

School Support System: Teacher Retention and Professional Development Plans

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Abstract—Teacher retention is a persistent challenge in the education sector, where the turnover rates significantly impact student learning and institutional stability. This study investigates the role of school support systems in promoting teacher retention through targeted professional development initiatives. A comprehensive support system, comprising adequate salaries, benefits, career growth opportunities, mentoring, and a conducive work environment, is essential for enhancing teacher job satisfaction and long-term commitment. The study examines how specific components of a support system—such as administrative backing, peer networks, and individualized professional development plans—can positively influence teacher retention rates. It also explores how professional development tailored to teachers' needs improves teaching quality and job fulfillment, ultimately fostering a culture of continuous growth and stability within schools. Through a mixed-methods approach combining surveys, interviews, and longitudinal data analysis, the study seeks to present a comprehensive model that schools can implement to enhance teacher retention and professional development, thereby contributing to sustained improvements in educational outcomes.

Keywords—Career Advancement, Continuous Professional Growth, Educational Leadership, Mentorship Programs, Professional Development, School Support System, Teacher Job Satisfaction, Teacher Retention, Teacher Satisfaction, Teacher Turnover.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher retention and professional development remain critical concerns within the education sector, as they significantly impact the stability, effectiveness, and quality of instruction in schools. The support mechanisms that schools provide—including salary, benefits, mentorship programs, and opportunities for professional growth—play a central role in fostering a positive working environment that can influence both teacher retention and development. Studies indicate that factors such as competitive compensation, comprehensive benefits, and strong support systems can help retain teachers, yet how these factors interact with other influential elements remains under explored. Consequently, this study aims to examine how school support systems impact teacher retention and the professional growth opportunities they provide. (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016).

This research investigated the primary question: (1) What are the school support system mechanisms that influence teacher retention and professional development? Specifically, it evaluated how salary and benefits compare to other factors such as mentorship, professional development resources, and leadership support. Additionally, (2) it sought to uncover differences in retention rates based on teachers' years of experience, educational backgrounds, and the subjects they teach. By understanding these dynamics, this study

aimed to provide an evidence-based framework for an effective teacher retention and professional development plan, addressing the specific needs of educators within diverse teaching contexts. (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019).

The significance of this research lies in its potential to offer actionable insights for educational institutions seeking to improve teacher support and retention strategies. The study's findings will contribute to policy discussions and institutional reforms that could benefit not only teachers but also students, whose learning experiences are deeply affected by teacher turnover and professional quality (Darling-Hammond, 2010). The scope of the study extends across various school environments, providing a comprehensive overview of the factors influencing teacher retention and development. This research thus serves as a crucial step toward enhancing school support systems that foster a sustainable teaching workforce capable of delivering high-quality education. (Kini & Podolsky, 2016)

II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative survey approach to investigate the relationship between school support systems and teacher retention and professional development. The research utilized a structured survey instrument to gather data from a sample of teachers across various school districts, examining factors such

as job satisfaction, work-life balance, and perceived support from school leadership.

Respondents

The study involved a sample of forty (40) teachers from diverse school environments, including both public and private schools. The sample will be selected to represent a range of teaching experience levels, educational backgrounds, and subject areas.

Data Collection

A structured survey instrument was used to collect quantitative data from the 40 participating teachers. The survey included questions related to:

1. **Demographic Information:** Years of teaching experience, Highest educational qualification, Subject areas taught
2. **School Support Systems:** Satisfaction with mentorship programs, Opportunities for collaboration, Access to professional development, Availability of resources, Support from school leadership
3. **Salary and Benefits:** Satisfaction with salary and benefits, Perceived importance of salary and benefits in retention decisions
4. **Retention Factors:** Perceived influence of salary, benefits, professional development, administrative support, job security, and opportunities for promotion on retention decisions
5. **Retention Intentions:** Frequency of considering leaving the teaching profession, Primary reason for considering leaving
6. **Recommendations for Retention and Development:** Desired changes to increase retention, Preferred professional development topics, Suggestions for a teacher retention plan

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the quantitative data, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations. Inferential statistical test, ANOVA, was employed to examine relationships between variables and to test hypotheses.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to all ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process.

