistics i.e. frequency counts, and percentages were employed. Data interpretation was done using frequency tables, bar and line graphs, and pie charts.

Demographic characteristics of respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 4.1. The majority of the respondents were female (80.5%) and male (19.5%). The majority of the respondents were aged between 30 and 40 years (60.5%), followed by 41 and 50 years (25.5%), 20 and 30 years (10.5%), 51 and 60 years (2.5%), and 61 and 70 years (1.0%). The majority of the respondents were married (75.5%), followed by single (15.5%), widowed (5.5%), and divorced (3.0%). The majority of the respondents were employed in public secondary schools (85.5%), followed by private secondary schools (10.5%), and other (4.0%).

The majority of the respondents were employed in public secondary schools (85.5%), followed by private secondary schools (10.5%), and other (4.0%).

The effect of gender with regard to the academic productivity of respondents was as follows:

The effect of the desire to leave the teaching profession on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kilimanjaro District was as follows:

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS, AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the effect of career plateau on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District in Kenya. The first part of this chapter deals with the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second part presents the findings following the research questions that informed the study. The researcher analyzed data statistically using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS ver. 17) software and presented the results by way of descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution tables, percentages, charts, and graphs. The respondents that fully completed the survey instrument were 110 out of 141, thus giving a 78.1% response rate. This chapter presents the findings under the following headings:

- i. Demographic characteristics of respondents
- ii. Career plateau among teachers in Kikuyu District
- iii. Self-assessment on academic productivity
- iv. The effect of stress and burnout on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers, in Kikuyu District.
- v. The consequence of absenteeism on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District.
- vi. The effect of conflict with administrators on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District.
- vii. The effect of the desire to leave the teaching profession on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District.

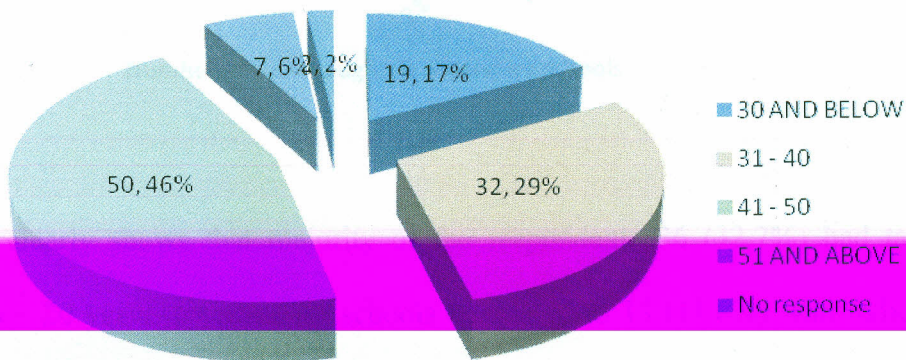
4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics covered by the study were age, years of teaching in secondary school, academic qualifications, and gender of the teachers.

4.2.1 Age of the teachers

A question was posed to the teachers to indicate their age in order to determine the age of the respondents; the responses gathered are as shown in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Distribution of respondents by age



Data depicted in figure 4.1 clearly shows that majority of the teachers 50 (46%) age is between 41 – 50 years compared to 7 (6%) who were above 51 years.

4.2.2 Years taught in secondary school

The researcher asked the teachers to indicate the number of years they have taught in secondary schools. The summary of the data collected is as follows in figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Number of years taught in secondary schools

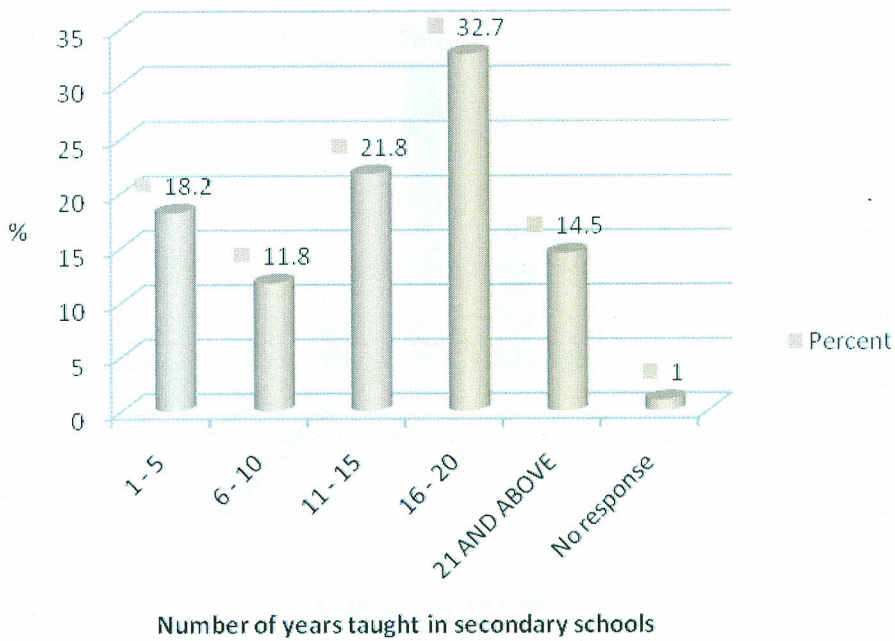
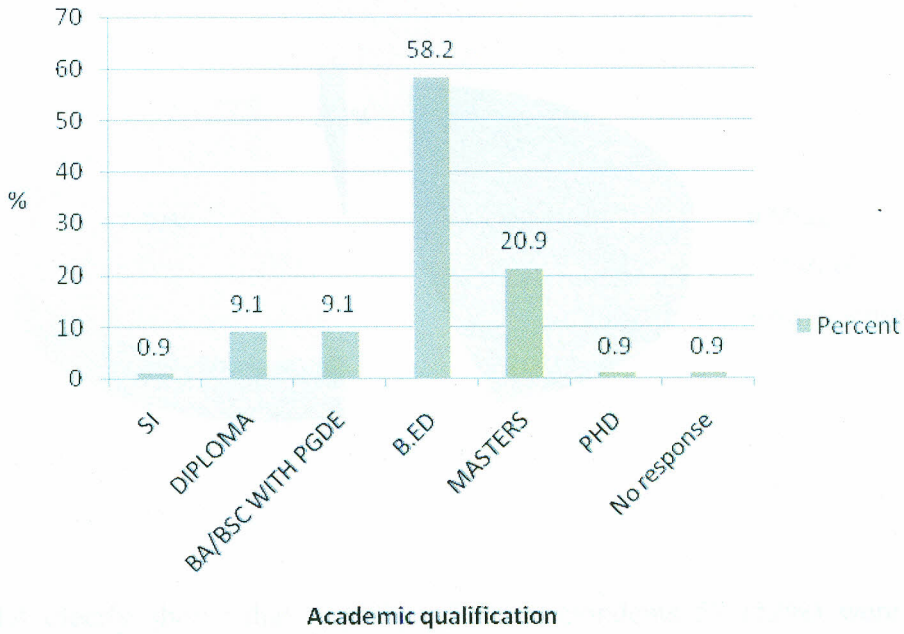


