

Causes of teacher attrition education essay



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This chapter focuses on review of literatures related to the study, starting with studies on causes of teacher attrition, this is because without attrition there will be no retention. In other words, all researches on teacher retention emanated as a result of teacher attrition. Other important aspects covered by this chapter are; factors that can help in retaining teachers and Theoretical/Conceptual framework.

2. 3 Causes of Teacher Attrition

Teacher attrition and retention is complex, with reasons for leaving or staying often related to individual factors, yet certain themes and patterns may be related (Certo & Fox, 2002). Many factors can be attributed to the causes of teacher attrition, although the factors may varies within regions. The factors in the United States may necessarily not be the same in Malaysia or in Nigeria, but despite the disparities there are factors that are peculiar to all regions as indicated by the authors above, for the purpose of this review it is decided to choose and review the factors that are related to the region or area of study.

2. 3. 1 Low Salary

We are in an era were money play vital role in our lives, to sustain yourself and your family you must have an income that can be utilized for livelihood. Salary as a source of income is very important to every working individual, reasonably payment can determine ones readiness to a job while payment that is low can also affect someone and can even lead to his willingness to leave a job. Many literatures clarified low salary as a factor for teacher's attrition as indicated below.

Hess (2006) examined the effects of differentiated salaries in hard to staff urban schools on teacher retention. The study was conducted as a case study in one particular school, Rolling Hills Middle School in Kentucky. He interviewed current teachers and former teachers who had left the school within the past year. The school according to the researcher was among the schools that participated in the Kentucky Department of Education's Differentiated Compensation Research Project which ran from 2003-2005. He added from his findings that there wasn't enough money available to ease the teacher attrition problem in the hard-to-staff schools. In this circumstance, money truly matters to be able to tackle attrition problems.

Gladis et, al (2007) conducted their study covering two large school districts in Florida among Teachers that left the teaching profession in 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 on one hand and those that are still in the teaching profession on the other hand. Out of 2, 858 teachers that left teaching within the period mentioned, 1131 teachers were reached through their contact provided by their schools, 901 completed their survey questionnaire. Out of the 20, 148 serving teachers, 1145 were randomly selected, a total 898 completed their survey. Their results revealed that over 50% of those teachers who left teaching place significantly more importance on finance more than those teachers who remain. This may not be far from the fact that, those leavers may have found better paying positions or positions with similar pay but less responsibility and stress. One of the major defect of this study is that, the teachers that left the teaching profession who participated in the study were not contacted one on one, but rather filled the questionnaire and sent back to the researcher, it would have been better for the researcher to have

personal contact with those categories of teachers so as to solicit information from them verbally, this would have given him a forum to hear from their voice why they leave teaching profession.

In Texas, Liza, Michelle & John (2008) interviewed teachers who left the teaching profession within the first to three years of their entrance. Virtually all the respondent answered that low salary is among the factors that led to their attrition, the researchers reported that many of the teachers expressed that the salary they received is low compared to their hours put in, and they at times spent extra hours which they are not paid for, so this affected them and causes their leaving.

Rumberger (1987) examined acute shortage of teachers in the area of Mathematics and Sciences in 2300 public secondary schools of the United States, the results of his analysis support the proposition that salary differentials between teachers and alternative occupations influence teacher shortages and attrition among Mathematics and Science teachers. In analysing his findings, one may not be surprised for the shortage of teachers in the field of Mathematics and Sciences because, the world is now turning rapidly to Science and Technology and specialist in this field are needed for advancement. It will be very difficult then to stop teachers from leaving hence their salary will be better when they leave class to industries, but for government to retain them there should be increase in the pay of these teachers so as to take off their mind from eying places outside the teaching profession.

