

The Impact of Working Conditions on Teachers Attrition in Secondary Schools in the South West Region of Cameroon

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The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between working conditions and teachers attrition in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon. The cross sectional survey research design was used for this study, adopting both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The population of the study was made up of all the secondary school teachers in the South West Region. The sample population was made up of 370 teachers. The Simple random sampling technique was used. Questionnaire and an interview guide were used as instruments for data collection. The statistical tools for analysis were percentages, mean scores, standard deviations and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings revealed that, low salary, poor working environment, lack of job satisfaction and bad principal leadership style contribute greatly to teacher attrition. The study found out, that in some cases, only one of these factors causes the attrition while in many cases, a number of factors collectively compel teachers to leave their jobs and these factors give the impression that the teaching profession is not respected as other professions in the study area.

Key words: Working Conditions, Teachers Attrition.

Introduction

From observations it is believed that of all the educational problems Cameroon is facing today, none is as persistence or as compelling as the one relating to the training and retention of competent teachers. Law No 98/004 of 14 April 1998 section 37(1) states that, “the teacher shall be the principal guarantor of quality education” which means that, for the education sector to be able to contribute to the achievement of national development of Cameroon by 2035, qualified and experienced teachers need to be attracted and retained in the teaching profession. It is also important to note that, for Cameroon to be able to achieve national development by 2035 the educational, agricultural, industrial, and family sectors need to interact, since all the sectors have a part to play as far as Cameroon development by 2035 is concern. It is good to note that, the educational sector has a greater part to play because it is the only sector that provides input for itself and other sectors, which means that the agricultural, industrial, and economic sectors receive input in the form of personnel from the education sector. This shows that education is the back bone of every economy.

Background of the Study

Teachers’ attrition (teachers leaving their profession to other professions or travelling abroad for greener pastures) is a problematic issue in Cameroon educational sector. Many schools in Cameroon focus on teacher recruitment when the real problem is teacher attrition. Most schools are experiencing teacher shortages. Internationally, it is widely recognised that teachers are central to student success. To a larger extent, they play an important role in transmitting cultural and social

values, such as tolerance, dialogue and gender equality. In addition, they are at the center of the debate on education quality and students' learning outcomes. Yet many of them are leaving their schools and the profession every year.

The importance of the teaching profession cannot be debated as teachers constitute one of the key instruments for solving every nation's developmental problem. Every nation depends on its teachers for its technological and social advancement as well as its man power requirements. This is because out of teaching all other professions are born. This means that teaching is one of the most important profession in the world. Levine and Ornstein (1989) strengthened the importance of the teaching profession in the following words, "We are faced with pressing social and economic problems. Whether we allow them engulf us or whether we can cope with our new environment will depend on a large extent on what kinds of skills are taught in our schools to our present day students". Sadker and Sadker (1991) also believed that teaching is a noble profession and in their words: wrote, "Teaching has been imbued with a nobility and dedication of purpose by philosophers' poets and political leaders since ancient times. What other occupation has inspired such comments as these?"

Supporting these trends of importance, Cicero in Sadker and sadker (1991) questioned, "What noble employment is more valuable to the state than that of a man who instructs the rising generation?" From the views of the above authors, it shows that teaching is a profession of high repute. Teachers lay the essential foundation for a person's education. The best professors at the most prestigious Universities are indebted to teachers who took time and efforts to train and cultivate their desires for education, knowledge and understanding. All policy makers in the public and private sectors have been taught by a teacher at some point in their lives.

Given that teaching is a noble profession, one could think that those who find themselves in this profession should count themselves lucky, but surprisingly, teachers are leaving the profession for other professions. One would have thought that many students upon leaving school would immediately and voluntarily like to become teachers. Most students upon completion of secondary school instead prefer other professions to teaching. They only turn to it as a last resort, and when all other things must have failed them. This explains why the rate of teacher attrition is high today. Teachers, who entered the profession because their first and second choices failed, need to be motivated or else they will leave the profession when another door opens.

