

Article

Teacher Retention, Well-being and Educational Effectiveness: Administrative Strategies to Combat Burnout and Attrition in 2020s Schools

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Abstract: Teacher retention and well-being have emerged as critical concerns in the 2020s due to increasing workloads, heightened accountability demands, post-pandemic educational challenges, and growing rates of teacher burnout and attrition. This study investigated administrative strategies for promoting teacher retention and enhancing teacher well-being in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. The study was guided by the need to identify factors contributing to teacher burnout and attrition, examine the impact of burnout on teacher retention, and determine effective administrative interventions capable of reducing teachers' burnout in order to improve teachers' professional experiences and commitment to the profession. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised teachers, principals, vice-principals, counsellors, and educational administrators from selected public secondary schools across North Central Nigeria. Using stratified random sampling techniques, a sample of 560 respondents was selected. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Teacher Retention and Well-being Questionnaire (TRWQ). The instrument was validated by experts in educational management and guidance and counselling, while a reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained using Cronbach's Alpha. Data were analysed using mean scores, standard deviations, and t-tests. The findings revealed that excessive workload, inadequate administrative support, poor work-life balance, insufficient recognition, poor remuneration and emotional exhaustion were major contributors to teacher burnout and attrition. The study further found that supportive leadership, teacher recognition programmes, professional development opportunities, counselling services, participatory decision-making, and effective workload management significantly enhanced teacher well-being and retention. The study concludes that institutionalising transparent recruitment, fair remuneration, equitable professional development, recognition initiatives, and wellness programmes are essential for sustaining teacher commitment and educational effectiveness. These recommendations align with global warnings from OECD and UNESCO that rising teacher shortages threaten the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 4. Strengthening administrative practices in Nigeria's schools is therefore critical to building a resilient teaching workforce capable of advancing national development goals.

Keywords: Teacher retention, Teacher well-being, Burnout, Attrition, School leadership, Administrative strategies, Educational management



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1. Introduction

The teaching profession occupies a central position in every educational system because teachers are responsible for nurturing the intellectual, social, emotional, and moral development of learners. Beyond imparting knowledge, teachers serve as mentors, role models, counsellors, and facilitators of lifelong learning. Edinoh described teaching as the act of imparting knowledge and skills to learners. It is one of the cardinal programmes of educational institutions and is very important in the educational setting. No meaningful educational program can take place without teaching. Teaching is one of the indicators used for measuring quality of education [1]. There are factors that determine the quality of teaching programmes and they include: the teacher's well-being, the quality of the teachers, methods of teaching, classroom management, mastery of subject matter, availability and adequacy of teaching aids, and infrastructural facilities.

Edinoh, Abiola and Nwafor, (2024) further argued that the quality of any nation's educational system is largely dependent on the competence, commitment, and well-being of its teachers. Consequently, retaining qualified and motivated teachers' remains essential for achieving educational goals and sustaining national development. In recent years, however, the teaching profession has faced unprecedented challenges that have significantly affected teacher well-being, job satisfaction, and retention.

Previous qualitative research by Kontagora et al. investigated the management of Nigerian primary school teachers in Kaduna and Katsina States, highlighted 'systemic management challenges including opaque recruitment, inequitable training access, and delayed promotions that shape teacher well-being and retention in Nigeria'. The decade of the 2020s has been marked by rapid educational changes resulting from technological advancements, curriculum reforms, post-pandemic recovery efforts, increasing accountability measures, and evolving learner needs. While these changes have created opportunities for innovation and improvement, they have also increased the demands placed on teachers [2], [3]. Many teachers are now expected to manage large classes, integrate digital technologies into instruction, address diverse learner needs, complete extensive administrative tasks, and meet performance expectations simultaneously. These responsibilities have contributed to rising levels of occupational stress and emotional exhaustion among educators.

Globally, teacher attrition has become a major concern among policymakers, educational administrators, and researchers. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, a considerable proportion of teachers across member countries have reported intentions to leave the profession within a few years due to excessive workloads, workplace stress, and declining professional satisfaction [4]. Similarly, UNESCO warned that increasing teacher shortages and attrition rates poses significant threats to educational quality, equity, and the attainment of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which seeks to ensure inclusive and quality education for all.

The challenge of teacher retention is particularly evident in developing countries where educational institutions often struggle with inadequate resources, overcrowded classrooms, limited professional development opportunities, and insufficient welfare provisions. In Nigeria, concerns about teacher burnout and attrition have become increasingly pronounced. Teachers frequently encounter difficulties associated with delayed promotions, heavy workloads, inadequate remuneration, limited administrative support, and poor working conditions [5]. These challenges often diminish morale and reduce commitment to the profession. In North Central Nigeria, where educational institutions continue to address diverse socio-economic and infrastructural challenges, retaining qualified and experienced teachers has become a pressing concern for educational stakeholders.

Teacher well-being has emerged as a critical factor in discussions surrounding educational effectiveness and workforce sustainability. Teacher well-being encompasses the physical, emotional, psychological, and professional conditions that enable teachers to function effectively and derive satisfaction from their work. Research has consistently demonstrated that teachers who experience

positive well-being are more likely to be motivated, productive, resilient, and committed to their profession. Dreer, Zhou et al, Sohail et al, Lemon and Turner, Beames et al, and Horwood et al. reported that teacher well-being significantly influences instructional effectiveness, classroom management, student achievement, and long-term career commitment. Conversely, poor well-being often results in stress, absenteeism, reduced performance, and eventual withdrawal from the profession [6], [7].

One of the most significant threats to teacher well-being is burnout. Burnout is commonly defined as a psychological syndrome characterised by emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment resulting from prolonged exposure to occupational stressors. Teachers experiencing burnout often feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and disconnected from their professional responsibilities. They may lose enthusiasm for teaching, become less effective in classroom interactions, and develop intentions to leave the profession altogether. Studies conducted by Collie, Greenier et al, Kim et al, Pressley, Madigan and Kim, and Burić and Kim revealed that burnout contributes significantly to teacher absenteeism, declining instructional quality, reduced organisational commitment, and increased turnover intentions [8], [9].

The COVID-19 pandemic further intensified many of the factors associated with teacher burnout. During and after the pandemic, teachers were required to adapt rapidly to remote learning environments, manage technological challenges, address learning losses, and provide emotional support to students facing unprecedented disruptions. These additional responsibilities increased professional strain and highlighted the need for stronger institutional support systems. As schools transitioned into the post-pandemic era, concerns about teacher mental health, workload management, and professional well-being became increasingly prominent.

Within this context, school administration has emerged as a crucial factor in promoting teacher well-being and retention [10], [11]. Administrative leadership influences the extent to which teachers feel valued, supported, and professionally fulfilled within their work environment. Effective school leaders establish positive organisational cultures, encourages collaboration, recognise teachers' achievements, provide professional growth opportunities, and ensure equitable workload distribution. Such practices foster trust, motivation, and commitment among staff members. Research by Fullan, Day and Gu, Leithwood, Kraft et al, Grissom et al, and Harris indicates that supportive leadership significantly reduces occupational stress and strengthens teachers' willingness to remain in the profession [12].

