

# **Primary School Teachers' Perception of the Effect of Transfers on Instruction in Kapsabet Division of Nandi, District**

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## **Abstract**

*Classroom instruction is a teacher-led process that enhances learning among pupils. Effective classroom instruction is affected by a myriad of factors including teacher transfer. The purpose of this study was to examine how primary school teachers perceive the effects of transfer on classroom instruction. One hundred and ninety eight Teachers from both public and private primary schools were involved in the study. The research questions addressed were: whether primary school teacher transfer affect classroom instruction, what reasons precipitate primary school teacher transfer; and whether primary school teacher transfer affect teacher-pupil learning relationship in Kapabet Division of Nandi North District. Survey research design was employed in the study. In-depth interviews were conducted with 4 Education Officers and a questionnaire containing both open and close-ended questions was completed by 198 teachers. The questionnaire had Likert scale items which represented varied perceptions of teachers on effects and reasons for transfer. Interpretation and presentation of data was accomplished through descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found out that teacher-transfer disrupted learning. Transfer did not increase teachers' efficiency and that it also made them lose morale of teaching. The study recommended that transfer of teachers should be avoided as much as possible and when inevitable it should be done at the end of the school calendar year.*

## **Background**

The effect of teacher transfer is a phenomenon in schools that goes on without much concern by the teachers and the education authorities. Teachers are promoted to different grades and positions, demoted, and moved from one geographical location to another. This occurs every term, and sometimes in the middle of the term for various reasons. Rarely do the education authorities link this phenomenon to classroom instruction and academic performance. In Kenya, the desire to provide education for all has attracted the growing attention to the question of how to optimize the government's investment in teaching personnel, which represents the largest share of the country's educational budget. Little research has been done on how to make the best possible use of teaching forces available, especially how to make sure that teachers are allocated places of work where they are most needed and their potential is tapped most (UNESCO, 1996). A legitimate transfer is supposed to ensure optimal utilization of teachers and engender higher productivity.

Although the Teachers' Service Commission Code of Regulations for teachers stipulates in article 25 (2) that a teacher may not be considered for transfer until he or she has served in a school for a period of not less than three years, or on proven medical and special circumstances, many teachers manage to transfer from one school to another for frivolous reasons. This has tended to destabilize staff balancing and teacher turnover. There should be a clearly stated transfer policy, which spells out the conditions and the circumstances for teacher transfer (Okumbe, 1999). One of the problems facing education policy makers is how to raise achievement in schools by considering such factors as quality of teaching and learning, patterns of resource use, gender, and social-economic background (Demie, 2002). Teacher transfer in schools also has implications for many important policy areas, such as staff rationalization, study

leave and school funding. Because of increased expectations for quality there is demand for more teachers. It is important that government policies make teaching more attractive.

Informal information gathered from teachers in Kapsabet Division reveals that many teachers leave the profession due to frequent relocation of their families whenever they are transferred. This has made many talented individuals to be discouraged from pursuing teaching as a career (Demie, 2002). This applies mainly to college students preparing to start their careers. There is an acute shortage of teachers in Kenya. This has been occasioned by the government ban on employment of additional teachers, coupled with retirement, deaths and imbalance in staffing as a result of irregular transfer of teachers by the Teachers' Service Commission (Mulongo, 2001).

Teachers teach the entire day with little or no time for lesson preparation, lesson analysis or exchange. Growing teacher dissatisfaction associated with these conditions poses a serious threat to the attractiveness of teaching as a profession (Mulongo, 2001). Talented youth are not considering teaching as a career, while capable teachers leave the profession after only one or two years (Creemers, 1989). Until teaching becomes more of a profession, it is unreasonable to expect the field to attract a sufficient number of talented individuals to schools (Creemers, 1989; Schletchy & Vance, 1983).

In Kitui District teachers were up in arms over massive transfer of their colleagues to other districts. They termed the transfers as a violation of teachers' rights. The Kenya National Union of Teachers also wanted the frequent transfers of teachers in Taita Taveta districts to be stopped because the transfers had not only hampered academic performance in national examinations, but had also promoted indiscipline among students and created serious shortage of teachers in some schools (Waihenya, 2004). It was reported that primary school teachers demanded for promotion as recommended by a task force. The teachers had persistently complained that their untrained colleagues with A-level certificates had in 1995 been promoted to Secondary Teacher 1 (S1) status (Aduda, 2004).

High teacher transfer has been found to affect academic performance at all levels. Teachers who stay in one school for a reasonably longer period of time are more efficient and more enthusiastic than those who have changed schools frequently (Demie, 2002).

