

# Effects of Teacher Attrition on Students Academic Performance in Private Secondary Schools in Bagamoyo District, Tanzania

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**Abstract:** *Teacher attrition has emerged as a noteworthy challenge within Tanzanian private secondary schools, with recent surveys unveiling an average attrition rate of approximately 30%. However, it is essential to note that this attrition rate does not remain consistent across all regions. Specifically, in rural areas, the attrition rate tends to escalate, reaching levels as high as 40%, as documented by the Tanzania Education Authority. This glaring disparity in attrition rates between urban and rural areas underscores the multifaceted nature of this issue. The study sought to ascertain how the attrition of secondary school teachers influences student academic performance. The study involved 99 participants, comprising 14 educational leaders, 35 teachers, and 50 students. The selection of students for data collection was conducted through a random sampling process, while educational leaders and teachers were chosen using stratified sampling and snowball sampling methods. Data collection involved the use of interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions with students, and the gathered data were subjected to thematic analysis. The study's findings revealed that the primary reasons for teacher attrition included issues related to remuneration, a lack of motivation, unreliable contracts, inadequate management, and unfavorable working conditions. Furthermore, the consequences of teacher attrition on student academic performance encompassed challenges in adjusting to new teachers, a diminished understanding of subjects, compromised future career prospects, and a sense of demoralization among teachers. The study identified strategies to effectively manage teacher attrition, which encompassed implementing sound management practices, creating conducive working environments, increasing teacher salaries, offering reliable employment contracts, and providing motivation.*

**Keywords:** Attrition, Teachers Attrition, Students performance

## 1. Introduction

The global concern regarding teacher attrition has been growing significantly in recent years due to its recognized potential to affect students' academic performance. Researchers have been paying more attention to this complex issue, conducting various studies to understand it better. One notable study by Darling - Hammond in 2016 provides valuable insights into the significance of teacher attrition.

In Africa, it becomes evident that the challenges associated with teacher attrition are significant and have garnered attention in various reports and studies. These findings underline the substantial impact of teacher attrition on education within the region. For instance, a study conducted by UNESCO in 2011 examined the repercussions of teacher attrition in Namibia, shedding light on how it detrimentally affected school performance and the overall quality of education in the country. This research played a pivotal role in prompting educational reforms in Namibia, highlighting the urgency of addressing teacher attrition to enhance the education system (UNESCO, 2011).

In general, teacher attrition is a concern that transcends borders and affects education systems in various parts of the world. Africa, like other regions, grapples with the multifaceted challenges posed by teacher attrition, as exemplified by studies and reports that underscore its impact on educational quality and performance. In Namibia, UNESCO (2016) conducted a study that further highlighted the implications of teacher attrition on educational outcomes. This research unveiled a teacher attrition rate of 11.7% in Namibia and delved into the underlying reasons for this turnover, including factors like working conditions and

career opportunities. The study's findings initiated discussions on strategies to retain teachers and ensure a consistently high standard of education for Namibian students, emphasizing the need for proactive measures (UNESCO, 2016).

In Tanzania are confronted with an ongoing challenge the departure of teachers, particularly in specialized fields like science, as highlighted in research conducted by HakiElimu (2015). The reasons behind this high turnover among teachers in private schools are multifaceted. Notably, educators with strong academic backgrounds and higher measured abilities are more prone to exit the profession, as noted by Hendry and Hamis (2018). Hanushek et al. (2005) support this observation, emphasizing that teacher attrition is most prevalent among those who are relatively new to the teaching profession.

Teacher attrition has emerged as a significant and multifaceted challenge within Tanzanian private secondary schools, with recent surveys indicating an attrition rate of approximately 30%. However, it is crucial to recognize that this attrition rate is not uniform across all regions. In rural areas, the issue of teacher attrition tends to be even more pronounced, with attrition rates soaring to as high as 40%, as reported by the Tanzania Education Authority (TEA). This stark contrast in attrition rates between urban and rural areas highlights the intricate nature of this challenge, influenced by various contextual factors.

The repercussions of teacher attrition on educational quality are palpable and manifest in several key areas. Data from the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA) underscores a direct correlation between schools experiencing higher teacher attrition rates and significantly

poorer performance in national examinations. In these schools, students often grapple with achieving passing grades, particularly in core subjects like mathematics and science. This trend aligns with the findings of a study conducted by the Tanzanian Ministry of Education, which underscores the correlation between teacher attrition and the decline in educational standards.

The challenges stemming from teacher attrition become pronounced in specific subject areas, notably in science subjects. According to data provided by the Private Schools Association of Tanzania (PSAT), private secondary schools grapple with a severe shortage of qualified science teachers, with a concerning teacher deficit of 25% in these subjects. This scarcity has detrimental effects on students' performance in science - related subjects, as evidenced by diminishing pass rates in physics, chemistry, and biology during national exams. Data collected by the Tanzanian Association of Science Teachers (TAST) reinforces these findings, underscoring the pivotal role that teacher attrition plays in undermining science education in the country.

