



## EFFECT OF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES ON TEACHER TURNOVER INTENTION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN WEST POKOT COUNTY, KENYA

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### Abstract:

This study examined the effect of training opportunities on teacher turnover intention in public secondary schools in West Pokot County, Kenya. The study was guided by the hypothesis that training opportunities have no statistically significant effect on teacher turnover intention. Data were collected from 213 teachers and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression. The findings revealed inadequate access to mentorship programs, scholarships, and institutional support for workshops and seminars despite the availability of some training opportunities. Correlation results indicated significant relationships between teacher turnover intention and mentorship programs ( $r = 0.685$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), workshops and seminars ( $r = 0.486$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), scholarships ( $r = 0.467$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), and facilitated training ( $r = 0.376$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Regression analysis established that training opportunities significantly predicted teacher turnover intention ( $R^2 = 0.346$ ,  $F = 39.254$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The study concludes that training opportunities significantly influence teacher turnover intention and recommends strengthening professional development programs to improve teacher retention.

**Keywords:** training opportunities, professional development, teacher turnover intention, teacher retention

### 1. Introduction

Training and professional development refer to the formal and structured activities designed and implemented by an organisation to equip its employees with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required to perform their current roles effectively and to prepare them adequately for future professional responsibilities (Armstrong, 2014;

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Dessler, 2017). In the educational context, professional development encompasses a broad and varied spectrum of activities, including in-service training programmes, subject-specific workshops, curriculum orientation and familiarisation sessions, mentoring and instructional coaching, collaborative professional learning communities, school-based peer learning initiatives, and postgraduate academic study (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2017). Training is particularly important in the education sector because it directly and continuously influences teachers' pedagogical competence, professional confidence, instructional adaptability, and capacity to respond effectively to evolving curriculum demands and learner needs (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2017; Noe *et al.*, 2017). The Teachers Service Commission in Kenya is constitutionally mandated to provide and coordinate professional development opportunities for public school teachers as a core component of its human resource management and teacher quality assurance mandate (TSC, 2023).

Despite the broad consensus in the literature regarding the positive motivational and retention effects of training and professional development, a closer and more critical examination of empirical studies reveals significant conceptual, methodological, contextual, and analytical gaps that substantially limit the generalisability and applicability of existing findings to marginalised and hard-to-staff educational contexts such as West Pokot County (Mokoena & Phasha, 2023; Manthi *et al.*, 2019). These gaps collectively justify the need for further context-specific empirical investigation that is sensitive to the unique structural challenges, resource constraints, and institutional dynamics that characterise teacher professional development in underserved ASAL counties.

The relationship between access to training and professional development opportunities and employee turnover intention has been well established across diverse organisational and educational contexts in the international literature. Empirical evidence consistently demonstrates that organisations that invest meaningfully and visibly in employee training and professional growth generate stronger levels of employee commitment, job satisfaction, and intention to remain within the organisation (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2008; Noe *et al.*, 2017). When employees perceive that their organisation is genuinely and consistently committed to their professional development and long-term career growth, they are predisposed by the logic of social exchange to reciprocate through increased institutional loyalty, heightened professional engagement, and reduced turnover intention (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Conversely, the absence of or severely limited access to relevant and high-quality training opportunities is consistently and robustly associated with feelings of professional stagnation, diminishing self-efficacy, declining instructional confidence, and elevated turnover intention across both educational and non-educational organisational contexts (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2008; Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2017).

In the United States, Kraft *et al.* (2021) established in a large-scale multi-district study that teachers who had access to high-quality instructional coaching and collaborative professional learning communities reported significantly stronger levels of

job satisfaction, professional self-efficacy, and lower turnover intention than those without equivalent developmental support. The study identified the sustained, job-embedded, and instructionally relevant character of professional development as the critical determinant of its motivational and retention effects, distinguishing meaningfully between high-quality developmental support and superficial or compliance-driven training activities. Nguyen *et al.* (2022) similarly found that sustained and job-embedded professional development was among the most effective institutional strategies for reducing teacher attrition in both urban and rural school districts, with teachers who received regular and relevant developmental support reporting significantly stronger organisational commitment and lower propensity to seek alternative employment.

