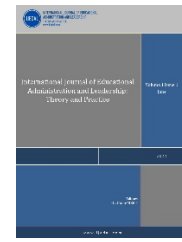




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# The Impact of School Leadership Support on Teacher Retention: A Study among School Leaders and Teacher\*

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### ABSTRACT

This research investigates teacher retention in private schools, focusing on the impact of leadership practices on educators' decisions to stay. It aims to understand how leadership in private schools in Sharjah affects the stability of the teaching workforce. Drawing on key theories in leadership styles, motivational frameworks, and teacher satisfaction, the study conducts a comprehensive literature review. Using a mixed-methods approach, it gathers quantitative data from surveys and qualitative insights from teacher interviews. The findings reveal that supportive gestures, recognition of efforts, and professional development opportunities significantly influence teachers' decisions to remain. The study emphasizes the critical role of school leaders in fostering a positive work environment and a sense of commitment among teachers. Despite limitations such as a constrained sample size and response rate, the study proposes future research exploring educational leadership and teacher satisfaction across more diverse educational settings. Ultimately, the research asserts that effective leadership is vital for teacher retention, advocating for strategies that acknowledge, support, and develop teaching staff, thus improving teacher stability and satisfaction.

#### Keywords:

School Leadership, Teacher Retention, Leadership Practices

## 1. Introduction

The study emphasizes the critical role of teacher retention in maintaining high standards of teaching and learning in educational institutions. High teacher turnover negatively impacts student performance, learning, and classroom relationships (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013). Lovison and Mo (2023) provide insights into teacher preferences and factors influencing retention. Teachers prioritize access to support personnel overpay raises, indicating the importance of support roles in job satisfaction (Beteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012). The study underscores the necessity for a comprehensive teacher retention strategy that goes beyond compensation issues. Tran and Smith (2020) advocate for the Sustaining Teacher Employment Model, which addresses both hygiene and motivating factors throughout a teacher's career. Approximately 8% of US teachers leave their jobs each year before retirement due to dissatisfaction with working conditions (Tran & Smith, 2020). Green et al. (2023) highlights the impact of gentrification on schools, showing a drop in student enrollment and the subsequent challenges for principals. Grissom and Loeb (2011) stress the significance of good principles in fostering academic achievement. Walters et al. (2003) conducted a meta-analysis, affirming the critical role of principal leadership in promoting school effectiveness. Harris et al. (2014) examines variations in teacher effectiveness measures, emphasizing the need for a thorough understanding of teacher

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retention's impact on educational stability. The study aims to disentangle the factors contributing to educational stability by examining the influence of school leadership on teacher retention.

The theoretical understanding of the effect of school leadership support on teacher retention lacks clarity, hindering the creation of practical turnover reduction methods. Policymakers, educators, and school administrators struggle to develop focused interventions due to the absence of comprehensive theoretical frameworks (Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010). Without a robust theoretical base, teacher retention may be treated as a monolithic problem, disregarding the multifaceted relationships influencing educators' decision-making (Sun & Leithwood, 2015).

The Sharjah private school scenario offers a unique framework for examining the intricacies of teacher retention. This study is the first of its kind to concentrate on private schools in Sharjah, shedding light on both the benefits and unique challenges in this educational environment (Alami, 2017). Sharjah's private schools, with their diverse student body and unique cultural environment, offer a microcosm of problems and possible solutions that might differ from those in other contexts. Sharjah and the UAE hosts people from different countries, faith, culture and contexts that bring both opportunities and challenges. Cultural expectations, economic stability, and the specific demands on teachers within private schools may all impact the effect of leadership support on teacher retention (Khalaf & Hussein, 2018). Thus, the absence of theoretical clarity about the influence of school leadership support on teacher retention results in a knowledge gap that impedes the creation of focused approaches. Sharjah's distinctive private school environment offers insights that are both uncommon and exceptional, filling this gap and contributing to the larger conversation on teacher retention within the specific organizational, cultural, and financial framework of Sharjah's private educational institutions. The main research question of this study is how does school leadership support influence teacher retention in educational institutions? Sub-questions:

- What specific forms and types of school leadership support are most effective in retaining teachers, and through what mechanisms do they impact teacher retention?
- In what ways does leadership support enhance teacher job satisfaction and mitigate turnover, and are there evidence-based practices that demonstrate this effect?

The study is motivated by the urgent need to bridge the existing knowledge gap regarding the influence of school leadership support on teacher retention. Beyond its theoretical investigation, this research is important because it aims to offer concrete, useful insights to guide the creation of tactics to improve teacher retention (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010). The topics of the study align with the overarching objective of expanding the body of existing literature, particularly the investigation of the effects of school leadership support on teacher retention. This study aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between teacher retention and leadership by exploring the various types of assistance offered by school leaders (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). For instance, the study seeks to determine whether teacher commitment and longevity within the school are more strongly impacted by recognition programs, professional development opportunities, or emotional support.

The potential of this research to provide meaningful information for school administrators highlights its applicability. The goal of the study is to identify specific practices that school leaders can put into place while investigating the kind of school leadership supports that improve teacher retention (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). For example, the study may reveal how important mentorship programs, group decision-making, or open lines of communication are to creating an atmosphere where teachers feel appreciated and are more inclined to stick with their jobs.

