

# Factors Influencing Teachers' Competence in Developing Resilience in Vulnerable Children in Primary Schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to assess the effect of teacher characteristics on their competence in developing resilience in vulnerable primary school children. A descriptive survey research design was used. This study was based on resiliency theory as proposed by Krovetz (1998). Simple random sampling was used to select a sample size of 108 teachers. Data was collected using questionnaire and interview schedule. Data was also analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques that include frequency count, mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation and multiple regression models. Data analysis was aided by use of statistical package for social scientist version 20.0 (SPSS) and Ms-Excel 2007. Data analyzed was presented in frequency tables and pie charts. The study found that experience and gender had an influence on teachers' competence when developing resilience in vulnerable children. Based on the findings, it's recommended that schools dealing with vulnerable children should use female teachers, trained and experience more when developing resilience in vulnerable children. Finally the findings may act as a basis for further studies by other scholars doing research in the same field of study.

**Keywords:** Resilience, Vulnerable, Gender, Marital Status, Experience

## 1.1 Introductions

Resilience concerns the ability to 'bounce back'. It involves doing well against the odds, coping, and recovering (Stein, 2005). Masten et al (1990) define resilience as "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances". Earlier studies of resilience focused on the assets of those who thrived in spite of significant adversity (Ebersöhn, 2008; Ferreira, 2006; Loots, 2005; McCallaghan, 2007; Mnguni, 2006; Odendaal, 2006), all made significant contributions to research in this area. In the onset of the research on resilience, researchers have been devoted to discovering the protective factors that explain people's adaptation to adverse conditions, such as maltreatment, catastrophic life events, or urban poverty. A consistent finding was that, in most cases, adults and young people developed coping mechanisms and achieved successful life outcomes. Empirical research on resilience has burgeoned in the last decade (Grotberg, 2001; Howard & Johnson, 2000; Knight, 2007; Luthar, 2000). Severe adversity, such as the birth of a child with disabilities and /or the many difficult situations that families may encounter) can be described as coping with loss/grief situations (Edelson, 2000).

Studies have also recognized the significant contributions made by schools and their teachers in developing protective factors in their pupils (Russo, 2007). Schools are perhaps the most prominent social context in which children mature and are replete with opportunities to nurture children. Teachers have a significant influence on the development of children because from the age of five, children spend a large part of their day in school, and these daily school experiences may affect them in multiple ways. Minnard (2002) emphasized that effective schools are those built on a foundation of protective factors, and can therefore provide pupils with security and greater opportunities to succeed. Gilligan (2002) emphasizes the importance of encouraging resilience and positive qualities such as self-esteem in children who have been abused. He points out ways this can be achieved, in particular through the child's relationship with a teacher.

Research has consistently found that schools and teachers play a critical role in the development of resilience in children (Krovetz, 2008). Moreover, Ungar, (2007) has argued that teachers play an important role in developing resilience in children through providing protective factors such as caring educational settings, positive and high

expectations, and positive learning environments that are relevant and practical. Teachers can promote educational resilience in children by reducing stress and providing positive support. However, in order for teachers to successfully recognize and assist children to be more resilient, it is necessary that their knowledge and awareness reflect the many complex factors that influence its development.

Our knowledge about the emergence of resilience will develop further as our children deal with different types of stress in their respective environments. However, it is important to remember that resilience is a common phenomenon arising from ordinary human adaptive processes. “It does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources in the minds, brains, and bodies of children, in their families and relationships, and in their communities (The New York University Child Study Center Updated on Jul 9, 2010).

In Kenya today the focus of empirical work then has been shifted to understand the underlying protective processes. Researchers endeavor to uncover how some factors (e.g. school, family) may contribute to positive outcomes. Stressful events are common occurrences in the lives of our children. In the presence of stressful events, the developmental challenge for children is to learn to cope, continue to adapt to changes and to grow into competent adults. Children who are able to succeed in the face of adversity have been described as resilient (Newman, 2004). However, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) states that every child is entitled to basic rights, among which education is the key. Children at a formative age need to be properly grounded on knowledge, values and attitudes that promote interdependence and respect of sanctity of life and appreciation of the environment. Resilience suggests the need to not only cope but to have an “accomplishment of wellness in the face of difficulties” (Grant, Ramcharan & Flynn, 2007).