Statement of the Problem

It has been noted that some teachers abandon their duties for other professions while others seek self-exile abroad in search of greener pastures. With reference to Law No 98/004 of 14 April 1998, Laying down guidelines for Cameroon schools, section 37 (1), states that, "the teacher shall be the principal guarantor of quality education",

The problem now is, if teachers continue to leave the teaching profession to other more lucrative jobs, will the educational sector be able to contribute to the achievement of Cameroon development by 2035? It is based on this that the researcher in question decided to carry out an investigation on the, "Impact of Working Conditions on Teachers' Attrition in Secondary Schools in the South West Region of Cameroon".

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to examine the relationship between working conditions and teachers attrition in secondary schools in the South West Region of Cameroon

Specific Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study included:

1. To examine the relationship between teachers' salaries and teachers attrition.
2. To examine the relationship between working environment and teachers attrition.
3. To examine the relationship between job satisfaction and teachers attrition.
4. To examine the relationship between principals' leadership styles and teachers' attrition
5. To determine the impact of teachers attrition on the quality of education.

Hypotheses of the Study

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between teachers' attrition and the quality of education.

Ha₁: There is a significant relationship between teachers' attrition and the quality of education.

Method and procedure**Research Design**

The cross sectional survey research design was used for this study, adopting both the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Population of the Study

The population of the study was made up of all the secondary school teachers in the South West Region of Cameroon.

The target population of this study was made up of 5250 general secondary school teachers in Fako, Meme and Ndian divisions of the south west region of Cameroon.

The accessible population of this study constituted 1557 teachers. In Fako division, the accessible population constituted teachers from 5 public, 4 confessional and 8 lay private schools. In Meme division the accessible population constituted teachers from 3 public, 2 confessional and 2 lay private schools. In Ndian division the accessible population constituted teachers from 4 public, 1 confessional and 1 lay private schools which were randomly drawn.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample population was made up of 370 teachers. This sample was chosen proportionately to the total population as recommended by Krejcie and Morgan in 1970. The sample of this study was made up of representative teachers from the 30 accessible secondary schools in the South West Region. The simple random sampling technique was use for this study.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection, accompanied by an interview guide for principals. 370 questionnaire copies were administered. The questionnaire contain closed-ended items where the researcher provided alternative response options in a likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree(A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Administration of the Instrument

The researcher employed the services of three research assistants; the assistants were trained for 2 days. A daily plan of activities was drawn and the researcher and the assistants visited at least five schools a day. The researcher and the assistants guided the teachers and personally administered the questionnaire to them face to face.

Procedure for Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. The statistical tools used for analysis were percentage, mean scores, standard deviations and the Pearson Product Correlation Moment.

Results

Table one and two below gives information about research question one which was stated thus: To what extent do teachers' salaries influence their attrition?

Decision level: $\bar{x} = \frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.5$

Respondents accept or agree with the opinion expressed in the item if the mean score is 2.5 and above. Otherwise, they reject or disagree.

Table 1: Relationship Between Teachers' Salaries and their Attrition

SN	Opinion Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{x}	s	Dec.
1	The teachers' salary corresponds to their level of education.	1	7	77	277	456	1.26	.4982	R
2	The salary situation of a teacher makes him/her to concentrate and effectively teach in one school.	8	29	45	280	489	1.35	.7225	R
3	Teachers' salaries are good in Cameroon	0	5	85	172	357	1.36	.5199	R
4	Teachers' salaries attract young graduate to join teaching than other professions.	2	5	112	243	490	1.35	.5387	R
5	There are some additional finances to my salary	1	26	162	173	579	1.59	.6336	R
6	The salary of a teacher depends on his/her input on the job.	4	4	105	249	487	1.35	.5616	R
Total / Average		16	76	586	1394	2858	1.38	.5791	R

\bar{x} = Mean score, s = Standard deviation, Dec. = Decision

Table 1 shows a mean of 1.38 which means that, all the items were rejected.

