

**Administrative Support And Teacher Retention In Selected Private Secondary Schools Of Wakiso District,
Uganda**

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Abstract

The article examined the relationship between administrative support and teacher retention in Wakiso district secondary schools. The study adopted a cross-sectional research design. The study used the mixed method, where the qualitative method shall be for the interview guide well as the quantitative method will be employed when teachers are filling questionnaire. Head teachers will be interviewed. The target population entailed all secondary school teachers in the ten selected schools in Wakiso district. According to Wakiso District Education Office (2024), there are approximately 430 teachers across all private secondary schools in Wakiso district. The sample was stratified proportionally to ensure representation from each institution. So 152 teachers (distributed across schools based on their teacher populations). Headteachers/administrators: 10 (all purposively included for qualitative insights). Pearson correlation results show that there is a positive significant relationship between administrative support and teacher retention among teachers ($r_s = 0.612, p < 0.01$). The higher the level of administrative support, the higher the retention levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between administrative support and teacher retention. Interview results revealed that leadership style and administrative support significantly influenced teacher morale and retention. Headteachers who practiced participatory leadership reported higher teacher satisfaction and lower turnover. In contrast, autocratic leadership was linked to frustration and attrition. Senior administrators noted that poor communication from top management demotivated staff. Support in disciplinary and parental conflicts was another critical factor. Teachers were more likely to stay in schools where administration backed them in challenging situations. The hypothesis postulated a significant relationship between administrative support and teacher retention. The quantitative analysis revealed a strong positive correlation ($r_s = 0.612, p < 0.01$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This finding is consistent with a growing body of international and African literature that positions school leadership as a cornerstone of teacher job satisfaction and commitment. Teachers in such environments reported feeling undervalued and disempowered, a sentiment that erodes professional commitment. It was concluded that Administrative leadership is a critical determinant. Supportive, participatory leadership that involves teachers in decision-making and backs them in conflicts fosters a positive school climate and enhances retention. Autocratic and unsupportive leadership, however, fuels dissatisfaction and exit. The study recommended that government must treat the timely payment of teachers' salaries as a non-negotiable priority. A transparent, digital payroll system with strong accountability mechanisms should be implemented to eliminate the delays of 3-6 months reported in this study.

Keywords: Administrative support, instruction materials, teacher retention, working condition.

Introduction

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Teacher retention is a very big problem world-over for instance in the US, 13.8% in the US were either leaving their schools or the whole profession as a whole (Emma & Gracia, 2019). While various factors influence retention, working conditions including remuneration, workload, school leadership, and professional development play a significant role (Ingersoll & May, 2017; Okello & Kagoire, 2021). Globally, teacher attrition is a major concern, with studies indicating that poor working conditions, low salaries, and high stress contribute to high turnover rates (OECD, 2018; UNESCO, 2021).

In Africa, the attrition rate of teachers stands at 4.0% and in Sub-Saharan in particular it stands at 4.8% (UNESCO, 2023). In South Africa, in the last decade they experienced a sudden increase in the rate at which teachers abandoned their workstations and others leaving the profession all together and many attributed it to difficult working conditions for instance government misuse of pension fund, failure to raise salaries for the teachers (Mubanga et al, 2023). In Sub-Saharan Africa, teacher shortages and retention challenges persist due to inadequate resources, large class sizes, and insufficient professional support (Mulkeen, 2020; Uwezo Uganda, 2022).

In East Africa, Tumaini, (2023) carried out a study in Tanzania's rural schools it found that retention was very low compared to urban schools, where they found that teachers were teaching in overcrowded classrooms and had to take on a heavier workload coupled with shortage of school supplies critical for teaching students. Halkano & Ochieng (2023) found that secondary schools found that headteacher's management practices created a poor working conditions like living in deplorable conditions led to many teachers leaving schools to other schools and many leaving the profession altogether in Kenya.

