

## An examination of teacher retention in secondary schools of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the East Kenya Union Conference

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<https://doi.org/10.51867/ajernet.3.1.20>

### ABSTRACT

Teacher retention continues to be a significant concern impacting the quality and stability of educational institutions worldwide. This research investigated the factors influencing teacher retention in faith-based secondary schools, specifically within Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) institutions in the East Kenya Union Conference (EKUC). The study utilized a contemporaneous mixed-methods research design and an exploratory strategy, employing a descriptive survey to examine the impact of school administration, wage administration, motivating strategies, socio-economic determinants, and religious devotion on teacher retention. Among the twenty secondary schools in the union, the researcher focused on eleven that had participated in the national examinations since 2008. The study's subjects comprised teachers, principals, conference/field education directors, and Board of Management chairpersons. The data gathering instruments employed were questionnaires directed at instructors. Interview schedules were arranged for education directors, school Board of Management chairpersons, principals, and teachers for the purpose of triangulation. The observation schedule was systematically arranged. This focused on the school infrastructure and all activities occurring within the institution. The educational facilities and the conduct of educators within the institution were also documented here. The additional instrument employed was the document analysis tool utilized to gather data over a span of 8 years. Ninety-eight (98) instructors were mandated to complete the supplied questionnaire, while eleven principals, five education directors, and eleven chairpersons of the Boards of Management (BoM) underwent interviews. Three educators from each school were interviewed for the purpose of triangulation. Observations were conducted during school visits. The documentary analytic method was employed to collect data on teacher turnover trends during an eight-year period. The acquired data was evaluated utilizing descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. An study of documents pertaining to teacher retention was conducted. Content analysis was conducted on interview replies and open-ended questions to discern the developing themes. The statistics indicate that a greater number of instructors departed from schools than were hired in the majority of the years. It is apparent that certain teachers departed from church employment. The turnover occurred annually. Teachers wanted to continue at the school as long as the management was cooperative, understanding, appreciative, acknowledged their work, demonstrated care, and treated them with dignity. The report advocates for the school administration to collaborate with teachers by treating them with respect and acknowledging their contributions. Stringent measures should be implemented to incentivize teachers, guaranteeing their access to housing and transportation, as well as ensuring they receive suitable remuneration.

**Key words:** East Kenya Union Conference (EKUC), Secondary Schools, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Teacher Retention

### I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher retention, as noted by Xaba (2003), is a worldwide issue that impacts education and requires significant attention. An investigation is required to examine methods for retaining educators in educational institutions. Fulbeck (2011) reported an international challenge of low teacher retention from a global perspective. The educator shortage constituted a national issue in Britain. The circumstances were more dire in Sweden, Germany, New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. The inadequate retention of teachers is said to compromise the quality of the educational workforce. Frequent teacher movement yields adverse consequences. The expense of recruiting and training new educators constitutes a significant financial undertaking. The turnover and attrition impede overall learning in the school environment. Conversely, Schaffhauser (2014) asserted that low teacher retention adversely impacts education, particularly due to the expenses and implications associated with hiring new educators. Deborah, Kim, Rueben, and Elisha (2014) additionally identified that in California, seasoned educators are more likely to achieve the federal objective of providing all children with access to education. Retaining instructors in the classroom for extended periods can enhance student performance. Experienced educators are more proficient in enhancing students' academic performance. The issue of teacher attrition is concentrated in Africa. In Ghana, Sam, Effah, and Osei-Owusu (2014) revealed that more than ten thousand teachers exit the profession each year in pursuit of better opportunities in other fields. Despite the annual output of several new educators from the nation's teachers' colleges, schools persistently experienced a deficiency of teachers due to high turnover rates in the profession. Cobbolt (2015) found that Ghana experienced a deficit of forty thousand (40,000) teachers in 2007. Of them, twenty-

four thousand (24,000) positions were occupied by unskilled teachers. This undermined the stability and continuity of education. Consequently, students were compelled by circumstances to transfer from the impacted schools, resulting in diminished student retention. The low retention of teachers adversely impacted student retention as well. The departure of students and teachers without replacement is termed "attrition," whereas the departure accompanied by replacement is referred to as "turnover."

