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CAREER PLATEAUIING AND IT'S RELATIONSHIP WITH SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' PURSUIT OF POST-GRADUATE STUDIES IN NYANDARUA AND MURANG'A COUNTIES, KENYA

Dr. Gaturu Mary Wangechi HSC

Director Quality Assurance and Standards Ministry of Education

Corresponding Authors Email: marygaturu@yahoo.com

P.O BOX 30040 NAIROBI, KENYA

Dr. Felista Njuguna

Senior Lecturer: Department of Education Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies

Corresponding Authors Email: wanjisjnu@gmail.com

P.O BOX 43844 NAIROBI, KENYA.

Dr. Norbert Ogeta

Senior Lecturer: Department of Education Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies

Corresponding Authors Email: norbertgeta@gmail.com

P.O BOX 43844 NAIROBI, KENYA.

Abstract

Purpose: Teachers in Kenya exhibit signs of career plateauing, and are registering for post-graduate courses in large numbers. This study investigated whether teachers' pursuit of post-graduate studies is a result of career plateauing. The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between career plateauing and secondary school teachers' pursuit of post-graduate studies in Nyandarua and Murang'a counties, Kenya. The objectives of the study were to: determine types and levels of career plateauing experienced by secondary school teachers of public schools in Nyandarua and Murang'a Counties; determine the relationship between career plateauing and teachers' decisions to pursue various Post-Graduate courses; and find out whether the structural or job content type of career plateau predicts teachers' decisions to pursue various Post-Graduate courses among secondary schools teachers in public schools in Kenya.

Methodology: The study employed the correlational research design. The target population of the study comprised of all the 5,022 teachers (3,581 in Murang'a County and 1,441 in Nyandarua County) in all the public schools in Nyandarua and Murang'a Counties except those which were used in the pilot. From this population, the sample size for each county was computed using the sample size computation formula by Krejcie & Morgan (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007), which gave 304 teachers from Nyandarua County and 348 teachers in Murang'a County. Stratified random sampling was used to select 304 teachers from Nyandarua County and 348 teachers from Murang'a County giving a total of 652 teachers. In Nyandarua County, the sample size was 152 male and 152 female teachers, while in Murang'a County there was 174 male and 174 female teachers. A questionnaire designed for teachers was used as the main tool for data collection. The study generated quantitative data, which was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was reported according to themes and involved the use of frequencies and percentages. Linear progression and Analysis of Variance were also used.

Results: Decisions to pursue post-graduate studies is expected to increase 0.014 when structural plateauing rises by one and decrease by 0.012 when job content plateauing goes up by one. Both structural and job content plateauing were found to predict decisions to pursue post-graduate studies significantly at $p < 0.05$.

Contributions to theory, policy and practice: The Teachers Service Commission should develop a clear road map for career advancement of the teachers to reduce career plateauing. The Teachers Service Commission in collaboration with the ministry of education should design a skills upgrade for teachers through capacity development programmes which should be a requirement for those joining the profession and which should form a basis for promotion

Key words: *Career Plateauing, Post-Graduate course*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Career plateauing is a term that refers to a feeling of frustration experienced by workers in an organization when opportunities for career advancement are no longer available (Choudhary, Ramzan & Riaz, 2013; Rotondo & Perrewew, 2000). It has been identified as one of the characteristics of the teaching profession (Atteberry, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2013). This study hypothesized that the teaching profession is characterized by the two types of career plateauing. Opportunities for promotion are limited in the teaching profession, and the 'routine' nature of the teaching job means teachers may reach a point where they feel that their job responsibilities are no longer challenging. When teachers reach career plateauing, just like employees in other sectors, they seek ways to address deal with career plateau or they may choose to exit the profession for more challenging and satisfying jobs. What is not clear is whether pursuing further studies is one way that employees use to address the career plateau.

A number of determinants of career plateauing have been identified. For instance, research by Tremblay and Roger (1993) showed that the best predictors of career plateauing among Canadian managers were factors such as past success, age, level of education, desire for advancement and personality (locus of control). The researchers reported that individual factors serve as better predictors of career plateauing than familial and organizational factors. Similarly, according to Mayasari (2010), there are individual and organizational factors that determine career plateauing. From an individual perspective, these factors include lack of individual skill and abilities, lack of intrinsic motivation, the perception of individual, familial factor, locus of control, and work perseverance. From the organization perspective, factors such as absence of work content dimension, and organizational career orientation, low organization innovative climate, business strategy, and organization characteristics are key determinants (Mayasari, 2010).

While numerous studies have been conducted on the factors associated with teacher career plateau in developed and developing countries, little research has considered whether there exists a relationship between career plateauing and teacher decisions to pursue post-graduate courses. In Kenya, Katula and Orodho (2014) found that the main explanatory variables affecting teaches in Kenya were job dissatisfaction among teachers as results of poor motivation and remuneration, limited avenues for promotions and professional growth due to unsupportive school and government policies.

