

Original Paper

Teachers' Attrition and Its Impact on School Performance: A Case STUDY ON Wag Seyoum Admasu General Secondary and Preparatory School

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Abstract

This study investigates the status of teachers' attrition and its' impact on the performance of Wag Seyoum Admassu General Secondary and Preparatory School using qualitative methodology. To that end, the data were gathered from school principal, department heads, and teachers. Interview, focus group discussions, and document analysis were the data gathering tools. In doing so, attention was given to causes for teacher attrition and impact on the school performance. The data collected was analyzed qualitatively case by case. The findings revealed that, personal factors, organizational factors, working conditions and socio-cultural factors were not the causes for teachers' attrition in the school. They only create dissatisfaction. The primary reasons for teachers' attrition were economic reason-low salary of teachers. With regard to the impact of teacher attrition on the performance of the school, students remain idle for long period of time, deterioration of students result and quality of education, additional burden on both teachers and school management, loosening staff cohesion and psychological unrest were some among many. It was concluded that, teachers' attrition in Wag Seyoum Secondary and Preparatory School was related to economic reason. Meaning full salary increment for teachers by the government was recommended.

Keywords

Teachers' Attrition, School Performance

1. Introduction

Internationally, it is widely recognized that teachers are central to students' success. In addition, they are at the "center of the debate on education quality and students learning outcomes" (UNESCO, 2011b, p. 5). However, many of them are leaving their profession every year. The phenomenon of teacher attrition, thus, has been an educational problem to school authorities and policy makers in both developed and developing countries-it is a global concern. The following table illustrates this reality.

Table 1. Teachers Attrition in Developed and Developing Countries

| USA | England | Nether Lands | Germany | Australia | Uganda | Lesotho | Zambia | Malawi |
|------|---------|-----------------|---------|-----------|--------|---------|--------|--------|
| 13.6 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 9.9 | 10 | 11.9 | 10 |

Source: EFA (2010). Joiner and Edward (2008).

The same is true to Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, teacher attrition, according to Dargie (2002)), cited in Ayalew (2009), has a "long history as old as the educational system itself" (2009, p. 1106). In line with this, over nine-years period of 1952/53-1960/61, "23% of the graduates from Haile Sellassie I day school, 28% of the graduates from four year training, and 42% of graduates from Debre Birhan community TTI left teaching profession"(1967, p. 32). Although, there is a general impression in Ethiopia that the level of teacher attrition to be high, I was not able to find documented and officially released data for the recent and subsequent years.

An unpublished electronic data obtained from MoE (2013), however, revealed that the national level teachers' attrition rate was 2.39% in 2011, 2.04% in 2012 and 5.79% in 2013. As compared to other African countries, the data revealed that the problem is not serious at national level. On the other hand, in Amhara region it was 2.38%, 1.59% and 3.38% from 2011 to 2013 respectively. It was almost similar to that of the rate of teacher attrition at national level. When we see that of Wag Himra Zone, however, teacher attrition rate was 12.87% in 2014 and 19.1% in 2015. Similarly, in Wag Seyoum Admasu general secondary and preparatory school, teachers' attrition rate was 11.42% in 2014 and 24.5% in 2015 (Wag Himra Zone, 2018). The data shows how serious the problem is and has been increasing in the research study zone as well as the sample school.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

High rate of teacher attrition is believed to have "implications for the quality of education students receive. It also leads to disruptions of a program's continuity, and increased costs to the education system as a whole" (Corbell, 2009, p. 3). In addition, it is a "problem for work force planning and an indicator of poor quality of schooling and teachers' moral" (Pitsoe, 2012, p. 2). Generally, it is costly loss where "the school and students will pay the price" (Johnson et al., 2012, p. 1).

Taking this in to account, a number of scholars have conducted empirical studies focused on

determining which kind of teachers are more exposed to leave teaching profession and why. For instance, the research done by Ingersoll (2001) showed that teacher attrition was strongly correlated with organizational characteristics. To that end, the researcher used school and staffing survey (SASS) and Teacher Follow up Survey (TFS) data to examine teacher turn over problems from organizational perspective. The data was analyzed quantitatively as per the variables set. As cited by Ingersoll (2001), Rumber's (1987) and Murnane's (1981) research focused on identifying teacher turn over in relation to individual characteristics of teachers. Accordingly, they aimed at examining personal characteristics like teaching field, age and experience as cause for attrition.

