



RESEARCH ARTICLE

INFLUENCE OF WORKLOAD ON JOB PERFORMANCE OF DELOCALIZED FEMALE PRINCIPALS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SOUTH RIFT VALLEY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the critical issue of school environment among educators, with a specific focus on female principals in secondary schools in Kenya. The study aims to explore the relationship between workload and job performance among delocalized female principals in the South Rift region from 2018 to 2022. The main objective of the study was to determine how workload influences job performance of delocalized female principals in secondary schools in South Rift Valley, Kenya. It was guided by the theory of psychological wellbeing. The target population consisted of all delocalized female principals in south rift; there are 151 public secondary schools headed by female principals. 80% of them have been delocalized since 2018. Therefore, the study targeted 121 delocalized female principals where Kericho had 50, Bomet 45 and Narok 26. The study employed census sampling method to sample schools and all principals to participate in the study. Therefore, a total of 121 principals were sampled and included in the study. Data was collected by means of interview schedule and questionnaire including Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) tool that measured the risk of burnout. However, all the sampled population was administered with questionnaires while 30% (36) were administered with interview schedules in order to enrich the study with qualitative information. A pilot study was carried out before the actual data collection and a reliability coefficient of 0.85 was obtained therefore the research instruments was deemed reliable. The collected data were subjected to statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme version 23.0. Descriptive statistics were used in the data analysis and the findings were presented in frequency tables, percentages and graphs. The study found out that teaching capabilities of the female principals have been hindered due to many responsibilities as the principal and that insufficient staff increases workload on the principal. The findings of this study may be of benefit to the government, school administrators and policymakers in coming up with effective strategies that will improve emotional wellness of principals in schools. The study may also benefit teachers' service commission and the Ministry of Education in designing and monitoring intervention strategies to address the challenges faced by female schools principals in mental build-up.

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of teacher delocalization is a growing concern in global education. Research by Barone, *et al.*, (2015) reveals that about 50% of teachers transfer schools within their first five years, contributing to severe educator shortages worldwide. Schools and governments must develop strategies to minimize delocalization and improve teachers' working conditions. In the Ghana Education Service, work-related stress stems from physical and emotional factors accrued from increased workload. Adeyemo (2002) notes that susceptibility to stress varies with personality traits. In Kenya, female principals face significant management-related stress, exacerbated by increased workloads during the pandemic. Limited research exists on the evolving roles of principals, especially concerning management and leadership challenges

in secondary schools (Munir & Khalil, 2016). This study investigates the relationship between burnout caused by increased workload among female principals and the delocalization policy. By focusing on the South Rift Valley region, the research sought to provide insights into mitigating burnout by improving principals' well-being and school performance through reducing the workload.

Statement of the Problem: Burnout caused by increased workload has been showed to be a prevalent problem at workplace and area of increasing concern in many countries of the world. Study showed that it affects individual's mental and physical health with significant consequences on job performance. Professional burnout is an increasing phenomenon that affects employees including female principals who have heavy responsibilities in managing

schools and taking up family and community roles. The high pressure caused by workload plays a crucial role in increasing burnout among female principals. Over the past decades many principals have faced schools strikes, indiscipline students and poor academic performance placing the principals under scrutiny. The study aims to shade lights on the unique experiences and stressors caused by increased workload that causes burnout among delocalized female principals. The study equally examined the need for bridging the gap between professional burnout and job performance while contextualizing the issue of delocalization in understanding how workload influences female principals in their work. Therefore, the study sought to understand the susceptibility of burnout caused by workload in relation to delocalization in South Rift region, Kenya.

Research Objectives: To determine how workload influences job performance of delocalized female principals in secondary schools in South Rift Valley, Kenya.

