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### **EDUCATION**

# INFLUENCE OF MANAGEMENT OF TEACHERS' WORKLOAD ON RETENTION OF TEACHERS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MANDERA EAST SUBCOUNTY, MANDERA COUNTY, KENYA

1\*Rashid Abdow Hillow & 2Dr. Mary Mugwe Chui

1\*Mount Kenya University, Kenya; Email: <a href="mailto:rashidabdow2015@gmail.com">rashidabdow2015@gmail.com</a>; ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-0235-5645; Tel No.:0723618102

<sup>2</sup>Mount Kenya University, Kenya; Email: <a href="mmugwe@mku.ac.ke">mmugwe@mku.ac.ke</a>; ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1493-8676; Tel No.:0722360069

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#### **ABSTRACT**

**Statement of the Problem:** Management of teacher's workload is crucial in ensuring that teachers perform their tasks effectively without any desire to seek transfers or leave teaching profession in toto. However, in Mandera East Sub- County, the retention of teachers has been an issue with many seeking to leave the teaching profession.

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of teacher workload management on teacher retention in public secondary schools located in Mandera East Sub- County, within Mandera County, Kenya.

**Methodology:** This study adopted a mixed methodology and applied concurrent triangulation research design. Target population was 132 respondents which comprised 8 principals, 123 teachers and the TSC Sub- County Director of Education from which a sample of 101 respondents was determined using Yamane's Formula. Stratified sampling was used in the study. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically and quantitative data descriptively and inferentially using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and SPSS Version 23 was used.

**Findings:** The study revealed that the number of teachers who leave public secondary schools in Mandera East Sub- County has continued to increase from 2018 to 2022. This is attributed to too much workload which teachers have to handle at school.

Conclusion: The study shows that teacher retention in public secondary schools in Mandera East Sub-County is a significant concern. The number of teachers transferring out of these schools has been on rise. It was found there is a significant correlation between heavy workload and teacher retention, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.820 at a p-value of 0.046. Additionally, 67.5% of the teachers strongly agreed that excessive lessons and administrative tasks are primary reasons for leaving their positions. The issue of teacher workload stands out as a critical area requiring intervention to improve teacher retention rates and, consequently, educational quality in Mandera East Sub-County.

Recommendations: The Ministry of Education should continue recruiting teachers to reduce the heavy workload occasioned by teacher shortage. Principals should partner with other stakeholders to support teachers through incentives besides salary raise as a strategy of keeping them in public secondary schools. Schools should conduct regular evaluations of teacher workloads to ensure they align with recommended guidelines. There is the need to offer training sessions on time management and stress management to help teachers better cope with high workloads. Educational authorities should review and update policies related to teacher workloads to ensure they are conducive to teacher retention. Establish clear channels for teachers to communicate their concerns related to workloads without fear of repercussions.

**Keywords:** Management of teachers' workload, retention of teachers, public secondary schools.

#### INTRODUCTION

Teachers play a very crucial part in the achievement of the cardinal aims and objectives of education in public secondary schools by ensuring that students enroll and complete their education. Goddard and Leask (2012) posit that, for quality education to be realized in public secondary schools, the retention of teachers ought to be planned and orderly. Kreig (2012) defines retention of teachers as the process of keeping teachers in the school which could either be due to overstay, requested, promotional or involuntary. In China, Buchmann and Hannum (2014) note there are rising concerns about the retention of teachers in different parts of the country with negative consequences on the provision of quality education in secondary schools.

Despite this state of affairs, few studies have interrogated the extent to which management of teachers' workload influences the retention of teachers.

Teaching is a very demanding job. The number of periods, paper works, testing preparation, grading, and others makes teachers busy the whole day. According to Kelly (2010), compared to other jobs, teaching seems to be the only profession that keeps teachers busy after work hours. Consistent with these assertions, Kirby (2010), in a study conducted in Texas, many teachers feel that they do not have a break or afternoon off; even their weekends are busy with teaching work, like grading and lessons preparations. In Texas, a school day starts at eight in the morning and ends by two in the afternoon every day like other professions in public sectors (Kirby, 2010). However, the difference between the teaching profession and other professions is that teaching work keeps going after the schooling hours when most of the other professions are free by the end of the work hours. This points to the fact that those who are in other professions rather than teaching use this opportunity to improve their income by doing some business during the afternoon time.