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study was designed to answer the following objectives:

1. To establish effects of primary school transfer of teachers on classroom instruction in Kapsabet Division of Nandi North District.
2. To identify factors contributing teacher transfer in primary schools in Kapsabet Division of Nandi North District.
3. To establish the effects of primary school teacher transfer on teacher-pupil personal and emotional attachment.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The present study tested the following 4 null hypotheses generated from the above research questions:

*Ho<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between primary school teachers' professional training and effects of teacher-transfer*

*Ho<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between teaching experience and effects of teacher transfer.*

*Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between primary school teachers' gender and effects of teacher transfer.*

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study took into consideration the concept of teacher transfer as articulated by some experts. The process of teacher transfer has been affected by the desire for better remuneration and terms of service for teachers as well as shortage of teachers in many schools. Attractiveness of teaching, as a profession is likely to take into account factors such as;

- *Conditions of service* which include pay, allowances, housing arrangements and even hours of work;
- *Promotion prospects*: It is true that even when starting rates of pay for teachers have become competitive with those for other occupations the ratio of senior to junior posts tends to be unfavourable;
- *Professional support*: Teachers' morale depends much on the success of professional leadership in making teachers have job satisfaction and *personnel administration*: the sense of fairness and efficiency (Williams, 1979).

Higher salaries reduce turnover among current staff. However, higher salaries also spoil job security of new recruits because they risk being laid off due to increased cost of labour. This, in turn, leads to exit of the new teacher from the profession. Teacher transfer is extremely important from the point of view of stability of school staffing and the sense of performance that a school community may have. Since teacher transfer in primary schools has unique effect in each school, this study seeks to find out the relationship between teacher transfer and classroom instruction and the extent to which it affects staff and student performance (Ballou & Podgursky, 1997).

### **Methodology**

#### ***Research Design***

Descriptive survey research design was employed in the study. This design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to get more details from a large number of subjects.

#### ***Participants***

A sample of 198 primary school teachers was drawn from a population of 44 primary schools in Kapsabet Division of Nandi North District. A sample of twenty out of the 44 schools was selected using stratified random sampling. Schools were stratified into public and private primary schools. Then simple random sampling method was used to select the sample population of 198 primary school teachers; which constituted 30 % of the total population. All teachers in the sampled schools were participated in the study.

#### ***Research Instruments***

**Questionnaires:** The main instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. Checklists and an interview schedule were also used to overcome the limitations of the questionnaire. A questionnaire was used in order to reach many respondents. This Instrument was piloted and

tests re-test method used to determine the reliability. A reliability index of 0.68 was obtained using product moment correlation coefficient formula. Questionnaires were administered to get information on: schools background, effects of teachers transfer, reasons of teachers transfer and effects of teachers transfer on teacher-pupil personal and emotional attachment. The questionnaire used in this study contained both close ended and open-ended items.

**Interview Schedule:** Close ended items in the questionnaire limited respondents' responses to the choices provided. This is why the researcher found it necessary to use an interview schedule and checklist to capture information that was not captured by the questionnaire. The AEO for Kapsabet Division, a TAC tutor for each of the educational zones in the division and the only staffing officer at the DEO's office were selected for the interview. Thirty-minute interview sessions were conducted with each of the four respondents at places and times convenient to the interviewees. The interviewees were allowed to discuss freely all issues related to teacher transfer in Kapsabet Division. The researcher was therefore able to corroborate their perception on effects of teacher transfer and the extent to which it affects staff and student performance. Clarity of issues related to transfer of teachers and classroom instruction were therefore sought.

### Discussion of Findings

The study-investigated teachers' perception of the effects of transfer, reasons for transfer and the extent to which it affects staff and student performance.

**Table 1: Effects of Teacher transfer on Classroom Instruction (N = 198)**

Teachers' Perception	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		N
	f	%	F	%	f	%	
Lose morale if I remain in one school for a long time	39	19.7	33	16.7	126	63.6	198
do not maintain steadiness in classroom for fear of transfer	11	5.6	3	1.5	184	92.9	198
Longevity enables one to effectively maintain discipline in the classroom	36	18.2	7	3.5	155	78.3	198
Teachers transferred to home schools perform better in classroom.	77	38.9	10	5.0	111	56.1	198

Table 1 above reveals that a large number of the respondents disagreed (63.6 %) disagreed that they lose morale of teaching if they remain in a school for a long time, a small percentage (19.7 %) of the respondents agreed that they lose morale of teaching if they remain in a school for a long time while 16.7 % of the respondents were undecided. This is supported by A.E.O's and Staffing Officers interviewed, who concurred that teacher-pupil attachment grows stronger with time. The majority of teachers (92.9 %) disagreed with the view that they do not care to maintain good order in their classroom with or without the fear of transfer, some respondents (5.6%) agreed while only 1.6% were undecided.