Loeb et al. (2005), on the other hand, focused on how teaching conditions predict teacher turn over. Their study focused on working conditions as causes for teacher attrition. Kelly (2004) and Imazeki (2004) analyzed teacher attrition in relation to salary of teachers. Ronfeild et al. (2012) also adequately treated the impact of teachers' attrition on students' achievement. The research done by Watkins (2005) indicates the role of school principals in attracting, retaining and developing new teachers. Smith and Ingersoll (2004) investigate the rationale to leave the profession and the effect of induction and mentoring on beginning teachers.

Even though teacher attrition is also a common challenge to Ethiopian education system, so far very few studies have investigated the issue. Accordingly, Seyoum's (1992) work focuses on brain drain among academicians in two higher education institutions in Ethiopia. To this end, the data was collected using questionnaire and relevant documents. The subjects were individuals who were on duty locally in Addis Ababa University and Kotebe teacher training college. The finding revealed that major causes for attrition were political and job dissatisfaction factors. Daniel (2012) also investigated teacher attrition in Wolita focusing on migration of teachers across districts. The study was a survey of 67 government school principals to identify the pushing factor for migration using questionnaire. The finding revealed that teachers' migration was to their desire to be closer to urban areas. The quantitative studies done by Arega (2007) and Mulugeta (2010) focus on investigating organizational factors for teachers attrition from randomly selected teachers and principals who were on duty. The study came up with a finding that inadequate salary and administrative problem were causes for teachers' attrition.

One of the limitations with many of the above studies is that they are narrowly focused. Researchers look at the influence of individual or organizational characteristics as cause for teacher attrition. Most of these studies focused on a single factor for teacher attrition. Second, most of the empirical studies are descriptive in nature and purely quantitative. These works haven't given sufficient attention to the meaning of events. Due to this, they did not examine the case in detail. Some of the studies targeted on attrition of novice teachers. My study, however, focused on identifying attrition factors to all teachers in the sample school in general irrespective of years of experience as well as field of specialization. Unlike most previous data sources, my work employed qualitative technique with different data gathering tools. Subjects were selected purposively including ex-teachers. In addition to teachers and principals currently working in the school, Reliable data was collected from those teachers who left the

school-meaning from “the horse’s mouth” to use Seyoum’s terms (Seyoum, 1994, p. 33). It was also examined the cause of teacher attrition in relation to personal, organizational, working condition, socio-cultural factors and economic factor simultaneously. The researcher also dealt with its’ impact up on school performance. Most research works were done in developed countries at macro level. Therefore, this work is away from this and become more context-sensitive at micro level to take an in-depth look. These make this study different from other research works. To this end, the research addressed the following basic questions:

- What factors influence teachers’ attrition in Wag Seyoum Admasu General Secondary and Preparatory School?
- What is the impact of teachers’ attrition on the performance of Wag Seyoum Admasu General Secondary and Preparatory School?

2. Review of Empirical Studies

Schools as social organizations require different types of inputs where human resource is the pivotal asset that contribute to realize its’ objectives. It is widely recognized that “teachers are at the center of students success and that of education quality” (Pitsoe & Machaisa, 2012, p. 1). However, many of them are leaving their school or the profession and schools are facing shortage of teachers. One of the pivotal causes of inadequate school performance is, therefore, the inability of schools to adequately staff classrooms with qualified teachers. Staffing problem is due to excess demand resulting from “revolving door” (Ingersol, 2001, p. 499) where large number of teachers departs their job. Buchanan elaborate this in such a way that “the teaching pool keeps losing water because no one is paying attention to the leak” (2009, p. 3).