According to Mungai (2015) most teachers in Kenya feel that the teaching job is no longer enjoyable; and the teaching profession no longer commands the high status it enjoyed 30 years ago, with the teaching today being regarded as 'employment of last resort' by most school leavers and university graduates. Research by Ondara (2004) also shows that most teachers in

Kenya view the teaching job as not having challenging job tasks. It has also been reported by Waga and Simatwa (2014) that there are limited opportunities for promotion within the schools and the teaching profession. These three factors – the feeling that the teaching job is no longer enjoyable, lack of challenging job tasks, and lack of promotion opportunities – have been linked to career plateau.

Upon this background, it was important to determine the relationships between career plateau and decision to pursue higher studies among teachers in Kenya. It was also important to examine the type of career plateauing (structural or job content) experienced by teachers in Kenya. Teachers in Kenyan secondary schools are in short supply, perpetuated, among other factors, by teachers leaving the profession to take up non-teaching employment. Teachers leaving the teaching profession affect the quality of education and students' academic achievement. The loss of qualified teachers affects Kenya's economic development, particularly in the scientific, technological, and professional sectors.

Reports from the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) indicate a high number of teachers leaving the profession in the country. For example, Oyaró (2008), quoting data from KNUT, reported that, in Kenya between January and June 2008, 600 teachers had left teaching to take up better paying jobs elsewhere. This translates to three teachers leaving the service every day. It is also observed that many teachers have been enrolling for post-graduate studies in the various universities in the country. Currently according to statistics in TSC the teacher shortage in the country is about 80,000. This is supported by Mulkeen, Chapman, DeJaeghere and Leu (2007) whose study in sub-Saharan Africa countries revealed that teachers often left their positions to pursue further studies.

Researchers have shown that teaching work in Kenya is characterized by the feeling that the teaching job is no longer enjoyable (Mungai, 2015), lack of challenging job tasks (Ondara, 2004), and lack of promotion opportunities (Waga & Simatwa, 2014). These three factors have been linked to career plateau. However, no research has so far been conducted in Kenya to ascertain this link. When teachers enroll for further education, some pursue education-related courses (such as Education Administration, Guidance and Counselling or masters degrees in their teaching subjects while others pursue courses unrelated to education (such as Business Administration, Gender and Development studies). What is not clear are the factors that influence teachers' decisions about which courses to pursue. Do they pursue courses that will increase their chances of promotion in the profession and thus overcoming structural plateauing, or courses that will increase chances of getting employed in other sectors with more challenging job tasks thus overcoming job content plateauing? The study therefore examined whether there was a relationship between career plateauing and decision to pursue higher studies among secondary school teachers in Kenya. The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between career plateauing and secondary school teachers' pursuit of post-graduate studies in Nyandarua and Murang'a counties, Kenya. More specifically, the study sought to: determine types and levels of career plateauing experienced by secondary school teachers of public schools in Nyandarua and Murang'a Counties; determine the relationship between career plateauing and teachers' decisions to pursue various Post-Graduate courses; and find out whether the structural or job content type of career plateau predicts teachers' decisions to pursue various Post-Graduate courses among secondary schools teachers in public schools in Kenya.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The study was based on the Managerial Careers Model by Ference, Stoner and Warren (1977). The model seeks to provide an understanding for the plateaued employee problem. The model delineates principal career stages of the plateauing process. The model's two basic components are perceived likelihood of promotion and performance. As illustrated in Table 1, there are four categories of employees: stars, solid citizens, deadwood and comers – based on their current potential and likelihood of future promotion (Ference *et al.*, 1977). Their classification is given in table 1.

Table 1: A Model of Managerial Careers

Current Performance	Likelihood of future promotions		
	Low		High
High	Solid (Organizationally Personally Plateaued)	Citizens or	Stars (Not Plateaued)
Low	Deadwood (Ineffectively Plateaued)		Corners (Non-Plateaued)

Source: Ference, Stoner and Warren (1977).

Solid citizens are individuals whose performance is satisfactory, but whom the organization feels have little chance for promotion due to organizational or personal reasons. These employees have in one sense plateaued, but they have still not reached a disengagement phase. These employees are likely to improve their skills for effective service delivery and hence attract promotion or go down in duty performance and join in the group of dead woods. In relation to the study those are teacher who are likely to pursue courses related to teaching profession for the purpose of improving or attracting promotion while still in the profession. Stars not only have above current job performance, but they are on a growth stage and also have potential for future advancement. These are committed, hardworking, successful employees on a fast career track. Their success has not made them complacent and they are still on the growth path.

