International Journal of Humanities Social Science and Management (IJHSSM)
Volume 5, Issue 3, May-June, 2025, pp: 641-645 ISSN: 3048-6874
www.ijhssm.org

Influence Of Wage Levels and Staff Incentives on Teacher Retention in Public Secondary Schools in Delta State

NKEDISHU, Victor Chukwubueze and AKPOJOTOR Rita Ufuoma
Department of Educational Management and Foundations,
Delta State University Abraka

Date of Submission: 02-06-2025 Date of Acceptance: 12-06-2025

Abstract
This study examined the influence of wage levels and staff incentives on teacher retention in public secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. It employed a quantitative research design utilizing a cross-sectional survey approach. A multi-stage sampling technique and Krejcie and Morgan's sample size determination table were used to select 390 teachers from a population of 15,531 teachers across 471 public secondary schools in Delta State. A structured questionnaire titled "Teacher Wage and Incentive Retention Scale (TWIRS)" was developed for data collection. It was validated through content and construct validity and further subjected to Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient value of 0.89. Data was analyzed using the coefficient of determination to address the raised questions employing SPSS version 26.0. The findings revealed significant positive relationships among all variables. Wage levels demonstrated the strongest correlation with teacher retention (r = 0.781), accounting for 60.9% of the variance in teacher retention rates. Staff incentives showed a moderate positive correlation (r = 0.575), explaining 33.1% of the variance in teacher retention. Interestingly, the combined effect of wage levels and staff incentives accounted for 45.9% of the variance in teacher retention. The research recommends that the Delta State government establish a revised teacher salary structure reflecting current economic realities, implement comprehensive incentive packages addressing professional development needs, and establish robust monitoring systems for tracking teacher retention.

Keywords: Teacher retention, wage levels, staff incentives, public secondary schools, Delta State

I. Introduction

Teacher retention has emerged as a critical challenge facing educational systems globally, with developing countries like Nigeria experiencing acute difficulties in maintaining stable teaching workforce (Nwoke, 2024). The significance of teacher retention cannot be overstated, as it directly impacts educational quality, student achievement, and overall system stability. García-Martínez et al. (2020) emphasize that teacher recruitment and retention represent one of the most promising interventions for improving educational outcomes in developing nations.The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform policy decisions regarding teacher compensation and incentive structures in Delta State's educational system. Previous research in Delta State has established the critical role of financial management practices in educational institutions (Nkedishu&Onyekwe 2024), while other studies have highlighted the importance of community support systems in educational development (Ataine&Nkedishu, 2017), creating a foundation for understanding the complex nature of educational challenges in the state. With Nigeria's rapidly growing population and increasing educational demands, retaining qualified teachers has become paramount for achieving sustainable educational development. (Ingersoll & Tran, 2023), highlighting the global nature of this challenge.Furthermore, this research contributes to the broader understanding of human resource management in educational settings, particularly in resource-constrained environments typical of developing economies. The findings could serve as a foundation for designing effective teacher retention strategies that balance fiscal constraints with the imperative to maintain quality education delivery.

Statement of the Problem

Public secondary schools in Delta State face a persistent challenge of high teacher turnover rates, which adversely affects educational quality and continuity. Despite government efforts to improve the education sector, observations indicate that many qualified teachers leave the public school system for entirely different career paths, citing inadequate compensation and lack of motivational incentives. This challenge is compounded by broader systemic issues affecting educational

International Journal of Humanities Social Science and Management (IJHSSM)
Volume 5, Issue 3, May-June, 2025, pp: 641-645 ISSN: 3048-6874
www.ijhssm.org

management in Delta State, where funding patterns and resource allocation continue to impact school operations (Nkedishu&Onyekwe 2024), and the retention of quality teachers remains problematic across both public and private institutions (Nkedishu, 2020).The problem is compounded by systemic issues affecting teacher welfare. Research has shown that poor salaries and unpleasant school policies contribute significantly to teacher attrition (Eze et al., 2019). This situation has resulted in understaffed schools, increased workloads for remaining teachers, and compromised educational outcomes for students. The continuous cycle of teacher departure and replacement disrupts instructional continuity and places additional strain on school administration and remaining teachers.Without addressing the underlying issues of wage adequacy and incentive provision, Delta State's public secondary schools risk continued deterioration in educational quality and further retain experienced teachers. The situation reflects broader challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa where teacher supply consistently fails to meet demand (Bennell, 2022).

