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A Comparative Analysis on Factors Influencing Teacher Retention in Rural Public Primary Schools in Tanzania: The Case of Kilolo, Mufindi and Iringa Rural Public Primary Schools in Iringa Region

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Keywords:

Promotion Opportunities (PO), Leadership Influence (SL), Social Services (SS) and Teacher Retention (TR).

The purpose of this study was to comparatively analyse why schools in Kilolo district had a high retention rate than those in Iringa DC and Mufindi districts by looking at the factors influencing teacher retention. The study was driven by three factors in the objectives which included; leadership influence, social services, and promotional opportunities and how they affect teacher retention. The study engaged two theoretical approaches i.e., Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain, interpret and present findings from the field. In all the selected districts, the population was 3660, from which a sample size of 351 was purposively drawn and distributed with questionnaires. Interviews were also administered made to 3 educational administrative officers. Each district was represented by 117 teacher-respondents who were distributed with questionnaires and 1 administrative officer who participated in the interview. Based on the findings, the researcher concluded that leadership influence, accessibility to social services and promotion opportunities had higher positive effects on teacher's retention rates in Kilolo districts than in Iringa DC and Mufindi districts. The study recommended that, given the state of distribution of social services in all selected districts and the overall low level of promotion opportunities, the government should increase the capacity to build social services infrastructures as well as increase promotion opportunities because they are likely to enhance the motivation of teachers thereby increasing retention rates.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of staff retention, especially teachers, is a global phenomenon. In particular, teacher retention is found to be a major factor in ensuring the quality and stability of the public education system in many countries' education systems in the world when responding to increased attrition (Boe *et al.*, 1997). Raymond (2016) observes that teacher retention is the situation whereby a teacher remains employed in a particular school for the longest possible time without shifting to another one or leaving the teaching profession. Global trends indicate that almost one-third of the teachers leave the profession during the first five years of service and 50% of these or more occur in urban schools (Fuller, 2002b). More importantly, Ingersoll (2002) argues that almost half of all teacher turnovers are due to dissatisfaction or teachers seeking different careers. Of the teachers leaving because of dissatisfaction, 43% reported that inadequate support from the school administration, dissatisfactory working conditions and limited career development opportunities have widely been the main reasons.

Meanwhile, Ingersoll (2002) and Sparks (2002) stated that retaining teachers in the face of rising trends of teachers leaving their jobs is one of the top educational challenges facing most countries today. Ingersoll (2002) and Sparks (2002) went on to establish the fact that the inability to retain quality teachers in many schools is driven by the low rate of 'teachers' employment rate and improved working environment commensurate to the increasing population of pupils and students. However, worldwide findings indicate that the tendency of staff retention, including teachers, varies from one country to another. For instance, BLS (2008) found that the standard average of

staff retention in the United States of America was 97% in the 2000s. The average staff retention in Singapore is 96.6%, in South Korea 97.1% and in Taiwan 97.37% (Katri *et al.*, 2001). In Tanzania, the need to deepen 'teachers retention has grown due to the observed trend revealed by Galabawa (2007). Galabawa (2007) noted that in the early 1980s, teacher to student ratio reached 1:18, and the Tanzanian literacy rate reached 80%. However, in the 1990s and 2000s, an uneven teacher to student ratio of 1:56 was witnessed in public schools due to an increase in the number of government schools from 828 in 2004 to 3,283 in 2009, most of which were built through community support in their wards and increase in enrolment rates. Moreover, the situation reveals that the country has had continuous improvement of teachers' work environment. The provision of incentives and recognition was among the strategies employed to retain teachers (Msisiri and Juma, 2017).

Practically, many regions in the country, particularly rural areas, require multiple factors for 'teachers' retention. Currently, retention rates have been increasing from 81.1% in 2019 to 85.83% in 2022 across the country (URT, 2022). Iringa DC has not retained 447(26.9%) teachers between 2019 and 2022, while Kilolo district lost 213 (13.4%) and Mufindi DC 517 (28.8%) teachers respectively. This implies that the rural areas of Tanzania will continue to experience shortages of teachers due to many reasons. To address the problem, the government has made efforts to improve the motivational factors to attract qualified teachers by increasing the recruitment rate since 2016 to date

Research Objective

General Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to compare factors influencing teacher retention in rural public primary schools in three districts in Tanzania.

