Abstract: Job retention is the extent to which a firm or an organization is able to secure and retain the services of its employees over a given period of time. It epitomizes and embodies the length of tenure-ship where an employee decides to remain in his or her current employment for a long period or stay for a short time. In looking at some of the reasons shortage of teachers’ exits and how possible solutions could be proffered, several questions that should be addressed by school administrators and the government are; pay raise, adequate training, community support, mentoring and development, mechanism for the management of stress and burnout among teachers, motivation, and security. This article examined the problems of teacher retention in Nigeria primary and secondary schools and what school administrators and the government could do to address the high attrition rate of school teachers. The paper concludes and recommends that primary and secondary school leaderships should continue to create smooth working relationships between teachers and the management.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Leadership, motivation, teachers, and attrition rate.

Introduction
The need to hire and retain quality teachers world-wide, including Nigeria has been of great concern to educational administrators and leaders throughout history. Equally worrisome is the fact teachers entering the field are leaving the profession at an alarming rate (Hare & Heap, 2001; Ingersoll, 2002). Teachers are the foundation, as well as the bedrock of the educational system (Aghenta, 2000; Adeyemi, 2004; Adeyemi, 2008). Therefore, the relevance of teacher and their contributions to students learning cannot be over-emphasized as they are required to provide quality education to the society.

Even though students learning are influenced by good teachers, student progress could be impeded by bad teachers as well. This was why several researchers like (Allen, 2005; Hanushek et al., 2004) argued that 100 percent retention is not attainable in schools which imply that poor-quality teachers should be retained. Besides the necessity of relieving teachers whose performance is below expectation of their jobs by the school authority, what is relevant is a small degree of annual turnover that could impart the organization with fresh ideas and insights that would allow those who are not willing to be in the employment of the school to leave amicably (Hong, 2005).
For the past few decades, teachers’ job satisfaction in Nigeria primary and secondary schools, and the need for school administrators and leadership to make the profession more attractive to new entrants into the field have been a major concern to policy makers and researchers (Ololube, 2004). Even though it is a fact that teacher’s retention and turnover in schools is both strong and inevitable, the departure of large numbers of them over time lowers the overall capacity of a school to fulfill its obligations to its students. Furthermore, the mass exodus of teachers creates a problem during recruitments and induction of new teachers. Research indicates that schools in rural areas suffers most when teachers leave the profession abruptly as getting a replacement is sometimes difficult (Marvel, Lyter, Peltola, Strizek, & Morton, 2007). While many states and local governments in Nigeria have experimented with different programs aimed at encouraging retention among primary and secondary school teachers, one research body emphasized the need for supportive working conditions such as good leadership, professional development, access to resources, and empowerment of teachers as these will a long way in influencing the degree of satisfaction teachers will feel in their jobs (Johnson, 2006). Studies reveals that “teachers with positive perceptions about their working conditions are much more likely to stay at their current school than educators who are more negative about their conditions of work, particularly in the areas of leadership and empowerment” (Hirsch & Emerick, 2007, p. 14). Moreover, job satisfactions, as well as work motivation are vital in the lives of teachers because they form the basis for working in life. If teachers stayed in classrooms, there would be no demand for new ones because this will help keep the classrooms filled with qualified teachers (Murnane & Olsen 1990).

Literature Review

Literature abounds on teachers’ job satisfaction and the need to retain qualified teachers both in primary and secondary schools world over, including Nigeria (Murnane, 1984; Andrew & Schwab, 1995; Coggshall, 2006). Large amount of resources are spent at all levels of government in preparing and training people for the teaching profession. Andrew and Schwab (1995) disclosed that 30 % of the resources are used on people who are not willing to stay in the teaching profession (p.44). Therefore, recruitment of more teachers into the field has been a strategy the Nigeria government used to increase teacher shortages.

The dearth of qualified teachers has been explored in Nigeria (Ololube, 2004). In 1982, an influential scholar Ivowi conducted a study to determine how Nigerian students performed in the West African School Certificate Examinations in Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. The results revealed that the high failure rate in science subjects was due to the acute shortage of science teachers in the profession. The results of the study also revealed that the reasons for these shortages were attributed to low wages paid to teachers. The shortage of qualified teachers’ schools is not restricted to Nigeria alone as similar circumstances have also been noted in the United States of America. Straker (1988), for example, reported that salaries in the teaching profession were very low in the United States when compared to what is obtained in Canada.