Uganda, in particular, faces a teacher attrition rate of approximately 10% annually, with many educators leaving for better-paying jobs in urban centers or transitioning to non-teaching professions (Ministry of Education and Sports [MoES], 2021). Teachers in Uganda experience delayed salaries, lack of teaching materials, overcrowded classrooms, and minimal career advancement opportunities (Nansamba et al., 2021; Ssenkusu et al., 2020). These challenges are exacerbated in peri-urban areas like Wakiso district, where schools struggle with high student enrollment due to population growth but lack proportional increases in staffing and infrastructure (Wakiso District Education Report, 2022). Working conditions encompass both physical and psychosocial factors that influence job satisfaction and retention. Key aspects include: Low and irregular salaries are among the primary reasons teachers leave the profession (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2019). In Uganda, public secondary school teachers often report dissatisfaction with pay compared to the rising cost of living (MoES, 2021). Private school teachers face even greater disparities, with many earning below the recommended wage (Uganda National Teachers' Union [UNATU], 2023).

Across Wakiso district, Wakiso District, Uganda, the challenge of retaining teachers has become increasingly pronounced for instance High attrition rates among teachers are often attributed to poor working conditions, including delayed salaries, excessive workloads, inadequate administrative support, and limited professional development opportunities (Wakiso District Education Report, 2022). These factors not only demoralize educators

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but also disrupt the continuity of learning, ultimately affecting the overall performance of students. This study seeks to examine the effect of working conditions on staff retention in Wakiso district.

The study is based on Herzberg's Two Factor Theory. Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (Motivation Hygiene Theory) was advanced by Frederick Herzberg in the year 1959, this theory posits that workplace factors can be categorized into two distinct groups: hygiene factors and motivators (Herzberg et al., 1959). Hygiene factors (extrinsic elements like salary, working conditions, and job security) prevent dissatisfaction when present but do not motivate employees. Motivators (intrinsic elements such as achievement, recognition, and responsibility) actively drive job satisfaction and performance. It also assumes that satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not opposite to each other but are separate, and that improving hygiene factors only reduces dissatisfaction without creating positive motivation (Herzberg, 1968).

Strengths of the theory include its clear distinction between different types of workplace factors and its practical applications for human resource management (Robbins & Judge, 2019). However, it has been criticized for oversimplifying the relationship between satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and for its limited generalizability beyond white-collar professionals (House & Wigdor, 1967). The theory's methodological approach has also been questioned, as it relies on self-reported data that may be biased (King, 1970).

Statement of the problem

Favorable working conditions for instance good student-teacher interactions, less salary disparities, and responsible administrative support motivate teachers to remain in their positions, leading to stable staffing, improved student outcomes, and sustained educational quality (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). However, the reality in Wakiso district Twon Council, secondary schools have poor working conditions, such as delayed or low salaries, limited administrative support, and inadequate teacher student interaction (MoES, 2021; UNATU, 2023). The magnitude of this problem is significant. For instance, some schools in Wakiso district have teacher to student ratios exceeding 1:70, far above the recommended 1:40, leading to overcrowded classrooms and excessive workloads (Wakiso District Education Office, 2023). Also, teachers don't have access to professional development opportunities and face inadequate teaching materials, further demoralizing them (Nansamba et al., 2021). However, these interventions have not sufficiently mitigated the challenges, particularly in periurban areas like Wakiso district, where unique dynamics such as urbanization pressures exacerbate the issues (UBOS, 2022). This study seeks to investigate the relationship between administrative support and teacher retention in Wakiso district secondary schools.

Objective of the study

To examine the relationship between administrative support and teacher retention in Wakiso district secondary schools.

Hypothesis of the study

There is no significant relationship between administrative support and teacher retention.