Figure 4.2 clearly shows that majority of the respondents 36 (32.7%) had taught between 16 – 20 years in secondary schools compared to 13 (11.8%) who indicated that they had taught for 6 – 10 years. These results clearly indicated that majority of the teachers 66 (69%) had taught for more than 11 years in secondary schools.

4.2.3 Academic qualifications

A study of this nature requires information about the respondents' academic qualification in order to determine its effect on the academic productivity of teachers. All respondents were asked to indicate their academic qualification and the data collected was analyzed and the results are as summarized in figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3 Academic qualifications of the teachers



From the figure above, majority of the teachers 64 (58.2%) were B.ED degree holders, followed by 23 (20.9%) masters holders. PHD holders and SI qualifications received 1 (0.9%) least qualification.

4.2.4 Gender of the teachers

In order to determine the gender of the respondents, the teachers were to indicate their gender. The responses gathered are as shown in figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4 Gender of the teachers

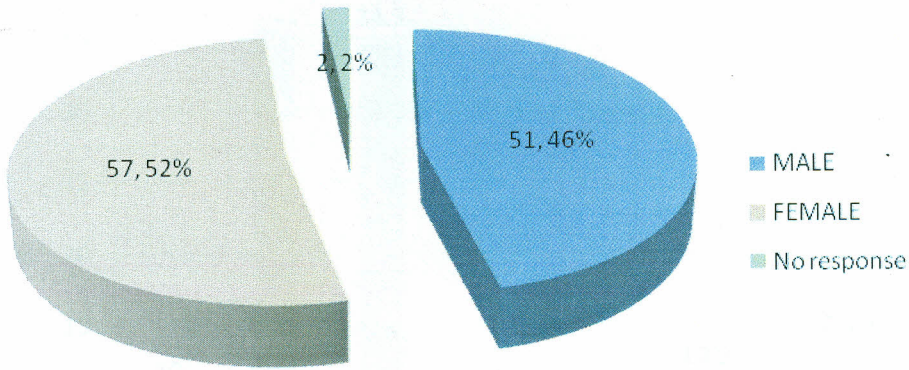


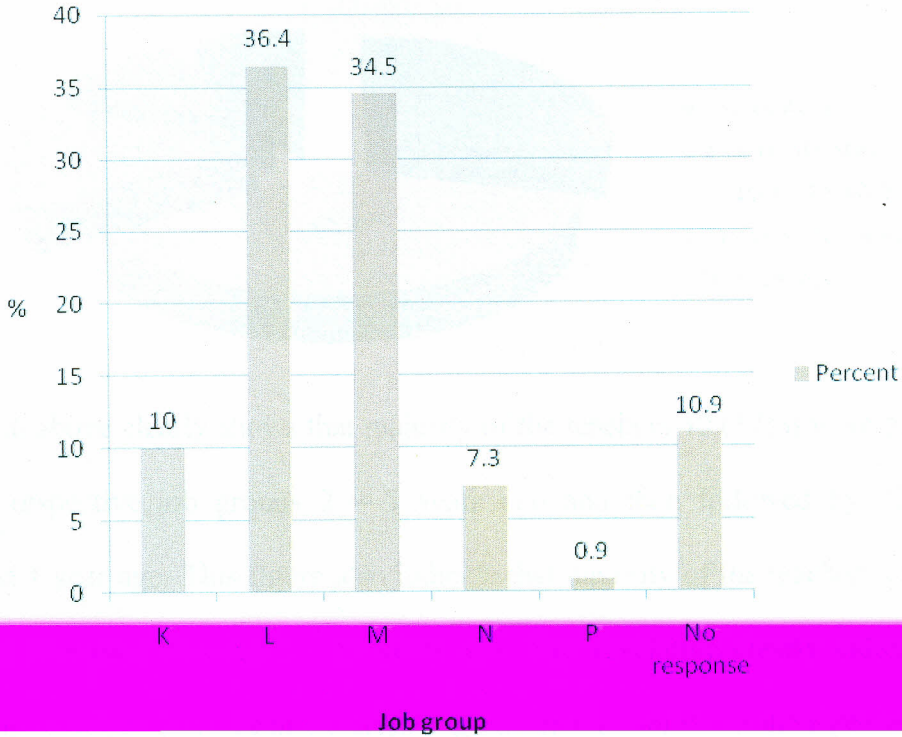
Figure 4.4 clearly shows that majority of the respondents 57 (52%) were female compared to 51 (46%) who were male. These results show that the results were representative.

