

Exploring the Context-Based Determinants of Turnover Intention among In-Service Teachers in Lira City, Uganda



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the context-based determinants of turnover intention among in-service teachers in Lira City. We used a qualitative research approach and phenomenological research design to explore the determinants of turnover intention among primary school teachers. A total of 68 participants were selected using simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Data was collected using an Interview Guide and a Focus Group Discussion guide. Data analysis was done using NVivo 15. The research question was explored using Thematic Analysis. Among the predictors that emerged as major context-based determinants of turnover intention among primary school teachers include; negative societal attitude, job demand, low salaries, limited promotion opportunities, career mismatch, poor motivation, harsh work conditions, health or personal conditions, old age, despotic leadership styles, limited professional growth opportunity, policy and administrative biases. Nuances of both personal and environmental constructs that look insignificant yet very influential in triggering turnover intention were explored hence contributing to the existing body of knowledge. It was therefore concluded that turnover intention is triggered by not only personal conditions but also environmental factors. Based on the field findings and conclusions, the researchers therefore strongly recommended the need for; salary enhancement, workload balancing, welfare improvement, establishment of better conditions of work, provision of equal promotion opportunities, prevention of career mismatch among teacher trainees, promotion of professional development, prioritization of teachers in all domains so that societal negative perspectives are reshaped and provision of financial incentives, fringe and contingent benefits.

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INTRODUCTION

The teaching profession serves as a building block for other professions. That's why some countries invest a lot in the education sector and teachers are treated with ultimate respect. However, in Uganda, teachers face myriads of challenges, the country's education system remains menacing as the propensity

of leaving the teaching profession continues to upswing among many competent and reliable teachers.¹ Turnover in this noble profession is high and the prospects of the teaching profession continue to dwindle.² In some districts, around 23% of teachers leave annually.³ Despite such threats, responsible stakeholders seem reluctant and no serious action has been taken. Research shows that teacher turnover interferes with the classroom setting as a result of the shortage of teachers, hinders educational continuity,⁴ breeds ramifications in students' achievement and school quality, and may cause a heavy financial strain on educational institutions.⁵ If teachers' challenges, concerns, and misapprehension are not addressed, the country might lose a number of competent teachers and the quality of education might be compromised. Therefore organisations should try as much as possible to address issues that may cause turnover and turnover intention among employees.

Extensive research has been done to examine the determinants of turnover intention though findings look antithetic and remain enigmatic.⁶ Moreover, in Uganda specifically, most researchers have focused on actual turnover, rather than turnover intention yet the latter gives better fertile ground and opportunity to formulate and implement intervention strategies before actual turnover betides.⁷ Therefore, exploring these contextual-based determinants may help responsible stakeholders to have a deeper understanding of factors that trigger turnover intention among in-service teachers and provide valuable insights on how to enhance the retention of quality teachers so that educational outcomes are improved.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Muhangi conducted a study to determine the antecedents of turnover intentions among secondary school teachers in Mbarara district and the results of this study revealed that demographic factors like academic qualification, age, gender, religious affiliation, and work experience significantly predict teacher turnover intention.⁸ However, this study was conducted in secondary schools and not primary. The condition of service in secondary schools and the way they operate is completely different from that of primary. Therefore it may not be realistic to treat and generalize the above determinants as key antecedents of turnover intention among primary school teachers. Although several other studies have shown that employees' intention to leave for another job is highly linked to variation in academic qualification, religious affiliation, personality, and age, the impact of these determinants on individuals depends on the

¹ Doreen Asemere, R Kaggwa, and John Paul Kasujja, "Teachers' challenges And The Implementation Of Universal Primary Education In Hoima District: A Case Study Of Primary Schools In Hoima City, Uganda," *European Journal of Education Studies* 11, no. 7 (2024).

² Wilson Mugizi et al., "Leadership Styles and Retention of Teachers in Private Primary Schools in Bushenyi-Ishaka Municipality, Uganda," *Open Journal of Leadership* 08, no. 04 (2019): 167–87, <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojl.2019.84009>.

³ Eva Juliet Kabejja, "Recruitment Methods and Teacher Retention in Private Secondary Schools in Kampala District" (Uganda Management Institute, 2016).

⁴ Aulia, Nurul, and Ira Haerani. "Teacher retention and turnover: Exploring the factors that influence teacher decision-making." *Journal of Education Review Provision* 2, no. 2 (2022): 54–64.

⁵ Richard M. Ingersoll and Henry Tran, "Teacher Shortages and Turnover in Rural Schools in the US: An Organizational Analysis," *Educational Administration Quarterly* 59, no. 2 (April 16, 2023): 396–431, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X231159922>; Nurul Aulia and Ira Haerani, "Teacher Retention and Turnover: Exploring the Factors That Influence Teacher Decision-Making," *Journal of Education Review Provision* 2, no. 2 (March 4, 2023): 36–42, <https://doi.org/10.55885/jerp.v2i2.155>; Marcus Pietsch, Pierre Tulowitzki, and Johannes Hartig, "Examining the Effect of Principal Turnover on Teaching Quality: A Study on Organizational Change with Repeated Classroom Observations," *School Effectiveness and School Improvement* 31, no. 3 (2020): 333–55.

⁶ Onesmus Kamau, Stephen Muathe, and Lawrence Wainaina, "Demographic Factors and Turnover Intentions of Teachers in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya," *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science* (2147- 4478) 10, no. 4 (June 14, 2021): 363–74, <https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v10i4.984>; Khawrin Mohammad Khalid and Abdurrahshed Sahibzada, "The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction at Selected Public Universities in Afghanistan: The Effect of Job Security on Turnover Intention," *Journal of Management and Business Education* 6, no. 3 (2023): 244–56; Proches Ngatuni and Chacha Matoka, "Relationships among Job Satisfaction, Organizational Affective Commitment and Turnover Intentions of University Academicians in Tanzania," *Pan-African Journal of Business Management* 4, no. 1 (2020): 47–68; Wagih Salama et al., "Impact of Work Stress and Job Burnout on Turnover Intentions among Hotel Employees," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 15 (August 7, 2022): 9724, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19159724>; Henry Tran and Douglas A. Smith, "Designing an Employee Experience Approach to Teacher Retention in Hard-to-Staff Schools," *NASSP Bulletin* 104, no. 2 (June 15, 2020): 85–109, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636520927092>.

⁷ Bakangisa Isaiiah, "The Role of Motivation in Mitigating Teacher Turnover in Selected Universal Secondary Schools of Rukiga District" (Kabale University, 2019); Yan Jingdong, Coolmax Najjuko, and Geoffery Ochwo, "Remuneration Level on Teachers' Turnover in Secondary Schools in Uganda," *European Journal of Business and Management* 9, no. 20 (2017): 57–61; Robert Kyaligonza and Edson Kamagara, "Staff Turnover in Public Universities in Uganda," *Makerere Journal of Higher Education* 9, no. 2 (August 30, 2017): 59–72, <https://doi.org/10.4314/majohe.v9i2.5>.

⁸ Godwin Tindyebwa Muhangi, "Demographic Factors as Antecedents towards Turnover Intentions among Secondary School Teachers in Mbarara District," *Journal of Education and Practice* 10, no. 20 (2019): 91–102.

nature of the profession and varies from one person to another.⁹ Each and every individual has preferences, beliefs, and goals. A variable may be influential to one individual and not significant to the other. It is therefore important to examine determinants of turnover intention from teachers' perspective for effective generalization of findings.

Biswakarma examined the level of turnover intention among employees working in Nepalese private commercial banks and no variation was realized in the level of turnover intention between novice and experienced employees.¹⁰ This was an indication that experience does not in any way influence turnover intention. Similarly, Ryan et al. added that all categories of employees display the intention to leave for another job or institution irrespective of experience.¹¹ This can be a result of both personal and environmental factors. On the contrary, Gezel conducted a study to explore the organizational factors causing turnover or attrition among primary school teachers in the Netherlands. Results of this study indicate that turnover was highest among novice teachers as compared to experienced teachers.¹² Supporting the point, Viac and Fraser examined the occupational well-being of teachers and its linkages with quality teaching.¹³ In their studies, findings show that "almost 50% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years before they have developed into optimally effective practitioners." The justification behind this behaviour remains under-researched. The vice here is that even the exiting new teachers who intend to leave are in most cases replaced by similarly inexperienced teachers. This might have a devastating effect on students' learning. Such inconsistencies in previous studies leave no room for a clear conclusion.

