



Original Article

Impact of High Teacher Turnover on Sustainability of Seventh-Day Adventist Secondary Schools in Western Kenya

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This study sought to examine the impact of high teacher turnover on the sustainability of SDA secondary schools in the West Kenya Conference of Seventh Day Adventist Church. The study was underpinned by sustainability transformation in education theory which postulates the identification of sustainability strategies and action plans for implementation. The mixed methods research approach was adopted in this study. This study utilized the descriptive research design and was conducted in WKUC of the SDA church which covers a total of 15 out of 47 counties in Kenya. The population of the study included 159 teachers, 2085 students in 11 schools, and 11 principals. The sample size comprised 11 schools and 113 teachers, and 6 Directors of Education. The validity and reliability of the research instruments was ascertained. The test-retest and the split-half reliability were ascertained by use of the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient, and reliability of 0.7 and 0.65 was arrived at, respectively. Study findings revealed that Student enrolment trends in SD. Schools were on a downward trend, and this needs to be addressed as soon as possible. The reasons that were cited for the low enrolment trends include; the high school fees charged by the schools, the negative perception of church members and the general public on SDA schools, and the quality of education provided, among others. This low enrolment of students led to the institutions suffering from limited financial resources. This later affected the payment of teachers. This made the teachers move to government schools where teachers are employed by the Teachers Service Commission, which has better terms of service than what the individual schools offer. Among the recommendations given were; the church administration and schools' management should address issues that affect low student enrolments, such as the high fees charged by sourcing funds from other sources such as engaging in income-generating activities or partnering with the government so that the government can provide teachers to the schools, sensitize its members to take their children to SDA schools in order to boost their

enrolment and endear church members and the public at large to change their perception of SDA schools through proper branding and serious marketing and advertisement.

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INTRODUCTION

As Kenya strives to attain sustainable development goals and the National Goals of vision 2030, the issue of education takes centre stage. Education is widely seen as one of the most promising paths for individuals to realize better, more productive lives and as one of the primary drivers of national economic development. Education also forms the basic component upon which the economic, social, and political development of any nation is founded (Ball, 2012).

The study focused on sustainability among the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) secondary schools in West Kenya Union Conference (WKUC), Kenya, in the context of enrolment, staffing, infrastructure, facilities, quality of education, spiritual programs, finances, and much more. While there are currently some successful Adventist secondary schools, most of them are basically struggling to survive. It is therefore important that Adventist schools pay great attention to sustainability if they are to continue to exist in such a challenging environment.

Studies by Mesa (2010) assert that Adventist schools in the South American Division territory of

the SDA church are growing in relation to the number of students, staff, quality of education offered, and spiritual programs. Marfo et al. (2017) did a study in Ghana and concluded that prospective students for SDA secondary schools in Ghana are faced with a dilemma when choosing schools. Either they focus on their faith and attend a Seventh-day Adventist secondary school which offers limited career options, or enrol in a non-SDA school which offers highly demanded courses in the job market.

Most of the Adventist secondary schools in Kenya have not established themselves as part of trustworthy educational networks in the eyes of the church constituency and the general public (Mesa, 2010). McIver (2017) also says that Adventist schools are in a condition of considerable dependency on possible grants and donations from conferences. Most of them are operating on a weak financial base due to dwindling enrolment, which is perceived to be crucial for sustainability and resilience.

Adventist education has continued to grow in Kenya with the establishment of many secondary schools,

among other institutions of learning. Kenya has two union conferences: The East Kenya Union Conference (EKUC) and the WKUC. The Education Department in WKUC is responsible for the coordination, promotion, training, and quality of the Seventh-day Adventist educational program, which includes 10 secondary schools, two colleges, and one university, with over 150 teachers and 2020 students (WKUC, 2020).

