

# Influence of Working Environment on Transfer Intentions among the Non-Resident Teachers in Public Primary Schools in Turkana County in Kenya

Peter Wamalwa<sup>1</sup>, Sarah Likoko<sup>2</sup>

Department of Educational Planning and Management, Kibabii University

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**Abstract**— The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of working environment on transfer intentions among the teachers in public primary schools in Turkana County in Kenya. The sample size was 246 non-resident teachers and 36 public primary schools. Simple random sampling technique was used to select non- resident teachers while purposive sampling technique was used to select head teachers. Questionnaire and interview schedule were used to collect data. Data was analyzed using weighted averages, Pearson's correlation and Multiple regression. The study concluded that working environment had statistical significant influence on transfer intentions among the non-resident teachers in public primary schools in Turkana County.

**Keywords**- Intentions, Non-resident, Teachers, Transfer, Working Environment

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Ira *et al.* (2019) asserts that comfortable work environment for employees can increase morale and encourage better performance and employees stay afloat. External related factors are beyond the control of the teacher and schools but have direct influence on teachers work at school. Arnoux-Nicolas *et al.*(2016) examined the role of psychological resource as a mediator for the relationships between perceived external factors and turnover intentions in a sample of 336 French workers from different organizations and institutions. The study established that that adverse working condition was positively and significantly associated with turnover intention. However, results could not be generalized to public primary institutions in Kenya as Arnoux-Nicolas *et al.*(2016) focused on workers from various occupational contexts in France where there exists a difference in terms of service and employment. Therefore, the current study sought to address the gap by investigating external related factors on transfer intentions among the non-resident teachers in Turkana County.

Ekabu, Kalai and Nyagah (2018) examined the relationship between working conditions and teacher turnover intentions in public secondary schools in Meru County, Kenya. The study used a descriptive survey design with both quantitative and qualitative approaches in data collection and analysis. A total of 520 respondents were involved in the study that included 503 secondary school teachers, 15 principals and 2 staffing officers. Teachers working conditions were examined to determine their relationship with turnover intentions.

Hypotheses were tested using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and chi-square goodness of fit at 95%,  $p < 0.05$ . The result of product moment correlation analysis indicated that the independent variable, working conditions ( $r = -0.488$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) have a negative and an inverse relationship with the independent variable, turnover intention. These results showed a significant relationship between working conditions and turnover intentions of secondary school teachers in Meru County. However, the generalizability of the findings to other populations could be done with a lot of caution since Ekabu, Kalai and Nyagah (2018) focused on secondary schools. The current study sought to address the gap.

In a similar study, Ira *et al.* (2019) analyzed the influence of the work environment towards turnover intention of 4-star hotel employees in Padang City. This type of research is quantitative descriptive with a causal associative approach. The population in this study was 796 people consisting of all 4-star hotel employees in Padang City. The sample is 251 people using proportional random sampling technique. The data analysis technique used is simple linear regression analysis. The results of the study show that  $F$  counts with sig.  $0,000 < 0,05$ , then the work environment variable has a significant influence on employee turnover intention. However, the generalizability of the findings to other populations could be done with a lot of caution since Ira *et al.*, (2019) focused on hotel employees who operate under different working conditions from a hotel. The current study sought to fill the gap.

Miligi, Alshutwi and Alqahtani (2019) examined the impact of work stress on turnover intention among 126 palliative care nurses using a descriptive correlational design. A majority of the nurses had three or fewer years of experience. More than 60% of the nurses reported high and moderate levels of intentions to leave the workplace. Further, turnover intention was significantly correlated with work-stress ( $r = 0.288$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ; 2-tailed). A stressful work environment can lead to multiple negative consequences. Therefore, more attention must be paid to palliative care nurses because they are at a higher risk for work stress and turnover intention. Work-related strains can lead to many negative consequences including high rates of turnover among nurses. However, generalizability of the findings to other population especially teachers could be done with a lot of caution due to the differences in the sample characteristics. The present study sought to fill the gap by exploring transfer intentions among the teachers in Turkana County in Kenya.

Raziqa & Maulabakhsha (2015) analysed the impact of working environment on employee job satisfaction. The study employed a quantitative methodology. Data was collected through a self-administered survey questionnaire. The target population consists of educational institutes, banking sector and telecommunication industry operating in the city of Quetta, Pakistan. Simple random sampling was used for collection of data from 210 employees. The result indicates a positive relationship between working environment and employee job satisfaction.