Studies revealed that when teachers get a more attractive job offer in oil companies, government or private sector, they tend to leave the profession, a situation that is always contributing to shortage of teachers in schools (Nwadiani, 1995; Aghenta, 2001). In supporting these views, Adeyemi (2008) observed that the demand for teacher in Ondo State Secondary Schools in Nigeria did not match the supply for them. There is evidence that teachers who leave the teaching profession on the average are better off and more effective than those who remain (Murnane & Olsen, 1990). A study carried out by Murnane and Olsen (1990) on teacher retention and turnover rates in North Carolina, United States found that high score on the on the National Teachers Examination was associated with a short initial stay in the teaching profession, while teachers with the highest test scores were the least responsive to pay raise. In a related development, several reasons have been ascribed to the high attrition rate among teachers which includes, poor salary, lack of motivation and incentives, delayed promotional prospects (Adeyemi, 2008). Adeyemi (2008) maintained that many teachers who leave the teaching profession do so because of frustration and low status accorded the teaching career in the society.

The mass exoduses of teachers from the school system take a heavy toll on the functioning of a school, and ultimately impact its ability to deliver high quality education to students. In supporting this view, Guin
Factors Impacting Teacher Retention

**Teacher Retention and Job Satisfaction**: The importance of job satisfaction to the long term growth of educational development cannot be over-emphasized around the world. Interestingly, job satisfaction is essential to the continuing growth of educational systems in Nigeria and around the world. Thorndike and Barnhart (1979) define satisfaction “as the fulfilment of conditions or desires” (p.904). With this definition, one would think that a person is satisfied when his or her expectations or desires are met. The results of a 1993-1994 Schools and Staffing Surveys on teachers’ satisfaction showed the opposite. The Schools and Staffing Surveys asked teachers if they were satisfied with different aspects of their work environment, including but not limited to ; administrative support and leadership’ cooperation among staff, adequate resources, and overall satisfaction. The results revealed that not one area received higher than 30 % of the teachers being satisfied (Alt et al., 1999). Job satisfaction is essential to increasing retention rate in the teaching profession.

According to (Kirby & Grissmer, 1993), teachers will exit the profession if their experiences in the school they work for, as well as in the classroom are not satisfactory. Children’s future and their growth depend on retaining quality teachers. If teacher retention problem is not recognized and action promptly to resolve it, it is detrimental to the learning process of children (Page & Page, 1982). Several factors can influence job satisfaction. For example, the quality of one’s relationship with their supervisor, the quality of the physical environment in which they work, and the degree of fulfillment in their work. However, there is no strong acceptance among Researchers and consultants that increased job satisfaction produces improved job performance. In fact, improved job satisfaction can sometimes decrease job performance (Spector, 1997, Peretemode, 1991).

**Teacher Retention and Compensation**: One of the factors responsible for the high exit rate for both old and new teachers is low salary (1992; Ingersoll, 2001; Page & Page, 1982). Compensation has been a major problem impacting teacher turnover world-wide, including Nigeria and no solution seems to be in sight. Equity Theory in workplace holds that worker motivation and compensation is influenced by employees’ perception of the existence of fair treat treatment in the workplace. Some common characteristics of equity theory in workplace includes; evaluation of performance and the distribution of rewards and compensation, as well as fairness in the selection of employees (Cascio, 1987). The implication of the equity theory as it relates to teachers retention is that teachers who do not believe that they are compensated equitably for the work and hardships will take action to remedy the inequity. One of these remedies is to leave the profession. Several studies have documented the impact of salary on rates of teacher turnover (Ondrich et al., 2005; Ingersoll, 2001; Murnane & Olsen, 1989). Researchers have consistently showed that teachers who were paid lower salaries were more likely to leave than those who were paid higher salaries (Ondrich et al., 2005; Ingersoll, 2001; Murnane & Olsen, 1989). Ingersoll and Kralk (2004) reported that approximately half of the teachers who left the profession nationally cited poor salary as a factor and approximately two thirds said that better salaries would encourage teachers to stay in the profession.