Xaba (2003) cited Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, and Central Africa as other African countries facing the dilemma of low teacher retention. The crisis has also impacted South Africa. The South African Minister of Education emphatically pushed high school students to pursue a career in teaching to address the nation's teacher shortage. According to UNESCO (2010), low teacher retention impacted even the most advanced and stable educational institutions. They encounter fluctuations in teacher shortages and surpluses in certain regions. Nonetheless, the Sub-Saharan nations were the most impacted in comparison to other regions globally. In 2006, the Eritrean government temporarily suspended teacher retirements due to concerns of a diminished teacher workforce. In other countries, the difficulty was not an insufficient number of instructors but rather an imbalance in supply. The supply mismatch impacted Gambia, Lesotho, and Zambia. Teachers under the age of fifty were more significantly impacted by poor retention rates. Acom (2010) reported that Ugandan schools in East Africa experienced a teacher shortage attributed to "teacher rural-urban migration," with an average attrition rate of 4%. The retention challenge cannot be entirely eliminated due to its extensive history, however it can be mitigated. The difficulty of employee retention originated in the early 1900s during industrialization. Prior to independence, the situation in Uganda was more favorable, since educators were held in high esteem and compensated adequately. To mitigate the difficulty, the ministry need to have established explicit staff policies, developed comprehensive communication channels, engaged teachers in decision-making, addressed their personal and social needs, and allocated manageable workloads. A consistent teaching workforce was anticipated to correlate with elevated academic standards, serving as an indicator of an elite populace and a robust economy. The circumstances in Rwanda, as noted by Monaco (2016), were not distant from the vicinity. The level of education is considered an indicator of income, health, and overall quality of life. Rwandan rural schools struggle to attract and retain qualified educators due to inadequate compensation, limited access to healthcare, sociocultural isolation, absence of recreational facilities, and huge class sizes, among other factors. Consequently, the remote schools were either devoid of qualified educators or entirely unstaffed. The government thus had a significant rate of teacher attrition, which imposed a considerable pressure on the ministry. Consequently, there was an absence of cohesive, collaborative, and established personnel. All new instructors were mandated to be assigned to rural schools, a decision met with resistance from educators, resulting in diminished teaching quality and adverse attitudes in the classroom. This prompted certain educators to resign from the profession, resulting in diminished teacher retention.

Bonface (2016) determined that knowledge was the most esteemed asset among all Tanzanians. They asserted that skilled human capital generated high-value goods and services. The retention of teachers, as the primary disseminators of essential knowledge, was very important. The significance of secondary education in society cannot be overstated, as it serves as the entrance to higher education, tertiary studies, and vocational and technical training. The secondary school level was designated as the cornerstone of education. Both the governmental and private sectors significantly depended on secondary school graduates. Primary schools were wholly reliant on the outputs of high schools, as well as on the educators and other personnel. The teaching profession represented the most esteemed and expedient avenue for employment in Tanzania. This was intended to address the vacancies resulting from the elevated rate of teacher attrition. To mitigate turnover, pay and incentives appeared effective for teacher retention. A supportive work environment and teacher motivation appeared to be solutions to the low retention of teachers in Tanzania (Bonface, 2016).

According to Orodho (2012), the issue of low teacher retention in Kenya mirrors global and regional patterns. Educators were departing the field for alternative jobs that offer more compensation and more clearly delineated working circumstances. Mugo (2009) identified a deficiency of teachers in Kenya due to the departure of certain trained educators to non-teaching occupations. The implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE) resulted in a rise in school enrollment. This rendered certain educators incapable of enduring the strain of overcrowded classes. Consequently, they resigned from their positions for more tranquil career opportunities.

Oyaro (2008) disclosed, based on evidence from the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), that the rate of teacher turnover in the country was worrying. Between January and June 2008, more than six hundred instructors departed from classrooms for higher-paying positions. The study from the Republic of Kenya/UNICEF (2012) indicated that the student-teacher ratio in the Coast and North Eastern provinces was deficient relative to other regions in the country. Notwithstanding the government's attempts to recruit new educators, the shortfall continued to endure. Koech, Tikoko, and Chemwei (2014) detailed that Kenya has a loss of approximately three teachers leave the profession daily. Private institutions experienced greater impact. Retention remained a critical issue due to insufficient teachers, resulting in burnout, overwork, and inferior teaching quality.