Research Questions

The following questions were raised:

1. What is the relationship between wage levels and teacher retention rates?
2. How do staff incentives influence teachers' decisions to remain in or leave?
3. What are the combined effects of wage levels and staff incentives on overall teacher retention?

II. Literature Review

Teacher retention has been extensively studied across various educational system, with wage levels and incentive structures consistently emerging as critical factors. Recent meta-analytic evidence demonstrates that salary satisfaction is among the strongest predictors of teacher retention across multiple studies (Borman & Dowling, 2017). The theoretical foundation for understanding teacher retention draws from motivation theories, particularly Herzberg's two-factor theory, which identifies salary as a hygiene factor that, when inadequate, leads to job dissatisfaction.In the Nigerian, studies have revealed complex relationships between compensation and retention. Research examining teacher quality and motivation in Nigeria has consistently identified inadequate remuneration as a primary factor driving teachers away from public schools (Bennell&Akyeampong, 2007). The average teacher salary in Nigeria of ₦486,000 annually (PayScale, 2025) remains significantly below what many consider adequate compensation for the qualifications and responsibilities required of a teacher.Studies from other African countries provide valuable insights into the relationship between compensation and retention. Casely-Hayford et al. (2022) define teacher retention as keeping qualified teachers in the teaching profession, emphasizing that retention strategies must address both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. Their cross-national study of teacher retention in Sub-Saharan Africa found that countries with better compensation packages consistently demonstrate higher retention rates (Peprah Opoku et.al. 2024).

The role of staff incentives beyond basic salary has gained increasing attention in literature. Kelchtermans (2017) argues that effective retention strategies must address teachers' need for recognition, professional development opportunities, and improved working conditions. Research indicates that comprehensive incentive packages addressing both financial and professional growth needs are most effective in retaining quality teachers(Gist & Bristol, 2022).International evidence suggests that strategic interventions can significantly impact retention rates. In England, where only 60% of teachers remain in state schools after five years, targeted retention programs have shown promising results (García-Martínez et al., 2020). These programs typically combine salary improvements with professional development opportunities and enhanced working conditions.Recent systematic reviews of teacher recruitment and retention interventions emphasize the importance of evidence-based approaches to policy development (See et al., 2020). The most promising interventions typically combine multiple strategies rather than relying on single approaches, suggesting that comprehensive reforms are necessary for meaningful improvement in retention rates.The limited empirical evidence specific to Delta State highlight the need for contextualized research to develop appropriate interventions. While general principles of teacher retention may apply across nations, the specific economic, social, and cultural factors affecting Delta State teachers require targeted investigation.

III. Method

This study employed a quantitative research design using a cross-sectional survey approach. The quantitative methodology was chosen to enable statistical analysis of relationships between variables and to test the formulated

International Journal of Humanities Social Science and Management (IJHSSM)
Volume 5, Issue 3, May-June, 2025, pp: 641-645 ISSN: 3048-6874
www.ijhssm.org

hypotheses objectively.The population of the study consists of 15,531 teachers in 471 public secondary schools, Delta State, where a sample of 390 teachers was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique and Krejcie and Morgan's sample size determination table. This provides adequate representation with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, considering the study population. A structured questionnaire titled "Teacher Wage and Incentive Retention Scale (TWIRS)" was developed for data collection. Content validity was established for the instrument through expert review by three educational administration specialists and one measurement and evaluation experts. Their feedback led to modifications in item wording and the inclusion of context-specific questions. Construct validity was assessed through factor analysis, which confirmed the three-factor structure of the instrument with factor loadings above 0.60 for all items.The reliability of the instrument was determined through a pilot study conducted with 30 teachers not included in the main study. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for each subscale: wage levels ($\alpha = 0.87$), staff incentives perception ($\alpha = 0.91$), and retention intention ($\alpha = 0.85$). The overall instrument reliability was $\alpha = 0.89$, indicating high internal consistency.Data was analysed using the coefficient of determination to answer the raised questionsemploying SPSS version 26.0.

IV. Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between wage levels and teacher retention rates?