Even though a school has affluent resources, teachers can still leave or develop the intention of leaving if their salary is not commensurate with the service they are providing.¹⁴ Teachers develop the intention to leave or actually quit for several reasons, these include; dissatisfaction with; the payment, administrative support, or workplace conditions.¹⁵ A report from a survey conducted by Cunningham among public and private school teachers pointed out insufficient administrative assistance, limited influence in the educational system, disruption in the classroom, and insufficient time for personal life as key determinants of teacher turnover intention and actual turnover.¹⁶ Sometimes teachers with strong academic backgrounds are inclined to leave the profession with the intention of looking for better-paid jobs elsewhere.¹⁷ This is because they always have higher chances of being absorbed in other schools or organisations as compared to their counterpart with weak academic backgrounds. See et al. added that

⁹ Mustafa Kesen, "The Impact of Employee Training and Innovation on Turnover Intention: An Empirical Research," *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 6, no. 1 (January 29, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v6-i1/1987>; Sarah Likoko, Judah Ndiku, and Stanley Mutsotso, "Influence of Demographic Characteristics on Turnover Intentions among the Academic Staff in Public Diploma Teacher Training Colleges in Kenya," *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)* 7, no. 8 (2018): 781–85; N Nhema and E Mutenheri, "Factors That Influence the Turnover Intentions of Employees in the Tourism Sector in Zimbabwe," *International Journal of Management Sciences and Business Research* 5, no. 12 (2016): 158–65; Simon L. Albrecht and Andrew Marty, "Personality, Self-Efficacy and Job Resources and Their Associations with Employee Engagement, Affective Commitment and Turnover Intentions," *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 31, no. 5 (March 8, 2020): 657–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2017.1362660>; Shannon V. Ryan et al., "Leaving the Teaching Profession: The Role of Teacher Stress and Educational Accountability Policies on Turnover Intent," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 66 (August 2017): 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.03.016>.

¹⁰ Gangaram Biswakarma, "Employees' Job Engagement and Turnover Intentions in Nepalese Private Commercial Banks-An Empirical Evidence," *Asian Journal of Research in Business Economics and Management* 5, no. 11 (2015): 61, <https://doi.org/10.5958/2249-7307.2015.00194.2>.

¹¹ Ryan et al., "Leaving the Teaching Profession: The Role of Teacher Stress and Educational Accountability Policies on Turnover Intent."

¹² Gezel, Pim. "Exploring organizational factors causing Teacher Attrition in Primary schools in the Netherlands: a multiple regression study." Master's thesis, University of Twente, 2020.

¹³ Carine Viac and Pablo Fraser, "Teachers' Well-Being: A Framework for Data Collection and Analysis," *OECD Education Working Papers*, no. 213 (2020): 01-81.

¹⁴ Ruth Achieng Ayall, Boke Joyce Wambura, and Enose M.W. Simatwa, "Influence of School-Based Factors on Teacher Turnover Intentions: A Case of Public Secondary Schools in Rachuonyo North Sub-County, Kenya," *East African Journal Of Education And Social Sciences* 2, no. Issue 4 (December 31, 2021): 125–29, <https://doi.org/10.46606/eajess2021v02i04.0136>; Kizza Francis Ssali, David Onen, and Genza Gyaviira Musoke, "Factors Determining the Retention of Academic Staff in Universities," *Journal of Education and Practice*, March 2019, <https://doi.org/10.7176/JEP/10-8-07>.

¹⁵ Amy M Johnson et al., "Challenges and Solutions When Using Technologies in the Classroom," in *Adaptive Educational Technologies for Literacy Instruction* (Routledge, 2016), 13–30.

¹⁶ Shelby L. Cunningham, "A Quantitative Analysis of the Factors Associated with Teacher Attitudes and Perceptions towards Job Satisfaction" (Seton Hall University, 2016).

¹⁷ Linda Darling-Hammond et al., "Implications for Educational Practice of the Science of Learning and Development," *Applied Developmental Science* 24, no. 2 (April 2, 2020): 97–140, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888691.2018.1537791>.

teachers with higher academic qualifications and competencies are more likely to leave compared to those with lower academic qualifications and less ability. This could be a result of confidence in their academic background, ability, skills, and a strong hope of being taken in any institution.¹⁸ This implies school administrators and responsible stakeholders have a lot to do so that staff retention is enforced.

Job turnover and turnover intention among in-service teachers are caused by inadequate salary and other non-monetary benefits like health insurance, extra leaves, and flexi-hours. Competitive salary offerings can be strategically utilized to attract talented individuals to the organization. Therefore when teachers are not paid well, their intentions to leave for another institution, profession or look for another job increases. Many teachers develop the intention to leave or actually leave their positions, opting for other professions or schools with more favorable environments because of administrative inadequacy, low status accorded to the profession, job dissatisfaction, low salaries, insufficient financial rewards, limited career advancement opportunities, and unfavorable working conditions like unhealthy classrooms, and work-family conflict.¹⁹ This remains a critical area of concern in most schools within the contextual scope of this study and if not addressed, the teaching profession might lose a number of teachers.

Teachers are sometimes compelled to leave or develop the intention of leaving for another school or profession because of factors related to the school environment, including lack of community engagement, challenges with social integration, administrative shortcomings, and unfavorable working conditions.²⁰ The community has a lot to do for effective running of schools. In situations where the relationship between the school and the community is poor and threatening, then teachers may hope to leave for another school. Authoritarian management of schools, the social standing of the teaching profession within the community, limitation to accessibility of social amenities like secure and affordable housing, healthcare, educational resources for both individuals and their families, and recreational options significantly influence turnover intentions.²¹ Darling-Hammond et al. in their study on the trouble with teacher turnover and how it affects students and schools found out that turnover intention can develop if; the payment is irregular, there is a lack of organizational support, and escalated criticism of teachers.²² This is very common in private schools as compared with government-aided schools. In Ethiopia, the turnover rate was documented at 67% in 1953. The predominant issue during this period was concentrated at the primary education level, with the primary motivators for departure from the profession being inadequate compensation, the diminished societal prestige of the teaching vocation, and adverse working conditions, challenges of rural living, and the lack of advanced educational opportunities. Even though the above factors were equally reported,²³ these push-out factors were for turnover, not turnover intention.

Teachers' condition of service has been pointed out in a number of studies as one of the key determinants of actual turnover and turnover intentions. When the condition of the work is not conducive, teachers may decide to quit the profession and go to places with good working conditions and better remuneration.²⁴ Kannan and Vivekanandan, in their research on "attrition among new entrants in software

¹⁸ Beng Huat See et al., "Teacher Recruitment and Retention: A Critical Review of International Evidence of Most Promising Interventions," *Education Sciences* 10, no. 10 (September 23, 2020): 262, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10100262>.

¹⁹ Emma Garcia and Elaine Weiss, "A Policy Agenda to Address the Teacher Shortage in US Public Schools: The Sixth and Final Report in the 'Perfect Storm in the Teacher Labor Market' Series.," *Economic Policy Institute*, 2020; Han Chen, Baker Ayoun, and Khalid Eyoum, "Work-Family Conflict and Turnover Intentions: A Study Comparing China and U.S. Hotel Employees," *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism* 17, no. 2 (April 3, 2018): 247–69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332845.2017.1406272>; Nastyalita Gunaprasida and Amin Wibowo, "The Effect of Work-Family Conflict and Flexible Work Arrangement on Turnover Intention: Do Female and Male Employees Differ?," *Jurnal Siasat Bisnis* 23, no. 1 (January 1, 2019): 27–36, <https://doi.org/10.20885/jsb.vol23.iss1.art3>.

²⁰ Chase J. Raymond, "A Case Study Exploring Teacher Job Satisfaction and Teacher Retention Issues in a Large Urban Oklahoma School District" (Northeastern University, 2018).

²¹ Aman Gebi Gerbi, "Major Causes and Consequences of Teachers' Turnover in Secondary Schools of Adama Town Oromia National Regional State" (Haramaya University, Haramaya, 2021).

²² Darling-Hammond et al., "Implications for Educational Practice of the Science of Learning and Development."

²³ Wurie, Haja R., Mohamed Samai, and Sophie Witter. "Retention of health workers in rural Sierra Leone: findings from life histories." *Human resources for health* 14 (2016): 1-15.

