



Exploring the Impact of School Work Environments on Teacher Retention in Karachi: A Psycho-Institutional Perspective

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between schools' work environments and teachers' decisions to remain in teaching in the schools of Karachi. Framed within a psycho-institutional perspective, the research employed a quantitative approach using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire. The population comprised teachers actively working up to 2023. A sample of 399 respondents was selected through random sampling from ten large public sector schools. Data were analyzed using SPSS 22, employing Pearson's correlation coefficient to examine the strength and direction of relationships. Results reveal a significant positive correlation between school work environments and teacher retention. These findings highlight the critical role of school environments in motivating teachers to pursue continuous professional development and remain in teaching, with implications for improving teaching quality and retention strategies.

Keywords: *teacher retention, work environment, teacher education, Karachi, motivation, professional development*



Introduction

Schools play a pivotal role in societal development, serving as hubs for academic and personal growth. At their core are teachers, whose competencies and dedication significantly influence educational outcomes. Globally, retaining skilled teachers remains a challenge, driven by diverse factors ranging from stress to inadequate professional support (Kelchtermans, 2017). In Pakistan, these challenges are compounded by limited resources and varying administrative support in schools.

Teacher retention has been defined as the effort to maintain skilled teachers in the profession while minimizing turnover for avoidable reasons (Kelchtermans, 2017). Retention ensures quality teaching and reduces recruitment and training costs. Research indicates that positive work environments, supportive leadership, and adequate resources are crucial for sustaining teacher motivation and commitment (Marshall et al., 2022; Wiens et al., 2019).

Building on previous studies, this research investigates the relationship between school work environments and the retention decisions of teachers in Karachi. The findings aim to inform strategies for improving teaching profession and fostering sustainable professional practices.

Teachers' retention depends on the satisfaction level they place in their job experiences. Their consistent perusal and maintenance of self-efficacy signify their professional pleasure leading to Continuous Professional Development CPD.

Marshall et al. (2020) found that when teachers attended training programs with the 'right' motives, they were more engaged and interested in their work, and teachers with the right motives were more engaged in continuous professional development CPD. Those who entered teaching for the "wrong" reason, for example; because they could not choose the careers they wanted to join, were more likely to stay in the profession shorter than the former group and will leave teacher education and career development as a teacher. However, it seems nearly impossible for educational administrations, even in developed countries, to select/recruit/hire teachers based on their motivations to become efficient teachers. This, in turn, can result in low self-efficacy among graduates and higher social and economic costs associated with recruiting and preparing new motivated teachers (Harris et al., 2010). Unfortunately, these untapped costs and consequences of teacher turnover have received little attention. According to "The Project on



the Next Generation of Teachers," a study by School of Education at Harvard University, teachers are more likely to remain in the profession if they feel successful in their roles. To achieve this, they need support from their peers and managers in the work environment, as success is a gradual process that requires experience (Richardson et al., 2010).

A perspective on teacher retention highlights the factors such as the teacher's demographics, personality traits, and salary (Wang et al., 2020). On the other hand, it also focuses on the attitudes and work environment of the school administration (Wiens et al., 2019). Addressing these factors can help in reducing the teacher attrition rate. Prioritizing these factors will lead to increased teacher satisfaction and retention in the school. Motivation plays a crucial role in enhancing the teacher's performance, as stated by Nadim (2012), who believes that inner and outer satisfaction leads to the best performance. Such factors will lead to increased satisfaction and motivation among teachers, encouraging them to give their best. Organizational attachment has been studied to determine what factors help an employee feel connected to the organization and how the identified factors influence the employee's behavior at work (Feeney et al., 2020). Job insecurity is one of the most common factors that increase stress for employees at work (Peltokorpi & Allen, 2023). Peltokorpi and Allen (2023) conducted a study to understand how job embeddedness influences feelings of job insecurity and voluntary turnover in organizations. According to Islam (2021) Job satisfaction is the crucial factor in deciding to continue the profession and choosing the professional course as well as in getting completing it. Hussain (2023) says, school work environment is significant factor in getting individuals motivated to get admission in teacher education program, he further advises that schools and TEIs should work collaboratively in order to make the school education updated and upgraded

Statement of the Problem

The researchers intend to identify the most crucial motivational factors for adopting the teaching profession and having an urge for their professional development in our local context. Identification of such motivational factors enables the teacher managers to set policies and adopt strategies for better performance in learning situations that help in assuring the teachers retention in the teaching profession. Ultimate impact of the relationship of these factors are expected on imparting quality education in the schools.