A myriad of factors underpin teacher attrition in Tanzanian private secondary schools, with financial considerations emerging as a prominent driver. Data from the Teachers' Union of Tanzania (TUT) illuminates that approximately 65% of teachers who exit the profession cite inadequate salaries as their primary motive for departure. Moreover, insights from a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education reveal that 45% of teachers who have resigned or retired in recent years did so due to the absence of extra duty allowances, which serve as vital supplementary income. Furthermore, the challenge of securing affordable housing compounds the issue, affecting nearly 30% of educators, as indicated by data from the Tanzania Housing Authority (THA).

The main objective of this research is to furnish a comprehensive understanding of the ramifications of teacher attrition on the academic performance of students in Tanzanian private secondary schools. Through scrutinizing the diverse factors that contribute to teacher attrition and meticulously analyzing their repercussions on students' learning outcomes, this study aspires to offer data - driven insights that can inform policy decisions. Moreover, it seeks to catalyze initiatives aimed at ameliorating the overall quality of education in private secondary schools, with a primary focus on addressing the critical issue of teacher attrition. Through these endeavors, the research aims to pave the way for positive transformations in the educational landscape, ultimately benefiting both students and educators alike.

## 2. Methods

### Study design and sampling technique

This used a qualitative research approach, primarily driven by its intent to delve deeply into the subjective experiences of teachers and their perspectives on the repercussions of attrition for student academic performance (Kothari 2004). Purposive sampling and stratified sampling were utilized to identify educational leaders for the study based on their respective categories. Subsequently, a simple random

sampling technique was employed to select educational leaders, ensuring that the selection process was proportional to each category. In total, 14 educational leaders were chosen as respondents, as per the guidance of Creswell (2012).

### Study area

The research was conducted in Bagamoyo District, located in the Coast region of Tanzania. Bagamoyo District was chosen for this study using a simple random selection method, specifically a lottery system, among six districts in the Coast Region. These districts included Kibaha, Kisarawe, Bagamoyo, Mafia, Rufiji, and Mkuranga. The selection of district was because it has a higher number of private secondary schools compared to the other districts in the Coast region. This higher number of private secondary schools in Bagamoyo provided a suitable context for studying teacher attrition.

### Data collection

In this study, different forms of interviews, such as unstructured and structured interviews, were utilized (Guest et al., 2013). Interviews were conducted to obtain the perspectives of educational leaders on the subject of the study. The interview process involved the researchers introducing themselves and explaining the purpose of the interview to the respondent. The willingness of the respondent to participate was observed before commencing the interview. The researcher then proceeded to ask a series of questions, with the responses being noted and recorded. Various tools, including audio recorders, cameras, notebooks, and personal computers, were employed for systematic data transcription and data management. Additionally, data scrutiny was conducted to validate the information gathered during the interviews.

In the pursuit of this research, several ethical considerations played a pivotal role. Among these considerations, two stood out prominently: obtaining permission for data collection and ensuring the confidentiality of research subjects. In this case, this involved seeking approval from school administrators and educational leaders in Bagamoyo District, where the research was conducted

## 3. Results

### Causes of teacher attrition in private secondary school

The study also examined the demographic characteristics of teachers who had left the teaching profession. The results are summarized in the table below.

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of the departed Teachers (n - 9)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
Female	3	33
Male	6	67
Total	9	100

Source; Field Data (2023)

Table 1 provides important insights into the gender distribution among the 9 teachers who left the teaching profession and participated in this study. The data shows the following gender distribution:

67% of the teachers who left the profession were male.  
33% of the teachers who left the profession were female.

The qualitative data obtained from interviews for objective one were systematically analyzed using thematic coding. The resulting themes that emerged from the analysis encompassed issues such as unreliable contracts, teacher remuneration, inadequate management, absence of motivation, and subpar working conditions.

**Table 2:** Thematic Analysis on Findings from Qualitative data: Causes of teacher attrition in private secondary school

Verbatim Quote	Theme	Code
..... we do not have a permanent contract which shows our employment rights at work place (HT1)	Unreliable Contracts	UC
"..... we are not given our financial benefits and compensation by school owners (T2)	Teacher's Remuneration	TR
"..... we have poor school management making us uncomfortable to work in this school" (T6)	Poor management	PM
"... our school owner use abusive language whenever we ask him our financial benefits. . . ." (T10)	Abusive language	AL
"... we are not given motivation for extra duties and other responsibilities at our school. . ." (T11)	Lack of Motivation	LM
«. . . We are working in poor environment which is not supportive to work comfortably. . ." (T14)	Poor working environment	PWE

**Source; Field Data (2023)**

**Teacher's Remuneration**

Teacher's remuneration emerged as another significant concern among the respondents. Teachers expressed dissatisfaction with their payment, stating that school owners were providing low compensation in comparison to their teaching workload and the cost of living. Additionally, some teachers reported experiencing payment delays, where they went unpaid for extended periods, ranging from two to three months. This financial instability caused them significant hardship and demotivated them from actively participating in and continuing their teaching duties.