²⁴ Haja R. Wurie, Mohamed Samai, and Sophie Witter, "Retention of Health Workers in Rural Sierra Leone: Findings from Life Histories," *Human Resources for Health* 14, no. 1 (December 1, 2016): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12960-016-0099-6>; M. Kannan and K. Vivekanandan, "A Study on Attrition among New Entrants in Software Testing Professionals," *International Journal of Computer Applications* 53, no. 7 (September 25, 2012): 23–29, <https://doi.org/10.5120/8435-2210>; Peter Kalunge Ekabu, Jeremiah M. Kalai, and Grace Nyagah, "Influence of Working Conditions on Turnover Intentions of Secondary School Teachers in Meru County," *European*

testing professions," elaborated that a significant motivator for employees is the intrinsic nature of the job tasks assigned.²⁵ When the tasks are engaging, enjoyable, and attainable, individuals are more likely to find the work fulfilling, perform optimally, and consequently, remain in the position. Hill and Chin further asserted that the impact of job content on employees, particularly service-oriented educators, is multifaceted and contingent upon individual expectations.²⁶ It can range from stimulating and engaging to monotonous or demoralizing, as well as from demanding to unchallenging. Consequently, dissatisfaction with the work may prompt the emergence of turnover intentions.²⁷ The nature of work is among the most critical factors influencing employees' (teachers') desire to quit or stay in an institution. According to the preceding study done by Kholiq on the "effect of job embeddedness, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment on employee turnover intention," determinants such as organizational incentives and trade-offs each play a significant role in influencing employees' perceptions of the job, thereby shaping their turnover intentions.²⁸ Employees tend to experience greater comfort and job satisfaction within a positive work environment. In organizations where working conditions are optimal, employees are more inclined to perceive their roles as opportunities to contribute meaningfully and drive organizational transformation.²⁹

Teacher turnover intention and actual attrition are global issues, characterized by their complexity and frequently attributed to inadequate workforce planning and a deficiency in teacher motivation.³⁰ The majority of employees often develop the intention to seek alternative employment when faced with dissatisfaction in their current roles, limited prospects for advancement, the availability of more attractive job opportunities, and when the compensation is not commensurate with the services rendered.³¹ Career development is an ongoing process comprising a sequence of stages or events that facilitate professional growth and progression.³² Most employees have career development goals, therefore organizations/institutions are encouraged to provide ample opportunities for advancement to enhance employees' (in-service teachers') dedication to the organization.³³ The higher the degree of an employee's commitment to the institution, the lower their intention to resign or depart.³⁴ This therefore calls for a lot of attention from the administrators and managers.

It is evident that the research on turnover intention is nascent. Most of the literature focused on the determinants of actual job turnover and not turnover intentions. In this area, studies on the determinants of turnover intention are scanty yet it breeds actual job turnover. Given the scarcity of research in this context, this study therefore seeks to examine the determinants of turnover intentions among primary school teachers in Lira City.

Scientific Journal, ESJ 14, no. 25 (September 30, 2018): 169, <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2018.v14n25p169>; Wei Wan and Ryan D. Duffy, "Decent Work and Turnover Intention Among New Generation Employees: The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction and the Moderating Role of Job Autonomy," *Sage Open* 12, no. 2 (April 26, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221094591>.

²⁵ Kannan and Vivekanandan, "A Study on Attrition among New Entrants in Software Testing Professionals."

²⁶ Heather C. Hill and Mark Chin, "Connections Between Teachers' Knowledge of Students, Instruction, and Achievement Outcomes," *American Educational Research Journal* 55, no. 5 (October 23, 2018): 1076–1112, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831218769614>.

²⁷ Jane Perryman and Graham Calvert, "What Motivates People to Teach, and Why Do They Leave? Accountability, Performativity and Teacher Retention.," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 68, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 3–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2019.1589417>.

²⁸ Damas Aunul Kholiq, "Effect of Job Embeddedness, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment on Employee Turnover Intention," 2019.

²⁹ Kholiq, "Effect of Job Embeddedness, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment on Employee Turnover Intention."

³⁰ Hezekiah A Othoo and Foscar Nekesa, "Factors Affecting Teacher Motivation in Public Secondary Schools in Teso-South Sub-County, Kenya," 2022.

³¹ Siti Aisyah, Junita Lubis, and Rizki Syahputra, "The Impact of Affective and Normative Commitments on Work Discipline of Education Services in Labuhan Batu District," *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute-Journal (BIRCI-Journal)* 5, no. 2 (2022): 9282–90.

³² Aisyah, Lubis, and Syahputra, "The Impact of Affective and Normative Commitments on Work Discipline of Education Services in Labuhan Batu District."

³³ Soon-Meng Chong and Khashayar Yazdani, "Factors Affecting the Affective Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction and Job Acceptance Intention of Interns: A Conceptual Framework," *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity* 10, no. 2 (2020): 68–72; Govand Anwar and Nabaz Nawzad Abdullah, "The Impact of Human Resource Management Practice on Organizational Performance," *International Journal of Engineering, Business and Management (IJEEM)* 5 (2021).

³⁴ Pascal Kamphuis and Arie C. Glebbeek, "Job (In)Security and Workers' Training Decisions: A Framing Approach," *International Journal for Research in Vocational Education and Training* 7, no. 3 (December 9, 2020): 361–87, <https://doi.org/10.13152/IJRVET.7.3.6>.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by two major theories, that is; the Person-Environment Fit theory and the Expectancy Value Theory.³⁵ Person-Environment Fit theory asserts that “people have an innate need to fit their environment and seek out places that match their own personal characteristics.”³⁶ This shows that if teachers’ personal characteristics align with the environmental conditions, then the intention to leave or actual job turnover may not be reflected but if they feel dissatisfied with the job, encounter a number of work-related stress, and strongly believe that there is a mismatch between personal factors and the nature of the job, the intention to exit the environment or job may easily manifest. Despite the fact that this theory laid a strong foundation for this study, human needs, and expectations keep changing depending on a number of factors. Therefore the connection between personal characteristics and environmental conditions may not guarantee employee retention for long as long as the expectations and desires change hence a need for an additional theory to fill this gap.

The Expectancy Value Theory asserts that motivation for a given behaviour or action is a combination of two factors that is, people’s **expectations for success** and **subjective values attached to it**.³⁷ Employees (teachers) are likely to leave if their expectations are not met.³⁸ From this perspective, therefore, turnover intention among teachers cannot only be realized if there is a positive expectation for success but also on the realization that subjective **values** like enjoyment, attainment value, and psychological satisfaction are attached to the outcome. From the above descriptions, integrating both theories in this study was a complementary step.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A qualitative research approach and a phenomenological research design were used to explore the context determinants of turnover intention among in-service teachers in Lira City.

Study Population

The target group included all full-time primary school teachers, head teachers from government & private schools, and city officials from the Department of Education, Lira City. These categories were identified taking into consideration their experiences within the teaching profession.

Sample Size for Key Informants

Table 1

Showing Sample Size of Informants.

Category	Population	Sample
Headteachers	146	05
City Officials	07	03
Total	150	08

Source: Adapted from Subedi (2021)

According to Subedi, there are no clear guidelines for determining sample size for qualitative research. For qualitative research, there are no hard rules that dictate universal numeric recommendations concerning the right sample size, and no clear rules or methods that guide the researcher on how a proper sample size can be obtained.³⁹ Ascertaining the appropriateness of sample size is a matter of judgement,

³⁵ J. P. R. French, “Adjustment as Person-Environment Fit,” *Coping and Adaptation*, 1974; Victor H Vroom, “Work and Motivation.- Revised Edition,” *San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Boss Classics*, 1995.

³⁶ Annelies E.M. van Vianen, “Person-Environment Fit: A Review of Its Basic Tenets,” *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 5, no. 1 (January 21, 2018): 75–101, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032117-104702>.

³⁷ Jacquelynn S. Eccles and Allan Wigfield, “Motivational Beliefs, Values, and Goals,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 53, no. 1 (February 2002): 109–32, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135153>.

³⁸ Sania Abdul Rehman, Sana Sehar, and Muhammad Afzal, “Performance Appraisal; Application of Victor Vroom Expectancy Theory,” *Saudi Journal of Nursing and Health Care* 02, no. 12 (December 15, 2019): 431–34, <https://doi.org/10.36348/sjnhc.2019.v02i12.008>.