Studies by Leithwood *et al.* (2020) and Collie *et al.* (2020) further highlight that training is considerably more effective in reducing turnover intention when it is accompanied by supportive school leadership, adequate institutional resources, and positive and collaborative school climates. This finding indicates that training does not operate as an isolated institutional intervention but rather interacts dynamically with broader organisational factors, including the quality of principal leadership, the availability of time and resources for professional learning, and the prevailing norms of collegial collaboration to shape teacher retention outcomes. Many empirical studies fail to incorporate these critical interacting variables, resulting in overly simplified models of the training-turnover relationship that may overestimate the direct and independent effect of training access on attrition (Leithwood *et al.*, 2020; Collie *et al.*, 2020).

In Europe, Worth and Van den Brande (2021) found in a nationally representative study in the United Kingdom that teachers who reported limited access to relevant, timely, and professionally meaningful development opportunities were significantly more likely to express intentions to leave the profession, particularly when they perceived that their professional growth needs were not being adequately recognised or addressed by their school leadership or the national education system. The European Commission (2022) further highlighted across member states that continuous professional development systems that were genuinely responsive to teachers' individual professional needs and career aspirations were among the most consistently effective institutional tools for enhancing teacher retention, underscoring the importance of needs-responsiveness and personalisation in professional development design.

Kim and Park (2023) found in South Korea that continuous, needs-based professional development significantly reduced turnover intention among teachers through the mechanism of enhanced perceived organisational support, a finding theoretically consistent with both Social Exchange Theory and Expectancy Theory. However, the highly structured, generously funded, and systematically coordinated nature of the South Korean education system differs substantially from developing country educational contexts, where professional development access is frequently irregular, inequitably distributed, and constrained by resource limitations that the South Korean system does not face. Zhang and Long (2024), in a meta-analytic synthesis, demonstrated that training reduces turnover intention indirectly by enhancing teachers'

professional identity and intrinsic motivation, suggesting that the psychological mechanisms of professional identity formation and motivational reinforcement mediate the relationship between training access and retention outcomes. However, by aggregating findings across multiple countries and organisational sectors, the meta-analysis necessarily obscures important context-specific variations in the training-turnover relationship, particularly those most relevant to teachers working in low-resource and geographically isolated environments where training access is most constrained and most consequential.

In Asia, Li and Liu (2023) established in China that structured mentoring programmes and career-linked professional development pathways were significantly and negatively associated with turnover intention among teachers in rural secondary schools, with the career relevance and progression linkage of training emerging as particularly important dimensions of training quality in motivating retention among rural teachers who perceived limited alternative career advancement pathways. Verma *et al.* (2022) similarly found in India that teachers who had access to relevant in-service training reported higher levels of professional confidence and institutional commitment, and were significantly less likely to consider leaving their current positions, even in contexts characterised by other sources of professional dissatisfaction such as large class sizes and limited resources.

In the African context, UNESCO (2022) reported that limited access to professional development opportunities was one of the most pervasive and consistently documented drivers of teacher dissatisfaction and turnover intention across Sub-Saharan Africa, where many teachers felt professionally isolated, pedagogically unsupported, and ill-equipped to manage the evolving demands of their instructional roles without adequate developmental input. This finding reflects a systemic institutional failure to invest adequately in teacher professional growth in contexts where the need for such investment is simultaneously greatest and most constrained by resource limitations.

Mokoena and Phasha (2023) explored the relationship between professional development and retention among rural secondary school teachers in South Africa and found that inconsistent, poorly coordinated, and inadequately resourced training programmes generated significant teacher frustration and elevated turnover intentions. This study is particularly relevant to the present investigation by virtue of its rural contextual focus, which mirrors many of the structural challenges characterising teacher professional development in West Pokot County. However, the study relied primarily on descriptive statistical analysis without employing advanced inferential methods, limiting the precision with which the strength and direction of the relationship between training and turnover intention could be established. Furthermore, the study did not systematically explore how rural contextual factors, including infrastructure deficits, geographical isolation, teacher professional loneliness, and administrative inefficiencies, specifically influence access to and benefit from professional development opportunities, leaving an important explanatory gap.