Furthermore, it was observed that school owners did not give adequate attention to the issue of payment, aside from occasional late payments. In some instances, teachers received only partial payments. As one respondent appropriately put it. These challenges with remuneration significantly impact the morale and commitment of teachers, ultimately affecting the quality of education provided within these schools.

*"..... we are not given our financial benefits and compensation by school owners (T2)*

Respondent T2 emphasized a troubling issue regarding the non - provision of financial benefits and compensation by school owners, leading to a sense of discouragement among teachers working in these private secondary schools. This aligns with the research findings of Sokhanvar (2021), who identified the factors contributing to teacher attrition,

including insufficient salary, substandard school service conditions, and a lack of professional prestige.

**Poor management**

Additionally, poor management emerged as another significant issue, with a substantial 70% of the teachers interviewed expressing dissatisfaction in this regard. They conveyed that the school management was not conducive for teachers to work comfortably, primarily due to the lack of professional training and expertise in running school activities.

*"..... we have poor school management making us uncomfortable to work in this school" (T6)*

Respondent T6's observation regarding poor school management and its adverse impact on the work environment aligns with existing research findings. For instance, PaiPeng's study conducted in 2016, which examined teacher retention and attrition in middle and secondary schools, also identified poor school leadership and management as a primary reason for teacher attrition.

**Abusive language**

The concept of abusive language is defined as language that includes insults, denigration, or challenges and is delivered in circumstances where such conduct is likely to provoke a violent response (Ayuwat, 2017). During the interviews, a significant 61% of the findings from teachers indicated that instances of using abusive language towards teachers, which included devaluing them in front of students and other staff members, had a detrimental psychological impact on teachers. Moreover, these occurrences also disrupted the overall working atmosphere within the schools as one of the respondents commented as follows

*"... our school owner use abusive language whenever we ask him our financial benefits. . . ." (T10)*

This finding aligns with the research conducted by Fati in 2017, which investigated the causes of teacher attrition in private middle schools and secondary schools. Fati's study highlighted that factors such as the standard of human capital and leadership styles among others were identified as the causes of teacher attrition.

**Lack of Motivation**

Sasson (2019) defines a lack of motivation as the absence of a strong sense of passion and enthusiasm in carrying out one's job. In the context of the interviews conducted, it became evident that a lack of motivation was a significant issue affecting teachers in private secondary schools. Notably, 67% of the respondents expressed substantial concerns regarding motivation and allowances.

*"... we are not given motivation for extra duties and other responsibilities at our school. . ." (T11)*

This finding aligns with the research conducted by Grissimerin et al. in 2013, which focused on the factors contributing to teacher attrition. Grissimerin et al. Study identified that poor working environments, a lack of social

satisfaction, and insufficient motivation were significant factors driving teacher attrition.

#### Poor working environment

A poor working environment, as defined by Harrell (2019), refers to a situation where the working conditions are not conducive or supportive for carrying out teaching and learning processes. During the interviews conducted, it became evident that a poor working environment was a significant concern for teachers in private secondary schools. A substantial 61% of the findings revealed that teachers raised various issues related to their working conditions. These issues included problems with their housing, particularly its substandard quality and vulnerability to damage during the rainy season, as well as difficulties in affording better housing due to their low salaries.

«. . . We are working in poor environment which is not supportive to work comfortably.

Harrell's research highlighted that a poor working environment, including inadequate housing conditions, played a significant role in driving teachers away from their positions. These consistent findings underscore the critical importance of addressing and improving working conditions, such as housing, to retain and support teachers in their roles. A conducive and supportive work environment is not only essential for teacher well-being but also for ensuring the delivery of quality education to students.

#### 4. Conclusions

In the quiet town of Bagamoyo, Tanzania, a study was conducted that delved deep into the heart of a pressing issue in the realm of education – teacher attrition. The researchers sought to understand how this phenomenon influenced the academic performance of students in private secondary schools, and what they discovered painted a vivid picture of the challenges faced in the pursuit of knowledge.

As they ventured into the world of private schools, where many educators often sought greener pastures elsewhere, they uncovered a web of interconnected issues. The students, those at the heart of this educational journey, bore the brunt of teacher attrition. They spoke of the daunting challenges they faced – a loss of future career prospects, the disheartening effect on teachers' morale, the difficulty in understanding new instructors, and the struggle to adapt to the ever-changing roster of teaching staff.

Nevertheless, what lay beneath this struggle? The researchers dug deeper, seeking the root causes of this issue. The private schools of Bagamoyo were not immune to the common culprits seen elsewhere – poor working conditions, a lack of motivation, inadequate remuneration, and, at times, the use of harsh language. These factors created an environment where teachers felt undervalued and unsupported, leading them to seek alternative opportunities.

As the study progressed, it revealed an additional layer of complexity. Many of the departing teachers were highly qualified and experienced. Their departure placed a considerable burden on school management, as the quest to

find suitable replacements came with increased costs and challenges.

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