

A STUDY ON EFFECT OF CO-WORKER AND STUDENT- TEACHER RELATIONSHIP ON TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE OF NAKURU NORTH DISTRICT, KENYA

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ABSTRACT:

Employee commitment is a critical component of organizational success. However literature indicates that employees have differing levels of organizational commitment. Different factors account for the differences in commitment of employees to their work, including work environment. This study sought to find out the effect of co-worker and student- teacher relationship on teachers' commitment to their teaching stations in public secondary schools in Nakuru North District, Kenya. The study adopted a correlational survey method of data collection. The target population comprised 341 teachers from whom a sample of 184 teachers was randomly selected. Data was collected by use of structured questionnaires. It was analyzed with the aid of the SPSS computer package version 20. Descriptive statistics such as means were used to summarize the data. Correlation analysis was used to establish the effect of co-worker and student-Teacher relationship on teachers' organizational commitment. Co-worker and Student-teacher relationship correlated positively with teachers' organizational commitment. The study established that there is a close relationship between teachers and their co-workers as well as between teachers and students. Both have small but positive effect on teachers' organizational commitment. The results indicate that school administrators and human resource management practitioners can enhance their employee organizational commitment by creating conducive work environment which facilitates formal and informal social interactions.

Keywords: *Co-worker Relationship, Student-teacher Relationship, Organizational commitment, Public Secondary Schools, Work Environment*

Introduction

Public institutions in Kenya, including educational institutions, are undergoing a transformation to reverse the falling trend in service delivery. They are increasingly adopting private sector practices aimed at institutionalizing a business culture where customer focus and results are the norm. Strategic and performance based management are therefore becoming mandatory in the management of public institutions. To realize these ideals, the productivity of the human resource is essential. However, low level of commitment among secondary school teachers in Kenya has been taking a worrying trend with a commitment level of only 50% (Mbwiria, 2010).

Though literature on teachers' organizational and professional commitment in Kenya is scanty, global statistics especially from the west indicate a worrying trend with regard to retention of teachers in the profession. Teaching tends to be characterized by comparatively lofty attrition compared to other professions such as engineering, medicine and law (Anderson, Stacey, Western & Williams, 1983). One study indicates that many graduates are there who never start a teaching career (Heyns, 1988). Of those who start, few expect to teach until their retirement. According to Murnane, Singer and Willett (1988), about 5% to 8% of teachers leave the profession each year. Recent statistics shows that approximately one third of new teachers leave their positions within the first 5 years of teaching (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2002).

Teachers leave the profession for a number of reasons, including dissatisfaction with support from administrators and with workplace conditions, pay, location of the working station, student characteristics, and working facilities. A study in USA by Bobbitt, Broughman and Gruber (1995) found that 20% of teachers who left the profession in the 1990-91 school year cited salary and inadequate support from administration as primary reasons for leaving. New teachers leave the profession because of the conditions in which they are exposed to. Achinstein (2006) underlines how new teachers are often placed in hard-to-staff schools and are constantly examined and inspected by administrators, colleagues, parents and students. New teachers in the United States and in most European countries are placed in high-needs urban or rural areas (Castro, Kelly & Shih, 2010).

Teachers in African countries work under difficult conditions that are different from those in developed countries. Osei (2006), notes that in many African countries teachers work in overcrowded classrooms (40-80 pupils in a class), mainly due to a considerable increase in student enrolment in primary and secondary schools, poor school facilities and inadequate infrastructure. Sumra,(2005) reports that 50.9% of the teachers in Tanzania would leave teaching if offered an alternative, the main reason being low pay. Other reasons included the locality of working station and heavy workload.