In their study of survey data from 379 novice teachers in the 1993-94 School and Staffing Survey (SASS) and 1995 Teacher Follow up Survey (TFS) and 114 first-year teachers in a Western state, Stockard, & Lehman, (2004) found that salary were more important variables, at least for the national sample. When other variables were controlled, teachers with lower salaries, in small towns, and in the West were more likely than others to have left teaching. Those in the West were also more likely to move to other positions. Again, the authors hypothesize that the importance of these factors may be related to the pursuit of better employment opportunities. Teachers with low salaries may more actively seek out other employment. This could be as a result of relatively high cost of living on the West coast may have prompted these teachers to seek other opportunities. In addition, teachers in the West may have been more likely to move to other positions in education as a rapidly growing population and teacher shortage produced more job opportunities.

The report submitted to the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee of United Kingdom by the National Teachers Union (2004) stated that Teachers start at a salary disadvantage relative to other graduate professions and then fall further behind, according to their report the starting salary for teachers in 2002 was £17, 595, compared to the average starting salary for graduates generally of £19, 714 in addition, despite recent increases for new entrants to teaching, teachers' starting salaries continue to lag well behind those of other graduate professions. The relatively low level of teachers' starting salaries continues to hinder recruitment to the profession, they cited an example that, in 1994, the starting salary for teachers was worth 96 per cent of median graduate starting salaries, but in

2002, teachers' starting salaries declined to just 89 per cent of average graduate starting salaries. Teachers have lagged behind other graduates in terms of salary progression for a number of years. This disadvantage compared to other graduates continues and this could be among the reasons why teachers may decide to take another job.

Webb et al. (2004) conducted a comparative study among teachers in England and Finland. Despite the fact that all the sampled teachers complained of low salary, but the problem is more pronounced within Finnish teachers. They reported low salary to be the largest disincentive for remaining in teaching. 9 out of 13 teachers spoke out strongly for the need for pay reform to elevate their level of pay to that of other professions, to establish national salary norms and to remove the anomalies between municipalities which resulted in some teachers being paid for extra hours worked while others went unrewarded. This is a clear indication that teachers in Finland are not paid as expected, hence more than 70% of those interviewed complained of low payment.

Psacharopoulos, Valenzuela, & Arends, (1996) discovered that teachers are underpaid in Bolivia by 35% although they further clarified that the underpayment is common among teachers in primary schools which they attributed the reason for such to first, continue expansion of schools which resulted to hiring a large number of teachers and with the increase in number this affected their payment which resulted to the decrease, second issue is that teachers are not adequately trained and this affected their pay also. The implication of this is that, teachers may be struggling to move from

the primary school level to secondary school or even to any other sector that they can receive better pay.

Paul (2004) conducted his study on in selected countries covering sub-saharan Africa and Asia, what he discovered was that teachers mostly in African region receive less pay with less than three dollars a day and most of this teachers have responsibilities on them, ranging from their family, house renting and food. This is actually true, because like in the state where this research is going to be conducted, teachers receive low salary compared to other professionals in the state. For example a Bachelor degree holder receives about one hundred and seventy five dollars (\$ 175: 00) in a month while medical doctors and engineers receives between six hundred and twenty five dollars (\$625: 00), and looking at the African culture having larger family is very common, so you will realised that the little amount cannot cater for the teachers' responsibilities, In fact as a result of low teachers' salary in Nigeria many teachers cannot even pay their house rent. So if somebody cannot even pay his rent regularly then you cannot think of him possessing other facilities that will make him comfortable, at this point the next thing is that he will start looking for a better place with better payment.

Asadullah (2006) Concluded that Teachers in Bangladesh are significantly under-paid compared to their counter-parts in other profession, their salary is low which is making it more challenging to attract others into the profession. He added that low relative pay of teachers may also partly explain the incidence of teacher attrition in some parts of the country.

Hence, an increase in the relative pay of teachers can aid schools in teacher retention and recruitment as well.

Teacher interviews in all but two (India and Nepal) of the 12 case study countries discovered that teachers are seriously underpaid and that this, more than anything else, is the key factor undermining teacher morale and motivation, thereby causing teacher attrition. (Paul & Kwame 2007)

Davidson (2007) reported that teachers in Tanzania are not contented with their salary. They call on the government to increase the salary from the minimum of 70, 000Tsh to 100, 000Tsh per month, (as at the time of his study 1, 000Tsh is equivalent to 1USD). He concluded that, low salary has repeatedly been associated with teacher attrition in Tanzania, because with their current salary teachers cannot be able to acquire the basic needs such as; food, cloth, and the education expense of their children.