**Teacher Retention and Motivation to Teach**: Other factor responsible for the high attrition rate of teachers in both primary and secondary schools is lack of motivation to teach. Teachers’ feeling about the teaching profession is motivation. These includes; enthusiasm to teach others and motivation in the classroom, opportunities for professional growth, and lack of incentives to warrant commitment to the field of education (Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Huberman, 1989).
Teacher Retention and Emotional Factors: Related to job retention and satisfaction of teachers is their mental health. Both positive and negative emotional and mental factors of the teaching profession could impact the level of retention of teachers. Positive factors such as enthusiasms and high level of passion and eagerness causes various degrees of satisfaction and the decision to stay on the job. On the other hand, negative factors such as stress and burnout could hinder teaching performance and reduce satisfaction (Terry, 1997). A teacher’s ability to properly function in a school environment could be impacted by stress, burnout, and anxiety (Terry, 1997). Mental health of teaching staff must be of utmost concern to school leaders and administrators if teacher retention is to be accomplished. Terry (1997) suggested five strategies for principals to use with teachers to enhance their mental, physical, and emotional well-being. They include positive feedback, high standards, opportunities for professional growth, support systems, and increased parental and community involvement. Coates and Thoresen (1976) maintained that the mental health of a teacher might be more important than a teacher’s knowledge of the subject matter and methods of teaching. Anxiety, stress, and mental and emotional imbalance in a teacher can result in a negative effect on thousands of students across the country (Coates & Thoresen, 1976). New teachers have very high expectations and burnout results when reality is not constant with those expectations (Terry, 1997). Teacher burnout is a cause of attrition and must be dealt with to lengthen the time that teachers remain in the profession (Berry, 1995).

Teacher Retention and Policy Recommendations

There is no single solution for reducing the high attrition rate of teachers in schools. Research suggests that pay raise alone cannot curtail teacher attrition and mobility (Allen, 2005; Berry & Hirsch, 2005). School leaderships and administrators must decide which policies are most effective to retain teachers. Studies, however suggests that the following steps could help reduce teacher turnover in schools:

Effective Induction Programs: An induction program is the process used within many businesses/organizations to welcome new employees to the company or organization so as to prepare them for their new role (Ololube, 2005). Newly hired teachers should be given effective programs upon employment. Induction programs would assist new teachers by increasing their content knowledge and instructional skills of their new organization as they make transition into the classroom. Furthermore, induction programs are needed to help new teachers become acquainted with their job environment. Research suggests that teachers who leave the profession do so at the beginning of their careers (Berry & Hirsch, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Bolich, 2001). Therefore, induction programs are needed to support the teachers as they learn to implement curriculum, teach, and address student’s needs (Sheldon, 2002; Caroll, 2005; Croasmun et al., 1999). A good induction program according to (Berry & Hirsch, 2005) should provide the following: Informational meetings to familiarize beginning teachers with organizational practices, employment conditions, and school regulations, Instruction in practical classroom strategies, such as communication skills, discipline, and classroom management, opportunities to engage in collaborative lesson design, reflection, goal-setting, and analysis of student work, and ongoing guidance and assessment by trained mentors (Allen (2005).

Provision of Financial Incentives: Other ways of guarding against high turnover rate of teachers in primary and secondary schools is for the government and school administrators to provide financial incentives. Research suggests that intended financial incentives can help reduce teacher turnover. Besides, experienced teachers can be encouraged with incentives to boost their skills and expertise, take on additional leadership responsibilities, and remain in classroom longer (Berry & Hirsch, 2005; Caroll, 2005). Berry and Hirsch (2005; Carroll, 2005) suggests an arrays of financial incentives to keep teachers in the classrooms and includes; Bonuses for remaining in the district for a minimum number of years, bonuses or targeted salary increases for teaching in hard-to-staff schools, bonuses or targeted salary increases for teaching in critical demand subject areas, bonuses for acquiring additional skills and knowledge, bonuses for mentoring and assuming leadership responsibilities, housing subsidies that require teachers to remain in the district for a minimum number of years, tuition assistance and forgivable loans, contingent upon teachers remaining in the district for a minimum number of years, and enhanced retirement benefits that encourage experienced teachers to remain in the classroom.
Conclusion

One of the greatest obstacles to creating productive learning environments in schools is the high rates of teacher turnover. Teachers leaving the profession limit the ability of the school to function properly and to standards. Studies revealed that turnover is highest among beginning teachers and those who enter teaching at a younger age. Some studies have found that attrition is highest in fields that offer more attractive earning opportunities outside of teaching, such as math and science. Teachers leave the classroom for a variety of reasons. Therefore, administrators can positively affect the working conditions of teachers to encourage them to stay. If teachers are properly supported financially and otherwise, they are more likely to remain in the profession.

References


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