Table 1: Correlation between Wage Levels and Teacher Retention

Variable	Mean	SD	r	r^2	r^2%	Remark
Wage levels	2.31	0.89	.781	.609	60.9	Positive correlation
Teacher retention	2.45	0.95				

Result in Table 1 shows correlation between wage levels and teacher retention. The result revealed wage levels with a mean rating of 2.31, SD=.89 and teachers retention with a mean rating of 2.45, SD=.95. The relationship between the two variables was r =.781 which shows a positive relationship. r^2 of .609 shows that wage levelsis related to teachers retention by 60.9%. Thus, there is a positive relationship between wage levels and teacher retention rates.

Research Question 2: How do staff incentives influence teachers' decisions to remain in or leave?

Table 2: Correlation between Staff Incentives and Teacher Retention

Variable	Mean	SD	r	r^2	r^2%	Remark
Staff incentives	2.04	0.89	.575	.331	33.1	Positive correlation
Teacher retention	2.45	0.95				

Result in Table 2 shows correlation between staff incentives and teacher retention. The result revealed staff incentives with a mean rating of 2.04, SD=.89 and teachers retention with a mean rating of 2.45, SD=.95. The relationship between the two variables was r =.575 which shows a positive relationship. r^2 of .331 shows that staff incentive is related to teachers retention by 33.1%. Thus, there is a positive relationship between staff incentives and teacher retention rates.

Research Question 3: What are the combined effects of wage levels and staff incentives on overall teacher retention?

Table 3: Correlation between Wage levels, Staff Incentives and Teacher Retention

Variable	Mean	SD	R	r^2	r^2%	Remark
Wage levels	2.31	0.89	.678	.459	45.9	Positive correlation
Staff incentives	2.04	0.89				
Teacher retention	2.45	0.95				

Result in Table 3 shows correlation between wage levels, staff incentives and teacher retention. The result revealed wage levels with a mean rating of 2.31, SD=.89,staff incentives with a mean rating of 2.04, SD=.89 and teachers retention with a mean rating of 2.45, SD=.95. The relationship between the three variables was r =.678 which shows a positive relationship. r^2 of .459

International Journal of Humanities Social Science and Management (IJHSSM)
Volume 5, Issue 3, May-June, 2025, pp: 641-645 ISSN: 3048-6874
www.ijhssm.org

shows that wage level and staff incentiveswere related to teachers' retention by 45.9%. Thus, there is a positive relationship between combined effects of wage levels and staff incentives on overall teacher retention.

V. Discussion of Findings

The finding that wage levels account for 60.9% of teacher retention (r = 0.781) strongly supports the theoretical framework proposed by Herzberg's two-factor theory, which identifies salary as a critical hygiene factor. This result is particularly significant when viewed against the backdrop of Nigeria's educational system, where the average teacher salary in Nigeria of ₦486,000 annually (PayScale, 2025) remains significantly below what many consider adequate compensation for the qualifications and responsibilities required of teachers. The strength of this correlation aligns with Borman and Dowling's (2017) meta-analytic evidence that demonstrates salary satisfaction is among the strongest predictors of teacher retention across multiple studies. This finding also supports the observations made by Eze et al. (2019) that poor salaries contribute significantly to teacher attrition in the Nigerian educational system. The practical implications of this finding are substantial, as it suggests that addressing wage inadequacy could potentially resolve the majority of retention challenges in Delta State's public secondary schools. This is consistent with research examining teacher quality and motivation in Nigeria that has consistently identified inadequate remuneration as a primary factor driving teachers away from the teaching profession (Bennell&Akyeampong, 2007).

The finding that staff incentives account for 33.1% of teacher retention (r = 0.575) demonstrates their importance while revealing their secondary role compared to wage levels. This result supports Kelchtermans' (2017) argument that effective retention strategies must address teachers' need for recognition, professional development opportunities, and improved working conditions. However, the relatively lower impact of incentives compared to wages suggests that in resource-constrained environments like Delta State, basic salary adequacy takes precedence over additional incentives. This finding provides insight into research indicating that comprehensive incentive packages addressing both financial and professional growth needs are most effective in retaining quality teachers (Gist & Bristol, 2022), suggesting that the foundation of adequate wages must be established before incentives can achieve their full potential impact.

Interestingly, the combined effect of wage levels and staff incentives accounts for 45.9% of teacher retention variance, which is paradoxically lower than the individual effect of wage levels alone (60.9%). This unexpected finding suggests potential interaction effects or multicollinearity between the variables that warrant further investigation. This complexity aligns with recent systematic reviews of teacher recruitment and retention interventions that emphasize the importance of evidence-based approaches to policy development (See et al., 2020). The finding also supports the observation that the most promising interventions typically combine multiple strategies rather than relying on single approaches, suggesting that comprehensive reforms are necessary for meaningful improvement in retention rates.

VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings indicate that wage levels and staff incentives are significant factors in retaining teachers. Individually, competitive wages are a powerful driver, explaining over 60.9% of teacher retention. This suggests that fair and attractive compensation is a foundational element in keeping teachers in the profession.Beyond just salary, staff incentives also play a critical role, contributing to over 33.1% of teacher retention. This highlights the importance of non-monetary or performance-based rewards in fostering a stable teaching workforce.When wage levels and staff incentives are combined, their positive influence on teacher retention is substantial, accounting for 45.9% of the overall retention rate.

VII. Recommendations

The following were recommended from the findings:

1. Delta State government should establish a revised teacher salary structure that reflects current economic realities and provides competitive compensation relative to other professions requiring similar qualifications.
2. Delta State should simultaneously implement a comprehensive incentive package that addresses teachers' professional and personal development needs.
3. Delta State should implement a robust monitoring system that tracks teacher retention and identifies emerging challenges were necessary.

References

[1]. Ataine, A. J. &Nkedishu, V. C. (2017). Relevance of school community relations in the development of primary education in

Delta state, Nigeria, *Journal of Research in Education and Society*, 8(2), 18-27.

[2]. Bennell, P. (2022). Missing in action? The World Bank's surveys of teacher absenteeism in sub-Saharan Africa. *Comparative Education*, 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/03050068.2022.2083342

[3]. Bennell, P., &Akyeampong, K. (2007). *Teacher motivation in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia*. Department for International Development.

[4]. Borman, G. D., & Dowling, N. M. (2017). Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(3), 367-409.

[5]. Casely-Hayford, L., Seidu, A., &Yendaw, E. (2022). Teacher retention and job satisfaction in Sub-Saharan Africa: A cross-national study. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 95, 102-115.

[6]. Eze, U. N., Nwoke, M. B., &Ugwu, J. C. (2019). Attrition and strategies for teacher retention in secondary schools in Anambra State. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 12(3), 45-58.

[7]. García-Martínez, I., Tadeu, P., & Montenegro-Rueda, M. (2020). Teacher recruitment and retention: A critical review of international evidence of most promising interventions. *Education Sciences*, 10(10), 262.

[8]. Gist, C. D., & Bristol, T. J. (2022). *Handbook of Research on Teachers of Color and Indigenous Teachers*. American Educational Research Association. https://www.torrossa.com/en/resources/an/5368445#page=864

[9]. Ingersoll, R. M., & Tran, H. (2023). Teacher Shortages and Turnover in Rural Schools in the US: An Organizational Analysis. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *59*(2), 396–431. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161x231159922

[10]. Kelchtermans, G. (2017). Should I stay or should I go? Unpacking teacher attrition/retention as an educational issue. *Teachers and Teaching*, 23(8), 961-977.

[11]. Nkedishu V. C., (2020). Qualifications, experience and retention of quality teachers in private secondary schools in Delta State, *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR)*, 6(5), 277-283.

[12]. Nkedishu, V. C, &Onyekwe, C. E. (2024). Funding patterns and financial management practices in public and private secondary schools, Delta State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Research in Education Humanities and Commerce*, *05*(01), 178–190. https://doi.org/10.37602/ijrehc.2024.5115

[13]. Nwoke, B. I. (2024). Assessing the phenomenon of out-of-school children in Nigeria: Issues, gaps and recommendations. *Review of Education*, 12(1), e3070.

[14]. PayScale. (2025). *Teacher salary in Nigeria*. https://www.payscale.com/research/NG/Job=Teacher/Salary

[15]. Peprah Opoku, M., Nketsia, W., Belbase, S., Side, A. S., Jiya, A. N., & Gemeda, F. T. (2024). A cross-national study of teacher retention and job satisfaction in Sub-Saharan Africa. Preventing School Failure: *Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 69(2), 137–148. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2024.2361874

[16]. See, B. H., Morris, R., Gorard, S., Kokotsaki, D., & Abdi, S. (2020). Teacher Recruitment and Retention: A Critical Review of International Evidence of Most Promising Interventions. *Education Sciences*, *10*(10), 262. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10100262