Limitations

The study was limited by the sample size (40 respondents) and the specific schools included in the study. The findings may not be generalizable to all school settings. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

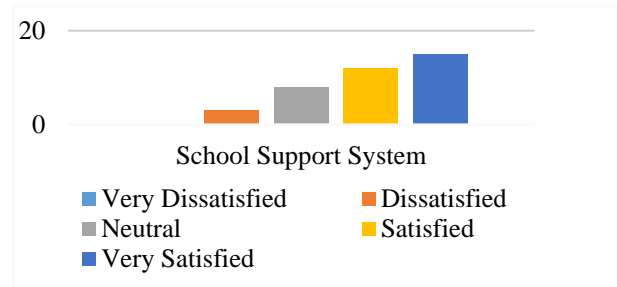


Figure: 1



Figure: 2

1. School Support Systems and the Influence of Salary and Benefits

The results reveal that teachers' satisfaction with school support systems is a significant factor in retention. Teachers expressed a high need for supportive leadership, effective feedback, and professional development opportunities (Panorama Education, 2023). The level of satisfaction with salary and benefits, however, is a point of contention. Many teachers feel that their compensation does not align with the demands of the role, which impacts their decision to remain in their positions.

Although professional development is highly valued, salary and benefits are seen as foundational; inadequate compensation can negate the positive impact of support systems and development opportunities.

The findings suggest that a combination of competitive salary, benefits, and robust support mechanisms contributes significantly to teacher retention (Learning Policy Institute, 2023).

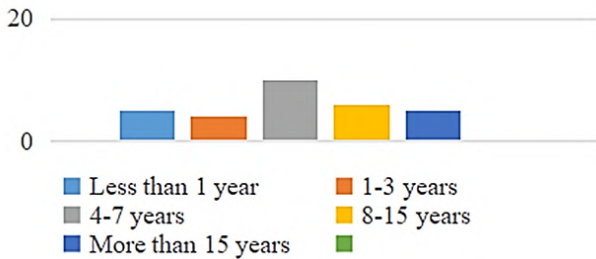


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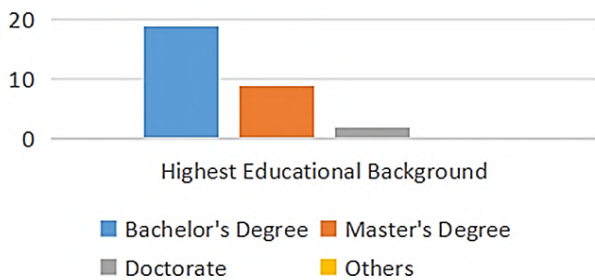


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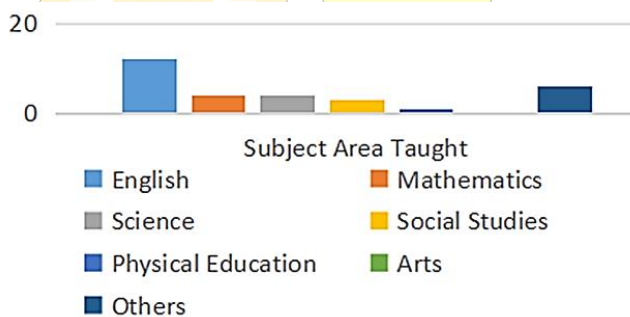


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2. Retention Rates by Experience, Background, and Subject

The analysis indicates variability in retention rates based on teachers' years of experience, educational background, and subjects taught. Teachers with more experience generally exhibit higher retention rates, potentially due to established career commitment and familiarity with school systems.

However, newer teachers, or those in high-demand subject areas (e.g., STEM), often face challenges that affect retention, such as heavier workloads and inadequate resources.

Additionally, teachers with advanced educational backgrounds may have higher expectations for professional growth and compensation, influencing their retention if these needs are unmet (Education Resource Strategies and the U.S. Department of Education).

3. Recommendations for Teacher Retention and Professional Development

Based on the findings, an effective teacher retention and professional development plan should include several key elements. Competitive compensation and comprehensive benefits are essential for meeting teachers' basic professional needs. Moreover, targeted professional development programs that align with teachers' career goals, coupled with leadership support and constructive feedback, are crucial. Addressing workload by implementing policies for work-life balance and ensuring manageable teaching responsibilities could also enhance retention. A structured, supportive environment fosters professional fulfillment and, as a result, encourages teachers to remain in their roles long-term (According to the 2024 State of the American Teacher Survey by RAND).

IV. CONCLUSION

The research highlights the critical role of comprehensive school support systems in improving teacher retention and fostering professional growth. Teachers' satisfaction with support mechanisms, such as leadership guidance, mentorship, and access to professional development, is pivotal for long-term retention.

Salary and benefits emerged as foundational factors that, when inadequate, can diminish the positive impacts of other support mechanisms. The study reveals that a balanced approach—incorporating competitive compensation, career advancement opportunities, and a conducive work environment—is essential for maintaining a committed teaching workforce. Furthermore, the data indicate that teachers with more experience tend to have higher retention rates, likely due to established career commitment, whereas newer teachers and those in demanding subject areas may face unique challenges affecting their retention. This research underscores the need for targeted retention strategies that consider diverse teacher backgrounds,

experiences, and subject-specific demands (Ingersoll, & Strong, 2011).

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