

Effects of High Teacher Turnover on Student Academic Performance: A Case of Sekyere Afram Plains District of Ashanti Region, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the effects of high teacher turnover on academic performance of students in the Sekyere Afram Plains district of Ghana as a case study. To understand the causal factors of turnover among teachers in Sekyere Afram Plains district, we employed the quantitative research design to gather descriptive data on teacher turnover from a purposive sample of 100 teachers, 10 school heads and Ghana Education Service officials in the district. Data analysis was done using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, and M-S Excel. The findings of the study depicted high teacher turnover due mainly to the “hard-to-reach” nature of Sekyere Afram Plains district, and general dissatisfaction with the environment and working conditions. This results in early requests for reposting and notable drops in Junior High School students’ academic performance in BECE. The study acknowledged the high turnover rate among teachers in Sekyere Afram Plains district and its negative effect on students’ academic performance. It recommended that strategic measures suitable and applicable to the Sekyere Afram Plains district should be implemented to retain teachers.

Keywords: Employee, Turnover, teachers, academic performance, Ghana.

INTRODUCTION

Employee turnover is generally described as the total number of workers that leave a company in a certain period; the turnover rate is the rate of the total number of workers who leave the company relative to the total number of workers the company has (Long, Ajagbe & Kowang, 2014). Also defined as the rate at which workers leave a company, Armstrong (2009) believes turnover can be costly and disruptive to the organisation. It is therefore imperative to develop proactive measures and policies to minimize turnover rates amidst workers’ retirement, transfers, or departures for any other reasons such as illness, death, or particular reasons, among others (Shuls & Flores, 2020).

Employee turnover is an important factor that should be taken into account when creating strategies and business plans to guarantee the survival and performance of an organisation. The basis is that it is a competent and skilled staff that can achieve the organisation’s objectives and goals (Asim & Alam, 2019).

A study by the Ghana Association of Teachers (GNAT) and The Teacher and Education Workers Union (TEWU) revealed an extremely unusual turnover rate of teachers in Ghana. According to the study, nearly 10,000 teaching staff members in the Ghana Education Service (GES) leave the institution each year to pursue other careers (GNAT, 2019). This high rate of teacher turnover hurts school education reforms because it disrupts the consistency and quality of teaching and learning. While studies have revealed that conventional teaching has also been classified as a profession with a considerably more elevated pace of staff turnover, high-performing schools are distinguished by consistent teaching (Effah & Osei-Bonsu, 2014).

Employee departure tends to have a major impact on the performance of organisations (Nair, Salleh & Nair,

2014) The performance of organisations has suffered as a result (World Bank, 2014). On the other hand, a high turnover rate negatively affects organisations and workers. For example, a high staff turnover rate might reduce the pool of entry-level workers, call for employing temporary workers, negatively affect productivity and competitiveness, and obstruct the development of expertise (Al-Suraihi, Samikon, Al-Suraihi and Ibrahim, 2021). The premise is that employee turnover can be challenging and, in some cases, devastating for organisations (Helga, 2015).

In the field of education, Kanwetuu, Brenyah and Obeng (2020) pointed out how teachers' commitment is affected as a result of employee turnover. Perhaps, a greater disruption of employee turnover is felt in poor educational and learning outcomes, disruption in educational planning, poor academic achievement of pupils, ineffectiveness of schools, and administrative costs, and can dent the reputation of the organisation (Azewara, et al., 2021).

In the Tamale metropolis, Seniwoliba's (2013, p181) research in seven public senior high schools indicated "salary, working conditions, incentives, medical allowance, security, recognition, achievement, growth, students' indiscipline, school policy and status" were the main causes of teacher job turnover in the schools. Additionally, Sawaneh and Kamara (2019) found that sound employee retention strategies such as managerial factors, working environment, rewards and benefits, and career promotion, among others can minimize employee turnover in higher learning institutions in Sierra Leone.