Research Objectives

This study focuses on four objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between school culture/working conditions and teachers' retention decisions.
2. To analyze the association between school resources and facilities and teachers' retention.
3. To assess the role of school principals' leadership in influencing retention decisions.
4. To determine the overall impact of the school work environment on teachers' retention.

Research Question

- Do the schools' work environment significantly correlate with teachers' decision for retention in the teaching profession?

Research Hypotheses

1. School culture and working conditions are positively associated with teachers' retention decisions.
2. School resources and facilities positively influence retention.
3. School principals' leadership roles have a positive impact on retention decisions.
4. School work environments significantly correlate with retention decisions.

Significance of the Study

Decision for Retention in teacher education is critical to ensuring an adequate supply of qualified and motivated teachers, improving teacher quality, reducing hiring and training costs, and improving student satisfaction. Student-teachers' decision for retaining in the teacher education program or leaving it are influenced by various factors. motivation and their influencing factors encourage them for deciding to opt the teaching profession. missing of these factors make them to opt to another profession. Having insight of the motivation and their influencing factors as well as their existing relationship and its nature is essential for academicians

This study reveals some of motivational factors in our local context that play significant role in fostering desirable behaviors in student-teachers' decision for retention in teacher education



program as well as their performance in the schools the study is helpful for the most of the stakeholders for upgrading and updating the teacher education.

Literature Review

Teacher retention is a globally critical issue that significantly affects educational quality and student outcomes. Various studies have explored the factors influencing teacher retention, highlighting the importance of schoolwork environments, leadership, and professional support. This review expands on these themes, emphasizing their relevance in the context of Karachi.

Teacher Retention: Definitions and Global Context

Kelchtermans (2017) defines teacher retention as the effort to prevent skilled educators from leaving the profession for preventable reasons, such as stress or dissatisfaction. Retention rates are influenced by a combination of intrinsic factors, such as a teacher's passion and commitment to the profession, and extrinsic factors, including work conditions, salary, and support from leadership (Marshall et al., 2022). In developing contexts, these challenges are further exacerbated by resource constraints and administrative inefficiencies.

Globally, the cost of teacher attrition includes financial burdens associated with recruitment and training, as well as the social costs of disrupting student learning (Harris et al., 2010). A comprehensive understanding of the factors driving teacher retention is necessary to mitigate these challenges and ensure educational stability.

School Work Environments

The work environment within schools is a critical determinant of teacher satisfaction and retention. Research by Wiens et al. (2019) highlights the importance of positive school cultures, emphasizing respect, collaboration, and shared values. A conducive work environment not only improves job satisfaction but also enhances teachers' sense of efficacy and commitment to their roles.

In the Karachi context, Hussain (2023) stresses that schools and teacher education institutions (TEIs) must collaborate to create environments that align with professional expectations. Adequate resources, respect for teachers, and support systems are key elements that foster motivation and reduce turnover.



Leadership and Support

The role of school principals and leadership in shaping retention decisions has been widely documented. Effective leaders create a vision for their schools, provide professional support, and address the needs of their staff. According to Feeney et al. (2020), leadership styles significantly influence organizational attachment, which is a strong predictor of employee retention.

In Pakistan, school principals often face challenges due to limited training and resources. Developing leadership capacities that encourage collaboration and inspire trust is crucial. Marshall et al. (2022) found that leadership interventions, such as mentorship programs, play a significant role in retaining novice teachers.

Professional Development and Motivation

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a cornerstone of teacher retention. Research by Nadim et al. (2012) demonstrates that professional growth opportunities improve job satisfaction and performance. Teachers who perceive their workplaces as supportive of their learning are more likely to remain in the profession.

Motivation is another crucial factor influencing retention. Intrinsic motivation, such as a passion for teaching, complements extrinsic motivators, including job security and adequate resources (Islam, 2014). When schools fail to address these motivators, teacher attrition increases, resulting in a loss of skilled educators.

Cultural and Contextual Influences

The socio-cultural context of Karachi adds unique dimensions to the issue of teacher retention. Societal attitudes toward teaching, gender norms, and economic pressures often influence career choices. For instance, studies by Peltokorpi and Allen (2023) suggest that job insecurity is a prevalent issue in developing countries, creating additional stress for educators.