Research Variables

The study sought to determine the effect of co-worker and student-teacher relationships on teachers' organizational commitment. Co-worker relationships are important to individual employees. Co-workers are other individuals situated in the same stratum of an organizational hierarchy and with whom one executes tasks and has routine interactions (Fairlie, 2004). These are other workers one works alongside on a day to day basis and who can both support and antagonize their colleagues. Social interaction among colleagues may be beneficial in several ways (Jarzabkowski, 2002). They promote better working relationships, which in the longer term may improve the quality of work. Secondly, positive social interaction may improve the emotional health of the staff community, thus reducing emotional stress and burnout. Moreover, interpretation of organizational policies is done

more by colleagues than by supervisors. Hence, an employee's colleagues may impact significantly to his satisfaction, dissatisfaction and level of motivation while working in an organization.

Student-teacher relationship is particularly important for both the student and the teacher. When teachers form emotionally warm and supportive relationships with and among their students they improve students' chances for academic success. According to Pianta (2001), close relationship between the student and the teacher will make the teacher feel satisfied with their jobs, as teachers job satisfaction is related to teacher-student interaction (Sava, 2001).

Commitment is an indicator of the extent to which employees identify themselves with organizational goals, value organizational membership, and intend to work hard to attain the overall organizational mission. Researchers conceive organizational commitment as involving some form of psychological bond between people and the organization. Porter and Steers (1974) defined organizational commitment as 'the relative strength of an individual's identification and involvement in a particular organization.' They viewed it as an attitudinal commitment characterized by an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization evidenced by a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values.

Statement of the Problem

The education system in Kenya is undergoing structural transformation in response to the changes in the technological, economic and cultural realms. New goals of education such as Education for All (EFA) and education as a means to realize vision 2030 are being implemented (Ministry of Education, 2012). In response to these challenges, there is need for a manpower that is highly committed to support the development of an efficient and responsive education and training system. However, global and domestic statistics indicate low levels of commitment among teachers (Anderson, 1983, Heyns, 1988, Sumra, 2005, Mbwiria, 2010). In spite of this, little study has been done to examine work environment in educational institutions and its effect on employee commitment. Studies done in the west on job satisfaction and commitment for teachers has focused on both physical (heavy workload, inadequate working facilities, location of the working stations) and psychological (low pay, security of tenure, student characteristics and lack of support from the administration.) aspects of work environment with little attention being given to the social dimension. This study therefore sought to investigate the effect of co-worker and student-teacher relationship on teachers' commitment to their working stations in Nakuru North District, Kenya.

Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the study was to examine the effect of work environment on teachers' commitment to their teaching institutions for public secondary school teachers. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i) Determine the effect of co-worker relationship on teachers' organizational commitment
- (ii) Determine the effect of student-teacher relationship on teachers' organizational Commitment

Research Hypotheses

The study sought to test the following hypotheses:

- i) There is a positive correlation between the nature of co-worker relationship between teachers and teachers' organizational commitment for secondary school teachers
- ii) There is a positive correlation between student-teacher relationship and teacher's organizational commitment in secondary schools.

Literature review:

Co-worker Relationship

Co-workers are other individuals situated in the same stratum of an organizational hierarchy and with whom one executes tasks and has routine interactions (Fairlie, 2004). These are other workers one works alongside on a day to day basis and who can both support and antagonize their colleagues. Individuals in every type of organization have co-workers who are partners in social and task interactions. The importance of coworkers is magnified by several recent firm and job-related trends. Flatter organizational structures and increased team-based work translate into more frequent and more meaningful lateral interactions. Likewise, the shift of job content from steady and routine individual tasks to more complex and collective tasks has enhanced coworkers' salience and their potential influence (Harrison, Johns, & Martocchio, 2000). In the U.S. for example, 90.2 percent of employees likely have coworkers (Chiaburu, 2008).