Osei (2006) Conduct an interview with twenty secondary school teachers in Ghana, on the issue of Teacher Salaries and Welfare. He reported that, almost all the teachers interviewed indicated their salary and welfare is not properly taken care of by the government and many of those interviewed are into petty business outside the teaching so as to sustain themselves. The researcher concluded that, Teacher salaries are still low, which is one of the main reasons that the field does not attract or keep the best candidates, and due to inadequate salaries, many of the most experienced and qualified teachers today leave the schools to find better employment elsewhere.

To intensify the vital role of salary as it affects teachers, Bolarinwa (1994) conducted a study among secondary school teachers in Lagos state, Nigeria.

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He sampled 570 teachers, out of which 62.94% took up a minimal job as financial coping techniques, because of the poor payment the salary cannot cope with their daily needs and demands so they have to look for an alternative. 41.18% withdrew their children from fee paying schools to non-fee paying schools because their salary cannot shoulder the educational responsibility of their children, they have to withdraw them from the private schools where learning facilities are adequate to public government owned schools where learning facilities is lacking. 59.22% expressed their opinion that they are ashamed to be introduced as teachers. 78.82% indicated that if they should be given opportunity to start their career lives afresh, they would have opt out of teaching, while 82.35% voiced out that they were not satisfied with the teaching profession because of the low salary compare to other workers.

Osunde & Omoruyi (2005) employed a simple survey method to gather data on the status of teachers and the teaching profession in Nigeria. Their target group for the study comprised 400 post-primary school teachers randomly drawn from 40 post-primary schools in Midwestern Nigeria. From each post-primary school, 10 teachers were selected through simple random sampling. Thus a total of 400 post-primary school teachers participated in their study. Results of the study have shown that post primary school teachers in Nigeria are not well financially remunerated and that they are looked down upon because of delay in payment of salaries and allowances. This constitutes reason for their opting out of teaching profession. Imaging a family man with bulk of responsibilities, and his salary not paid at the right time, this is

enough to frustrate and discourage him on the profession (teaching) thereby making him to start thinking for an alternative job elsewhere.

Yusuf (2010) opined that teaching should be respected as a profession and those in the profession (teachers) should be respected as well. He added that government should put their welfare into considerations particularly in the area of salary, they should be given a reasonable salary not the little stipend given to them by government. This is a clear indication that teacher salaries in Nigeria is low, and that is the reason why that author in his writing suggested reasonable amount should be giving to them as salary.

In their research on Teacher attrition in Nigerian Schools, Egu, et al (2011) discovered that, improve in the payment of salary is often mention by a lot of teachers in regards to their decision to remain in teaching. The Researchers concluded that, paying reasonable salary will help in retaining teachers in schools. Although, apart from poor salary there are other factors discovered by the research which is hindering teachers in their profession, such as; lack of additional incentives and late payment of salary.

Cassandra (2006) indicated that teachers prefer higher salaries indicate that teachers exhibit preferences for higher salaries, better working conditions, and greater intrinsic rewards and tend to move to other teaching positions or to jobs outside teaching that offer these characteristics when possible.

Teacher salaries play an important role in determining teacher readiness to the teaching profession and as a factor can cause attrition (Bobbitt et al 1991; Theobald 1990)

2. 1. 2 Poor Working Condition

This is another factor leading to teacher attrition. No matter how good, hardworking and committed a teacher is, if the environment is not good and conducive there is no how he can efficiently perform his duty as expected.