The development of the Ministry of Education (MoE) strategic plan and its eventual implementation in Kenya is guided by the national philosophy which places education at the centre stage of the country’s human and economic development strategies. The plan therefore focuses on the acquisition of knowledge and skills as well as provision of life-long learning. Emphasis is placed on the provision of a holistic quality education and training that promotes cognitive psychomotor and effective domains of learners (RoK, 2011). It is clear that many children in modern societies face multiple and accumulating risks that require multiple protective interventions and comprehensive efforts to prevent or ameliorate risk for children and their families. No child is invulnerable and, as risk levels rise, fewer children escape the developmental consequences of adversity. This study therefore, established teachers’ perception on the factors influencing their competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children in primary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Due to their daily contact with children, teachers are considered to be the first line of assistance for children in building resilience (Miller, DuPaul & Lutz 2002).

## 1.2 Problem Formulation

Over the past decade, researchers have made significant advances in the conceptualization of resilience and the research approaches for studying it. Children who have thrived under conditions of harsh adversity command a great deal of admiration. But the perspective that resilience is an extraordinary quality that distinguishes a relatively few extraordinary children is challenged by Masten (2001), who notes that it is generally found to be based on ordinary, normal human adaptive processes.

Due to its cosmopolitan nature, Uasin Gishu County has a number of schools established to deal with vulnerable children as a result of rise in street children, orphans; HIV/AIDs infected and affected children and more likely children affected by post-election violence (PEV) of (2007-2008). The researcher carried out a reconnaissance on few schools that deal with vulnerable children and although these children are provided with food, shelter, security and education, their performance and adaptability does not match other pupils on a general scale. According to Skovdal et al, (2013) most of vulnerable children were scoring poorly in their exam and it was not satisfactory from a child development perspective as it meant the child would be unable to proceed to secondary school.

Specifically, numerous research studies have found resilient outcomes to be present when a small number of systems are operating well: relationships with caring adults, effective self-regulation skills, competent intellectual abilities, positive self-regard, and intrinsic motivation to succeed. The most serious threats to positive development may well consist of the hazards to these basic protective systems rather than other forms of risks. The fact that some circumstances exist in which a majority of vulnerable children in U.G County do not

successfully adapt is evidence that these processes can be easily disrupted. However, one critical difference between the literatures is that the study of resilience tends to take a broader view, focusing on larger issues of adjustment leaving a gap on teacher factors that can influence their competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children. Due to this gap, the researcher attempted to bridge the relationship between teachers' perception on the factors influencing their competence and developing resilience in vulnerable children. The study therefore hypothesized that:

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between teachers' gender and their competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between teachers' marital status and their competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children.

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between teacher's experience and their competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children.

### **1.3 Theoretical Framework**

This study was based on resiliency theory as proposed by Krovetz (1998). Resiliency theory defines the protective factors in families, schools, and communities that exist in the lives of successful children and youth and compares these protective factors with what is missing from the lives of children and youth who are troubled. Bernard (1997) describes four common attributes of resilient children: social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy, sense of purpose and future. Resiliency theory proposes that most people have some of each of these attributes, but that whether these attributes are strong enough to help individuals cope with adversity in their lives depends on protective factors in families, schools, and communities.

Krovetz maintains that the real power of these personal characteristics is determined by the extent to which the child's environment is supported by teacher factors (a caring environment, positive expectations, and meaningful participation). Krovetz acknowledges that building resilience in pupils does not come from a curriculum or a special program developed with new grant money. Rather, resilience develops as the result of long-term, systemic change that reflects the communities in which children live and work. Within resilient school and communities, Krovetz has observed classes that are heterogeneously grouped, or re-grouped as appropriate. The resilient school provides a "safety net" for pupils who may fall behind in academics; common instructional practices are generally used within the school. It may also be critical that teachers who work with these pupils ask questions that require higher-order thinking skills. Furthermore, when pupils ask questions to teachers, the teachers should respond not with the answer, but rather with a thought-provoking question. Krovetz also believes that the school must foster resilience by: building collegiality, providing intellectual stimulation, giving teachers a significant voice about the school's daily operations and increasing job satisfaction.