Specific Objectives

- To find out how social services affect teacher retention in three districts.
- To determine the extent to which leadership influences teacher retention in three districts
- To assess how promotion opportunities contribute to teacher retention in three districts

Research Questions

- How do teacher social services affect retention in three districts?
- To what extent does leadership influence retention in three districts?
- How do promotion opportunities contribute to retention in three districts?

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Theoretical Review

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

This study was guided by Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1954). The study benefited from these theories because they all focus on the 'needs fulfilment, and satisfaction of an individual in a particular context. This study employed these theories and ratified that there is a very strong connection between job satisfaction and needs fulfilment that compel workers, including teachers, to leave or stay in the profession.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs presupposes that every individual requires the fulfilment of five kinds of needs, which are physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization needs. Maslow elucidates that the fulfilment of one type of need persuades an individual to desire

the needs of the next level. Referring to the factors identified in the reviewed literature, physical needs such as adequate social services and better working conditions are some of the factors that affect the physiological need level. However, if teachers have their basic needs fulfilled, as Maslow pointed out, they will think about other factors such as a safe and protective environment, fair management, and job security.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg (1966) developed the two-factor theory. This theory is closely related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs but relates more specifically to how individuals are motivated in work place. Based on his research, Herzberg argued that meeting the lower -level needs (hygiene factors) of individuals would not motivate them to exert effort, but would only prevent them from being dissatisfied. Only if higher - level needs (motivator factors) were met the individuals would be motivated. The implication for managers of the motivator- hygiene theory is that meeting employee's lower- level needs by improving salary, benefits, safety and other job contextual factors will prevent employees from becoming actively dissatisfied but will not motivate them to exert additional efforts towards better performance. To motivate workers, according to the theory, managers must focus on changing the intrinsic nature and content of job themselves by "enriching" them to increase employees' autonomy and their opportunities to take an additional responsibility, gain recognition and develop their skills and careers.

In moving from industrial world to the microcosm of the education and learning in general, the intrusion of the business ethos is evident (Herzberg, 1966). The education and learning world has become complex as an industrial organization as exists and the same laws that govern the industry govern the effective operation of the education industry (Herzberg, Mausner and Sneyder 1959). The same principles governing the turnover of the industrial sector, parallel within the learning institution settings, apply to the

efficient operation of the learning institution (Herzberg 1966).

Empirical Literature Review

Influence of leadership on Teacher Retention

Omar (2011) examined the influence of motivational leadership on 'Employees' Commitments and Performance in Argentina. The survey involved 218 employees in public sector organizations. Data analysis was done by regression analysis, and findings showed that motivation leadership improved the commitments of employees. This means that the availability of motivational leaders increased employee commitments and reduced employee turnover. Thus, motivational leadership increases staff retention compare to other form of leadership such as autocratic, laissez faire and democratic leadership. Likewise, Amin *et al.*, (2016) examined the relationship between leadership and team commitments with effects on retentions of team performance in Pakistan. The study involved 180 project experts as a sample size. Correlational analysis was done, and findings indicated that leadership influenced the commitments of employees, which was crucial to retain employees. Thus, good leadership is crucial for maintaining employees in an organization.

Influence of Organizational Promotion Opportunities

A recent study by McKinsey (2022) highlights that a focus on employee development helps organizations gain an edge in a looming recession. McKinsey argues that most companies share several common traits; they create opportunities for employees to keep learning and reinventing themselves, such as by providing more than 70 hours a year of training per employee, and by making promotions and internal transfers readily available. In addition, they promote a culture of entrepreneurship where employees can collaborate and share expertise and ideas across functions.

Indeed, multiple arguments have been underlined as to why promotion opportunities and career development lie more important in improving employee retention. Importantly, according to Nash (2021), promotion opportunities lie as a cure for increased changing expectations of employees and the presence of a multi-generational workforce in today's organizations. For most employees then, excellent employee experience is based on continuous learning and growth opportunities along with challenging and meaningful work. In other words, most employees especially the younger ones want to grow, learn, desire flexibility, and the need to feel like they are truly part of the institutional mission when they are being promoted (Nash, 2021).

