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INFLUENCE OF BURNOUT ON CAREER ADVANCEMENT AMONG TEACHERS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF LONDIANI SUB – COUNTY

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INFLUENCE OF BURNOUT ON CAREER ADVANCEMENT AMONG TEACHERS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF LONDIANI SUB – COUNTY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated whether the symptoms that are closely associated with the mid –life transition such as professional burnout has any influence on the effectiveness of teachers and on the choices the teachers in this age bracket make regarding their teaching career. The research objective was to examine the influence of burnout on the management of career progression among teachers in public secondary schools of Londiani Sub-County. The research methodology for the study was mixed method approach and concurrent triangulation research design. The target population was 476 respondents comprising of 440 teachers and principals from 36 schools in Londiani sub-county. The sample for the study was 95 respondents selected using the stratified sampling technique. Five strata bases was created based on the number of zones. From each zone, a sample of 3 Principals and 16 teachers was identified using purposive sampling. Questionnaires was used to collect data from the teachers whereas key informant interviews were conducted for the principals. Piloting was conducted in Kedowa Zone where 10 teachers was sampled to establish validity, reliability, credibility and dependability. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages and inferentially using ANOVA in Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 24). The results showed that there was evidence that the relationship between burnout on career advancement which was linear; indicated moderately strong positive linear relationship. This implied that burnout has a significant and moderate strong relationship with the career management. The coefficient of determination, R-square of 0.260 implied that 26.0% of the variance in career management is explained by burnout. The research hypothesis posited H_0 : burnout has no significant effect on career management. Thus, the model was significant and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected on the ground that burnout had a significant and moderate strong positive linear correlation with career management. The study recommended that the government should enhance support on burnout management program among teachers to enhance the gains from it to the education sector. The researcher suggested that other studies should be done on the same topic but in a different geographical environment. Other studies can also consider other objectives and variables not considered in the current study. This study provided insights into Mid-life crisis on performance. The researcher recommended that a study be done by expanding the scope to other counties.

Key Words: *Mid –Life Transition Crisis, Professional Burnout, Teacher’s Effectiveness*

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INTRODUCTION

The term mid-life transition is generally defined as a period in an adult's life believed to occur at around the age of 40 when there is a reappraisal of one's life accomplishments, a more poignant recognition of health issues and ultimate mortality and a potential for a change in life style. People tend to use the term mid-life period associating it with physical aging, career stagnation and marital boredom. According to Levinson (2006), it is also a period that sets in after an individual has devoted much of his or her energies to establishing themselves in the chosen occupation with associated markers of success both internal and external. Although commonly associated with a mid-life crisis of disillusionment with one's life structure, especially career status, the mid-life transition may also be a time of flexibility, creativity and development of new goals and aspects of self. The individual is in a position to make positive organizational changes, mentor others and decide the terms of his attachment to his career as an independent person.

In countries where, according to the *Daily Telegraph* UK (2012), the life expectancy of the population is in the late forties, for example, Afghanistan, Swaziland, South Africa, Guinea Bissau and Chad "many people are expected to die before they even reach middle age" and the conceptions of midlife transition and crisis would not apply to most of the population. According to Global Age Watch (2013) the life expectancy at birth in South Africa is 54 years of age. Statistics South Africa (2013) shows the life expectancy figure in South Africa as 59 years of age based on the 2012 census. Class differences in South Africa as they correlate with race are very apparent with concomitant major differences in life expectancies amongst the different classes. South Africa has one of the largest and most sophisticated economies in Africa with first world infrastructure as well as economic institutions. Since the 1994 advent of the new political dispensation and, inter alia, employment equity legislation in South Africa there has been a substantial increase in the number of people who would be regarded as middle class in

skilled job positions due to significant increases of previously disadvantaged groups into more senior and management positions in companies and organizations. The number of South Africans in the middle-class group has therefore increased by 56 percent during the period 2001 and 2011 according to *Business Day Live* (The new middle class, 2013).

Career advancement is the lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure, and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future (Greller, 2015). In personal development, career progression is the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic, and chance factors that combine to influence the nature and significance of work in the total lifespan of any given individual; the evolution or development of a career is informed by: Experience within a specific field of interest (with career, job, or task specific skills as by-product), success at each stage of development, educational attainment commensurate with each incremental stage, communications (the capacity to analytically reflect your suitability for a given job via cover letter, resume, and/or the interview process), and understanding of career development as a navigable process. The lifelong psychological and behavioral processes as well as contextual influences shaping one's career over the life span. As such, career development involves the person's creation of a career pattern, decision-making style, and integration of life roles, values expression, and life-role self-concepts.