The research conducted by Githinji, Afande, and Riro (2015) indicated that private schools in Kenya experienced significant challenges due to low teacher retention rates. In 2010, the turnover rate was 12%; in 2011, it

increased to 15%, and in 2012, the percentage of teachers who departed from private schools reached 20%. The factors contributing to the elevated rate of teacher attrition include inadequate human resource management, excessive workloads, limited opportunities for professional progression, and insufficient wages. Ninety-six percent of the departing teachers cited inadequate compensation as the reason for their exit. Additional reasons contributing to low retention included the absence of human resource policies. Consequently, there were inadequate selection processes, deficient recruitment procedures, and insufficient training for educators. Their development was inadequate, and educational institutions lacked performance oversight.

According to Barnes, Crowe, and Schaefer (2007), retaining teachers in a school for an extended period improves academic achievement. Teacher attrition impacts not only academic achievement but also student retention. When educators resign, students also withdraw, as they are unable to self-instruct. This study aimed to evaluate the situation of teacher retention in Adventist secondary schools within the East Kenya Union Conference (EKUC) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Kenya.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

A preliminary review of the background of the study showed that low teacher retention was a major problem in schools in developed and developing countries (World Bank, 2004). The challenge of low teacher retention was also experienced in SDA Church schools of East Kenya Union Conference (EKUC). The statistics of the year 2015 showed that teacher retention had been of concern. Such a trend could affect not only the budgeting of a school but also the academic performance of students because the new teachers might affect the coverage of the syllabus. There would also be immense time wastage as these teachers adjust to their new schools, which can lead to disruptions in the learning environment and hinder students' academic progress during the transition period. Based on the statistics from EKUC schools on teacher retention, there is a need to account for such a trend. The only way to unearth such things was through research. In the absence of empirical evidence regarding teacher retention, the forces behind the low retention remained unidentified/unattended, and the challenge remains unresolved. This study was, therefore, set to examine low teacher retention in schools and come up with some possible ways for high retention.

## 1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the retention trend of teachers in secondary schools of EKUC from the year 2008 to 2015?
2. To what extent do teachers intend to remain in school?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Akram and Hazif (2013), the process of learning in a school requires direction and guidance, necessitating quality teachers who are well-trained, experienced, and licensed to direct students' learning. Proper order and organization in schools lead to educational achievement, emphasizing the teacher's role as both an instructor and a guide. Amutuhaire (2010) found that keeping teachers is important for any school because they are the most valuable assets. Koech et al. (2014) agreed, saying that teachers are the foundation of a successful school. High-quality teaching staff is crucial for achieving school objectives, with teachers serving as the most variable instrument for student success in the classroom. Daily interaction between teachers and students facilitates learning; however, the teaching profession faces numerous challenges that discourage teachers from remaining in their roles, resulting in dissatisfaction, attrition, and workforce shortages. Teacher turnover and attrition often signal more profound issues within schools or the profession itself, with undesirable turnover being costly, disruptive, draining resources, and causing inefficiency.

Chiat and Miller (2009) observed that elevated teacher turnover rates frequently result in the substitution of less experienced educators, potentially undermining classroom efficiency. Freedman and Appleman (2008) highlighted that many institutions struggle to recruit efficient, qualified, and committed teachers willing to stay, and without such teachers, student achievement suffers, ultimately impacting student retention as well. Guin (2004) observed that teacher turnover and attrition negatively affect faculty interactions and the overall school climate, disrupting school development and social resource maintenance. The impact is even greater when principals leave, as frequent changes in leadership can hinder development and increase attrition among other staff and students, given the principal's central role in the school.

Teacher retention, therefore, is crucial for promoting staff collegiality, community trust, and students' academic achievement (Loeb, Kalogrides, & Beteille, 2011). Quality teaching is a key factor in facilitating student learning, as emphasized by Sargent (2003), who argued that recruiting and retaining qualified teachers,

while removing low-quality ones, is vital for academic success. White (1903) differentiated between true and false teachers, with true teachers dedicated to guiding students to maximize their potential both academically and morally, while false teachers focus solely on academic results, neglecting discipline and holistic development.