### **2.0 Empirical review**

According to the International Resilience Project (IRP), children facing such situations often feel lonely, fearful, and vulnerable. These feelings are less overwhelming for children who have the skills, attitudes, beliefs and resources of resilience. To overcome adversities, children draw from three sources of resilience features labeled: I HAVE, I AM, And I CAN. What they draw from each of the three sources may be described as follows (Grotberg, 1995):

#### **2.1 Identification of Resilient Children**

Garmezy (1983) identified individual characteristics of resilient pupils in high poverty areas who succeeded despite their disadvantaged circumstances. These characteristics include a wide array of social skills, positive peer interactions, a high degree of social responsiveness and sensitivity, intelligence (measured by IQ), empathy, a sense of humor, and critical problem-solving skills.

#### **2.2 Teachers' Understanding/Knowledge of Resilience in Children**

Oswald et al., (2003) studied the views of teachers in relation to resilience in children. The study investigated the beliefs of 477 teachers' from junior primary and secondary schools in South Australia. Teachers completed a questionnaire on the important factors that influence the development of resilience. The findings of the study indicated that junior primary teachers believe the school to play the more important role in developing resilience. Children are considered resilient by these teachers when they are "effective communicators, having a strong attachment with at least one adult, holding a personal belief in being able to achieve and be successful, and the acceptance of responsibility" (Oswald et al., 2003).

Similar results were also found in studies where interviews were conducted with primary school teachers on their views concerning what made resilient versus non-resilient children (Howard & Johnson 2000). According to Dryden et al., teachers refer frequently to the individual characteristics that children possess. Despite previously mentioned research on resilience, teachers in this study considered resilience to be mostly innate, that is, something that children do or do not have. Howard and Johnson (2000) reported that teachers believed that having “a tough life” at home was the cause of pupils lacking resilience and being at-risk. In direct contrast to the pupils who believed that learning difficulties was a key to having “a tough life”, teachers in this study did not believe that a lack of school achievement affected levels of resilience. That is, for teachers, being successful at school was not related to school life.

Not surprisingly, teachers tend to underestimate the potential or actual roles they might play in supporting children within their schools (Oswald et al. 2003). (Oswald et al. 2003) interviewed teachers about their views on the characteristics of resilience. The results of this study revealed two broad perspectives. While some teachers believed they could play an important role in the lives of children they educate and make valuable contributions, others believed they could have little impact during the time children are in their class and that both as adults and teachers they lacked the control or influence to alter situations.

Teachers’ understanding of resilience may be affected by their pre-service training, the lack of professional development, or prior experience using the deficit model, which has dominated educational thinking (Mathews 2005). Teachers need to be aware of the significant contributions they can make in developing resilience. While prior research suggests that teachers have some knowledge of resilience, research does not appear to have examined factors influencing teachers’ competence in developing resiliency levels in children. However, one related study revealed that teachers, in comparison to the pupils’ self-report, underestimated pupils’ levels of optimism and their adjustment to high school (Boman, 2002). It may not necessarily follow that having an understanding of resilience means that teachers are able to distinguish resilient or vulnerable children in their classrooms. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore factors influencing teachers’ competence in developing resiliency levels in children.

### **2.3 The Relationship between Teachers’ Gender and Their Competence in Developing Resilience in Vulnerable Children**

Smith (2004) observed that the diminishing presence of male teachers was a global issue and that the proportion of men within teaching ranks was declining significantly hence a decline in the resilience of pupils because the male nature does not foster resilience. He cited many studies whose findings demonstrated the continual decline of males in the teaching profession. He quoted figures from Commonwealth of Australia (2002), Education Queensland (2002), Queensland Catholic Education Commission (2002), NEA (2003), and Nelson (2003) to illustrate the situation of gender imbalance among primary schoolteachers, especially within Australia. More female teachers in schools were found to promote resilience in pupils because of their understanding nature.

