

GENDER FACTOR IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHER'S JOB SATISFACTION IN NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT: *The teaching profession in Kenya has witnessed various manifestations of teacher dissatisfaction more specifically in the last ten years. These include industrial disharmony, teacher turnover and disciplinary cases relating to teacher absenteeism and desertion of duty. Teachers' job satisfaction has a direct impact on students' achievement and their future careers. This implies that, while a satisfied teacher is less likely to desert his/her teaching responsibilities, a dissatisfied one has higher chances of being less committed to his/her students thereby minimizing their chances of making positive learning gains among learners. In view of the importance of teacher job satisfaction, this study investigated the influence of gender on job satisfaction among public secondary school teachers in Nakuru County, Kenya. Using ex-post facto research design, data was collected from 341 teachers through a self-delivered questionnaire. Validity of the research instrument was ascertained through a pilot study carried out in the neighbouring Nyandarua County. The internal and external reliability coefficients for the teachers' questionnaire as estimated through Cronbach's alpha coefficient and split-half technique stood at $r = .945$ and $r = .905$ respectively. Data was analyzed using t-test. The study found that gender had a statistically significant influence ($p < .05$) on teacher satisfaction, with the male teachers recording a higher satisfaction than their female counterparts. The study offers useful insights to the teacher managers in Kenya, specifically the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) and Boards of Management (BoMs) in secondary schools on how to address the needs of female teachers. This will go a long way in enhancing their level of job satisfaction.*

KEYWORDS: teachers, job satisfaction, gender, Nakuru County, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction is an important and crucial factor in the workplace including organizations and industry. According to Judge, Thoresen, Bono and Patton (2001), job satisfaction has a substantial influence on all facets of organizational behaviour such as commitment, absenteeism, and job turnover. In terms of organizational behaviour and practice of human resource management, job satisfaction is considered as a critical construct. This is because, job satisfaction greatly influences employees' attitude towards their job, a factor that has a significant effect on the development of organizations including the employees themselves. In addition, Ololube (2006) points out that job satisfaction has a strong link with academic achievement of students. A satisfied teacher has a friendly attitude and greater enthusiasm which contributes immensely towards the educational advancement of the students, whereas a dissatisfied teacher has an irritable and hostile attitude thereby causing great harm to the institution as well as to the society (Sankar & Vasudha, 2015).

Greenberg and Baron (2003) define job satisfaction as a feeling that can produce a positive or negative effect towards one's roles and responsibility at work. Job satisfaction is the result of a personal assessment of work and work experiences. On the other hand, Heslop, Smith, and Hart (2002) define job satisfaction as the difference between what individuals feel they should receive from their work and what they derive from the actual work situation. A sense of satisfaction or its absence is thus, an individual's subjective emotional reaction to his or her work (Abu-Bader, 1998). Lim (2008) has further observed that job satisfaction has an appreciable influence on workers' psychological well-being and consequently organizational effectiveness. This implies that a satisfied worker is more likely to experience positive emotions and feelings of happiness, both of which are significant determinants of organizational commitment and output.

Teachers' job satisfaction, however is not a group phenomenon since it is a function of an individual's needs fulfilment. Since teachers are not similar in terms of temperament, interests, and experience, their needs and consequently levels of job satisfaction may differ (Steers, Porter & Bigley, 1996). The differential levels of job satisfaction are also linked to the fact that teachers are typically in different stages of career development. As has been explained by Okumbe (1998), there are four career development stages that teachers go through. These include; the exploration, establishment, maintenance (plateau) and the decline stage. These stages have a lot of implications on job satisfaction. For instance, as Okumbe points out, at the exploration stage (the first stage in an employee's career), teachers are likely to have lower expectations because of limited job knowledge and information. At the establishment stage, teachers tend to be concerned with achievement, esteem, autonomy and competition while at the maintenance and decline career stages most teachers are characterized by the desire for promotion and respect from younger employees.

In view of teachers' heterogeneity, Evans (1998) has averred that the best approach in an attempt to study teacher satisfaction is to adopt the individuality dimension. This is an approach in which the focus is on individual characteristics such as gender. The extent to which gender may influence workers' job satisfaction has been explored in a number of studies, though the results have tended to be conflicting. A study conducted by Ghafoor (2012) for instance showed that male employees were more satisfied compared to their female counterparts. On the contrary, Ombeni's (2016) study revealed that females had a higher level of job satisfaction than their male colleagues. Further, a study by Strydom, Nortje, Beukes, Esterhuyse and Westhuizen (2012) showed that gender had no significant relationship with teacher job satisfaction. Further, research has isolated specific facets of the job and measured satisfaction based on them. In one such study, Dehaloo (2011) measured satisfaction and found out that male teachers were more satisfied than female teachers with school policies, interpersonal relations and the schools' overall organizational climate. In the same line of investigation, Crossman and Haris (2006) reported that female teachers were more satisfied with their working conditions e.g., physical facilities, state of offices and orderliness in the work place than males.