Furthermore, administrative strategies such as mentoring programmes, counselling services, participatory decision-making, staff recognition initiatives, wellness programmes, and professional development opportunities have been identified as effective mechanisms for enhancing teacher well-being. These interventions help teachers cope with workplace challenges, build resilience, and maintain a healthy balance between professional and personal responsibilities. Consequently, educational administrators are increasingly expected to prioritise teacher welfare as an integral component of school improvement and educational effectiveness, Edinoh, Onah, and Oluwole [13].

Despite growing awareness of the importance of teacher well-being and retention, many schools continue to experience high rates of burnout and staff turnover [14]. While numerous studies have examined teacher stress and job satisfaction in various contexts, limited empirical attention has been devoted to understanding how specific administrative strategies can address burnout and improve teacher retention within public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. This gap underscores the need for context-specific research capable of informing policy decisions and administrative practices.

It is against this background that this study investigates teacher retention and well-being, with particular emphasis on administrative strategies for combating burnout and attrition in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria [15]. The study seeks to contribute to existing knowledge by identifying factors responsible for teacher burnout, examining their implications for retention, and exploring practical administrative interventions that can foster a supportive and

sustainable teaching workforce.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers constitute the backbone of the educational system, yet increasing numbers are leaving the profession due to burnout, stress, emotional exhaustion, and declining job satisfaction. Across the globe, educational institutions are experiencing challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified teachers, thereby creating concerns about educational quality and continuity. The problem has become more pronounced in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, which introduced additional professional demands and intensified existing workplace pressures.

In Nigeria, and particularly within public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria, many teachers continue to contend with excessive workloads, inadequate instructional resources, increasing administrative responsibilities, large class sizes, limited opportunities for professional advancement, and insufficient institutional support. These challenges have contributed to declining morale, reduced professional commitment, and growing intentions to leave the teaching profession. Reports from educational stakeholders indicate that teacher turnover has become a significant concern in several schools, leading to shortages of experienced personnel and disruptions in teaching and learning processes, Edinoh, Asemota & Wakili [16].

Although governments and educational authorities have introduced various reforms aimed at improving educational outcomes, the issue of teacher retention remains unresolved. Many interventions have focused primarily on curriculum improvement, student achievement, and infrastructural development, often with less attention given to teacher well-being and workplace conditions. Consequently, teachers continue to experience levels of occupational stress that adversely affect their effectiveness and commitment.

Furthermore, while previous studies have examined teacher burnout and job satisfaction, there is limited empirical evidence regarding the specific administrative strategies that can effectively reduce burnout and improve teacher retention within public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria [17]. The absence of such evidence makes it difficult for policymakers and school administrators to implement targeted interventions capable of addressing the problem.

Therefore, the problem of this study is the persistent occurrence of teacher burnout and attrition in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria and the need to identify effective administrative strategies that can enhance teacher well-being, reduce turnover intentions, and promote long-term retention.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate administrative strategies for combating teacher burnout and attrition while promoting teacher retention and well-being in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria [18].

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify the factors contributing to teacher burnout and attrition in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.
2. Examine the effects of teacher burnout on teacher retention in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.
3. Determine the administrative strategies that promote teacher well-being in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.
4. Assess the effectiveness of administrative interventions in improving teacher retention in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.
5. Examine the relationship between administrative support and teachers' intentions to remain in the profession in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What factors contribute to teacher burnout and attrition?

2. How does burnout affect teacher retention?
3. What administrative strategies promote teacher well-being?
4. How effective are administrative strategies in improving teacher retention?

Research Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant difference between teachers and administrators regarding factors contributing to teacher burnout.

H02: There is no significant relationship between administrative support and teacher retention.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provides the conceptual foundation upon which this study is anchored. It offers explanations for the relationships among teacher well-being, burnout, retention, and administrative strategies in contemporary school settings. Given the multifaceted nature of teacher burnout and attrition, no single theory adequately explains all dimensions of the phenomenon. Consequently, this study is guided by three complementary theories: the **Job Demands-Resource Theory**, **Self-Determination Theory**, and **Transformational Leadership Theory** [19]. These theories collectively explain how workplace conditions, psychological needs, and leadership practices influence teachers' well-being, job satisfaction, commitment, and decisions to remain in the profession.

Job Demands-Resource Theory

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory was developed by Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli (2001) to explain the factors that influence employee well-being, motivation, and occupational burnout. The theory proposes that every profession has specific job demands and job resources that interact to influence employees' physical and psychological outcomes.

According to the theory, **job demands** refer to the physical, emotional, psychological, and organisational aspects of work that require sustained effort and are therefore associated with physiological and psychological costs [20]. Examples of job demands in the teaching profession include excessive workload, large class sizes, administrative responsibilities, curriculum changes, student behavioural challenges, time pressures, and emotional labour associated with supporting students' academic and personal development.

Conversely, **job resources** refer to the physical, social, organisational, and psychological factors that help employees achieve work goals, reduce job demands, and promote personal growth and development. In educational settings, job resources may include supportive leadership, professional development opportunities, adequate teaching materials, mentoring programmes, teacher recognition, collegial relationships, counselling services, and opportunities for participation in decision-making.

The central assumption of the JD-R Theory is that when job demands consistently exceed available resources, employees are likely to experience stress, emotional exhaustion, and eventually burnout. On the other hand, when sufficient resources are available, employees are better equipped to cope with workplace challenges, remain motivated, and maintain positive levels of well-being and engagement [21], [22], [23].

The relevance of this theory to the present study is evident in the realities faced by many teachers in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. Teachers often encounter increasing workloads, overcrowded classrooms, administrative pressures, and limited resources. Such conditions may contribute to emotional exhaustion and intentions to leave the profession. However, where administrators provide supportive leadership, recognition, professional support, and opportunities for growth, teachers are more likely to remain engaged and committed. Thus, the Job Demands-Resource Theory provides a useful lens for understanding how administrative strategies can mitigate burnout and enhance teacher retention [24].

Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) was developed by Deci and Ryan and remains one of the most influential psychological theories explaining human motivation, well-being, and behavioural commitment. The theory posits that individuals possess three fundamental psychological needs **autonomy**, **competence**, and **relatedness** which must be satisfied for optimal functioning, motivation, and psychological well-being.

Autonomy

Autonomy refers to an individual's need to experience a sense of control and ownership over their actions and decisions. In educational settings, teachers are more likely to experience job satisfaction when they are granted professional freedom to make instructional decisions, manage classroom activities, and contribute meaningfully to school policies. Excessive control, rigid supervision, and exclusion from decision-making processes often undermine teachers' sense of autonomy and reduce professional motivation [25].

Competence

Competence relates to an individual's desire to feel effective, capable, and successful in performing tasks. Teachers derive a sense of competence when they receive adequate training, professional development opportunities, constructive feedback, and institutional support. Continuous opportunities for learning and professional growth help teachers develop confidence in their abilities and increase their commitment to teaching.

