

Assessment of Teachers' Retention Strategies among Public Senior Secondary Schools in Sokoto, Sokoto State, Nigeria

USMAN, Hamza Abubakar¹

hamzausman1980@gmail.com

+2347064715400

ODEFUNSHO, Amos Olukayode²

olukayodecodefunsho12@gmail.com

+2347031191006

¹Nigerian Army College of Education, Ilorin, Kwara State- Nigeria

²Department of Educational Management, School of Education, AbdulRaheem College of Advanced Studies Igbaja, Kwara State- Nigeria.

Abstract

Teacher retention remains a critical issue in developing educational systems due to its implications for instructional quality, organizational stability, and student achievement. This study assessed teachers' retention strategies in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the dimensions of retention strategies and determined the level of retention support available to teachers. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population comprised 7,560 teachers across 447 public senior secondary schools. A sample of 400 teachers was selected using stratified sampling techniques. Data were collected using the Teachers' Retention Strategies Questionnaire (TRSQ), which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.65. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that financial incentives, promotion opportunities, professional development programmes, and staff welfare allowances significantly contribute to teacher retention. Professional development programmes emerged as the most influential retention strategy. The study concludes that comprehensive retention policies are essential for sustaining teacher commitment and enhancing educational outcomes. The study recommends increased government investment in teacher welfare, continuous professional development, and timely promotion systems.

Keywords: Teachers' retention, professional development, financial incentives, welfare, secondary education, Nigeria.

Introduction

The quality of any educational system largely depends on the availability, competence, and stability of its teaching workforce. Teachers are central to educational effectiveness because they directly influence student learning outcomes, curriculum implementation, and school improvement initiatives (Sharma & Dhar, 2016). Consequently, retaining qualified teachers has become a strategic priority for educational administrators and policymakers globally (Tehseen and Hadi, 2015). Teacher retention has emerged as a significant challenge across both developed and developing countries. Recent evidence indicates that teacher shortages are increasingly linked to rising attrition rates, inadequate compensation, excessive workloads, poor working conditions, and limited career advancement opportunities (Nguyen et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2023). In Sub-Saharan Africa, teacher attrition is particularly severe due to socioeconomic challenges, inadequate infrastructure, and limited professional support systems (UNESCO, 2023). Research by Farinde-Wu and Fitchett (2018) indicates that teacher turnover adversely affects student performance and drains school and district resources needed for recruiting, hiring, and training new educators. Strategies for retaining teachers involve understanding the factors that influence their decision to stay in their assigned schools (Tehseen and Hadi, 2015). Nigeria continues to experience teacher retention challenges, especially in public secondary schools located in rural and underserved communities. Teachers frequently encounter poor welfare conditions, delayed promotions, insufficient professional development opportunities, and inadequate financial incentives (Bryant and Allen, 2013). These factors often contribute to low job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions. Educational stakeholders have therefore emphasized the importance of teacher retention strategies aimed at improving teachers' commitment and reducing attrition. Such strategies include competitive salaries, promotion opportunities, professional development programmes, recognition systems, and staff welfare packages (Cohen, 2013). Despite increasing attention to teacher retention globally, empirical evidence on retention strategies within Nigerian public secondary schools remains limited. This study therefore examines teachers' retention strategies in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess the teachers' retention strategies in public senior secondary in Sokoto State. Specifically, study examined the dimensions of teachers' retention strategies and the level of retention strategies provided for teachers in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State.

Research Questions

Two research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study.

1. What are the dimensions of teachers' retention strategies in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State?
2. What is the level of retention strategies provided for teachers in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State?

Conceptual Clarification

Teachers' Retention

Teacher retention refers to the ability of educational institutions to maintain qualified and experienced teachers within the profession over time. Teacher retention has become a global concern due to increasing teacher shortages and attrition rates. Recent global evidence indicates that approximately 44 million additional teachers will be required worldwide by 2030, with teacher attrition representing a major contributor to the shortage crisis UNESCO (2024).

Financial Incentives

Financial incentives refer to the practice of offering additional monetary rewards to teachers aimed at enhancing their performance (Lavy 2019, Muralidharan & Sundararaman 2020). Financial incentives include salaries, bonuses, housing allowances, transport allowances, medical benefits, pension schemes, and performance-based rewards. Robbins et al (2013) emphasized that monetary rewards serve as a powerful motivator for increasing teachers' retention.

Promotion Opportunities

Promotion refers to upward career mobility involving increased responsibilities, status, recognition, and remuneration. Promotion involves elevating teachers to positions with greater responsibilities, higher status, and increased salaries Cockcroft (2019). Haq and Islam (2015) noted that Promotions serve as positive reinforcement, enhancing teacher retention and motivating them to work harder towards educational objectives.