In relation to the study stars are those teachers who have not experienced either structural or the job content plateauing. They are the lot that is contented with profession and may not have any intentions to quit. They may pursue post graduate studies to improve on their skills and efficiency in the profession.

Deadwoods are individuals whose performance is below expectations and who also have limited possibilities for advancement in the organization fearing career stagnation. They feel that their positions gave them limited opportunity to engage in projects visible to top management and their services were least marketable to other organizations. They are plateaued both structurally and in job content. They may pursue post graduate studies in courses not related to teaching with intention to quit.

Comers are individuals who have been identified by the organization as having a high potential for advancement, but their present performance is below their potential. Research has shown that individuals who are undecided about what they want to do have lower performance than employees who are committed to their jobs. Comers can be described as those who have yet to settle in the profession. They are still in the process of self-exploration. . These are the could be the new recruited teachers who are the young and inexperienced . They are not yet plateaued

since they are in the process of learning the expectations of the profession. In this study, the Managerial Careers Model (FERENCE *et al.* 1977) was employed to find out whether career plateaus predict teacher decision to pursue higher studies.

Empirical review

The literature hereby reviewed focuses on the types of career plateauing experienced by teachers, relationship between career plateauing and teacher decision to pursue post graduate studies, background characteristics associated with career plateauing

Types of Career Plateauing Experienced by Teachers

From Bardwick (1986), two types of career plateau are observed: job content plateau and hierarchical (or structural) plateau. Job content plateau takes place as a result of overall staleness of the job itself. The employees feel not challenged by the work and responsibilities that they carry out on daily basis. On the other hand, hierarchical (or structural) plateau occurs as a result of employees having little or no chance of further promotion the organization (Bardwick, 1986). Another categorization of career plateauing is provided by Burke and Mikkelsen (2006), who argue that in addition to structural and content plateaus, there is a third category which they refer to as life plateauing. They define life plateauing as an employee's feeling of being trapped or stuck in his or her roles outside of work.

While career plateauing has been linked with both positive and negative organizational outcomes, researchers such as Lee (2003) and Tremblay and Roger (1993) have shown that plateauing have more negative outcomes. For example, hierarchical plateauing is associated with employee absenteeism, low levels of satisfaction with supervisors, more health problems, high levels of work-related stress and burnout, and high turnover intentions (Tremblay et al., 1995). Hierarchical plateauing has also resulted to low job satisfaction levels, lack of organizational commitment, and poor job performance (Chao, 1990; Milliman, 1992; Allen et al., 1999). One of the objectives of this study was to determine the types of career plateauing experienced by teachers in public secondary schools in Kenya.

Relationship between Career Plateauing and Teacher decision to pursue post graduate studies.

Non-monetary benefits such as support from colleague teachers and school administrators are also considered by teachers as an important factor to be considered in making career decisions. Other factors include and not limited to challenging work responsibilities, opportunities for promotion, standards of school facilities, resources available, involvement in decision-making process, attitudes of the learners, and assigned teaching hours. These working conditions will depend on type of school, where school is located, and the demographics of learners, parents and students.

Human capital can be increased through in-service training, advancing in education through formal schooling, induction courses or any other program that is meant for professional growth and development. According to Kirby and Grissmer, (1993) trainings where one acquires skills that can be transferred to other professionals for the purpose of wage improvement and other benefits is referred as general training. On the other hand specific training is specifically for building a firm's human capital such as a teacher training for the purpose of his work in a specific school. It is a training which is specific to a school in which a teacher works or any other school (Kirby & Grissmer, 1993). In this study, it will be interesting to find out the motivational factors behind teachers' choice to pursue postgraduate courses.

A number of studies have been conducted on the link between education level attained and turnover intentions. In Bloland and Selby's (1980) review of literature on teacher attrition, educational attainment related little with teacher mobility. Their conclusions agreed partially with a research by Marso and Pigge (1995), which revealed that in respect to the relationship between level of education and attrition, whether a teacher attended a two-year teachers college or received a bachelor's degree was unrelated to continuing teaching. However, teachers who completed graduate work or obtained a master's degree continued teaching longer than other teachers. This finding suggests that professional level of training in education produces a greater commitment to teaching resulting in a larger proportion continuing to work.

Dixon and Ward (2015) investigated the reasons for teachers undertaking a master's degree and the type of workplace support offered during their enrolment. The study, which involved 18 practicing teachers, established that the reasons for undertaking academic study were very much tied to their perceptions of what it means to be a teacher and how teaching and learning can be improved. Dixon and Ward (2015) reported that teachers' professional identity seemed to reflect the discourse of teaching as a complex and professional activity. Such an identity seemed contradictory to those of many of their workplace colleagues and senior managers who provided the teachers with subtle messages regarding the importance and value of study and research to teachers' professional practice.