In the Wa Municipality in Ghana, the study by Shuibin, Benjamin and Naam (2020) noticed communication gaps, and insufficient well-defined in-service training and development policies for teachers as challenging factors to employee retention. Whereas pay was found as a variable of job satisfaction that contributed to teachers' turnover intentions in the Offinso South District of Ghana (Addai et al., 2018), Mansa (2021) outlined turnover and retention strategies in the 16 regions of Ghana. Among the turnover factors were "organizational fit, promotion and pay satisfaction" while retention strategies included "competitive salaries and benefits, training and development, employee-manager relations".

Moreover, Opoku-Asare et al (2022) studied the pull and push factors influencing teachers in the rural areas of Afigya- Kwabre West District in the Ashanti Region of Ghana and their effect on students' academic performance. The study revealed retention strategies of job security, opportunities for study leave, respect and recognition, and a peaceful rural environment for teachers as the major pull factors that motivate senior high school (SHS) teachers and increase students' academic performance. On the contrary, compromised job security, and lack of additional sources of income constitute significant push factors that threaten teachers' retention.

From the above discussion, studies across the world, Africa and Ghana emphasise the magnitude of employee turnover and its effects on organisations. As a matter of urgency, it is imperative to take a look at the effect of employee turnover in the education sector and how it can be curtailed. To meet the educational needs of learners the workforce in the teaching profession must be sustained. It is against this background that the researchers sought to unravel teacher turnover and its effects on organisational performance in the Ghana Education Service of the Sekyere Afram Plains District as well as appropriate retention strategies.

EFFECTS OF EMPLOYEE TURNOVER ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Researchers have found that employee turnover hinders organisational progress, given the expenditure and time involved in the hiring and replacement process. The factors that influence employee turnover in businesses are many and occur in diverse ways. Some of the numerous repercussions that affect organisational performance are explained in the following sections.

Increased Customer Dissatisfaction

Employee turnover is expensive and disruptive as it decreases outputs and causes organisations additional costs to hire people to replace those who leave, which is why employers must focus attention on reducing turnover (Ramadhania & Wulansari, 2022). Significant direct and indirect costs that companies incur when employees quit include advertising, time in training the new employee to gain the knowledge, skills, motivation for the work and efficiency (Khan, Khan & Ghafoor, 2016). Peters, Lau and Ching-Yat (2014) have argued that productivity and worker morale are related. Enhancing an employee's productivity depends also on the organisation's support and the type of workplace environment provided.

Disruption and Ineffectiveness of Service Delivery

Employees with adequate and requisite competence contribute to effective productivity of work (Srivastava et al., 2023). Likewise, competent working staff and human resources project a greater chance of making a significant impact on the progress of an organisation (Govaerts et al., 2011). But when deficiencies and inability to satisfy job demands set in as a result of personnel turnover (Khan, Khan & Ghafoor, 2016), disruption and ineffectiveness to service delivery are bound to happen. To this end, Poku et al. (2022) took a look at how employee turnover in the health sector has contributed to disparities in healthcare delivery. The study reveals how the "general well-being, job control and satisfaction, and working condition" compelled some nurses to abandon their work in search of better options. This has left a huge gap in the health sector thereby affecting the delivery of adequate healthcare to patients.

In the field of education, Kanwetuu, Brenyah and Obeng (2020) pointed out how teachers' commitment is affected as a result of employee turnover. Perhaps a greater disruption of employee turnover is felt in poor educational and learning outcomes, disruption in educational planning, poor academic achievement of pupils, ineffectiveness of schools, and administrative costs, and can dent the reputation of the organisation (Azewara et al., 2021).