Nelson (2003), for instance, was cited to have claimed that in 2002, the proportion of male primary teachers (within Australia) was only 20.9% and NEA (2003) was said to have indicated that only nine percent of American elementary school teachers are men. It has also been speculated in some quarters that teacher’s gender affected the resilience of the child. Dee (2006) described two theories which suggested that the resilience of the child depended on the gender of the teacher. According to Dee, (2006), one theory asserts that the teacher’s gender shapes communications between teacher and pupil, while another says the teacher acts as a gender-specific role-model, regardless of what he or she says or does thus promoting more resilience. Dee further explained that the second theory stipulated that pupils were more engaged, behaved more appropriately, and performed at a higher level when taught by one who shared their gender.

Results of studies on the influence of teacher’s gender on the child’s resilience, however, appear to be inconclusive. Some authorities cited by Smith (2004) had claimed that there was a strong relationship between the gender of the teacher and the resilience of the pupil. Among those who had taken this stance were the Catholic Education Office (2002) and Education Queensland (2002). These had assumed that boys suffered a disadvantage in primary schools due to the paucity of male teachers and went further to campaign along with other protagonists (West, 2004; Nelson, 2003) for increase in the number of male teachers in order to cushion the effects of teacher gender imbalance in the schools and thus promote more resilience among pupils. Krieg (2005) reported that a number of findings had indicated teacher and pupil genders were correlated with the resilience of pupils. Furthermore, Dee (2005) had found that the same-sex teacher indeed had an impact on pupil resilience

and performance. Dee (2006) again reported that his results confirmed that a teacher's gender does have large effects on pupil's resilience.

Based on his convictions concerning the authenticity of his results, he went further to claim that girls have better educational outcomes and more resilience when taught by women and boys are better off when taught by men. On the other hand, Holmlund and Sund's (2005) results did not support the idea that a same-sex teacher had a positive causal impact on pupil resilience outcomes. Krieg (2005) also found no evidence to support the hypothesis that the interaction of pupil and teacher gender impacted upon resilience among pupils.

A recent UNESCO advocacy brief (UNESCO, 2006) argues in favor of hiring more female teachers in developing countries, and states that doing so will have two positive outcomes. Their presence will lead to an improvement in both girls' enrolment and girls' resilience and thus learning achievements. Other researchers have also suggested a beneficial relationship between teacher gender and resilience, especially for girls (UNESCO, 2000). A UNESCO-sponsored study of four countries (Bangladesh, Nepal, India and Pakistan) on female teachers in rural primary schools found that female teachers were perceived as more effective in developing resilience among children; children also saw them as more open and more comfortable to interact with than male teachers thus fostering a higher level of resilience (UNESCO, 2000).

Female teachers tend to use a more pupil-oriented style of teaching that emphasizes relating to the pupil. This is because they understand the pupils they are teaching. Compared with their male counterparts, women teachers also tend to have more liberal views about letting the pupils define and identify their own learning experiences and learning styles thus promoting a greater level of resilience. Women teachers are also more likely to involve their pupils in peer collaboration than in personalized activities in class (Chen, 2000). With respect to the positive relationship between the presence of female teachers and improved resilience for girls the argument is that the presence of a female teacher may help alleviate parental concerns about the safety and well-being of their daughters in traditional, gender-segregated societies and encourage them to send their daughters to school (UNESCO, 2000).

#### **2.4 The Effect of Teachers' Marital Status on Their Competence in Developing Resilience in Vulnerable Children**

Researchers have shown that teacher effectiveness is one of the keys to improve pupils' educational outcomes and level of resilience Rivkin, Hanushek & Kain (2002) and Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, (2007) found that married than the single teachers have significant impact on pupils' ability to be more resilient. Gordon, Kane & Staiger (2006) also found that pupils who consistently have an effective teacher benefits exponentially from schooling. The general assumption is that married teachers are more assertive than unmarried teachers hence promoting a high level of resilience among children. The fact is that sex roles are somewhat rigid in Africa and gender differences are emphasized ([Onyezuigbo, 2003](#)).