The analysis of the role leadership support plays in teacher retention makes it clear how relevant it is to policymakers. Equipped with the knowledge gained from this study, policymakers can decide on matters that affect the larger field of education (Darling-Hammond, 2010). For example, knowing the routes or mechanisms that connect leadership support to teacher retention may help shape policies that encourage schools to use supportive leadership practices, which would raise retention rates and improve teacher satisfaction. The analysis of the relationship between leadership support and teacher job satisfaction and turnover reduction may have implications for programs that prepare future teachers. Teacher preparation programs can benefit from the research's discovery of the elements that affect teachers' commitment and satisfaction (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). For example, the emphasis on leadership training in the teacher preparation curriculum may

change in response to new understandings of the role that leadership support plays in creating a pleasant work environment.

The study aims to provide practical, situation-specific findings by addressing research questions to illuminate the types of support and leadership techniques that positively impact teachers' commitment and longevity and uncover the complex relationships between teacher retention and school leadership support in Sharjah's private schools. Ultimately, it seeks to contribute to creating stable, encouraging, and prosperous learning environments by offering practical advice for school administrators, legislators, and teacher preparation programs.

### **1.1. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

By examining the intricate dynamics of teacher retention through analyzing the diverse role of educational leadership through the lens of multiple theoretical frameworks, a crucial factor surfaces that is the interaction between leadership philosophies and teacher retention, with each philosophy offering a unique viewpoint on how school administrators might affect teachers' career choices, dedication, and job satisfaction. As this study delves into the complex relationship between teacher retention and school leadership, recognizing the importance of administrative support and its influence on teachers' career decisions, leadership styles significantly impact teachers' decisions to stay, relocate, or leave their current schools, as demonstrated in Urick's (2020) research, where Instructional Leadership, Transformational Leadership, and Managerial Leadership play a crucial role. Principals who cultivate a stable, community-oriented atmosphere have a higher chance of retaining their teachers. The New Teacher Support Program (NTSP) in North Carolina, evaluated by Bastian and Marks (2017), significantly improved novice teacher performance and retention, particularly with extensive coaching. Career Choice Theory aids in comprehending the various motivations that influence teachers' decisions to stay in or leave the field. Instructors will be categorized according to their career stages, and the study will examine the ways in which individual behaviors, personal traits, and contextual factors affect instructors' retention. The purpose of this segmentation is to pinpoint the precise causes of teacher turnover at various career levels. While Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory differentiates between extrinsic and intrinsic influences on teacher satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The study explores the roles that the work environment and compensation (extrinsic factors), and intrinsic motivators such as a feeling of mission and personal growth, play in teachers' decisions to remain in the field. Awareness of what genuinely drives instructors beyond a sense of job satisfaction requires cognizance of this distinction. Whereas Investigating Transformational Leadership examines the relationships between teacher satisfaction and morale and transformational leadership attributes such as intellectual stimulation, inspiration, and individual attention. The main objective is to evaluate the ways in which these leadership attributes support the development of a supportive school climate, raise teacher satisfaction and commitment, and ultimately increase retention rates.

Examining the Effect of Instructional Leadership focuses on how instructional leadership affects teacher retention. The development of teachers and students is prioritized in this leadership approach. The study evaluates how implementing good teaching practices in conjunction with a collaborative and supportive school culture enhances teachers' job satisfaction and professional development – two critical components of retention. From a different perspective, assessing Holistic Educational Leadership aims to evaluate how leaders function as visionaries and change agents who impact curriculum development, policy, and the creation of environments that support the professional development of educators and students. The goal is to comprehend how school culture, teacher morale, and ecosystem management are impacted by ethical decision-making, strategic planning, and teacher retention. The research integrates these theoretical frameworks to provide thorough knowledge of the complex influence of educational leadership on teacher retention. This method allows for pinpointing the main causes of teacher attrition and creating practical tactics that administrators may use to increase teacher retention. According to the study, a teacher's sense of belonging and professional development are greatly aided by good leadership, defined by strong interpersonal skills, transparent communication, and supportive behaviors.

The relationship between teacher retention and school leadership is also examined in "The Principal-Teacher Churn: Understanding the Relationship Between Leadership Turnover and Teacher Attrition" by DeMatthews et al. (2021). The study highlights the importance of a stable, courteous, and encouraging work atmosphere in

educational settings. A recent study by Tran et al. (2023), titled "How Can School Leaders Retain Teachers? The Relative Importance of Different Administrative Supports for Teacher Retention in Different Types of Schools," thoroughly analyzes various administrative support types that promote teacher retention in different school settings. Mancuso et al.'s (2011) article examines the impact of supportive school leadership on teacher retention in international schools. The study emphasizes the significance of transformational and distributed leadership styles in international schools, showing that teacher retention was most significantly influenced by the perception of supportive school leadership. Doromal and Markowitz's (2023) study demonstrate the correlation between teachers' intentions to stay and the actual retention rates and their perceptions of leader support in childcare settings. Grissom and Bartanen (2019) conducted a thorough investigation of principals' strategic retention practices, particularly in the context of multiple-measure teacher evaluation systems. Boyd et al. (2011) offers a thorough analysis of the variables influencing teacher retention decisions, emphasizing the crucial role of school administrators and contextual factors within schools. Teachers' opinions on the administration, including support, leadership style, and decision-making procedures, have been shown to be crucial in deciding whether to stay or leave a school. Administrative support greatly impacts teachers' intent to stay in their jobs. Leadership styles significantly impact teachers' decisions to stay, relocate, or leave their current schools, as demonstrated in Urlick's (2020) research. Principals who cultivate a stable, community-oriented atmosphere have a higher chance of retaining their teachers. The New Teacher Support Program (NTSP) in North Carolina, evaluated by Bastian and Marks (2017), significantly improved novice teacher performance and retention, particularly with extensive coaching.