Theoretical Review: This study was guided by the theory of Psychological Well-Being. The concept of well-being encompasses various definitions and terms, such as welfare, person well-being, subjective well-being, happiness, quality of life, and life fulfillment. Ed Diener, a renowned researcher in the field of well-being, has provided a comprehensive understanding of well-being as a broad term that encompasses different aspects of assessing one's life or emotional experiences. This includes factors like life satisfaction, positive emotions, and low negative emotions (Diener *et al.*, 1999). In the context of work, the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE, 2007) has identified key work design factors that are associated with stress-related health issues. These factors are categorized within a framework known as the "Management Standards" and include Demands, Control, Support, Relationship, Role, and Organizational change. These factors, referred to as "psychological stressors," have been linked to various physical and psychological problems (Cox & Griffiths, 1995).

Psychological demands refer to the workload experienced by individuals, particularly in terms of time pressure and role conflict (Kompier, 2003). On the other hand, job control refers to the extent to which workers have the ability to control their work activities, make decisions about their job, and utilize their skills. The model suggests that job strain occurs when there is a combination of high psychological demands and low job control. In other words, when employees face high demands such as role overload but have minimal control over their work environment, occupational stress increases (Leka *et al.*, 2010). In summary, the job demand-control model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the relationship between job demands, job control, and psychological well-being. It highlights the importance of considering both workload and the ability to control one's work activities, while also recognizing the role of social support in mitigating the negative effects of job strain on workers' physical and mental health.

Research Design: Concurrent triangulation research design was adopted for this study to investigate how school environment influences job performance of female principals in the delocalization period of 2018-2022 in South Rift region, Kenya. A concurrent triangulation design is a suitable approach when the aim is to gather data containing qualitative and

quantitative data collection which is conducted at the same time (Kothari, 2008). This design allowed for the collection of data that could provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between professional burnout and job performance among female principals. It offered cost-effectiveness, ease of completion, and efficient tabulation of results. Additionally, the survey method enabled the researchers to obtain a significant number of responses within a relatively shorter timeframe (Kothari, 2008). This design involved the use of structured questionnaires and interviews to gather data on various aspects related to burnout and job performance. The questionnaires provided quantitative data, while the interviews allowed for a deeper exploration of the experiences and perceptions of the participants. Overall, the design was chosen for its suitability in capturing a wide range of data, enabling a comprehensive analysis of the influence of school environment on the job performance of female principals in secondary schools in the South Rift Valley.

RESULTS

Heavy workloads have a negative impact on job performance, suggesting that the amount of work an employee is assigned can significantly affect their performance. When employees are burdened with excessive work, especially when the tasks are particularly challenging for them, it is likely to result in poorer performance. As part of the study's objective, the research aimed to investigate how workloads influence job performance in secondary schools within the South Rift Valley region. To assess this influence, the researcher provided the respondents with statements and asked them to express their level of agreement using a coding system. The coding system used was as follows: Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1, Disagree (D) – 2, Neutral (N) – 3, Agree (A) – 4, and Strongly Agree (SA) – 5. This methodology was employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of workload on job performance. Table 4.7 provides insights into the impact of workload on job performance, with a focus on the role of principals in secondary schools in the South Rift Valley region. The table demonstrates that when asked whether their teaching capabilities were hindered by their many responsibilities as principals, 9 (7.8%) respondents expressed disagreement, 11 (9.5%) remained neutral, 32 (27.6%) agreed, and the majority, 64 (55.2%), strongly agreed. The mean score was 4.30, with a standard deviation of 0.935, highlighting that a significant majority strongly agreed that their teaching capabilities were affected. These findings are consistent with the research conducted by Lunenburg (2016), which suggested that principals, primarily tasked with supervision, often struggle to find adequate time for teaching due to their extensive administrative roles. A heavy workload can negatively impact job satisfaction, as it is a reflection of an employee's perception of the tasks they must complete within a specific timeframe.

Regarding the impact of many responsibilities on their creative capabilities, 29 (25%) respondents disagreed, 16 (13.8%) were neutral, the majority, 42 (36.2%), agreed, and 29 (25%) strongly agreed. The mean score for this aspect was 3.61, with a standard deviation of 1.117. Once again, this suggests that the majority of respondents agreed that their creative capabilities were hampered by their numerous responsibilities as principals, echoing Lunenburg's (2016) findings that balancing work and family responsibilities can impede creative capabilities.