Employees have interactions with leaders and coworkers, and both types of relationships can be positive or negative. Theoretically, leaders can be supportive or antagonistic (Tierney & Tepper, 2007). Similar possibilities exist for coworkers. Coworkers can provide to their colleagues different valences of influence such as positive social support and antagonism. They also determine role perceptions, work attitudes, withdrawal and effectiveness. While vertical relationships are governed by authority ranking, coworker exchanges are based on reciprocation and turn-taking. Further, because of their greater presence relative to leaders in almost any organization, employees are likely to interact more frequently with their coworkers (Ferris & Mitchell, 1987). The repository of emotional and behavioral resources from coworkers is thus larger and easier to draw from than the leader-based one. More frequent coworker interactions are also more likely because they have generally the same status as the focal employee and exchanges of all types are less restricted. Coworkers should, then, have a nontrivial influence on colleagues' role perceptions, attitudes, withdrawal, and effectiveness, even in the presence of other influences originating from the direct leader.

Social support is a useful resource for enhancing employees' proper functioning in organizations (Ng & Sorensen, 2008). Supervisor and coworker support are the most relevant forms of social support for employees in the workplace. If the supervisor is abusive, then coworker support becomes a more salient and important source of social support. Coworker support refers to employees' beliefs about the extent to which coworkers provide them with desirable resources in the form of emotional support and instrumental assistance (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). In the work engagement literature, coworker support is considered a job resource. Job resources refer to job aspects that are functional in the achievement of work goals, fostering of personal development, and reduction of job demands and their associated costs (Bakker & Demerouti, 2004). Also, according to Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) theory of stress, social support prevents stress by making threatening experiences appear less consequential or provide valuable resources for coping when stress occurs.

Student-Teacher Relationship

Literature provides evidence that strong and supportive relationships between teachers and students are fundamental to the healthy development of all. (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Zeller & Pianta, 2004). Positive student-teacher relationships serve as a resource for students at risk of school failure, whereas conflict or disconnection between students and adults may compound that risk (Ladd & Burgess, 2001). Although the nature of these relationships changes as students mature, the need for connection between students and adults in the school setting remains strong (Crosnoe, Johnson & Elder, 2004). As children enter formal school settings, relationships with teachers provide the foundation for successful adaptation to the social and academic environment. Children who form close relationships with teachers enjoy school more and get along better with peers. Moreover, teachers who demonstrate respect towards their students will automatically win favour by having active learners (Affizal & Raidah, 2009).

Teacher factors show a fairly inconsistent association with quality of the teacher-student relationship. Teachers' beliefs and perceptions about students and about their own roles are much more salient to the formation of supportive relationships. Brophy (1985) suggested that teachers view themselves primarily as instructors or socializers and that their perceptions in relation to these two roles affect the way they interact with students. Instructors tend to respond more negatively to students who are underachievers, unmotivated, or disruptive, whereas teachers who are socializers tend to act more negatively toward students they view as hostile, aggressive, or interpersonally disconnected. According to Kennedy and Kennedy (2004), teachers with a dismissing or avoidant attachment style may have unrealistic expectations for their students' maturity and independence, as they themselves may have learned to be distant in their own interpersonal relationships. Teachers with a dismissing status may generally respond to students by distancing themselves, demonstrating a lack of warmth and understanding. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs may also affect the nature of the relationship they develop with students. Teachers who believe that they have an influence on students tend to interact in ways that enhance student-teacher relationships. (Midgley, Feldlaufer & Eccles, 1989). Teachers also report their relationships with students as being a source of emotional support and comfort (Zeller & Pianta, 2004).

Organizational Commitment

Multiple definitions of commitment are found in the literature. Bateman and Strasser (1984) state that organizational commitment has been operationally defined as being multidimensional in nature, involving an employee's loyalty to the organization, willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organization, degree of goal and value congruency with the organization, and desire to maintain membership. Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian (1974) define organizational commitment as being "a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals, a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a definite desire to maintain organizational membership". Sheldon (1971) defines commitment as being a positive evaluation of the organization and the organizational goals. According to Buchanan (1974) most scholars define commitment as being a bond between an individual employee and the organization. Meyer & Allen (1997) define a committed employee as being one who "stays with an organization, attends work regularly, puts in a full day and more, protects corporate assets, and believes in the organizational goals". This employee positively contributes to the organization because of his commitment to the organization. Meyer and Allen (1993) identified three types of commitment: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment.