Affects Work-life Balance

Work-life balance is a major issue facing employees and employers (Matz et al., 2013). Poku et al. (2022) suggest that productivity will increase if there is a well-balanced work and out-of-work life of employees. Work-life balance must be managed through effective human resource practices that seeks to reward and compensate employees at the workplace (Rasool et al., 2019). An imbalance of work and life affects the psychological and physical well-being of employees, which makes them stressed-out and emotionally exhausted. Hence, an increase in job stress in "role overload, role conflict, and role ambiguity" (Okyere-Kwakye et al., 2018, p.345) may result in discontent, absenteeism and turnover (Hardy & Adnett, 2002; Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001). Local studies in Ghana reveal how the low quality of work-life balance among nurses in the Kumasi Metropolis contributes to turnover in the health sector (Poku et al., 2022). Similarly, classroom work overload and its associated stress made some teachers refuse postings to the rural areas in five districts of the Central Region, thereby contributing to teacher attrition (Azewara et al., 2021).

METHODOLOGY

The quantitative research paradigm, using the descriptive research design which provides an accurate and valid representation of variables that are relevant to the research question (Jackson, 2019) was the type of research adopted for the study. The quantitative research design was purposely employed for this study to determine the relationship between turnover of teachers and their quest for reposting in the Sekyere Afram Plains District. The type of descriptive research method used was the survey by questionnaire.

Purposive sampling was used to select the sample. The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which best enables the researcher to answer

their research questions (Asamoah-Gyimah & Duodu, 2007). This technique was also chosen because the sample size was quite small when compared with probability sampling.

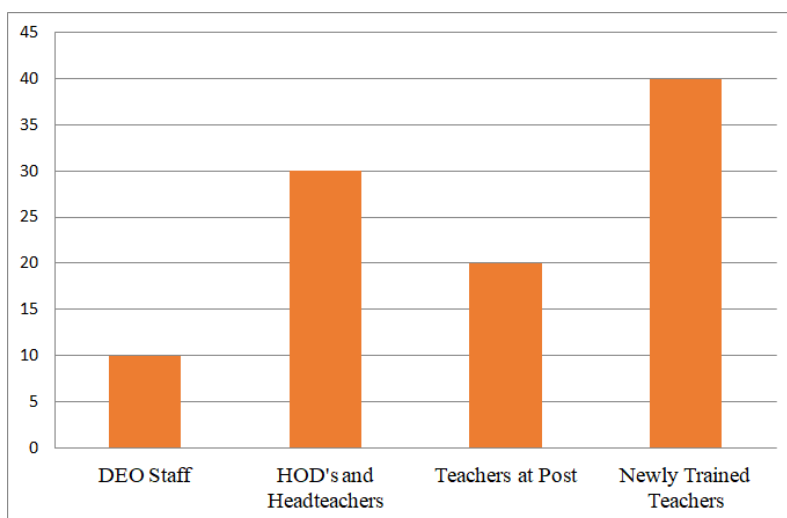
The study's general population consisted of One hundred and ten (110) Ghana Education Service officers, heads of department/headteachers and teachers in the Sekyere Afram Plains District. A questionnaire was created for a sample size of One hundred (100) respondents. For a more varied perspective on the study, the same designed questionnaire was administered to ten (10) Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors at the District Education Directorate, thirty (30) to the headteachers, twenty (20) to the teachers at post and forty (40) to the newly posted teachers at post. The total number of questionnaires distributed was One hundred (100). An aggressive follow up of the administered questionnaires enabled all 100 of them to be retrieved, making a 100% response rate.

Both secondary and primary data were utilised for the investigation. Data was gathered using quantitative methods and reported using frequency distribution and percentages. It was also used to calculate the percentage of respondents who selected each response option. Each collection of things related to the objectives underwent this process. The proportions showed the diverse views of employees on the various sub-issues. Tables were also used to ensure an easy understanding of the analyses by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, and M-S Excel.

DISCUSSIONS AND FINDINGS

The study population consisted of 100 respondents. Data from the questionnaire indicate that 40 (representing 40%) were newly posted teachers. Likewise, 10 (representing 10%) were Ghana Education Service officers in the Sekyere Afram Plains District directorate. The data presented in Figure 1 shows responses to the questions on the background details of the 100 respondents used for the study.