Review of related literature revealed that a difference exists between the level of teaching competency among married and unmarried teachers. For instance, [Eskin \(2003\)](#) reported married teachers to be more assertive than unmarried teachers thus a high level of resilience among their pupils. Further complicating this picture, other researchers have found no relationship between teachers' marital status and pupil outcomes. In the Netherlands, for instance, Geert Driessen (2007) found that teacher marital status has no effect on pupil achievement, attitudes, or behavior and resilience, regardless of pupil gender, ethnic background, or socioeconomic status.

Thus the evidence that increasing the presence of married teachers will improve girls' learning outcomes is at best limited. With respect to the positive relationship between the presence of married teachers and improved school participation for girls the argument is that the presence of a married teacher may help alleviate parental concerns about the safety and well-being of their daughters in traditional, gender-segregated societies and encourage them to send their daughters to school thus promoting high level of resilience among children (UNESCO 2000).



## **2.5 The Relationship between Teachers' Experience and Their Competence in Developing Resilience in Vulnerable Children**

The importance of experienced teachers in schools has been highlighted by many researchers (Akinleye, 2001, Ogunbare 2001 and Commeyras, 2003). Researchers have also given different opinions about teaching experience and vulnerable children' learning outcomes in schools ( Ijaiya, 2000 & Akomolafe, 2001). Their arguments centered on the fact that experience improves teaching skills while pupils learn better at the hands of teachers who have taught them continuously over a period of years (Ijaiya, 2000).

Smith (2010) argues that employing educators with previous teaching experience is beneficial to the vulnerable children because they have skills in classroom management and guidance, increased credibility with teachers, provision of career opportunities for school teachers, and increased understanding of problems that are unique to schools" (Smith, 2001). Experienced teachers identify the establishment of classroom management as one of the major goals that needs to be accomplished first. They experienced increased ownership and involvement with the vulnerable children in their classes over time.

Experienced teachers differ from novice teachers in important ways. They are likely to need professional development that affirms the knowledge, experience, and intuitive judgment they have cultivated during their careers. At the same time, teaching experience does not necessarily result in expertise (Tsui, 2005). Some experienced teachers are not as receptive to professional development as are new teachers, even though they might benefit from opportunities to reflect on and enhance their knowledge and refresh their enthusiasm for teaching (Tsui, 2003).

Yin, and Mayall (2006) found that experienced teachers managed their classrooms more effectively than less experienced teachers. They took more control than did novice teachers in establishing classroom routines and monitoring group work and were less controlling and reactive in dealing with individual student behavior, thus teachers of deaf blind learners are expected to manage their classes effectively. However, Gatbonton (2008) found that experienced teachers may be less concerned with promoting learners' acquisition of specific language items, such as using with third person singular verbs in the simple present tense, than with ensuring that genuine and meaningful communication occur. In addition, Experience teachers might change classroom routines or engage in action research (Chisman & Crandall, 2007). For vulnerable children' teachers to deal with individual behaviors and effectively communicating with vulnerable children' they need to be well experienced.

Farrell (2005) suggest that reflective and collaborative professional development activities can be particularly beneficial for experienced teachers, as can activities that place them in a mentoring or coaching role. Walls et al (2002), found that expert teachers rely more on procedural knowledge (their own practical knowledge of what steps and techniques have worked well in the past), whereas novices rely more on declarative knowledge (the theoretical knowledge they have gleaned from teacher training programs).

However, review of related literature revealed that a difference exists between the level of teaching competency among married and unmarried teachers. Yet, there are few studies on teacher factors and teacher competence in developing resilient among vulnerable children particularly in developing countries.

## **3.0 Research Methodology**

The study employed a descriptive research survey design. Descriptive survey research designs was fit in this study because it describes records and analyzes situations in attempt to investigate teachers' perception on the factors influencing their competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children in primary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The target population comprised 30 head teachers and 361 teachers drawn from 30 primary schools dealing with vulnerable children in Uasin Gishu County. In this study the sample size consisted of 108 teachers, 30 head teachers selected from the targeted population. This number of 108 teachers was chosen to represent 30% of the target population as recognized by Kerlinger (1973) as an adequate representative sample. To gather data in relation to the study, the researcher used questionnaires and interview schedules. The following is a description for the same. This study obtained cronbach alpha values of 0.711, 0.831, 0.901, 0.733 and 0.707 which were above 0.7

### 3.1 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistical techniques included mean and standard deviation; frequency counts and percentages. The inferential statistics that was used to test the hypothesis was Pearson correlation and multiple regression since it is a parametric statistics (higher method of measuring hypothesis) and also it is used to test two or more than two independent variable (analysis concerning relationships). The results were presented in frequency tables and pie charts. (0.05 level of significance)

### 4.0 Findings and Discussions

This section presents findings from the study about teachers' perception on the factors influencing their competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children in primary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya.