Affective commitment is defined as the emotional attachment, identification and involvement that an employee has with his organization and its goals (Mowday, Porter & Steer, 1997). According to Allen and Meyer (1990), Affective Commitment is the result of employee's emotional attachment with the organization. Porter et al (1974) conceptualize it as a "belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, a willingness to focus effort on helping the organization achieve its goal's, and a desire to maintain organizational membership". Mowday and others (1997) further state that affective commitment is "when the employee identifies with a particular organization and its goals in order to maintain membership to facilitate the goal" (p.225). Meyer and Allen (1997) state that affective commitment to an organization is evident when employees retain membership out of choice.

Meyer and Allen (1990) describe continuance commitment as the result of cost associated with leaving the organization. Reichers (1985) describes continuance commitment as the willingness to remain in an organization because of the investment that the employee has with "non-transferable" investments. Non-transferable investments include things such as retirement benefits, relationships with other employees, or things that are special to the organization. According to Reichers, continuance commitment includes factors such as years of employment or benefits that the employee may receive that are unique to the organization. Meyer and Allen (1997) further explain that employers who share continuance commitment with their employees often make it very difficult for an employee to leave the organization.

Normative commitment is the commitment that a person believes that they have to the organization or their feeling of obligation to their workplace (Bolon, 1997). Weiner (1982) discusses normative commitment as being a "generalized value of loyalty and duty". Meyer and Allen (1991) supported this type of commitment with their definition of normative commitment being "a feeling of obligation". Weiner (1982) argues that normative commitment is only natural due to the way we are raised in society. It can be explained by other commitments such as marriage, family and religion. Therefore when it comes to one's commitment to their place of employment they often feel like they have a moral obligation to the organization.

Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) observe that the three types of commitment are a psychological state "that either characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization or has the implications to determine whether the employee will continue with the organization." They also state that those employee's with a strong affective commitment will remain with an organization because they want to, those with a strong continuance commitment remain because they have to, and those with a normative commitment remain because they feel that they have to.

Co-worker Relationship and Employee Commitment

There is empirical evidence that co-worker relations are an antecedent of job satisfaction. A number of authors maintain that having friendly and supportive colleagues contributes to increased job satisfaction and commitment (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2001, Morris, 2004). Findings of a survey conducted by Madison (2000) on more than 21000 women occupying the most demanding jobs indicated that those participants who lacked support from co-workers were more likely to suffer from job dissatisfaction. Another survey conducted amongst 1250 FoodBrand employees found that positive relationships with co-workers enhance job satisfaction (Berta, 2005). Empirical evidence indicates that relationships with colleagues have consistently yielded significant effects on job satisfaction of federal government workers in the United States (Ting, 1997). A study conducted by Viswesvaran, Deshpande and Joseph (1998) further corroborated previous findings that there is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and co-workers.

An individual's level of job satisfaction might be a function of personal characteristics and the characteristics of the group to which he or she belongs. The social context of work is also likely to have a significant impact on a worker's attitude and behaviour (Marks, 1994). Luthans (1998) postulates that work groups characterized by co-operation and understanding amongst their members tend to influence the level of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. When cohesion is evident within a work group it usually leads to effectiveness within a group and the job becoming more enjoyable. However, if the opposite situation exists and colleagues are difficult to work with, this may have a negative impact. Ramírez and Nembhard (2004) found that organizational commitment can only be achieved through the compatibility of the employees who work together to achieve goals. There is also evidence about how social support from coworkers is related to individuals' stress, burnout and physical strains (Halbesleben, 2006). Some studies have connected either positive or negative behaviors originating from co-workers to individual work outcomes other than health (Duffy, Ganster & Pagon, 2002).

In a research to find out the effect of co-worker motivational efforts on employee morale, Hasan (2011) concludes that co-workers various motivational efforts have a great impact on employee morale as co-workers are the ones who support and guide them at the work place and are the source of positive spirit which leads towards the accomplishment of objectives. However, in contrast, the motivational efforts do not necessarily guarantee employees' commitment towards their job as the employee's job commitment is affected largely by various other factors which include compensation, benefits, rewards, increments, promotions, chances to grow in the organization and supervisor-subordinate relationships.