Thus, there are different factors that cause teacher attrition. For instance Skaalvik & Skaalvik, come up with findings that the causes for teachers attrition are aspects of the school context: “value consonance, supervisory support, relations with colleagues, relations with parents, time pressure, and discipline problems” (2011, p. 1). In addition “lack of mentoring and induction for beginning teachers” Keengwe and Boateng (2012, p. 250) can also cause attrition. Just as it is possible for teachers to “stay because of a good administration, it is likely that teachers will leave if they perceive that administration is poor” Certo and Fox (2002, p. 57). Borman and Dowling (2008) categorized the causes for attrition in to teacher demographic characteristics, teacher qualifications, and school resource. Teacher demographic characteristics include gender, teacher race, age, marital status, and number of children. In a similar way, school organizational characteristics or working conditions include school location, collaboration and teacher network, and regular support of administrators.

In addition, opportunities for advancement, bureaucracy, student discipline, and control over decision making in their school are elements related to organizational factors (Ingersoll, 2001). On the other hand, factors related to school resources include the average class size, student-teacher ratio, school expenditure for teaching materials. According to Fessehatsion and Peng (2021), work load issues like

increased paper work, lack of interest to learn on the part of students, lack of support from parents and low status of teaching profession also cause teachers to leave the profession. In line with the above reasons for attrition, Ingersoll (2001) also found that the causes for teacher attrition are personal reasons and organizational factors. Personal reasons such as departures for pregnancy, child rearing, health problems, and family moves, while organizational conditions like lack of administrative support, student conflict and faculty of influence are causes for attrition. In addition, “socio-cultural factors such as prestige, customs and tradition of the society and availability of infrastructure in the locality” (Kaabi, 2005, p. 9) also reported as causes for teacher attrition.

Substantial evidence suggests that wages play a role in retaining as well as attracting teachers. Certo and Fox (2002), for example, found that teachers are more likely to quit or transfer when they work in districts with lower wages. “Lack of adequate incentives, and inadequate salary of teachers i.e., economic factors” (Pitsoe & Machaise, 2012, p. 5) are causes for attrition.

Taking the above theoretical issues in to account, this research used personal factors, organizational factors, working conditions, economic factors and socio-cultural factors as a theoretical framework to identify causes for teacher attrition. The study focuses only on teachers who voluntarily departure their school or the profession excluding other factors as death, transfer to other school, long sickness and long study leave.

2.1 Impact of Teachers Attrition

Retaining quality teachers is critical for the success of students and schools. As rightly argued by Shields, to be successful, schools need teachers who are stable, committed, and unified (2009). The exit of teachers from the profession and the movement of teachers to better schools are “costly phenomena, both for the students, who lose the value of being taught by an experienced teacher, and to the schools” (USDE, 2005, p. 1). It results in an “overall decrease in teacher quality and additional complication associated with teacher shortage” (Hancock, 2003, p. 167). It disrupts staff cohesion, affects student achievement, and has an overall negative effect on the school climate. Moreover, it jeopardize curriculum continuity (Watkins, 2005); increase principal’s administrative load (Christie, 2006); and result in empty classrooms (UNESCO, 2010). It also leads schools to be staffed disproportionately with inexperienced and often untrained teachers (Loeb et al., 2005). Generally speaking, the consequences of teacher attrition are too terrible and too complex to consider (Pitsoe, 2017).

3. Research Design and Methodology

The purpose of this study was to look into the causes of teachers attrition and its’ impact on the school performance of Wag Seyoum Admassu general secondary and preparatory School. To realize this purpose, a case study was employed. This is because a case study enables “detailed examination of one setting” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 59); “analyze it intensively” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 106); and “explore processes, activities and events in detail, and collect using a variety of data collection tool” (Creswell, 2009, p. 208). Qualitative research was, therefore; the overall method to be fully employed

in conducting this study. This is because qualitative research takes place in a “natural setting” which enables researchers to develop a level of “detailed understanding about participants and elicits contextualized data” (Creswell, 2009, p. 216).

3.1 Sources of Data

Data for the study were collected using primary as well as secondary sources. The primary sources were collected from the school principal, teachers on duty, department heads and teachers who already left the school on the assumption that they have adequate information about the topic under study. To supplement this, secondary sources of data such as letters, individual teacher’s file and reports were consulted. This is because “a written text has a potential source of data” (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 212).