Professional development opportunities

Professional development refers to an ongoing process that updates teachers' knowledge, skills, and interests in their chosen fields Nakpodia (2008). Professional development encompasses workshops, conferences, seminars, mentoring, coaching, in-service training, and continuing education programmes. Given the significance of staff development and its practical implications for teachers' retention in secondary schools, staff development can be viewed as a process aimed at enhancing educators' professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes, ultimately improving student learning.

Staff Allowance

Allowances refers to fringe benefits that teachers are entitled to receive while fulfilling their roles as educators (MOES, 2013), and numerous studies have examined the relationship between teachers' job commitment and these benefits. Teacher welfare includes health services, accommodation support, transportation assistance, leave benefits, safety, workload management, and psychosocial support.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg et al., 1959). Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory posits that certain job factors lead to satisfaction, while others serve to prevent dissatisfaction. Herzberg (1959) argued that workers experience happiness and unhappiness in various situations, which influences their behaviour. These feelings can positively or negatively impact their job, leading to satisfaction for several reasons. Factors that contribute to worker unhappiness are categorized as dissatisfaction or hygiene factors such as salary, working conditions, job security, organizational policies, and interpersonal relationships. Recognition, accountability, development, achievement, responsibility, professional growth, advancement and success are all elements that contribute to job satisfaction and motivation. If such factors are met, they can avoid dissatisfaction, resulting in teacher attrition. However, if the factors are satisfied, they could positively impact the teacher's decision to stay in the profession (Chikoyo, 2018). According to Herzberg, the absence of hygiene factors creates dissatisfaction, while the presence of motivational factors promotes job satisfaction. The theory is relevant because teacher retention depends on conducive environment, welfare provisions and professional growth opportunities which can motivate teachers to stay in a school longer.

Empirical Review (2020–2025)

See et al (2020) conducted a comprehensive review of international teacher recruitment and retention interventions. Their findings revealed that supportive working environments, professional learning opportunities, and effective school leadership were more influential than salary incentives alone in promoting teacher retention. Toropova, Myrberg and Johansson (2021). Bardach et al (2022), in their integrative review concluded that teacher motivation, self-efficacy, resilience, and psychological well-being significantly influence teachers' retention. Nguyen et al. (2022), conducted a systematic review of teacher attrition and retention studies and reported that sustained professional development programmes significantly increased teacher retention rates across educational systems. Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner (2022). The Global Report on Teachers as clearly stated by UNESCO (2024) highlighted the urgent need to strengthen teacher recruitment and retention policies worldwide. The report emphasized professional development, improved working conditions, teacher well-being, and career progression as essential retention mechanisms. The OECD (2023) report found that teachers who experienced supportive school leadership and access to professional learning opportunities reported higher job satisfaction and lower turnover intentions.

Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design is a type of design that involves a systematic and comprehensive collection of information about the opinions, attitudes, feelings, belief and behaviours of respondents through observation, interview and administration of questionnaire to a relatively large representative sample of the population of interest.

Population of the Study

Population for the study entailed two levels. The first level comprised the population of all the 447 public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The second level of population comprised all the 7,560 school teachers and 447 school principals within the State. Therefore, as at the time this investigation was carried out, Sokoto State had 447 public secondary schools with 7,560 school teachers. This is shown in the Table 1 below:

Table 1: *Public Senior Secondary Schools and Teachers in Sokoto State, Nigeria*

State	No of Public Senior Secondary Schools	No of School Teachers
Sokoto State	447	7,560
Total	447	7,560

Source: *Annual School Census Report (2022/2023)*

Sample and Sampling Technique

This study employed a multi-stage sampling procedure, which combines two or more sampling techniques to ensure comprehensive data collection. At stage one, the purposive sampling was employed to select schoolteachers and their principals, as these groups were considered the primary sources of relevant and reliable information regarding teachers' retention strategies in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

Research Instruments

Data collected for this study emanated using a research instrument which was generated from the indicators of the variables in this study. The instrument used for data collection in this study was Teachers' Retention Strategies Questionnaire (TRSQ). The instrument was administered on the selected teachers in the sampled public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria to ascertain the retention strategies put in place for teachers. It was divided into two Sections – A and B. Section A of the structured questionnaire was based on the demographic data of the respondents. Section B consisted of 20 items on the dimensions of the teachers' retention strategies. The questionnaire was rated on a four (4) point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA) – 4 points, Agree (A) – 3 points, Disagree (D) – 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1 point.