Moore (2014) advised that before considering dismissal, one should make efforts to improve the performance of ineffective teachers. Consider removal only after exhausting all efforts to support and reclaim underperforming teachers. A positive teaching culture can often encourage underperforming teachers to leave voluntarily, which can help address the issue of teacher retention and alleviate the challenges faced in maintaining effective learning environments. McLaurin et al. (2009) identified teacher retention as a significant challenge, particularly in the United States, where many teachers leave the profession and replacements are insufficient, threatening effective learning and making it difficult to implement new policies and reach high targets.

In Kenya, Kipsoi and Sang (2008) reported overwhelming teacher shortages, largely due to uneven distribution of teachers and attrition, despite local recruitment policies and government efforts, such as the recruitment of over 18,000 teachers in 2010. However, high turnover persisted, with some newly recruited teachers leaving before confirmation, necessitating further recruitment and compounding the challenge.

Job satisfaction is a critical factor in teacher retention, as highlighted by Koech et al. (2014), who noted that dissatisfaction leads to high turnover and burnout. Acom (2010) suggested strategies to enhance retention, including recognizing teachers as important assets, establishing clear policies and communication channels, encouraging participation in decision-making, attending to personal and social needs, assigning reasonable workloads, and offering competitive remuneration and supportive working conditions. Sawchuk (2009) said that better working conditions and financial incentives lower attrition, as shown in the United States.

In Kenya, poor remuneration relative to civil servants with similar qualifications contributed to high teacher turnover, with teachers often leaving for better opportunities due to a lack of incentives and career advancement (Koech et al., 2014). Sargent (2003) linked attrition to recruitment processes, emphasizing the necessity of clear qualification criteria, comprehensive orientation, and strong professional support networks to foster a sense of belonging and encourage retention.

McLaurin et al. (2009) further argued that schools must build a positive reputation to attract and retain quality teachers, as high turnover makes implementing changes difficult and undermines academic performance, as observed by Acom (2010) in Eastern Uganda. However, both McLaurin et al. (2009) and Schaffhauser (2014) asserted that only effective and committed teachers should be retained, since retaining ineffective teachers is detrimental to educational outcomes. Moore (2014) reiterated the importance of supporting struggling teachers before considering removal, as a culture of excellence can encourage self-selection among staff.

Lloyd (2012) discussed identifying ineffective teachers, who may display unprofessional behaviors such as humiliating students or neglecting their responsibilities. While it is challenging and sometimes costly to remove such teachers, their presence can demoralize others and disrupt school culture. Acom (2010) distinguished between “stayers,” who remain in the profession due to passion, proximity to home, and favorable work-life balance, and “movers,” who leave, often for better opportunities.

Job satisfaction and supportive administration are key to retention (Mbwiria, 2010), while excessive workloads, inadequate facilities, and distant postings increase the likelihood of attrition. Koech et al. (2014) found that a 25% annual turnover rate is typical, potentially bringing new ideas but harming school culture and budgets when turnover is excessive. Armstrong (2006) indicated that high turnover signals institutional problems, negatively affecting morale, performance, and student retention.

Frequent changes to the curriculum and reforms (Koech et al., 2014) also affect retention because they make teachers' jobs harder, more stressful, and less motivating, especially when they are done without enough training or support. These challenges contribute significantly to teacher attrition, further exacerbating staff shortages.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employed a concurrent mixed techniques design. This design involves the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. Subsequently, the obtained data are concurrently amalgamated. This study utilized questionnaires to gather quantitative data and interviews to obtain qualitative data. The target population comprised the twenty Seventh-day Adventist Church-operated secondary schools in EKUC. The subjects of analysis comprised eleven secondary school principals, ninety-eight instructors, five education directors, and eleven chairpersons of the school boards of management (BOM). The administrative approach of school administrators may affect teacher retention, whereas education directors establish regulations that govern teacher retention in schools. The secondary schools were selected due to their difficulties in teacher retention. Educators resign from ecclesiastical positions in favor of TSC and alternative work opportunities.

The cluster sampling technique was employed to obtain the samples. This sampling technique involved segmenting the target population into five clusters: principals, teachers, education directors, and board chairpersons. Samples were collected from each of these clusters. The data gathering instruments employed were questionnaires directed at instructors. Interview schedules were arranged for education directors, school Board of Management chairpersons, principals, and teachers for triangulation purposes. An observation schedule was established. This focused on the school infrastructure and all activities occurring within the institution. The educational facilities and the conduct of educators within the school were also documented here. The additional instrument employed was the document analysis tool utilized to gather data over a span of 8 years. Ninety-eight (98) instructors were mandated to complete the supplied questionnaire, while eleven principals, five education directors, and eleven Board of Management chairpersons had interviews.