It can also be observed from Table 1 that the majority of respondents (78.3%) disagreed that a teacher who remains in a school for a long time is the only one who can effectively sustain

discipline in the class. Only 18.2% and 3.5% of the respondents agreed and were undecided, respectively. This is probably because the length of time one takes in a school does not determine a teacher's effectiveness in containing discipline in a classroom. From Table 1 above, it can also be observed that 56.1 % of the respondents disagreed with the statement that teachers transferred to teach in schools next to their homes perform better than those who teach away from their homes, 38.9 % of the respondents were in agreement while a very small percentage (5.0%) were undecided. This finding contradicts what Mulongo (2001) found. In his report, he opined that teachers working close to their homes tend to perform better because they are relaxed. This may call for further inquiry to ascertain the true picture.

The A.E.Os interviewed concurred that those teachers who taught in schools next to their homes performed poorly in classroom instruction. The staffing officer interviewed also indicated that when teachers work next to their homes, they dedicate more of their time to domestic and private matters than classroom and school activities. Those who agreed with the statement may already be teaching in schools near their homes (ibid).

Respondents were asked to indicate whether procedure of recruitment and selection of primary school teachers had effect on classroom instruction. Table 1 above also shows that the majority of the respondents (54.5 %) agreed, while 32.3% disagreed that procedure of recruitment and selection of primary school teachers had effect on classroom instruction. The rest (13.1%) were undecided. The majority (54.5%) who agreed that the procedure of recruitment and selection of teachers has an effect on teacher performance in classroom teaching may have witnessed low calibre of teachers recruited at the expense of more professionally qualified ones. This matches to what obtained by (Bull, & Solity, 1989).

**Table 2: Teachers' Perceptions of Reasons for Teacher Transfer (N=198)**

Teachers' Perception	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		N
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Teachers transfer to new schools to be close to their families	173	87.4	6	3.0	19	9.6	198
Teachers choose to be transferred to whichever school they like	122	56.6	8	4.0	78	39.4	198
Teachers transfer to run away from family responsibilities and conflicts	57	28.8	14	7.1	127	64.1	198
Teachers enjoy working in urban areas	115	58.1	17	8.6	66	33.3	198
Teachers work in rural schools to minimize costs of living.	150	75.8	8	4.0	40	20.2	198
Transfer of teachers to other schools also triggers pupil transfer	128	64.6	8	4.0	62	31.4	198
Teachers are transferred to improve their efficiency	54	27.3	12	6.1	132	66.6	198
Transfer of teachers is based on the guidelines laid by the TSC	95	48.0	6	3.1	97	48.9	198
Head teachers influence transfer of teachers out of the schools they lead	144	72.7	9	4.5	45	22.7	198
Transfer of teachers is influenced by the teacher's union (KNUT)	46	23.2	22	11.1	130	65.7	198
Transfer of teachers is influenced by the school management committee	86	43.4	12	6.1	100	50.5	198
Teachers quit teaching profession due to low pay	168	84.8	4	2.0	26	13.2	198

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents (87.4 %) agreed that teachers transfer in order to be close to their families, a few (9.6 %) disagreed and the rest (3.0%) were undecided. Due to demand and need for parental care most teachers would like to be close to their families in order to enable them assist their spouses in meeting family obligations.

Data in Table 2 reveals that most (56.6 %) teachers are of the opinion that teachers have a choice to make as to which schools they would like to be transferred to. The majority of teachers (39.3 %) reported that teachers do not have a choice; 4.0 % were undecided; and 39.9 % disagreed with the statement that teachers choose to be transferred to whichever school they like may be quite cognizant of the TSC Code of Regulations about teacher deployment and service. Those who agreed (56.6 %) that teachers should be at liberty to choose whichever school they like may either be ignorant of the TSC Code of Regulations, or simply prefer to be given the option to choose the school in which they want to serve. This is in agreement with Okumbe (1999).