4.3 Career plateau

4.3.1 Job group

Career plateau is an important component of career development that adds to the dynamism of career research. Limited hierarchical movement among employees is more likely to trigger low productivity. All respondents were asked to indicate their job groups, the data collected analyzed, and the results are as summarized in figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5 Distribution of teachers as per their job groups



From the figure above, majority of teachers 40 (36.4%) were in job group L followed closely by 38 (34.5%) in job group M. Only 1 (0.9%) was in job group P.

4.3.2 Year of promotion

In order to determine teachers' hierarchical movement the period when the teachers were promoted to various job groups had to be determined. A question was posed to all the teachers to indicate when they were promoted to different job groups. The responses gathered are as shown in figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6 Year of promotion to different job groups

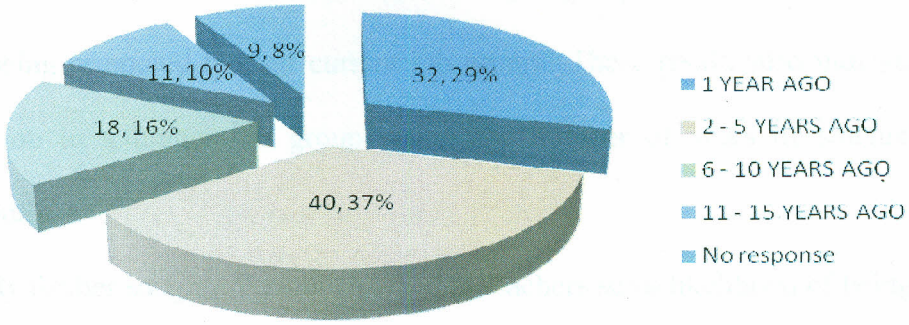


Figure 4.6 above clearly shows that majority of the teachers 40 (37%) were promoted to their respective job groups 2 – 5 years ago and then followed by 32 (29%) promoted 1 year ago. This figure also indicate that majority of the teachers 69 (63%) were last promoted between 2 – 15 years ago. This revelation clearly indicates that very many teachers have been experiencing career immobility in their profession. A cross tabulation was also carried out to compare teachers progression to various job groups and their years of teaching. The responses gathered are as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Teachers' years of teaching and progression to various job groups

Years of teaching	JOB GROUP				
	K	L	M	N	P
1 - 5	8	2	0	0	0
6 - 10	3	7	3	0	0
11 - 15	0	14	10	0	0
16 - 20	0	11	17	6	1
21 and above	0	5	8	2	0
Total	11	39	38	8	1

Table 4.1 shows that most teachers who are in job group M, had taught for 6 - 10 years before being promoted to their current job group. These results also indicate teachers' progression to a higher job group where the number of years of teaching features prominently.

The study further sought to establish whether teachers see a likelihood of being promoted to the next job group the following year. Teachers were therefore asked to indicate whether they saw a likelihood of being promoted to the next job group. The question asked yielded the results summarized in the Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7 Teachers' responses on the likelihood of being promoted