Table 4.9. Influence of Workload on Work Performance

Statement (Workload)	SD	D	N	A	SA
My teaching capabilities have been hindered due to many responsibilities as the principal	–	9 (7.8%)	11 (9.5%)	32 (27.6%)	64 (55.2%)
My creative capabilities have been affected due to many responsibilities as the principal	–	29 (25%)	16 (13.8%)	42 (36.2%)	29 (25%)
Insufficient staffs increases work load on the principal	–	–	4 (3.4%)	53 (45.7%)	59 (50.9%)
There is high number of students in my school thus increasing the work load	12 (10.3%)	22 (19%)	27 (23.3%)	35 (30.2%)	16 (13.8%)
High number of indiscipline students increases the work load on the principal and management	–	23 (19.8%)	9 (7.8%)	43 (37.1%)	41 (35.3%)
Length of service affect my performance as the principal	12 (10.3%)	26 (22.4%)	19 (16.4%)	30 (25.9%)	24 (20.7%)

Source: Researcher, 2024

The study also examined whether an insufficient number of staff members increased the workload on principals. Only 4 (3.4%) respondents were neutral, while the majority, 53 (45.7%), agreed, and 59 (50.9%) strongly agreed. The mean score for this aspect was 4.47, with a standard deviation of 0.567. These results align with the research by Ayeni and Amanekwe (2018), which stated that a shortage of staff in institutions, such as schools, contributes to an increased workload, as female principals must take on additional roles due to the lack of teachers, leading to potential burnout.

In relation to whether a high number of students in their schools increased their workload, 12 (10.3%) respondents strongly disagreed, 22 (19%) disagreed, 27 (23.3%) were neutral, the majority, 35 (30.2%), agreed, and 16 (13.8%) strongly agreed. Although 4 (3.4%) respondents did not participate, the mean score was 3.19, with a standard deviation of 1.219. This suggests that the majority of respondents agreed that an increase in the number of students results in a proportional increase in workload, aligning with Ayeni and Amanekwe's (2018) findings. When asked whether a high number of undisciplined students increased the workload on the principal and management, 23 (19.8%) respondents disagreed, 9 (7.8%) were neutral, the majority, 43 (37.1%), agreed, and 41 (35.3%) strongly agreed. The mean score for this aspect was 3.88, with a standard deviation of 1.105. Once again, the majority of respondents agreed, reinforcing Lunenburg's (2016) observation of an increased workload in response to rising indiscipline cases in schools.

The study also investigated whether the length of service had an impact on the performance of female principals. Only 12 (10.3%) respondents strongly disagreed, 26 (22.4%) disagreed, 19 (16.4%) were neutral, the majority, 30 (25.9%), agreed, and 24 (20.7%) strongly agreed. However, 5 (4.3%) respondents did not participate, resulting in a mean score of 3.25 and a standard deviation of 1.324. These results align with Lunenburg's (2016) research, which suggested that the length of service proportionally affects the work performance of principals. Interview findings further emphasized the pressures placed on principals by the Ministry of Education and the Teacher Service Commission (TSC), which often lead them to engage in both supervision and teaching. Female principals interviewed suggested that administrators should focus solely on administrative tasks and should be provided with more deputy principals based on the school's student population. Darmody and Smyth (2017) proposed that female principals should establish clear priorities and thoroughly address them to reduce work-related stress.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends the following

- The Ministry of Education should review policies to ensure a manageable workload for delocalized female principals. This can include reducing administrative tasks or redistributing them among other staff members.
- Regular training and professional development programs should be implemented to help principals manage their workload effectively.
- Establish mentorship programs where experienced principals can guide and support delocalized female principals.
- Ensure that schools are adequately staffed so that principals do not have to take on additional teaching responsibilities.
- Regular Assessments should be conducted to monitor the workload and job performance of delocalized female principals, using the findings to make necessary adjustments.

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