Student-Teacher Relationship and Teachers' Commitment

Student-teacher relationship is one of the most challenging aspects of teachers' job. Teachers encounter a multitude of challenging student behaviors on a daily basis including disrespect, verbal abuse, fighting, student tardiness, and/or general disorder (Hastings & Bham, 2003). Over time, the culminating frustration of addressing these behaviors builds up and significantly affects their overall job satisfaction. Challenging behaviors can cause teachers to feel less effective and more stressed and frustrated (Friedman, 2000). Eventually, after repeated failed attempts to correct challenging behaviors and get back to teaching, many teachers become disheartened, burnt out, and feel like quitting the teaching profession altogether (Hastings & Bham, 2003; Zabel & Zabel, 2002). In a research conducted in public school classrooms in Israel, Friedman (1995) determined that student behaviors including disrespect, inattentiveness, and sociability accounted for 22% of teacher burnout. Overall, student discipline is a well-documented source of teacher stress. In a study to determine the school conditions relating to teacher dissatisfaction, it was found that student discipline problems and poor motivation, both of which are antecedents of teacher-student relationship, accounted for 25.5% and 20% respectively for urban public schools (Ingerso, 2002).

Another factor affecting teacher morale is the gap between the expectations created in pre-service training and the experiences of teachers in the field. Pre-service public school teachers come to expect through their training that they will be accorded professional autonomy and professional respect. They often feel that teaching is a calling and that their students will eagerly accept the knowledge that they have to offer. Their experiences are at considerable odds with their expectations. They are often treated with little respect and much abuse (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study used correlational survey design in that it sought to establish relationships between variables. Data was collected using survey method. This design was chosen because it is an efficient method of collecting data regarding characteristics of a sample of a population. The design allows the researcher to gather information regarding the respondent's opinion, perceptions, attitudes and views in highly economical way.

Sample Design

A sample of 184 teachers was used in the study. A sampling formula developed by Israel (1992) was used to determine sample size, n , for the research given the population size N as shown in equation 1 below.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = sample size(s)

N = population (p)

e = probability of error (i.e., the desired precision, e.g., 0.05 for 95% confidence level).

The total number of secondary school teachers within Nakuru North district that were to be included in the study were 341. Substituting for population ($N=341$) in the equation gave the sample size (n). Thus the sample size (n)= 184 as shown below:

$$n = \frac{341}{1 + 341(0.05)^2} \approx 184$$

To select the sample from the population, proportionate sampling was used to ensure each school was represented in the sample. A number of teachers equivalent to the proportion of teachers in a school to the desired sample were randomly selected.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected regarding the nature of student-teacher and co-worker relationships and organizational commitment using a structured questionnaire. The choice of the instrument was informed by the literate characteristic of the teachers who were the respondents. Questionnaires were self administered to the teachers in the identified schools. Data on co-worker relationship was collected using a modified questionnaire developed by New-Foundland and Labrador Statistics Agency, NLSA (2009). Data on student-teacher relationship was collected using a short form of Student-Teacher Relationship Scale developed by Pianta (2001). Data on organizational commitment was sought using a structured questionnaire developed by Meyer and Allen (1997). Where applicable the questionnaire was in the form of modified Linkert five point scale. A total of 160 questionnaires were returned, representing 86.9% return rate.

Reliability and Validity

Cronbach alpha coefficients for the scales were worked out using the SPSS package. Alpha coefficient for questions on the nature of coworker relationships was .796. The coefficient for the short form of the Student-Teachers Relationship Scale (composed of the Conflict and Closeness subscales) was .786 and that of the commitment scale was found to be 0.772.

The content and face validity of the instrument was improved through expert judgment. The researcher sought assistance of his University supervisors to help improve content validity of the instrument.