3.2 Sample and Sampling Technique

Since the research design was a case study, Wag Seyoum Admasu General Secondary and Preparatory School was selected by purposive sampling for the reasons discussed in the statement of the problem. Since it is found in the capital town of the zone, experienced teachers, better budget support, and better facilities were expected to be apparent. In addition, it was assumed that there will be better administrative support and better infrastructure and facility in the locality for teachers to live on. If so, it is expected to have lower teacher attrition rates. However, it is reported that the school is in a serious problem where attrition rate reached almost 24.5% in 2018. This will put the overall school performance in question. It is due to this reason that the school is purposefully selected for the study.

With regard to subjects, the school principal, all the six department heads, were purposively included in the study. This is because purposive sampling helps to identify particular types of cases for “in depth investigation” and “allow the researcher to decide who can provide the best information to achieve the objective of the study” (Cropley, 2021). With regard to teachers on duty, only those who served three or more years in the school were chosen as research participants purposively assuming that their experience would let adequate and cumulative information on the issue under consideration. Accordingly, only six teachers who meet the experience criterion were selected and participated in the study. With regard to teachers who have already left the school, snowball sampling was used to recruit participants with the help of the principal initially suggesting possible participants, who in turn suggested others (Buchanan, 2009). Accordingly, seven teachers were used as informants.

3.3 Instruments of Data Collection

To obtain relevant information, interview, focus group discussions, and document analysis were employed. Un-structured interview was conducted with the school principal since the number is manageable and, it allows for clarifications and greater flexibility. It also enabled to observe non-verbal communications and gestures (Kumar Haradhan, 2018). With the consent of the principal, the interview was recorded. Similarly, face to face unstructured interview was conducted with four teachers who already left the school. Telephone interview was also conducted with other three teachers after collecting their address and getting their willingness to be subjects of the study.

Focus group discussions were conducted with two groups: teachers consisting of six members and six department heads. The discussion with these groups and the remaining subjects revolved around the following issues: the extent of teacher attrition causes for teacher attrition, and the impact on school performance. FGD was used since it is a special qualitative research technique (Cropley, 2021) and it provides opportunity for participants to interact with each other and come up with data required. Both focus group discussions and interviews were recorded with audio after getting subjects permission.

3.4 Method of Data Analysis and Interpretations

The data in audio was transcribed in Amharic then it was translated in English. Before the actual data analysis began, the whole data was read and reread to “obtain a general sense of information and reflect on its’ overall meaning” (Creswell, 2009, p. 216). The data collected using the instruments were then coded in to causes of attrition, and impact of teachers attrition. Then it was qualitatively analyzed and interpreted case by case. Finally, it comes up with findings and conclusions. Pseudo names are used in the analysis to maintain the anonymity of subjects.

3.5 Ethical Issues Considered

For smooth accomplishment of the research objective, the purpose of the research was explained to subjects and the anonymity of subjects was maintained by using pseudo names. Mindful of some scholars advice (e.g., Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), the research data was kept confidential.

3.6 The Research Site

Wag Seyoum Admasu General Secondary and Preparatory School, the research setting, is found in Ethiopia, Sekota town. It was established in 1956 as elementary school and upgraded to secondary school in 1968. Beginning from 1996, it becomes preparatory school. Currently, it has a total of 4720 students, 106 teachers and 25 supportive staffs.

4. Results

4.1 Causes for Teacher Attrition

As per the research framework set, the analysis on causes for teachers’ attrition is presented taking the order of organizational factors, personal factors, working conditions, socio-cultural factors and economic (salary) related factors here under.

4.2 Organizational Factors

This section presents the impact of administrative support, student conflict, participation in decision making and faculty influence. The response of subjects in FGD as well as interview revealed that organizational factors were not major reasons for teachers attrition. Here is what two of the participants had to say on administrative support:

Moges: It is common that teachers, particularly newly assigned, need a support not only from the school management but also from senior teachers. To be frank, the school management is not supportive. Although their support is insignificant, it could not be the real cause for teachers to leave the school. For instance, this was not the reason for me to leave the school. Well! it might create

negative feeling but could not lead to leave the school. (Interview of a teacher who had already left the school).

Likewise, Kebedech said:

Kebedech: I was assigned to the school immediately after my graduation from a college. We started teaching without any induction and mentor attachment. The support of the administration is not to the expected level. We continue working with complaints but no one has left the school due to this. I am a witness that lack of administrative support was not the cause for me to leave and even to all others. (Interview of teacher who had already left the school)

From the above response it is possible to understand that the school management was not as such active in providing the required support to teachers but was not a pushing factor.