Table 2: Correlation Between Teachers' Salaries and their Attrition

		TEACHERS' SALARIES	TEACHER ATTRITION
TEACHERS' SALARIES	Pearson Correlation	1	-.223*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.671
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	25655.333	-24859.000
	Covariance	5131.067	-4971.800
	N	6	6
TEACHER ATTRITION	Pearson Correlation	-.223*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.671	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-24859.000	501758.000
	Covariance	-4971.800	71679.714
	N	6	8

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 shows a Pearson Correlation coefficient, $r = -0.223$ which indicates that there is an inverse significant relationship between teachers' salaries and their attrition.

Table three and four below gives information about research question two which was stated thus: To what extent does teachers' working environment influence their attrition

Table 3: Relationship Between Working Environment and Teacher Attrition.

SN	Opinion Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{x}	s	Dec.
7	There is support for teachers' professional development in the school where I teach.	1	17	125	219	524	1.45	.59894	R
8	The school environment where I teach is conducive enough for teaching and learning.	5	70	215	72	732	2.02	.66952	R
9	There are sufficient teaching resources in my teaching school.	4	44	218	96	680	1.89	.64600	R
10	Teachers' workload in my school is high	247	94	16	5	1307	3.61	.64046	A
11	There are appropriate learning resources in my school.	0	48	248	66	706	1.95	.55974	R
12	The school environment where I teach is clean	4	12 1	173	64	788	2.18	.72296	R
Total / Average		261	39 4	995	522	4737	2.18	0.6396	R

In table 3, Item 7 with a mean of 1.45 indicates that, there is no support for teachers' professional development in our schools. Item 8 with a mean of 2.02 reveals that, school environments are not

conducive enough for teaching and learning. Item 9 with a mean of 1.89 reveals that, there are no sufficient teaching resources in our schools. Item 10 with a mean of 3.61 shows that, teachers' workload is high. Item 11 with a mean of 1.95 indicates that there are no appropriate learning resources in our schools. Item 12 with a mean of 2.18 indicate that, our school environments are not clean.

Table 4: A Correlation Showing Teachers' Working Environment and their Attrition

		WORKING ENVIRONMENT	TEACHER ATTRITION
WORKING ENVIRONMENT	Pearson Correlation	1	-.911*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.012
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	360567.500	-380619.000
	Covariance	72113.500	-76123.800
	N	6	6
TEACHER ATTRITION	Pearson Correlation	-.911*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-380619.000	501758.000
	Covariance	-76123.800	71679.714
	N	6	8

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows a Pearson Correlation coefficient, $r = -0.911$ which indicates that there is an inverse strong significant relationship between teachers' working environment and their attrition.

Table five and six below gives information about research question three which was stated thus: To what extent do job satisfaction influence teachers' attrition?

Table 5: Relationship Between Job Satisfaction of Teachers and their Attrition

SN	Opinion Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{x}	S	Dec.
13	I am satisfied being a teacher.	11	83	189	79	750	2.07	.75197	R
14	I enjoy the friendly and social relationship with other teachers.	12	65	165	120	693	1.91	.79880	R
15	I like teaching in this school	6	54	152	150	640	1.77	.75999	R
16	Teachers are provided with many opportunities for promotion	0	8	79	275	457	1.26	.48828	R
17	I will encourage my siblings to be teachers	5	9	112	236	507	1.40	.61134	R
18	I am psychologically satisfied with my teaching job.	5	35	132	190	579	1.59	.71957	R
Total / Average		39	254	829	1050	3626	1.67	.6883	R

Table 5 with a mean of 1.67 indicates that, all the items were rejected.

Table 6: A Correlation of Job Satisfaction and Teachers' Attrition

		JOB SATISFACTION	TEACHER ATTRITION
JOB SATISFACTION	Pearson Correlation	1	.715*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.111
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	62175.333	123979.000
	Covariance	12435.067	24795.800
	N	6	6
TEACHER ATTRITION	Pearson Correlation	.715*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.111	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	123979.000	501758.000
	Covariance	24795.800	71679.714
	N	6	8

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 shows a Pearson Correlation coefficient, $r = 0.715$ which indicates that there is a strong linear relationship between job satisfaction and teacher attrition.