Statement of the Problem

With the onset of midlife, many changes are occasioned in family, health and even career. Mid-life is commonly associated with physical aging and career stagnation. Some of the documented changes in career include professional burnout, teacher stress, depression and constant illnesses among others. For the teachers, these are likely to reduce their effectiveness in classroom delivery and slow down effectiveness in service delivery as well as their general career advancement prospects. It is expected that these changes may have an effect on

their ability to advance their career. The Teachers Service Commission bases its promotions largely on performance and the ability of teachers to continually improve their skills through continuous professional training. This study seeks to examine the influence of the effects of mid-life transition on the career advancement of teachers in public secondary schools in Londiani Sub - County.

No significant research has been carried out on the psychosocial and physiological aspects of midlife transition and the effect they have in the work place and the prospects of career advancement. For Kenya particularly, no research seems to have been carried out or could be found in an extended literature search. This was established by searching current research and university websites in an attempt to discover whether or not any theses and/or dissertations or research on the subject existed. This is one of the reasons that pushed the researcher to examine this topic. The most extensive research has been conducted in the USA since the 1990s and it employed longitudinal and cross-sectional research approaches (Lachman, 2001). The difference of opinion between with regard to whether or not midlife transition exists, as well as the lack of knowledge and research in the areas described above, specifically in the Kenyan communities, reveals that a clear gap in knowledge of the phenomenon in Kenya does exist. It is consequently important to establish whether the theories and research findings from elsewhere in the world, most notably the USA, have applicability in Kenya within the middle-class group with life expectancies similar to the USA population, and if so, the extent to which this is the case. Furthermore, it would also be important to identify what impact midlife has, if any, on the family, community, and workplace and at a personal level, as well as with regard to the multicultural nature of the Kenyan population.

Objective of the study

This study objective was to examine the influence of burnout on career advancement among teachers in public secondary schools of Londiani Sub – County.

The research was guided by the following research question;

- To what extent does professional burnout affect how High School teachers in Londiani Sub-County get promotions during their mid-life years?

Rationale of the study

A lot of developmental research has been carried out for the early stages of human development especially childhood development and teenage development. Much less emphasis has been laid on adult development probably because there are minimal changes on the physical person. This overlooks the immense psychological changes that adults experience as they mature. This psychological revolution if well understood by the adult and those around him or her can yield extensive wisdom gained from the experience of living and/or working, leading to a more satisfying and fulfilling career, a factor that will bring immense benefits to learners add all those involved in the education system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical Literature Review

This study reviewed burnout as a measure of midlife transition and the huddles they may erect on an individual's career path.

Professional Burnout and Career Development

Burnout is defined as a negative psychological experience that is the reactions to job-related stress. It pertains to feelings experienced by people whose jobs require repeated exposure to emotionally charged social situations. Thus, it is an occupational hazard to which all members of helping professions are exposed, including teachers. As a metaphor, burnout points the quench of candle or a fire; if the fire does not receive adequate resources, it was quenched after a while (Schaufiel et al 2009). Burnout was first defined by Freuden Berger (1974) and involves feelings of failure and exhaustion resulting from excessive demands on a person's energy with insufficient reward for the effort. Other researchers have defined burnout as psychological

distancing from work (Maslach, 2016). Burnout has been defined as “a syndrome of Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Reduced Accomplishment which is a special risk for individuals who work with other people in some capacity” (Leiter & Maslach, 2008), Block (2008). Teachers going through the mid – life transition have been on the job for well over twenty years and could experience symptoms of burnout.

Freudenberg (2013) in a study on burnout has identified many of the symptoms associated with burnout, which can be categorized into three groups: physical, psychological and behavioral. These symptoms of burnout are very personal, they are generally "lack of" symptoms. The list includes lack of energy, joy, enthusiasm, satisfaction, motivation, and interest, dreams for life, ideas, concentration, self-confidence, or humor (McGee-Cooper, 2010). But any single isolated symptom cannot be viewed as an indication of burnout. Various combinations of the above and perhaps others represent the manifestations of burnout. Other burnout symptoms may include high absenteeism, lack of commitment, and abnormal desire for vacations, low self-esteem, and an inability to take work seriously (Leung et al. 2000; Adams, 2009).