Williams (2005) carried out a qualitative analysis of six experienced teachers in New Zealand, with the aim of identifying the role of academic study in teachers' professional development. The study established that the main factors contributing to teachers' learning included: the opening of their minds to different perspectives; the necessity to analyze and synthesize ideas, knowledge and concepts as part of in-class discussion and assessment tasks; the importance of theory; and the role of reflection and collaboration with others. Williams (2005) concluded that postgraduate studies have the potential to make real changes to teachers' thinking and practice, and therefore, to make a vital contribution to their professional learning.

Harvey (2005) conducted a survey of the motivating factors influencing teachers' engagement in postgraduate study. Study participants (N=178) included primary and secondary teachers in five Christian schools located in the south eastern region of Queensland, Australia. The study identified the strongest motivators for teachers engaging in postgraduate study as the desire to acquire knowledge and skills in specific subject areas (pedagogical content); the desire to serve their students more meaningfully and help their students learn better (serving and enabling students); and the opportunity to explore beliefs and values underlying educational issues and trends (educational philosophy). The studies reviewed above seem to suggest that all teachers who pursue post-graduate studies do so with a view of becoming better teachers. The studies do not show whether there are teachers whose objective of pursuing further studies is to seek employment in other sectors outside the teaching profession. This study, as one of the objectives, sought to find out whether there are teachers who, as a result of experiencing career plateauing, enrol for further studies with a view getting promotion or for improving themselves in the teaching profession.

Background Characterises Associated with Career Plateauing and Turnover

In a study designed to determine the causes and effects of career plateau in China, Baoguo and Mian (2008) established that career plateau is not determined or affected by gender, age, educational level or seniority in the organisation but there is a significant effect by the job tenure and career path. This is in concordance with Tremblay & Roger's (1993) three-factor causal model. Palmero, Roger and Tremblay (2001) carried out a study on work satisfaction and career plateau of part-time workers. The study was conducted among 155 employees of 12

companies in southern France. Multiple regression analysis showed that background variables (gender, education level, and having a young child) contributed for 5.9 % of the variance in career plateau.

In their review of literature, Ongori and Agolla (2009) quote researchers (Yamamoto, 2006; Applebaum and Santiago, 1997) whose work showed that some factors that could be causing career plateau are those hold positions of responsibility longer, the mergers and takeovers in organisation that cause layoffs, which results in fewer available positions but which are competitive. Ongori and Agolla (2009) further note that career plateau is observed where there is competition and the age factor and organizational needs. Competition can be brought about by the fact that in a given position, some people may be seen as less qualified than others and the people qualified includes some presently, outside the organisation. The organisation may consider elderly people undesirable in the organisation, preferring instead to give opportunities to younger candidates (Ongori & Agolla, 2009).

Locklear (2010) conducted a study in Georgia which used a mixed method research design with a sample size of 545 teachers from both the northern and southern counties of the state of Georgia, USA. The study revealed that most teachers in the state of Georgia had obtained their master's degrees, were within the first 5 years of their educational career, and viewed administrative support and working conditions as positive aspects of their teaching experience.

The studies reviewed in this section give inconclusive findings on the role of gender and age in career plateauing and pursuit of postgraduate studies among teachers. The current study sought to find out if there are significant differences in career plateauing and teachers' decisions to pursue various Post-Graduate courses across: gender, age and teaching experience.

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study utilized the correlational research design, which is a quantitative method of research in which a researcher has two or more quantitative variables from the same group of respondents, aimed at determining if there is a relationship (or covariation) between the two or more variables. The correlational research design was used to establish whether career plateauing relates with teachers' decisions to enrol for post-graduate studies. The rationale behind use of correlational design for this study was that the researcher did not manipulate any variables. The independent variable of the study was career plateauing, while the dependent variables were teachers' decisions to enroll for post-graduate studies.

The study was carried out in public secondary schools in Nyandarua and Murang'a Counties. The choice of these two counties was based on the fact that one of them – Murang'a – can be considered as largely peri-urban, while Nyandarua County is largely rural. A study by Wokabi (2015) in Nyandarua County revealed that promotion of secondary school teachers in the County was skewed with respect to school type and gender, whereby most of those promoted were male teachers from extra-county schools. Nyandarua and Murang'a Counties have been ranked the lowest in Central region in relation to performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (Ngina, 2017). It was therefore important to study the teachers in the two Counties in order to have a more representative sample and for comparison purposes.

The study targeted all the 5,022 teachers teaching in the public secondary schools in Nyandarua and Murang'a Counties. The teachers targeted were both those pursuing post-graduate studies and those not pursuing the studies. According to 2016 data from the County Director of

$$s = \frac{X^2NP(1 - P)}{d^2(N - 1) + X^2P(1-P)}$$

Education Offices (Murang’a and Nyandarua), there are 3,581 public secondary school teachers in Murang’a County and 1,441 teachers in Nyandarua County, giving a total of 5,022 teachers as the target population. From the population of 5,022 teachers, a representative sample was determined using the formula by Krejcie & Morgan (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007), which is used to calculate a sample size (s), from a given finite population (P) such that the sample will be within plus or minus 0.05 of the population proportion with a 95 percent level of confidence.