Data Analysis and Presentation

The data was analyzed with the aid of the SPSS computer software version 20. Data for all scales was summarised using descriptive statistics. Means of each scale were worked out and entered into the SPSS programme to generate statistics such as correlation and regression coefficients. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the joint effect of the independent variables on teachers' organizational commitment.

RESULTS

Teachers' Organizational Commitment

The study also established the level of commitment for public secondary school teachers to their working stations. This was assessed using an eighteen item commitment scale developed by Meyer and Allen (1997). General commitment was measured with a mean score of between 18 and 90. These scores were then divided by 18 in order to obtain a mean score for each respondent of between 1 and 5. The higher the score represents a higher level of commitment. The findings were that teachers in Nakuru North District have a slightly above average level of organizational commitment with a mean score of 3.1314 and a standard deviation of 0.51781. These findings are consistent with those of Mbwiria (2008) who found that public secondary school teachers in Imenti South District were averagely committed to their profession at 51.7%. Sumra (2005) had also found that 50.9% of teachers in Tanzania would leave teaching if offered an alternative.

Demographic factors of respondents had no significant effect on teachers' commitment scores. Male respondents were more highly committed with a mean score of 3.2007 and a standard deviation of 0.50888 compared to female respondents with a mean score 3.0468 and a standard deviation of 0.51955. An independent samples t-test revealed no significant difference in scores between male and female respondents. Revene's t-value was 1.88 (Sig. 2-tailed = 0.61). Literature on gender and organizational commitment has inconsistent results. According to some researchers, women are more committed to their organizations than men (Wahn's, 1998; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990). However, Ngo and Tsang (1998) found insignificant relationship between gender and organizational commitment. Table 4. gives a summary of the mean scores for demographic factors of the respondents.

Table 1.: Mean Scores for Demographic Factors and Teachers' Organizational Commitment

Demographic Factor	Description	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Gender	Male	3.2007	88	.50888
	female	3.0468	72	.51955

Age	22-30 years	3.2896	23	.43121
	31-40 years	3.1077	57	.55975
	41-49 years	3.1241	70	.46531
	50 years & above	2.9979	14	.704446
Tenure	1-5 years	3.1282	85	.53288
	6-10 years	3.2256	43	.48814
	11 years & above	3.0084	32	.51380
Teaching experience	1-5 years	3.2328	29	.49196
	6-10 years	2.9974	19	.49782
	11-15 years	3.1037	38	.55542
	16-20 years	3.1256	48	.44497
	20 years & above	3.1677	26	.63154

Source: Field data

Table 4. shows that in terms of age, commitment scores generally reduced with advancement in age. Younger respondents of between 22 and 30 years had the highest level of commitment at 3.2896, those aged between 31 and 40 scored 3.1077, those between 41 and 49 scored 3.1241 while those aged 50 years and over scored the least at 2.9979. Tenure had a curved effect on commitment. Those who have been in a station for between one and five years scored 3.1282, those with six to ten years scored 3.2256 while those with above ten years scored 3.0084. Teaching experience has a curvilinear effect on commitment. Those with between 1 and 5 years of experience scored 3.2328, those with between 6 and 10 years scored 2.9974. Those with between 11 and 15 had 3.1037. Those with between 16 and 20 scored 3.1256 while those with above 21 years had a mean score of 3.1677.

4.6 Co-Worker Relationship and Teachers' Organizational Commitment

The second objective was to determine the effect of co-worker relations on teachers' organizational commitment. To determine this, one tailed partial correlation analysis was done between scores in co-worker relationship scale and organizational commitment. The controlled variables were supervisory style and student-teacher relationships. Table 4.7 presents a summary of the findings.