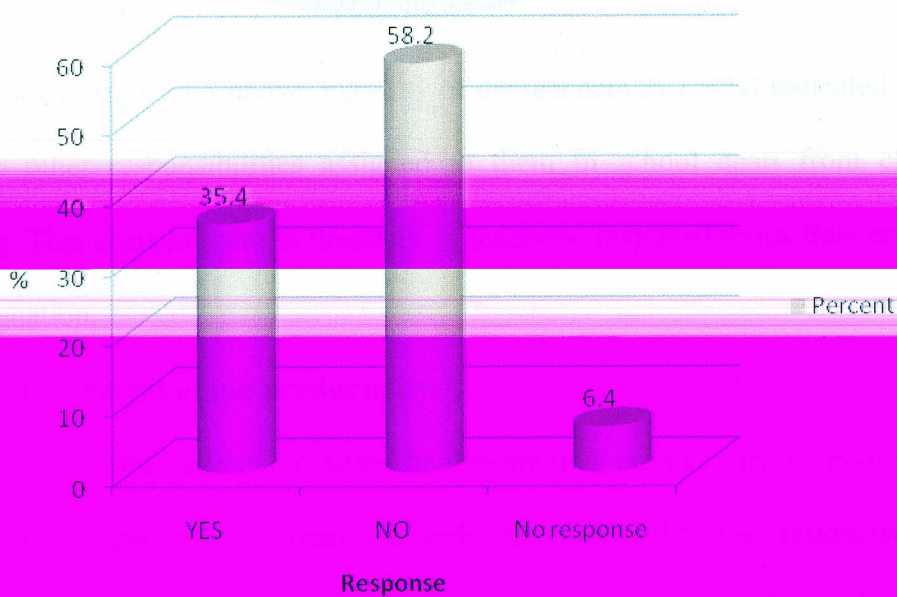
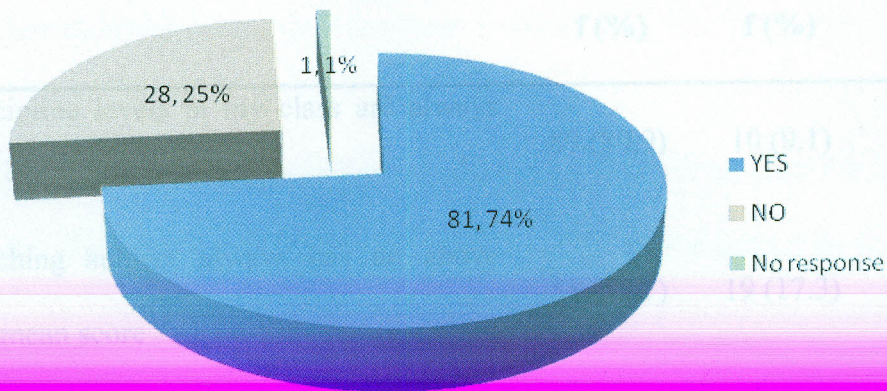


Figure 4.7 above clearly shows that majority of the teachers 64 (58.2%) stated that they do not see a likelihood of being promoted to the next job group compared to 39 (35.4%) who felt otherwise. These results clearly paint a gloomy picture on the hierarchical progression for teachers in the public secondary schools.

The study further sought to determine whether teachers hold any other responsibility. A question was posed to the teachers to indicate whether they hold any other responsibility in the school apart from classroom teaching. The following results were realized in the figure below.

Figure 4.8 Teachers' responses on holding other responsibilities



As depicted in figure 4.8 above, majority of the teachers 81 (74%) indicated that they do have other responsibilities assigned to them in school apart from classroom teaching. This ensures there is diversity in teachers' responsibilities thus eradicating task stagnation.

4.4 Self-Assessment of job productivity

An individual' self-assessment helps in determining productivity of employees. A positive or negative self-assessment influences an individual productivity thus providing an opportunity for knowledge and skills advancement. The study sought to determine teachers' self-assessment on their job productivity. Teachers were asked to give information on their job productivity in relation to various statements. Seven structured statements were incorporated with a scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. For ease of analysis, Strongly Agree and Agree were combined as Agree while Disagree and Strongly Disagree became Disagree. The respondents'

percentages of agreement and disagreement with the various statements are shown in table 4.4.1 below:

Table 4.2 Teachers' self-assessment on job productivity

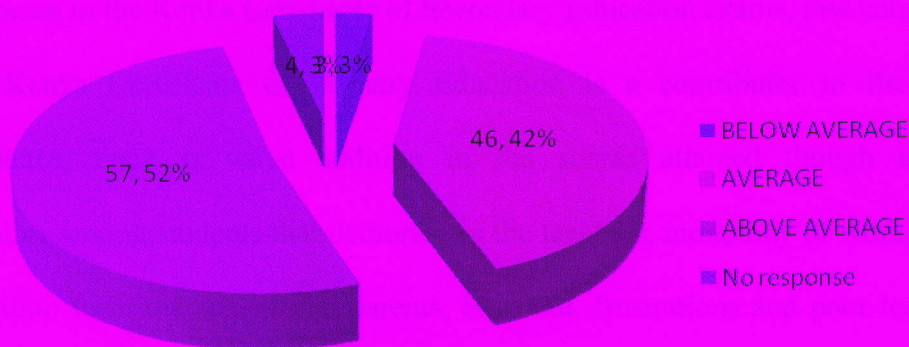
Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
The discipline levels in my class are always high	89 (80.9)	10 (9.1)	8 (7.3)
My teaching subject always has an above average mean score	58 (52.7)	19 (17.3)	30 (27)
I rate myself as a high performer in my teaching job	92 (83.6)	13 (11.8)	2 (1.8)
I always cover the syllabus within the stipulated time	86 (78.2)	11 (10)	11 (10)
My relationship with other teachers is above average	93 (84.5)	9 (8.2)	6 (5.4)
I take keen interest in students' work after school hours	71 (64.6)	21 (19.1)	14 (13)
The performance of students in my subject makes me proud	63 (57.2)	16 (14.5)	27 (25)

From the table 4.2 above, majority of the teachers 89 (80.9%) indicated that the discipline levels in their class is always high, 58 (52.7%) stated that their teaching subject always has an above average mean score, 92 (83.6%) rate themselves as high

performers in their teaching jobs and 86 (78.2%) always cover the syllabus within the stipulated time. Teachers 93 (84.5%) observed that their relationship with other teachers was above average, 71 (64.6%) indicated that they take keen interest in students' work after school hours and 63 (57.2%) were proud with the performance of students in their subject. From these results, it is apparent that teachers had a positive self-assessment, which boosts their academic productivity.