Computing the desired sample size using this formula gave 304 as the minimum number of respondents in Nyandarua County; and 348 as the minimum number that was selected from Murang’a County. This gave a total sample size of 652 teachers. Stratified random sampling with proportionate allocation was used to select the teachers. In proportional allocation, the number of sampled units in each stratum is proportional to the size of the stratum (in this case Murang’a and Nyandarua counties) such that each unit in the sample represents the same number of units in the population (Lohr, 2010).

Stratified random sampling was used to select 40 schools from Murang’a County and 40 schools from Nyandarua County. The sampling was proportionately representative of all categories of schools which are the National schools, County schools and sub-county schools as shown on Table 2 below .

Table 2: Sampling matrix for schools

Category of school	Murang’a County		Nyandarua County	
	Population	Sample size	Population	Sample size
National schools	2	2	2	2
County schools	25	10	17	10
Sub-County schools	238	28	116	28
Total	265	40	135	40

In Nyandarua County, from the sample size of 308, 152 male and 152 female teachers while in Murang’a County from a sample of 348, 174 male and 174 female teachers. It was in the researcher’s interest to have equal number of male and female teachers per county.

The study employed a questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire collected data on demographic characteristics; gender, age, academic qualifications, data on career plateauing, whereby, a scale was designed to measure the extent to which teachers have reached structural and job content plateaus, data on whether teachers have pursued, are pursuing, or intend to pursue post-graduate studies. This section also probed on the reasons for enrolling or not enrolling in post-graduate studies, the courses they are pursuing (whether education related or not) and what the teachers hope to achieve with their post-graduate qualifications.

Before the study was conducted, a pilot study was carried out among 15 teachers in Nyandarua county and 15 teachers in Murang’a County. The teachers were randomly selected from six

schools (three from each county) which were not included in the actual research. The objective of the pilot study was to assess and improve reliability and validity of the questionnaires. The pilot study also helped the researcher to familiarize with data collection process.

Validity of an instrument was improved through expert and the researcher sought assistance from the supervisors and other university lecturers, who are experts in research, to ensure the validity of instruments. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics involved the use of frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations. The process of data analysis required the use of a computer spreadsheet, and for this reason the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. In order to determine the relationship between independent and dependent variables of the study in research question 3 and 4, Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis was computed at the 0.05 level of significance. Analysis of Variance was used to find out if there were significant differences statistically among teachers of different ages while chi-square was used to find out if there was significant difference statistically among the teachers of different gender and academic qualifications. In order to find out whether the career plateau (structural or job content) predicts each independent variable in research question 4, a linear regression model was specified as depicted by the formula below:

$$Y_j = a_1X_1 + a_2X_2 + c ; Y_k = a_1X_1 + a_2X_2 + c$$

Where:

Y_j = Turnover intentions

Y_k = Teacher's decision to pursue post-graduate courses

X_1 = Structural plateauing

X_2 = Job content plateauing

c = Constant; and

$a_1..a_2$ = Regression coefficients

Open ended questions in the questionnaire were analysed qualitatively using content analysis based on analysis of meanings and implications emanating from respondent information and comparing responses to documented data on career plateauing and teachers' decisions to pursue post-graduate studies.

4.0 FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Types and Levels of Career Plateauing Experienced by Teachers

The first objective of the study was to determine types and levels of career plateauing experienced by secondary school teachers of public schools in Kenya. To address this objective, teachers were presented with 20 items based on two types of career plateauing, that is, structural or hierarchical and job content. They were asked to indicate the extent to which they experience feelings regarding these two types of career plateauing. Their ratings were scored on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (no extent) to 4 (very great extent). The results of this analysis are discussed below.

