

Personal Characteristics and Career Progression of Tutors in Primary Teacher Colleges in Kenya

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of tutors' personal characteristics (age, qualification, gender, career aspiration and experience) on career progression in Public Teacher Training Colleges (PTTCs) in Kenya. The study was conducted as a descriptive survey with 264 tutors randomly sampled from eight public teacher colleges in Kenya. Data were collected using a questionnaire for tutors and an interview schedule for Principals. Random sampling was used to pick respondents involved in the study. A total of 207 respondents returned the questionnaire out of 264 representing 78.4 % return rate which was deemed acceptable. One way ANOVA was used to test the relationship between each selected variable and tutors career progression at 0.05. The study found that age, gender, and experience were not significantly related to tutors' career progression. Tutors' career aspiration and qualifications were found to be significantly related ($\alpha=0.05$) to tutors career progression. The study concluded that there is need to systematically address personal characteristics of tutors towards career progression to stem tutor job dissatisfaction and possible attrition.

Key terms: Primary teacher colleges, Career progression, Tutors, Teaching

Introduction

Teachers are at the core of the education system, and contribute greatly to school student performance (Hanusheck and Rivkin, 2000; Uwezo initiative, 2011). Due to this importance, the Government of Kenya (GOK) desires to have a properly skilled and professional human resource in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) and Vision 2030 (ROK, 2007). The introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in Kenya in 2003 increased the teacher - student ratio in both primary schools and PTTCs requiring preparation of tutors for new roles and planning to retain and motivate professional tutors in their career. This cannot be achieved unless a good climate is provided where teachers offering the FPE are well trained by PTTCs tutors. Public primary teacher college tutors prepare the about 8000 students admitted annually for a two year residential teacher certificate course (ROK, 2003).

Yet, according to a survey done by Tetra Link Taylor and Associates in June 2009 on behalf of Teachers Service Commission, teachers in Kenya, especially tutors in colleges reported discouragement from low remuneration and stagnation in the same job grades (TSC, 2009). This study investigates personal tutor characteristics that may help to explain this stagnation in their careers. It is necessary to address tutor issues if we are to produce the quality primary school teachers envisaged in national planning documents (Galabawa, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

Primary Teacher Training Colleges (PTTCs) train primary school teachers, who represent more than half of all teachers employed by TSC (UNESCO, 2009). However, one of the major challenges facing Kenya in attainment of vision 2030 and Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is to improve students' outcomes, and this requires improved tutor commitment. Despite training there are still concerns that our primary school sector is underperforming (Uwezo Initiative, 2011).

Attempts have been made to probe the contribution of diverse factors such as teachers, resources discipline and leadership styles among others (DFID, 1998; Likoko, Mutsotso and Nasongo, 2010). One direction where there is dearth of information is teacher training and development, an area where college tutors can make a big contribution. Career progression of tutors who train these teachers is important as it affects tutors' job satisfaction, yet job satisfaction is known to lead to higher productivity of employees. Improving the career progression of college tutors is therefore likely to increase the quality of teachers released to teach in primary schools. This study seeks to find out the extent to which tutors personal characteristics (age, qualifications, experience, and career aspirations) affects the career progression of tutors in Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

To study the career progression for tutors in Primary Teacher Training Colleges in Kenya, the following were adopted as objectives of the study:

- (i) To determine the relationship between tutors' age and their career progression;
- (ii) To determine the relationship between tutors' qualification and their career progression
- (iii) To determine the relationship between tutors' career aspirations and their career progression;
- (iv) To determine the relationship between tutors' experience and their career progression.

These objectives were consequently translated into respective null hypotheses H_01 , H_02 , H_03 , and H_04 which stated that there was no significant relationship between factors and career progression of college tutors.

Literature Review

Career progression may be defined in terms of the level and type of position which workers (teachers) ultimately hope to attain Lacey (2001), as a measure of salary or the level of responsibility or promotions (Seibert, Maria & Michael, 2001), career satisfaction (Wayney, Robert & Isabel, 1999) and professional development (Grenhaus, Saroj & Wayne, 1990). For purposes of this paper, we define career progression as the move through job groups to a relatively higher status in the teaching profession.

In order to retain employees in the teaching fraternity, educational institutions should satisfy personal and professional needs which vary from status, recognition, professional growth and personal development. according to Lunenburg and Ornstein (2008), institution should not only be interested in the output but also welfare of people involved in the processing of the output, knowing that tutor have aspirations to be fulfilled met by the education system . Bennel & Akyengpong (2007) agreed that tutor aspirations need not to be frustrated by the administrators if productivity is to be improved. They found that teachers were facing a motivational crisis and as a result learners were not taught properly which slowed individual career fulfillment. Successful organizations are recognizing that enhanced career progression can sustain and advance their competitiveness. Allen, Simon and Mayo (2011) noted that there was high turnover among teachers in the United Kingdom which was attributed to lack of clearly designed career progression path and they recommended that a systematic approach to developing teachers career through coaching, mentoring, talent spotting and promotion from within would provide teacher job satisfaction. Tutors get intrinsic satisfaction of working with students, but this should not preclude possibility that they would be motivated by extrinsic factors as well.