The study further sought to determine how teachers rated their productivity in the last 5 years. A question was posed to the teachers to rate their productivity as a teacher in the last 5 years. The following results were obtained as depicted in the figure 4.9 below.

Figure 4.9 Rating of teachers' productivity



From the figure above majority of the teachers 57 (52%) rated their productivity at above average compared to 3 (2.7%) who considered their performance at below average.

Teachers were further asked to give reasons for their answer. The teachers who indicated that their performance was above average gave the following reasons: they do use learner centered approaches in their teaching that caters for students needs and builds a positive attitude in the subject, there has been a tremendous improvement in

the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations performance in their subjects, the mean score performance in their subjects surpasses the school mean score, teachers have attained the targets set and produced good results, students have prepared adequately by ensuring syllabus coverage was done on time, teachers are self motivated and go an extra mile by creating more contact hours outside school time with the students, the school administration has taken heed of the input given by teachers and encourage them to attend in-service trainings, students are motivated to perform, appreciation of teachers effort by the parents, good relations and team work among colleagues, more enrollment into the subject and students who pursue courses after school related to the subject. Those who indicated an average performance attributed this to the following reasons: low scores and a discouraging trend in performance, students performing at both extremes, the subject mean being below the school mean in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education exams, low entry marks in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education is a contributor to the dismal performance, there is value addition in the scores attained though minimal, indiscipline among students that demoralizes the teachers, monotony of work, lack of appreciation from the school and parents, burn out, frustrations and poor leadership from the school administration and the employer that results to frequent transfers, teachers are overburden with work, the effort put by teachers is not proportional to the poor results attained and home related issues that take toll on teachers performance. Teachers who indicated below average stated low entry marks among students leads to poor performance, low motivation among students and teachers, lack of role models in the society, drug abuse among students and boy-girl relationships as the main reasons.

From these results on teachers' assessment on job productivity it is clear that teachers who are exhibiting characteristics of career plateauing are among those teachers who are citing reasons for average and below average performance. To turn the tables round and attain a positive academic performance all players should be brought on board and work as a well-oiled engine of a machine.

4.5 The effect of stress and burnout on academic productivity

Career plateau has consequences on employees. Plateaued employees can exhibit stress and burnout characteristics. The study sought to determine the effect of stress and burnout on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District. Teachers were asked to give information on the effect of stress and burnout on their academic productivity. Four structured statements were incorporated with a scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. For ease of analysis, Strongly Agree and Agree were combined as Agree while Disagree and Strongly Disagree became Disagree. The respondents' percentages of agreement and disagreement with the various statements are shown in table 4.3:

Table 4.3 The effect of stress and burnout on academic productivity

Statements	Agree f (%)	Neutral f (%)	Disagree f (%)
My teaching work is monotonous	50 (45.4)	21 (19.1)	34 (30.9)
I enjoy my teaching work	86 (70.2)	15 (13.6)	9 (8.2)
Most times I do not feel like going to teach	22 (20)	17 (15.5)	69 (52.8)
My work is overwhelming	59 (53.6)	18 (16.4)	32 (29.1)

From table 4.3, majority of the teachers 50 (45.4%) indicated that their teaching work is monotonous, 86 (70.2%) stated that they enjoy their teaching work, 69 (52.8%) feel like going to teach and 59 (53.6%) observed that their work is overwhelming. These results are in line with the findings of Chao (1990) who found out that plateaued employees report low level of work satisfaction and organization commitment.

4.6 The consequence of absenteeism on academic productivity

The study sought to determine the consequence of absenteeism on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District. Teachers were asked to give information on the consequences of absenteeism on the academic productivity. Four structured statements were incorporated with a scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. For ease of analysis, Strongly Agree and Agree were combined as Agree while Disagree and Strongly Disagree became Disagree. The respondents' percentages of agreement and disagreement with the various statements have been worked out as shown in table 4.6 below:

Table 4.4 The consequences of absenteeism on academic productivity

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
I always come to school on time	93 (84.6)	7 (6.4)	9 (8.1)
I have not missed any class this term	40 (36.4)	15 (13.6)	55 (50)
I often change my lesson so that I leave school early	19 (17.2)	7 (6.4)	83 (75.4)
I have often been reprimanded about missing class	10 (9.1)	10 (9.1)	87 (79.1)

From the table 4.4, majority of the teachers 93 (84.6%) indicated that they always come to school on time, 55 (50%) stated that they had missed class that term, 83 (75.4%) stated that they do not change their lessons so that they leave school early and 87 (79.1%) stated that they had not been reprimanded about missing class. From these results, absenteeism has not taken toll on academic productivity of teachers in the District.

4.7 The effect of conflict with administrators on academic productivity

The study sought to determine the effect of conflict with administrators on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District. Teachers were asked to give information on the effect of conflict with administrators on the academic productivity. Four structured statements were incorporated with a scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. For ease of analysis, Strongly Agree and Agree were combined as Agree while Disagree and Strongly Disagree became Disagree. The respondents' percentages of agreement and disagreement with the various statements have been worked out as shown in table 4.5.