Agbozo et al., (2017) examined the effect of work environment on job satisfaction with the spotlight on a merchant bank in Ghana. Stratified sampling technique was adopted to select the sample for the study. Questionnaire was used as the research instrument while Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was employed to analyze the data gathered from the field study. The paper concludes that the environment has a significant effect on employees' satisfaction. However, the generalizability of the findings to other populations was limited since Agbozo et al. (2017) carried out a study in Ghana, where geographical settings, economical and political factors are different from Kenya.

Asimah (2018) explored the factors that influence labour turnover in the hospitality industry. A descriptive, cross-sectional survey was conducted among 80 purposely selected employees in the hospitality industry in Ho, Ghana. Logistic regression analysis was used to identify the factors that influence employee labour turnover in the hospitality industry. Results show that poor working conditions were statistically significant in the prediction of employee turnover in the hospitality industry with a predicted turnover rate of 70.31%. However, Asimah (2018) explored employee turnover in hospitality industry where working conditions are different from primary schools especially in ASAL areas. The current study sought to fill the glaring gap by focusing on transfer intentions among the teachers in public schools in Turkana County.

Umer (2018) study objective was to identify the determinant factors that affect turnover intentions of employees. Both quantitative and qualitative research approaches method were used. The study employed stratified sampling method to select the samples that are representative and 252 employees. The primary data was gathered through close ended questionnaire (1-5) likert scales from existing employees and in-depth interview was conducted with the HR director and personnel's. The study established that turnover intention in the organization was affected by lack of conducive working environment. However, Umer (2018) focused on a corporate sector where employment terms and working conditions are different from schools. The current study therefore sought to fill the gap.

## **2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **2.1. The Influence of Working Environment on Teacher Transfer Intentions**

The objective of the study was to assess the influence of working environment on transfer intentions among non-resident teachers in public primary schools in Turkana County. The factors considered for this study were teacher safety, school accessibility and teacher Exigencies. In order to determine the influence of working environment the study set out to verify the hypothesis stated as below:

**H<sub>05</sub>:** Working environment have no statistically significant influence on teacher transfer intentions among non-resident teachers in Turkana County

To determine the extent to which working environment in the County affected teachers intentions to transfer, the non-resident teachers were required to rate their opinions against six statements on a five point likert scale with a score of 1 indicating 'Not Important' and 5

indicating ‘Most Important’. The ratings were analyzed as frequencies and weighted averages. The results were presented in Table 1 below

**Table 1: Teacher Responses on Working Environment**

Statement	MI	I	FI	LI	NI	$\Sigma fi$	$\Sigma fiwi$	$\frac{\Sigma fiwi}{\Sigma fi}$
Area around school is unsafe	68	37	42	7	28	182	656	3.604396
Owning property in the County is a challenge	39	35	52	38	18	182	585	3.214286
It is very difficult to access the school by any means	41	28	37	50	26	182	554	3.043956
It is very costly to travel to and from the school	29	38	48	47	20	182	555	3.049451
There are inadequate houses within and around the school	44	37	44	32	25	182	589	3.236264
Accessibility to clean water is a major challenge in this area	56	44	52	12	18	182	654	3.593407
Acquiring foodstuffs is a challenge	63	71	27	12	9	182	713	3.917582
Access to good health is a challenge	105	37	16	21	3	182	766	4.208791

**Source: Field Data, 2018**

The study set out to determine if security concerns could account for transfer Intentions of the non-resident teachers. The teachers were hence required to rate the statement that the area around the school is unsafe. A larger proportion represented by 105 (57.7%) rated the factor as ‘Most Important and Important’ while 42(23.1%) rated it as Fairly Important and only 35(19.2%) rated the statement as Least Important and Not Important. The statement had a weighted mean of 3.604(3dp) which imply on average, the teachers have concerns over safety of schools in Turkana County.

Similarly in relation to security, the respondents were required to rate the statement that owning property in the county is a challenge. Majority of the respondents, represented by 74(40.6%) rated the factor as ‘Most Important and Important’ while 52(28.6%) rated the statement as ‘Fairly Important’ and 56(30.8%) indicated that the factor was ‘Least Important or Not Important’. The statement had a weighted average of 3.214(3dp) implying that the respondents rate the challenge of owning property in the County as an important factor that influences their transfer Intentions.

The study also considered limitations of transport infrastructure among factors that could account for Transfer Intentions. The teachers were required to rate the statement that it is very difficult to access the school by any means. Majority of the respondents represented by 76(41.6%) rated the factor as 'Least Important and Not Important' while 69(37.9%) rated it as 'Most Important and Important', with 37(20.3%) rating it as 'Fairly Important'. The weighted Average for the statement was 3.044(3dp) which indicates the respondents consider school accessibility challenges as only 'Fairly Important'.