When contextualized in the teaching profession, it is reasonable to aver that enhancing job satisfaction among teachers should be a priority both at the national and school levels. This is because satisfied teachers are key to quality learning outcomes and by implication positive returns

to resources invested in the education sector. However, in spite of the intricate link between job satisfaction and employee commitment, teachers' job satisfaction in a number of African countries, Kenya included, has been reported to be low. In Malawi, for example, a study by Kadzamira and Chibwana (2005) reported low job satisfaction levels among primary and secondary school teachers. The challenge of teacher satisfaction has similarly been explored by researchers in Kenya. For instance, a study by Mutwiri (2015) among secondary school teachers in mixed day secondary schools in Imenti South District, Kenya revealed that some of the critical factors that were impacting negatively on job satisfaction were; supervision, state of offices and classrooms and general school infrastructure. Similarly, the study by Njiru (2014) among secondary school teachers in Kiharu District, Kenya revealed that most teachers in the study area were dissatisfied with remuneration, workload, inadequate promotion opportunities, poor interpersonal relations and inadequate teaching equipment and resources. The issue of teachers' job satisfaction has also been investigated in Nakuru County, Kenya. Mwangi's (2012) study among secondary school teachers in the county revealed that although teachers who participated in the study were satisfied with their schools' organizational goals and achievements, they were dissatisfied with matters relating to promotion and in-service training opportunities. Another study by Mburu (2013) in the county revealed that the terms and conditions of service were perceived negatively by the teacher participants.

Proceeding from the foregoing discussion on teachers' job satisfaction, it is apparent that there are various aspects of teacher needs that should be investigated with a view to addressing them so as to enhance teachers' job satisfaction in Kenya. Although the cited studies in Nakuru County have revealed that secondary school teachers in the County could be experiencing unfulfilled needs, the studies are too general. Specifically, they have not individualized in regard to teachers' job satisfaction which is critical to the deep understanding of teacher satisfaction in the country. For instance, there is need to find out who is more satisfied or dissatisfied with a given facet of their work between male and female teachers. This is the knowledge gap that this study sought to fill.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies (see for example Chirchir, 2016; Kemunto, Raburu & Bosire, 2017; Njiru, 2014; Olorunsora, 2012) examining job satisfaction disparities between men and women tend to suggest that women are more satisfied with their jobs than their male counterparts. The finding that women are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs than their male colleagues has been attributed to two main factors. First, women tend to have a lower expectation of career and income due to gender pay differentials, discrimination and reduced promotion opportunities (Long, 2005; Sloane & Williams, 2000). The lower expectation, as has been argued by Clark (1997) tends to translate into a higher job satisfaction for women. The other factor that has been linked to higher job satisfaction among women employees is the relatively higher tendency by women to attach more importance to intrinsic rewards (e.g., interesting work content and good work schedules) than their male counterparts who are inclined more to extrinsic rewards from their jobs such as status, pay, power, and promotion (Metle & Alali, 2018). For this reason, women are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs in spite of getting lower wages and having limited opportunities for upward mobility in their careers.

In spite of the finding that women on average report greater job satisfaction than men, contrary findings have been observed by other studies. For instance, Chiu's (1998) study reported that male employees were more satisfied with their jobs than female employees. This finding is consistent with the results of subsequent studies by Souza-Posa (2007), and Chirchir (2016). Other studies (see for example Metle & Alali, 2018; Kemunto *et al.*, 2017; Koyuncu, Burke & Fiksenbaum, 2006) ended without finding any significant gender gap in job satisfaction. In view of the inconclusive empirical findings on the perceived gender disparities in job satisfaction, the current study sought to shed more light in the topic by examining whether and to what extent gender differences existed in teachers' job satisfaction in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Theoretical Framework

The study was based on Job Characteristics Theory and Herzberg Two-Factor Theory which were construed as potentially capable of enhancing our understanding of the link between gender and teacher job satisfaction. According to Hackman and Oldham (1976) there are five core job characteristics that determine the level of employee satisfaction, namely skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. The five core characteristics according to the theory lead to three critical psychological states which in turn influence individual and work outcomes such as job satisfaction, absenteeism, work motivation, level and quality of performance among others. The theory postulates that the work environment (in this context teachers' work environment) should provide opportunities for greater variety in teaching methodologies, autonomy in work schedules and increased responsibility so that the maximum potential of teachers can be realized.