Table seven and eight below gives information about research question four which was stated thus: To what extent do principals' leadership styles influence teachers' attrition?

Table 7: Relationship Between Principal Leadership Styles and Teachers' Attrition

SN	Opinion Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{x}	S	Dec.
19	The principal of my school usually involves teachers in decision making.	0	92	178	92	724	2.00	.71393	R
20	The principal has good working relationship with teachers.	5	56	162	139	641	1.77	.71774	R
21	The principal ensures that teachers are provided with instructional materials in order to improve on their teaching.	3	61	153	145	646	1.78	.74654	R
22	The principal provide emotional support for teachers	4	21	156	181	572	1.58	.65352	R
23	The principal usually provide relevant and timely feedback on teachers' performance.	3	67	164	128	669	1.85	.74179	R
24	The principal praise and encourage teachers to work harder.	8	57	134	163	634	1.75	.79755	R
Total / Average		23	354	947	848	388	1.79	.7285	R

Table 7 with a mean of 1.79 reveals that all the items were rejected.

Table 8: Correlation Between Principals' Leadership Styles and Teachers' Attrition

		PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLE	TEACHER ATTRITION
PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLE	Pearson Correlation	1	.675*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.141
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	12241.333	51952.000
	Covariance	2448.267	10390.400
	N	6	6
TEACHER ATTRITION	Pearson Correlation	.675*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.141	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	51952.000	501758.000
	Covariance	10390.400	71679.714
	N	6	8

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 8 shows a Pearson Correlation coefficient, $r = 0.675$ which indicates that there is a strong linear relationship between principals' leadership styles and teacher attrition. This implies that principals' leadership styles are responsible for 45.56% ($r^2 = 0.455625$) of teacher attrition.

Table nine and ten below gives information about research question five which was stated thus: To what extent does teachers' attrition influence the quality of education?

Table 9: Relationship Between Teachers' Attrition and the Quality of Education

SN	Opinion Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	\bar{x}	s	Dec
25	The quality of education depends on the number of professional and experienced teachers.	137	202	17	6	1194	3.29	.63547	A
26	Teachers play an important role in the moral development of students.	115	180	66	1	1133	3.13	.70396	A
27	Students are demotivated when teachers leave the teaching profession.	109	176	65	12	1106	3.06	.78224	A
28	Frequent departure of teachers can affect the development of creativity in students.	115	180	64	3	1131	3.12	.71665	A
29	Teacher quality is the single most important variable in determining students achievement	102	216	41	3	141	3.15	.63735	A
30	Teachers' departure can affect the intellectual development of students.	107	187	68	0	1125	3.11	.68784	A

31	Teachers departing from the teaching profession can lead to a fall in the standard of education	140	188	31	3	1189	3.28	.65249	A
32	Teachers leaving the teaching profession disrupt the smooth functioning of the school.	149	133	78	2	1153	3.19	.78525	A
Total / Average		974	1462	430	30	9172	3.17	.70016	A

Table 9 with a mean of 3.17 indicates that all the items were accepted.

Table 10: A Correlation Between Teachers' Attrition and the Quality Of Education

		QUALITY OF EDUCATION	TEACHER ATTRITION
QUALITY OF EDUCATION	Pearson Correlation	1	.199*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.816
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	6660.000	5713.000
	Covariance	951.429	816.143
	N	8	8
TEACHER ATTRITION	Pearson Correlation	.199*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.816	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	5713.000	501758.000
	Covariance	816.143	71679.714
	N	8	8

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 10 shows a Pearson Correlation Coefficient, $r = .199$ which indicates that there is a linear significant relationship between teacher attrition and quality of education. This implies that teacher attrition is responsible for 3.96% ($r^2 = 0.039601$) of the quality of education.