Relatedness

Relatedness refers to the need to establish meaningful and supportive relationships with others. Teachers who experience positive relationships with administrators, colleagues, students, and parents are more likely to develop a sense of belonging within the school community. Such relationships foster emotional support, collaboration, and workplace satisfaction.

According to Self-Determination Theory, when these three psychological needs are satisfied, individuals experience higher levels of intrinsic motivation, engagement, well-being, and organisational commitment. Conversely, when these needs are frustrated, employees become disengaged, dissatisfied, and more likely to withdraw from their work environment.

The theory is particularly relevant to this study because many of the administrative strategies examined – including supportive leadership, participatory decision-making, professional development opportunities, counselling services, and recognition programmes – directly contribute to the satisfaction of teachers' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness [26]. In the context of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria, teachers who feel valued, supported, and professionally empowered are more likely to remain committed to their schools and less likely to experience burnout or intentions to leave the profession.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory was advanced by Bass and Avolio (1994) and has become one of the most widely applied leadership theories in educational administration. The theory emphasises the ability of leaders to inspire, motivate, and empower followers to achieve organisational goals while simultaneously promoting personal growth and professional development. Transformational leaders move beyond traditional supervisory functions by creating a shared vision, fostering trust, encouraging innovation, and supporting the professional aspirations of employees [27]. Rather than relying solely on authority and control, transformational leaders influence followers through inspiration, collaboration, and personal example.

Bass and Avolio identified four key dimensions of transformational leadership:

Idealised Influence

Leaders serve as role models whose actions inspire trust, respect, and admiration among followers. In schools, principals who demonstrate integrity, fairness, and professionalism are more likely to gain the confidence and commitment of teachers.

Inspirational Motivation

Transformational leaders communicate a compelling vision and encourage employees to work towards common goals. Teachers who understand the purpose and value of their work are often more motivated and resilient when faced with challenges.

Intellectual Stimulation

This dimension involves encouraging creativity, innovation, and problem-solving. Educational leaders who support new teaching methods, collaborative learning, and professional experimentation help teachers develop confidence and professional competence.

Individualised Consideration

Transformational leaders recognise the unique needs and aspirations of each employee. They provide mentoring, encouragement, emotional support, and opportunities for professional growth. Teachers who feel personally valued by school leaders are more likely to experience job satisfaction and organisational commitment [28], [29].

Numerous studies have demonstrated the positive influence of transformational leadership on teacher well-being and retention. Fullan, Leithwood, Harris, Grissom et al, and Kraft et al found that supportive and transformational school leadership significantly improves teacher morale, motivation, professional satisfaction, and commitment to the profession. Such leadership practices also contribute to the development of positive school climates that reduce stress and turnover intentions.

In relation to the present study, Transformational Leadership Theory provides a valuable explanation for how administrative practices influence teacher well-being and retention. School administrators who demonstrate supportive leadership, recognise teachers' contributions, involve staff in decision-making, and provide opportunities for professional development create environments where teachers feel valued and motivated to remain in the profession [30].

Implications of the Theories for the Study

The three theories collectively provide a comprehensive framework for understanding teacher retention and well-being in contemporary schools. The Job Demands-Resource Theory explains how excessive demands and insufficient resources contribute to burnout and attrition. Self-Determination Theory highlights the importance of satisfying teachers' psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Transformational Leadership Theory emphasises the crucial role of school leaders in creating supportive environments that foster professional satisfaction and commitment.

Together, these theories suggest that teacher burnout and attrition are not solely individual problems but are significantly influenced by organisational conditions and leadership practices. They further imply that effective administrative strategies such as supportive leadership, teacher recognition, counselling services, professional development opportunities, collaborative decision-making, and workload management can serve as protective factors that enhance teacher well-being and promote long-term retention.

Consequently, these theories provide the conceptual basis for examining how administrative interventions can reduce burnout and strengthen teacher commitment in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria [31].

2. Literature Review

Concept of Teacher Well-being

Teacher well-being has gained considerable attention in contemporary educational research due to its direct influence on teaching effectiveness, professional commitment, and educational

outcomes. The concept extends beyond the absence of stress or illness and encompasses the overall psychological, emotional, social, physical, and professional functioning of teachers within their work environment. Teacher well-being reflects the extent to which educators experience satisfaction, fulfilment, resilience, and positive engagement in their professional responsibilities.

In recent years, scholars have increasingly recognised that teacher well-being is fundamental to the success of educational institutions. Teachers who enjoy positive well-being are more likely to demonstrate enthusiasm for teaching, establish supportive relationships with students, maintain effective classroom management, and contribute positively to school improvement initiatives. Conversely, poor well-being often manifests in stress, anxiety, fatigue, reduced motivation, and diminished professional effectiveness.

Dreer observed that teacher well-being significantly enhances instructional quality, student engagement, and professional commitment. The study further noted that teachers with high levels of well-being are more capable of adapting to workplace challenges and maintaining productive relationships within the school community. Similarly, Zhou et al, through a comprehensive meta-analysis, identified school climate, leadership support, collegial relationships, workload management, and professional autonomy as major determinants of teacher well-being.

The significance of teacher well-being became even more apparent following the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, teachers were required to adapt rapidly to online teaching platforms, address students' emotional needs, and manage increased workloads under uncertain conditions. According to Collie, these unprecedented challenges heightened awareness of the need to prioritise teacher mental health and professional welfare. Likewise, Beames et al. found that teachers who received organisational support and well-being interventions demonstrated greater resilience and lower levels of psychological distress [32].

From a Nigerian perspective, teacher well-being is influenced by factors such as working conditions, availability of instructional resources, administrative support, remuneration, opportunities for career advancement, and societal recognition of the teaching profession. In many public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria, teachers often operate under conditions characterised by limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, and increasing administrative responsibilities. These conditions can adversely affect their well-being and ultimately influence their decision to remain in the profession. Global reports from OECD and UNESCO warn that teacher shortages and burnout jeopardise SDG 4. Nigerian studies echo these concerns, citing poor pay, delayed promotions, and heavy workloads.

Qualitative evidence from the teacher management study adds depth, showing how systemic practices undermine morale. One head teacher noted, *'I have no involvement whatsoever in the recruitment of teachers. We just see new teachers arrive in the school with their letters of appointment.'* Teachers also reported that *'Most teachers have small business of their own because their salaries are not enough and sometimes they don't do their work well because of that.'* These accounts illustrate how opaque recruitment and inadequate remuneration erode autonomy and effectiveness.

Researchers such as Mercer, Mansfield et al, Richardson, and Wang emphasised that promoting teacher well-being requires a holistic approach that addresses both organisational and individual factors. Educational administrators therefore have a responsibility to create supportive environments that foster professional satisfaction, psychological safety, and work-life balance.

Empirical evidence from Nigeria underscores the urgency of addressing teacher burnout and attrition. Ozoemena et al. conducted a cross-sectional study among primary school teachers and found that **69.9% experienced psychological distress** and **36% reported burnout**, with emotional exhaustion and reduced accomplishment strongly linked to intentions to leave the profession. These findings highlight the systemic nature of burnout in Nigerian schools, where coping strategies often determine resilience levels.