In other words, Kirby (2010) posits that many people in Texas gain from afternoon business more than what they gain from their profession, but they keep their profession for many reasons such as fixed monthly income, secure job for any unexpected circumstances. On the other hand, teachers do not have the time to do afternoon business which pushes them to think again about their decision of being teachers. To corroborate these assertions, McKenzie and Santiago (2011), in a study conducted in Paris, noted that, despite having low ranking compared to many professions, teachers have very heavy workloads, ambiguous roles and responsibilities, exhausting schedules, unsupportive administrative issues. According to McKenzie and Santiago (2011), most of the reasons why teachers leave the profession are mostly associated with concerns about a heavy workload. McKenzie and Santiago (2011) further posit that by being stuck with teaching overcrowded classes, overwhelming schedules, planning lessons and evaluating the classroom activities, teachers are unable to connect with other colleagues and barely have time to think about their personal and professional growth. This has affected their classroom instruction and thus impacting negatively on learners' academic performance. McClelland and Varma (2012) also reported that effective professional development support from the organization help teachers deal with their dissatisfaction and other personal factors, that is, beliefs, attitude and self-efficacy. Subsequently, it is very hard to retain teachers in such frustrating and stressful conditions, particularly with no or lack of organizational and professional support.

In most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, Egu, Wuju and Chionye (2012) assert that working conditions that influence retention of teachers in rural schools include; multiple teaching assignments, preparations, workload, paperwork, multi-aged classes, limited resources and class size. For example, in a study conducted in Alexandria in Egypt, Heller (2012) reported that teachers in rural schools are often required to teach multiple subjects, as well as multiple ages, often within the same classroom, the same day, or certainly within the same year. This requires multiple preparations, which generates increased paperwork, accountability and workload. Heller (2012) noted that, tied to these additional stressors are limited resources, class sizes that are often large and diverse.

In Tanzania, Mhando (2013) asserted that support for teachers is often hardest to come by in rural schools, which very often have few institutional resources. These rural education conditions contribute to higher rates of attrition. These findings attest to the fact that retention of teachers in rural school districts frequently results from teachers feeling a lack of support from their administration at the school, district or county levels. According to Mhando (2013), teachers often overlook working conditions when they feel satisfied with the administration, feel supported, feel heard and appreciated. This feeling of validation transcends many areas of job satisfaction.

In Kenya, similar to other contexts, there is a considerable number of teachers who submit applications to exit the teaching profession (Ariko, 2014). For instance, Little (2011) conducted a study in Machakos East Sub-county, which revealed that the presence of limited funding and resources, reduced salaries, supplements, and incentives, as well as the existence of multi-aged classrooms and combined grade levels, exemplify several adverse consequences. The aforementioned descriptors collectively reflect the situation previously characterized as "poor working conditions," which have been identified as factors that contribute to increased job dissatisfaction among teachers and negatively impact student performance. In the Mandera East Sub-County, despite the implementation of various strategies aimed at enhancing teacher retention, there is a significant prevalence of teachers expressing a strong inclination to depart from their current work stations. According to research conducted by Galgallo (2019) in Mandera County, it was found that the rate of teacher retention in Mandera East Sub-county is significantly low, standing at approximately 46.5% in public secondary schools, with an

estimated rate of 14.9%. In the case of the 23 recently hired secondary school teachers in 2018, it was observed that 35.3% of them had already communicated their intention to pursue a transfer from their present work locations. This phenomenon can be attributed to multiple factors, one of which is the workload that teachers bear.

In a seminal study conducted in Mandera East Sub- County, Hirbo (2014) established that lack of non-contact time for teachers is a major barrier to being successful in the role and is considered a major impediment towards learners' retention in schools. Hirbo (2014) revealed that teaching jobs that have little workload challenges create boredom, but too many workload challenges create frustrations and feelings of failure. In other words, dealing with a workload that is too heavy and deadlines that are impossible to meet can be very stressful. However, Hirbo (2014) as well as other empirical studies have not articulated how workload-related practices contribute towards the retention of teachers in public secondary schools.