Analysis of Responses from the Interview

Table 11: Teachers Complain on Small Salaries Compared to Work Load

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	90
No	2	10
Total	20	100

Table 11, shows that, 90 % of respondents said that teachers usually complain that their salaries are not enough compared to their workload while 10 % indicated that, they are no complains.

Table 12: Reaction of Teachers when Salaries are not enough Compared to the Work Load.

Reactions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Abandoned teaching	15	75
Stay away from classes	18	90
Frown at the administration	17	85

Table 12, shows that, 75% of the respondents said that, when teachers' salaries do not correspond to their work load, they abandoned teaching, 90% said that, they stay away from classes and 85% said that, they frown at the administration.

Table 13: Teachers Teaching in More Than One School and Reason

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	20	100
No	0	0
Total	20	100

Table 13, shows that, all the respondents said that, some of their teachers teach in more than one school. The only reason the respondents gave was that, teachers want to meet up with their needs.

Table 14: Adequate Teaching and Learning Materials in Schools

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	4	20
No	16	80
Total	20	100

20% of the respondents as shown on table 14 confirmed that, they have adequate teaching and learning materials, while 80% said, there are no adequate teaching and learning materials in their schools.

Table 15: Consequences of Inadequate Teaching and Learning Materials.

Consequences	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Difficulty in explaining certain concepts	20	100
Low performance	19	95
Teachers using their personal money to buy text books	15	75

All the respondents as shown on table 15 said that lack of adequate teaching and learning materials lead to difficulty in explaining certain concepts, 95% said that this leads to low performance and

75% said, as a result of inadequate teaching and learning materials some teachers use their personal money to buy text books.

Table 16: Avenues for Teachers Professional Development in their Schools

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	5	25
No	15	75
Total	20	100

75% of the respondents as shown on table 16 said that there are no avenues for teachers' professional development in their institutions while 25% said that, there are avenues for teachers' professional development in their schools.

Table 17: Teachers Sometimes Quarrel Among Themselves

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	85
No	3	15
Total	20	100

Table 17 shows that 85% of the respondents agree that, teachers usually quarrel among themselves while 15% said that, teachers do not quarrel.

Table 18: Teachers and Provision of Opportunities for Promotion

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	1	5
No	19	95
Total	20	100

Table 18 shows that 95% of the respondents said that, all the teachers are not provided with opportunities for promotion, while 5% of the respondent accepted that, all the teachers are provided with opportunities for promotion.

Table 19: Teachers Involvement in Decision Making

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	4	20
No	16	80
Total	20	100

Table 19 shows that 20% of principals accepted that, they always like to involved teachers in decision making while 80% said that, they do not always like to involved teachers in decision

making, reason being that, teachers always influence decisions that will favour them first before the school no matter the consequences.

Table 20: Confidence and Trust in Subordinate.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	5	25
No	15	75
Total	20	100

25% of the respondents as shown on table 20 said that, they have confidence and trust in their subordinates while 75% said that, they do not trust their subordinates. The reason they gave for not trusting their teachers was that, teachers always think about themselves first rather than the growth of the school.

Table 21: Teachers Improving the Quality of Education

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	18	90
No	2	10
Total	20	100

90% of the respondents on table 21 agree that teachers have a greater part to play in improving the quality of secondary schools, while 10% said that, teachers do not have a greater part to play in improving the quality of secondary schools.

Table 22: Opinions Concerning the Effects of Teachers' Attrition on Students' Academic Achievement

Opinions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Students performance at internal and external examinations drop	20	100
Creates a vacuum in the subject taught	19	95
Indiscipline is promoted in class	19	95
Syllabus coverage is affected	18	90

All the principals interviewed as shown on table 22 said that, students' performance drops, 95% said that a vacuum is created in the subject taught and that indiscipline in the class room increases. 80% said that syllabus coverage is affected.