Validity of the Instrument

To ensure the validity of the research instruments, the “Teachers' Retention Strategies Questionnaire, the questionnaire underwent content, construct, and face validation by five experts. These experts were tasked with critically evaluating the items on the instruments with respect to its relevance, appropriateness, clarity of language, and alignment with the study's

Assessment of Teachers' Retention Strategies among Public Senior ... Usman, H. A. & Odefunsho, A. O. (2026)

objectives and research questions. The instrument was subsequently distributed to respondents in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instruments was assessed using the test-retest method to evaluate the consistency of the *Teachers' Retention Strategies Questionnaire*. A pilot test was conducted on 70 participants, comprising 50 teachers and 20 school principals, who were not part of the main study population. This test was carried out twice within a two-week interval in schools within Kebbi State. The scores obtained were analysed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A reliability coefficient of 0.65 was achieved, indicating that the instrument was sufficiently reliable for data collection.

Procedure for Data Collection

With the help of three research assistants, the researcher distributed the “Teachers’ Retention Strategies Questionnaire to the sampled public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The researcher provided the research assistants with detailed instructions regarding the administration of the instruments to ensure consistency in data collection.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the instruments were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0. Descriptive statistics, including percentages, mean and standard deviations, were used to answer the research questions. The decision rule stipulates that items with mean scores of 2.50 or higher were accepted, while those below 2.50 were rejected. The analysis of the instrument items followed a benchmark of 2.50, derived from dividing 10 by 4, where items with mean scores of 2.50 or higher were considered high, while those below 2.50 were considered low. The research hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to test the main hypothesis while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the operational hypothesis. All hypotheses were evaluated at a 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What are the dimensions of teachers’ retention strategies in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State?

Table 2: *The dimensions of teachers’ retention strategies in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State*

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
Financial Incentives				
1	I do receive additional incentive for extra work done.	3.48	.588	High
2	I am underpaid in relation to my efforts	3.33	.627	High
3	I am satisfied with timely payment of salary	3.26	.572	High
4	My monthly salary is sufficient to satisfy all important expenses	3.30	.620	High
5	My salary enhances job commitment	3.25	.719	High
6	I get my salary on time	3.29	.780	High
7	I receive a good salary	3.36	.706	High
8	The salary I receive tallies with my qualifications.	3.28	.687	High
9	I am happy with the salary structure	3.28	.662	High
10	I get a pay increment every year.	3.33	.603	High
11	I am paid for extra time worked.	3.40	.625	High
	Average Mean	3.32	0.65	High
Promotion				
12	I am satisfied with commitments different level for my promotion.	3.24	.791	High
13	Received academic rewards from school increase my job commitment.	3.17	.749	High
14	I feel comfortable with my present level of responsibility in my teaching job	3.29	.737	High
15	The promotion process and procedures used by my employer are fair.	3.29	.704	High
16	I am comfortable with the promotion opportunities available to me as a teacher	3.42	.649	High

Assessment of Teachers' Retention Strategies among Public Senior ... Usman, H. A. & Odefunsho, A. O. (2026)

17	My school's administration recognizes the good work I do.	3.23	.725	High
18	I get leave whenever I have a serious problem.	3.30	.647	High
	Average Mean	3.28	0.71	High
Professional Development Programmes				
19	Provision of job-related workshops enhance my job performance	3.58	1.05	High
20	Availability of opportunity to attend workshops outside the school increases my knowledge	3.33	.723	High
21	Provision of in-service training with in school on various issues enhances my knowledge.	3.10	.845	High
22	I am satisfied with my professional ability to perform my teaching job	3.34	.771	High
23	I am satisfied with provision of school wide experience sharing with model schools	3.30	.693	High
24	Extra responsibilities I hold at school, are appreciated	3.05	.903	High
25	My school principal attends to my social and professional problems	3.07	.905	High
26	Changing teaching profession now would be difficult for me	3.44	.765	High
27	My life would be disrupted if I change my teaching profession now	3.29	.688	High
28	I do not mix up my feeling, emotions and personal problems in the profession work	3.27	.803	High
29	I encourage other teachers to fully dedicate and commit to professional programmes.	3.21	.725	High
30	I believe that school image is my image.	3.88	.791	High
31	Teaching profession is important to my self-image	3.29	.669	High
	Average Mean	3.31	0.79	High
Staff Allowance				
32	I am satisfied with creating clean, initiating and comfortable working area.	2.48	.655	Moderate
33	I am satisfied with accessibility of transportation allowance	2.55	.602	High
34	Teaching provides me opportunity to use all skill and knowledge.	2.67	.534	High
35	I get enough recognition from educational leaders	2.63	.578	High
36	I enter the teaching profession because of its good pay	2.35	.641	Moderate
37	I always receive bonus from my school principal	3.58	.571	High
38	I share the profits generated from school projects	3.55	.590	High
39	Projects held in my school are useful towards uplifting my welfare	3.39	.578	High
40	I get medical allowances from school whenever I am sick	3.40	.636	High
41	I receive transport allowances every month.	3.41	.659	High
42	My school principal organises appropriate gifts for the good work I do.	3.41	.793	High
43	The school provides me with accommodation	3.44	.688	High
44	The school provides me with medical treatment.	3.34	.628	High
	Average Mean	3.09	0.63	High