Working in close cooperation with the Education Department directors in the six conferences and one field, the staffs offer services to boards, administrators, and faculty of Adventist schools, colleges, and universities within WKUC. The staff also provides support through the WKUC to the local conferences and field levels and to teachers in Adventist elementary and secondary schools to ensure that the Adventist philosophy of education and the principles of faith and learning are integrated into the life of each institution (WKUC, 2020). The mission of the WKUC Department of Education exists to act as an arm of the church in making disciples of Jesus Christ who live as His loving witnesses and proclaim to all people the everlasting gospel of the Three Angels' Messages in preparation for His soon return (Matt 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Rev 14:6-12). The union carries this mission through supervision, coordination, and promotion to ensure the provision of quality Adventist Education in the WKUC territory. The vision of the union on the other hand is to provide qualified, competent personnel and Christ-based membership to the church system in WKUC for the effective achievement of its mission (WKUC, 2018).

This study is important because it sought to identify factors that would enhance sustainability in SDA secondary schools. The study results also contributed to extending the knowledge base and generating new questions for further research, and informing decision-making on school sustainability and resilience.

Statement of the Problem

SDA schools in WKUC are collectively facing a rather unpredictable future. Some would argue that the state of SDA schools in the WKUC education system has plenty of room for improvement, but developing a plan to take SDA schools in WKUC in the right direction is easier said than done. The SDA schools in WKUC are faced with the challenge of low student enrolment occasioned by the government policy of providing free day secondary education in all public secondary schools and encouraging 100% transition from primary to secondary school. The low enrolment has brought about dwindling financial resources in these schools since they solely rely on fees paid by students. In turn, they have suffered from high teacher turnover, where they have experienced a mass exodus of the most experienced teachers to government secondary schools.

There has been the challenge of financial dependence of SDA schools in WKUC on their respective conferences for sustenance. Consequently, the funds from various conferences that were used to support these schools have decreased rapidly. This, coupled with the effects arising from the Covid-19 pandemic that saw the closure of schools and places of worship has seen tithes and offerings that were remitted to the various conferences reduced significantly.

The various conferences where the SDA schools in WKUC are situated have asked the various schools to come up with strategies to overcome the challenges facing them in matters of sustainability and the subsequent provision of quality and holistic education. Apparently, limited study has been conducted to establish the strategies to overcome challenges facing the sustainability of SDA schools in WKUC in Kenya in the provision of quality and holistic education. Therefore, there was a need to investigate the strategies to overcome challenges facing the sustainability of SDA schools in WKUC

in Kenya in the provision of quality and holistic education.

Research Objective

Investigate the impact of high teacher turnover on the sustainability of SDA secondary schools in WKUC Research Question

How does the high teacher turnover affect the sustainability of SDA secondary schools in WKUC?

Significance of the study

First, the study identified challenges that hinder sustainability in SDA schools in WKUC in Kenya. With this data, the SDA schools in WKUC will come up with interventions for their schools. The government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Education, would benefit from the study as it would enable it to formulate quality policies for enabling sustainability in secondary school educational programs. The study findings will benefit SDA schools in WKUC and school principals to identify aspects of sustainability deficiency and adopt appropriate improvements at the level of schools. In addition, the findings would help them to assess the administrative policies in terms of planning, school facilities, enrolment, staffing, spiritual programs, and resources for the effective provision of sustainable quality education. Furthermore, the