Table 4.5 The effect of conflict with administrators on academic productivity

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
School administrators appreciate my work	66 (60)	23 (20.9)	14 (12.7)
School administrators expect too much from me	43 (38.9)	35 (31.8)	26 (23.7)
School administrators have their 'favorite' teachers	48 (43.7)	25 (22.7)	33 (30)
I have never received a warning memo(s) from the school administrators	65 (59.1)	8 (7.3)	36 (31.7)

From this table, majority of the teachers 66 (60%) stated that school administrators appreciate their work, 43 (38.9%) indicated that too much is expected from them by the school administrators, 48 (43.7%) cited that school administrators have their 'favorite' teachers and 65 (59.1%) indicated that they have never received a warning memo from the school administrators. From that: teachers noted that conflict with school administrators could influence their academic productivity especially when they expect too much from them and is not in the list of their favorites.

4.8 The effect of the desire to leave the teaching profession on academic productivity

The study sought to determine the effect of the desire to leave the teaching profession on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District. Teachers were asked to give information on the effect of the desire to leave the teaching profession on the academic productivity. Four structured statements were

incorporated with a scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. For ease of analysis, Strongly Agree and Agree were combined as Agree while Disagree and Strongly Disagree became Disagree. The respondents' percentages of agreement and disagreement with the various statements have been worked out as shown in table 4.6:

Table 4.6 The effect of the desire to leave the teaching profession on academic productivity

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
Teaching is a fulfilling profession to me	62 (56.4)	20 (18.2)	25 (22.7)
I have done other courses not related to teaching	62 (56.4)	12 (10.9)	32 (29.1)
I have applied for a job in a different field	51 (46.4)	8 (7.3)	48 (43.7)
I will not retire a teacher	59 (53.6)	22 (20)	25 (22.7)

From table 4.6 above, majority of the teachers 62 (56.4%) indicated that teaching is a fulfilling profession to them, 62 (56.4%) indicated that they had done other courses not related to teaching, 51 (46.4%) stated that they had applied for a job in a different field and 59 (53.6%) stated that they will not retire a teacher. From the results, it is apparent that majority of teachers show little satisfaction and they have a strong desire to venture into other professions.

The study further sought to determine other effects of career plateau teachers have witnessed in their schools. Teachers made the following suggestions: teachers from study leave decline to take additional responsibilities, teachers are more contented even with

the poor results, high teacher turnover, high tendencies to pursue further studies, intimidation from school administrators, teachers engaging in non-teaching activities to earn extra money, demoralization among teachers due to poor results over the years, mistrust among the teachers, low self-esteem among teachers due to poor pay resulting to quitting, strained relationships between colleagues, overstaying in one station, complacency and indispensability attitude among teachers, desertion of duty that results to dismissal performance.

The study further sought to establish recommendations that could lessen career plateau among teachers. The question yielded the following recommendations: teachers as well as students should be motivated and appreciated for their excellent performance, refresher courses, capacity building, in-service trainings, workshops and seminars should be organized by the Ministry of Education and the school to equip teachers with new skills and interventions in addressing major challenges experienced in the education sector, the Teachers' Service Commission should come up with a teachers' promotion scheme that factors teachers' promotion on the basis of merit, recognize certificates that are issued in in-service trainings, seminars, workshops and other courses during teacher promotions, have a clear progression path for teachers that specifies the period of time when one should be in a particular job group to avoid stagnation in one job group, there should be competitive selection for promotion to different job groups as well as headship of schools and promotion upon educational advancement. There should be an increment in teachers' remuneration, benefits, and allowances. School heads should be discouraged from victimizing teachers who pursue further studies, improve teachers working environment in schools. School heads should organize motivational talks to teachers to build their self-esteem. Teachers need scholarships for educational advancement. Experienced teachers

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents summary, conclusion, and recommendations based on the findings. The summary presents each part of the study in brief, there are conclusions for each research question, and recommendations are given on the general findings of the study.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of career plateau on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District in Kenya. The study sought to determine the effect of stress and burnout, absenteeism, conflict with administrators and the desire to leave the teaching profession on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District. Related literature review was used to guide the study to make conclusions. The study employed stratified random sampling procedures to identify the teachers who provided relevant data for the study. The sample consisted of 141 teachers from 13 schools within Kikuyu District. The researcher used SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to summarize the data. From the analysis, the study found out the following:

On the issue of career plateau, majority of teachers were in job group L. A majority of the teachers was promoted after 2 – 15. This revelation clearly indicates that very many teachers have been experiencing career immobility for a very long time. Many teachers who are on job group M had taught for 6 - 10 years in the previous job group.

These results also indicate teachers' progression to a higher job group happens after teaching for many years.

On the assessment of teachers' productivity, majority of the teachers indicated that, their teaching subject always has an above average mean score; teachers rate themselves as high performers in their teaching jobs. Teachers take keen interest in students' work after school hours and were proud with the performance of students in their subject. Teachers rated their productivity at above average due to the learner centered approaches they use that caters for students needs and builds a positive attitude in the subject, a tremendous improvement in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education exams performance in their subjects, teachers attained the targets set and produced good results. Students are motivated to perform while parents appreciate teachers for their effort.