The decision of teachers to stay in the classroom is influenced by various factors, leading to three categories of Teacher for America corps members: leavers, lingerers, and lasters. Heineke et al. (2014) defined leavers as those who exit teaching after fulfilling their two-year TFA commitment, lingerers as those who stay beyond two years but don't view teaching as a long-term career, and lasters as those committed to a long-term teaching career. Mentoring and involvement in group activities, like planning and teamwork, reduces the likelihood of new teachers leaving the profession, according to Smith and Ingersoll's study (2004b). This research, based on the Schools and Staffing Survey (1999–2000), demonstrates the impact of induction and mentorship programs on teacher retention. It emphasizes the significance of these programs in educational policy and practice and underscores the need for comprehensive approaches that include mentoring and instructional support.

Bruno, Rabovsky, and Strunk (2019) found that newly hired teachers often start their careers in challenging classrooms, with high proportions of English language learners, lower student success rates, and more disciplinary issues. This study highlights the impact of placing new teachers in various educational environments on their professional growth, efficacy, and students' academic performance, particularly in large urban school districts. Ronfeldt et al.'s study (2013) conducted in New York City public schools, particularly in fourth and fifth grades, reveals that frequent teacher turnover negatively affects student progress in math and English language arts, especially in schools with a high proportion of low-performing children. This research emphasizes the significant impact of teacher turnover on student learning.

Financial incentives significantly impact teacher retention decisions. Springer et al. (2016) studied the efficacy of a USD \$5,000 retention bonus for highly productive instructors in Tennessee's Priority Schools, finding a positive effect on retention in assessed subjects and grades. One important question in educational policy is whether financial incentives for teachers may increase teacher retention and student progress. Merely offering monetary rewards might not be enough to keep instructors on staff or raise student achievement. Shifrer et al. (2017) address this topic by distinguishing between the effects of different award levels and by concentrating on the actual receipt of financial rewards rather than just eligibility. A better likelihood of teacher retention or gains in the mean student test scores did not always correspond with receiving a financial award.

This conclusion is especially pertinent to urban schools, where educators deal with a variety of difficulties and where support networks and internal motives may be more important than monetary rewards. Regression discontinuity techniques are used in this study, which is situated in a sizable metropolitan school district, to assess how financial incentives affect academic performance. Recent developments in education have expanded our understanding of teacher retention, emphasizing the critical roles of support and leadership in student outcomes. Principals significantly impact teacher retention, especially in complex assessment frameworks. Effective principals retain high-performing teachers, suggesting that not all turnover is detrimental. Future studies should focus on the long-term effects of principal effectiveness and tactics for

retaining high-caliber teachers. Mentorship and induction programs, especially in high-poverty areas, are linked to lower turnover rates. Customized induction programs are vital for success. New teachers' initial placements impact their efficacy and professional advancement. Workload and professional culture significantly impact student achievement and teacher retention. Policies addressing these aspects are crucial for effective support. Dispersed leadership in schools has proven effective, and further research should explore increasing academic capability and long-term viability. Targeted teacher retention requires understanding its impact on teachers' viewpoints and job satisfaction. Research on the interconnectedness of teacher retention techniques with variables like race, gender, and socioeconomic background is needed for more successful and inclusive approaches in education.

Our understanding of teacher retention has greatly expanded because of recent developments in the field of education, which highlight the critical roles that support, and leadership play in determining student outcomes. These revelations have not only shed light on important topics but also indicated areas that need more investigation. Principals' roles have been found to have a significant impact on teacher retention, particularly in the context of complex teacher assessment frameworks. Effective principals have been found to play a crucial role in keeping teachers on staff, especially those who perform well. This casts doubt on the widely held belief that all teacher turnover is bad, proposing a more balanced strategy in which keeping highly accomplished educators in place while letting go of less successful ones could be advantageous. Prospective studies should focus on the long-term effects of principal effectiveness on teacher retention, as well as the tactics employed by successful administrators to keep their teaching staff of the highest calibre.

Another area of interest has been the effect of mentorship and induction programmes on lowering the attrition rate among new teachers. These programmes are linked to lower turnover rates, especially when they include mentoring, opportunities for collaboration, and instructional support. This effect is more noticeable in schools located in high-poverty areas, highlighting the vital role that these kinds of programmes play in demanding learning contexts. This suggests that induction programmes must be thorough and customised for the unique circumstances of educational institutions. The initial placement of new teachers in classrooms and schools, particularly those with more challenging curricula, has been a subject of attention. Their efficacy and ability to advance professionally may be impacted by this. Student achievement and teacher retention are also significantly impacted by elements like workload and the professional culture in schools. It is believed that policies addressing these many aspects are essential for providing new instructors with effective support.

Another topic of study has been dispersed leadership in schools and how effective it can be, given the circumstances and difficulties of the school. Future studies may examine ways to increase school academic capability through dispersed leadership models, as well as the long-term viability of distributed leadership in raising student success and school performance (Albasha & David, 2019). Furthermore, further research is required to determine the long-term effects of targeted teacher retention. Understanding the impact of retention tactics on teachers' viewpoints and job satisfaction is part of this. A more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of teacher retention might be obtained by looking into the impact of leadership support on the teachers' voice and satisfaction (Abbasi & David, 2021).