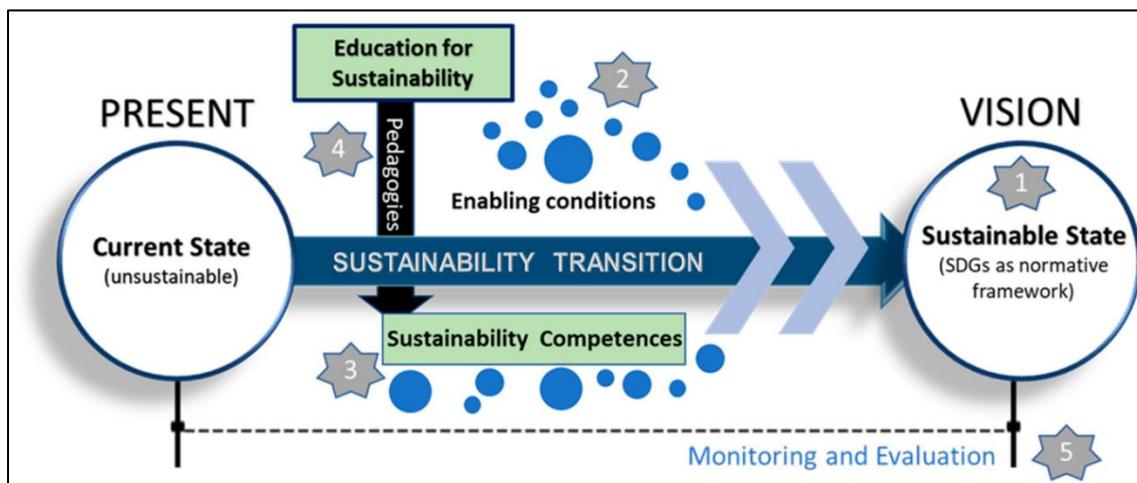
findings would provide the basis for corrective measures in enhancing sustainability gaps that require immediate action.

School leadership and governance are key players in ensuring sustainability measures in schools. The findings will boost their case for capacity building to enhance their knowledge as well as motivate them for better performance. Students and teachers too will benefit from the findings, especially in maximizing effective teaching and learning habits to enhance the sustainability of the schools. Other congregations involved in education could benefit from the results of this study since this will enhance the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education provided in their schools. The study will also elicit a vital literature review upon which future studies will be pegged.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework illustrates that SDA secondary schools have existing values, systems, structures, and policies which guide the operation of schools. However, the current state of things seems to be unsustainable. The framework implies identification of sustainability strategies and action plans for implementation. The vision is to achieve a sustainable state for the institution, as demonstrated below (Adapted from Voulvoulis et al., 2019).

Figure 1: Sustainability transformation in education



LITERATURE REVIEW

High Teacher Turnover in Secondary Schools

According to McIver (2017), most of the Adventist secondary schools in Australia and Kenya alike have not established themselves as part of trustworthy educational networks in the eyes of the church constituency and the general public. This is true in the Kenyan situation because Adventist secondary schools depend solely on school fees collected from students. It therefore goes without saying that student numbers are indeed crucial for the survival of the schools.

Nyabwari et al. (2013) did research on Holistic Christian education for character formation in Seventh-Day Adventist Church-sponsored secondary schools in Nyamira County, Kenya. The study found that the church has taken a fundamental role as a sponsor in Kenya since 1968 in providing quality education in her schools. Without this education, church schools risk graduating students who are not well prepared socially, spiritually, morally, physically, economically, emotionally, and intellectually disintegrated. Specifically, the study explored the church's educational philosophy, efforts made in the schools to educate for holistic Christian character formation, examined the practices involved in the implementation of the church's educational philosophy, investigated challenges experienced in the implementation and identified strategies for effective implementation of the Christian education for character formation.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed methods research paradigm where both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were used and adopted a descriptive research design. According to Kim & Lidia (2011), a descriptive survey involves a systematic inquiry in cases where the researcher does not have direct control over the independent variables. The issues of sustainability in SDA secondary schools in WKUC cannot be manipulated by the researcher. The validity and reliability of the instruments were ascertained. After the test-retest, the instruments attained a reliability coefficient of 0.70 using the Cronbach alpha coefficient, which was considered high enough to continue with data collection. Split-half reliability was also tested and yielded a coefficient of 0.65 which was acceptable.

Study Population

The study population was drawn from the West Kenya Union Conference (WKUC) of the SDA church. This is one of the two union conferences in Kenya and it covers a vast territory of 15 of the 47 counties of Kenya. The SDA administration of this area comprises five conferences, namely Central Nyanza, Greater Rift Valley, Kenya Lake, North West Kenya, Ranen Conferences, and Lake Victoria Field. The study focused on the eleven (11) schools of WKUC, as outlined in *Table 1*. As of the fourth quarter of 2020, the West Kenya Union Conference student population in Adventist Secondary schools stood at 2085. The students attend 11 secondary schools, which are church-maintained schools within WKUC. The total population of teachers stands at 159, according to the 2020 statistical report. The 11 schools are served by 11 principals.