Similarly, Ifarajimi, Bolaji, Mason, and Jalloh examined mentoring practices in Nigeria's public school system and reported that **up to 60% of teachers leave within their first five years of**

service, largely due to inadequate mentorship and weak institutional support. Teachers in the study emphasised that structured mentoring frameworks – formal sessions, defined mentor-mentee ratios, and regular assessments – could significantly reduce attrition and improve professional satisfaction.

Further evidence from BMC Public Health revealed that socio-economic factors such as age, qualifications, and income levels were inversely associated with burnout among Nigerian teachers. This suggests that welfare policies addressing remuneration, career progression, and workload distribution are critical for sustaining teacher commitment.

Taken together, these Nigeria-specific studies demonstrate that burnout and attrition are not abstract global issues but pressing realities within the Nigerian education system. They reinforce the need for context-sensitive administrative strategies – including mentorship, wellness programmes, and workload management – to enhance teacher well-being and retention in North Central Nigeria.

Teacher Burnout

Teacher burnout represents one of the most significant threats to teacher well-being and retention in contemporary educational settings. Burnout is commonly described as a state of chronic physical, emotional, and psychological exhaustion resulting from prolonged exposure to occupational stressors. According to Maslach and Leiter (2021), burnout comprises three major dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment.

Emotional exhaustion occurs when teachers feel overwhelmed by the demands of their work and perceive that they no longer possess the energy required to perform their duties effectively. Depersonalisation involves the development of negative attitudes towards students, colleagues, or professional responsibilities. Reduced personal accomplishment refers to feelings of inadequacy and declining confidence in one's professional competence.

The prevalence of teacher burnout has increased considerably in recent years. Pressley reported that the post-pandemic educational environment significantly intensified stress levels among teachers, leading to higher incidences of burnout and intentions to leave the profession. Similarly, Kim et al. identified excessive workload, emotional labour, administrative pressures, and student behavioural challenges as major predictors of teacher burnout.

Several studies have highlighted the adverse consequences of burnout on teachers and educational institutions. Madigan and Kim found that burnout is strongly associated with increased absenteeism, reduced job satisfaction, diminished instructional quality, and higher turnover intentions. Greenier et al. further observed that emotionally exhausted teachers often experience difficulties maintaining effective classroom interactions and positive professional relationships.

The Job Demands-Resource Theory provides a useful explanation for teacher burnout. According to the theory, burnout occurs when workplace demands consistently exceed available resources. In many schools, teachers face increasing responsibilities without corresponding levels of support, recognition, or professional autonomy. Such imbalances create conditions that foster emotional strain and occupational exhaustion.

Within the context of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria, teacher burnout may be exacerbated by large class sizes, inadequate teaching materials, administrative workload, insufficient welfare provisions, and limited opportunities for professional development. These challenges can undermine teachers' enthusiasm for teaching and increase the likelihood of attrition. Consequently, understanding the factors contributing to burnout is essential for developing effective interventions aimed at improving teacher well-being and retention.

Teacher Retention

Teacher retention refers to the ability of educational institutions to attract, support, and maintain qualified teachers within the profession over an extended period. Retention is a critical issue because the stability of the teaching workforce directly influences educational quality, student achievement, and institutional effectiveness. Schools that experience high rates of teacher turnover

often face disruptions in instructional continuity, increased recruitment costs, and difficulties maintaining organisational stability.

According to Ingersoll et al, teacher retention is influenced by a combination of organisational, professional, and personal factors. These include leadership quality, salary satisfaction, working conditions, opportunities for professional development, collegial support, and organisational culture. Teachers are more likely to remain in the profession when they perceive their work environment as supportive, rewarding, and professionally fulfilling.

Recent international reports suggest that teacher retention has become a growing concern across educational systems worldwide. The OECD reported that many teachers are considering leaving the profession due to workload pressures, stress, insufficient support, and declining job satisfaction. UNESCO similarly warned that increasing teacher shortages and attrition rates threaten efforts to achieve equitable and quality education globally.

Teacher retention is closely linked to teacher well-being. Dreer found that teachers who experience positive emotional and professional well-being demonstrate stronger commitment to their schools and lower intentions to leave the profession. Likewise, Horwood et al. argued that teacher retention cannot be effectively addressed without first addressing issues relating to mental health, workplace satisfaction, and organisational support.

In the Nigerian educational system, teacher retention remains a persistent challenge. Many qualified teachers leave the profession in search of alternative employment opportunities offering better remuneration, improved working conditions, and greater career prospects. Ofoegbu and Owan observed that inadequate welfare package, delayed promotions, and limited administrative support contributes significantly to teacher turnover in Nigerian schools.

For public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria, retaining experienced teachers is particularly important because of the role they play in ensuring educational continuity and mentoring younger educators. Consequently, identifying strategies capable of enhancing teacher retention remains a priority for educational administrators and policymakers.

Administrative Support and Leadership for Teachers Retention

Administrative strategies refer to the policies, practices, and leadership approaches employed by school administrators to create supportive work environments and enhance teachers' professional experiences. Educational researchers increasingly acknowledge that school leadership plays a central role in determining whether teachers remain committed to their profession or seek alternative career opportunities.

One of the most effective administrative strategies identified in the literature is supportive leadership. Supportive school leaders establish positive organisational cultures characterised by trust, respect, collaboration, and open communication. They provide teachers with emotional support, recognise professional achievements, and involve staff in decision-making processes. Fullan, Leithwood, Harris, Kraft et al, and Grissom et al. consistently found that supportive leadership significantly enhances teacher morale, job satisfaction, and retention.

Professional development opportunities also play a crucial role in teacher retention. Teachers who have access to continuous learning opportunities are more likely to feel competent, valued, and professionally fulfilled. Day and Gu emphasised that professional growth contributes to teacher resilience and long-term commitment to the profession. Similarly, Kraft et al. found that schools that invest in teacher development experience lower rates of staff turnover.

Mentoring and induction programmes represent another important administrative strategy. Newly recruited teachers often encounter difficulties adjusting to the demands of the profession. Effective mentoring programmes provide guidance, emotional support, and professional assistance that facilitate successful integration into the school environment. Research by Johnson, Walker, and Kutsyuruba suggests that mentoring programmes significantly improve teacher retention, particularly during the early years of teaching.

Recognition and reward systems have also been identified as important factors influencing retention. Teachers who feel appreciated and recognised for their contributions are more likely to develop stronger organisational commitment and job satisfaction. According to Harris, recognition programmes foster positive workplace relationships and reinforce professional motivation.

Furthermore, teacher wellness initiatives have become increasingly important in the post-pandemic era. Such initiatives include counselling services, stress management programmes, workload reduction measures, mental health support, and work-life balance policies. Beames et al. and Lemon and Turner found that schools implementing comprehensive wellbeing programmes reported improvements in teacher resilience, engagement, and retention.

