

**School Management Reasons Leading to Science Teachers' Turnover in Private Secondary
Schools in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania**

Neema Mselela

Ruaha Catholic University

Email: mselelaneema23@gmail.com

and

Makungu Bulayi

Ruaha Catholic University

Email: bscit113@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examined school management reasons that lead to science teachers' turnover in private secondary schools in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania. The study employed a mixed method research approach with a descriptive research design. The study involved 68 respondents, of whom there were 4 Heads of schools, 4 academic teachers and 60 secondary school teachers, who were obtained through purposive samplings and simple random sampling technique respectively. Data were collected by using questionnaire and interview method. Qualitative data were analysed by using content analysis, while quantitative data were analysed descriptively by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 26.0. The study findings revealed that, the school management reasons that lead to science teachers' turnover in private secondary schools include search for green pasture, good attractive remuneration and poor social and geographical environment. It is recommended that private schools' management must ensure that they retain science teachers by providing high and reasonable remuneration as well as incentivizing them.

Keywords: *Management, Private Secondary School, Science Teachers, Turnover*

1.0 Introduction

Teachers' turnover has been a common phenomenon in most private schools for a long time now. This situation is a result of many reasons, searching for green pastures being one of those reasons. Loquercio, Chediell and Adegbesan (2016), and Shamsuzzoha and Rezaul (2008) argued that in private secondary schools, teachers find job insecurity, a situation that threatens their employment. In Asia, there is also high rate of science teachers' turnover in private school. The major causes of such turnover include low salary, irregular payments, improper management, abusive language of school managers and some supervisors, delay of promotion, lack of allowances, long working hours, and lack of increment, just to mention but a few (Abdali, 2011). Furthermore, in Pakistan, job dissatisfaction among teachers in private schools makes them work uncomfortably. As a result, they move from those private secondary schools.

East African countries such as Kenya and Tanzania in particular have experienced high rate of science teachers' turnover. Kuriya and Ondigi (2012) report that in Kenya, unfavorable working

conditions, long working hours with minimal pays and poor employees training programmes are the causes of turnover. As a result, employees develop work-related stress and reduce organizational commitment. In the same study, few schools had employees who work up to their retirement and employees' resignation was the major form of labor wastage in schools. In Tanzania's schools, staff turnover has been described as a crisis (Hakielimu, 2011). However, the situation is even worse in Tanzania private schools which continue to lose teachers especially science teachers (Chediell, 2010). Science teachers' turnover rate in private secondary endangers the rate of productivity, efficiency, working morale among staff members as well as students' academic performance (Beardwell, 2004). Despite the school management initiatives to cope with teachers' turnover in private secondary schools, the problem still persists. This study examined the following question: why teachers' turnover persists in private secondary schools despite the initiative devised to curb it?

1.1 Theoretical Perspective

This study was guided by Fayol's Management Theory popularly known as Administrative Management Theory, which was developed around 1900 by French management theorist Henry Fayol (Edwards, 2018). According to Fayol, managerial excellence is technically ability and can be acquired. Furthermore, Fayol devised some management principles, which he believed can help the organizations prosper. Some of the principles include division of work, authority and responsibility, remuneration to employees, decentralization in big organizations, just to name a few. With Administrative Management Theory, Fayol outlined five (5) elements of management depicting the kinds of behaviours managers should engage in to realize the organizational goals and objectives are met. These elements are planning, organizing, command, coordination, and control. In order to make the elements achieved in the organization, good communication is vital.

This theory was relevant to the study since it described all essential elements that make employees, especially private secondary school teachers to go away or continue working in particular private schools. In the decentralized education system, school heads are given power to oversee the school activities within the school compounds, which practically fall under the element known as division of work despite the fact that there are Ward Education Officers, District Secondary Education Officer, and other levels of supervision. However, private secondary school teachers' turnover is questionable because they are not satisfied with the remuneration, promotion as well as job security. Most of science teachers prefer to work with the government owned schools for one reason, which is job security. Perhaps, science teachers' turnover may be due to insecurity at work place, lack of safety, low salaries, to mention but a few.

1.2 Review of Literature

In their study on selected North Carolina, beginning and veteran teachers' perceptions of factors influencing retention and attrition, McCoy, Wilson and Jones (2013) reported that a teacher's decision to leave often mentioned undesirable working conditions, a stressful workload, and a lack of support with classroom management. Additionally, factors that influenced teacher turnover included

the demands of testing and accountability and having to demonstrate familiarity with vast and varied instructional procedures (McCoy et al., 2013).