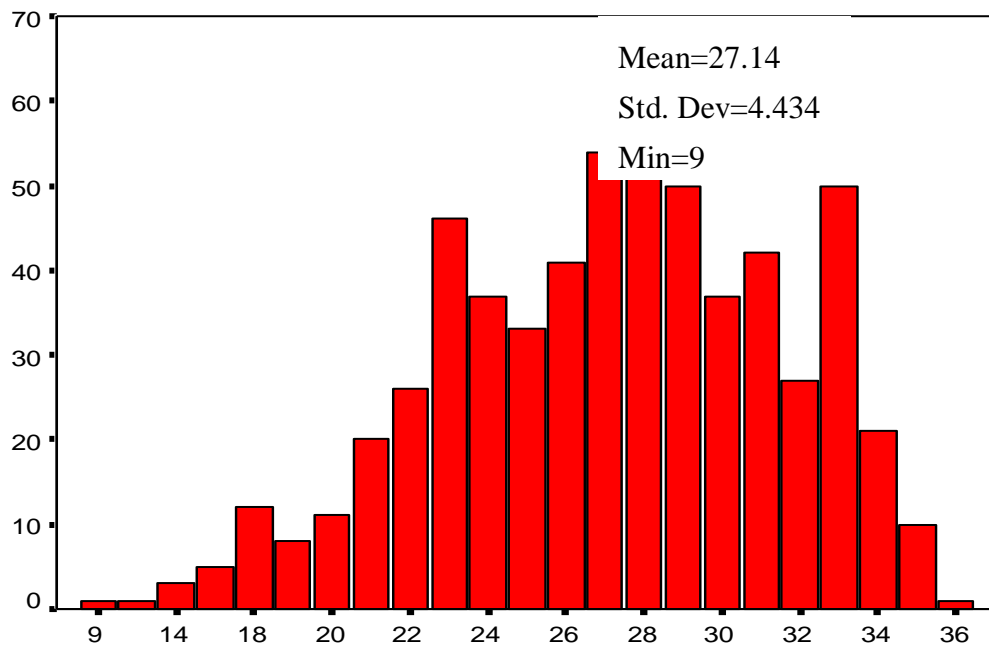
Structural Career Plateauing

To determine the extent to which teachers experienced feelings related to structural career plateauing, a Four-point Likert scale comprising 9 items was used..

Table 3: Teachers' Feelings on Structural Career Plateauing

Structural (Hierarchical)	VGE		GE		SE		NE		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
My job responsibilities have increased significantly	185	31.0	307	51.5	92	15.4	12	2.0	3.12	.730
I have an expectation of advancing to a higher level in teaching career in the near future	256	43.0	201	33.7	95	15.9	44	7.4	3.12	.933
I have had a chance to learn and grow in my current job as a teacher	133	22.3	326	54.7	125	21.0	12	2.0	2.97	.717
My duties in school give me an opportunity to come into contact with my supervisors who can recommend for my future advancement.	199	33.4	215	36.1	119	20.0	63	10.6	2.92	.976
I expect frequent promotions in the future	178	29.9	176	29.5	161	27.0	81	13.6	2.76	1.03
Chances for upward mobility are limited in my teaching career	129	21.6	161	27.0	209	35.1	97	16.3	2.54	1.00
I am not likely to be assigned responsibilities that give me a higher title in my school.	56	9.4	85	14.3	165	27.7	290	48.7	1.84	.991
I am not likely to get ahead in my career.	35	5.9	84	14.1	142	23.8	331	55.5	1.70	.920
I am at a point in my career where I don't expect to further promotions	35	5.9	62	10.4	167	28.0	332	55.7	1.66	.886

As shown in table 3, the highest rated items were: “my job responsibilities have increased significantly”, “I have an expectation of advancing to a higher level in teaching career in the near future”, and “I have had a chance to learn and grow in my current job as a teacher”. On the other hand the lowest rated items were: “Am at a point in my career where I don't expect to further promotions”, followed by “I am not likely to get ahead in my career”, and then “I am not likely to be assigned responsibilities that give me a higher title in my school”. The last two columns of Table 3 show the means and standard deviations of each item. The mean scores obtained by teachers on the scale measuring their feelings on structural career plateauing ranged from 1.66 to 3.12. These results show that majority of the respondents expressed high levels of agreement with items that suggest absence of structural plateauing, and low levels of agreement with those statements that suggest presence of structural plateauing, suggesting that most of the teachers were not experiencing structural career plateau. Figure 1 shows the overall mean and standard deviation of teachers' level of structural plateauing.



Overall scores on structural career plateauing

Figure 1: Teachers' levels of structural plateauing

As shown in figure 5.1, the teachers had a mean score of 27.14 on the structural plateauing scale, with a standard deviation of 4.434. The scores ranged from 9 to 36. The mid-point of the scale was 22.5, with scores below this denoting presence of structural career plateauing while scores above 22.5 denoted absence of structural plateauing. The finding that the mean score (27.14) was above the mid-point of 22.5 shows that majority of the teachers were not experiencing career plateauing. There were 87 (14.6%) of the teachers who scored below the mid-point of 22.5, and who therefore were experiencing structural career plateauing. The other 509 (85.4%) of the teachers were not experiencing structural career plateauing. This finding indicates that structural plateauing among teachers in Kenya is not as high as portrayed by previous research. A previous study by Kabeti (2011) on career plateauing of secondary school teachers in Imenti South district showed that about 87% of the teachers had experienced structural plateauing due to lack of promotion opportunities.