Lastly, a relevant area for further research is the interconnectedness of teacher retention techniques with variables like race, gender, and socioeconomic background. Examining the ways in which these variables affect retention intervention efficacy may highlight significant equity problems in the educational system and result in more successful and inclusive approaches. These areas of interest collectively highlight the necessity of complex techniques and policies in the education sector to improve student outcomes and teacher effectiveness.

A brief analysis on the context of the UAE may provide relevant background to the study as the study was conducted in private schools in the UAE. The educational sector in the UAE has been expanding (David, 2017a) steadily also addressing excellence in education (David, 2017b), making the UAE an educational hub for learning mobility in the region (David, et.al, 2017). The UAE strives to innovate curriculum (David & Hill, 2020) and instruction (David & Hill, 2021) paving ways for educational improvement. Eltanahy and David (2018) showcase that school leader's role on curriculum innovation is a key factor to enhance teaching strategies. Al Husseini and David (2017) suggest that instructional leadership support teaching quality. Daraghmeh and David (2017) highlight that school leaders play pivotal role in technology integration. David

and Abukari (2019) observe that contextualising leadership practices are important. Albasha and David (2019) indicate that the role of curriculum leaders is vital for effective instruction. Mansour and David (2021) highlight that school leaders support teacher's organizational commitment. Abbasi and David (2021) insist that educational leaders support professional development of teachers. Haque and David (2022) recommend that effective curriculum implementation to achieve instructional outcome of all subjects is largely ensured by school leaders. Yahya and David (2022) suggest that educational leaders' support is crucial for teachers to teach in all teaching modalities. Alzarouni and David (2023) highlight the impact of school leaders to impart value education in nurturing students' positive behaviour. Allababidi & David (2024), indicate the role of school leaders in nurturing middle leaders to enhance teachers performance. These and other local studies inform the trends on the role of leaders in schools in the UAE that will help exploring the impact of school leaders to develop and support teacher retention.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1. Research Model**

The empirical study helped to examine how school leadership support affects teacher retention at a Sharjah private school. Given the complex nature of this investigation, a mixed-method approach is used in the research. The mixed methods with two or more data allows researchers to make informed and substantial claims. This strategy is in line with the recommendations of Creswell and Plano Clark (2017), who support mixed-method research to combine the advantages of quantitative and qualitative techniques and provide a more thorough understanding of study issues.

### **2.2. Research Sample**

This study's quantitative component is a survey that was given to about 150 teachers. As Dörnyei (2007) points out, surveys are a crucial instrument in educational research for quantifying attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. They are perfect for extrapolating results to a larger population since they offer a comprehensive summary of the views held by a sizable group of people. Three school administrators participated in semi-structured interviews as part of the qualitative component, which supports the survey.

### **2.3. Data Collection Tools and Procedure**

The survey instrument is intended to collect information on the different facets of school leadership and how it is thought to affect teacher retention. Semi-structured interviews are useful for thoroughly examining complicated topics since they provide flexibility and the opportunity to uncover fresh perspectives. Because it makes it possible to extract complex understandings of leadership styles and methods, the interview is the mixed-methods approach is very useful in educational leadership research.

### **2.4. Data Analysis**

The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistical analysis and the qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis is divided into two main parts: analyzing survey data (quantitative) and interview data (qualitative). For the survey data, MS Excel was used. Basic statistics were examined, including participant age and teaching experience. The analysis explored how factors like leadership style and work-life balance relates to teacher retention. Correlation and regression analyses were conducted. For the interview data, a thematic analysis was employed. The process included immersion, reading interview transcripts to note early impressions, interesting points, and potential patterns. Coding followed, tagging text fragments with codes representing main ideas. Then, similar codes were combined into coherent themes. These emergent themes were refined by examining, polishing, and potentially rearranging them to match the facts. Next, the themes were defined and labeled to capture their essence accurately. Finally, the themes were integrated into a story, enhanced by representative quotes from the interviews.

### **2.5. Ethical**

All the research tools – qualitative and quantitative – are made to keep participant-identifying information private. This takes ethical guidelines for research instrument design into account, which is essential for preserving respondent anonymity (Denscombe, 2014). Data protection laws will be followed in the processing and archiving of the data, guaranteeing that private information is kept safe and utilised responsibly.

Following the study's conclusion, the participants will receive information about how their data will be used, stored, and disposed of (UK Data Service, 2018). The concept of reliability pertains to the degree to which a measurement of a particular phenomenon yields outcomes that are consistent and enduring (Taherdoost, 2016). Henceforth, to ascertain the dependability and uniformity of the assertions and their interconnectedness as a collective, utilisation of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was deemed necessary. The following table duly presents the outcomes obtained through this analytical approach.

To affirm the reliability and trustworthiness of the study's results, maintaining the consistency and stability of the research instruments is crucial. For this purpose, Cronbach's alpha, calculated using Python, was utilised to assess the internal consistency of the survey questionnaire within this study's quantitative analysis. The significance of this measure lies in its ability to evaluate the extent to which the survey items cohesively represent a single latent construct, thereby ensuring a commendable level of internal consistency. The computation of Cronbach's alpha, yielding a value of approximately 0.958, signifies an excellent level of reliability, instilling confidence in the uniformity and dependability of the survey's constructs.