Figure 1: Status of Employees at Sekyere Afram Plains District Education Directorate



Source: Field Survey November, 2022

As seen in Figure 1, the majority (40 out of 100) of the employees are newly trained teachers which imply that the district needs to plan in-service training and development programmes to reskill and upskill them periodically (Baker, 2019) to keep them abreast with the emerging trends in the teacher profession. This corroborates with Khalid and Nawab (2018) who states that training and orientation of newly recruited workers are paramount to employee retention. As newly trained teachers and deployed employees, the government should make provision for an intervention package to entice these teachers to feel satisfied and

stay in the teaching profession (Azewara et al., 2021).

Release and Reposting of Teachers in Sekyere Afram Plains

The data shown in Table 1 indicates that 85 males (representing 46.2%) and 99 females (representing 53.8%) were released and reposted between 2016 and 2021. In all a total of 184 teachers were released.

Table 1: Teachers Released and Reposted from the District from 2016 to 2021

YEAR	MALE	%	FEMALE	%	TOTAL
2021	10	5.4%	25	13.6%	35
2020	9	4.9%	10	5.4%	19
2019	23	12.5%	19	10.3%	42
2018	20	10.7%	18	9.8%	38
2017	14	7.6%	12	6.5%	26
2016	9	4.9%	15	8.2%	24
TOTAL	85	46.20%	99	53.8%	184

Source: Field Survey November, 2022

Table 1 shows a high turnover rate of female teachers in the district. This means the girls in the schools would have fewer female role models to emulate in the Sekyere Afram Plains schools. This is a matter of grave concern that must be resolved to keep more girls in school.

The effects of high turnover on the academic performance of students in the Sekyere Afram Plains district

The objective of the study was to identify the effects of high turnover of teachers on the academic performance of students in the Sekyere Afram Plains. Perhaps a greater disruption of employee turnover is felt in poor educational and learning outcomes, disruption in educational planning, the poor academic achievement of pupils, ineffectiveness of schools, and administrative costs, and can dent the reputation of the organisation (Azewara et al., 2021). In this vein the effect of the high turnover rate of teachers on students' academic performance was examined under the following subheadings from 2016-2021: effects of teachers' turnover on students' academic performance, and teachers' retention strategies.

Students' Academic Performance (2016-2021)

The rate of teacher turnover poses a threat to students' academic performance (Opoku-Asare et al., 2022). Based on that the impact of teachers' turnover on students' academic performance was analysed. The data revealed an average of 52.2% overall performance from 2016 to 2021. However, there was a 40.8% pass rate in 2017 and a 21.3% pass rate in 2019. The remaining pass rates and their corresponding years are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Students' Academic Performance in the Sekyere Afram Plains (2016 – 2021)

NUMBER OF B.E.C.E. CANDIDATES				NUMBER WHO PASSED THE EXAMS			PERCENTAGE PASSED (%)
YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	TOTAL
2021	184	105	289	108	56	164	56.7%
2020	210	161	371	188	125	313	84.4%

2019	211	104	315	45	22	67	21.3%
2018	103	65	168	64	30	94	56%
2017	150	115	265	70	38	108	40.8%
2016	126	70	196	73	33	106	54.1%
TOTAL	984	620	1,604	548	304	852	52.2%

Source: Field Survey November, 2022

The results in Table 2 indicate that an average of 852 out of 1,604 students were able to transition from junior high school into senior high school from 2016-2021. Though there were pockets of years that the students’ performance could not meet the pass mark, specifically in 2017 and 2019 (see Table 2), the general impression created from the results denotes that the students fared well academically. Even though teachers’ turnover leaves some gaps in the organisational setup which affects the delivery of quality service (Poku et al., 2022), the results from Table 2 indicates that teachers’ turnover did not undermine the students’ academic performance in the Sekyere Afram Plains District in the years under review.

Effect of Teachers’ Turnover Rate on Students’ Academic Performance

A greater disruption of teacher turnover is felt in poor educational and learning outcomes and poor academic achievement which can dent the reputation of the organisation (Azewara et al., 2021). On this note teachers’ turnover rate was compared to the students’ academic performance from 2016-2021 to unravel its effect. The data indicate that the turnover rate in 2019, which was above 100%, yielded a 21.3% BECE pass rate. Likewise, the 2017 turnover rate of 72.2% recorded a 40.8% BECE pass rate. Table 3 gives details of the teachers’ turnover rates and their corresponding BECE rates in the year under review.