Job Content Plateauing

A four-point Likert scale comprising 11 items was used to determine the extent to which teachers experienced feelings related to job content plateauing. The scale ranged from 1 to 4 with 1 denoting no extent, 2 representing small extent, 3 great extent, and 4 very great extent. The midpoint of the scale was a score of 2.5. Therefore, any score above 2.5 denoted that teachers experienced that particular feeling to a great extent, while scores below 2.5 denoted that teachers experienced the feeling to a less extent. Table 5.2 shows the ratings per item, the means, and standard deviations obtained by the respondents on the statements regarding their feelings on the job content plateauing.

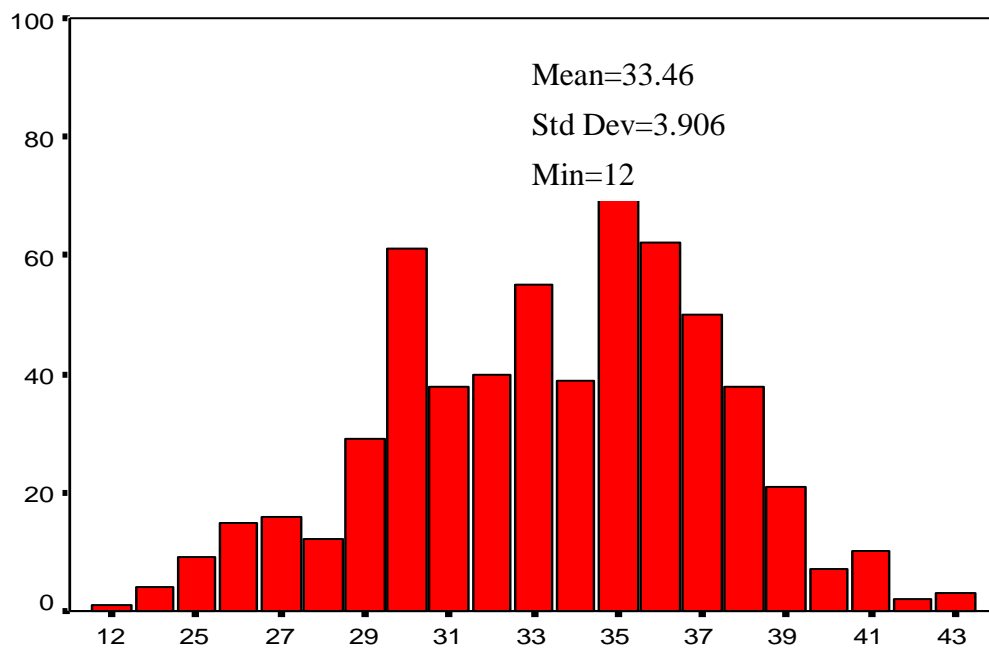
Table 4: Teachers' feelings of job content plateauing

Job content	VGE		GE		SE		NE		M	SD
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
In my job am required to continually use my abilities and knowledge	350	58.7	201	33.7	36	6.0	9	1.5	3.50	.680
I persist with enthusiasm in completing my work	315	52.9	231	38.8	42	7.0	8	1.3	3.43	.684
I display dedication on the job	316	53.0	237	39.8	27	4.5	16	2.7	3.43	.706
I often voluntarily assist in tasks which are not in my job description	253	42.4	251	42.1	83	13.9	7	1.2	3.26	.738
I expect constant challenges in my job	206	34.6	250	41.6	108	18.1	32	5.4	3.06	.860

Key: VGE-Very Great Extent, GE-Great Extent, SE-Small Extent, NE-No Extent

Results in table 4 show that the highest rated items were: “In my job am required to continually use my abilities and knowledge”, “I persist with enthusiasm in completing my work”, and “I display dedication on the job” On the other hand, the lowest rated items were: “This job is too hard for me”, “There is nothing exciting anymore about this job”, and “My qualifications surpass my input at work, which makes me feel that I am underutilized in the teaching profession”. The mean scores for the items ranged from 1.40 to 3.5. It emerges from these results that most of the teachers agreed with those items denoting absence of job content plateauing while disagreeing with items denoting presence of job content plateauing. This is an indication that most of the teachers in the study were not experiencing job content plateauing. Figure 2 shows the overall mean and standard deviation of teachers' level of job content plateauing.

The results displayed in figure 2 show that mean score obtained by the teachers on the job content plateauing scale was 33.46 with a standard deviation of 3.906. The scores ranged from 12 to 43. The mid-point of the scale was 27.5, with scores below this denoting presence of job content plateauing while scores above 27.5 denoted absence of job content plateauing. Since the mean score obtained by teachers (27.14) was above the mid-point of 27.5, it can be concluded that majority of the teachers were not experiencing job content plateauing. It was established that 45 (7.6%) of the teachers scored below the mid-point of 27.5, and who therefore were experiencing job content plateauing. The other 551 (92.4%) of the teachers were not experiencing job content plateauing. The results show that only a small number of teachers had experienced job content plateauing. This is in contrast to a previous Kenyan study conducted by by Azinga (2012) in Kikuyu district, which indicated that 63% of the teachers were experiencing career plateauing.