³⁹ Eneli Kindsiko and Helen Poltimäe, “The Poor and Embarrassing Cousin to the Gentrified Quantitative Academics: What Determines the Sample Size in Qualitative Interview-Based Organization Studies?,” in *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, vol. 20 (DEU, 2019), 24; Frank J. van Rijnsoever, “(I Can’t Get No) Saturation: A Simulation and Guidelines for Sample Sizes in Qualitative Research,” *PLOS ONE* 12, no. 7 (July 26, 2017): e0181689, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0181689>.

and it largely depends on the nature of inquiry and the kind of information to be gathered and the level of saturation attained. Therefore, collecting qualitative data from a total of 08 Key Informants was comprehensive enough to attain saturation for this study.

Sample Size for Focus Group Discussion

For the purpose of this study, the researchers attained saturation after obtaining qualitative data from a total of sixty (60) teachers. Ten (10) focus group discussions with 06 participants per group were held. These groups were homogenous in nature i.e. male and female. The rationale behind having few members in a focus group discussion was grounded on the point that it; gives participants ample time and opportunity to share their insights and observations about the phenomenon under investigation, may favor participants with social anxiety, lays a better ground for controlling group members and it is easier to host.⁴⁰

Sampling Techniques

Schools were selected by use of stratified and simple random sampling techniques. As a measure of ensuring fairness, schools were divided into strata depending on the common attributes they shared. These included government and private schools. A sample was selected from each stratum using the simple random sampling technique. To prevent predilection when selecting samples, obtain a sample that delineates a population, and draw statistical inferences that epitomize characteristics of a target population, a simple random sampling technique was used to select specific participants (teachers) from the selected schools by use of lottery methods. The purposive sampling technique was used to identify the head teachers and the city officials by taking into consideration the level of their proficiency and how much they are informed about a phenomenon under investigation.

Instruments and Measures

Data was collected using an Interview Guide and a Focus Group Discussion Guide. This self-constructed Interview Guide contains two sections, that is sections A and B. Section A captured the background information of the informants while Section B explored the context-based determinants of teacher turnover intention. The Focus Group Discussion guide used in this study to collect data from teachers also had two sections that are Section A and B. Section A captured the background information of teachers while Section B captured the determinants of turnover intention.

Quality Control Measures

Some participants were found in more than one school hence to prevent double responses such participants were told not to be part of the study if they had already participated before. To ensure validity, and prevent ambiguity and misinterpretation of the questions, copies of the Interview guide and Focus Group Discussion guide were given to other specialists to check the wording, phrasing, and arrangement of guiding questions and to ascertain whether the tools capture the items they are supposed to explore.

Sometimes personal and social factors affect the data collection process, interpretation, and analysis. Therefore, it is imperative for the researchers to critically reflect on how personal values, experiences, assumptions, and biases influence interactions with participants, data collection, interpretation and analysis. To achieve reflexivity, we approached participants in a way that minimizes bias, made continuous self-reflection throughout the whole process of the study and engaged in a critical review of the manuscript to ensure that there is no element of personal biases.

In some contexts, the researchers' **positionality** affect the relationship between the researchers and participants, data collection flow, interpretation and analysis if not well managed. To achieve positionality, we had to provide the audience with the sufficient contextualization of our background and

⁴⁰ Rosaline S Barbour, "Doing Focus Groups," 2018; Hery Rahmat and Roi Boy Jon, "Benefits and Challenges of Group Discussion as Creative Learning Strategies in Speaking Class," *IJECA (International Journal of Education and Curriculum Application)* 6, no. 1 (2023): 72–80; Khoirzady Taqwa et al., "An Analysis of Students' Speaking Anxiety in EFL Classroom: A Mixed-Method Study," *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 4, no. 5 (2022): 6408–16; B Miller, "Advantages and Disadvantages of a Focus Group," *Retrieved December 30 (17AD): 2022.*

identity to allow them have a deeper understanding of the essence of the data and gain trust. To achieve relationality, we had to develop a strong rapport with participants to gain deeper insights, make participants feel comfortable during data collection processes and develop trust between the researchers and participants.

Data Management and Analysis

Responses from informants on context-based determinants of teacher turnover intentions were recorded with key areas noted verbatim et literatim. The qualitative data collected was coded using common phrases or words. Data was analyzed using Nvivo version 15 and explored using thematic analysis. The analysis was conducted by following the six steps of thematic analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Consents were received from the participants and leaders of the institutions where the data was collected. The researchers respected the participants' privacy and in no way did they employ force to collect data. Participants were allowed to respond freely without any form of intimidation. Most of the study's findings were generalized, and the contributions of other authors were recognized and referenced in the reference list.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Context-Based Determinants of Job Turnover Intention

The data was collected from a total of 68 participants, out of whom 60 participated in the Focus Group Discussions and 08 key informants were interviewed. Ten Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were held and each group had six participants. The data presented here are in both paraphrased forms and verbatim, with participants represented by the codes P1 to P6 (Participant 1 up to Participant 6) according to each Focus group.

To ascertain the severity of turnover intention among teachers and obtain an in-depth explanation of the context-based determinants that were triggering turnover intention, participants were implored to explicitly elaborate on what they thought were the determinants of turnover intentions. Several responses emerged and the findings obtained were as thematized below:

Societal Attitude

The participants noted that the negative perception of teachers' status by community members is a significant factor triggering turnover intention among in-service teachers. The general society seems to regard teachers as rejects who deserve no respect and honour. A response like "they undermine teachers a lot" (P1, FGD 1, 2nd April 2024) clearly indicates that the teaching profession is no longer cherished, with teachers being seen as icons of economic failure, and those who deserve no public respect. According to P6, FGD 10, 4th April 2024,

"..people respect you when you have money but when you look miserable financially, you are seen as a burden and no one sees you as someone significant". According to another participant, "there are low class buildings in villages that are nicknamed after primary school teachers (P1, FGD 9, 4th April 2024). "Worn out shoes are regarded as those meant for primary school teachers" (P1, FGD 2, 2nd April 2024). We find it challenging to be recognized in any form of function (P5, FGD 5, 3rd April 2024). All these are indicators that our teachers are under-looked and less valued by community members, unlike other countries where teachers are treated like elites."

Further still, as gathered from the interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGD), it is evident that job satisfaction among teachers is very low and this has been a result of negative societal attitudes and perceptions. In a detailed expression, one of the participants vented his anger, emphasizing gaps in respect and recognition accorded to teachers. He said, "...we are undermined by many people within the community, government, pupils..." (P2, FGD 5, 3rd April 2024). This points out the possibility of some teachers having low self-esteem because of the way society perceives them, making it very difficult to identify with such a profession. Well aware that, no one wants to be identified with a profession that is

treated as a low-level occupation, many teachers may leave for other jobs other than remain in the teaching profession and be disrespected.

Economic Challenges

This has played a key role in acting as a push factor. These factors force teachers to seek alternative occupations that are financially more rewarding. According to the participants of this study, most teachers struggle with financial challenges to the extent that they end up getting depressed. One of the participants lamented about the financial difficulties faced at home due to inadequate salary. He said "The salary I get is too meager to address family-related problems that we have" (P3, FGD 3, 2nd April 2024). Another participant, in a tone of bitterness, made it known that the financial challenges caused by low salaries hinder their personal and professional growth, "I can't even afford to go for further studies because of financial constrain" (P1, FGD 4, 2nd April 2024). This clearly shows that teachers are struggling in a vicious cycle, characterized by many demands from society, yet rewarded with very little pay, keeping them stagnant in terms of personal and career development. It can therefore be inferred based on the findings of this study, that one of the most irritating factors in the teaching service is financial difficulties (low salaries), making teachers struggle at all times, balancing between work and the meagre resources to ensure progress, but in the end, pushing many of them into depression due to excessive demand that cannot be easily met.

It was also evident that the teaching profession is no longer cherished as it was in the past. Most teachers openly demonstrated their dissatisfaction with teaching and expressed the willingness to opt for other career areas outside teaching. Two participants, P1 and P4 considered other professions as more viable options due to better financial prospects. While P1 noted, "A farmer is much better than a teacher," (P4, FGD 4, 2nd April 2024), P4 considered other businesses where one is able to have more time for the family. Many teachers expressed a clear intention to leave teaching if any opportunities arose (P3 & P5, FGD 7 3rd April 2024). The mention of "any opportunity" suggests that many teachers are very dissatisfied with the teaching profession to the extent that they no longer want to stay in the profession. Citing one case of exit from teaching, some participants said "they had teachers who left teaching for a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) because of better financial opportunities (P1 FGD 9, P6, FGD10, 4th April 2024). The mention of opportunities outside teaching, such as business, NGO work, or any other job opportunities reveals a high level of discontent with the teaching job to the extent that the majority of those who are still teaching are doing so just to buy time until a better opportunity strikes.