Those who rated themselves at average performance attributed this to the low mean scores and a discouraging trend in academic performance, students performing at both extremes, the subject mean being below the school mean in national examination, low entry marks in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education exams which contributes to the dismal performance of students. Monotony of work, lack of appreciation from the school and parents, burn out, frustrations and poor leadership from the school administration and the employer that results to frequent transfers, teachers are overburdened with work, the effort put in by teachers is not proportional to the poor results attained. Teachers who indicated below average performance attributed this to the low entry marks among students that lead to poor performance, low motivation

among students and teachers, lack of role models in the society, drug abuse among students and boy-girl relationships as the main reasons.

From these results on teachers' assessment on job productivity it is clear that teachers who are exhibiting characteristics of career plateauing are among those teachers who are citing reasons for average and below average performance. On the effect of stress and burnout, the study found out that teachers find their teaching work monotonous, though most of them enjoy their teaching work, they feel like going to teach, yet majority find their work overwhelming. On the consequence of absenteeism on the academic, teachers indicated that they always went to school on time, many had not missed class that term, and they did not change their lessons to leave school early. From these results, absenteeism has not taken toll on academic productivity of teachers in the District.

On the effect of conflict with administrators on the academic productivity, the study found out that school administrators appreciate teachers' work, though too much is expected from teachers by the school administrators, besides, school administrators have their 'favorite' teachers. From the results, teachers noted that conflict with school, administrators could influence their academic productivity. On the effect of the desire to leave the teaching profession on academic productivity, though majority of the teachers indicated that teaching is a fulfilling profession to them, they had done other courses not related to teaching and had applied for a job in a different field while some said they will not retire a teacher. These results show that teachers have

little satisfaction in their work and they have a strong desire to venture into other professions.

The study also found other effects of career plateau that teachers have witnessed in their schools like, high teacher turnover, high tendencies to pursue further studies to get out of teaching. Teachers engage in non-teaching activities to earn extra money, demoralization among teachers due to poor results over the years, low self-esteem among teachers due to poor pay and complacency and indispensability attitude among teachers.

On the recommendations that could be put in place to enhance academic productivity and discourage career plateau the study found out that teachers should be motivated and appreciated for their excellent performance, refresher courses, in-service trainings, workshops and seminars should be organized by the Ministry of Education and the school to equip teachers with new skills and interventions in addressing major challenges experienced in the education sector, the Teachers' Service Commission should come up with a teachers' promotion scheme that factors teachers' promotion on the basis of merit, recognize certificates that are issued in in-service trainings, seminars, workshops and other courses during teacher promotions, have a clear progression path for teachers that specifies the period of time when one should be in a particular job group to avoid stagnation in one job group, there should be competitive selection for promotion to different job groups as well as headship of schools and promotion upon educational advancement. There should be an increment in teachers' remuneration, benefits, and allowances. Schools heads should be discouraged from victimizing teachers who pursue further studies, improve teachers working environment in schools. School heads can organize motivational talks to teachers to build their self-esteem. Teachers should be

given scholarships for educational advancement. Experienced teachers should guide novice teachers on school matters and issues pertaining to the teaching profession.

5.3 Conclusions

The researcher made the following conclusions based on the findings of the study: majority of the teachers stated that teachers experience a career plateau since several of them have stagnated on one job group for more than three years. Most of the teachers assessed themselves as above average in performance because of the high mean scores in the subjects they teach. Stress and burnout affects the academic productivity of teachers due to work that is monotonous and overwhelming. Absenteeism has not taken toll on the academic productivity of teachers in the district. Conflict with school administrators could influence academic productivity especially when they expect too much from teachers and when a teacher is not their favorite. Many teachers have a strong desire to leave the teaching profession due to the absence of job satisfaction.

5.4 Recommendations

In order to ensure that career plateau does not affect teachers' academic productivity negatively, there is need to implement the following:

5.4.1 School level

Teachers as well as students should be motivated and appreciated for their excellent performance, school administrators should improve the working environment in schools by ensuring schools have appropriate and adequate infrastructure for teaching and learning. School heads can also organize motivational talks to teachers to build their self-esteem. Experienced teachers should guide novice teachers on school matters and on issues pertaining to the teaching profession. School heads should be

discouraged from victimizing teachers who pursue further studies when they report from their study leave.

5.4.2 Government policy

The Government through Ministry of Education should initiate refresher courses, capacity building programs, in-service trainings, to equip teachers with new skills and interventions in addressing major challenges they experience in the education sector, the Teachers' Service Commission should come up with a teachers' promotion scheme that factors teachers' promotion on the basis of merit, recognize certificates that are issued in in-service trainings, seminars, workshops and other courses during teacher promotions, there should be competitive selection for promotion through interviews to different job groups as well as headship of schools and promotion upon educational advancement. The commission should review teachers' remuneration, benefits, and allowances upwards. The government through the Teachers' Service Commission should offer scholarships to teachers for educational advancement. Apart from that, recruitment of more teachers should be done to reduce teachers' workload especially after the introduction of free secondary education in day schools.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

The study examined the effect of career plateau on the academic productivity of public secondary school teachers in Kikuyu District. For further understanding on how career plateau affects productivity of teachers, future researchers should give attention to the following areas of research.

- i. A study on the effect of career plateau on the productivity of employees in parastatal organizations.