4.3 Student Discipline and Teacher Participation in Decision Making

As part of organizational factor, subjects responded that student discipline and participation of teachers in school decision making did not have any connection with teachers' attrition in the school. Excerpts from the two of the participants may be more informative:

Bihonegne: Most of our students are from rural areas and are not as such exposed to commit serious disciplinary problems to teachers or among themselves. What is common in our school is late coming and absenteeism. This will have a negative effect on their result but couldn't be a cause for teacher attrition (Teacher on duty FGD).

In support of the above idea, Alemu stated the following:

Alemu: With regard to participation of teachers in decisions of school matters, we have monthly meetings where all teachers are supposed to participate. These give us an opportunity to have a say on issues that are concerned on the school activity in general and academic issues in particular. There are also different committees which are part of the management where teachers are members of them. Thus, lack of participation in decision making does not have room to be a cause for teachers' attrition. (Department heads FGD).

As indicated above, students' disciplinary problems were not a serious cause to affect the teaching learning process in the school. Secondly, as I observed in the minute of staff meeting and understood from their responses, there was a monthly meeting where all teachers attended and made a decision on different academic issues. Generally, the above data revealed that organizational factors were not the cause for teacher attrition in the study school.

4.4 Personal Factors

Most common personal reasons cited by different scholars as a cause for teacher attrition were departures for pregnancy, child rearing, health problems, family moves, teachers' race and marital status. Like that of organizational factors, personal factors were also not causes of teachers' attrition in the school. Looking at the participants' actual observations explains the issue more elaborately:

Tirsit: I have served in the school for four years and left the school last year. The reason to leave was not due to pregnancy or a case related to child rearing. As per my knowledge no one has left for marriage case. It was not also due to health problem for all of us who left the school. In addition, the locality was not as such exposed to epidemic problems like malaria. In short, these were not the cause for me and others to depart (An interview with teacher who left the school).

In favor of Tirsit's idea, Hagos provided the following:

Hagos: Most of the teachers who left the school was from similar area and ethnic background. Almost all of us went to our original region. This doesn't mean we left the school due to ethnic or racial influence. The distance between the places where we are working now and where our parents are living is almost equal to that of the school we left. So the reason to live with families is not convincing (Interview conducted with a teacher who had already left the school).

On the bases of the above information collected from subjects, personal reasons were not the cause for teachers' attrition in the study school.

4.5 Working Conditions

Working condition related factors that cause teachers attrition include: class size, student- teacher ratio, availability of educational facilities, budget allocation, and parental support. Student interest to learn and their achievement, work load stress and collaboration among staff members are also work related factors presented in this part.

As per the response of subjects in both FGDs and interview conducted, the finding confirmed that no single teacher left the school due to inconveniency of working conditions. Below is part of their observations:

Principal: With regard to working conditions, our school has a serious gap as compared to the standard set for secondary schools. Just to mention some, student- teacher ratio and class size is higher than the standard. We don't have well equipped laboratory, no sufficient number of seats for students as well as teachers. Teachers as well as students do not have access for internet service. The only sources of budget we have are the block grant and some GEQIP fund. These cannot go beyond purchasing paper for exams. All these can aggravate the problem for teachers to depart but to my knowledge no one has left our school due to these poor working conditions (Principal interview).

In agreement with the explanation and conclusion made by the school principal, teachers on duty and those who had already left the school confirmed this. The following excerpt indicates this shared conception:

Tafess: No parent is willing to come to school to discuss on their children's academic performances. The school is not conducive to run academic function smoothly. We have problems related to school facilities. With all these gaps, we were doing our daily tasks collaboratively and in team sprite. The inadequacy of them may crate dissatisfaction but none of them were reasons to exit including me. (Interview of teacher who already left the school).

The above interview response revealed that the school had a serious problems with regard to creating appropriate working conditions. There were a serious challenges related to class size, school resources, parental involvement and budget deficit. Teachers were also overloaded by different tasks as a result they were stressed. With all this tiresome efforts teachers made, students were not motivated to learn. Although all these negative circumstances were common to observe, they were not considered as a real pushing factor for teachers' to leave the school beyond crating dissatisfaction.