Table 23: Number of Teachers that have Abandoned Service Ever Since they Become Principal

Number of principals	Longevity as principal	Teachers who have abandoned
6	7	21
5	6	19
4	5	16
3	4	14
2	2	10

Table 23 shows that 6 principals who have each served for 7 years registered 21 abandonments. 5 principals who have each served for 6 years registered 19 abandonments. 4 principals who have each served for 5 years registered 16 abandonments. 3 principals who have each served for 4 years registered 14 abandonments and 2 principals who have each served for 2 years registered 10 abandonments.

Table 24: Causes of Teachers Attrition

Opinions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor salaries	19	95
Lack of job satisfaction	18	90
Departure to greener pastures	17	85
Poor working environment	16	80
Departure for further studies	5	25

Most of the respondents gave almost the same reasons for teachers' attrition. These ranged from poor salaries with a response rate of 95% as shown on table 24, lack of job satisfaction with a response rate of 90%, departure to greener pastures with a response rate of 85%, poor working environment with a response rate of 80% and departure for further studies with a response rate of 25%

Table 25: How to Curb Teacher Attrition

Opinions	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Increase salaries	20	100
Ensure conducive and friendly environment	18	90
Promotion should be on merit	16	80
Teachers should be send to desirable locations	15	75

All the respondents on table 25 were of the opinion that teachers' salaries should be increased. 90% recommended conducive and friendly environment. 80% saw the need for promotion to be on merits and 75% said that, teachers should be send to their desirable locate.

Discussion of Findings

As revealed in this study, working conditions greatly influence teachers' attrition. The study revealed that teachers' low salaries influence their attrition to a high extent. In Cameroon and other parts of the world, statistics have shown that teachers receive low salaries and experience poor working conditions compared to their counterparts in different professions (Tambo, 2003). This is supported by Aslami (2013) who found out that, low salary is one of the major factors that causes teachers to leave their teaching profession for other professions. Candle (2010) found out that, better pay in other professions increases the rate of teacher attrition. Low pay for teachers has a devastating effect on the whole process of education by demoralizing teachers, devaluing their work and luring teachers to better paying professions (Gemedu and Tynjala, 2015).

The interview conducted in this study revealed that, the only reason teachers teach in more than one school is to meet up with their needs. This shows that their salaries are not enough, from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, teachers as human beings have needs and wants which need to be satisfied. In the case where the teacher faces some challenges and these needs cannot be satisfied, they start drifting toward a different profession where they believe they can easily have their needs achieved. Teachers join schools to satisfy their human needs and reach their goals (Harper and Ross, 2011). Over the years, low salaries have been the most harmful factor that affects the education sector. Akiba, et al. (2011) revealed that low teacher salary often leads to teacher dissatisfaction and higher attrition rates.

Furthermore, the study revealed that, poor working environment to a high extent influences teachers' attrition. Working environment is an important factor in the decision making process of individual teachers to stay or leave the profession. When teachers' working environments are not conducive they might not have the interest to stay in that work place. This is also supported by Acom (2010) who found out that, there is a very strong positive relationship between teacher working environment and teacher retention.

Results from the interview conducted in this study revealed that there are no adequate teaching and learning materials in our schools. Tapper (1995) found out that, most teachers do not have enough text books and instructional materials to facilitate teaching. They use their money to photocopy school materials. Aubry (2010) found out that, an influential factor that would lead to highly effective teachers' willingness to remain in teaching is school facilities and resources.

Ingersoll and Smith (2003) found out that, 50 percent of teachers leave their profession within the first five years. This is due to the poor working environment associated with teaching. Hess (2006) supported this fact by saying that inadequate resources limit effectiveness and affect teachers' decision on teaching. Most secondary schools in Cameroon have unconducive learning environments, the basic amenities are not there and this has a lot of effect in demoralizing the strength of so many teachers. According to Ndongko and Tambo (2000) Lack of school resources, lack of didactic materials and overcrowded classes are some of the challenges affecting teachers in Cameroon. Improving the working environment of teachers might attract the top college graduates to teaching and also slow the rate of teacher attrition (Ingersoll, 2003). Many teachers quit because of poor working environment. Hasty (2007) found out that, higher stress levels are associated with stronger intentions of teachers to leave their profession.