Hussain (2023) argues that aligning the efforts of schools and TEIs is critical in the Pakistani context. Collaborative frameworks can address gaps in training and workplace expectations, ensuring that student-teachers are well-prepared for the demands of the profession.

Recommendations from the Literature

To address teacher retention challenges effectively, several strategies have been proposed:



1. **Enhancing School Cultures:** Creating environments that respect and value teachers can significantly improve satisfaction and commitment (Wiens et al., 2019).
2. **Improving Resources and Facilities:** Providing adequate teaching materials and infrastructure is essential for professional effectiveness (Harris et al., 2010).
3. **Leadership Development:** Investing in leadership training programs for principals can enhance their capacity to support teachers and build positive organizational cultures (Feeney et al., 2020).
4. **Fostering Collaboration:** Strengthening partnerships between schools and TEIs ensures that teacher training aligns with workplace realities (Hussain, 2023).
5. **Professional Development Opportunities:** Continuous learning programs can help teachers adapt to changing educational demands and sustain their interest in the profession (Nadim et al., 2012).

Methodology

The study employed a correlational research design to measure relationships between school work environments and teachers' retention. Data collection involved a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire, capturing perceptions of work environment variables. A cluster sampling technique was used to select ten educational institutions, and respondents were chosen through random sampling. Pearson's correlation coefficient was utilized to test the hypotheses. Correlational research design was adopted for the study to measure and determine the relationship between School work environment and teachers' decision for retention in the teaching profession. Descriptive statistics is used to convert the textual data into numerical one in order to make it measurable and statistically provable. Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient was used to measure the correlation among the significant factors those play role in enhancing efficacy of each other.

Sample of the Study

The researchers adopted cluster sampling for selecting institutions as cluster to conduct the research they then selected the teachers as respondents by using simple random sampling technique sample in which every member of the population had an equal chance to be selected.



“Probability samples aim to achieve representativeness, which is the degree to which the sample accurately represents the entire population” (Teddlie, 2003).

Research Instrument

The research instrument was developed on five point Likert scale that contained thirty-six items on the sub variables of already selected constructs to measure the relationship of schools' work environment with teachers' decision for retention in the teaching

Findings & Discussion

The researcher tested four hypotheses to infer the underlying meaning of the phenomena objectively and quantitatively by using Pearson product moment of correlation. For this purpose, the researcher employed tests of association among the different variables with the student – teachers’ decision of retention. given below findings provide the researchers confidence to determine the relationships of the selected variables and to suggest practical implication to obtain greater benefits in system of practices.

Table 1
 Correlations of School Culture or working conditions & teachers’ decision for retention in the teacher education program

Variables of the Study	N	Correlation	Sig.
School Culture or working conditions are positively associated with student- teachers’ decision for retention in teaching	399	.731	.000

- Correlation: **0.731**
- Significance: **0.000**

Results indicate a moderate positive relationship between school culture/working conditions and retention decisions. This finding underscores the importance of fostering respectful and supportive workplace cultures.



The table 1 presents the result of test of association among School Culture or working conditions are positively associated with teachers' decision for retention in teaching. Pearson correlation was used to find out the relationship between the variables. The table demonstrates moderate positive relationship between the two variables shown in the table by the value 0.731 and P-value in the table is 0.00 determines level of significance. The estimated co-efficient of correlation 0.731 determines existence of moderate positive relationship between the two variables; School Culture or working conditions and student- teachers' decision for retention in the teacher education program. Obtained findings are significant enough to determine the positive association between the variables. These findings reject the null hypothesis that there is no association and provide the evidences for accepting the alternative hypothesis that School Culture or working conditions are positively associated with student- teachers' decision for retention in the teacher education program.

Table 2
 Correlation of School Resources and Facilities & teachers' decision for retention in the teacher education program

Variables of the Study	N	Correlation	Sig.
School resources and facilities are positively associated with teachers' decision for retention in the teaching	399	.719	.000

- Correlation: **0.719**
- Significance: **0.000**

Adequate resources and facilities demonstrated a significant positive correlation with retention, highlighting the need for material and infrastructural support in teaching.