4.6 Socio Cultural Factors

Social-cultural factors such as “prestige, customs and tradition of the society and availability of infrastructure in the locality” (Kaabi, 2005, p. 9) can also be causes for teacher attrition. The reality in the school, however, was not that. The following could be regarded as a representative opinion of the participants' feelings on social prestige:

Moges: The recognition and social value given to teaching profession is failing than ever before. This lack of acceptance by the society and even by students is related to our income. Our students observe our personal life including the way we dressed. They don't respect and give us value as a teacher. Being a teacher mean simply being poor. Really, we are dissatisfied with it (Teachers on duty FGD).

In agreement to the former Girma said the following:

Girma: In our society in general, teaching is not a respected profession. The community and even students do not value teachers. The former song “Yegna Mushira Kuri Kuri Wesedat Astemari” meaning “our new bride be proud of being a wife of a teacher” has no more space. It is directly related with the amount of payment we earn. With all this painful practices, no one has left his job due to lack of social value and prestige (Interview with teacher who had already left the profession).

The above response revealed that teachers' status and social prestige have fallen than ever before. However, no one responded as a cause for departure beyond creating dissatisfaction.

4.7 Culture of the Society and Availability of Infrastructure

Among the pushing factors for teachers to leave the school or the profession, a given localities' socio-cultural elements and availability of infrastructure have a negative impact. These problems are serious particularly in Africa (UNESCO, 2010). In relation to socio-cultural issues and infrastructure, here is what two of the subjects had to say on the issue:

Hagos: The culture and problem of infrastructure in the locality can't be convincing reason for turnover. It is a locality where you still find original Ethiopian culture and hospitality. There was no problem related to infrastructure and culture of the people. I really like the locality and the people. Still my mind is there. As per my knowledge no one has left the school due to problem of infrastructure and the culture (Interview of a teacher who had already left the school).

In support of this response, the principal said:

Principal: Leave alone these days where regular bus transportation, telephone service, and twenty four hours electric access is available, by then when the back of mule was the only means of transportation, when candle was the only source of light, when a river water was used for consumption it was called

“Wag sheduleksosimelesulekso” meaning “lament on arrival at Wag; lament on departure from Wag”. A similar proverb “Sekotakewarkawktelawarefielebentechewmetahusanbayentakiefie” meaning “Even if I left Sekota, still everything of mine and my heart is there”. These proverbs imply the hospitality of the people and attractiveness of the culture. So remoteness of the locality where our school found, inadequacy of infrastructure, the culture and the society in general could not be causes for teachers turn over (Principal interview who left the school).

The response of subjects who are currently working in the school and those who already left the school confirmed that these were not the reason for teachers to leave the school voluntarily.

4.8 Economic Factor

As per different scholars “Lack of adequate incentives, and inadequate salary of teachers, i.e., economic factors” (Pitsoe & Machaise, 2012, p. 5) in general are indicated as causes for teachers attrition. Subjects in the study site also confirmed this. The following excerpt indicates this conception: Almaze: I served for about two years and left the school in 2014. I was from that locality and was living with my parents. I was free from house rent and related expenses. My salary was 1327 birr per month which was inadequate to cover my expenses. I was dependent for many things up on my family. I had no option but to leave for economic reason to get better income. Life was really difficult to lead with such monthly salary. Currently I am working as a chemistry teacher in one of a private school with monthly salary of 3000 birr payable in Addis Ababa. In addition, I am working as tutor to supplement my income. Currently, I am in a better position than I was before (Interview with teacher who already left the school).

Similarly,

Hagos: I served for two years in the school and left in 2015 second semester and doing my own business. Teachers working in the school do not have any additional means of income except monthly salary. Due to this, we cannot shoulder the challenge of life. As long as you are in teaching profession and with this inadequate salary, leave alone to think changing once life, your existence in life is questionable. Unless you look for other opportunity, you will always remain poor. I don't know what would happen when one gets marriage and got children. So the major and primary reason for me to leave the profession is for economic problem- low salary. (Interview with teacher who already left the school)

Subjects who had already left the school indicated that currently they are engaged in businesses, some employed in NGO's. On the bases of subjects' response, therefore, it is possible to conclude that the primary reason for the teachers to leave the school was economic problem related to low salary of teachers.