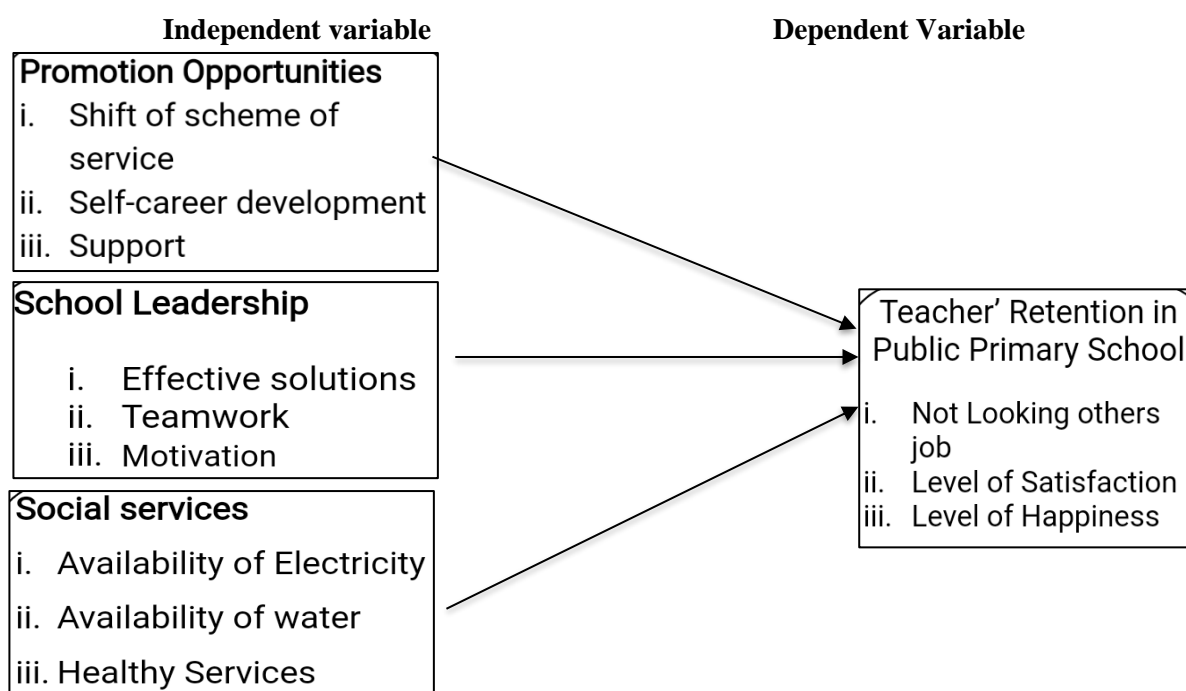
Influence of Social Services on Retention

Long and Perumal (2014) conducted a study on the influence of social services among employee in Singapore on retention. They sampled 80 supervisors and security officers of a firm in Singapore. Correlation analysis was used to find the relationship of the study variables. Findings revealed that performance management correlates with intention to leave at 0.61, while regression analysis showed that performance management had a significantly higher effect on the intent to leave compared to other variables. Among the factors which led to the intention to leave was the presence and/or lack of quality social services within the workplace. Therefore, social services were important in maintaining employees at the workplace. The availability of water, electricity, and transportation systems was important for retaining staff.

Conceptual Framework

Abbas and Horman (2017) pointed out that a conceptual framework is a network or a plane of linked concepts. The plane of linked concepts is created from the grounded theory. In this study, therefore, variables which have been described in the theoretical background are linked to develop the conceptual framework, as shown in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1: A conceptual framework



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Area

This study was carried out in rural public primary schools in Kilolo, Mufindi and Iringa districts in Iringa region of Tanzania. Iringa region was selected purposively among 31 regions in Tanzania because it is among the top 4 regions that perform better in primary school education. Equally important, public primary schools in Kilolo, Mufindi and Iringa DC were selected because the selected districts have similar geographical characteristics that are necessary for a comparative study.

Research Design

In this particular study, the cross-sectional research design was employed for several reasons. Firstly, it facilitated the use of diverse data collection methods, making it a cost-effective and time-efficient choice due to limited resources. Furthermore, this design allowed the researcher to conduct a more focused and descriptive study.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

Targeted Population

In this study, the target population was 3660 primary teachers working in Kilolo, Mufindi and Iringa district councils, administrative officers, education officers and the community (RCO, 2022).