In line with the above, it is therefore explicit that under this theme, the issue of salary, which the teachers said is too low to help them run their families well, is very recurrent. One of the participants mentioned a conditional decision to stay based on salary increase: "I may not leave the job if they increase the salary and not later than one and half years from now" (P2, FGD 2, 2nd April 2024). Closely related to the above, the issue of rewards that are not commensurate to the workload also featured so much among the factors related to pay. The findings of this study further revealed that inadequate remuneration is another crucial determinant of turnover intentions among teachers. As expressed in the words of participants, "there are no extra allowances" (P2, FGD 1, 2nd April 2024), "...you teach for one month then at the end you get your salary only to pay debts. How do you expect us to enjoy teaching?" (P5, FGD 7, 3rd April 2024). Based on such responses, it is clear that the majority of teachers are not content with what they earn in relation to what they do. Therefore, one can conclude that low pay is one of the most significant determinants of turnover intentions among teachers in primary schools in Uganda.

Poor Motivation

The limitations in motivation here came out not only from an extrinsic perspective but also from an intrinsic dimension. From an intrinsic perspective, a participant lamented then she regrets joining the teaching profession yet she feels talented and interested in the medical field (P1, FGD 10, 5th April 2024). She added that she was pushed into this profession by her parents. This is an indication of a career mismatch within the teaching profession. Lack of appreciation and reward for teachers also featured in the discussion, with participants explicitly stating that they are never recognized for good work..."even if you do something credible, there is no appreciation" (P3, FGD 2, 2nd April 2024). According to some

participants, motivation may not necessarily need to be in the form of material or financial benefits. A simple recognition energizes (FGD 7, 3rd April 2024). Similarly, another participant said:

"We should be appreciated because we do a lot, when you look at doctors, engineers, pilots among others, all are as a result of the efforts of teachers" (P1, FGD 6, 3rd April 2024).

The assumption behind this argument is that teachers play a big role in developing learners' careers. With all these challenges, creating an avenue that recognizes their efforts alone could save a lot, and restore some extent of satisfaction among teachers within the teaching profession. Otherwise, if such a negative trend remains unchanged, it is likely that the teaching job will soon be deserted by many teachers in favour of other professions where they feel there are higher levels of extrinsic motivation than the teaching profession.

Limited Promotion Opportunities

In another related response, another participant (P4) exhibited a high level of dissatisfaction with promotion opportunities. He said, "...there are no genuine promotion opportunities in the education sector, especially in primary schools. Irrespective of your academic qualifications, salary structure remains the same" (P4, FGD 3, 2nd April 2024). This is demoralizing. According to another participant, (P5 & P6, FGD 9, 4th April 2024), frustration with stagnant pay despite further education is another major problem: "I completed my degree in 2014 but I am still a classroom teacher. I regret wasting money to acquire this degree" (P5, FGD 3, 2nd April 2024). Another participant noted that he may leave for another profession even if the financial benefit is nearly the same (P6, FGD 8, 4th 2024). This particular response shows a very high level of dissatisfaction with the profession, to the extent that a servant is willing to exit even if the financial benefit outside the current profession is the same. It also portrays a very high level of toxicity in the teaching profession, where a serving teacher would want to seek peace of mind with total disregard for financial benefits. Overall, these findings underscore the urgent need to look introspectively into the teachers' promotional opportunities.

Despotic and Authoritative Leadership

As gathered from the findings of this study, pressure from school directors is yet another very significant determinant of turnover intentions among teachers. According to a participant, "...some directors are too egocentric. They don't take into consideration employees' personal needs. This is really annoying" (P5, FGD 10, 4th April 2024). The pressure, according to participants, comes from some administrative officers, directors of schools, inspectors, and other external forces. Similarly, one participant stated "...we have so many learners on the ground but our immediate supervisors seem less considerate. They want things done irrespective of other factors on the ground." (P1, FGD 1, 2nd April 2024). They also noted that teachers face challenging working conditions, including harsh treatment from school directors (P5, FGD 6, 3rd April 2024). This situation is very common in privately owned schools, where the proprietor reserves the right to decide everything, ranging from terms of recruitment, remunerations, and termination of service among others. This makes teachers in such environments work in fear and panic most of the time, with very little or no morale at all.

With specification, P5 and P6 of FGD 1 pointed out administrative pressures such as harassment from head teachers, deputies, and intimidation from higher authorities, as well as external pressures from parents as significant determinants of teacher turnover intention (FGD 1, 2nd April 2024). This pressure limits the teachers from having enough time with their families (4, FGD 6, 3rd April 2024). There is also the element of harsh treatment of teachers by school owners, as observed by another participant. Such treatment has greatly triggered turnover intentions among teachers.

As quoted from a participant, "... mistreatment of teachers by the owners of the school, ...it becomes so challenging when the work environment is like a battlefield. We always find it hard to deliver because of administrators' or directors' rough behaviour. Our emotions are always not always catered for. This is making teachers leave the profession" (P6, FGD 8, 4th April 2024).

Therefore, inferring from the above findings, it is apparent that job demand, resulting from too much pressure exerted both internally and externally against the teachers, limits their time for personal

and family engagement, thus making the teachers lose the morale of teaching and develop the intentions to opt for other jobs or occupations.

Poor Work Conditions

In reference to the conditions under which teachers serve, the participants pointed out teachers' workload as one determinant triggering turnover intention among primary school teachers. They noted that what teachers are required to perform at all times is overwhelming. One participant stated "heavy workload" and proceeded to say, "we have so many learners and we teach many classes, the work is very exhaustive" (P3, FGD 1, 2nd April 2024). "The job demand is not good for our health. I think I should not even enter payroll" (P3, FGD 2, 2nd April 2024). In some private schools, lessons run from 7am up to 10pm at night. This is too much (FGD 2, 2nd April 2024). "Tough working conditions for example the night classes have left us with no options other than thinking about other opportunities outside teaching" (P6, FGD 7, 3rd April 2024).

Related to the above, another participant complained about poor conditions of work, saying, they work in a dirty and uncondusive environment, unlike other professions where employees enjoy the ambience of their workplace (P6, FGD 3, 2nd April 2024). "When you look at staff quarters where we are living, you will truly understand the meaning of suffering. The houses are small and in very bad conditions" (2nd April 2024), there are no other fringe benefits (P2, FGD 5, 3rd April 2024). Looking at the reasons behind turnover intentions, it is possible to infer that the benefits teachers get for the service they offer are not commensurate with their input. The extent that even someone who has not yet accessed the government payroll already wishes not to join shows that the conditions of service are detrimental to the lives of teachers and may force many teachers out of the teaching profession.

Health Related Challenges

The field findings also showed that some teachers are staying in their current workstations conditionally and not because they actually love to stay. For instance, P1, a disabled teacher, with a tone of bitterness lamented that she would have left a long time but her condition leaves her with no option. In her words, she noted: "For me, I would wish to leave but there is no way because this is the only school in Lira City which somehow favors me" (P1, FGD 3, 2nd April 2024). This highlights a situation where some teachers are persevering in toxic and unfavourable working environments against their will as a result of their disability, and there are high chances of such teachers leaving should any opportunity arise.

Age-Related Determinants

Old age coupled with the nature of the work was one of the factors pointed out as a key determinant of teacher turnover intention. One common tendency revealed in this study is the will for early retirement. However, what should be noted is that the desire to go for early retirement is not ordinarily based on free will, but mostly due to dissatisfaction with the service. For instance, two participants, P3 and P4 expressed intentions to leave due to old age and dissatisfaction with the service, expressing that the intention to leave was due to their chronological age vis-a-vis retirement age (P3 & P4, FGD 2, 2nd April 2024). On the other hand, though, P6 had definitive plans to leave before their expected time, indicating, "It is already planned and I feel I have done enough for the government" (FGD 2, 2nd April 2024). Similarly, another participant mentioned applying for early retirement due to donkey years of service, "I have served for nearly 24 years and feel I should apply for early retirement" (P4, FGD 5, 3rd April 2024). The last statements bring to light the fact that, unlike other professions where employees may still have the intention to work even after retirement, most teachers hope for early retirement from the services, This could be an indicator of total dissatisfaction within the profession.