The majority of respondents (64.1 %) disagreed with the statement that teachers transferred in order to run away from family problems. Those who were in agreement represented 28.8% of the respondents, while a few teachers (7.1%) were undecided. This is supported by the staffing

officer interviewed, who responded that, even though family responsibility is not a good ground for teachers' transfer, in some cases it was considered genuine enough to warrant a transfer. It is evident from this table that most of the teachers (58.1 %) agreed that teachers enjoy working in urban areas but 33.3 % of them disagreed, while only 8.6 % were undecided. Demie (2001) found that teachers tend to prefer urban areas as many would want to pursue courses that would enhance their CVs.

The majority of teachers (75.8 %) agreed that they would work in rural areas to minimize the cost of living because living cost in the rural areas is lower compared to urban areas (ibid).

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents (64.6 %) agreed with the statement that transfer of teachers leads to transfer of pupils. However 31.4 % of them disagreed, while 4.0 % were undecided. This probably happens when pupils and parents have developed a strong personal attachment to the teacher in question because of his/her contribution to high performance of the students. The second reason that may lead to pupil's transfer is when a well performing teacher is transferred to a neighboring school. Such pupil transfer, triggered by teacher transfer may be an indication of the teachers influence as a role model to the pupil (Spector, 1990)

The majority of teachers (66.7 %) disagreed with the statement that they are transferred to improve their efficiency; 27.3 % of the respondents agreed with this view while 6.1 % were undecided. The staffing officers indicated that teachers were transferred in order to improve their efficiency. Teachers who agreed with this opinion affirmed the officers' position. This group considered cases where teachers may not have been efficient in their performance of duty.

As indicated in Table 2 above, transfer of teachers may be initiated by TSC as indicated by 48.0 % of the respondents. However, 48.9 % of the respondents indicated that rarely are teachers transferred as per the guidelines from the T.S.C. Most teachers (65.7 %) indicated that their transfers were rarely influenced by KNUT (Kenya National Union of Teachers), 23.2 % of the respondents showed that KNUT had influence on teachers' transfer while the rest (11.1 %) were undecided (Mulongo, 2001).

This is probably because KNUT is quite aware of T.S.C. Code of Regulations on teacher transfers and the legal implications of contravening the same. In addition, Table 2 shows that approximately half (50.5 %) of the teachers indicated that school management committees rarely influenced their transfers, 43.4 % of the respondents indicated that the committees often had influence on transfers while 6.1 % were undecided. The percentage of teachers who were on agreement with this view (43.4 %) are supported by Williams (1979) who stated that it was extremely important from the point of view of the stability of school staffing and the essence of performance that school committee may have to be involved.

Table 2 also reveals teachers' response on the item on remuneration. Asked whether low remuneration made teachers quit teaching profession majority (84.8 %) of the respondents were in agreement that low pay made teachers quit the profession while the minority (13.2 %) disagreed.

The high percentage of respondents who agreed that teachers quit the profession due to low pay shows how respondents attach economic rewards to jobs they perform. Probably other factors like conditions of service do not count much. It is also possible that many teachers remain in teaching profession because they have not found a more economically rewarding job.

**Table 3 Effects of transfer on teacher-pupil personal attachment (N = 198)**

Teachers' Responses	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		N
	f	%	F	%	F	%	
There is improvement in academic performance when teachers are transferred regularly	32	16.2	6	3.0	160	80.8	198
Transfer of teachers occurs unexpectedly	117	59.1	10	5.0	71	35.9	198
I work effectively in a school until I voluntary request for transfer	156	78.8	7	3.5	35	17.7	198
Emotional attachment between pupils and teachers promotes effective classroom instruction	132	66.7	17	8.6	49	24.7	190
Teacher-pupil personal attachment boosts classroom participation	164	82.8	9	4.6	25	12.6	198

Table 3 above shows that a high percentage (80.8 %) of teachers indicated that rarely does their transfer help to improve academic performance, 16.2 % of the teachers agreed that there is improvement when teachers are transferred regularly while only 3.0 % were undecided. The majority who disagreed with this statement may have considered breaking their personal attachment with pupils and possibility of their pupils' eventual transfer to other schools. In Table 3, 59.1 % of teachers indicated that transfers of teachers occurred unexpectedly, 35.9 % of the respondents reported that rarely did transfers occur unexpectedly while a few (5.1 %) were undecided. Reading from Table 3 above majority of the respondents agreed that they worked effectively until they requested for a transfer (78.8 %), a small percentage of the respondents (17.7 %) disagreed while very few (3.5 %) were undecided about their effectiveness in class performance. This corresponds in a remarkable way to what Spector, (1990) established.