Sample Size

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are to be studied to gain information about the whole population. This study used a sample size of 351 primary teachers, which implies a sample of 117 teachers from each district as shown in *Table 1*. Since the study was mixed in nature, both quantitative and qualitative approaches arrived at a total of 3660, that was 351 'teachers' respondents, and 3 respondents comprised the cluster of leadership patterns, especially the administrators. This was the sample size that participated in the data collection exercise. Basically, the sample size was obtained through a quantitative approach. The researcher employed Krejcie and Morgan, (1970) table for determining the sample size as shown in *Table 1*. To obtain qualitative information, the sampling

also involved district education administration officers.

Table 1: Table for determining sample size from a given population

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	246
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	181	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

Note: N is population size, S is sample size.

Source: Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

Sampling Frame

In this study, the list of primary teachers obtained from academic departments in all three districts of Kilolo, Mufindi, and Iringa DC was based on teachers' statistics and their availability.

Type and Source of Data

This study used both primary and secondary data as discussed below.

Primary Data

Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires which were distributed to 351 respondents for quantitative data collection. Furthermore, in-depth interviews were administered to 3 participants during primary data collection respectively.

Secondary Data

Secondary data is information that has already been collected by someone else and has already been passed through the statistics process (Kothari, 2008). Secondary data were collected

using official published documents, organizational documents, and academic outputs, including dissertations and theses, journals, research reports, and textbooks.

Data Collection Methods

A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data in the quantitative phase. Also, interviews were done with 3 participants under study. In addition, secondary data collected used documentary review in qualitative form.

Data Analysis

The researcher mainly used descriptive statistics to analyse data. Also used were frequency, percentage, and mean for analysing quantitative data. In addition, compared means were also employed to make a comparison on the level of influence based on each district.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Leadership Influence on Teachers' Retention

Basically, leadership in education plays an important role in the management of education institutions such as the public primary schools for

maintaining the goals of the institutions through effective and efficiency learning. In determining how leadership affects retention of teachers at their workplace there are various arguments on the importance of leadership styles that have contribution on motivation of employees an aspect that has also been expounded by scholars such as Horng et al. (2010). Horng et al (2010) states that, leadership style is the manner and approach for providing direction, implementing plans and motivating people.

On top of that, Chepkonga et al. (2015) identified different leadership styles including; autocratic, democratic, transformational and laissez-faire leadership. Their research discovered that an achievement in school management depends on such four identified leadership styles. Autocratic is self-centered, allowing minimum participation of subordinates, in decision making. Democratic are rather people oriented. Laissez-Faire refers to an approach that allows free contributions of ideas or opinions without interference.

Table 2: Pursued types/nature of leadership in Kilolo, Mufindi & Iringa DC

Districts	Nature/Types of Leadership in Practice			
	Transformational	Democratic	Laissez Faire	Autocratic
KILOLO	Very High	Moderate	low	Very high
MUFINDI	Low	Moderate	High	Very high
IRINGA DC	Moderate	Moderate	High	Very high

Source: URT, 2023

Basically, leadership styles differ from one institution to another; though it is possible in some cases to find multiple practices of leadership types in an institution while there should be the dominant one. Based on *Table 2* above, the researcher determined that, predominantly, all districts pursue a top-down leadership approach that is autocratic in nature. This has been determined due to the fact that, schools in rural Kilolo, Mufindi and Iringa DC are government institutions whose educational governance precedes the traditional top-down approach during the implementation of the national educational policy of 2014, the public service employment act of 2003, and standing orders for public service of 2009. Both policies and legal frameworks are crucial instruments that guide all educational systems in the country. Autocratic leadership in this case is basically implemented through order of instructions from the director level down through the ward educational administrative officers, to the school-based heads and ends to the teachers' level.

Importantly, across all districts of Kilolo, Mufindi and Iringa Districts the researcher identified that, there was predominantly pursuance of autocratic leadership, an approach that through interviews and observations, the researcher was able to

determine due to traditional government system of executing policies, laws and regulations. However, additionally through an interview with an administrator as transcribed below, the researcher discovered that; Kilolo had an addition of very high practice of transformational leadership and moderate democratic leadership approach than other districts. Mufindi had low transformational leadership while Iringa DC had low practice of transformational leadership. Scholars such as Chepkonga et al, (2015), points out that, transformational leadership refers to working in teams' of followers beyond their immediate self-interests to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide through influence inspiration, and executing the change in tandem with committed members of a group.