In another study by Oles (2010), on generativity on a sample of 58 midlife individuals using the revised version of a Midlife Crisis Questionnaire to which an additional 60 items relating to values and mid-career issues were added. A principal component analysis of the data revealed, inter alia, a construct of generativity as found also by Oles (2009) and Hermans and Oles (2009). It should be mentioned that the issue of ‘generativity’, which is a cornerstone of Erikson’s (2010) stage and task-specific theory for midlife, is one aspect for which researchers seem to have found validity. Erikson (2010) defined generativity as a key life task in middle age where individuals seek to establish and guide the next generation. Stewart and Ostrove (2008) mention a number of studies which have found that generativity is higher in middle age than in early adulthood (McAdams, de St Aubin & Logan,

2013; McAdams, Hart & Maruna, 2008; Ochse & Plug, 2016; Peterson & Stewart, 2013; Ryff & Heincke, 2013; Ryff & Migdal, 2014; Vaillant, 2013). On the other hand, Stewart and Ostrove (2008) have commented that other theorists and researchers are equivocal about the matter (Gruen, 2014; MacDermid, Frans & De Reus, 2008; Whitbourne, Zushlag, Waterman, 2012). Vandewater and Stewart (2008) suggest that there are three forms of generativity, namely, generative desires, felt capacity for generativity and generative accomplishment. These distinctions could explain the above mentioned equivocation between theorists and researchers.

Levinson (2006) in his study on human life course using 570 respondents claimed that his research revealed there is, a single human life course through which all lives advance. He found no differences between male and female blue-collar workers with regard to psychological experiences during midlife. He postulated however, that the two groups arrived at middle age with different resources and life circumstances. In several studies women showed increases in achievement motivation and independence, as children got older.

Helson and Wink (2012) found in their research turmoil on life transition in the early 40s and stability by age 52 when the women had decreased in negative emotionality and increased their decisiveness. Helson cited several researchers (Datan, 2016; Mitchell & Helson, 2010; Neugarten, Wood, Kraines & Loomis 2008; White & Edwards, 2010) who found that the experience of women at middle age does not seem to be more negatively related to physiology and social roles than that of men. He further posited that the evidence from contemporary research shows that gender differences in midlife are due to stereotyping and gender discrimination. However, the gender schemas that emerge in midlife seem to be more complex than in earlier developmental stages. Gender schemas are furthermore thought to be learned early in life and sustained and supplemented

by educational institutions and occupational settings.

Theoretical Framework: Sigmund Freud's theoretical contribution

This theory was proposed by Sigmund Freud. In this study this theory anchored the variable of mid-life transition and its influence on career advancement. No study of the literature in midlife development would be complete without reference to the contribution of Sigmund Freud. It can be said that stage-based theories of adult development and the midlife transition in the modern era, had their genesis with Freud's final description of the libidinal stage (Fine, 2013). Freud's conception of psychology was that the role of the unconscious and sexuality is dominant and accordingly, his theory of personality development is described as a psychosexual development theory (Jahoda, 2017). This theory was based on five phases of psychosexual development. Fine (2013) describes the five stages as follows:

- The first three stages, namely, oral, anal and phallic begin at infancy until the age of six;
- Stage four is referred to as the latency stage which occurs from age six to puberty; and
- The final stage five he called the genital stage which begins at the start of puberty when sexual urges are re-awakened.

Freud has been criticized by many for over-emphasizing the sexual impulse (Jahoda, 2017; Jung, 2011; Kohut 2011; Plaut, 2018; Thompson, 2010). Although Freud's theory of sexuality was based entirely on his own observations in his clinical practice, his generalizations from these observations

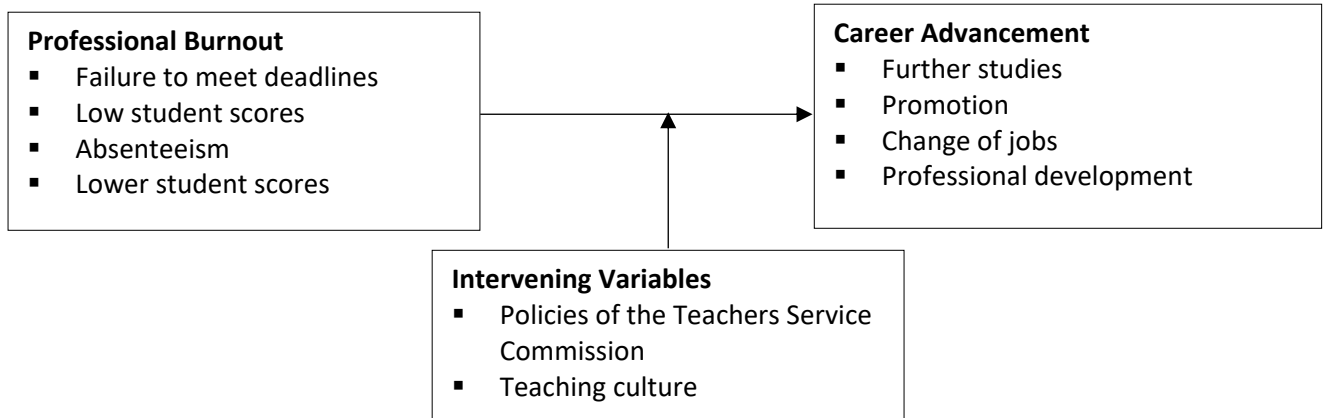
were nevertheless far-reaching (Fine, 2013). Freud never theorized specifically about further development taking place after stage five and into adulthood, but it is nevertheless posited that libidinal theory should not be enclosed within the literal meaning of his five stages. Fine has argued that Freud laid the foundation for whatever has happened in the development of the psychoanalytic field to date.