On the other hand, Herzberg's two-factor theory holds that there are two sets of factors in the work place that influence satisfaction of workers, namely hygiene factors and motivators or growth factors. According to Herzberg (1957) motivators are internal factors that are associated with higher order needs and include achievement, recognition and opportunities for advancement and growth. The presence of intrinsic factors lead to job satisfaction, but the absence will not lead to job dissatisfaction. On the other hand, hygiene factors are the extrinsic factors concerned with lower order needs and include supervisory practice, salary, working conditions and job security among others. According to the theory, job satisfaction will be enhanced by focusing on the motivators while ensuring that the hygiene factors are adequately addressed.

Conceptual Framework

The study presumed that job satisfaction (dependent variable) is dependent on gender of the teacher (independent variable). The study additionally hypothesized that the association between gender and job satisfaction may be moderated by longevity in a school, teaching workload and the position held by the teacher in a school (extraneous variables). The conceptualized relationship between the three categories of variables is shown schematically in figure 1.

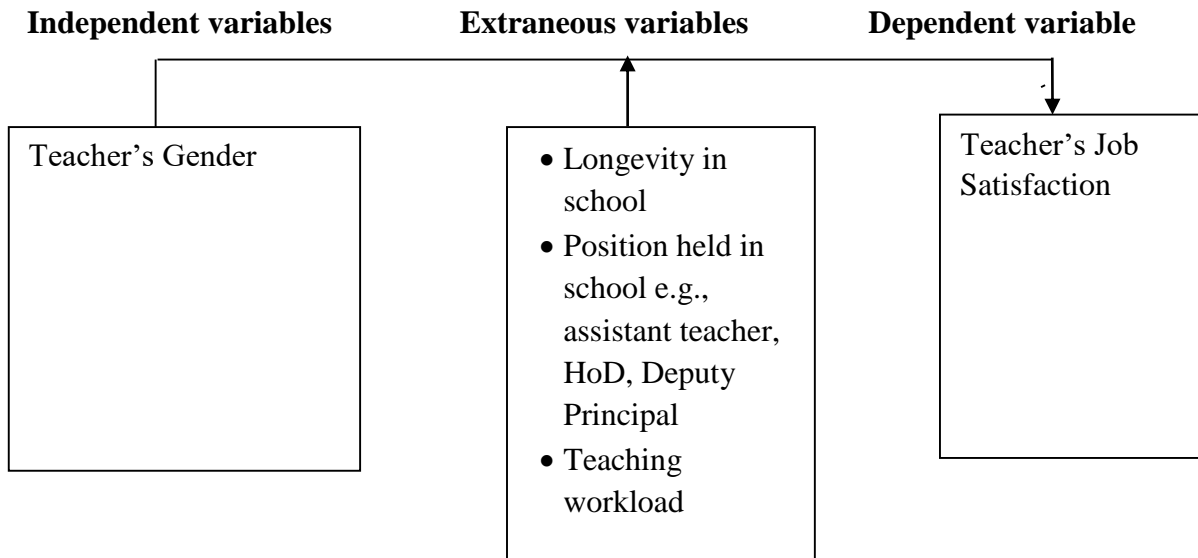


Figure 1: Hypothesized relationship among variables subsumed in the study

The study took cognizance of the fact that extraneous variables have the potential to generate rival or competing hypothesis which may explain the results of the study thereby compounding its external validity. For this reason (as suggested by Maczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger, 2005), the study controlled the three extraneous variables by randomly selecting teachers in the study area. This ensured that all teachers irrespective of their background participated in the study. This helped to reduce the error effect that could have been generated by the three extraneous variables.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized *ex-post facto* research design. This design is applied in studies where the independent and dependent variables have already interacted. Therefore, the investigator cannot manipulate the independent variable(s) with a view to determining its effect on the dependent variable(s). In this regard, the effect of the interaction between the independent and dependent variables is determined retrospectively (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The design was deemed ideal in this study in the sense that the study sought to establish retrospectively the extent to which gender (independent variable) could be influencing job satisfaction among public secondary school teachers (dependent variable) in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Instrumentation