Basically, the practicability of transformational leadership is when leaders' behavior influence followers and inspire them to perform beyond their perceived capabilities (Odumeru, J.A, & Ogbonna, I.G, 2013). According to (Nguni et al, 2014), features of transformational leadership style are predominant in Tanzanian context, especially in institutions with employee performance management systems which government institutions is among the ones. Below are respondents' interviews on how leadership

contributed to teacher retention as presented and recorded by the researcher;

Question; how leadership practices have been contributing to retentions in Kilolo District? The following asserted quotations were recorded and hereafter presented;

Response from Kilolo Educational administrative officer;

.... I have been in Kilolo District for 5 years to date, and we have been retaining teachers using different means. Among the ways we are currently applying is looking at effective teacher-based solution to problems, and encouraging teamwork in our schools. We usually have often consultations with our employees to air out some underlying challenges experienced at work places such as finding out the means to meet computer needs for smooth computation of assignment marks especially in schools with big number of pupils. We are planning this to be our long-term project, though we are so limited in resources. We also provide directives to resolve challenges which arise at school level and all heads of school are demanded to resolve their challenges at school level. Also, we receive suggestions from teachers and we motivate them whenever they perform well. Despite of these facts that, we also embark on all these approaches, the biggest challenge in our district is operating in a more widely spread distance. For example, schools such as Mahenge, Image, Ilula, Udekwa are largely dispersed so we usually have inter-schools' programs such as examinations to

create teachers' interactions and create travel and allowance payments for teachers rotating to administer the inter district examinations competitions (Educational administration Officer in Kilolo district 1... 25/7//2023).

Social services, Living Conditions, and Its Influence on Teachers' Retentions

Social services and the general living conditions of an employee are critical for achieving organizational goals but ensure sustainability of work output. Determining the extent to which social services have effects on teacher and employee retention was one of the key objectives of this study. Basically, it is so difficult to retain teachers under poor working environment. Likewise, Timilehin (2010) asserts that retaining teachers it is important to ensure adequate school facilities and extra school facilities which include material resources that facilitate effective teaching and learning in schools, water and transport systems.

On top of that, Ngala and Begi (2017) explored the school related factors influencing teacher retention in pre-primary schools by identifying the central problem being job discontentment, stress, fatigue, and change of profession being rampant affecting teacher retention. Therefore, regarding the current study, the researcher reviewed district school-based profile data to determine the actual number of teachers and employees being affected by the available social services infrastructures. Below is Table 3 illustrating distribution of social services per teachers in the selected three districts of Kilolo, Iringa DC and Mufindi.

Table 3: District data on teachers' accessibility to social amenities, working tools & general living conditions; N=5037

Key Accounts	Teachers Accessibility to Social Amenities & Working Tools in Kilolo, Mufindi & Iringa DC					
	Kilolo 1585 Teachers		Mufindi 1792 Teachers		Iringa DC 1660 teachers	
Teachers access to electricity	1488	93.8%	1420	79.2%	1265	76.2%
Teachers access to tap water	820	51.7%	733	40.9%	770	46.3%
Teachers access to personal computers	63	3.9%	58	3.2%	32	1.9%
Teachers access to government housing services	142	8.9%	40	2.2%	39	2.1%

Source: Districts Data Profile, (2022)

Teachers Satisfaction level on Accessibility to Social Services and Working Environment in Rural Areas

In an effort to expand the range for understanding how teacher’s accessibility to social services affect retentions, the researcher measured respondent’s satisfaction level on the available social services in the selected districts of Kilolo, Mufindi and Iringa DC. From the stand point of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, it can be argued that, every individual requires the fulfillment or satisfaction of five kinds of needs which are physiological needs, safety needs, belonging needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs.

Promotion and Awards Opportunities

At the apex of the current competitive job market, retaining top talent is a key challenge for organizations especially staff that works in difficult rural working conditions. This is why finding ways to improve employee retention remains paramount. Addressing the question to

what extent promotions and awards opportunities influence teacher retention was one of the key objectives of this study.