#### 4.1 Attributes of Vulnerable Children

Table 1 captures respondents' response in regards to developing resilience. Findings from table 1 found that vulnerable children do not score good grades. This might be associated in that, vulnerable children do not have high self esteem (mean =3.06) and are not able to solve problems (mean =3.3). Findings also indicated that vulnerable children are not able to compete with equal measures with non vulnerable children. However, results revealed that vulnerable children have improved in their discipline and have a sense of humor

**Table 1 Attributes of Vulnerable Children**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
The vulnerable children in my school are scoring good grades	3.03	1.073
vulnerable children in my school are competing with equal measures with non vulnerable children	3.17	1.191
vulnerable children have improved in their discipline	3.68	1.109
vulnerable children in my school have high self esteem	3.06	1.286
vulnerable children in my school are able to solve problems	3.03	1.142
vulnerable children in my school have a sense of humor	3.56	1.367

#### 4.2 Perceived influences of Teacher's Gender, marital status and experience on the Level of Competence when Developing Resilience in Vulnerable Children

The findings in table 2 showed that teachers perceive that vulnerable children are not attached to teachers of the same gender with them. They also believe female teachers are able to develop resilience among vulnerable children than male teachers. This can be supported by Dee (2006) that the teacher's gender shapes communications between teacher and pupil, while another says the teacher acts as a gender-specific role-model, regardless of what he or she says or does thus promoting more resilience. Findings indicated that I believe teachers gender matters in developing of resilience of vulnerable children this can be explained in the fact that pupils are more engaged, behaved more appropriately, and performed at a higher level when taught by one who shared their gender (Dee, 2006).

Results in table 2 revealed that teachers perceive that marital status do not influences teacher level of competence in dealing with vulnerable children and parental skills posses by married do not develop resilience in vulnerable. However, they believe that single teachers have more time with vulnerable children as compared to married teachers. More findings showed that experienced teachers are able to develop resilience in vulnerable children. Teachers without adequate experience have difficulties dealing with vulnerable children. Teachers also believe that teachers who have dealt with vulnerable children previously acquire enough status and experience to develop resilience. Researchers have given different opinions about teaching experience and vulnerable children' learning outcomes in schools ( Ijaiya, 2000 & Akomolafe, 2001). Their arguments centered on the fact that experience improves teaching skills while pupils learn better at the hands of teachers who have taught them continuously over a period of years (Ijaiya, 2000). In a nutshell, experienced teachers have mastered the training and teaching pedagogy and they have mastered appropriate ways to deliver it to pupils of different abilities hence promoting resilience among them.

**Table 2 Perceived influences of Teacher’s Gender, marital status and experience on the Level of Competence when Developing Resilience in Vulnerable Children**

	Mean	Std. Deviation
I believe teachers gender matters in developing of resilience of vulnerable children	3.42	1.271
Vulnerable children are more attached to teachers of the same gender with them	2.89	1.229
Female teachers are believed to be able to develop resilience among vulnerable children than male teachers.	3.15	1.322
Your marital status influences your level of competence in dealing with vulnerable children.	3.13	1.339
Married teachers are believed to have parental skills, hence are able to develop resilience in vulnerable	3.64	1.213
Single teachers are believed to have more time with vulnerable children as compared to married teachers	2.73	1.299
experienced teachers are able to develop resilience in vulnerable children	2.81	1.339
I believe teachers without adequate experience have difficulties dealing with vulnerable children	3.58	1.112
I believe teachers who have dealt with vulnerable children previously acquire enough status and experience to develop resilience	3.58	0.955