4.9 Impact of Teacher Attrition

There is a casual relationship between teacher attrition and the quality of teaching and learning. In addition to this, a limited supply of teachers increases the need and likelihood for out-of-field teaching, where teachers teach subjects in which they are neither prepared nor qualified to teach. This obviously

leads to poor teaching and handicaps students learning. This has also detrimental effect on teachers' morale. Generally speaking its' impact is complex (Pitsoe&Machaisa 2012). The empirical data from FGDs and interview is more revealing:

Tassew: Students are forced to sit for exams without covering the subject assigned for each grade level. This has seriously jeopardized the effort that the school made to improve quality of education. It has seriously affected students result and cause the repetition rate to increase. When this happened, it is the teachers on duty and the school in general that will be accountable for-we pay the cost for it (Teachers on duty FGD).

Kebede added the following:

Kebede: Teachers on duty are forced to take extra teaching load. It has also become a cause for conflict between school management and teachers on duty at the time of redistributing the load of those teachers who left. When one lose his friend, he/she will be unsettled and psychologically demoralized. So we will be initiated to follow their route. The school is losing young, experienced and hardworking ones. Generally speaking, it has multidimensional negative effect on the school performance (Department heads FGD).

The above response revealed that teacher attrition has seriously affected the normal functioning of the school in many ways. Taking this in to account, it is possible to conclude that teacher attrition has seriously affected the day to day activity of the school.

5. Discussion

The novice teachers reported that they didn't get appropriate induction and mentoring support. A research done by Smith and Ingersoll (2004) however, revealed that teachers who were provided mentor support and participated in induction activities are less likely to leave teaching" (p. 681). A research finding conducted in Ghana indicated that teachers were not properly inducted to the profession and they were not given appropriate mentoring support. Due to this a significant number of teachers were living their school and the profession in general (UNESCO, 2010, 2006; Keengwe & Boateng, 2012).

Unlike the practice in Ghana, however, lack of mentoring and inadequacy of induction was not the cause for teacher attrition in the study school. In a similar way, lack of administrative support in general was considered as a cause for teacher attrition as indicated by several studies. It is stated that schools with lower level of administrative support had higher teacher attrition rates (Tye & O'Brien 2002; Thornton, 2004). In contrast to this, subjects indicated that even if the problem existed, lack of administrative support was not a cause for teachers attrition in the school.

In contrast to former research works (e.g., Ingersoll, 2001; Ronfeldt et al., 2012; UNESCO, 2010, 2006), student disciplinary problems, lack of teachers participation in decision making and faculty influence were not the reasons for teachers attrition in the school.

Unlike the research finding of (UNESCO, 2010; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001), subjects' responses revealed that personal factors such as pregnancy, marriage, child care responsibility, ill health, race or ethnic problems and family issues were not the cause for attrition of teachers in the study school. A research done in Nigeria by Egu et al. (2011) however, indicated that next to economic reason, ill health and child birth were causes for teachers' attrition.

The finding showed that problems related to working condition were not causes for departure beyond creating dissatisfaction and stress on teachers. This was in agreement with the finding of Darge (2002) that teachers who faced shortage of time and who have work load are exposed to stress that lead to dissatisfaction. The finding of (Blazer, 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson et al., 2012; Loeb et al., 2005), however, revealed that poor working conditions were largely a cause for teachers to leave either the school or the profession in general.

Subjects make clear that low status of the profession and low social prestige was not a cause for teachers' attrition. It was similar in Ghana that teachers were not welcomed in the communities they worked in. In addition, they "were not given respect by students and parents" (Shields, 2009, p. 78). The low social prestige came from the low economic status of the profession compared to other professions.

Unlike UNESCO (2010) finding, undesirability of the locality due to remoteness and inaccessibility of infrastructure were not the cause for higher rate of teacher attrition in the school. To sum up, socio-cultural factors mainly lack of social prestige, poor infrastructure and issues related to the culture of the locality were not the reason for teacher attrition.