This view was shared by Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2006) who felt that unlike the old view of career progression which emphasized high pay and job security, the modern version takes into account the growing recognition that people increasingly need to make their own career decisions and to balance career and family responsibility. In these decisions the individual weighs their personal attributes against possible career progression. Employers need to balance the aspirations of individual with those of their employing organizations as far as possible customizing moves to meet the need of employees, their families and the changing skill requirement of the organization. A report by South East Asia Ministers of Education Organisation on achieving EFA goals by 2015, (SEAMAO), indicated that although career progression is a complex issue that depends on many factors, motivation to achieve individual aspirations is key (OECD, 2005). The report recommended regular strategies on ensuring that tutors fulfill their desired career goal as a teacher among other strategies. Successful organizations promote continuous professional development throughout employees' career to achieve intended organizational and individual goals (Cunningham & Cordaro, 2009).

According to Glickman (2009), motivation for career progression for tutors shifts with age. Young teachers thrive on challenging tasks, training and new opportunities.

Older teachers are motivated by freedom, balance in their lives and transferable retirement package. These tutors especially between the ages of 40 – 59 years are probably at the height of personal commitments and therefore highly depend on job security, less movement and steady pay check. This may bring stagnation in the career which causes bitterness in the said tutors and in the long run become disinterested in school activities including professional development. This dissatisfaction sometimes causes tutors to leave the teaching career, or to continue teaching without enthusiasm and compromise the quality of their output (Machio, 2011; Glickman, 2009; and OECD, 2009).

Individual characteristics of tutors are attributes that a tutor brings to the institution and which may affect his/her career progression. According to Ornstein & Levine (2002), becoming a teacher starts with the persuasion to choose teaching as a career with varied individual motivation. When defining personal characteristics, Rausch and Witheridge (2003) said that these influence how a worker behaves in the work place. The personal characteristic of any worker is what he or she brings into the system that combined with institution characteristics work together to increase their productivity. Linda (2003) found that teachers derived job satisfaction not only from seeing students learn, but also through movement up the career ladder. Bennell (2004) found that individual job satisfaction in low income countries including Kenya was influenced by work place goals and individual goals, and that in these low income countries, pay alone does not increase job satisfaction.

Method

The research employed descriptive survey design. This design helped to obtain precise information concerning the current state of career progression in colleges and to draw varied general conclusions from the facts that were obtained. The study targeted 18 Primary Teacher Training Colleges (PTTCs) that had presented candidates for PTE examination, with their 756 tutors and 18 Principals or their deputies. The sample size calculation produced a sample size of 264 tutors. These tutors were selected through proportionate random sampling, depending on the size of staff in a college. Purposive sampling was used to pick eight Principals or their Deputy Principals of the sampled colleges due to their knowledge in tutors' career progression. Questionnaires were to collect data from tutors. The questionnaire collected required demographic data and also tutors' reactions to Lickert type statements on their career aspiration and career progression. The study also used an interview schedule to collect data from principals and deputy principals. ANOVA was used to investigate the relationship between the variables at the 0.05 significance level. Career progression was measured as an interval variable while the independent variables were measured as either categorical or interval variables.

Results

The age of tutors was skewed towards older ages with majority of tutors (74.9%) being above 40 years old. Tutors in colleges are qualified for career progression 84.1% of them having a bachelor's degree and above qualification (73.4% B.Ed/PGDE, 8.7% M.Ed, PhD (2%) and non graduates (11%). Most (71%) of tutors had college teaching experience of more than eight years.

Table 1: Anova Output Values For Career Progression

Factor	Df	F	Sig.
Tutors' age	31 , 171	1.422	.083
Tutors' qualifications	31 , 171	1.921	.005
Career aspiration	31 , 170	1.242	.193
Tutor's college teaching experience	31, 171	1.018	.450
Tutors total experience	3, 202	8.778	.000

using a significance level of 0.05, H_{01} , H_{03} and H_{04} were retained while H_{02} was rejected. This means that:

- i) There was no significant relationship between tutors age and career progression. ordinarily one would guess that older persons are more likely to have moved up through the ranks further than the younger one tutors.
- ii) There was a significant relationship between qualifications of tutors and their progression , with higher qualifications tending to merit higher career progression.