Policy Issues and Administrative Biases

The idea of equality in terms of payment irrespective of your qualification is a policy that has caused more pain among teachers. It doesn't matter whether you have a diploma, degree, master's, or PhD as long as you are a primary school teacher the salary remains the same. This is demoralizing. This is a similar trend in secondary school where a teacher mentioned that turnover intention may equally be rising among secondary school teachers who teach arts-related subjects because of variations in terms of

payment. "The government practice of Divide and Rule is very discouraging, let the whole system cater for all the teachers" (FGD 3, 2nd April 2024). This reflects the latest development in the salary structure and enhancement in which salaries were enhanced with disparities across the subject alignment. This finding shows that if such a step is not reversed, many teachers will be forced to exit the teaching job due to dissatisfaction and frustration.

Career and Professional Growth Determinants

The study findings also revealed that many teachers end up dissatisfied with the teaching profession because of limited opportunities for professional growth within the teaching profession. According to a participant, "...going for further study is a waste of time. Besides, administrators make it hard for teachers to go for upgrading." (P4, FGD 3, 2nd April 2024). Related to the above, P4 of the fourth FGD, (2nd April 2024) stated that "if you make a mistake of going for upgrading, you risk losing your job", while another participant observed that, "limited opportunities for career transfer" (P6, FGD 9, 3rd April 2024) as a major reason for leaving the teaching job. Similarly, in a related observation, P3 of FGD 5, while highlighting the existing gap in promotions, said, "If someone has gone for upgrading, upon completion, he or she should be promoted" (3rd April 2024). Also, in a reflective argument, P5 of FGD 5 expressed frustration over limitations in career progression, stating that, "I obtained Bachelor of Education in 2017 and there is no promotion" (FGD 10, 3rd April 2024). These are indicators of promotion hurdles within the education system.

Relatedly, based on individual interviews, the primary determinants of turnover intention among teachers include; inadequate salaries, poor working conditions, and job demand. From Interview 1 and Interview 4, insufficient pay and lack of financial incentives were pointed out as major factors driving teachers to seek other opportunities. Additionally, administrative pressures also play a significant role, as discussed in Interviews 3, 4, 6, and 8. Teachers' perceptions of better opportunities outside the profession, like politics or business, further contribute to their turnover intentions. The findings above are all indicative of a looming threat of teacher attrition as the serving employees seem constantly faced with the challenge of hardships towards academic and professional growth while in service, making it hard for them to upgrade to higher levels. Besides, those who have sacrificed and upgraded to higher levels such as diplomas and degrees are not recognized and paid the same salary (Interview 2, April 2024). This absence of the deserved recognition and rewards for the sacrifice of teachers has prompted many teachers to start brewing the idea of exiting the teaching profession.

DISCUSSION

Context-Based Determinants of Turnover Intention

The study findings on context-based determinants of turnover intentions among teachers, align with various aspects of the existing literature and theories. However, notable agreements and contradictions emerged, underscoring the complexity of turnover intentions among teachers. The findings are discussed based on themes as presented below.

The participants' view is that societal attitudes towards the teaching profession significantly impact turnover intention. They expressed feelings of being undermined and disrespected by society. Statements like "teaching profession is no longer cherished, with teachers being seen as icons of economic failure, and those who deserve no public respect" implies that teachers are viewed as economically unsuccessful and socially inferior, resulting in a demoralizing work environment. This finding agrees with, See et al. who highlighted low social status accorded to teachers as one key factor contributing to job dissatisfaction and turnover intention. Similarly, these findings were also echoed by Chase who emphasized the role of community apathy and social status in influencing teachers' decisions to leave the profession. However, the depth of dissatisfaction rooted in societal attitudes towards teachers as expressed by participants in this study appears underexplored in the existing literature.

In this study, teachers expressed frustration with their low salaries with the majority earning around 300,000 to 500,000 Uganda shillings (that's around 83 to 139 US dollars) per month, which are insufficient to meet their basic needs. Low salaries were another key context based determinant highlighted in this study, with participants indicating that poor remuneration contributes to their desire to leave the profession. This study's findings demonstrate that economic and financial factors

significantly contribute to turnover intentions among in-service teachers. Participants pointed out limited economic benefit as one factor that forces teachers to seek alternative occupations that are financially more rewarding. Teachers expressed frustration with their inability to meet personal and professional needs due to the low remuneration. The teaching profession is revered by many and viewed as an unviable career, with several participants expressing intentions to leave for better-paying opportunities outside the field. This aligns with the Expectancy Value Theory which asserts that motivation for a given behaviour or action is a combination of two factors that is, people's expectations for success and subjective values attached to it.⁴¹ Employees (teachers) are likely to leave if their expectations are not met.⁴²

These findings align with studies conducted by Ayall et al. and Ssali et al. who identified salary dissatisfaction as a major driver of teacher turnover intention and actual turnover.⁴³ Both studies argue that inadequate pay pushes teachers to seek alternative employment opportunities that offer better financial compensation. Similarly, Opio added that low salaries, combined with a lack of non-monetary benefits, triggers turnover intention among teachers.⁴⁴ As evidenced in other studies, these findings clearly indicate that salary dissatisfaction is a primary factor in turnover intentions. Even in well-resourced schools, teachers may still leave if their compensation does not reflect the service they provide. Another participant explicitly mentioned that their salary goes primarily towards paying debts, leaving little room for enjoyment or growth, a situation that drives many to consider leaving teaching. This mirrors the conclusions of Opio who found that inadequate salaries and poor working conditions were among the most cited reasons for turnover in both public and private school teachers.⁴⁵ The current findings diverge from the findings of Charles-Leija, et al. who argue that salary and experience do not necessarily predict turnover intentions.⁴⁶ There could be other intrapersonal factors outside salary that may trigger turnover intention. However, in this study, salary dissatisfaction is paramount, and the absence of career progression is linked to teachers' low morale.

From an intrinsic standpoint, one participant expressed regret over her decision to join the teaching profession, revealing that, despite feeling a natural talent and strong interest in the medical field, she was diverted into the teaching profession by her parents. She emphasized that her passion lies in medicine, yet she finds herself in a career that doesn't align with her true aspirations. This situation highlights a clear case of career misalignment within the teaching profession, where personal interests and aptitude are not in harmony with the chosen path. This finding aligns with the Person-Environment Fit (PEF) theory which emphasizes the importance of the alignment between an individual's personal characteristics and the environment in which they work. These personal factors include skills, interests, goals, personality traits, abilities, and needs among others. According to this theory, employees are more likely to feel comfortable, satisfied, and motivated when the conditions of their work environment are compatible with their personal factors. When these elements match, employees tend to experience higher levels of well-being, engagement, and productivity. Conversely, when there is a mismatch between an individual personal trait and the environment, stress and dissatisfaction emanate.

Participants also expressed frustration over stagnant pay despite earning additional qualifications with statements like "I completed my degree in 2014 and still get the same salary." This indicates that acquiring higher educational advancement does not necessarily translate into financial improvement, challenging the notion that higher academic ability alone without any other fringe benefit drives turnover intentions as suggested by Darling-Hammond. This is consistent with findings from previous scholars who reviewed the role of demographic factors like academic qualifications or experience in determining turnover intentions. Several other studies have shown that employees' intention to leave for another job is highly linked to variation in academic qualification, The study findings agree with Akpa and Olalekan

⁴¹ Eccles and Wigfield, "Motivational Beliefs, Values, and Goals."

⁴² Abdul Rehman, Sehar, and Afzal, "Performance Appraisal; Application of Victor Vroom Expectancy Theory."

⁴³ Achieng Ayall, Joyce Wambura, and M.W. Simatwa, "Influence of School-Based Factors on Teacher Turnover Intentions: A Case of Public Secondary Schools in Rachuonyo North Sub-County, Kenya"; Ssali, Onen, and Musoke, "Factors Determining the Retention of Academic Staff in Universities."

⁴⁴ Patrick Opio, "Incentives and Retention of Qualified Teachers in Hard to Reach Primary Schools of Uganda: A Case of Kotido District" (Kyambogo University, 2021).

⁴⁵ Opio, "Incentives and Retention of Qualified Teachers in Hard to Reach Primary Schools of Uganda: A Case of Kotido District."