The researcher conducted interviews with the school principals during the visit following the administration, completion, and return of the questionnaires. All chairpersons and education directors were interviewed. Four chairpersons were interviewed at their offices, while seven were interviewed via telephone discussions. Simultaneously, three education directors were interviewed in their offices, while the remaining two participated via telephone interviews. The researcher was unable to contact those interviewed via telephone during the data collecting period. Three teachers from each school were interviewed for the aim of triangulation.

Observations were conducted during the school visits. The documentary analytic method was employed to collect data on teacher turnover trends during an eight-year period. The acquired data was evaluated utilizing descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. An study of documents regarding teacher retention was conducted. Content analysis was conducted on interview replies and open-ended questions to detect emergent themes.

### IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented. The study sought to establish teacher retention in secondary schools of Seventh-day Adventist Church in EKUC. Teachers, School Principals, School Chairpersons and Education Directors were targeted by the study. Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

#### 4.1 Response Rate

The researcher issued 98 to teachers. All of these questionnaires were returned. This made a response rate of 100% which was considered sufficient for analysis.

#### 4.2 Extent to which Teachers and Students Intended to Remain in School

The researcher presented the descriptive analysis of the responses to items on the extent to which teachers and students intended to remain in school using a four-point scale (4 – agree; 3 – tend to agree; 2 – tend to disagree, 1 – disagree).

Scale of interpretation:

3.50 – 4.00 – Agree

2.50 – 3.49 – Tend to agree

1.50 – 2.49 – Tend to disagree

1.00 – 1.49 - Disagree

**Table 1***Descriptive Statistics on Teachers' Intention to Remain*

<b>Intention to remain</b>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I plan to remain in this school until I retire	1	4	2.32	1.181
This is my best school since when I started teaching	1	4	2.85	1.161
I have a strong sense of staying in this school	1	4	2.87	1.086
I do not intend to transfer from this school	1	4	2.50	1.214
I am committed to contribute to the growth of this school	1	4	3.79	0.584
<b>Mean</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.84</b>	<b>0.839</b>
N = 98				

Teachers showed willingness to remain in their respective schools, as indicated by a mean of 2.84. The overall standard deviation of 0.839 suggests that the responses were closely clustered around the mean, indicating consistency in the perceptions of the respondents. This reliability means the findings accurately reflect teachers' views on the statements presented to them.

Respondents generally felt that while their current schools were neither the best nor the worst, they remained committed to teaching and the schools' growth. However, this commitment did not preclude intentions to transfer. This finding corresponds with Koech et al. (2014), who noted that although teachers are the cornerstone of a successful school, their continued presence is not guaranteed, especially when conditions are less than ideal. Similarly, Amutuhaire (2010) emphasized that teacher retention is essential as teachers are a school's most valuable asset, yet retention remains a challenge.

Although teachers did not express a strong sense of permanence—demonstrated by the mean of 2.5 for “I do not intend to transfer from this school” and 2.32 for “I plan to remain in this school until retirement”—their commitment to teaching was evident. This suggests that while they have some intention to stay, their attachment is conditional. Sargent (2003) supports this, observing that retention is easier when teachers feel a sense of belonging and professional connection, but without these, teachers are likely to consider leaving.

The paradox of teachers liking to work in SDA Church Schools, yet being unwilling to commit long-term, may be explained by factors such as lack of facilities, administrative support, or motivation. These issues align with findings by Freedman and Appleman (2008), who noted that the absence of efficient, qualified, and committed teachers can jeopardize student achievement and contribute to teacher turnover. Chiat and Miller (2009) further highlighted that high turnover often leads to replacement by inexperienced teachers, negatively impacting classroom efficiency.

Interview responses reinforced this, with teachers expressing that some schools lacked direction in their operations. Despite favorable church policies, these were often not implemented by immediate supervisory bodies such as the Conferences and Unions. Teachers, aware of their rights through church policy and spirit of prophecy books, became demoralized when they saw policies being contravened, leading to uncertainty about their future in church employment. This is consistent with Koech et al. (2014), who identified that lack of incentives and poor working conditions contribute to teacher attrition.