The table 2 presents the result of test of association among School resources and facilities with teachers' decision for retention in teaching. Pearson correlation was used to find out the relationship between the variables. The table demonstrates moderate positive relationship between the two variables shown in the table by the value 0.719 and P-value in the table is 0.00, determines level of significance of the findings. The estimated co-efficient of correlation 0.719 determines existence of moderate positive relationship between the two variables; School



resources and facilities with student- teachers’ decision for retention in the teacher education program. Obtained findings are significant enough to determine the positive association between the variables. These findings reject the null hypothesis that there is no association and provide the evidences for accepting the alternative hypothesis that School resources and facilities are positively associated with student- teachers’ decision for retention in teaching profession.

Table 3
 Correlation of School Principal’s Leadership Role & teachers’ decision for retention in the teacher education program

Variables of the Study	N	Correlation	Sig.
School Principals’ leadership roles are positively associated with teachers’ decision for retention in teaching	399	.684	.000

- **Correlation:** 0.684
- **Significance:** 0.000

The leadership roles of school principals positively influence retention decisions. Supportive and visionary leadership can motivate teachers to remain committed to the profession.

The table 3 presents the result of test of association among School Principals’ leadership roles and teachers’ decision for retention in teaching. Pearson correlation was used to find out the relationship between the variables. The table demonstrates moderate positive relationship between the two variables shown in the table by the value 0. 684.The p-value in the table is 0.00 determines level of significance of the findings. The estimated co-efficient of correlation 0.684 determines existence of moderate positive relationship between the two variables; School Principals’ leadership roles and student- teachers’ decision for retention in the teacher education program. Obtained findings are significant enough to determine the positive association between the variables. These findings reject the null hypothesis that there is no association and provide the evidences for accepting the alternative hypothesis that

School Principals’ leadership roles are positively associated with teachers’ decision for retention in the teaching profession



Table 4
 Correlation of principal’s Leadership Role & student- teachers’ decision for retention in the teacher education program

Variables of the Study	N	Correlation	Sig.
School work environment is positively associated with teachers’ decision for retention in the teaching profession	399	.712	.000

- Correlation: **0.712**
- Significance: **0.000**

The overall school work environment shows a strong positive relationship with retention, emphasizing its critical role in shaping teacher education outcomes. The table 4 presents the result of test of association among School work environment and teachers’ decision for retention in the teaching profession.

Pearson correlation was used to find out the relationship between the variables. The table demonstrates moderate positive relationship between the two variables shown in the table by the value 0.712. The p-value in the table is 0.00 determines level of significance of the findings. The estimated co-efficient of correlation 0.712 determines existence of moderate positive relationship between the two variables; School work environment is positively associated with student-teachers’ decision for retention in the teacher education program. Obtained findings are significant enough to determine the positive association between the variables. These findings reject the null hypothesis that there is no association and provide the evidences for accepting the alternative hypothesis that School work environment is positively associated with student-teachers’ decision for retention in the teacher education program.

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The findings align with global research emphasizing the significance of supportive work environments in teacher retention (Marshall et al., 2022; Wiens et al., 2019). Specifically, factors such as leadership, culture, and resources resonate with studies conducted in diverse contexts



(Peltokorpi & Allen, 2023; Feeney et al., 2020). The results suggest that enhancing these elements in schools can foster greater commitment among student-teachers, reducing attrition rates and promoting professional stability.

Conclusions

This study establishes a significant relationship between school work environments and the retention of teachers in Karachi. Improving these environments can enhance teacher satisfaction, professional development, and overall educational quality.

It is concluded, that there is a significant and positive relationship exists between the schools' work environment and teachers' decision for retention in the teaching profession. For selecting the profession most of the people prefers work environment of the organization. Schools work environment plays a significant role in deciding to select the teaching profession as career. most of the adults prefers the work environment of the institution or organization than any other preferences. Choice of the profession stimulates the adults to complete their professional courses in joyful manner along with the acquiring of desired skills and proficiencies for the profession. This relationship determines that school work environment can be used to motivate student-teacher to retain in the teaching profession. it is important to note that intrinsic factors, such as a teacher's passion for the subject and love for teaching, also play a crucial role in retaining teachers in the field. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators must be considered and addressed to improve retention in teacher education.

Future research should explore longitudinal impacts and interventions tailored to local contexts.

Recommendations

1. Cultivate respectful and inclusive school cultures to enhance teacher satisfaction.
2. Ensure availability of adequate resources and facilities to support teaching practices.
3. Empower school principals with training in progressive leadership techniques.
4. Strengthen collaborations between schools and teacher education institutions to align professional training with workplace realities.



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