NATCF(2002) categorised working conditions into i. professional working condition and demographic characteristic of the school according to them working conditions, including professional teaching conditions, plays a vital role in decisions to leave teaching in a particular school, and they contribute to decisions to leave the profession altogether. They further added that teachers' plans to remain in teaching are highly sensitive to their perceptions of their working conditions. The few teachers that reported their interest to remain in teaching are strongly associated with how teachers feel about the administrative support, resources, and teacher voice and influence over policy in their school. Some teacher according to the second category, prefer schools that are less in population as such some teachers prefer to leave from dense populated schools to the schools with less population. Over population of students in a class is a considerably factor for some teachers exit, for example it is very common in my state to see class over populated, a class that is supposed to accommodate 30-40 students you will find about 80-90 students. Rationally, there is no how a teacher can work efficiently. With over population also, teachers get discouraged because, it always consume their time to control the class and this can lead to discouraging them which can result to leaving the profession.

Loeb et al (2005) used data from a survey of 1, 071 California teachers conducted in January 2002 by Louis Harris Associates. The teachers selected <https://assignbuster.com/causes-of-teacher-attrition-education-essay/>

represent 1, 018 schools located in approximately 370 different school districts in 53 of the 58 counties in the state. They conducted telephone interviews with teachers focusing on working conditions in their respective schools, including the adequacy of textbooks and instructional materials, physical facilities, class size and schedule, among others. Their findings revealed that, most teachers indicated large class size as a factor causing attrition, and some schools especially in low socioeconomic communities with a predominance of Black and Latino families often have dilapidated facilities, few or inadequate science laboratories. Teachers in this kind of areas indicated their interest of changing school or leaving the profession entirely. This is a clear indication that poor working condition can affect teachers' decision in their workplace.

In a similar study, Schneider (2003) randomly selected teachers in Chicago and Washington, D. C. Teachers were asked about the quality of their working conditions and the effect of those working conditions on job performance and effectiveness. They were asked to evaluate their surroundings, including the degree of overcrowding, the availability and adequacy of such specialized facilities as science labs and lunch rooms, and physiological factors, including indoor air quality, thermal comfort, classroom lighting, and noise levels. Respondents in the two cities were asked to grade their facilities on an A-through-F scale. Nearly 60% of respondents reported that science labs were somewhat or very inadequate, or non-existent. More than 40% said that their "classrooms were the wrong size for the type of education they were trying to deliver, and more than 25% reported having taught in non-classroom spaces such as hallways and even closets"

Approximately one-third said that they had little or no teacher workspace. Air quality was reported to be only fair or poor in the classrooms of over two-thirds of the Washington and over one-half of the Chicago respondents. Notably, more than one-quarter of the Chicago teachers and about one-third of the Washington teachers reported suffering health problems rooted in poor environmental conditions in their schools. Although, the study was unable to establish whether sampled respondents are ready to quit the teaching profession or not, as a result of the reported conditions of their environment, one thing that is clear with their findings is that more than 40% of the teachers who graded their facilities with a C or below said that poor conditions had led them to consider changing schools.

Using qualitative methods, Johnson (2005) interviewed 115 drawn from a pool of teachers recommended by their principals as being above average, includes 75 from public schools, 20 from independent schools, and 20 from church-related schools in eastern Massachusetts. Teachers reported the importance of working in safe buildings and well-equipped schools.

Respondents-especially those working in low income settings-frequently said that they lacked sufficient resources for their teaching such as; paper, crayons, pencils, chalk, and textbooks for each student. Although some teachers in low-income schools said that, as a result of categorical grants, they had abundant resources for particular subjects or students, they often lacked other physical supports, such as a clean, well maintained, and adequately ventilated classroom, which would enable them to teach effectively. The respondents reported of out-of-date textbooks, stringent quotas on paper, and deficient libraries with torn books and antiquated

audio-visual materials. The author concluded that poorly maintained schools are less likely in attracting and retaining teachers. This is true because indicating dissatisfaction with the working condition is a signal that if a better working condition is discovered can be preferred.