- ii. A study on the effect of career plateau on the academic productivity of teachers in rural areas and primary schools.
- iii. Similar studies should be conducted in other parts of the country to find out whether the findings in this study can be generalized to the entire country.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Letter to Respondents

Dear Respondent,

This study seeks to investigate the effect of career plateau (the point in a career where the likelihood of additional hierarchical promotion is very low”) on the academic productivity of teachers in public secondary schools, in Kikuyu District. The research intends to recommend the most appropriate remedial factors to arrest career plateau, which would enhance and sustain teachers’ academic productivity. The study assumes that they staying at the same point of their career for too long without getting any promotions have affected the academic productivity of teachers.

Given the significance of the study in enhancing the productivity of teachers, reflected in the performance of students in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations, you are an important part in the study. Please spare some of your precious time to provide information relating to the questions that follow. Each response will be confidential and used for academic research only. Thank you for your co-operation.

Sincerely,

Esther N. Azinga

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire intends to collect information on the effect of career plateau on the academic productivity of teachers. Kindly provide answers to these questions as honestly as you can. Responses to all the questions will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Part 1: Background Information

Teaching subjects _____

Please tick [√] the appropriate answer

1. Your age in years

- a. 30 and below ()
- b. 31-40 ()
- c. 41-50 ()
- d. 51 and above ()

2. How many years have you taught in secondary school?

- a. 1-5 ()
- b. 6-10 ()
- c. 11-15 ()
- d. 16-20 ()
- e. 21 and above ()

3. What is your current academic qualification?

- a. SI ()
- b. Diploma ()

- c. BA/BSc with PGDE ()
- d. B.Ed ()
- e. Masters ()
- f. Any other [specify].....

4. Gender:

- a. Male ()
- b. Female ()

Part 2: Career Plateau

5. Which Job Group are you currently in?

- a. K ()
- b. L ()
- c. M ()
- d. N ()
- e. Any other [Specify].....

6. When were you promoted to this Job Group?

- a. 1 year ago ()
- b. 2-5 years ago ()
- c. 6-10 years ago ()
- d. 11-15 years ago ()

7. Do you see a likelihood of being promoted to the next job group in the next one year?

- a. Yes ()
- b. No ()

8. Do you hold any other responsibility in the school apart from classroom teaching?

- a. Yes ()
- b. No ()

Part 3: Self-Assessment of Job Productivity

The table on the next page presents various statements regarding your job productivity as a teacher. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement, using the following scale.

SA-Strongly Agree A-Agree N-Neutral D-Disagree SD-Strongly Disagree

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
9. The discipline levels in my class are always high					
10. My teaching subject always has an above average mean score					
11. I rate myself as a high performer in my teaching job					
12. I always cover the syllabus within the stipulated time					
13. My relationship with other teachers is above average					
14. I take keen interest in students' work after school hours					
15. The performance of students in my subject makes me proud					

16. How would you rate your productivity as a teacher in the last 5 years?

- a. Below average
- b. Average
- c. Above average

17. Give reasons for your answer in the above question.

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Part 4: Effects of Career Plateau

In the table below, various statements are provided regarding effects of career plateau.

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement by placing a tick [√] where appropriate. Use the following scale to respond.

SA-Strongly Agree A-Agree N-Neutral D-Disagree SD-Strongly Disagree

18. Stress and Burnout	SA	A	N	D	SD
a. My teaching work is monotonous					
b. I enjoy my teaching work					
c. Most times I do not feel like going to teach					
d. My work is overwhelming					
19. Absenteeism	SA	A	N	D	SD
a. I always come to school on time					
b. I have not missed any class this term					

c. I often change my lesson so that I leave school early						
d. I have often been reprimanded about missing class						
20. Conflict With Administrators	SA	A	N	D	SD	
a. School administrators appreciate my work						
b. School administrators expect too much from me						
c. School administrators have their 'favorite' teachers						
d. I have never received a warning memo (s) from school administrators						
21. Desire to Leave the Profession	SA	A	N	D	SD	
a. Teaching is a fulfilling profession to me						
b. I have done other courses not related to teaching						
c. I have applied for a job in a different field						
d. I will not retire a teacher						

22. Please indicate any other effect of career plateau that you may have

witnessed in your school

.....

.....

.....

Part 5: Recommendations

23. What do you think could be done to mitigate career plateau among teachers?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you so much for your time and cooperation

Data Analysis
Writing the report
Submission of report to the supervisor

Appendix C

WORK PLAN FOR THE PROJECT

Activity	Date (2012)
Correction of Proposal	14 th -17 th March
Piloting of Questionnaire	19 th -23 rd March
Data Collection	26 th March-5 th April
Data Analysis	9 th - 13 th April
Writing the report	16 th -17 th April
Submission of report to the supervisor	18 th April
Submission of final research project	19 th April

Appendix D

RESEARCH BUDGET

Activity	Kshs
Proposal Writing	
Printing 53 pages @ Kshs 15 per page	795
Photocopy 5 Booklets @ Kshs 2.50 per page	662
Spiral Binding 6 Booklets @ Kshs 70	420
Transport and Miscellaneous	1,000
Final Project	
Pilot questionnaires 15×5 pages @ Kshs 2.50	187
Photocopy questionnaires 164×5 pages @ Kshs 2.50	2,050
Data Analysis	15,000
Transport and Miscellaneous	4,000
Printing 80 Pages @ Kshs 15	1,200
Photocopy 6×80 pages @ Kshs 2.50	1,200
Binding Final Copies	4,000
GRAND TOTAL	30, 514

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