Also, a study by Thomas and Hammond (2017), on teacher turnover in German: Why it matters and what we can do about it, indicated that teachers turnover was due to job dissatisfaction as a reason for resigning. In their research, dissatisfaction included results of accountability pressures, lack of administrative support, and poor teaching conditions. The teacher conditions variable was multifaceted, indicating dissatisfaction with teaching assignments, lack of opportunities for advancement, and input. Within that, ten percent reported large class sizes, and nine percent reporting a lack of resources (Thomas & Hammond, 2017). Turnover rates will increase if teachers continue to be underpaid. School leaders must understand all factors encouraging staff turnover that decreases staff commitment and loyalty, which is highly attributed to stagnant pay (Thomas & Hammond, 2017).

On the other hand, a study by Asantemungu and Anicet (2019), on retaining rural private secondary schools: salient roles and best practices of selected school managements, revealed that poor living standards of the surrounding community, unfavorable school culture, lack of recognition by the school management, student age and gender leading to teachers' attrition in rural private secondary schools. A poor, harsh and expensive living condition of the surrounding community is also reported as a reason for teachers' turnover by Macdonald (2019).

Furthermore, in a study on understanding teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and perceptions of retention among Arizona teachers, Mertler (2016) reported a teacher dissatisfaction rate of 26%, which expressed an increase from his 2002 research that revealed only a 23% dissatisfaction rate. The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher reported that nationwide, teacher satisfaction and morale continue to decline. Teacher satisfaction has decreased from 62% to 39% and is at its lowest level in 25 years since 2008. Teachers have also been found to dislike teaching as a career in favour of other professions (Mertler, 2016).

2.0 Materials and Methods

The study employed a mixed-method approach with a cross-sectional research design. The study was conducted in Iringa Municipality and involved four private secondary schools. The respondents of this study consisted of 4 heads of school, 4 academic teachers and 60 secondary teachers making a total of 68 respondents. The head of schools and academic teachers were purposively selected because of their virtue to their positions as managers that they have sufficient information about the study for that reason they had to provide evidence on science teachers' turnover in their schools. Teachers were randomly selected because of having the character of possessing related information in regards to the study question mostly giving their overview of the general school working conditions and their social wellbeing. Data were collected through questionnaires and interview. The instruments were tested for validity and reliability prior to be administered in the field. Data analysis

involved coding, entry and analysing using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics used to analyse quantitative data involved frequencies and percentages under the assistance of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. On the other hand, qualitative data were analysed thematically under research theme and sub-themes.

3.0 Findings and Discussion

3.1 School Management Reasons that Lead to Science Teachers' Turnover in Private Schools

The key respondents responded that in private schools the reasons ranged from lack of green pasture, poor social and geographical environment, low remuneration, lack of appreciation and discouragement of teachers as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Teachers' Responses on the School Management Reasons Leading Science Teachers' Turnover in Private Secondary Schools (N=60)

S/N	Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total	
		Fq.	%	Fq.	%	Fq.	%	Fq.	%	Fq.	%	Fq.	%
1	Lack of green pasture	5	8	5	8	9	15	29	49	12	20	60	100
2	Poor social and geographical environment	7	12	6	10	15	25	22	36	10	17	60	100
3	Low remuneration	5	8	6	10	11	18	23	39	15	25	60	100
4	Lack of appreciation	4	7	6	10	9	15	28	47	13	21	60	100
5	Discouragement of teachers	4	7	5	8	9	15	28	47	14	23	60	100

3.1.1 Lack of green pasture

With regard to lack of green pasture, Table 1 indicates that 69% of teachers believed that teachers, especially science teachers in private secondary schools move from their working places to other places in search of green pasture of which they lack in schools they work. On the other hand, 16% of the respondents disagreed with the statement in which to them they do not believe that lacking green pasture lead to science teachers' turnover in private secondary schools.

During the interview sessions with heads of schools and academic teachers, it was revealed that some science teachers were moving from some schools to others in search of greener pastures. In some private secondary schools, science teachers were paid low salaries that did not meet their basic needs.

Also, there were no incentives provided to them as a part of appreciating and acknowledging their work performance. Therefore, when they hear about others who have green pasture, they dare to find opportunities in those schools.

An Academic Master from School B had this to say:

We [teachers] work with expectation of winning life through our profession. Therefore, wherever we go for work we think of green pasture. When our expectations are not met, we find other places. I am currently working at this school, but any time if I get another place, I will leave and that is what many of teachers do. It is a common practice to science teachers due to their marketability, and it rarely occurs to arts subject teachers because they are many unemployed in the streets (Interview with Academic Master, School B, 15th July, 2023).

Lack of green pasture in some private secondary schools in Iringa Municipality causes science teachers' turnover. The rate of teachers' turnover was higher than that of art subject teachers due to the fact that in Tanzania, there is limited number of science teachers a situation which make them to be marketable and therefore decide to go anywhere they think they can get green pasture.