Table 1: Distribution of SDA Secondary Schools in WKUC.

Name of Conference	SDA Secondary Schools	Principals	Teachers	Students
Central Nyanza	01	01	11	73
Greater Rift Valley	04	04	87	1494
Kenya Lake	01	01	15	130
North West Kenya	01	01	11	100
Ranen	02	02	20	197
Lake Victoria	01	01	11	110
WKUC	01	01	15	120
Total	11	11	159	2224

Source: WKCUC Records 2021

Background Information of Respondents

This section summarizes the respondents' background information sought during the study

and information included their school, gender, year of birth, level of education, marital status, and religious affiliation.

Table 2: Background Information of Respondents

	Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	86	76.1
	Female	27	23.9
	Total	113	100.0
Year of Birth	1961-1970	24	21.2
	1971-1980	31	27.4
	1981-1990	27	23.9
	1991-2000	23	20.4
	2000-2010	08	7.1
	Total	113	100.0
Level of Education	Primary	00	00
	Secondary	00	00
	Tertiary	04	3.5
	University	102	90.3
	Postgraduate	07	6.2
	Total	113	100.0
Marital Status	Single	07	6.2
	Married	102	90.3
	Separated	04	3.5
	Total	113	100.0
Religious affiliation	SDA	113	100
	Other	00	00
	Total	113	100

From the background information of the teachers' respondents, the majority (86, 76.1%) were male, while the rest (27, 23.9%) were female. This shows most of our schools are dominated by male teachers as opposed to the female gender. In regards to their years of birth, the majority (31, 27.4%) were born between 1971-1980 followed by those born between 1981-1990 who were 27 (23.9%) followed by those between 2000-2010 at 8 (7.1%). This shows that majority of the teachers in SD. A maintained schools are in their early 40s and late 30s, and they are still energetic interims of service delivery. In regards to their level of education, a majority (102, 90.3%) are university graduates with a first degree then, followed by those with postgraduate qualifications who are 7 (6.2%) followed by those with college diplomas or tertiary qualifications who were 4 (3, 5%). None had primary or secondary school level education as the highest qualification. This is in line with the employment policy in Kenya where only teachers with TSC numbers ought to be

employed in Kenyan secondary schools. For you to qualify for a TSC number, you need to have graduated with two teaching subjects from a recognized institution (GoK,2012).

The majority (102, 90.3%) were married, 7 (6.2%) were single, and 4 (3.5%) were separated. The high number of married teachers shows that they belong in the age bracket where one is supposed to be in a stable relationship and the Adventist philosophy that encourages spouses to work together on religious affiliations, all 113(100%) teachers were members of SD. A church. This is due to the that the employment policy within the church requires you to be a member of the church before being employed. In regards to training, again, all 113(100%) teachers were trained which explains the Kenyan government policy that one cannot work as a teacher before being qualified for the same (GoK,2012).

Table 3: Schools that participated

School	Frequency	Percent
Nyabola	10	8.8
Kisumu South	8	7.1
Kagoro	8	7.1
Nyabikaye	6	5.3
Ranen	8	7.1
Chebwai	8	7.1
Kimolwet	6	5.3
Segero Natnl	31	27.4
Segero Herald	9	8.0
Segero Baraton	9	8.0
Kamagambo	10	8.8
TOTAL	113	100

According to *Table 3*, the school with the highest number of teacher respondents was Segero National School (31, 27.4%) teacher respondents; this was followed by Nyabola and Kamagambo, which both had 10(8.8%) teachers who acted as respondents. This was closely followed by Segero Heralds and

Segero Baraton, which both had 9 (8.0%). This was again followed closely by four other schools which had the same number of teacher respondents. These were 8 (7.1%), and these schools were Kisumu South, Kagoro, Ranen and Chebwai. This was of course followed by the last category with 6 (5.3%)

teacher respondents each, which were Kimolwet and Nyabikaye. In total, there were 11 schools that participated in the study.