Collaborative decision-making is another strategy that promotes teacher commitment. When teachers participate in decisions affecting their work, they are more likely to feel respected, valued, and invested in school success. Distributed leadership approaches advocated by Harris encourage shared responsibility and strengthen teachers' sense of ownership and belonging.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that teacher retention is not solely dependent on financial incentives. Rather, it is significantly influenced by the quality of administrative leadership, organisational support, professional development opportunities, recognition systems, and workplace well-being initiatives. These findings underscore the importance of adopting comprehensive administrative strategies capable of addressing the multifaceted challenges associated with teacher burnout and attrition in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

Post-Pandemic Challenges

The COVID-19 Pandemic created an unprecedented challenge for teachers worldwide. Rapid shifts to online teaching, technological barriers and increased emotional support responsibilities heightened stress levels. In Nigeria, these challenges were compounded by infrastructural deficits and the digital divide, leaving teachers under immense strain. Post-pandemic realities therefore demand institutionalised wellness programmes and resilience strategies to sustain teachers commitment in the long run.

3. Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a **descriptive survey research design**. The descriptive survey design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researchers to obtain information from a relatively large population regarding their perceptions, experiences, and opinions on teacher retention, teacher well-being, burnout, and administrative strategies in contemporary schools. The design also provided an opportunity to examine existing conditions without manipulating any variables.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), descriptive survey research is useful when a researcher seeks to describe characteristics, attitudes, behaviours, and trends within a population. The choice of this design was informed by the need to gather empirical data from teachers and educational administrators regarding the factors contributing to teacher burnout and attrition as well as the administrative interventions capable of promoting teacher well-being and retention.

The study focused on selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria, where concerns regarding teacher retention, increasing workload pressures, and occupational stress have become increasingly evident in recent years.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. The North Central geopolitical zone comprises Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau States, and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The zone occupies a strategic position within Nigeria and accommodates diverse socio-economic, cultural, and educational contexts.

Public secondary schools in the region continue to face challenges relating to teacher shortages, inadequate educational resources, increasing student enrolment, and growing administrative demands. These challenges make the region appropriate for investigating issues surrounding teacher well-being, burnout, and retention.

Population of the Study

The population for the study comprised teachers, principals, vice-principals, counsellors, and educational administrators in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. These categories of respondents were considered suitable because they possess direct knowledge and experience regarding teacher welfare, school leadership practices, workload management, and staff retention issues within their respective schools.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 560 respondents was selected using a stratified random sampling technique. The population was first divided into strata based on professional categories, namely teachers, principals, vice-principals, counsellors, and educational administrators. Stratification was employed to ensure that each stakeholder group was adequately represented in the study and that the sample reflected the diversity of perspectives within the secondary school system.

After the strata had been defined, respondents were randomly selected from each group. The final sample consisted of 400 teachers (71.4%), 50 principals (8.9%), 60 vice-principals (10.7%), 20 counsellors (3.6%), and 30 educational administrators (5.4%). This procedure enhanced the representativeness of the sample, reduced sampling bias, and ensured that findings were based on the views of all major educational stakeholders involved in school administration and instructional delivery.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents

Respondent Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Teachers	400	71.4
Principals	50	8.9
Vice-Principals	60	10.7
Counsellors	20	3.6
Educational Administrators	30	5.4
Total	560	100

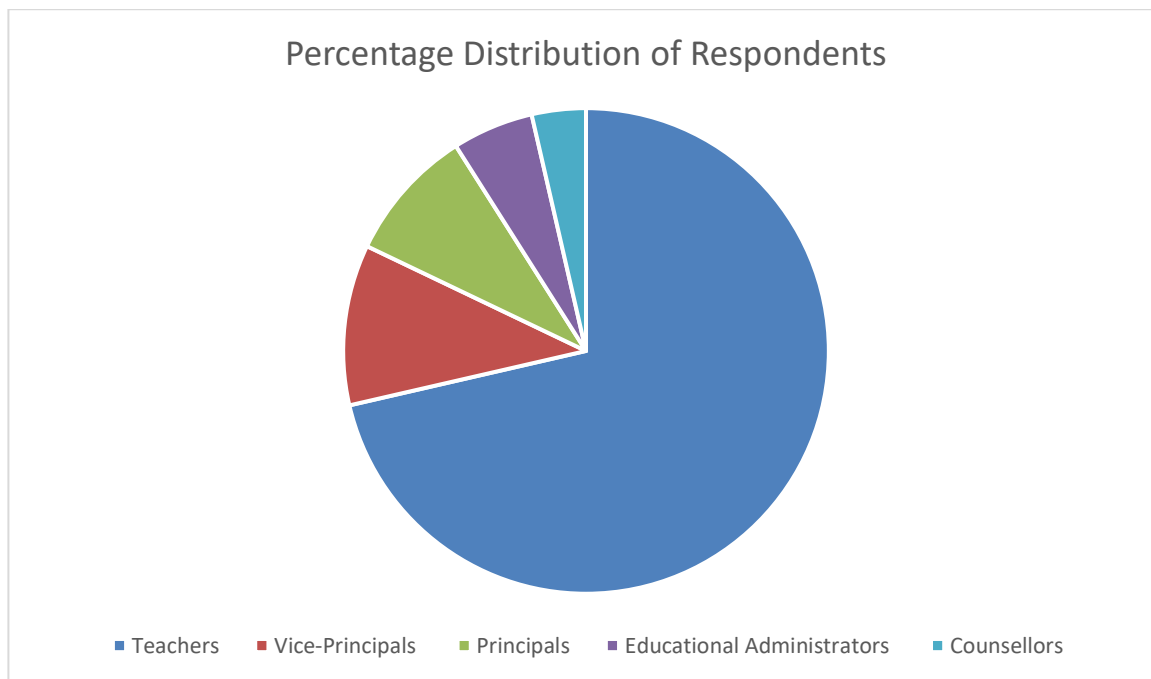


Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents

The distribution indicates that teachers constituted the largest proportion of respondents because they are directly affected by issues relating to burnout, well-being, and retention. Their responses therefore provided valuable insights into the realities of contemporary school environments.

Instrumentation

Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled **Teacher Retention and Well-being Questionnaire (TRWQ)**.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections:

Section A : Demographic Information

This section elicited information relating to respondents’ professional category, gender, years of teaching experience, and educational qualifications.

Section B: Teacher Retention and Well-being Variables

This section contained structured items designed to measure:

1. Factors contributing to teacher burnout
2. Causes of teacher attrition
3. Administrative support practices
4. Teacher well-being indicators
5. Teacher retention strategies

The questionnaire was structured on a four-point Likert scale:

Response Option	Score
Strongly Agree	4
Agree	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

A criterion mean of 2.50 was used for decision-making.

Validity of the Instrument

To ensure content and face validity, the instrument was subjected to scrutiny by three experts in Educational Management and two specialists in Guidance and Counselling from public universities in North Central Nigeria.

Their observations and recommendations regarding clarity, relevance, and adequacy of the questionnaire items were incorporated into the final version of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

A pilot study was conducted among 40 teachers from secondary schools outside the sampled schools.

Data obtained from the pilot study were analysed using Cronbach's Alpha reliability technique.

The analysis yielded an overall reliability coefficient of **0.87**, indicating that the instrument possessed a high level of internal consistency and was therefore suitable for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The researchers personally visited the sampled schools with the assistance of trained research assistants. Copies of the questionnaire were administered directly to respondents after obtaining approval from relevant educational authorities and school administrators.