Two of Freud's early followers, Jung and Erikson, are key theorists in relation to midlife psychology and developed their own theories based on the psychodynamic school of thought initiated by Freud. Jung (2011) wrote an essay entitled *the stages of life* in which he explicated and elaborated on a theory of midlife. Erikson (2010) took Freud's Five Stage

Psychosexual Development Theory and created a Psychosocial Theory incorporating an extension of the adolescent stage as well as an additional three adult stages. Erikson (2010) also gave a different meaning to the five stages by creating bipolar challenges for each stage for example, trust versus mistrust as the fundamental challenge for the infant in the oral stage (the infant has to learn to trust its caregiver to ensure its survival). Jung and Erikson's theories are elaborated upon below and located within the late modern and postmodern theories of midlife on career development as well.

Conceptual Framework

This study will examine the influence of midlife transition on management of career advancement among teachers. This relationship is presented as in figure 1:



Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Professional burnout was the independent variables while career advancement was the dependent variable. Career advancement was indicated by the parameters of further studies like a master’s degree or PhD, promotion, enrolling for Teacher Professional development courses or a change in jobs all together.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for the study was mixed method approach and concurrent triangulation research design. The target population was 476 respondents comprising of 440 teachers and principals from 36 schools in Londiani sub-county. The sample for the study was 95 respondents selected using the stratified sampling technique. Five strata bases was created based on the number of zones. From each zone, a sample of 3 Principals and 16 teachers was identified using purposive sampling. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the teachers whereas key informant interviews was conducted for the principals. Piloting was conducted in Kedowa Zone where 10 teachers was sampled to establish validity, reliability, credibility and dependability. To enhance content validity, the researcher had research instruments appraised by the research supervisors. Validity was ascertained through expert judgment. Reliability was determined using test retest. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was used which simply provides an overall reliability coefficient for a set of variables at

a level of 0.7. Credibility was determined by involving multiple analysts whereas dependability was established by detailed reporting. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically along the objectives and presented thematically in narrative form. Quantitative data was analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages and inferentially using ANOVA in Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS 24).

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Burnout and the management of career advancement of teachers in public secondary schools in Londiani Sub - county

There was evidence that the relationship between burnout on career advancement which was linear; the correlation coefficient (R) of 0.510 indicated moderately strong positive linear relationship. This implied that burnout has a significant and moderate strong relationship with the career management. The coefficient of determination, R-square of 0.260 implied that 26.0% of the variance in career management is explained by burnout. The significance value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 thus the model was statistically significant in predicting the effect of burnout on career management. The research hypothesis posited H_0 : burnout has no significant effect on career management. Thus, the model was significant and therefore the null hypothesis was rejected on the

ground that burnout had a significant and moderate strong positive linear correlation with career management.

The study recommended that;

- The government, specifically the Teachers Service Commission should roll out programs to support teachers in dealing with professional burnout, stress, depression and illnesses that emerge with the onset of the midlife years and the general aging process. This will help the aging teachers to remain vibrant, energised and ambitious in order to tap on the wealth of experience they have gained after being on the job for a longer period.
- Schools should establish programs that support teacher's wellness and work-life balance for enhanced performance.

- Training colleges and universities can come up with strategies to institutionalise mid-life transition management into their teaching and learning.

Suggestions for Further Study

The researcher suggested that other studies be done on the same topic but in a different geographical environment. Studies can also be done on the individual study objectives. Other studies can also consider other objectives and variables not considered in the current study. This study provided insights into Mid-life transition on career advancement. The researcher recommended that a study be done by expanding the scope to other counties.

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