Reliability, as conceptualised in research methodology, pertains to the consistency and stability of measurement across various instances and contexts (Taherdoost, 2016). The application of the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, a measure derived through Python programming, facilitates the examination of the interconnectedness and uniformity within the set of survey items. The observed Cronbach's alpha far exceeds the threshold suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), which posits a minimum reliability criterion of 0.70, thereby underscoring the robustness of the survey instrument used in this study. It is anticipated that a diverse array of methodological strategies will be employed to bolster the reliability of qualitative data. Among these, triangulation stands out as a pivotal approach, leveraging multiple data sources to validate and strengthen the outcomes derived from both the survey and interview methodologies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This multifaceted approach to data collection and analysis serves to enhance the credibility and reliability of the research findings, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive and validated understanding of the study's domain.

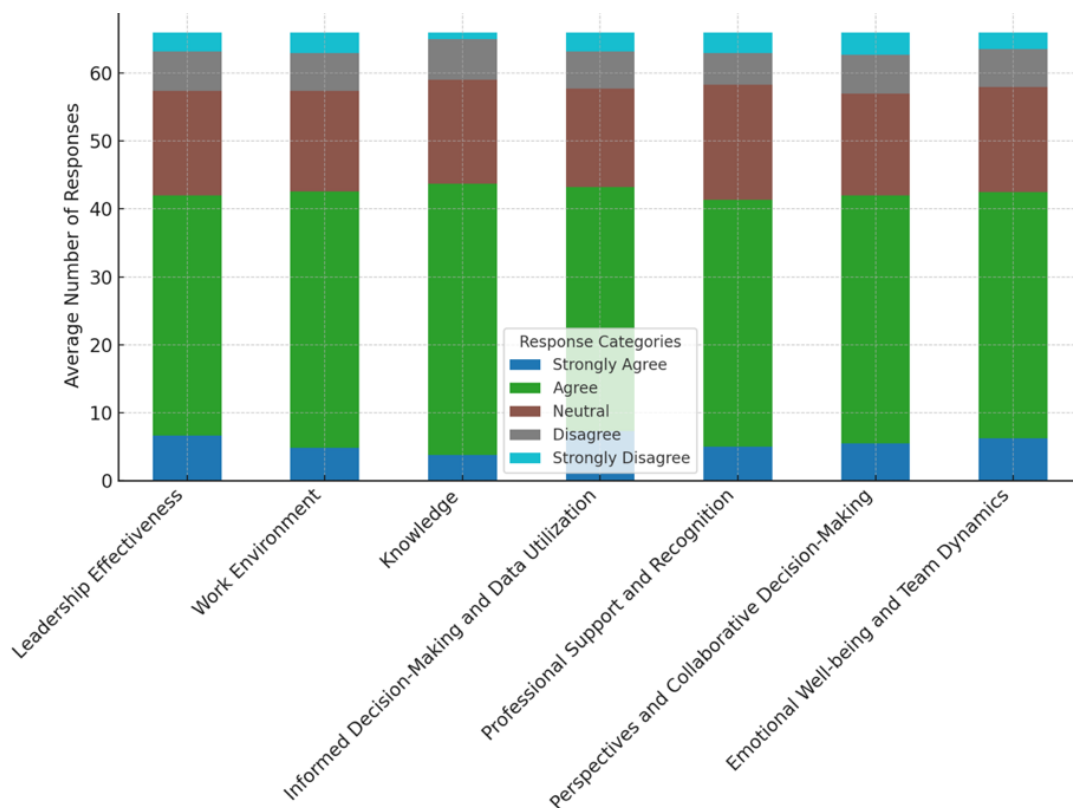
### **3. Findings**

#### **3.1. Quantitative Findings**

A quantitative survey conducted in a private school setting aims to explore the relationship between leadership support and teacher turnover. The study, employing robust quantitative analysis techniques, revealed seven distinct themes: Leadership Effectiveness, Work Environment, Knowledge, Informed Decision-Making and Data Utilisation, Professional Support and Recognition, Perspectives and Collaborative Decision-Making, and Emotional Well-Being and Team Dynamics. Visualizations including stacked bar charts, box plots, heat maps, and radar charts were used to analyze the data.

The highest mean scores (3.60) were in the themes "Knowledge" and "Informed Decision-Making and Data Utilisation", indicating a strong agreement on the value of knowledgeable, data-driven leadership in teacher retention. However, "Perspectives and Collaborative Decision-Making" and "Professional Support and Recognition" had the lowest mean scores (3.53 and 3.54 respectively), suggesting the need for improvements in involving teachers in decision-making processes and providing professional support and recognition.

The relatively consistent standard deviation values across themes indicate general agreement among respondents but also suggest room for enhancing consensus on certain leadership aspects. Overall, the survey results underscore the critical impact of effective, knowledgeable, and supportive leadership on fostering a work environment conducive to teacher satisfaction and retention, while also highlighting specific areas where targeted improvements can amplify positive outcomes. The summary of the quantitative data is illustrated in the below figure.