Carroll et al. (2004) explore how inadequate resources limit teachers' effectiveness and affect their decision on teaching. These researchers report that in New York over 75% of teachers planning to leave high-risk schools cite non-retirement reasons, class size/pupil load, lack of supplies and materials, or bad school facilities reported as reasons for their leaving. Similar patterns of response were found in California and Wisconsin, although the gaps between high-income and low-income schools in Wisconsin were less extreme than in the other two states. In commenting on the impact these factors have on teachers' decisions to leave their schools, the authors observe that working conditions are cited far less often as reasons for teachers planning to leave low-risk (high-income) schools than high-risk (low-income) schools. In their view, such conditions increase the likelihood that teachers in low-income schools will leave their schools or teaching prematurely because they fail to succeed with their students. The authors concluded that the problem is not having too few teachers entering high-risk schools; it is that too many good teachers are leaving. They leave because conditions in their schools do not meet even the most basic requirements for successful teaching and learning.

In Nigeria, Fati (2010) conducted her study in Minna metropolis among 200 teachers randomly selected within 10 secondary schools. The researcher administered questionnaire and used simple frequency distribution table and <https://assignbuster.com/causes-of-teacher-attrition-education-essay/>

percentage to analyse her data. The findings of the study discovered that 94.5% of the sample indicated that there were no adequate working materials such as; Textbooks, Maps, globes, laboratory equipment and so on, for teachers and students in their schools. In addition the study recorded high rate of inadequate infrastructures with over 80% of the teachers indicating that there were no infrastructures such as; adequate classrooms, furniture for students to sit and so on. Infact some teachers complained that their students sit on the floor while some stand during teaching and some teacher do not have chairs and table in the staff room. These with other problems identified by the research are the major factors causing teacher attrition. One of the major defects of this study is that, the researcher would have used mixed method, select some teachers and conduct interview with them and visit the schools to see things for her-self not relying on sending questionnaire and ask the teachers to fill and submit.

Paul (2004) in his studies discovered that many teachers are working in poor conditions, which tends to lower self-esteem and is generally de-motivating. Schools in many countries lack basic amenities such as pipe-borne water and electricity, staff rooms, and toilets. These are discouraging factors to many teachers it is obvious if you work in a place that the atmosphere is not conducive the next thing is that you will be thinking of another place that you will have more comfort.

Ahmed (2003) in his paper Education and National Development in Nigeria, pointed out that most secondary schools in Nigeria learn in an un conducive learning atmosphere, the basic amenities are not there so this has a lot of effect in demoralising the strength of so many teachers. In line with this, one

most annoying thing with some schools in my area is that the required facilities/equipment particularly for science practical are totally inadequate, teachers will be willing to engage science students in practical but the facilities are not there, this is actually discouraging to the profession.

Olaleye (2009) observed that many of the schools in Nigeria are still functioning below standard. Most of them are characterized with inadequate classroom space, furniture, equipment for teaching and learning, lack of easy access to safe drinking water, hygienic sanitation, and health facilities. These factors are at times making it difficult for teachers to cope, because without the required facilities learning cannot take place effectively, teachers will be discouraged with the teaching and start to look for somewhere else.

In a lecture delivered on Teachers' day in Lagos State Nigeria, Okebukola (2000) reported on situation of schools in Lagos that; 12% of students sit on the floor, 87% have overcrowded classrooms, 3% of the schools have no chalkboards, 38% of the classrooms have no ceiling 77% lack textbooks 36% of students have no writing materials.

Most schools in Nigeria are not sufficiently equipped with adequate facilities, making it difficult to retain teachers in the profession. (Akinbote, 2001; Ndukwe, 2002; Okpala 2006)

From the studies reviewed above, it is glaring that poor working condition play a role in teachers' decision on teaching profession and can result to teachers' attrition, because inadequate learning facilities can make instructions (teaching) stressful and boring, which can make teachers lose interest in the job and will start thinking of getting better job.

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2. 1. 3 Leadership style

A bad leadership in a school can result to teacher dissatisfaction which can result to attrition, as indicated in the studies below.

Liza, Michelle & John (2008) conducted a qualitative study in Texas. Their result indicated that out of the eight participants interviewed, seven respondents agreed that administration was one of the biggest influential factors in not returning to the teaching profession. Participants cited disrespect from administration as one of the biggest problems.