Table 3 shows that more than half of the respondents (66.7 %) agreed that emotional attachment between teachers and pupils promotes effective classroom instruction, 24.7 % of the respondents disagreed while only 8.6 % were undecided. This finding is similar to that of (Goodard, R. D., Hoy, W. K., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2004).

The high positive response of this question can better be understood in Bull and Solity's (1989), perspective when they mention that teachers make learning possible through their interaction with pupils and ensure that children learn faster than they would if left on their own. They further argue that many consequences for children's behaviour in classroom are provided by the teacher. Majority of teachers agreed that teacher pupil personal attachment boosts classroom participation (82.8 %), a small percentage disagreed (12.6 %) while very few were undecided (4.6 %). Teachers derive their greatest satisfaction directly from pupils they teach. They further mention that teachers and the students are willing to help one another to achieve the class objectives and fulfil the responsibilities of their respective roles and that students share the teaching goals of the class with the teachers (Ashton & Webb, 1986).

## Hypotheses Testing

Chi-Square test was used to test the null hypotheses stated. Out of the seven null hypotheses subjected to Chi-Square test; only two were found to be significant at 0.05 level of significance.

***Ho<sub>1</sub>*** *There is no significant relationship between professional training and effects of teacher-transfer*

The calculated chi-square value of 40.04 was greater than the critical value of 9.49. As a result the null hypothesis was rejected. There is significant difference on the perceptions of respondents based on professional training on the effect of transfer on classroom instruction. Trained and experienced teachers, for instance are averse to arbitrary transfers. They feel that any transfer done should be legitimate but not punitive.

***Ho<sub>3</sub>*** *There is no significant relationship between primary school teachers' gender and effects on classroom instruction.*

It was also observed that there was a significant difference on the perception of respondents based on gender on the effects of teacher transfer on classroom instruction. The calculated chi-square value was 5.33 while the critical value is 3.84. Since the calculated value is more than the critical value, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result seems to indicate the gender is a critical factor in the transfer of teachers in Primary School. And closely tied to this factor is the marital status of teachers. Married teachers, especially women, do not favour transfers that take them away from their spouses. Though generally, married couples detest changes that arise, particularly on transfers this creates disturbances on their family stability.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings there was enough evidence to show that majority of teachers in Kapsabet Division Nandi North District could not work effectively in classroom instruction when they are transferred from the schools without prior consultation. Transfer of teachers disrupts learning. Positive teacher-pupil personal attachment promotes effective classroom instruction. It was also noted that transfer of teachers also triggered pupil transfer from schools whose teachers were transferred away from them. Responses from the participants in the study pointed out the fact that teachers chose to be transferred to schools close to their homes to enable them handle other family responsibilities with ease. It also apparent that teachers tend to prefer working in rural areas, where the cost of living is cheaper. In terms of remuneration it can also be observed that teachers quit teaching profession due to low pay. The chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) tests of the independent variables -age, school category, pupil-attachment, effects of transfers and reasons for transfers did not yield any significant relationships. However, professional training and gender were found to be quite significant. From the foregoing findings, the following conclusions can draw:

1. Majority of teachers resented transfer from one school to the other. Many teachers preferred to initiate the transfer themselves despite the existence of T.S.C Code of Regulation which requires them to work anywhere in the Republic of Kenya.
2. There was negative effect of school teacher-transfer on classroom instruction.
  - a. Teacher transfer reduces teachers' morale of teaching in the classroom
  - b. Teacher transfer breaks personal and emotional attachment built between teachers and pupils, which is normally helpful in individualized instruction and pupil participation in classroom activities.

- c. Due to the fact that transfers of teachers trigger pupils transfer, pupils' learning is disrupted by a changing pattern of instructional methods when a pupil is taught by a newly transferred teacher.
3. Primary school teachers transfer because of the following reasons:
    - a) Influence by head teachers.
    - b) On promotion or demotion.
    - c) For staff balancing as directed by the T.S.C.
    - d) Teachers' personal reasons

Based on these findings it was recommended that:-

1. Teacher transfer should be done only when the circumstances are unavoidable preferably at the end of the year because it disrupts learning.
2. Since teacher transfer has affective implications there should be a clear teacher-transfer policy that incorporates the pupils' needs and teachers welfare
3. Primary school management committees should provide decent social amenities to teachers who reside in schools they teach to boost their morale and curb teacher transfer.
4. Procedure of selection and recruitment of primary school teachers should be carried out in a manner that guarantees merit of those so selected.

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