**Figure 1.** *The Quantitative Data*

The relationship between school leadership support and teacher retention is deeply connected to Career Choice Theory. The teaching staff, with a gender balance of 57.6% males and 40.9% females, and significant experience (54.5% with around 10 years), seeks stability and mentorship. A high level of educational qualifications (50% with a bachelor's and 43.9% with a master's degree) underscores commitment to professional growth. Efforts to align teachers with the school's vision, coupled with effective leadership communication, reflect higher job satisfaction. Leadership's focus on professional development, understanding of educational best practices, and personalized support create an environment valuing career advancement and individual needs. This approach, underpinned by Career Choice Theory, illustrates how a supportive and nurturing work environment significantly influences teacher retention, fostering a committed and dynamic teaching workforce.

Leadership positively impacts teacher retention, particularly experienced and dedicated teachers, by creating an environment valuing vision alignment, effective communication, collaboration, support, conducive physical workspaces, professional development opportunities, and confidence in leadership's expertise. Leadership's ability to comprehend specific difficulties, offer individualized support, and promote teacher participation in decision-making processes significantly improves teacher morale and work satisfaction. A positive school climate, where teachers feel respected and empowered to thrive, is influenced by leadership's empathy and efforts to establish a nurturing and supportive work environment. While the school leadership effectively helps to retain staff, areas for improvement include workload management, communication clarity, emotional well-being support, and community engagement, to further improve teacher satisfaction and retention. The stacked bar chart shows strong agreement and agreement in several areas regarding leadership traits positively affecting teacher retention, with the presence of neutral responses indicating areas for improvement. Overall, a thoughtful and compassionate approach to leadership can have a significant impact on teacher retention in various demographic contexts.

Transformational leadership in educational settings significantly impacts teacher satisfaction and retention by fostering a positive work environment. The Four Is - idealised influence, inspiring motivation, intellectual stimulation, and personalised consideration - are crucial components shaping this leadership style. By engaging teachers in a greater purpose, inspiring them to excel, promoting creativity, and providing individualised support, transformational leadership boosts satisfaction and retention. Similarly, instructional



leadership, focusing on curriculum, teaching effectiveness, and professional development, also enhances teacher satisfaction and retention by creating an engaging and supportive work climate. Balancing guidance and autonomy empower teachers and increases their commitment. Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory highlights intrinsic factors like a sense of mission and personal growth, as well as extrinsic factors like the work environment and compensation, as significant for teacher retention. Survey results show agreement on the importance of aligning with the school's vision and providing professional development opportunities. There is a strong consensus among educators regarding the efficacy of these leadership attributes, as evidenced by the concentration of responses in the "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" categories for questions pertaining to the leadership's clarity of vision, effective communication, fostering a collaborative environment, and providing adequate support. Notably, there was strong agreement on the topics of giving teachers the freedom to express their ideas and offering opportunities for professional growth, highlighting the significance of these elements in promoting job satisfaction and retention. This graphic emphasises how important it is for leaders to be empowering and helpful to keep teachers in their positions. It also raises the possibility that improving these traits could play a major influence in reducing teacher attrition.

The quantitative analysis of the 66 survey responses focuses on understanding the impact of school leadership dimensions on teacher turnover. It categorises the insights into seven themes: Leadership Effectiveness, Work Environment, Knowledge, Informed Decision-Making and Data Utilisation, Professional Support and Recognition, Perspectives and Collaborative Decision-Making, and Emotional Well-Being and Team Dynamics. The analysis indicates a generally positive perception of leadership, with the themes of Knowledge and Informed Decision-Making receiving the highest mean scores. However, Perspectives and Collaborative Decision-Making and Professional Support and Recognition scored lower, highlighting areas for improvement. Visualisations such as stacked bar charts, box plots, heat maps, and radar charts were used to illustrate the data, showing a consensus on the positive impact of leadership on teacher retention but also areas where the perceptions vary, indicating opportunities for leadership improvement.

The study revealed that creating a supportive work environment is crucial, including open communication, personalized professional development, and fostering collaboration. The replies indicate that the teachers can influence decision-making. Most of the teachers believe that the leadership understands the unique issues they face. The teachers and the school can both benefit from this involvement as it helps promote a sense of accountability and ownership. The leadership's empathetic display and strong sense of camaraderie play a crucial role in fostering a caring and supportive work environment. These elements provide an environment in schools where educators can grow both personally and professionally. The average rating, which is closer to 4 than 3, indicates that the leadership support has a generally positive effect on teacher retention. This is supported by the mode and median, which are solidly at "High Impact", representing the most common and middle values respectively in the dataset, providing additional clarity on the prevalent perception and central tendency of teacher ratings regarding leadership support. These ratings show that the leadership is successfully helping to keep its teaching staff on board.

Leadership support, such as professional growth opportunities, well-being programs, and recognition of teachers' efforts, enhances job satisfaction and fosters belonging within the educational community. Practices contributing to job satisfaction include offering competitive compensation, ensuring work-life balance, and involving teachers in decision-making. Successful integration of such practices demonstrates leadership's strategic approach to enhancing teacher retention. Collaborative and strategic approaches, involving teachers in policy development, foster a sense of shared ownership and commitment, essential for creating a supportive environment.