According to Tambo (2003) teachers at all levels in Cameroon are not satisfied with their working environments which are below expectation when compared with their counterparts in different occupations. This is in conformity with the two factor theory stipulated by Herzberg (1959). According to this theory, motivational factors are called satisfiers. These factors motivate the employees for a superior performance. Looking at the case of Cameroon, teachers are dissatisfied

because a majority of Herzberg's satisfiers are commonly absent in their working environment, causing teachers to leave the teaching profession to other professions. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) found out that, the root of the teachers' shortage largely reside in the working environment within schools. Boyd (2009) revealed that, teachers considered working environment as one of the main factors in staying or leaving the profession.

In addition, the study indicates that job satisfaction to a high extent influences teachers' attrition. This shows that when teachers are satisfied with the way in which schools are managed, they will remain in the teaching profession. This is supported by Ingersoll (2003) who revealed that Job satisfaction of teachers determines teacher attrition. Research carried out by McShane and Glinow (2003) revealed that, people who are dissatisfied with their jobs often quit and pursue other careers, thereby increasing the rate of attrition. Giacometti (2005) found out that, the best predictor in choosing to leave or stay in the teaching profession was emotional.

Teachers complain bitterly about job dissatisfaction and this has given rise to this new phenomenon of teacher attrition (Tambo, 2003). Griffin (1990) found out that satisfied employees are likely to remain within the organization, why dissatisfied employees are more likely to look for alternative job opportunities (high attrition). This is in conformity with the hierarchy of needs theory stipulated by Maslow (1943). According to the theory, if teachers' needs are not satisfied it might lead to job dissatisfaction, which will in turn make teachers to put on irresponsible behaviours in their work place. When the basic needs of teachers are not met; achieving job satisfaction, retention and professionalism may be difficult in some situations and unattainable in others (Lynch, 2012; Waltman, 2012).

Sergent (2003) found out that, teachers who feel that their work is important and recognized are more likely to remain vital dynamic and contributing members of the school community. This shows that, recognition of teachers' achievement by the school administration is very important as it leads to job satisfaction. Tickle (2008) found out that, perceived administrative support and teachers' satisfaction with their salary were identified as significant predictors of teachers' job satisfaction and intent to stay in teaching.

Results from the interview conducted in this study shows that 85% of the respondents agree that, teachers usually quarrel among themselves. When teachers quarrel among themselves it affects their satisfaction with the teaching profession. According to McClelland (1962) people with a high need for affiliation desire positive relationships with others, teachers find it discouraging to be in the company of colleagues who are unsupportive or inconsistent in their attitudes and behaviour (Buchanan, et.al: 2013). Some teachers feel isolated in their classrooms; they cannot react cordially with their colleagues thereby not fulfilling their social needs. Such teachers will always want to leave. This confirms the fact that lack of job satisfaction can actually influences teachers' attrition.

The study also revealed that, principals' leadership styles to a high extent influences teachers' attrition. This is supported by Greiner and Smith (2009) who identified lack of administrative support as a key factor in attrition. Leadership style of a school principal has an effect on teacher's decision of either to remain in teaching or not. Bad leadership of the principal can discourage teachers from the profession.

Results from the interview conducted in this study shows that 80% of principals do not always like to involved teachers in decision making, 75% of principals said that, they do not trust their subordinates. According to Williams (2003), a lack of administrative support damages a teacher's self-esteem, causes teachers to become frustrated, and leaves the teacher with nowhere to look for advice, and ultimately causes teachers to leave. Teachers are more likely to leave teaching or indicate intent to leave without adequate support from administrators. Ismail (2012) revealed that,

teachers generally, expect principals to know about all aspects of their school, while still giving them autonomy and freedom to make good decisions in classrooms.