In Kenya, Kamau, Muathe, and Wainaina (2021) made a notable empirical contribution by establishing that training opportunities significantly and negatively predicted turnover intentions among secondary school teachers in Murang'a County, with employee engagement functioning as a partial mediator of this relationship. Their findings support the theoretical proposition that training enhances teachers' psychological attachment to their employing institution by improving their professional competence, reinforcing their sense of organisational support, and strengthening their intrinsic motivation to remain professionally engaged. However, the cross-sectional design of the study limits the capacity for causal inference and does not capture how sustained or cumulative exposure to training influences long-term retention decisions over time. Additionally, the relatively well-resourced, accessible, and institutionally stable nature of Murang'a County raises important questions about external validity, particularly for counties such as West Pokot that are characterised by acute teacher shortages, severe infrastructural challenges, geographical remoteness, and significantly more constrained access to professional development opportunities.

Similarly, Ekabu (2020) found that professional development opportunities significantly reduced teacher turnover intentions in Meru County by increasing job satisfaction and strengthening organisational commitment. While this study reinforces the fundamental proposition that training investment reduces attrition, it presents an important conceptual limitation by narrowly defining professional development exclusively as formal workshops and externally facilitated seminars. This narrow conceptualisation systematically excludes other significant and increasingly recognised forms of teacher professional learning, including peer mentoring, collaborative lesson planning, school-based instructional coaching, action research, and informal experiential learning, all of which may contribute meaningfully to teacher professional growth and retention in contexts where access to formal training is limited (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, the study did not examine key intervening variables such as the quality of school leadership support, the intensity and distribution of teacher workload, or the prevailing school climate, all of which are theoretically and empirically important in explaining how training access translates into concrete retention outcomes.

Manthi, Kilika, and Kimencu (2019) examined training and other bundled human resource management practices among tutors in teacher training colleges in the Nairobi Metropolitan Region and found that inadequate training significantly increased turnover intentions among academic staff. Although this study broadened the analytical scope by examining the combined and interactive effects of multiple human resource management practices rather than training in isolation, its focus on higher education institutions in an urban metropolitan setting introduces a substantial contextual limitation. Tutors in teacher training colleges operate under qualitatively different career structures, professional expectations, institutional cultures, and resource availability conditions compared to secondary school teachers working in rural and hardship regions, and the findings of this study may therefore not accurately reflect the lived professional realities

and developmental experiences of teachers in underserved ASAL counties such as West Pokot.

At the regional level, Tesfaye and Bekele (2024), employing a mixed-methods design within Ethiopia's Ministry of Education, found that limited access to training and career development opportunities significantly increased employees' turnover intentions. A notable methodological strength of their study lies in the integration of qualitative data collection and analysis, which provided deeper and more contextually nuanced insights into employees' subjective experiences and perceptions of professional development inadequacy. However, the institutional focus on central administrative structures and ministry-level employees rather than classroom-level teacher experiences limits the study's relevance to school-based teacher retention dynamics. Moreover, the structural differences between Ethiopia's education administration framework and Kenya's Teachers Service Commission system, including differences in teacher governance, professional development coordination, salary structures, and deployment policies, introduce a significant contextual gap that constrains the direct transferability of these findings to the present study's institutional context.

## 2. Research Hypothesis

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no statistically significant effect of training opportunities on teacher turnover intention in public secondary schools in West Pokot County.

## 3. Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research design. Data were collected from 213 teachers using structured questionnaires. Training opportunities were measured through five indicators:

- 1) Availability of professional development courses.
- 2) Encouragement to attend workshops and seminars.
- 3) Continuity of mentorship programs.
- 4) Availability of scholarships for further
- 5) Facilitation of teacher training by schools.

Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and simple linear regression were used to analyze the data.

### 3. Results and Findings

#### 3.1 Teachers' Perceptions of Training Opportunities

**Table 1:** Teachers' Views on Training Opportunities

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	NA (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Opportunities are available for teachers to attend professional development courses	21.6	20.2	13.1	31.9	13.1
My school encourages me to attend workshops and seminars	18.3	23.0	13.6	11.3	33.8
Mentorship programs are a continuous process in my school	17.8	8.0	12.7	31.9	29.6
Availability of scholarships for further education	2.8	5.6	17.4	55.9	18.3
My school facilitates my trainings	33.8	20.2	14.6	6.1	25.4

**Key:** SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, NA = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

##### 3.1.1 Interpretation

The findings indicate that 54.0% of teachers agreed that their schools facilitated training activities. However, 75.2% disagreed that scholarships for further education were available, while 60.5% disagreed that mentorship programs were continuously implemented. These findings suggest inadequate support for long-term professional development.