Administrators, according to the respondents, tend to put teachers down instead of motivating them and encouraging them to try harder with the students. Several of the selected participants mentioned that administrators tend to put a lot of pressure on the teachers and criticize them in front of the rest of the staff. From this, we can say that “ bad school leadership can contribute to teachers leaving the job” if the leader is not diplomatic he will find it difficult to blend his teachers because of their different background.

In a similar study, Boyd, et al (2009) explored the effect of school contexts such as teachers’ involvement in the school policy decision, student behavior, administrative support, facility, and safety by surveying and interviewing teachers in public schools in New York. The authors identified working conditions, specifically administrative support, as a critical factor to retain teachers. In Washington D. C, Luekens (2004) using the results of teacher follow up survey of 2000 -2001. The researcher found that nearly 40% of teachers who left teaching cited a lack of administrative support as the main reason for their departure.

Adamu (2005) conducted his study among secondary school teachers in Bauchi State, Nigeria. The researcher purposively selected 120 teachers in 10 secondary schools. Teachers were asked to indicate support from their principals among other. 42% of the respondents indicated that the support from their principal is not encouraging, 35% indicated partial support from their principal while 23% stated that the support from their principal is encouraging. The result of the study added that among those that are not encouraged and those that indicated partial support from their principals also indicated their interest of leaving the teaching profession if they should have any available opportunity. Despite the fact that the study address the issue of Principals support, one short coming of this study is that, it does not address in details why those teachers are not comfortable with their principals, it could be possible that some of the selected teacher may not be performing their duty as expected and the principals may not want to tolerate that.

Cassandra (2006) indicated that school leaders that often treat their teachers with cares are likely to have teachers' support. Some leaders are democratic in their leadership style, once a new teacher is posted to their school they tend to give him/her a due consideration, but some principals are autocratic they don't bother about the new teachers, they give responsibilities and task to them and expect results without excuses this kinds of leadership style can easily scared the new teachers and lead to their exit out of teaching profession.

Bill M. (2003) revealed that leadership style of the principal has a great effect on teachers particularly the beginning ones, this kinds of teachers

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according to the study need cares, they need to be concerned with about their job, the school principal should begin to work closely to them by encouraging them and advising where necessary. He also carry them along in decision making, this will help in building confidence on the teachers and instil in them a sense of belonging. This kind of leadership is seriously required, as earlier stated that opposite to cares and concern to teachers from school leaders can constitute a factor for leaving the profession.

School leadership and management style are also important factors, which can either motivate or lower teacher morale and commitment. Nwankwo (1984) discovered that teachers are excited when consulted by the school leader regarding their work or any issue concerning them. He added that some school principals are autocratic in their dealings with teachers.

Trusting and giving a sort of autonomy to teachers will facilitate and enhance the attractiveness of the profession as a career choice and will help in improving the quality of the classroom teaching practice. Teachers who work together in a meaningful and purposeful ways are found to be more likely to remain in the profession because they feel valued and supported in their work Bill M (2003).

Principals have a great role to play being leaders in the school setting, they are the custodian of the entire school, so whatever goes wrong in the school they are bound to be liable. Looking at the importance of their position, it is important for them to handle their teachers diplomatically so as to achieve the school goals and objectives.

2. 1. 4 Rural Posting

Rural schools experience difficulty in retaining teachers. Research on teacher retention in rural areas tends to assume that teachers will leave their positions for other districts because they feel isolated (McClure & Reeves, 2004). Specifically, attracting young teachers to rural areas is particularly difficult because of social isolation (Proffit, Sale, Alexander & Andrews, 2002). Leaving rural areas to other areas seeking for another job or leaving the teaching entirely may be attributed to so many factors. A survey of teacher mobility was conducted with 94 past and current teachers in rural British Columbia. The survey highlighted the fact that teachers leave communities because of geographic isolation, weather, distance from larger communities and family, and inadequate shopping (Murphy & Angelski, 1996/1997). This survey also revealed that those teachers who do stay in rural communities stay because of the princ