They were also required to rate the statement that it is very costly to travel to and from the school. There was a divided opinion on the statement with 67(36.8%) Rating the statement as either Important and Most Important or Least Important and Not Important while 48(26.4%) rated the factor as Fairly Important. The weighted average was hence 3.049(3dp) which again imply that on average, the teachers rated the factor as Fairly Important. The cost of travel to schools was not so important in determining transfer intentions of the teachers.

The other statements were aimed at determining the ease of access to basic needs within the school locality. When the teachers were required to rate the statement that there are inadequate houses within and around the school, 81(44.5%) rated the factor as Important and Most Important while 57(31.3%) rated it as Least and Not Important. A fair proportion of 44(24.2%) rated the factor as Fairly Important. Hence the weighted average for the statement was 3.236(3dp) implying a general rating of the factor as important in determining transfer Intentions.

On whether accessibility to clean water is a major challenge around the school, a very large proportion of 100 (55%) rated the statement as Important and Most Important, while 57(16.5%) of the ratings were Least Important and Not Important and a fairly large proportion of 44(28.6%) rated the factor as Fairly Important. The weighted average was 3.236(3dp) which implies that a teachers ratings for the factor were that it is important.

When required to rate the statement that acquiring foodstuffs is a challenge, a very large proportion of 134(73.6%) rated the factor as Most Important and Important while only 21(11.5%) rated it as Not Important and Least Important which was lower than ratings for Fairly Important that were 27(14.8%). Consequently, there was a high weighted average for the statement at 3.918(3dp) implying the teachers rated the challenge of acquiring foodstuffs as a very important factor in determining their transfer Intentions.

On whether access to good health is a challenge, a very large proportion of 142(78%) rated the factor as Most Important and Important while 24(13.1%) rated the factor as Least Important and Not Important with 16(8.8%) rating the factor as Fairly Important. Hence the weighted average was a high value of 4.209(4dp) which imply the rating for the factor is rated Most Important.

## 2.2. Aggregation of Variables of Working Environment

The rating for each item that measured the three variables of working environment were summed up in order to develop indices that could measure teacher security, school accessibility and teacher Exigencies. The indices for teacher security and accessibility had values ranging from 2 to 10 where Values above 5 imply that the factor was highly rated as important while values lower than 5 imply the factor was rated less important. On the other hand, the teacher Exigencies Index had a range of 4 to 20 with values above 12 considered high rating for the factor. The descriptive statistics for the variables are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Variables of Working Environment**

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Aggregated Security Index	182	2.00	10.00	6.8187	2.55007
Aggregated Accessibility Index	182	2.00	10.00	6.0934	2.43298
Aggregated Needs Index	182	5.00	20.00	14.9560	4.25152

**Source: SPSS Output**

Table 2 shows that the mean rating for the variables Teacher Security, School Accessibility and Teacher Exigencies were above the average with Teacher Security ( $m = 6.8187, sd = 2.55007$ ), School Accessibility ( $m = 6.0934, sd = 2.43298$ ) and Teacher Exigencies ( $m = 14.9560, sd = 4.25152$ ).

## 2.3. Multiple Regression Analysis of the Influence of Working Environment on Teacher Transfer Intentions

A multiple regression was conducted to determine the influence of working environment which was measured by variables Teacher security, School accessibility and Teacher Exigencies. Hence the regression model for this objective can be presented in the form below:

$$T_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 E_1 + \alpha_2 E_2 + \alpha_3 E_3 + \epsilon$$

Where  $T_i$  - denotes the Teacher transfer intentions which is the dependent variable

While the independent variables (Predictors) are

$E_1$ - Teacher Security

$E_2$  – School Accessibility

$E_3$  – Teacher Exigencies

$\epsilon$  - Error term

$\alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3$  are the regression coefficients for the predictor variables while  $\alpha_0$  and  $\epsilon$  are the constant and error term respectively. In interpreting the results of multiple regression analysis, the major elements considered were the Coefficient of multiple determinations

(R-square), the F-statistic in the ANOVA Table, the regression coefficients and Alpha values

The coefficients of multiple correlations and determination enabled the researcher to assess the proportion of variation in Teacher Transfer Intentions that can be explained by variations in working environment. The results are presented in Table 3

**Table 3. Model Summary for Regression of Working Environment**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.704 <sup>a</sup>	.496	.488	2.78023

a. Predictors: (Constant), Aggregated Exigencies Index, Aggregated Security Index, Aggregated Accessibility Index

Source: SPSS Output

The result in Table 3 reveal a strong and positive correlation between School External Factors and Teacher transfer Intentions (R=0.704). The model also had a coefficient of determination,  $R^2 = 0.496$  which indicates that the independent variable (School External Factors) explain up to 49.6% of the variations in Teacher transfer Intentions. This implies that the model satisfactorily fits the data.