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Management of teachers' workload plays a major role in ensuring that teachers undertake their duties effectively and with less desire to leave teaching profession. However, in Mandera East Sub- County, the retention of teachers has been an issue with many seeking transfers immediately after employment. As indicated earlier in the background, Galgallo (2019) indicated that teacher retention in Mandera East Sub- County has been the lowest at about 46.5% in public secondary schools were estimated at 14.9%. For instance, out of the 23 newly recruited secondary school teachers in 2018, 35.3% of them had already expressed a desire to seek transfer from their current work stations. This trend has continued to date which paints a picture of low teacher retention. Efforts to mitigate this challenge have not yielded much remarkable progress. Despite these statistics, much is yet to done to interrogate how management of teachers' workload influences teacher retention in public secondary schools; hence the need for this study.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- To assess the status of teachers' retention in public secondary schools in Mandera East Sub- County.
- ii. To examine the influence of management of teachers' workload on retention of teachers in public secondary schools in Mandera East Sub- County;

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was informed by the Systems Theory of Luhmann Nklas (2004). According to this theoretical perspective, a school can be conceptualized as a managed system that undergoes a process of transformation, converting various inputs such as raw materials, individuals, and other resources into outputs. These outputs encompass the goods and services that constitute the products of the school. School management practices encompass the systematic processes of planning, organizing, and administering the educational activities within an educational institution. Hence, the justification for employing this theory in the present study lies in its emphasis on the significance of effectively managing teachers' workload as a crucial factor influencing teacher retention. The present study was informed by Tinto's (1993) Retention Theory, which posits integration as a central concept. According to the assertion, the likelihood of a teacher persisting or dropping out can be significantly predicted by their level of academic integration and social integration. The phenomenon of dropout rates is influenced by the dynamic interplay between integration and commitment, wherein the level of commitment at the time of the decision plays a significant role in shaping the evolution of dropout patterns. Therefore, within the framework of this research, the retention of teachers in educational institutions is contingent upon the effective management of their workloads by said institutions.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed methodology and applied concurrent triangulation research design. Target population was 132 respondents which comprised 8 principals, 123 teachers and the TSC Sub- County Director of Education from which a sample of 101 respondents was determined using Yamane's Formula. Stratified sampling was used to create two strata based on the number of zones in Mandera East Sub- County. From each zone, three principals were selected using purposive sampling. The TSC Sub- County Director of Education was also nominated using purposive sampling.

However, from each zone, 47 (8 teachers per sampled school) were selected using simple random samplings. This procedure realized a sample of six principals, 94 teachers and the TSC Sub-County Director of Education (SCDE). Qualitative data were analyzed thematically based on study objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages and inferentially using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 23) and presented using tables.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This section presents the findings of the study based on the objective. It also outlines the methods of presentation of the study findings and discussions.

#### **RESPONSE RATES**

In this study, 94 questionnaires were administered to teachers and, in return, 93 questionnaires were filled and returned. The researcher also interviewed six principals and the TSC Sub-County Director of Education. This yielded response rates shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Response Rates** 

Respondents	Sampled	Those Who	Achieved Return
	Respondents	Participated	<b>Rate</b> (%)
Principals	6	6	100.0
Teachers	94	93	98.9
TSC Sub- County Director of	1	1	100.0
Education			
Total	101	100	99.0

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 1 shows that principals registered a response rate of 100.0%, teachers registered a response rate of 98.9% whereas the TSC Sub- County Director of Education registered a response rate of 100.0%. This yielded an average response rate of 97.8%, which is consistent with the assertions of Creswell (2014) that a response rate above 75.0% is adequate. This information was important since it allowed the researcher to generalize the study outcomes to the target population.

#### **Retention of Teachers in Public Secondary Schools**

The study sought to assess the status of retention of teachers in public secondary schools in Mandera East Sub- County. This was measured by taking stock of the number of teachers who have been transferred from public secondary schools in Mandera East Sub- County between 2018 and 2022. Results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Teachers' Retention in Public Secondary Schools in Mandera East Sub- County

Year	No. of Teachers Who Have Transferred from Secondary Schools			
2018	4			
2019	6			
2020	7			
2021	6			
2022	8			

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 2 shows that the number of teachers who leave public secondary schools located in Mandera East Sub- County has continued to increase from 2018 to 2022 despite the efforts by different stakeholders. These findings corroborate the study of Galgallo (2014) who reported that teacher transfer requests in Mandera East Sub- County have been the highest at about 46.5% compared to the national average which was estimated at 14.9%. Galgallo (2014) further indicates that out of the 23 newly recruited secondary school teachers in 2016, 35.3% of them had already applied for transfers by December 2016. It is evident that teacher retention has been and continue to be a challenge in many public secondary schools. This calls into question the effectiveness of school management practices towards mitigating the same.