Ingersoll and Smith (2003) identified good administrative leadership as the primary contributor to retention. Charlotte advocates for education (2004) found out that, teacher's decision to stay at a school largely depends upon the principal and his or her leadership style in the school. Similarly, Moore and Birkeland (2003) interviewed new teachers who move to different schools and reported that, the voluntary movers in the sample cited dissatisfaction with school administration as their main reason for leaving. They complained that, their principals were too authoritative and never consult them in decision making. In the light of the above information the researcher is of the opinion that principals who display democratic leadership style will encourage teachers to remain in the profession.

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

Moreover, the findings revealed that, teachers' attrition has a negative impact on the quality of education. The quality of education in any given country is reflected and related to the men and women who serve as teachers in the school system. Schools with high attrition rate are more likely to get inexperienced teachers or unqualified teachers who are likely to be less effective. This is supported by Darling – Hammand (2000) who found out that, high attrition has damaging impact on the quality of schooling.

Patall and Birkeland (2003) revealed that, "losing a good teacher whether to another profession or to the school across town means losing that teacher's familiarity with school practices, experience with the school curriculum and involvement with students, parents and colleagues". This is also supported by Sykes and Dibner (2009) who found out that, high attrition rate does not only have an impact on the financial resources of schools but also the quality of teaching. Teacher attrition has a negative effect on students learning and hinders students to achieve their objectives. Attrition also affects full coverage of syllabi which contribute to falling educational standard which is dangerous for Cameroon as we are striving towards emergence by 2035. According to Ingersoll (2002) attrition influences the performance and effectiveness of the school since the school as an organization has production processes requiring extensive interaction among educators and it is therefore prone to suffer when subjected to high rates of attrition.

According to the system theory teachers form part of the school system charged with many responsibilities. Teachers are at the center of curriculum implementation if teachers continue to leave the teaching profession to other professions; the education sector will be negatively affected. When one part of the organization is absent the organization faces problems. Consequently, attrition disrupts the quality of school cohesion and performance. It is important to note that teacher attrition does not affect only teachers. Everyone associated with the school system is affected by teacher attrition.

Luckens and Kattryn (2004) found out that, teachers who change school or leave the teaching profession create difficulties for school administrators. They revealed that teacher quality is the single most important variable in determining students' success. Teacher quality being the single most important variable in determining academic success means that, for the educational sector, to be able to contribute to Cameroon becoming an emerged nation by 2035, qualified teachers must be recruited and retained in the teaching profession. The quality of teachers is likely to assume even

greater importance in the future as changing needs place greater pressures on teachers. For example, to promote professionalism and technical education that is needed for emergence by 2035, qualified teachers need to be recruited and retained in the teaching profession.

According to the results from the interview conducted, 90% of the respondents agree that teachers have a greater part to play in improving the quality of secondary schools. This indicates that when teachers abandon their jobs the resulting effects are poor academic achievement by students. In line with these results, teachers who are guarantors of quality education are not satisfied at all with their salaries (Tambo, 2003, p.104). Consequently, most teachers quit the profession after a few years of working and this affects the quality of education.

Conclusion

The findings also revealed that teacher's attrition has an impact on the quality of education. This shows that, in order to effectively implement the educational sector strategy to facilitate the attainment of Cameroon development by 2035, there is a need to retained experience and qualified teachers in the teaching profession since teachers are guarantors of quality education.

Recommendations

From the findings the following recommendations were made:

- The government should raise the salary of teachers to admirable levels, provide attractive incentives, make provision for the payment of teachers' salaries immediately they are posted, increase the financial support accorded to schools, Provide good staff rooms equipped with facilities to ease lesson preparation.
- Seminars /workshops should be organized by the Ministry of Secondary Education to sensitize and educate teachers to change their mentality and provide them other benefits to attract and keep them in the profession.
- There is also a need for the Ministry of secondary Education to organize periodic workshops to train and sensitize principals on the purpose of teachers as a crucial resource and for that matter, how trying to retain them is obviously significant because the whole education system largely depends on them.
- There is a need for school administrators to regularly organize sessions in which open discussions can take place between teachers and the school heads to allow teachers air out their grievances instead of opting for grapevine.

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