



## INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL'S MOTIVATION STRATEGIES ON TEACHER'S RETENTION IN CATHOLIC PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAJIADO COUNTY, KENYA

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### Abstract:

This study investigated the influence of principal's motivation strategies on teacher's retention in Catholic secondary schools in Kajiado County. The study was anchored on transformational leadership theory. A mixed-methods research paradigm of convergent parallel design was employed. Phenomenological and cross-sectional survey designs with respect to qualitative and quantitative designs were adopted. Census, purposive, and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires, structured interview guides, and document analysis. Content validity and split-half reliability were used to ensure the validity and reliability of quantitative instruments. Member checking, peer review, and triangulation of data were used to check the reliability of the qualitative instrument. Both inferential (correlations) and descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data, which was presented in frequencies, percentages, tables, and graphs. Qualitative data was analyzed using a thematic approach and presented in the form of narratives and direct quotations. The study revealed that principals' motivation strategy positively influences teachers' retention in Catholic secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study concluded that the principals of schools in Catholic secondary schools in Kajiado County need to improve on the strategies used to retain the teachers. The study recommended that there is a need for a comprehensive review and redesign of the motivation strategies employed by principals to ensure their effectiveness in retaining teachers.

**Keywords:** influence, principals, motivation strategies, teacher's retention

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## 1. Introduction

The education sector continues to encounter various challenges in achieving effective learning. Teacher retention is a challenge that affects administration work and compromises learning in secondary schools. Teacher retention is an action of a learning institution to keep a teacher serving students for a long period of time and enables continuity of programs without disruptions, hence achieving the school's set goals. Hawthorne (2021) defines teacher retention as keeping staff in the workplace and reducing turnover. Keeping efficient and effective staff for a long period of time in school enables students to consistently benefit from the teaching and learning process. Retention of effective and competent teachers enhances coverage of the syllabus, good preparation of students for national examinations, student retention, and gives ample time and opportunity to offer high-quality education, while ineffective teachers discourage students. Emerick (2006) considered teacher retention not only as remaining in an institution for a longer period of time but also as completing a particular project or program intended. For this reason, management is able to account well for the progress of a project or program. The principal is charged with the responsibility of spearheading and implementing strategies and practices that an institution considers necessary to retain its staff for a long period of time.

Principals are seen as executive officers in learning institutions, for they are endowed with positional powers to provide instructional leadership, manage physical and financial resources, develop educational institutions, and manage the staff to realize school goals. Principals also serve as key players in directing learning in educational institutions. They are charged with powers to spearhead the implementation of education policies, instill discipline, a positive attitude, skills, knowledge, and values, and support teachers to enhance students' learning, thus transforming them and the larger society, says Khedkar & Pushpanadham (2018). To realize the country's educational goals, principals collaborate with the Ministry of Education (MoE), parents, and teachers as key partners. According to Makwinja's (2017) study in Botswana, teachers have been at the forefront of advocating for social transformation, creativity, and innovativeness among students. This calls for principals to employ strategies to retain competent, qualified teachers to enhance the teaching and learning process in India, thereby achieving high-quality education (Reddy, 2020).

Makovec (2018), in view of addressing the professional development of teachers, identified instructive, teaching-disciplinary, and value orientation as important pedagogical roles entitled to teachers, which take shape depending on the socio-cultural and geographical environment. Instructively, teachers coach, instruct, inform, and facilitate classroom learning while at the same time instilling values of commitment, responsibility, integrity, and respect in the students. Further, teachers have a didactic role in planning lessons as they take into account specific group, level, and individual needs, which gives each learner a chance to access and benefit from learning activities. Involving teachers in decision-making makes them feel appreciated, which makes them more

effective and efficient in their teaching. Consequently, as subject experts, teachers spearhead the learning of students, whereby knowledge and skills are imparted. Being effective experts, teachers empower students in preparation for future careers and professions. Many research studies have revealed that teachers are a key human resource in educational institutions affecting teaching and learning (Wilson *et al.*, 2019). It is imperative that principals retain teachers consistently to uphold an ideal school that offers holistic learning.

Similarly, Barnett (2017) observes that teachers in the United States of America are seen and held as a central part of the education system, as they play a vital role in enhancing discipline, providing guidance and counseling, providing spiritual nourishment, and providing physical and social support to students on a personal and group level. The advocacy for teacher retention shows that they play a key role in students' education. When effective and committed teachers are retained, students get empowered and well-supported, hence motivated to learn. Additionally, the holistic formation of learners is upheld, the teacher-student relationship is enhanced, performance is heightened, and they are able to fit into the larger society. On the contrary, when teachers don't stay, students do not fully achieve their desired goals due to a lack of the required skills and knowledge in their area of specialization. Notably, schools in New York incur a loss of institutional memory and relational trust among departmental members (Ronfeldt *et al.*, 2013). To address the challenge, the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) (2017) purports that principals should provide instructional and emotional support, offer inclusive decision-making, and encourage and motivate teachers on an individual or group level in order to create a conducive environment to retain them.