3.1.2 Social and geographical environment

Social and geographical environment leading to science teachers' turnover in Iringa Municipality. As indicated in Table 1, 53% of the respondents have a positive view that due to poor social service and geographical environment of the school, teachers fail to entertain the situation and decide to leave the schools in search for conducive ones, whilst 22% of the respondents disagreed with the statement with the notion that poor social and geographical environment of the school is not a reason for science teachers' turnover.

During interview sessions with heads of schools and academic teachers the findings revealed that poor social and geographical environment is a reason for science teachers' turnover in private secondary schools. Teachers desire conducive social and geographical working environment. This was evident when one of the private school head teachers was interviewed and had to say:

Just like other human beings, teachers need to teach in good schools, which allow them to attain social and geographical benefits. Socially, teachers want peace. Geographically, science teachers prefer the presence of science materials, which influence them to teach and allow students to practice what is being taught. If it happens that the social and geographical environment of the school is not well, teachers tend to move to other schools with good social and geographical environment (Interview with Head of School, School A, 13th July, 2023).

The majority of respondents argue for the poor social and geographical environment of the school to be the cause of science teachers' turnover in private secondary schools. The findings of this study are

consistent with that of Macdonald (2019), who asserted that attrition is highest in geographical locations where living conditions are extremely poor, harsh and expensive or where teachers do not feel comfortable with ethnicity. However, this is not the only reason for teachers' turnover since there are other strong factors, for example where working places are not safe and teachers' needs are not attained, teachers tend to move to places with good social and geographical environment.

3.1.3 Low remuneration

Remuneration is considered another school management reason for science teacher turnover. Table 1 indicates that 64% of the respondents agreed with the statement but 18% of the respondents believed that low remuneration is not the reason for science teachers' turnover in private secondary schools.

During interview sessions with heads of schools and academic teachers the findings revealed that low remuneration is another reason for science teachers' turnover in private secondary schools. Science teachers need to be paid highly as they consider themselves teaching difficult subjects. This was described by one of the school heads when interviewed:

Science teachers are doing a lot. They prepare and engage students who are science takers in practice. However, the payment is still low because the school manager does pay all teachers equally regardless the nature of subjects they teach. Therefore, when science teachers get notified that they are job opportunities in other schools, they tend to move to those schools. Therefore, low remuneration contributes to science teachers' turnover (Interview with Head of School, School B, 13th July, 2023).

Teachers, in this study, believed that low remuneration was a reason for science teachers' turnover. Some private secondary school teachers were paid low salaries with no provision of incentives whenever they perform well. Therefore, when teachers learn of other schools paying higher salaries, they are more likely to go there. These findings are in line with the findings of Abreh (2018) which indicated that good attractive remuneration and payments helped to retain science teachers.

3.1.4 Appreciation to teachers

The findings in Table 1 show that 68% of respondents agreed that lack of appreciation was a problem. While 17% of respondents disagreed with the statement and believed that appreciation to teachers was not a problem to them.

During interview sessions with heads of schools and academic teachers, the findings revealed that in private secondary schools among the reasons to why science teachers' turnover was lack of appreciation. Teachers need to be appreciated when they perform well academically. Appreciation encourages them and feels that they are valued. But when they are not appreciated, they bear a spirit of turning over. This was evident when one among the private school heads had this to say:

Appreciation encourages people. Even in private secondary schools, science teachers need to be appreciated. When we [school administrators] fail to appreciate teachers while they perform well their works, some teachers feel that they are not acknowledged and try to find other working places where they will be appreciated (Interview with Head of School, School A, 13th July, 2023).

To retain science teachers, appreciation of teachers' work and performance in schools is inevitable. When private schools' administrators fail to do that, they discourage teachers and that is the reason for their attrition. Asantemungu's (2019) study concurs with the finding of this study by insisting that failure of the school management to appreciate teachers on what they do creates attrition to teachers. Furthermore, lack of appreciation to teachers was mostly caused by the notion that teaching is a normal career in which any person from any other careers can fit in. Lemomo (2010) concurs with this notion revealed from the study. He found that teaching was viewed to be employment of the last resort among university graduates and secondary school leavers. This had its root in private schools and led to lack of appreciation to teachers.

3.1.5 Discouragement

Discouragement to teachers was another reason for science teachers' turnover. The findings from Table 1 indicate that, 70% of respondents believed that discouragement to teachers led to science teachers' turnover in private schools, whereas 15% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that discouragement is a reason for teachers' turnover.