Out of the 560 copies distributed, all were properly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 100%.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed using:

1. Mean scores
2. Standard deviations
3. Independent samples t-test

Mean scores and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions, while the t-test was used to test the hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance.

4. Result

Research Question 1

What factors contribute to teacher burnout and attrition in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria?

Table 2

Factors Contributing to Teacher Burnout and Attrition

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Excessive workload	3.78	0.61	Agree
2	Lack of administrative support	3.71	0.64	Agree
3	Poor work-life balance	3.65	0.67	Agree
4	Student behavioural challenges	3.58	0.73	Agree
5	Inadequate recognition	3.69	0.69	Agree
6	Emotional exhaustion	3.81	0.59	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.70	0.66	Agree

The results presented in Table 2 above and Fig 2 below indicate that respondents generally agreed that all the identified factors contribute significantly to teacher burnout and attrition. Emotional exhaustion recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.81$), followed closely by excessive workload ($M = 3.78$). The grand mean of 3.70 further confirms that burnout-related factors constitute major challenges affecting teacher retention in public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

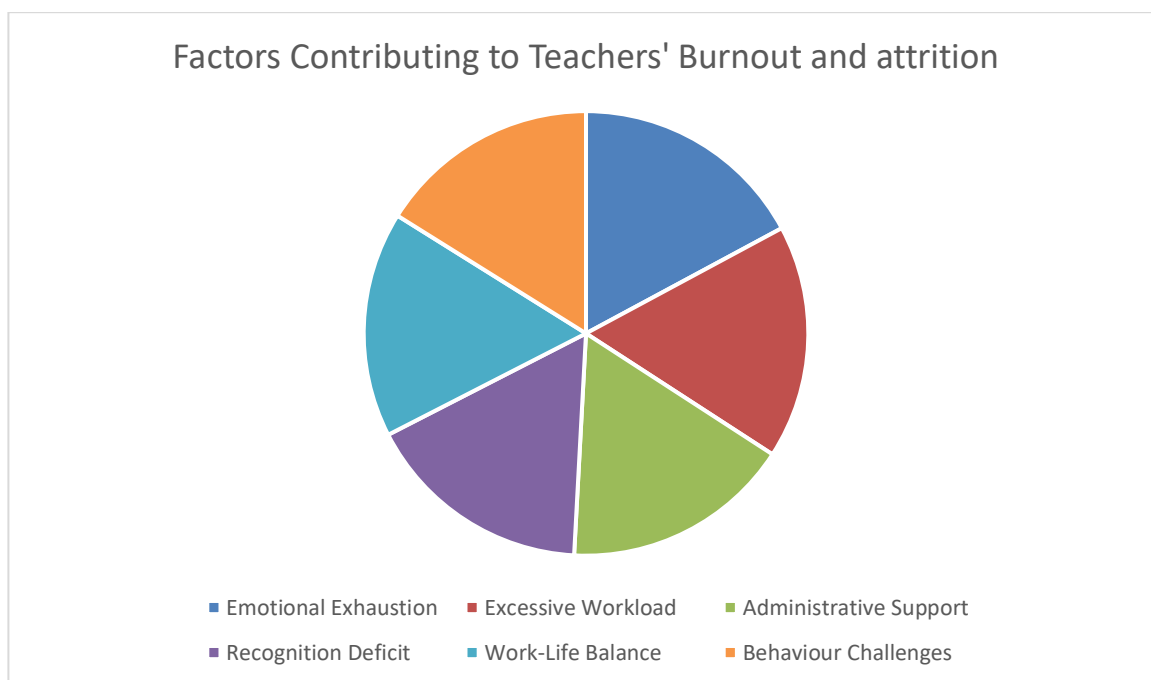


Figure 2: Factors Contributing to Teacher Burnout and Attrition

Research Question 2

What administrative strategies promote teacher well-being in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria?

Table 3

Administrative Strategies Promoting Teacher Well-being

S/N	Strategy	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Supportive leadership	3.89	0.54	Agree
2	Professional development opportunities	3.74	0.63	Agree
3	Teacher recognition programmes	3.81	0.60	Agree
4	Counselling services	3.77	0.65	Agree
5	Participatory decision-making	3.85	0.58	Agree
6	Flexible workload management	3.79	0.61	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.81	0.60	Agree

The findings in Table 3 and Fig 3 reveal that respondents perceived all the listed administrative strategies as effective mechanisms for enhancing teacher well-being. Supportive leadership obtained the highest mean score (M = 3.89), followed by participatory decision-making (M = 3.85) and teacher recognition programmes (M = 3.81). The grand mean score of 3.81 suggests that administrative interventions play a critical role in promoting teacher satisfaction, resilience, and retention.



Figure 3: Administrative Strategies Promoting Teacher Well-being

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis One

H₀: There is no significant difference between teachers and administrators regarding factors contributing to teacher burnout and attrition.

Table 4

Independent Samples t-Test Analysis

Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value	Decision
Teachers	400	3.69	0.65			
Administrators	160	3.73	0.61	1.24	0.216	Not Significant
Total	560					

The result presented in Table 4 shows that the calculated p-value of 0.216 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between teachers and administrators regarding their perceptions of the factors contributing to teacher burnout and attrition.