#### Workload Dynamics and Retention of Teachers in Public Secondary Schools

The study sought to assess how workload dynamics influence retention of teachers in public secondary schools. Results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Teachers' Views on the Influence of Workload Dynamics on Retention of Teachers in Public Secondary Schools

Test Items	Ratings				
	SA	A	U	D	SD
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	%
Teachers have many lessons to teach which has	67.5	7.8	3.9	11.7	9.1
encouraged them to leave teaching					
In public secondary schools, the number of delegated	50.6	9.1	6.1	19.9	14.3
tasks is high and has pushed them to leave teaching					
Teachers usually undertake many delegated	67.5	7.4	4.8	14.7	5.6
administrative tasks which have always pushed them to					
leave the teaching profession					
In public secondary schools, many teachers have left		4.3	2.6	40.7	5.6
teaching due to the large amount of work to be					
undertaken					

#### Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 3 shows that 63 (67.5%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that teachers have many lessons to teach which has encouraged them to leave teaching while 7(7.8%) agreed, 4(3.9%) were undecided, 11(11.7%) disagreed whereas 9(9.1%) strongly disagreed. The study found out that 47(50.6%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in public secondary schools, the number of delegated tasks is high and has pushed them to leave teaching while 9(9.1%) agreed, 6(6.1%) were undecided, 19(19.9%) disagreed whereas 13(14.3%) strongly disagreed. The study revealed that 63(67.5%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that teachers usually undertake many delegated administrative tasks which have always pushed them to leave the teaching profession while 7(7.4%) agreed, 5(4.8%) were undecided, 14(14.7%) disagreed whereas 5(5.6%) strongly disagreed.

The study revealed that 44(46.8%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that, in public secondary schools, many teachers have left teaching due to the large amount of work to be undertaken whereas 10(4.3%) agreed, 2(2.6%) were undecided, 38(40.7%) disagreed whereas 5(5.6%) strongly disagreed. These findings corroborate the findings of a study carried out in

Texas in which Kirby (2010) established that many teachers feel that they do not have a break or afternoon off; even their weekends are busy with teaching work, like grading and lessons preparations. Kirby (2010) further found that a school day starts at eight in the morning and ends by two in the afternoon every day like other professions in public sectors.

These findings also lend credence to the findings of a study conducted in Paris in which McKenzie and Santiago (2011) found that, despite having low ranking compared to many professions, teachers have very heavy workloads, ambiguous roles and responsibilities, exhausting schedules, unsupportive administrative issues. According to McKenzie and Santiago (2011), most of the reasons why teachers leave the profession are mostly associated with concerns about a heavy workload. In the same token, a study conducted in Alexandria in Egypt by Heller (2012) established that teachers in rural schools are often required to teach multiple subjects, as well as multiple ages, often within the same classroom, the same day, or certainly within the same year. This requires multiple preparations, which generates increased paperwork, accountability and workload.

Heller (2012) noted that, tied to these additional stressors are limited resources, class sizes that are often large and diverse. Besides, these findings further support the findings of a study carried in Mandera East Sub-County by Hirbo (2014) established that lack of non-contact time for teachers is a major barrier to being successful in the role and is considered a major impediment towards learners' retention in schools. Hirbo (2014) revealed that teaching jobs that have little workload challenges create boredom, but too many workload challenges create frustrations and feelings of failure. In sum, these findings are indicative of the fact that dealing with a workload that is too heavy and deadlines that are impossible to meet can be very stressful. This implies that teaching is a very demanding job considering the number of periods, paper works, testing preparation, grading, and others makes teachers busy the whole day. From these findings, it is evident that many teachers seek transfers due to too much workload which leads to emotional exhaustion and fatigue. This indicates that workload which teachers handle at any given moment contribute immensely to their decisions to leave their current work stations and seek teaching opportunities in schools where workload is shared and thus, manageable.

#### **Inferential Analysis**

To verify the influence of workload dynamics on retention of teachers in public secondary schools, data were collected from the six sampled public secondary schools on the average number of lessons teachers undertake and the number of teachers who have transferred from their schools for the last five years (2018-2022). Results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Number of Lessons Per Week Teachers Undertake and the Number of Teachers who have Transferred from Public Secondary Schools (2018-2022)

<b>Number of Lessons Teachers</b>	Number of Teachers who have Transferred from		
Undertake Per Week	Public Secondary Schools (2018-2022)		
28	4		
31	6		
33	7		
38	6		
38	8		
21	4		