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Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design. Cross-sectional design was chosen because data was collected at a single point and once without follow-up (Creswell, 2017). This allowed for a snapshot analysis of working conditions and teacher retention in Wakiso district. The study used the mixed method, where the qualitative method shall be for the interview guide well as the quantitative method was employed when teachers are filling questionnaire. Head teachers will be interviewed. Correlational design is employed to examine relationships between variables (administrative support, student-teacher interaction, salary disparities, and retention) without manipulation (Kumar, 2019). This design helps reveal the course and strength of associations between the variables. The target population entailed all secondary school teachers in the ten selected schools in Wakiso district. According to Wakiso District Education Office (2024), there are approximately 430 teachers across all private secondary schools in Wakiso district.

To find the sample size for teachers in Wakiso district secondary schools, the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table was applied. This method is suitable for finite populations and provides a reliable sample size based on the total population (N) with a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error.

According to Wakiso District Education Office (2023), there are approximately 430 teachers across the secondary schools in Wakiso district.

The Krejcie and Morgan table provides suggested sample sizes for a given population size. For N = 430, the table suggests: Sample size (n) = 152 (for a population of 430 at 95% confidence and 5% margin of error). The sample was stratified proportionally to ensure representation from each institution. So 152 teachers (distributed across schools based on their teacher populations).

Headteachers/administrators: 10 (all purposively included for qualitative insights).

The study will employ simple random sampling for teachers and purposive sampling for headteachers and key administrative staff. This strategy ensures both representativeness and depth in data collection.

RESULTS

Administrative Support

Respondents were requested to indicate their levels of administrative support. The frequencies obtained were translated into percentages as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequencies of Responses on Administrative Support

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. School leadership provides regular professional development.	23.0	32.9	21.1	15.8	7.2
2. I receive constructive feedback from school administrators.	19.7	27.6	25.7	19.7	7.2
3. My workload is fairly distributed among staff.	14.5	26.3	28.9	21.1	9.2
4. The administration involves teachers in decision-making.	25.7	30.3	22.4	15.8	5.9

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5. I have access to necessary teaching resources.	18.4	28.9	27.6	17.8	7.2
6. School policies support teacher well-being.	21.1	32.2	26.3	13.8	6.6
7. Administrative duties interfere with my teaching time.	7.9	13.8	19.7	35.5	23.0
8. The school recognizes and rewards teacher achievements.	27.6	32.9	22.4	11.8	5.3

Results in Table 1 show that only 23% agreed that school leadership provides regular professional development, while 55.9% disagreed. Similarly, 58.5% disagreed that the administration involves teachers in decision-making. A majority (58.5%) agreed that administrative duties interfere with teaching time. Only 17.1% agreed that the school recognizes and rewards teacher achievements.

Teacher Retention

Respondents were requested to indicate their levels of teacher retention. The frequencies obtained were translated into percentages as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Frequencies of Responses on Teacher Retention

Items	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. I can easily communicate with my students during lessons.	4.6	9.2	13.8	47.4	25.0
2. My students actively participate in classroom discussions.	5.9	15.8	22.4	39.5	16.4
3. I have time to give my students individual attention.	13.2	23.0	25.7	26.3	11.8
4. My students' behavior positively impacts my teaching motivation.	9.2	18.4	27.0	32.2	13.2
5. Language barriers hinder effective communication with students.	14.5	27.6	25.0	21.1	11.8
6. Overcrowding limits my ability to interact with all students.	6.6	15.8	19.7	35.5	22.4
7. I receive constructive feedback from my students.	18.4	26.3	28.9	19.7	6.6
8. There is mutual respect between me and my students.	7.9	14.5	23.0	36.8	17.8

SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, N=Neutral, A=Agree, SA=Strongly Agree

Results in Table 2 showed that 72.4% agreed they can easily communicate with students, while 55.9% agreed their students actively participate. However, 38.2% said they rarely have time for individual attention. Overcrowding was noted by 57.9% as limiting interaction. Only 26.3% agreed they receive constructive feedback from students, but 54.6% agreed there is mutual respect.