Table 3: Comparison Between Students’ Academic Performance and Teachers’ Turnover Rate in the Sekyere Afram Plains from 2016 to 2021

YEAR	TEACHERS’ TURNOVER	TURNOVER PERCENTAGE (%)	B.E.C.E PASSED STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE PASSED (%)
2021	35	70%	164	56.7%
2020	42	Above 100%	313	84.4%
2019	19	Above 100%	67	21.3%
2018	38	53.8%	94	56%
2017	26	72.2%	108	40.8%
2016	24	72.7%	106	54.1%
	184		852	52.2%

Source: Field Survey November, 2022

Data from Table 3 shows that the teachers’ turnover rate in the Sekyere Afram Plains had partial adverse effects and impacts on the academic performance of students in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). This is shown in 2019 where the over 100% turnover rate adversely affected students’ academic performance rate of 21.3% in the BECE. But there was a contradictory performance of 84.4% BECE pass rate against the backdrop of over 100% teachers’ turnover rate in 2020. Even though the teachers’ turnover rates are high and surpass 53%, its effect on students’ academic performance was felt twice (2017 and 2019) out of the six years under review in Sekyere Afram Plains District. It is obvious from studies conducted by Azewara et al. (2021) and Opoku-Asare et al. (2022) that teachers’ high turnover rate undermines

educational and learning outcomes, and students' academic performance. But the results of this study project a contrary view indicating that teachers' high turnover rate in the Sekyere Afram Plains District has a very minimal effect on students' academic performance.

Even though the Sekyere Afram Plains District experienced a high turnover rate of teachers within 2016-2021, the impact on students' academic performance was very minimal. The impact was felt in 2017 when 40.8% of students passed that year's BECE exams. The worse scenario of teachers' high turnover rate on students' academic performance was in 2019 with only a 21.3% BECE pass rate for the students.

CONCLUSIONS

The turnover rate among teachers in the Sekyere Afram Plains District is very high. This is due to dissatisfaction with working conditions and environment, intent to leave, demographic factors (gender, age, educational background), lack of advancement (career development), opportunity to move, and other underlining factors. These conditions make teachers feel that their psychological and physical well-being which makes them stressed out and emotionally exhausted at work are not being addressed. Working in such an environment where teachers have to cross several rivers before they can reach their destination of work (GES, Sekyere Afram Plains, 2022) is very frustrating and calls for immediate attention and solutions (Sawaneh & Kamara, 2019; Seniwoliba, 2013). It is, therefore, the wish of these teachers that appropriate retention strategies and practices (Butt et al., 2020; Aman-Ullah, Aziz & Ibrahim, 2020) should be implemented to entice them to stay in the teaching profession.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations meant to help curb or avert the high teacher turnover rate in the Sekyere Afram Plains District of the Ghana Education Service are as follows:

1. A motivating working and living environment should be created for teachers in the Sekyere Afram Plains to reduce the turnover rate and ensure high retention of teachers since living conditions and work environment is one of the key factors that affect employees' choice to stay in the service.
2. The Ghana Education Service should focus on the needs of teachers and implement employee retention policies to increase teachers' work and organisational commitment since their high turnover rate impacts negatively on students' academic performance.
3. Favourable working conditions such as rewards and benefits like the best teacher award scheme, granting study leave with pay, and conditions of living allowances, as well as scholarships that target women who work in deprived districts in particular, must be implemented since living in these areas becomes challenging to them and their families.
4. The Ghana Education Service headquarters, the Sekyere Afram Plains District Assembly and the Ghana Education Service directorate in the district must adopt specific strategic measures suitable and applicable to the peculiar nature of the district to entice teachers who are posted there to remain at post longer.

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