This study sought to explore the effect of higher teacher turnover on the sustainability of the SD. A schools. Table 4 below shows the findings from the teachers' questionnaires.

Table 4: High Teacher Turnover

Statement	Agreed		Undecided		Disagreed		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The rate of teacher turnover has affected enrolment	96	85.0	17	15	0	0	113	100
The high number of teachers who resign affects school sustainability	99	87.6	14	12.4	0	0	113	100
The rate of teacher turnover is due to poor remuneration	92	81.4	21	18.6	0	0	113	100
Teacher turnover is influenced by job security	75	66.4	38	33.6	0	0	113	100
Teacher turnover is influenced by the school leadership	87	77.0	18	15.9	8	7.1	113	100
Low teacher turnover is important in ensuring school sustainability	100	88.5	4	3.5	9	8.0	113	100

The study sought to explore the effect of higher teacher turnover on the sustainability of SDA schools. In order to achieve this, the teacher respondents were asked to respond to some statements geared towards achieving this. When asked if high staff turnover in SDA Schools had affected enrolment, the majority (96, 85.0%) agreed, while 17(15%) were undecided, and none disagreed. This shows that when teacher turnover is high, students lose confidence in the schools, and this affects enrolment. The teacher respondents were further asked if the high number of teachers who resigned from the SDA schools affected the sustainability of the schools. Majority 99(87.76%) agreed, while 14(12.4%) were undecided and none disagreed. This shows that the rate of teacher turnover really affects the school's sustainability since there is no stability and continuation when new teachers are employed almost every term.

The teacher respondents were further asked if the rate of teacher turnover was due to poor remuneration they received. Majority 92(81.4%) agreed, while 21(18.6%) were undecided. This

shows that poor remuneration was one of the issues affecting the sustainability of SDA schools.

On whether teacher turnover was influenced by job security, the majority again (75, 66.4%) agreed, while 38(33.6%) were undecided, and none disagreed. This shows that job security was an important ingredient that was necessary for SDA schools if the teacher turnover was to be reduced. This opinion agrees with the views of Estermann, and Pruvot (2011) also agrees that there are three key pillars to ensure financial sustainability: identifying the cost of all activities and projects, maintenance of reasonable diversified income, and having more sustainable funding with adequate accountability measures.

On whether teacher turnover was influenced by the school leadership, the majority (87, 77%) agreed, 18(15.9%) were undecided, and 8(7.1%) disagreed. It was noted that there were mixed reactions on whether leadership really caused teacher turnover, though the majority agreed. This is in line with the views of Hauge et al. (2014) who say that the role of leadership in secondary schools remains the

major driving force for the school’s continued effectiveness and sustainability.

Asked if reducing the rate of teacher turnover would ensure school sustainability, a majority (104, 92.0%) agreed, while 9(8.0%) were undecided, and none disagreed. This shows that for SDA schools to maintain their student enrolment and attain stability in the schools, they need to address the issue of teacher turnover.

When the teacher respondents were asked why many teachers were resigning from SDA schools, a larger percentage (45, 39.8%) said it was due to poor

payment. This was followed by 39(34.9%) who indicated that it was due to strict SDA restrictions imposed on members and finally, 29(25.7%) who mentioned that teacher’s interaction with students and other teachers were highly interfered with; hence this discouraged many teachers working in SDA schools.

The null hypothesis was tested under the objective:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between high teacher turnover and the sustainability of Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools in WKUC.