#### **4.2. Qualitative Findings**

Effective leadership support, characterized by empathy, strategic thinking, and collaboration, emerged as a pivotal factor in retaining teachers. Leaders who prioritize teacher well-being, professional development, and involvement in decision-making processes contribute significantly to enhancing job satisfaction and mitigating turnover rates within educational institutions. According to the findings from the interviews, the data analysis is divided into four themes: (1) Leadership Style and Supportive Environment, (2) Teacher Support and Professional Development, (3) Leadership and Collaborative Decision-Making, and (4) Challenges, Trends, and Strategic Responses in Teacher Retention. Each of them will be discussed below:

*Theme 1: Leadership Style and Supportive Environment:*

The exploration of leadership styles and the creation of supportive environments revealed distinct approaches among leaders. Leader 1 (L1) emphasizes active listening, professionalism, and the implementation of recognition strategies, while Leader 2 (L2) focuses on organizational culture and continuous learning initiatives.

*Theme 2: Teacher Support and Professional Development:*

Continuous learning and growth opportunities play a crucial role in enhancing teacher job satisfaction and retention. Both leaders recognize the importance of tailored professional development initiatives and mentorship programs in fostering a culture of support and growth within the institution.

*Theme 3: Leadership and Collaborative Decision-Making:*

Strong, supportive leadership positively influences teacher morale and commitment by actively involving teachers in decision-making processes. Themes of trust, respect, and collaboration emerged as key components in fostering a conducive environment for teacher retention.

*Theme 4: Challenges, Trends, and Strategic Responses in Teacher Retention:*

The analysis of challenges, trends, and strategic responses highlighted hurdles such as workload pressures and administrative decisions impacting teacher retention. Strategies for addressing these challenges include enhancing teacher satisfaction through competitive compensation, fostering a positive school culture, and implementing individualized support mechanisms. The below table sums up the four themes.

**Table 1.** *The Themes*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>
<i>Theme 1: Leadership Style and Supportive Environment</i>	The qualitative data analysis emphasized the importance of a supportive environment fostered by leaders through empowering leadership styles, active listening, and feedback assimilation, which promotes professional growth and retention.
<i>Theme 2: Teacher Support and Professional Development</i>	Leaders create a climate of cooperation, openness, and ongoing development, significantly impacting teacher retention by encouraging a culture where teachers feel appreciated and valued.
<i>Theme 3: Leadership and Collaborative Decision-Making</i>	The narrative demonstrates the institution's dedication to creating an atmosphere that supports growth and retention by investing in professional development and recognizing the significance of strategic leadership actions to overcome challenges facing teacher retention.
<i>Theme 4: Challenges, Trends, and Strategic Responses in Teacher Retention</i>	The study highlights the critical impact of leadership in improving teacher retention, underscoring the importance of proactive, supportive, communicative, and inclusive leadership practices.

The investigation highlights the critical impact that leadership plays in improving teacher retention by underscoring a culture of cooperation, openness, and ongoing development. A supportive environment where instructors feel appreciated is fostered by leaders through the use of empowering leadership styles, active listening, and feedback assimilation. This promotes professional growth and retention. It is emphasised that encouraging a sense of belonging among teachers requires supportive leadership, effective communication, and participation in decision-making processes. Professional development and well-being initiatives for teachers are essential for job happiness and retention. In order to ensure successful management practices and meet competitive problems, strategic leadership is required. Meanwhile, to create environments that support teacher satisfaction and retention, the summary emphasises the importance of proactive, supportive, communicative, and inclusive leadership. It also provides school administrators with useful insights to improve their leadership practices, which in turn contributes to the stability and success of educational institutions.

The study employs a triangulation approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, to examine the impact of leadership practices on teacher retention in private schools. This approach enhances the research's depth, validity, and reliability by cross-validating findings from multiple data sources. The quantitative data revealed a positive perception of leadership, particularly highlighting the importance of knowledge and informed decision-making as key to retaining teachers. These findings were supported by the qualitative data,

which underscored the significance of a supportive environment fostered by collaborative and encouraging leadership styles. This environment values teacher input and promotes professional growth, thereby contributing to teacher retention.

The study conclusively demonstrates that effective leadership – characterised by knowledge, decision-making, collaboration, and support – directly influences teacher retention. It validates the importance of these leadership attributes and assures the robustness of the findings, enhancing the research's overall credibility. The triangulation method provides a comprehensive understanding of how leadership practices affect the teachers' decisions to stay or leave, offering actionable insights for school administrators to improve leadership strategies and create environments that support teacher retention. This approach not only confirms the crucial role of leadership in teacher retention, but also ensures the applicability and solidity of the research findings, providing valuable information for legislators and school administrators aiming to enhance teacher satisfaction and retention.

In the data triangulation section of our study, we integrate and examine the findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses to present a comprehensive view of how leadership practices impact teacher retention in the context of private schools. This integration allows us to juxtapose the measurable aspects captured through the survey with the nuanced insights gathered from the interviews, enabling a multifaceted understanding of the leadership dynamics at play. The table below summarises the key findings from both data sets, highlighting the synergies and distinctions between the quantitative and qualitative results. This approach not only corroborates the findings across different methodologies, but also enriches our comprehension of the complex interplay between leadership styles and teacher retention outcomes.