⁴⁶ Humberto Charles-Leija et al., "Meaningful Work, Happiness at Work, and Turnover Intentions," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 20, no. 4 (February 17, 2023): 3565, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20043565>.

and See et al. who argued that teachers with higher academic qualifications are more likely to leave due to better job prospects.⁴⁷ This suggests that while qualifications may play a role, broader social and workplace conditions are critical to understanding turnover among teachers in Lira. While previous studies found that turnover intentions were often linked to academic qualifications, further disagreement with the literature can be found in the role of experience. Statements from participants such as "I completed my second degree and still get the same salary" underscore that experience and further education are not strong enough to deter turnover intention when economic dissatisfaction is prevalent.

Job demand, as noted in this study, is another common factor that came up from the field findings. Participants expressed discomfort with the nature of the work and the difficulties in managing large classes. This finding mirrors the work of Junaidi et al. who identified workload and overcrowded classrooms as determinants of teacher burnout and higher turnover intentions.⁴⁸ Moreover, Viac and Fraser pointed out that new teachers, in particular, experience high levels of stress, with a high number leaving for other professions in less than six years.⁴⁹ This directly correlates with the challenges faced by participants in this study, who expressed that the psychological and physical demand of this job in most cases exceeds the personal and social resources that they can mobilize. This is an indicator of hyperstress or total burnout. This finding is also consistent with studies by Olalekan and Kesen who found that teachers often seek alternative professions offering better compensation with no stressors.⁵⁰

The findings also revealed that career development opportunities are limited in the teaching profession. Teachers expressed disappointment on the basis that they are always denied promotional opportunities for those who have already upgraded. In this sense, the study expands on Chong and Yazdani's findings who suggested that career advancement without corresponding financial rewards may not reduce turnover intentions.⁵¹ It also aligns with Kamphuis and Glebbeek who noted that insufficient career development options contribute to turnover intentions.⁵² However, the data from this study shows that even with career advancements, such as earning additional degrees, teachers may still leave due to unchanged salaries, adding a layer of complexity to the relationship between career progression and turnover intentions. Additionally, even when teachers upgrade their qualifications, such efforts go unrewarded, with no automatic promotions or financial recognition. The findings on lack of promotion opportunities, such as being capped at Grade III despite higher qualifications, echo the work of Darling-Hammond who noted that teachers with higher academic backgrounds are more likely to leave the profession due to their expectations of better job prospects.⁵³ In contrast, See et al. argue that teachers with lower academic ability tend to stay, a pattern that is indirectly corroborated by the participants' frustrations about the lack of reward for pursuing further studies.⁵⁴

The findings from the study indicate that teachers experience significant dissatisfaction with their motivation systems, primarily stemming from extrinsic factors such as inadequate non-monetary benefits and recognition from school administrators. These findings resonate with existing literature that highlights similar concerns. For instance, García and Weiss argue that teachers often develop an intention to leave the profession due to dissatisfaction with non-monetary benefits, salary, and poor administrative support.⁵⁵ This is also consistent with findings from a study conducted by Jingdong et al. who identified lack of non-monetary benefits like health insurance and flexible working hours as drivers of turnover intentions. However, the current study adds an important layer to this discourse by revealing that some teachers are willing to exit the profession even for jobs with lower pay as long as they feel more

⁴⁷ O Victoria and U Olalekan, "Effects of Demographic Factors on Employees' Intention to Leave in Selected Private Universities in South West, Nigeria," *The International Journal of Business and Management* 4, no. 10 (2016): 322–30.

⁴⁸ Achmad Junaidi et al., "The Effect of Overtime, Job Stress, and Workload on Turnover Intention," *Management Science Letters*, 2020, 3873–78, <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2020.7.024>.

⁴⁹ Viac and Fraser, "Teachers' Well-Being: A Framework for Data Collection and Analysis."

⁵⁰ Kesen, "The Impact of Employee Training and Innovation on Turnover Intention: An Empirical Research"; Victoria and Olalekan, "Effects of Demographic Factors on Employees' Intention to Leave in Selected Private Universities in South West, Nigeria."

⁵¹ Chong and Yazdani, "Factors Affecting the Affective Organizational Commitment, Job Satisfaction and Job Acceptance Intention of Interns: A Conceptual Framework."

⁵² Kamphuis and Glebbeek, "Job (In)Security and Workers' Training Decisions: A Framing Approach."

⁵³ Darling-Hammond et al., "Implications for Educational Practice of the Science of Learning and Development."

⁵⁴ See et al., "Teacher Recruitment and Retention: A Critical Review of International Evidence of Most Promising Interventions."

⁵⁵ García and Weiss, "A Policy Agenda to Address the Teacher Shortage in US Public Schools: The Sixth and Final Report in the 'Perfect Storm in the Teacher Labor Market' Series."

appreciated. This finding aligns with Tirta and Enrika who examined “the impact of reward and recognition, work life balance, on employee retention with job satisfaction as mediating variable on millennials in Indonesia” and found that school administrators who emphasized the use of non-monetary incentives like recognition can influence employee retention.⁵⁶

The study participants also highlighted dissatisfaction with how some school administrators run the schools, different forms of harassment they get from administrators, coupled with external pressure from parents, as significant determinants of turnover intention among in-service teachers as in this population. The participants complained about "egocentric" administrators who fail to consider their personal needs. In support of these findings, Cunningham also found that insufficient administrative assistance, limited influence in the educational system, disruption in the classroom, and insufficient time for personal life as key determinants of teacher turnover intention and actual turnover.⁵⁷

Moreover, the pressure of balancing professional duties and personal lives was a recurrent theme, with teachers lamenting that they lack time for their families due to administrative demands. This is corroborated by findings from a study conducted by Chen et al. who identified work-family conflict as a significant factor in turnover intentions among teachers. The harsh treatment from school owners, particularly in private institutions, as indicated by the participants, merged as one key factor triggering turnover intention. Administrators who care less about the social and psychological well-being of colleagues ignite turnover intention among the oppressed. The findings in this study indicate that pressure from higher authorities, particularly in private schools, disproportionately affects all teachers, pushing them toward turnover. This is supported by a study from Iqbal et al. who noted that despotic leadership styles trigger turnover intention.⁵⁸ The administrative pressures detailed in this study also align with findings from a study conducted by Ndyabahika and Henry who found that transformational leadership significantly enhances retention of teachers.⁵⁹

The findings regarding poor working conditions, heavy workloads, and inadequate housing facilities came out as key determinants of turnover intention. In agreement with this finding, Garcia and Evans in their study highlighted how low status, job dissatisfaction, and poor working conditions as contributing factors that if not addressed can lead to the development of turnover intentions among employees. Participants of this study expressed dissatisfaction with the living quarters provided by schools, often describing them as "small and in very bad conditions," a sentiment that aligns with Gichungu's argument who noted that an uncondusive work environment significantly influences turnover among employees.⁶⁰ Moreover, the heavy workload, with teachers often required to teach large classes and take on additional night lessons, mirrors Melesse's assertion that overwhelming workloads contribute to teacher burnout, turnover intention and actual turnover. Teachers in this study reported that they are expected to work from morning until late evening, with no additional pay for night classes, leading to physical exhaustion and a strong desire to leave the profession. However, this study findings diverge from Biswakarma's finding which found no variation in turnover intentions based on workload among Nepalese employees. In contrast, the participants of this study consistently emphasized that their workload is a primary source of dissatisfaction, with many expressing that the excessive workload does not match their financial compensation driving many to consider leaving for other professions.

The finding that some teachers remain in their positions conditionally due to limitation of alternative opportunities highlights an understudied area in the existing literature. One teacher expressed a desire to leave but was limited by fact that there were no other schools that could accommodate her disability. This aligns with Chen et al. who noted that the availability of professional alternatives can significantly affect turnover intentions.⁶¹ However, the current study suggests that in some cases, teachers

⁵⁶ Aga Hutama Tirta and Amelia Enrika, “Understanding the Impact of Reward and Recognition, Work Life Balance, on Employee Retention with Job Satisfaction as Mediating Variable on Millennials in Indonesia,” *Journal of Business and Retail Management Research* 14, no. 03 (2020).

⁵⁷ Cunningham, “A Quantitative Analysis of the Factors Associated with Teacher Attitudes and Perceptions towards Job Satisfaction.”