Table 5: Chi-Square results showing the relationship between high teacher turnover and sustainability of Seventh-day Adventist secondary schools in WKUC

	High teacher turnover in SDA schools	Sustainability of SDA schools.
Chi-Square	0.123	0.124
Df	5	5
Asym. Sig	0.033	0.033

A Chi-Square test was calculated comparing the frequency of high teacher turnover and the sustainability of SDA schools. It was hypothesized that no significant relationship existed between the two factors. A significant relationship was found (χ^2) = 0.123, df 5, P = 0.033, for high teacher turnover and $\chi^2 = 0.124$, df 5, for the sustainability of SDA schools in WKUC, as shown in *Table 5*. The results show that in both cases, the P value 0.033 was less than 0.05. Therefore, there was a

significant relationship between high teacher turnover and the sustainability of SDA schools in WKUC. Therefore, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis. There is a significant relationship between high teacher turnover and the sustainability of SDA schools in WKUC. In other words, the sustainability of SDA schools was dependent on as opposed to being independent of teacher turnover. The two attributes are therefore associated in reality and not as a result of some chance factor.

Table 6: Why low teacher turnover is important

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strengthen teacher-student relationship hence sustaining the school	73	64.6
Enhances teacher consistency to sustain learning	31	27.4
Do not know	9	8.0
Total	113	100

Asked why low teacher turnover is important, the majority (73, 64.6%) strengthened teacher-student relationships and hence sustained the school,

another 31(27.4%) enhanced teacher consistency to sustain learning, while 9 (8%) did not have any say, as shown in *Table 6*.

Table 7: Why leadership is a reason for teacher turnover

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Good school administration discourages teacher turnover and boosts sustainability	48	42.5
Harsh and hostile environment in school results in high teacher turnover, which is retrogressive to development.	50	44.2
Not aware of the reasons	15	13.3
Total	113	100

Asked why leadership is a reason for teachers' turnover, the majority (50, 44.2%) said the harsh and hostile environment results in a high teacher turnover which is a high number, 48(42.5%) argued

that good school administration allows low teachers turnover which helps to sustain the school, while 15(13.3%) said they do not know as shown in *Table 7*.

Table 8: Reason for the high teacher turnover

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Poor payment to teachers affects sustainability	45	39.8
Strict SDA rules imposed on members restrict the number of students which affects the sustainability	39	34.5
Teachers' interaction is highly interfered with hence sustainability is affected	29	25.7
Total	113	100

When the teacher respondents were asked why many teachers were resigning from SDA schools, a larger percentage (45, 39.8%) said it was due to poor payment. This was followed by 39(34.9%), who indicated that it was due to strict SDA restrictions

imposed on members, and finally, 29(25.7%) who mentioned that teacher's interaction with students and other teachers was highly interfered with; hence this discouraged many teachers working in SDA schools as shown in *Table 8*.

Table 9: Why Job security is a reason for high teacher turnover

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Teachers are not well secured in working on contract terms and unreliable pay	85	75.2
No extra cash to teachers in terms of motivational cash for teaching extra lessons	28	24.8
Total	113	100

Asked why job security is a reason for the high teacher turnover. The majority (85, 75.2%) argued that teachers do not feel secure when working on contract terms and pay that is unreliable. A few 28(24.8%) argued that no extra motivation cash is

given to teachers in private schools, as shown in *Table 9*.

CONCLUSION

The study had the following conclusions.

- When the teacher turnover is high, students lose confidence in the schools and this affects students' enrolment.
- Poor remuneration was therefore noted as one of the issues affecting the sustainability of SDA schools though it was not the only challenge that the schools faced.
- Job security was noted to be an important ingredient that was necessary for SDA schools if the teacher turnover was to be reduced.
- Leadership in secondary schools remains the major driving force for the school's continued effectiveness and sustainability.
- Many teachers were resigning from SDA schools due to poor pay.

Recommendations

- The SDA church needs to sensitize its members to take their children to SDA schools in order to boost their enrolment.
- The church administration and school management should address the other issues that affect low student enrolments such as the high fees charged and the negative perception of the parents and other stakeholders.
- The church administration and schools' management should propose to reduce fees paid by students by sourcing funds from other sources such as engaging in income-generating activities or partnering with the government so that the government can provide teachers to the schools.
- The church administration and schools' management should endear church members and the public at large to change their perception towards SDA schools through proper branding and serious marketing and advertisement.

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