- iii) There was no significant relationship between tutors aspirations and career progression. This sounds disappointing in that we would expect aspiring tutors to be rewarded with career progression sought. This mismatch may lead to great dissatisfaction and less productivity. More light needs to be shed in this area.
- iv) Teaching experience in the colleges was not significantly related to career progression. This is another surprising result in that you would expect employees who have served an organization longer to rise faster than new comers. Unfortunately results show that the new comers may actually have moved faster. When one looks at the p value for total teaching experience visavis career progression, one notes that the result is now significant. This may indicate that the so called late comers have experience from other institutions ran by the employer (TSC), which counts in their progression in the teacher colleges.

Discussions

Almost half of tutors (48%) of tutors were in the age group 40-49 years and the least 3.4 % of the participant were aged below 30 years. The small proportion of tutors aged below 30 years could be due to fact that TSC froze employment of new teachers since 1998 and started employing on the basis of “where vacancy arises”. The few tutors could be mainly from ICT departments in the colleges. Tutors’ age was found to be having insignificant effect on career progression. This implied that though TSC is expected to consider the age of tutors during recruitment , it did not. This supports findings by OECD (2009), TSC (2002) and Kanake (2003) who all concluded that age was not a relevant criterion in the promotion of workers. Age could be a necessary condition during employment but may not be necessary for further career progression.

When tutors qualifications were subjected to ANOVA test, it produced a significant difference, perhaps because a majority of tutors in colleges have the required qualifications (B.Ed) for career progression. This agrees with the findings by OECD (2005) who found that tutors with high qualifications are likely to get high career progression in African countries. According to TSC promotion policy, a tutor must have a B.Ed degree to be promoted to administrative position, which a majority of tutors do. A PhD is not recognized and TSC only gives an added advantage to tutors with Masters Degree in Education. This was reflected by few tutors in job group N and P with Masters Degree. Interviews from Principals established that academic/professional qualification was important but not enough to determine career progression. The work output of a tutor in terms of student performance in PTE examination was observed to play a big role in the career progression with a tutor who shows good results for teacher trainees being more likely to be promoted before a tutor with a high qualification. This points to a trend where colleges may be joining the examination bandwagon to learning of skills.

The study found that tutors college teaching experience was not important in contributing to tutors career progression. Majority 31 % have taught in college for between 8-14 years. More than 65 % have 8 and above years’ experience on college teaching. Years of teaching in a PTTC were not necessary for upward career mobility. Tutors with a college teaching experience of 15 years and above have remained in the same job group for more than 4 – 6 years while those with little experience have been promoted to the next job group. This lends credence to Kirimi and Amukowa (2013) finding that the promotion in teacher colleges is haphazard and erratic

Although Albert and Luzzo (1999) found that there is a strong relationship between individual career aspirations of workers and their career progression career aspiration of tutors in this study did not produce a positive effect on career progression. Career aspiration represents an individual orientation towards a desired career goal under ideal conditions. Career aspiration of tutors in PTTCs shows a tutor’s interest and hopes that causes a drive to self fulfillment. Most tutors reported that their aspirations had not so far been realized. Unfulfilled aspirations are likely to reduce tutors’ morale and as a result induce them to seek alternative avenues to achieve their career aspirations.

Conclusion

Training and other characteristics for example age, gender, experience, career aspirations and qualification that a tutor brings into the PTTC are therefore important prerequisites for tutors’ career progression. If the colleges are to meet their strategic goals and objectives and keep pace with social, political, social and political changes that continuously demand new ways of doing business, then they should ensure that tutors individual characteristics are recognized, in appointments.

Although there is no notable relationship between tutors' college teaching experience and tutors career progression, tutor experience is key factor if tutors are to achieve their career goal of training quality teachers for effective teaching. This conclusion is supported by OECD (2009) who found that the success of any performance system largely depends on among other factors experience of workers implementing the program. When less experienced persons in college teaching get promoted to responsibility in the colleges, the strategic objectives of the colleges are likely to suffer. Ideally, even the tutors in primary teacher colleges should be graduates of primary teacher education themselves to be able to share best practices with their students. Tutors' age, tutors' experience and tutors aspirations need to be considered seriously in any effort to address the work output of these workers.

Recommendations

Kenya's effort of ensuring increased opportunities for secondary school leavers through pre-service training in PTTCs has been largely a success. However, the tutors feel that their promotion opportunities remain very low. It is necessary that the inconsistencies noted in this study, with respect to tutors career progression, be sorted. The study recommends that all stakeholders make concerted effort to address these challenges in order to remove obstacles likely to hinder career progression of tutors in PTTCs.

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