#### 4.3 Correlation Statistics

The results in table 3 indicate that, there is positive and significant correlation between teacher’s gender and developing resilience ( $r = 0.413$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The results also indicate that there is a positive and significant correlation between teacher experience and developing resilience ( $r = 0.330$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ). Finally, the findings indicate that there is no significant relationship between teacher marital status with developing resilience

**Table 3 Correlation Results**

	Developing resilience	Teacher gender	Teacher marital	Teacher experience
Developing resilience	1			
Teacher gender	.413**	1		
Teacher marital	0.045	.333**	1	
Teacher experience	.330**	0.039	-0.047	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#### 4.4 Testing Hypothesis

The results of table 4 showed the teachers’ gender has a positive and significant effect on their competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children ( $\beta_1 = 0.335$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). In conformity with the findings, Smith (2004) claimed that there was a strong relationship between the gender of the teacher and the resilience of the pupil. Additionally, Nelson (2003) asserts that teachers’ gender affects the resilience of the child. However, Krieg (2005) found no significant relationship between teachers’ gender and resilience among pupils.

Teachers’ marital had no significant effect in developing resilience in vulnerable children ( $\beta_2 = -0.06$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). In line with the results, Geert Driessen (2007) found no relationship between teachers’ marital status and pupil achievement, attitudes, or behavior and resilience. Further, as opposed to the study, Eskin (2003) reported that married teachers are more assertive than unmarried teachers thus a high level of resilience among their pupils. From the aforementioned, increasing the presence of married teachers has a mixed relationship with children’s ability to be more resilient.

Teachers’ experience has a positive and significant effect on their competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children ( $\beta_3 = 0.002$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Smith (2010) argues that employing educators with previous teaching experience is beneficial to the vulnerable children because they have skills in classroom management and guidance, increased credibility with teachers, provision of career opportunities for school teachers, and increased understanding of problems that are unique to schools" (Smith, 2001). Experienced teachers identify the



establishment of classroom management as one of the major goals that needs to be accomplished first. They experienced increased ownership and involvement with the vulnerable children in their classes over time. Also experienced teachers have acquired more skills through interaction and time hence able to assist vulnerable children to develop resilience

**Table 4 Multiple Regression Statistics**

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.521	0.515		1.012	0.314
Teacher gender	0.327	0.092	0.335	3.565	0.001
Teacher marital	-0.061	0.1	-0.06	-0.612	0.542
Teacher experience	0.341	0.105	0.27	3.233	0.002
R Square	0.326				
Adjusted R Square	0.292				
F	9.652				
Sig.	.000				

**a Dependent Variable: developing resilience**

### 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study established that teachers' gender has a significant effect on their competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children. Precisely, female teachers were found to relate better with pupils. This is because they allow them to identify their own learning experiences and learning styles thereby promoting a greater level of reliance. As well, vulnerable children tend to be more attached to teachers of the same gender with them.

In addition, teachers' experience has a significant effect on their competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children since experienced teachers are considered to have gained more skills with time that enables them to identify and help vulnerable children to developing resilience. Finally, teachers' marital status has no significant effect on their competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children. Thus, it is not entirely factual that single teachers have more time with vulnerable children as compared to married teachers.

The study has established that gender has a significant influence on teachers' competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children. There is therefore need to attach vulnerable children with teachers of the same gender with them. Also, female teachers are best suited to deal with vulnerable children since they have motherly instincts that enable them deal well with vulnerable children. As the saying goes 'experience is the best teacher' it is important for schools dealing with vulnerable to involve all teachers when developing resilience in vulnerable children so as they can gain more skills to deal with such children

Although the implications of the findings of the study indicate that teacher gender, qualification and experience have a significant effect on teachers' competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children, more elaborate research is necessary to accurately establish other factors that have an influence on teachers' competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children. In addition, including moderator factors and looking forward to direct or indirect relationship towards developing resilience in vulnerable children can also be made in the research models of the new research by other scholars in future. A similar study also has to be conducted in another County so as to come up with a conclusive picture. Given these considerations, there will be conclusive results on teachers' perception on the factors influencing their competence in developing resilience in vulnerable children.

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