Data was collected through a questionnaire which was personally delivered to the 341 public secondary school teachers in the study area who were selected by simple random and proportionate sampling techniques from a total population of 3,092 teachers. Selection of the 341 subjects was guided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample sizes from given populations. The questionnaire had 61 likert scale items with response categories ranging from “highly satisfied”, “satisfied”, “slightly satisfied”, “dissatisfied” and “very dissatisfied” which were allocated ‘5’, ‘4’, ‘3’, ‘2’ and ‘1’ scores respectively. The maximum mean score for the items was

expected to be 5 indicating a high level of job satisfaction, while the minimum mean score was expected to be 1 showing a low level of job satisfaction.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument's validity and reliability was estimated using thirty randomly selected teachers from the neighbouring Nyandarua County. With regard to validity, the pilot group was requested to assess the extent to which the 61 items in the instrument were adequately measuring teachers' job satisfaction. Based on the observations proffered by the 30 teachers, changes which were deemed necessary were effected in the instrument prior to execution of the main study.

The instrument's external reliability was estimated through split half technique. Specifically, after administering the instrument to the pilot group, it was split into two halves of even and odd numbered items. Scores of all odd and even numbered items for each respondent were then computed separately and in turn correlated, in which a correlation coefficient of $r = .905$ was realized. Internal reliability which addresses the question of the extent to which items in an instrument are measuring a single construct (in this context job satisfaction) was estimated using internal consistency technique in which Cronbach's coefficient alpha of $.945$ (94.5%) was obtained. This implied that the items correlated highly among themselves. Therefore, the instrument was considered to be internally reliable in measuring the construct of job satisfaction since according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a coefficient of $.70$ (70%) and above is deemed ideal in social sciences research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Collected data was analyzed at two levels. First, the mean scores generated from responses to the likert items were tabulated with a view to determining the level of job satisfaction of male and female teachers with each facet of satisfaction in the items. Second, the scores were further analyzed through t- test so as to establish whether there was a significant difference between the means of male and female teachers. The core purpose of this analysis was to test the null hypothesis which postulated that gender had no statistically significant influence on teachers' job satisfaction levels. The results from the two levels of analysis are summarized in tables 1 and 2 respectively;

Table 1
Teachers' Job Satisfaction Mean Scores by Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev
Male	183	4.0820	0.2751
Female	137	2.9416	0.6942
Total	320	3.5937	0.7537

Source: Field data, 2020

The data in table 1 shows that male teachers had a higher mean score (mean=4.0820) compared to their female counterparts whose mean stood at 2.9416. This indicates that male teachers were more satisfied than female teachers.

Table 2
Paired Samples t- Test for Gender Differences in Teachers' Mean Job Satisfaction Scores
Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower	Upper			
Level of male-female Job Satisfaction Scores	-2.16563	1.17206	.06552	-2.29453	-2.03672	-33.053	319	.000

Source: Field data, 2020

A scrutiny of the data in table 2 shows that the computed t- value ($t=-33.053$, $df = 319$, $P = .000$) was significant at .05 alpha level. This finding implies that gender can reliably predict teachers' job satisfaction. The findings are in agreement with a previous study in Nigeria by Manasseh (2015) which reported that male employees had a higher level of satisfaction (mean=75.5) than the female employees (mean=63.0) and that gender had a statistically significant influence on job satisfaction. Similar findings were reported by Chiu (1998) and Souza-Poza and Souza-Poza (2007). Contrastingly, a study by Mengistu (2012) among secondary school teachers in Ethiopia revealed that female teachers were more satisfied than male teachers although the difference was not statistically significant. A similar finding was realized by Ekuwam's (2014) study among public primary school teachers in Kenya. However, other studies (for instance, Metle & Alali, 2018; Kemunto *et al.* 2017; Koyuncu *et al.*, 2006) did not find any statistically significant difference in job satisfaction between male and female employees.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study found a statistically significant difference in favour of male teachers in regard to job satisfaction. It can therefore be concluded that male teachers in public secondary schools in Nakuru County are more satisfied than their female colleagues. The findings generated by the study have important implications and lessons in regard to teacher job satisfaction. A major observation is that job satisfaction of secondary school teachers depends on the gender of a teacher. On the basis of the foregoing observation, there is need to carry out a study to determine why female teachers appeared to be less satisfied than their male colleagues. Such a study may reveal the unaddressed needs of female teachers. This will undoubtedly enable teacher managers, specifically the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and Boards of Management (BoMs) to come up with intervention strategies for meeting the needs of female teachers with a view to enhancing their job satisfaction.

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