#### **4. Discussion**

This research delves into the intricate relationship between school leadership support and teacher retention in Sharjah's private schools, revealing a nuanced exploration of how educational leadership impacts the teaching workforce's stability and quality. Highlighting the significance of teacher retention as a cornerstone of educational quality, the study draws attention to various non-salary factors such as leadership styles, working environments, and the availability of support personnel that influence teachers' decisions to remain in their roles. It addresses a notable gap in the existing literature by offering an in-depth analysis of how diverse leadership supports can positively affect teacher retention, aiming to equip policymakers and school administrators with actionable insights for fostering an improved teaching environment. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research integrates quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, engaging approximately 150 teachers and three school administrators. This comprehensive method facilitates a detailed examination of leadership practices and their correlation with teacher retention, blending statistical analysis with personal narratives to enrich the findings. The research underscores the pivotal role of effective leadership in creating a supportive work environment conducive to retaining teachers. It identifies key leadership practices, such as providing professional support, acknowledging teachers' contributions, and promoting a collaborative culture, as essential to enhancing teacher satisfaction and commitment. Furthermore, it emphasises the importance of addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators to boost job satisfaction.

The research underscores the critical importance of leadership in fostering a positive school climate that enhances teacher retention. The key leadership practices identified, such as providing professional support, recognising teacher contributions, and fostering collaborative cultures, echo the findings of previous studies (Ingersoll & Smith, 2004; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). However, the study extends these insights by emphasising the unique context of Sharjah's private schools, highlighting the role of cultural, organisational, and economic factors in shaping leadership effectiveness and teacher retention strategies.

Comparing the study's findings with the existing literature reveals both alignments and extensions. Like Lovison and Mo (2023) and Tran and Smith (2020), this research confirms that beyond financial incentives, factors such as leadership support, professional development opportunities, and a supportive work environment play significant roles in teacher retention. However, the study advances the discourse by specifically examining the Sharjah private school context, offering nuanced insights into how localised educational environments influence the effectiveness of leadership practices. The emphasis on the complex interplay between leadership support and teacher retention aligns with the work of Grissom and Loeb (2011),

who highlighted the importance of principal effectiveness in fostering academic achievement and teacher retention. This study builds on these insights by exploring the specific types of leadership support that are most effective in the Sharjah context, thereby contributing to a more contextualised understanding of the leadership's impact on teacher retention.

## **5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study reaffirms the critical role of school leadership in influencing teacher retention and provides a comprehensive examination of how this dynamic unfolds in the specific context of Sharjah's private schools. By bridging theoretical frameworks with empirical findings, the study contributes to a more profound understanding of the factors that underpin teacher retention and offers a foundation upon which future research and practical applications can be built. Ultimately, the insights garnered from this research endeavour not only to enhance our academic knowledge, but also offer a beacon of guidance for educational leaders striving to cultivate environments where teachers are supported, valued, and motivated to continue their vital work in shaping future generations.

Concluding that school leadership is instrumental in teacher retention, the study highlights how strategic leadership practices can significantly contribute to a positive work atmosphere and elevate teacher satisfaction levels. The implications for policy development are profound, suggesting that focused leadership training and the adoption of supportive practices could markedly improve teacher retention rates. This investigation contributes valuable perspectives to the field of educational leadership, particularly concerning the unique challenges and opportunities presented within the context of Sharjah's private schools. It advocates for a holistic approach to teacher retention that transcends mere financial incentives, spotlighting leadership's critical role in shaping a nurturing work environment. Overall, the study offers a thorough exploration of the dynamics between school leadership and teacher retention, stressing the need for tailored leadership strategies to mitigate teacher turnover and, by extension, enhance the educational outcomes.

## **6. Recommendations**

The research provides recommendations for educational administrators, policymakers, and school leaders in private schools in Sharjah or similar settings such as Implement targeted leadership development programs focusing on transformational leadership skills, data-informed decision-making, and emotional intelligence. Cultivate leadership qualities that enhance teacher retention, such as the ability to inspire, support, and engage with teachers on a personal and professional level. Invest in creating and maintaining a positive school culture by ensuring clear communication, recognizing, and rewarding teacher efforts, providing opportunities for professional growth, and fostering a collaborative atmosphere. Efforts should be made to improve areas of weakness identified in the study, such as collaborative decision-making and workload management.

Educational policies should support leadership practices conducive to teacher retention. This may include policies that encourage professional development, mentorship programs, and initiatives aimed at improving the school climate and teacher satisfaction. Retention strategies should be customized to fit the specific cultural, organizational, and economic contexts of schools. Expand existing leadership theories to incorporate the impact of cultural and organizational context on leadership effectiveness and teacher retention. Future research could explore how transformational leadership practices can be adapted or modified in different educational settings.

The use of a mixed-methods approach underscores the value of combining qualitative and quantitative data to gain a comprehensive understanding of complex issues like teacher retention. Future research could further explore the benefits of mixed methods designs in educational research, particularly in studies that seek to understand the nuances of human behaviour and organizational dynamics.

By focusing on private schools in Sharjah, the research addresses a gap in the literature related to leadership and teacher retention in this specific context. Future studies could expand this line of inquiry to other private school settings or conduct comparative studies between public and private schools to identify the unique challenges and opportunities in each. The study suggests several avenues for further research in educational leadership and teacher retention, particularly in private schools in Sharjah and similar environments. Future research could include cross-cultural comparative studies, longitudinal studies on leadership's long-term effects, quantitative assessments of leadership interventions, exploration of technology's role in leadership,

qualitative research on teachers' perspectives, examination of economic and organizational challenges faced by private schools, and evaluation of customized retention strategies and leadership development programs. These directions emphasize a comprehensive approach to exploring and addressing the intricacies of educational leadership and teacher retention in various contexts.

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