The response of subjects confirmed that the primary reason for teachers' exit was inadequacy of salary and economic problem as is the case reported in Certo and Fox (2002) not for any other reason. It was a similar finding to the study of Ingersoll (2003a) in Shields (2009) where "teachers who left the profession cited salary as their reason for leaving". This suggests that "wages play a role in retaining as well as attracting teachers. There is a direct relation between pay and retention. The larger teacher salaries, the lower rates of attrition will be" (Kelly, 2004, p. 45). The study conducted by World Bank (2007, p. 51) also confirmed that "increasing teachers' salary is an important long term strategy not only to retain but also to attract people towards the profession". Thus teachers are more likely to quit or transfer when they work with lower wages, especially relative to alternative wage opportunities. In other words, "teachers are most likely to leave the job for better paying jobs" (Egu et al., 2011, p. 108). A large number of studies have found a consistent association between larger teacher salaries and lower rates of attrition (Loeb et al., 2005).

Here it is important to note that a study done by Aklilu (1967) came up with a finding that the then Ethiopian teachers depart the teaching profession mainly due to low payment and still almost after a decade for the same reason they do the same. Here it is possible to infer that teacher attrition is a deep rooted problem of the country that didn't get solution for a number of years.

Teachers attrition has affected "students learning, their result, quality of education, and cohesion of the

school community as well” (Ronfeldt et al., 2012, p. 7). It has also created “additional burden to both teachers as well as the management” (Christie, 2006, p. 1). It has ended with “shortage of teachers in the school” (Hancoc, 2003, p, 167). More than this, it caused conflict, disciplinary problem and “psychological unrest” (Daniel, 2011, p. 104) on the school community. “The loss of young blood” was of course, “a drain on the vitality of the teaching force”(Pitsoe & Machaisa, 2012, p. 4).

6. Conclusions

To investigate the causes for teacher attrition issues related to organizational factors such as management support, participation of teachers in the management, students’ disciplinary problems, conflicts and managerial influences were considered. None of them were the cause for teachers’ attrition. The same was true with regard to personal factors, working conditions and socio- cultural factors. Their impacts were not beyond creating some dissatisfaction and stress up on teachers. What was consistent across all respondents of this study was that teachers’ attrition was a result of economic problem. It was a primary and the only cause for teachers’ attrition. Thus it is possible to conclude that, insufficient salary was the cause for teachers’ attrition in Wag Seyoum General secondary and Preparatory school.

It is indicated that committed, experienced and hardworking teachers were leaving the school. Classes were not covered as per the school academic plan. Students were not in a position to get the expected knowledge and skills. As a result, students result was reduced. Teachers on duty were psychologically disturbed and stressed. It was also cause for additional burden to both teachers as well as the school management. In addition, teachers’ attrition was also resulted in disciplinary problems. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the functioning of the school, students achievement and quality of education were seriously affected due to teachers’ attrition.

7. Recommendations

There is a consensus among researchers and educators that the most important factor in determining students’ achievement is the quality of the teacher. If the national goal of providing quality of education is to be met, it is critical that efforts to be made in retaining teachers in their duty. It is important to overcome shortage of teachers created as a result of voluntary attrition. It is indicated that inadequacy of salary or economic problem was the only reason for teachers’ attrition in the school. It was found that teachers are challenged by the ever increasing cost of life as compared to their monthly income. Different research works also confirmed that amount of teachers salary is causes either to continue in teaching or to leave the school or the profession as a whole. Taking the negative impact of teachers’ attrition and the effort of the country to improve quality of education, priority attention should be given to retain teachers on their job. To this end policy decision at national level should be made to increase teachers’ salary meaningfully.

Even if teachers’ salary were the cause for attrition, other factors such as poor working conditions and

lack of administrative support were sources for teachers' dissatisfaction that may aggravate the problem. Inadequacy of school facilities were, for instance, a serious problem of the school. Similarly, there were no chance for teachers to get rewards and incentives. Thus, the school administration in collaboration with local stakeholders should create conducive working environment that enable teachers to carry out their duty willingly and with full commitment. In addition, recognition and rewards should be given to teachers periodically for their best achievement and effort they made so as to reduce the degree of dissatisfaction. Moreover, the training of teachers' should take into account the 'revolving door' teaches who join and leave the profession.

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