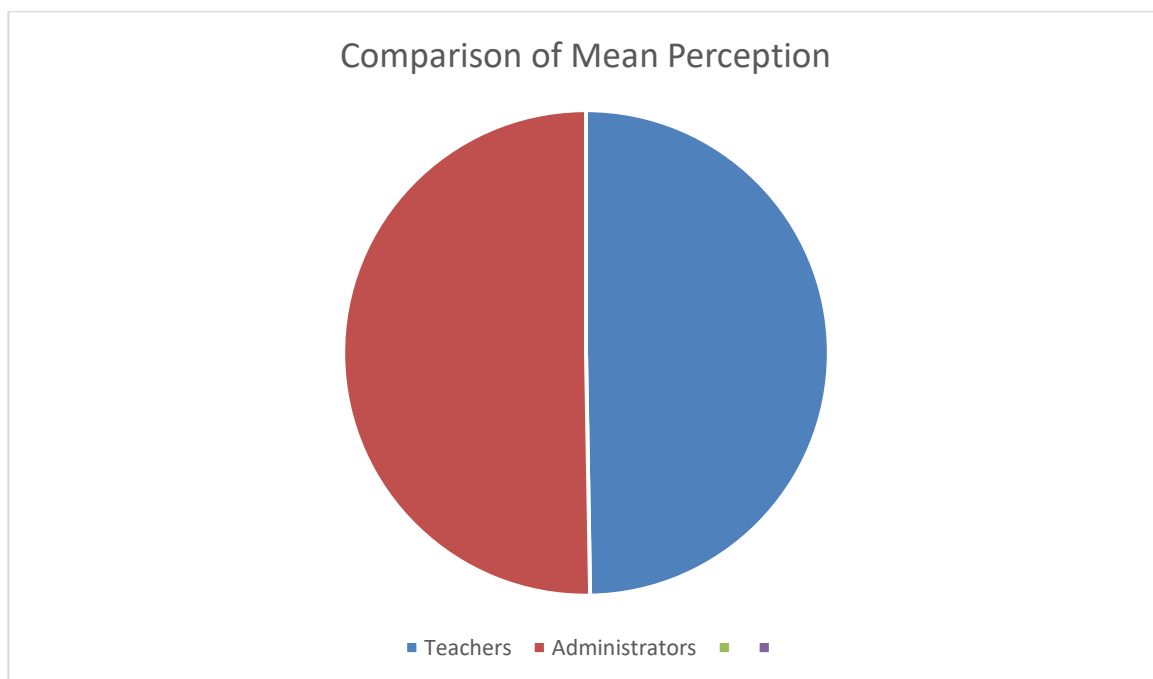


Figure 4: Comparison of Mean Perceptions

The comparison above revealed the Mean perception of teachers 3.69 and that of administrators to be 3.73. The minimal difference between the two groups suggests a shared understanding among educational stakeholders regarding the challenges affecting teacher well-being and retention within public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

The survey data revealed that poor remuneration, delayed promotions, and lack of recognition were major contributors to burnout. IJED's narratives from Kaduna and Katsina confirm these patterns: teachers supplemented income with side businesses and waited years for promotions. Aligning quantitative and qualitative evidence underscores that financial insecurity and stalled career progression are central drivers of dissatisfaction across Nigerian regions.

5. Discussion of Findings

The primary objective of this study was to investigate administrative strategies for promoting teacher retention and well-being while combating burnout and attrition in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. The findings provide valuable insights into the challenges confronting teachers and the administrative interventions capable of fostering a healthier and more sustainable teaching workforce.

The study revealed that excessive workload, emotional exhaustion, poor work-life balance, inadequate administrative support, insufficient recognition, and student behavioural challenges were major factors contributing to teacher burnout and attrition. Among these factors, emotional exhaustion and excessive workload recorded the highest mean scores, suggesting that many teachers experience considerable physical and psychological strain in the course of their professional duties. This finding is not surprising given the increasing responsibilities placed on teachers in contemporary educational settings. Beyond classroom instruction, teachers are often expected to perform administrative tasks, prepare extensive documentation, participate in extracurricular activities, manage student behavioural issues, and meet various accountability requirements. When these responsibilities accumulate without adequate support, they create conditions that can lead to chronic stress and professional fatigue.

The finding supports the studies of Pressley (2021), Madigan and Kim (2021), Kim et al. (2022), Sohail et al. (2023), and Zhou et al. (2024), who found that workload pressures and occupational

stress are among the strongest predictors of teacher burnout and turnover intentions. These scholars argued that teachers who consistently experience overwhelming demands are more likely to report emotional exhaustion, reduced job satisfaction, and a desire to leave the profession. The present study extends these findings to the context of public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria, where teachers frequently operate under challenging conditions characterised by limited instructional resources, large class sizes, and increasing administrative demands.

The finding also lends support to the Job Demands-Resource Theory, which posits that burnout occurs when job demands exceed available organisational and personal resources. Teachers in the sampled schools may be facing high professional demands without corresponding levels of support, recognition, or opportunities for recovery. Such circumstances can gradually erode motivation and professional commitment, thereby increasing the likelihood of attrition. This finding highlights the urgent need for school administrators and policymakers to address workplace conditions that contribute to teacher stress and emotional exhaustion.

Equitable access to professional development is critical for sustaining competence and motivation. Self-Determination Theory highlights the importance of competence and relatedness, yet IJED shows how favouritism undermines these needs. As one teacher explained, *'Because of the issue of connections, favouritism and bribery, some teachers did not attend any workshops or seminars.'* Such inequities limit skill growth and weaken belonging, intensifying burnout. Within the Job Demands-Resource framework, this represents a resource deficit that magnifies teaching demands, reinforcing the need for transparent and inclusive training policies. In the context of teacher education, providing targeted professional development for teacher educators is particularly important. By strengthening their technological knowledge and pedagogical skills, teacher educators can more effectively model innovative practices for pre-service teachers, Ogunode et al. (2023)

Another significant finding of the study revealed that supportive leadership was the most effective administrative strategy for enhancing teacher well-being and retention. Respondents strongly agreed that school leaders who provide encouragement, recognise staff contributions, maintain open communication, and involve teachers in decision-making processes create positive work environments that promote professional satisfaction and commitment. This finding underscores the critical role of school leadership in shaping teachers' workplace experiences and influencing their decisions to remain in the profession.

The result corroborates the findings of Fullan (2020), Day and Gu (2020), Leithwood (2021), Harris (2022), Grissom et al. (2021), and Kraft et al. (2021), who consistently reported that supportive leadership contributes significantly to teacher motivation, resilience, job satisfaction, and retention. These scholars emphasised that teachers are more likely to remain committed to schools where administrators demonstrate empathy, fairness, accessibility, and genuine concern for staff welfare. In addition, supportive leaders create environments where teachers feel valued and respected, thereby strengthening organisational commitment and reducing turnover intentions.

Within the context of North Central Nigeria, supportive leadership may be particularly important because many schools operate under conditions that require administrators to manage limited resources while simultaneously supporting staff morale. When teachers perceive that school leaders understand their challenges and are willing to provide assistance, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes towards their work and remain committed despite existing difficulties. This finding therefore suggests that leadership development programme should be prioritised as part of broader efforts to improve teacher retention.

The study further revealed that participatory decision-making was highly valued by respondents as an effective strategy for promoting teacher well-being. Teachers indicated that they were more satisfied and motivated when given opportunities to contribute to decisions affecting their professional responsibilities and school operations. This finding suggests that teachers desire a sense of ownership and inclusion within the educational process. When educators are treated as active partners rather than passive recipients of directives, they are more likely to demonstrate

commitment to organisational goals.

This finding aligns with the principles of distributed leadership advocated by Harris (2022), which emphasise collaboration, shared responsibility, and collective decision-making. It also supports the Self-Determination Theory of Deci and Ryan (2000), which argues that individuals are more motivated and satisfied when their need for autonomy is fulfilled. Consequently, schools that encourage teacher participation in decision-making may experience greater staff engagement, improved morale, and stronger retention outcomes.

Another important finding of the study was that counselling services significantly contribute to teacher well-being and retention. Respondents agreed that access to counselling and psychological support services helps teachers cope with occupational stress, emotional challenges, and work-related pressures. This finding is particularly relevant in the post-pandemic era, during which concerns about mental health and emotional well-being have become increasingly prominent within educational settings.

The finding supports the studies of Beames et al. (2023), Lemon and Turner (2024), and Dreer (2023), who found that structured well-being interventions, including counselling programmes, significantly improve teachers' mental health, resilience, and professional commitment. Counselling services provide teachers with opportunities to discuss personal and professional challenges, develop effective coping strategies, and maintain emotional balance. In schools where such services are available, teachers may be better equipped to manage workplace stress and remain productive in their roles.