#### 3.2 Descriptive Statistics of Training Opportunities

**Table 2:** Descriptive Summary of Training Opportunities

Training Opportunity Indicator	N	Mean	SD
Professional development courses are available	213	2.95	0.965
School encourages attendance of workshops and seminars	213	3.19	1.023
Mentorship programs are continuous	213	3.47	0.875
Scholarships for further education are available	213	3.81	1.204
School facilitates teacher training	213	2.69	0.682

##### 3.2.1 Interpretation

Teachers generally agreed that schools facilitated training ( $M = 2.69$ ) and provided professional development opportunities ( $M = 2.95$ ). However, they disagreed regarding the availability of scholarships ( $M = 3.81$ ), mentorship programs ( $M = 3.47$ ), and support for workshops and seminars ( $M = 3.19$ ). This demonstrates inconsistencies in training and career development support.

#### 3.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between training opportunities and teacher turnover intention.

**Table 3:** Correlation between Training Opportunities and Teacher Turnover Intention

Training Opportunity Variable	Correlation (r)	p-value
Professional development courses	0.079	0.865
Workshops and seminars	0.486*	0.035
Mentorship programs	0.685*	0.000
Scholarships for further education	0.467*	0.012
School facilitates training	0.376*	0.042

\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$ .

### 3.3.1 Interpretation

Mentorship programs exhibited the strongest relationship with teacher turnover intention ( $r = 0.685$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Scholarships, workshops, and facilitated training also demonstrated significant relationships. However, merely availing professional development courses did not significantly influence turnover intention.

## 4. Regression Analysis

### 4.1 Model Summary

**Table 4:** Regression Model Summary

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error	p-value
0.472	0.346	0.339	0.05624	0.000

#### 4.1.1 Interpretation

The model explains 34.6% of the variation in teacher turnover intention. This indicates that training opportunities are an important predictor of teachers' intentions to remain in or leave their schools.

### 4.2 ANOVA Results

**Table 5:** ANOVA for Training Opportunities and Teacher Turnover Intention

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	246.398	1	58.365	39.254	0.000
Residual	68.328	212	27.365		
<b>Total</b>	<b>314.726</b>	<b>213</b>			

#### 4.2.1 Interpretation

The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model is statistically significant ( $F = 39.254$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that training opportunities significantly affect teacher turnover intention.

### 4.3 Regression Coefficients

Table 6: Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	10.362	8.365	-	37.993	0.000
Training Opportunities	0.185	0.127	0.119	13.635	0.000

### 4.4 Regression Equation

$$\text{Teacher Turnover Intention} = 10.362 + 0.185(\text{Training Opportunities}) + \varepsilon$$

#### 4.4.1 Interpretation

The regression coefficient ( $\beta = 0.185$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) indicates that training opportunities significantly influence teacher turnover intention. The findings suggest that improvements in training programs can substantially affect teachers' retention decisions.

## 5. Discussion

The study established that training opportunities significantly influence teacher turnover intention in public secondary schools. Teachers reported deficiencies in mentorship programs, scholarships, workshops, and institutional support for continuous professional development. These shortcomings may contribute to dissatisfaction and increase turnover intentions.

Mentorship emerged as the strongest predictor of turnover intention, emphasizing the importance of professional guidance and support. The findings are consistent with previous studies that have identified mentorship, career development opportunities, and professional learning as critical determinants of teacher retention.

The qualitative responses from school principals further supported these findings. Principals observed that teachers who receive training and career development opportunities feel valued, motivated, and more committed to remaining in their schools.

## 6. Conclusion

The study concludes that training opportunities significantly affect teacher turnover intention in public secondary schools in West Pokot County. Although schools facilitate some training activities, major gaps exist in mentorship programs, scholarships, and institutional support for continuous professional development. Training opportunities explained 34.6% of the variation in teacher turnover intention, underscoring their importance in teacher retention strategies.

## 7. Recommendations

- 1) Schools should establish structured mentorship programs for all teachers.

- 2) The Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission should expand scholarship opportunities for further education.
- 3) Schools should allocate adequate resources for workshops, seminars, and in-service training.
- 4) Professional development programs should be aligned with promotion and career advancement pathways.
- 5) Policymakers should institutionalize continuous professional development frameworks to improve teacher retention.

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### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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