Table 2 Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Matrix between Co-worker Relationship and Teachers' Organizational Commitment

		Co-worker Relationship	Organizational Commitment
Co-worker Relationship	Pearson Correlation	1.000	0.224
	Sig.(1-tailed)	-	0.002
	N	160	160

Organizational Commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.224	1.000
	Sig.(1-tailed)	0.002	-
	N	160	160

Correlation is significant at < 0.05 (1-tailed)

Table 4.7 shows that there is a small positive and significant correlation between close co-worker relationship and teachers' organizational commitment ($r = 0.224$, $p = 0.002$). Since correlation between the nature of co-worker relationship and teachers' organizational commitment is positive, the hypothesis that there is a positive correlation between the nature of co-worker relationship and teachers' organizational commitment is therefore accepted.

These findings are consistent with those of a number of authors who maintain that having friendly and supportive colleagues contributes to increased job satisfaction and commitment (Morris 2004, Kreitner & Kinicki, 2001). Another survey conducted amongst 1250 FoodBrand employees found that positive relationships with co-workers enhance job satisfaction and commitment (Berta, 2005). A study carried out to establish the working conditions that matter for teachers found that a collegial atmosphere accounted for 34% of what mattered most in teachers' decisions about whether or not to stay in the school in which they work (North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions survey, 2004). Teachers value school settings where they are not isolated, working together with colleagues and leadership that supports their efforts.

Student-Teacher Relationship and Teachers' Organizational Commitment

The third objective was to determine the effect of student-teacher relations on teachers' organizational commitment. This was determined through one tailed partial correlation analysis between scores in student-teacher relationship scale and organizational commitment. The controlled variables were supervisory style and co-worker relationships. Table 4.8 presents a summary of the results.

Table 3. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Matrix between Student-Teacher Relationship and Teachers' Organizational Commitment

		Student-Teacher Relationship	Organizational Commitment
Student-Teacher Relationship	Pearson Correlation	1.000	0.168
	Sig. (1-tailed)	-	0.018
	N	160	160
Organizational Commitment	Pearson Correlation	0.168	1.000
	Sig.(1-tailed)	0.018	-
	N	160	160

Correlation is significant at < 0.05 (1-tailed)

Table 5. shows that there is a small but significant positive correlation between student-teacher relationship and teachers' organizational commitment ($r = 0.168$, $p = 0.018$). Since correlation between student-teacher relationship and teachers' organizational commitment is positive, the hypothesis that there is a positive correlation between the nature student-teacher relationship and teachers' organizational commitment is therefore accepted.

The weak effect could be explained by the feeling that teachers are often treated with disrespect and much abuse by students (LeCompte & Dworkin (1991). They encounter a multitude of challenging student behaviors on a daily basis including disrespect, verbal abuse, fighting, student tardiness,

and/or general disorder (DeVoe et al., 2004). However, positive student-teacher relationship is beneficial to both the student and the teacher. It serves as a resource for students at risk of school failure. Conflict or disconnection between students and adults may compound that risk (Ladd & Burgess, 2001). Teachers also report their relationships with students as being a source of emotional support and comfort (Zeller & Pianta, 2004).

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study sought to find out the effect of co-worker and student-teacher relationship on teachers' organizational commitment. It was established that there is a close relationship between teachers and their colleagues, and between teachers and students in the district. This relationship has a small but positive effect on teachers' organizational commitment. Multiple regression analysis revealed that co-worker relationship has a greater effect accounting for 21.1% variation in teachers' organizational commitment ($\beta = .211$). Student-teacher relationship explains 15.6% ($\beta = .156$).

Conclusion

This study has shown that co-worker and student-teacher relationships have little effect on teachers' commitment to a working station. However, they have important policy implications for human resource management practitioners and administrators of schools. Conducive social environment needs to be created in the work settings to enhance commitment of employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the following:

- i. A similar study is carried out in a business environment to establish the role of clients in enhancing employee commitment.
- ii. Further research is recommended for the contribution of other social stakeholders in education such as parents and school management boards and committees.
- iii. Since the study was conducted in a peri-urban setting, teachers could have been committed to their working stations because of other conveniences such as accessibility to the working station and teachers' residential status and preferences. The influence of these factors calls for further investigation. There is also need to carry out a similar but comparative study in a rural setting.

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