Administrative Support and Teacher Retention

To test the significance of the first hypothesis (H₁) which stated that there is no significant relationship between administrative support and teacher retention, Pearson correlation(r_s) was used and results were as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Pearson correlation between Administrative Support and Teacher Retention

		Administrative Support	Teacher Retention
Administrative Support	Pearson correlation	1.000	.612**

	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	152	152
Teacher Retention	Pearson correlation	.612**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	152	152

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

Pearson correlation results in Table 3 show that there is a positive significant relationship between administrative support and teacher retention among teachers ($r_s = 0.612, p < 0.01$). The higher the level of administrative support, the higher the retention levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between administrative support and teacher retention.

Qualitative Phase

Interview results revealed that leadership style and administrative support significantly influenced teacher morale and retention. Headteachers who practiced participatory leadership reported higher teacher satisfaction and lower turnover.

“I hold regular staff meetings where teachers can voice concerns. We make decisions together this builds ownership and trust.” (HT3)

In contrast, autocratic leadership was linked to frustration and attrition. Senior administrators noted that poor communication from top management demotivated staff.

“When the headteacher makes unilateral decisions, teachers feel sidelined. Many leave because they don’t feel heard.” (SA7)

Support in disciplinary and parental conflicts was another critical factor. Teachers were more likely to stay in schools where administration backed them in challenging situations.

“If a parent attacks a teacher unfairly, I step in immediately. Teachers need to know the school has their back.” (HT8)

However, some headteachers admitted limited capacity to provide support due to bureaucratic and financial constraints.

“I want to offer more support, but without resources or authority from the district, my hands are tied.” (HT5)

Discussion of Findings

The hypothesis postulated a significant relationship between administrative support and teacher retention. The quantitative analysis revealed a strong positive correlation ($r_s = 0.612, p < 0.01$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This finding is consistent with a growing body of international and African literature that positions school leadership as a cornerstone of teacher job satisfaction and commitment (Ingersoll et al., 2018; Asiyai, 2019). The qualitative data profoundly illuminated the mechanisms behind this correlation.

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The interviews highlighted a stark contrast between participatory and autocratic leadership styles. Headteachers who adopted a collaborative approach, involving teachers in decision-making processes (e.g., HT3's practice of regular consultative meetings), reported higher levels of staff ownership and trust. This aligns with the work of Bellibas and Gümüş (2019), who found that distributed leadership in schools significantly enhances teacher self-efficacy and organisational commitment. Conversely, autocratic leadership, characterised by unilateral decision-making, was cited as a primary source of frustration and a direct cause of attrition (SA7). Teachers in such environments reported feeling undervalued and disempowered, a sentiment that erodes professional commitment.

A critical, yet often overlooked, aspect of administrative support emerged in the context of conflict mediation. Teachers expressed a profound need to feel protected and supported by their administration when facing disciplinary challenges or conflicts with parents (HT8). This finding resonates with studies from Sub-Saharan Africa, which identify the lack of administrative backing in student discipline as a major stressor for teachers (Okeke & Mtyuda, 2017). When teachers perceive that the administration will not advocate for them, their sense of security and belonging diminishes, making departure a more attractive option.

However, administrators also voiced significant constraints. Headteachers like HT5 pointed to bureaucratic and financial limitations that hamper their ability to provide adequate support, be it in the form of resources, professional development, or timely conflict resolution. This reflects the systemic challenges within Uganda's decentralised education system, where school-level leaders often have responsibilities that outstrip their authority and resources (Altinyelken & Možina, 2021). Therefore, the relationship between administrative support and retention is not merely about leadership style but is deeply mediated by the broader systemic capacity to enable effective school-level management.

Conclusion

Administrative leadership is a critical determinant. Supportive, participatory leadership that involves teachers in decision-making and backs them in conflicts fosters a positive school climate and enhances retention. Autocratic and unsupportive leadership, however, fuels dissatisfaction and exit.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed for policymakers, school administrators, and other stakeholders.

The government must treat the timely payment of teachers' salaries as a non-negotiable priority. A transparent, digital payroll system with strong accountability mechanisms should be implemented to eliminate the delays of 3-6 months reported in this study (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2019).

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