The study set to determine whether the three independent variables for working environment can significantly predict variations in the teacher transfer intentions. The One way ANOVA and F-statistic was used. The results are presented in Table 4.below.

**Table 4. Model ANOVA Test (N=182)**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1355.173	3	451.724	58.440	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	1375.882	178	7.730		
	Total	2731.055	181			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Teacher Exigencies, Teacher Security, School Accessibility

b. Dependent Variable: TRANSINDEX

Source: SPSS Output

Table 4. shows that the independent variables, Teacher Security, School Accessibility and Teacher Exigencies significantly predict the variations in Teacher Transfer Intentions ( $F_{(3,182)} = 58.440, p < 0.05$ ).

The other part of the regression analysis consisted of analysis of multiple regression coefficients as well as an assessment of the collinearity of the independent variable. The values are presented in Table 5 below

**Table 5. Regression Coefficients and Collinearity Statistics for Independent Variables (N=182)**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	4.958	.775		6.398	.000		
1 Teacher Security	.885	.109	.581	8.153	.000	.557	1.795
School Accessibility	.156	.121	.097	1.287	.020	.494	2.025
Teacher Exigencies	.082	.065	.090	1.255	.211	.556	1.800

**a. Dependent Variable: TRANSINDEX**

**Source: SPSS Output**

From Table 5 a test for multicollinearity among the three independent variables was found to be very low shown by the low values of VIF (Teacher security, Tolerance=0.557, VIF=1.795; School accessibility, Tolerance= 0.494,VIF=2.025; Teacher Exigencies, Tolerance=0.556, VIF=1.800).

Table 5 also shows the test for significance of the coefficients  $\alpha_0, \alpha_1, \alpha_2, \alpha_3$  using the t-statistic at a significance level of 0.05. The Coefficient for Teacher security ( $\alpha_1$ ) was statistically significant with a  $t_{(2,182)} = 8.153, p < 0.05$ . The coefficient for school accessibility ( $\alpha_2$ ) was also significant with a  $t_{(2,182)} = 1.287, p < 0.05$ . However, the coefficient for Teacher Exigencies ( $\alpha_3$ ) was not significant ( $t_{(2,182)} = 1.255, p > 0.05$ .)

Based on the findings in Table 5, the study rejected the null hypothesis (**H<sub>05</sub>**) that ‘there is no statistically significant influence of working environment in County on transfer intentions among the non-residents teachers in public primary schools in Kenya’ was thus rejected. A multiple linear regression calculated to predict Teacher transfer Intentions based on working environment found a significant regression equation ( $F_{(3,182)} = 58.440, p < 0.05$ ) with  $R^2 = 0.608$ . The prediction equation for transfer Intentions in Turkana County was  $T_i = 4.958 + 0.581E_1 + 0.097E_2$  which imply that other factors held constant, 58.1% of Teacher Transfer Intentions can be attributed to Teacher Security while 9.7% can be attributed to School accessibility. This implies that working environment had a statistically significant influence on transfer intentions among the non-resident teachers in public primary schools in Turkana County.

The findings are in line with the interview data. During the interviews with the headteachers, one of them indicated that;

“... some of the non-resident teachers are uncomfortable with the accommodation available .....”



Another headteacher noted;

“...the road networks are poor and at times a challenge accessing the school, this has been a big problem in retention of teachers, more specifically non-resident ...”

Another observed that;

“... the challenge is access of quality health facilities, most of non- resident teachers are not satisfied with the service this has made them not comfortable working in this County...”

The findings presented in Table 5 and interview data therefore, agree with Ekabu, Kalai and Nyagah (2018) examined the relationship between working environment and teacher turnover intentions in public secondary schools in Meru County, Kenya. The study used a descriptive survey design with both quantitative and qualitative approaches in data collection and analysis. Although there were similarities in the findings, Ekabu, Kalai and Nyagah (2018) focused on public secondary schools, leading to a difference in sample characteristics. This therefore, limits generalizability of the research findings to other populations to other populations or settings like public primary schools.

The results presented in Table 5 of the study indicated strong support for the notion of job embeddedness theory. More specifically, organizational sacrifice is considered as the perceived psychological benefits that may be forfeited by leaving Turkana County (Mitchell *et al.*, 2001). This probably means that, the non-resident teachers who leaves, may have to give up cherished team works, staff welfare and good neighbourhood in Turkana County. If this case could be true, then teacher who considers quitting Turkana County may not wish to sacrifice valued relationship and benefits from the County and therefore less likely to transfer.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have demonstrated that there is a high transfer intention among the non-resident teachers from Turkana County as a result of security challenges and accessibility of some schools.

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