Overall scores on teachers' job content

Figure 2: Teachers' levels of job content plateauing

Relationship between Career Plateauing and Teachers' Decisions to Pursue Post-Graduate Courses

The third objective of the study was to determine the relationship between career plateauing and teachers' decisions to pursue various Post-Graduate courses. In order to determine the relationship between career plateauing and teachers' decisions to pursue various Post-Graduate courses, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was carried out with the nature of courses attended as the grouping variable. The results are as presented in Table 5.

Table 5 shows that for structural plateauing, teachers who had attended courses related to the teaching profession had lower mean scores than those who had attended courses not related to the teaching profession and those who had not attended any courses. For job content plateauing and overall career plateauing, the mean scores were found to be equal for all teachers, regardless of attendance of additional courses or not. As shown in Table 5.8, there was a significant difference (at $p > 0.05$) in teachers' structural plateauing mean scores across nature of courses attended. Teachers who had attended courses related to the teaching profession had significantly lower mean scores than those who had attended courses not related to the teaching profession and those who had not attended any courses. This shows that teachers who attended courses related to the teaching profession were experiencing higher levels of structural plateauing than their counterparts who attended courses unrelated to the teaching profession and those who had not attended any courses. For job content plateauing and overall career plateauing, the study did not find any significant mean differences across the nature of courses attended.

Table 5: ANOVA results for Career plateauing across nature of courses attended

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Structural plateauing	Between Groups	139.068	2	69.534		
	Within Groups	11560.523	593	19.495	3.567	.029*
	Total	11699.591	595			
Job content plateauing	Between Groups	29.408	2	14.704		
	Within Groups	9046.543	593	15.256	.964	.382
	Total	9075.951	595			
Overall career plateauing	Between Groups	40.661	2	20.331		
	Within Groups	28964.095	593	48.843	.416	.660
	Total	29004.757	595			

*Significant at the 0.05 level

Career Plateauing as a Predictor of Decisions to Pursue Post-Graduate Courses

The fourth research objective was to find out whether the structural or job content type of career plateau predicts teachers' decisions to pursue various Post-Graduate courses. In order to address this research objective, the following linear regression model was tested.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon;$$

Where:

Y = Attendance of further training

β_0 = Beta Constant

$\beta_1 - \beta_2$ = Beta Coefficients

X_1 = Structural plateauing

X_2 = Job content plateauing

ε = Error term

Table 6: Regression model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Attendance of further training	.123	.015	.012	.479

Table 6 shows that for turnover intentions, an R-Square value of 0.26 was obtained, meaning the independent variables (structural and job content plateauing) explained 26% of the variation in turnover intentions. Teachers' decisions to pursue post-graduate studies, an R-Square value of 0.015 was obtained, which shows that structural and job content plateauing explained 1.5% of the variation in decisions to pursue further studies. Table 7 shows the regression coefficients for the two models.

Table 7: Regression coefficients

Model	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
Attendance of further training	(Constant)	1.386	.179			
	Structural plateauing	0.01364	.005	.125	2.823	.005
	Job content plateauing	-0.01168	.005	-.095	-2.129	.034

Table 7 shows that the prediction equation for attendance of further training (Y) becomes:

$$Y = 0.014 [\text{structural plateauing}] - 0.012 [\text{job content plateauing}] + 1.386$$

As such, decisions to pursue post-graduate studies is expected to increase 0.014 when structural plateauing rises by one and decrease by 0.012 when job content plateauing goes up by one. Both structural and job content plateauing were found to predict decisions to pursue post-graduate studies significantly at $p < 0.05$.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, the following conclusions were made:

- i. Majority of the teachers were not experiencing both structural and job content career plateauing.
- ii. Structural and job content career plateauing were predictors of teachers' decisions to pursue post-graduate studies.
- iii. There was a significant difference in structural plateauing across age and teaching experience of the teachers.

Arising from the study findings, the following recommendations were made,

- i. The Teachers Service Commission should develop a clear road map for career advancement of the teachers to reduce career plateauing.

- ii. The Teachers Service Commission in collaboration with the ministry of education should design a skills upgrade for teachers through capacity development programmes which should be a requirement for those joining the profession and which should form a basis for promotion
- iii. The Teachers Service Commission in collaboration with the ministry of education should introduce scholarship programs that should give due consideration to female teachers who the study revealed that they were significantly less than the male teachers who pursued post graduate studies

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