Adecco (2021) adds that, promotion opportunities makes employee feel valued, appreciated, and cared for beyond their job title. Having access to new incomes and learning opportunities that are transparent and open to everyone it builds trust and collaboration both fundamental elements in having successful and enjoyable work relationships. And these relationships are one of the major factors in people’s decision to stay or leave the organization (Adecco, 2021). Furthermore, Pen (2020) expands that, an employee who has made an internal move has a 75% likelihood of staying within their company compared to a 56% chance for someone who has not made such a move. Building on this narration, the researcher reflected available data on employment trend in the selected districts of Iringa DC, Kilolo and Mufindi district as presented in *Table 4* below;

Table 4: Teachers cumulative employee promotion records from 2019-2022, N=5037

District	No. of teachers shifted their scheme of services for the past 5 years	Grade Three B	Grade Three C	Grade Three D	Total No. of Teachers not Promoted
Iringa DC (1660)	481 28.9%	268	117	116	1179
Kilolo DC (1585)	661 41.7%	320	172	168	924
Mufindi DC (1792)	540 30.1%	378	110	52	1252
Total	1682	966	399	336	3355

Source: RCO, (2022)

The Extent to which Promotion Opportunities Influence Retention in the selected districts of Kilolo, Mufindi & Iringa DC.

Data from the selected districts show that, in all terms, Kilolo district had the highest promotion rate as compared to Iringa DC and Mufindi districts. In particular, findings show that, within the past 5 years there were 661(41.7%), out of 1585 teachers who shifted from their original scheme of service or bars to another level commensurate to new salary scales and other financial incentives. Mufindi district had 540(30.1%) out of 1792 and the last was 481(28.9%) out of 1660 teachers. Based on these facts, it is indicated that, overall over the past five

years, Kilolo district had enjoyed the highest rate of teachers that were promoted to grade three B, C and D than Mufindi and Iringa DC. Shifting of grades in teachers’ cadre usually refers to increment of salaries and other incentives. This means if salaries and incentives increases then it attracts satisfaction and happiness, it was highest experiences in Kilolo district, followed by Mufindi and Iringa DC. The researcher further determined that, due to data above the chances for resonating why teachers in Kilolo district felt to remain than to leave the work is high than in other districts. In that regard the researcher concluded that, there is positive relationship between promotion opportunities and teachers’ retention

more in Kilolo district than in Mufindi and Iringa districts.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

This study has theoretically and empirically evaluated research framework by incorporating factors influencing teacher retention in Kilolo, Iringa and Mufindi districts. Various measurements were assembled from theoretical perspectives and empirical review for measuring each independent variable as well as dependent variables. The study concludes that on leadership practices all districts experienced more of autocratic leadership in education than other leadership styles although Kilolo had also high transformational leadership practice than Mufindi and Iringa DC. In line with that, the study shows that respondents' satisfaction level on leadership practice was high in Kilolo followed by Iringa DC and Kilolo respectively. Overall, the study concluded that, there was high level of contribution of leadership practice on teacher retention in Kilolo district than in Mufindi and Iringa DC.

In view of social services, teachers' access to social services was also high in Kilolo, followed by Iringa DC and finally Mufindi district. Also, there was relative contribution of available social services in the selected districts on teacher retention but more significant in Kilolo district. Finally, it was observed that, there is overall uneven low rate of promotion activities took place in all selected districts. However, in this study overall, it was shown that, promotions were higher in Kilolo district and that it had more contribution to teacher retentions than in Mufindi and Iringa DC.

Recommendations

Since, this study determined that social service, promotional opportunities and leadership practices had higher degree of influence on teacher's retention, in Kilolo district as compared to Iringa DC and Mufindi district, therefore, the management of all the selected districts of Kilolo,

Mufindi and Iringa should broaden and capitalize the use of these variables to continue retaining teachers in rural primary schools. Since, social services have been seen to have more effects on teachers' retention in Kilolo district as compared to Iringa DC and Mufindi district, Therefore, Mufindi district and Iringa DC should do something (as per study findings) to improve more social services to increase attraction of teachers working in rural areas hence increase the level of retentions. Since, promotion opportunities has crucial for contributing teacher's retention and that the government had promoted teachers at low rate of in almost all selected districts, the government at district level should extend the range of promotions and diversify promotions levels so as to meet teachers career expectations thereby attract and retain more teachers.

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