Table 2 shows the dimensions of teachers' retention in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that, the average mean of 2.97 with the standard deviation of 0.75 on the appropriate use of instructional materials, the average mean of 2.99 with the standard deviation of 0.74 was on punctuality to school/classroom while the average mean of 2.83 with the standard deviation of 0.78 on the items of classroom management. Therefore, all the average means of each indicator was greater than 2.50 bench mark mean which was accepted. This implies that the dimensions used have influenced the teachers' retention strategies in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What is the level of retention strategies provided for teachers in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State?

Assessment of Teachers' Retention Strategies among Public Senior ... Usman, H. A. & Odefunsho, A. O. (2026)

Table 3. *Level of retention strategies provided for teachers in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State.*

Level	Frequency	Percentage
High	81	44.3%
Moderate	70	38.2%
Low	32	17.5%
Total	183	100%

Source: *Researcher's Field Survey, 2026*

Table 3 shows the level of retention strategies provided for teachers in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State. Out of the 183 respondents who participated in the study, 43.3% agreed that the level of teachers' retention strategies was high in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria, 38.2% agreed that it was moderate while the remaining 19.7% agreed that it was low. Therefore, 43.3% constituted the majority of the respondents who agreed that the level of teachers' retention strategies was high in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State, Nigeria.

Table 4: *Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Retention Strategies Provided for Teachers in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Sokoto State*

S/N	Retention Strategies	N	Mean	SD	Decision	Ranking
1	Financial Incentives	1.745	19.38	8.103	High	2 nd
2	Promotion		16.01	2.905	High	3 rd
3	Professional Development Programmes		36.72	4.632	High	1 st
4	Staff Allowance		14.84	8.244	High	4 th

Source: *Researcher's Field Survey, 2026*

Table 4 shows the mean ratings and standard deviations on the level of retention strategies provided for teachers in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State. Professional development programmes were ranked 1st with the mean of 36.72 and standard deviation of 4.632, financial incentives was ranked 2nd with the mean of 19.38 and standard deviation of 8.103, promotion was ranked 3rd with the mean of 16.01 while staff allowance was ranked 4th with the mean of 14.84 and standard deviation of 8.244 respectively. This shows that, the level of retention strategies provided for teachers was high in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of research question one revealed that financial incentives, promotions, professional development programs, and staff allowances were strategies implemented to retain teachers in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State. These findings corroborate with Christians et al. (2016), who observed that higher salaries, training opportunities and promotion enhance teachers' performance, foster a sense of belonging, and strengthen solidarity among supervisors regarding teacher retention strategies. Similarly, Sharma and Gupta (2014) emphasized that salaries, promotion opportunities as stipulated in employment contracts, are an integral part of teacher retention strategies. Ahuja and Shukla (2022) also highlighted that offering incentives tied to specific goals motivate teachers to exert greater effort and enhances retention, with the incentive serving as a reward upon goal achievement. Findings on research question two revealed that level of retention strategies provided for teachers in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State was high. This finding corroborates with the work of Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) who argued that welfare and financial incentives reduce factors that lead to teachers leaving their positions. Roland (2017) highlighted a direct link between financial incentives and teacher performance and retention, where rewards are tied to improved student outcomes. Nakacwa (2015) also stressed that monetary rewards, including salaries, bonuses, and benefits, are critical in enhancing teachers' retention.

Conclusion

The study highlights the importance teachers' retention strategies in public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State. The ability to retain teachers is essential for maintaining stability in schools, fostering a conducive learning environment and improving student learning outcomes. By implementing effective management and retention strategies including financial

Assessment of Teachers' Retention Strategies among Public Senior ... Usman, H. A. & Odefunsho, A. O. (2026)

incentives, promotions, professional development, and staff allowance, schools can create an environment where teachers are motivated to stay in their positions.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Sokoto State Government should consistently maintain and effectively implement teacher retention strategies in public senior secondary schools across Sokoto State.
2. Sokoto State Government should ensure adequate funding of public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State to support students' academic progress and overall school development
3. Sokoto State Government should ensure that teachers should strive for increased productivity and effectiveness in their profession. This will improve their teaching experience and positively impact students' academic performance.
4. State governments should ensure that teacher's promotions are carried out promptly and timely to boost morale and motivation.
5. Sokoto State Government should ensure that teachers actively participate in professional development programmes such as workshops, seminars and conferences to strengthen their professional growth.

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Assessment of Teachers' Retention Strategies among Public Senior ... Usman, H. A. & Odefunsho, A. O. (2026)

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