⁵⁸ Iqbal, Javed, Ali Asghar, and Muhammad Zaheer Asghar. "Effect of despotic leadership on employee turnover intention: mediating toxic workplace environment and cognitive distraction in academic institutions." *Behavioral sciences* 12, no. 5 (2022): 125.

⁵⁹ Ndyabahika, Jacos Dickens, and Noel Henry. "Leadership Styles and Retention of Teachers in Selected Secondary Schools in Ruhinda County, Mitooma District Uganda."

⁶⁰ Gichungu, Teresia, Elegwa Mukulu, and Alice Simiyu. "Work Environment and Employee Turnover in the Insurance Industry in Kenya." *Journal of Human Resource and Leadership* 9, no. 2 (2024): 19-31.

⁶¹ Chen, Ayoun, and Eyoun, “Work-Family Conflict and Turnover Intentions: A Study Comparing China and U.S. Hotel Employees.”

are trapped in their roles due to the scarcity of alternative opportunities, a point less emphasized in the existing literature. This contrasts with Gezel whose studies revealed that teachers often leave the profession early due to dissatisfaction, but it also nuances the discussion by highlighting that some teachers might stay despite dissatisfaction because they have no other viable options.⁶²

The findings of the current study indicate that teachers express a desire for early retirement due to dissatisfaction with the teaching profession, rather than it being a voluntary choice. Participants pointed out factors such as chronological age, dissatisfaction with the service, and prolonged years of service coupled with bad experiences as driving forces behind their desire to retire early. For instance, one participant stated, "I have served for nearly 24 years and feel I should apply for early retirement" (P4, FGD 5). This aligns with Muhangi's research findings which found that demographic factors like academic qualification, age, gender, religious affiliation, and work experience significantly predict teacher turnover intentions. Similarly, Ryan et al. added that age factors can equally trigger turnover intention. However, unlike other professions where employees would still wish to continue even after retirement, most of the participants exhibited a high level of turnover intention with a greater percentage coming from the elderly. This is an indicator of total burnout among teachers.

However, while the study's findings align with much of the existing literature, contradictions remain regarding the role of age and experience in triggering turnover intentions. While Gezel posits that novice teachers are more likely to leave due to a lack of experience and professional development, the current study shows that even experienced teachers with over 20 years of service are seeking early retirement. Additionally, Biswakarma's research findings suggest that experience does not significantly influence turnover intentions, with both novice and experienced employees displaying similar intentions to leave.⁶³ This discrepancy highlights the power of other factors that influence turnover intention irrespective of experience and age.

Another important finding from this study is the dissatisfaction stemming from disparities in salary structures and lack of systemic support for all teachers. Participants noted that in some private schools, there are unequal pay grades which may force many teachers to exit the profession. This is supported by García and Weiss who argue that even in well-resourced schools, teachers may leave if they feel underpaid or underappreciated.⁶⁴ This dissatisfaction with pay, lack of financial incentives, disparities in salary alignment, and administrative inadequacies as noted by the study participants align with Chase who attributed teacher turnover intention or actual turnover to structural issues within the school system.⁶⁵ It is also consistent with results from a study conducted by Mugo and Guyo who found that pay grade disparities lead to job dissatisfaction, a factor pushing teachers toward turnover. The study's findings extend this understanding by highlighting that such inequities are pervasive in primary schools, a gap that has been less explored in previous studies that primarily focused on secondary education.

It was further revealed that a significant cause of teacher dissatisfaction and turnover intention is a limitation in career advancement or professional growth. Teachers lamented that furthering their education is viewed as futile and that the education system does not offer incentives for career development. For example, one participant stated, "...if you make a mistake of going back to school for upgrading, you risk losing your job" (P4, FGD 3). This issue reflects broader concerns in the literature. Studies by Viac and Fraser suggest that teachers often leave the profession due to limitation and dissatisfaction in career progression opportunities.⁶⁶ This parallels the findings of Melesse et al. who found that limited career development opportunities significantly contribute to turnover intention.⁶⁷ This

⁶² Pim Gezel, "Exploring Organizational Factors Causing Teacher Attrition in Primary Schools in the Netherlands: A Multiple Regression Study" (University of Twente, 2020).

⁶³ Biswakarma, "Employees' Job Engagement and Turnover Intentions in Nepalese Private Commercial Banks-An Empirical Evidence."

⁶⁴ García and Weiss, "A Policy Agenda to Address the Teacher Shortage in US Public Schools: The Sixth and Final Report in the 'Perfect Storm in the Teacher Labor Market' Series."

⁶⁵ Raymond, "A Case Study Exploring Teacher Job Satisfaction and Teacher Retention Issues in a Large Urban Oklahoma School District."

⁶⁶ Viac and Fraser, "Teachers' Well-Being: A Framework for Data Collection and Analysis."

⁶⁷ Frehiwot Melesse, "The Assessment of Causes of Teachers' Turnover at Harvest Academy as Perceived by Existing Staff" (St. Mary's University, 2021).

indicates an agreement between the study's findings and the literature, with both suggesting that lack of career advancement and poor professional support are central to teachers' turnover intentions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the field findings and discussion, the following recommendations were drawn: There is a need for effective recognition of teachers, to enhance societal respect. Teachers should be; accorded the highest status, respected, and well-paid just like in other countries. This can be done by recognizing their roles publicly through awards, campaigns, and enhancing policies to boost morale and retention. This may create a feeling of prestige within this profession thus fostering community respect and appreciation for their contributions.

There is a need to improve teachers' salaries, contingent rewards, and other fringe benefits. Responsible stakeholders should review and increase teachers' salaries to reflect their qualifications and workload. Just like other prestigious professions, teachers should be entitled to other benefits such as health insurance, free professional career development, and housing allowances among others to enhance job satisfaction and retention. Besides, ensuring equality in terms of salary among teachers may help in addressing discrepancies. This may serve as a motivating factor hence reducing turnover intention.

Reducing job demand by addressing workload concerns. This can be done by hiring or recruiting more teachers to reduce class sizes, redistributing teaching responsibilities, as well as providing administrative support that prioritizes teacher well-being and encourages a balanced work-life environment. Where possible the teacher-learner ratio should be reduced to the smallest number possible to enhance efficacy and reduce workload.

In terms of leadership, school administrators need to be fair and considerate to teachers. The propensity to use school resources with egoistic intentions may not help. Teachers' voices and requests should be heard and considered. The application of pressure and an authoritative leadership style may create tension at work and should be avoided. The application of equity and equality when using school resources should be adhered to. This will help create a spirit of transparency and motivate teachers thus reducing turnover intention.

Improving the welfare and the work environment of teachers. The work environment is key to increasing job satisfaction and lowering the likelihood of employees leaving. Both the social and physical environment of schools should be made appealing, attractive, and conducive for both teachers and learners. Therefore, providing better housing, allowances, and social support may enhance retention and reduce turnover intention.

Promoting professional development and enhancing merit-based promotions. There is a need to offer accessible study leave opportunities for teachers. Promotion should be done on merit. Teachers with higher qualifications should be given promotion and their salaries enhanced. Similarly, paying teachers based on their qualifications may not only help boost the spirit of professional development within the teaching profession but may also reduce turnover intention.

Some teachers join the teaching profession not by interest but by default and they feel unhappy, frustrated and always think about leaving. Therefore, to prevent career mismatch and turnover intentions, students shouldn't be forced to enroll in the teaching profession when their potential and interest fall in other areas. Staying in the wrong profession can cause economic and psychic loss.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study on the context-based determinants of job turnover intention among teachers provide a multifaceted view of the challenges educators face, echoing and diverging from existing literature. The key drivers of turnover intention revealed in this study included both personal and environmental factors. This included societal negative attitudes towards the teaching profession. This study has uncovered an underexplored depth of frustration stemming from societal disrespect. The demoralizing societal perception of teachers as economically unsuccessful, coupled with low salaries, was notably demotivating, pushing many towards career shifts. Job stress, exacerbated by heavy workloads and large class sizes contributed significantly to burnout, while inadequate career growth opportunities compounded the frustration. Limited promotion opportunities are one of the key issues that were of concern to many participants. Despite further education, teachers remained trapped in stagnant

financial positions, signaling that qualifications alone do not counterbalance turnover intentions. Administrative biases and poor working conditions further entrenched dissatisfaction. This study underscores the complexity of turnover decisions, revealing that financial and social factors often outweigh demographic variables like experience, age, and education, necessitating a holistic approach to addressing teacher retention challenges.

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