Further, while teachers agreed with the statement “I do not intend to transfer from this school” to some degree, they did not plan to remain until retirement. This reflects only a moderate sense of belonging. McLaurin et al. (2009) noted that teacher retention is a persistent challenge, as many leave the profession for other opportunities, putting effective learning at risk.

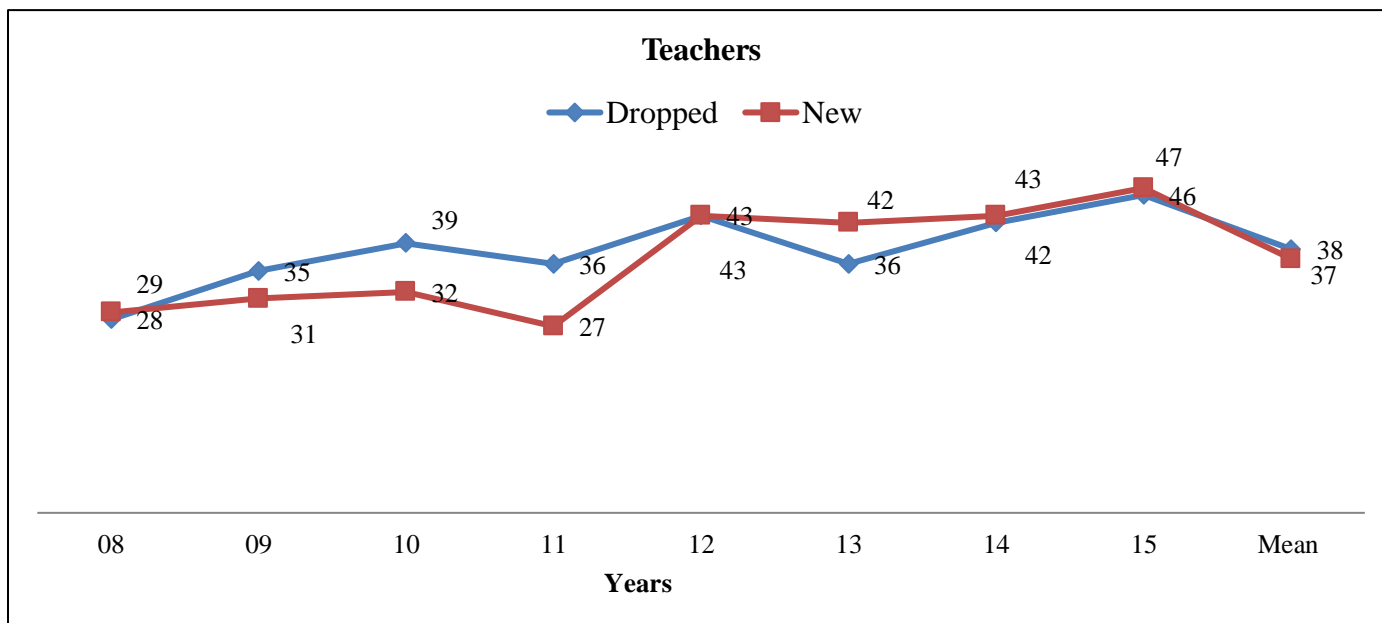
During interviews, teachers stated that they joined church employment with high expectations, but were disappointed by the lack of job security, unclear remuneration policies, and insufficient resources. Some reported that schools operated without annual budgets and lacked seriousness in the provision of teaching and learning materials. Even though they were committed to teaching, they felt constrained by leadership shortcomings, particularly the unavailability of Education Directors and Executive Directors. This aligns with findings by Koech et al. (2014), who attributed high turnover in Kenya to poor remuneration, lack of incentives, and unsupportive working environments.

The situation in Adventist schools, as supported by Githinji et al. (2015), is not unique; many private schools in Kenya are affected by low teacher retention, often due to systemic and policy-related challenges.

The findings indicated that teachers might plan to remain in their current schools, but various circumstances discouraged their willingness to stay, as reflected by a mean of 2.82 and a standard deviation of 0.875. The close clustering of responses further underscores the consistency of teachers' experiences and perceptions. Frequent reforms, increased workload, and lack of support, as noted by Koech et al. (2014), further exacerbate teacher dissatisfaction and attrition.