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 4 shows that, in public secondary schools, teachers handle between 28 to 40 lessons per week against the recommended 27 lessons per week and has a direct relationship with the number of teachers who seek transfers from such schools. Results in Table 11 were subjected to Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis and the results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Relationship between Workload Dynamics and Retention of Teachers in Public Secondary Schools

		Workload Dynamics	Retention of Teachers
Workload	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
Dynamics	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	6	
Academic	Pearson Correlation	.820*	1.000
Performance in	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	
KCSE	N	6	6

<sup>\*.</sup> Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Test Analysis which generated a correlation coefficient, r = 0.820, with corresponding significant level (p-value) of 0.046 which was less than the predetermined level of significance, 0.05, that is, p-value = 0.046<0.05. In summary, these results indicate that there is significant influence of teachers' workload dynamics on retention of teachers in public secondary schools.

#### **Thematic Analysis**

The researcher also interviewed the principals and TSC Sub- County Director of Education who also supported the view that teachers have many lessons to teach which has encouraged them to leave teaching. Principal, P1, stated;

In my secondary school there are very few teachers and thus, the available ones must share the workload. This has often scared many teachers who have always sought for transfers.

These views were supported by the STSC Sub- County Director of Education who also stated that there are few teachers in many public secondary schools in the sub-county and therefore, the available teachers must re-adjust their programmes to accommodate extra classes. TSC Sub- County Director of Education, TSCSCDE1, noted;

In my sub-county, we have very few teachers and thus who are available are often required to fill the gaps. This has often increased their teaching workload besides undertaking other delegated duties.

These views further affirm the fact that workload which teachers has contribute to their desire to seek transfers. Just like quantitative findings, these views also support the views expressed by McKenzie and Santiago (2011) that teachers have very heavy workloads, ambiguous roles and responsibilities, exhausting schedules, unsupportive administrative issues, which is the key reason why teachers leave the profession are mostly associated with concerns about a heavy workload. In summary, these views affirm the fact that dealing with a workload that is too heavy and deadlines that are impossible to meet can be very stressful.

This implies that the workload which teachers handle at any given moment contribute immensely to their decisions to leave their current work stations and seek teaching opportunities in schools where workload is shared and thus, manageable.

#### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The study revealed that the number of teachers who leave public secondary schools located in Mandera East Sub- County has continued to increase from 2018 to 2022 despite the efforts by different stakeholders. From the mixed findings, teachers handle heavy workloads which range from classroom pedagogy to performing delegated administrative tasks. This has negatively influenced their desire to work in such school environments. A significant portion of teachers agree that high workloads, including many lessons to teach and administrative tasks, are a key factor pushing them to leave. This aligns with other research showing that heavy workloads lead to job dissatisfaction and high turnover among teachers. Statistical analysis confirms a significant correlation between heavy workloads and low teacher retention. Interviews with principals and educational directors further substantiate these findings, indicating that the high workload makes the teaching positions unattractive, thereby exacerbating the teacher retention issue. In summary, the high workload contributes greatly to teachers' decisions to leave, calling for a reevaluation of workload management in these schools.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the study shows that teacher retention in public secondary schools in Mandera East Sub-County is a significant concern. The number of teachers transferring out of these schools has been on rise. It was found there is a significant correlation between heavy workload and teacher retention, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.820 at a p-value of 0.046. Additionally, a large percentage of teachers-67.5%-strongly agreed that excessive lessons and administrative tasks are primary reasons for leaving their positions. Interviews with educational leaders also corroborate these quantitative findings. Therefore, the issue of teacher workload stands out as a critical area requiring intervention to improve teacher retention rates and, consequently, educational quality in Mandera East Sub-County.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that the Ministry of Education should continue recruiting more teachers to reduce the heavy workload which teachers handle occasioned by teacher shortage. Principals should partner with other stakeholders to support teachers through incentives besides salary raise as a strategy of keeping them in public secondary schools. Schools should conduct regular evaluations of teacher workloads to ensure they align with recommended guidelines. Implement a more equitable distribution of tasks among teachers, possibly aided by hiring more

staff to alleviate the current workload. There is the need to offer training sessions on time management and stress management to help teachers better cope with high workloads. Educational authorities should review and update policies related to teacher workloads to ensure they are conducive to teacher retention. Establish clear channels for teachers to communicate their concerns and challenges related to workloads without fear of repercussions. Engage parents and the community in school activities to share some of the workloads and responsibilities, like after-school programs, which could provide some relief for teachers.

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