During interview sessions with heads of schools and academic teachers, the findings revealed that in private secondary schools, discouragement to teachers is a reason for science teachers' turnover. When science teachers are discouraged in what they do, they get demoralized. They feel to be unwanted and therefore they seek other schools where they will be encouraged. This was evident when one of the private secondary school heads in an interview said:

Every human being makes mistakes. When a teacher has made mistake, and you provoke him for such mistake, they tend to be discouraged. I was told a story of a teacher who taught in this school. One day that teacher quarreled with a form four student. Unexpectedly, a former head of school provoked him in front of students. The next day, that teacher wrote a resignation letter and terminated the contract. She was teaching Chemistry in form three and four respectively (Interview with Head of School, School C, 13th July, 2023).

The findings show that teachers tend to find other work places where they can work peacefully. Generally speaking, the expanded employment of teachers and the terms that are set for their selection in private schools makes the career lose its status. Teaching has been seen as the field that absorbs candidates who would not have access into other careers. Private secondary schools decide to pay the teachers low salary that would not compare with their former schoolmates that walked into

other careers. The social status of teachers, in comparison to other professionals is low. So, the low social status of the teaching profession is linked to its low economic status in society. These concerns make science teachers to bear a sense of moving from their current working places and find other places so that they can get green pastures, good social and conducive environment as well as looking for places or institutions which will appreciate them. This is a reason McCoy, Wilson and Jones (2013) reported that undesirable working conditions and a stressful workload perpetuate the increase in teachers' turnover rate.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

In private secondary schools, school management try their level best to retain science teachers by supporting them, engaging them and recognizing them. Private secondary school teachers also have their preferences such as being paid a good salary, which increase the rate of teachers' turnover. Therefore, private secondary schools have to facilitate accommodation and other incentive to all teachers and in particular science teachers in order to decrease the rate of turnover.

Therefore, it is recommended that private schools' management must ensure that they take measures to retain science teachers by providing high and reasonable remuneration as well as incentivizing them. This will make science teachers see that they are valued. Private schools' management must also provide accommodation and ensure work security to teachers and administrators must avoid the behaviour of snobbish to teachers.

REFERENCES

- Abdali, A. (2011). *Educational administration: An introduction*, Ado-AEkiti: Green light.
- Abreh, K. (2018). Involvement of school management committees in school-based management: Experiences from two districts of Ghana. *Education Planning*, 24(03), 61–75.
- Asantemungu, J., & Anicet, C. (2019). Retaining teachers in rural private secondary schools: Salient roles and best practices of selected school managements. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development*, 8(5), 26–35.
- Beardwell, P. (2004). *Strategic planning handbook for schools and colleges*. Nairobi: Image Books Ltd Kenya.
- Chediell, W. (2010). *Teachers' management in a context of HIV and IDS Tanzania*. Dar es Salaam: University of Dar es Salam Press.
- Edwards, R. (2018). An elaboration of the administrative theory of the 14 principles of management by Henry Fayol. *International Journal for Empirical Education and Research*, 1(1), 41–52.

- HakiElimu (2011). *Living and working condition of teachers in Tanzania*. Dar es Salaam: HAKIELIMU.
- Kuriya, J., & Ondigi, O. (2012). Organizational environment and its impact on turnover intentions in education sector of Pakistan. *Asian Journal of Business Management*, 3(2), 118–122.
- Lemomo, L. J. (2010). *Factors influencing performance in secondary Schools: A case of Morogoro Municipality*, Unpublished Master Dissertation, and Mzumbe: Mzumbe University.
- Loquercio, D., Chediell, N., & Adegbesan, M. (2016). *Quality assurance in Nigerian education system*. Ogun: Olabisi, Onabanjo University Press.
- Macdonald, D. (2019). *Teacher attrition: A review of literature: Teaching and Teacher Education*. 15 university of Queensland, Brisbane.
- McCoy, S., Jones, L., & Jones, P. (2013). Selected North Carolina beginning and veteran teachers' perceptions of factors influencing retention and attrition. *Journal of Research Initiatives*, 1(1), 46–53.
- Mertler, A. (2016). Should I stay or should I go? Understanding teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and perceptions of retention among Arizona teachers. *International Research in Higher Education*, 1(2), 34–45.
- Mollel, H., Griffeth, R., Hand, H., & Meglino, B. (2014). A review and conceptual analysis of the employee turnover process. *Psychological Bulletin*, 86, 493–522.
- Sandhya, K., & Kumar, D. (2011). Employee retention by motivation. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, 4(12), 1778–1782.
- Shamsuzzoha, B., & Rezaul, R. (2018). Managing teacher turnover. *South African Journal of Education*, 23(4), 287–291.
- Thomas, D., & Hammond, L. (2017). Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it. Learning Policy Institute. Retrieved on 12th February, 2023 from <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/teacher-turnover-report>