### 4.3 Turnover and Attrition among Teachers

There were more teachers leaving schools than those being employed in most of the years, as indicated in figure 1.



**Figure 1**  
*Turnover and attrition among teachers*

For example, in 2012, the number of teachers leaving and those being employed was equal, with 43 teachers in each category. However, across the years, the average number of teachers leaving (38) slightly exceeded the average number of teachers joining (37). This imbalance suggests that teacher turnover was a recurrent issue, potentially undermining the stability and effectiveness of the teaching workforce in these schools.

A closer look at the early years of the study reveals that schools were not diligent in replacing teachers who left. This lack of prompt replacement likely disrupted the continuity of teaching, negatively impacting students’ learning experiences. High turnover rates, as evidenced in the findings, are widely recognized as being detrimental to the smooth operation of educational institutions. Chiat and Miller (2009) also observed that such turnover often results in inexperienced replacements and may impair the overall quality of education offered.

The reasons for this trend may be multifaceted. A possible contributing factor during those years was insufficient resources, which could have limited the schools’ ability to recruit and retain qualified teachers. Without adequate funding and support, schools may have struggled to offer competitive salaries or provide necessary teaching resources, both of which are important for attracting and keeping staff, as highlighted by Koech et al. (2014).

A positive shift is observed in the later years of the study, beginning around 2012, when efforts were made to motivate teachers through seminars and conferences. These initiatives likely played a role in improving teacher morale and encouraging retention. Furthermore, in 2014, some conferences took the significant step of increasing teachers’ salaries using funds from tithe, following the implementation of the SDA Church Working Policy. This policy change demonstrated a tangible commitment to supporting teachers and addressing some of the root causes of attrition, in line with Acom (2010), who stressed the importance of motivation and supportive policies for retaining teachers.

Despite these efforts, the findings still indicated that some teachers continued to leave church employment. Interestingly, those who joined the schools were typically recent graduates from universities. This is partly due to the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) not immediately absorbing new graduates, often resulting in a waiting period of up to five years. During this time, new graduates would take up positions in SDA schools, only to leave once opportunities with the TSC became available. Thus, annual turnover became a norm, as more experienced teachers left for more secure or better-remunerated positions, and schools continually onboarded new, less experienced graduates.

This cycle of attrition and replacement highlights the ongoing challenge of maintaining a stable and experienced teaching workforce in SDA Church schools. As with the findings of Freedman and Appleman (2008), it is clear that without sufficient support, resources, and long-term incentives, schools may continue to face difficulties in retaining teachers and ensuring consistency in educational delivery. The implementation of structured motivational programs and policy reforms, such as those observed from 2012 onwards, is crucial for reversing this trend and fostering a more committed and stable teaching workforce.

## V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study assessed teacher turnover and attrition trends in nine schools over an eight-year period from 2008 to 2015. The findings revealed a consistent pattern where more teachers were leaving than being employed in most years, highlighting a significant challenge in retaining teaching staff. This annual turnover was not only disruptive to student learning and school stability but also indicated that some teachers were leaving church employment altogether, seeking alternative opportunities. Despite these patterns of attrition, the study found that many teachers were willing to remain in their schools if certain conditions were met. Notably, teacher retention was strongly influenced by the quality of school administration. Teachers expressed that they intended to stay as long as the administration was cooperative, understanding, appreciative, recognized their efforts, and treated them with dignity and care. This underscores the critical role of supportive and respectful leadership in fostering teacher loyalty and retention within schools.

### 5.2 Recommendations

In light of these findings, the study recommends several actions for improving teacher retention. First, school administrations should prioritize fostering a supportive and respectful working environment. This involves treating teachers with dignity, showing appreciation for their work, and recognizing their contributions to the school community. Additionally, schools should put in place effective motivation strategies, such as providing opportunities for professional development, establishing recognition programs, and ensuring that teachers are involved in decision-making processes.

Teacher welfare must also be addressed by ensuring access to essential amenities such as housing and transport, which can greatly enhance job satisfaction and stability. Importantly, schools should ensure that teachers are adequately and fairly remunerated, with salaries that are competitive and reflect their qualifications and experience. Creating a positive work environment where teachers feel valued and supported is essential for building a sense of belonging and commitment.

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