The study also found that professional development opportunities positively influence teacher retention and well-being. Respondents recognised the value of continuous learning opportunities in enhancing professional competence, confidence, and career satisfaction. This finding suggests that teachers are more likely to remain in schools where opportunities for growth and advancement are available.

The result is consistent with the findings of Day and Gu (2020), Kraft et al. (2021), and Walker (2022), who reported that professional development contributes significantly to teacher motivation, effectiveness, and retention. Professional learning opportunities enable teachers to acquire new instructional skills, adapt to educational changes, and remain confident in their ability to meet evolving classroom demands. Consequently, investment in teacher development should be viewed as a strategic approach to workforce sustainability.

Furthermore, the study revealed that teacher recognition programmes positively influence well-being and retention. Respondents indicated that recognition of their efforts and achievements enhances their sense of value and belonging within the school community. Recognition serves as a powerful motivational tool because it communicates appreciation for teachers' contributions and reinforces professional identity.

This finding aligns with the work of Harris (2022), Leithwood (2021), and Kraft et al. (2021), who observed that recognition and reward systems strengthen organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Teachers who feel appreciated are more likely to remain engaged, motivated, and loyal to their institutions. Conversely, a lack of recognition may contribute to frustration, reduced morale, and eventual attrition.

Findings from North Central Nigeria align with Kontagora et al. (2017) qualitative evidence from Kaduna and Katsina. Both studies highlight recruitment opacity, poor pay, delayed promotions, inequitable training, and unmet aspirations for recognition. Quantitative data confirm prevalence, while qualitative accounts illustrate lived realities. Together, they demonstrate that attrition is systemic, rooted in weak management structures, and demand comprehensive reform.

Finally, the hypothesis tested in the study revealed no significant difference between teachers and administrators regarding factors contributing to teacher burnout and attrition. This finding suggests a shared understanding among educational stakeholders concerning the challenges facing

teachers in public secondary schools. Both groups acknowledged the significance of workload pressures, emotional exhaustion, inadequate support, and workplace stress. Such consensus is encouraging because it indicates that administrators are aware of the difficulties experienced by teachers and may therefore be better positioned to implement meaningful interventions.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce the view that teacher retention and well-being are multidimensional issues requiring comprehensive administrative responses. The results demonstrate that improving leadership practices, providing counselling services, enhancing professional development opportunities, recognising teacher contributions, and promoting participatory decision-making can significantly reduce burnout and strengthen retention within public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated teacher retention and well-being, with particular emphasis on administrative strategies for mitigating burnout and reducing attrition among teachers in selected public secondary schools in North Central Nigeria. The findings reveal that teacher burnout remains a critical challenge within the Nigerian secondary education system, arising largely from excessive workload, emotional exhaustion, poor work–life balance, inadequate administrative support, limited professional recognition, and insufficient opportunities for personal and professional growth. These factors collectively undermine teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and long-term commitment to the teaching profession.

The study further established that administrative practices significantly influence teachers' decisions to remain in or exit the profession. Supportive and transformational leadership, participatory decision-making, access to counselling and psychosocial support services, professional development opportunities, recognition programmes, mentoring initiatives, and effective workload management emerged as important mechanisms for enhancing teacher well-being and strengthening retention. These findings underscore the pivotal role of school leadership in creating organisational environments that foster teacher engagement, resilience, and professional fulfilment.

Importantly, the study demonstrates that teacher retention extends beyond issues of recruitment and financial compensation. Retention is fundamentally linked to the quality of teachers' workplace experiences, the availability of institutional support systems, and the extent to which teachers feel valued, respected, empowered, and professionally supported. Where positive organisational climates exist, teachers are more likely to exhibit stronger organisational commitment, higher instructional effectiveness, and sustained dedication to educational goals.

The implications of these findings extend beyond individual schools to Nigeria's broader educational development agenda. As the nation seeks to improve learning outcomes, expand access to quality education, and achieve the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4), the National Policy on Education, and other teacher development initiatives, addressing teacher well-being and retention must become a central policy priority. Persistent teacher attrition threatens educational quality, institutional stability, and the achievement of national human capital development objectives. Consequently, policies aimed at strengthening teacher effectiveness must integrate comprehensive well-being frameworks, leadership development programmes, professional support systems, and retention strategies alongside recruitment efforts.

The study therefore concludes that investing in teacher well-being is not merely a welfare intervention but a strategic educational policy imperative. Strengthening supportive school leadership, improving working conditions, enhancing professional development opportunities, and institutionalising teacher support mechanisms can contribute significantly to building a stable, motivated, and high-performing teaching workforce. Such investments are essential for advancing Nigeria's teacher development agenda, improving student learning outcomes, and ensuring the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the nation's education system.

Evidence from this study confirms that teacher attrition in Nigeria is systemic, driven by poor pay, opaque recruitment, inequitable training, and delayed promotions. OECD and UNESCO warn that such challenges threaten SDG 4. Nigeria must prioritise welfare, transparency, recognition, and wellness as the foundation of reform. By addressing these issues, the country can build a motivated and resilient teaching workforce capable of advancing national development goals. Without decisive action, cycles of attrition and declining quality will persist; with targeted interventions, schools can become environments where teachers thrive and learners succeed.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following short-terms and long-term recommendations are made:

Short-Term Recommendations (1–2 Years)

1. School administrators should establish teacher wellness programmes that address teachers' physical, emotional, psychological, and professional well-being through regular support initiatives and stress-management activities.
2. Educational authorities should provide accessible counselling and mental health services in public secondary schools to assist teachers in coping with occupational stress and work-related challenges.
3. School leaders should adopt supportive and transformational leadership practices characterised by acknowledging professionalism, effective communication, empathy, fairness, and concern for teacher welfare.
4. Teachers should be actively involved in school decision-making processes to strengthen their sense of belonging, professional autonomy, and organisational commitment.
5. Recognition and reward systems should be institutionalised to acknowledge teachers' outstanding performance, dedication, and contributions to school development.
6. Regular professional development programmes should be organised to enhance teachers' instructional competencies, career growth, and job satisfaction.
7. Establish equitable professional development with clear criteria; to reduce favouritism and corruption in training access.
8. School-based mentoring programmes should be strengthened, particularly for newly employed teachers, to facilitate professional adjustment and reduce early-career turnover.

Long-Term Recommendations (3–5 Years and Beyond)

1. Educational authorities should review and reform teacher workload policies to minimise excessive administrative responsibilities and promote a healthier work – life balance.
2. Government should improve teachers' welfare packages and working conditions through competitive remuneration, timely promotions, improved infrastructure, and adequate provision of instructional resources.
3. State Ministries of Education and relevant stakeholders in North Central Nigeria should develop and implement comprehensive teacher retention policies that integrate teacher well-being, leadership development, professional support, and workforce sustainability strategies.
4. Sustainable funding mechanisms should be established to ensure the continuous provision of teacher support services, professional development opportunities, and retention initiatives across public secondary schools.

Educational planning bodies should institutionalise periodic monitoring and evaluation systems to assess teacher well-being, job satisfaction, and retention outcomes, thereby informing evidence-based policy decisions and continuous improvement efforts.

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