Oke *et al.* (2016) study in Nigeria posits that teachers are great contributors to students' performance and institutional stability. They further stress that the retention of committed teachers brings out the latent capabilities of learners and empowers them to make a difference in their lives. Teacher retention is of great importance to learners, for they consistently gain knowledge, acquire and better their skills, and build positive attitudes in their area of specialization. When learners are well attended to by their teachers, they create a good rapport in which they relate freely, and through sharing, they advance their skills, hence enabling them to achieve their dreams. In addition, Students are able to secure future employability, reduce poverty levels in their families, improve financial stability, and raise good living standards (Hawthorne, 2021). However, Hawthorne's study found out that despite increased financial incentives, teachers' motivation to remain in schools continues to be a challenge that has had a negative impact on institutional administration and students' learning.

Teachers are key implementers of curriculum and contributors in effecting change; thus, they need the support and direction of the principal. Nevenglosky (2018) found out that unaddressed concerns, lack of collaboration and support from principals triggered teacher attrition in the United States of America, hence derailing the implementation of curriculum. However, the researcher noted that teachers who are well-equipped with skills and knowledge implement new curricula with confidence. For the purpose of

consistency and effectiveness, Rose (2021) and Gitari's (2016) study in Kitui emphasized that the task of principals is to strategically offer physical facilities, curriculum resources, and support tools and develop the teachers professionally in order to effect change in the curriculum, project, or program intended. This further enhances teacher motivation to stay and reduces teacher stress and burnout, hence making it effective.

Imaobong's (2019) research found that teachers bear the primary responsibility for implementing both national and institutional educational goals since they provide guidance, counsel, mentorship, motivation, coaching, and nurturing to students. Staff professional development strategies enhance the morality and abilities of educators, enabling them to take responsibility for achieving both personal and societal objectives. However, in order for teachers to do their jobs properly and improve teacher retention as well as institutional development, principals must provide them with the financial, well-being, and moral support they require.

A study by Connolly *et al.* (2017) on the difference between educational management, educational leadership, and the importance of educational responsibility pointed out that school principals influence teachers' retention, performance, and participation in enhancing quality teaching and learning. For example, a principal's verbal words and non-verbal communication influence the feelings, thoughts, views, and even behaviors of teachers. Principals' positive communication has a positive influence on teachers' motivation and retention, thus enhancing high job performance and good outcomes throughout. Equally, a negative approach to communication consequently leads to low teacher performance, low motivation, job dissatisfaction, chronic absenteeism, and turnover, among others. Therefore, good communication between the principal and the teachers supports a good relationship that enhances a healthy working environment.

Despite the efforts made by researchers and principals in administration, many schools in the world are experiencing disruptions in the teaching and learning process due to teacher retention challenges. Thomas *et al.* (2017) and Gitari (2016) revealed that principals are challenged by staff turnover through transfers. The situation has led to a teacher shortage and the employment of unqualified and inexperienced personnel. Some teachers are transferred without replacement, early retirement, migration, and resignation (Ingersoll & May, 2012).

Along the same line, Levy *et al.* (2012) conducted a study on estimating teacher turnover costs in the USA and found out that teachers were either reassigned to schools or left the district, hence raising recruitment costs to the institution and creating gaps in teaching learners effectively. Luna *et al.* (2018), further found out that low salaries demotivated teachers, hence triggering turnover in public secondary schools in Rachuonyo South and East sub-Counties. Teacher retention is, therefore, a global issue of concern to principals, as reported by various researchers over time. In order to enhance retention, Mafora (2013) noted that principals in South Africa should understand the reasons behind teacher attrition in order to put in place appropriate retention strategies. These concerns affect developed, developing, and underdeveloped countries, as well as

private and public secondary schools. Research studies have shown that adequate and effective teachers spearhead effective and efficient progress by offering quality education. However, teacher retention has been a challenge facing the education sector for quite a long time. This is shown by the high teacher turnover over the years. Some teachers opt to retire, transfer, and others go for new jobs, thereby creating gaps in learning and increasing recruitment costs. DeMathews (2021) noted that teacher's turnover in America spiked in schools that experienced high principal turnover. Podolsky *et al.* (2019), Oke *et al.* 2016 and Laney (2018) study in the United States of America (USA) on perceptions of working conditions on teachers stay, the study revealed that a shortage of teachers was noted in key fields of mathematics, science, and special education, which increased teacher workload, raised recruitment costs. These incapacitated institutions offer special skills, hence limiting future career choices for students. However, Laney (2018) revealed that principals who provided instructional support, staff professional development, and supportive working conditions had a positive influence on retaining science and mathematics teachers. In addition, Mathew *et al.* (2022) revealed that principals in the USA provided the required resources for the safety of teachers and enhanced work-life balance in their schools. These strategies served well in keeping teachers in the profession and their various schools.

In the same country, the USA, Rinehart (2021), Darling-Hammond *et al.* (2018), Jacobson (2016), Darling-Hammond (2016) and Cross (2011) noted that the rate of teachers quitting was high within the first year due to unfavorable work conditions, geographical setting, a lack of teacher promotion, and career advancement. They further noted that undisciplined students, fear of unknown changes and reforms, unsupportive administration, and a lack of autonomy triggered teachers' burnout and attrition. Teacher attrition consequently lowers learning standards, incapacitates learners' subject choices, promotes poverty cycles, inhibits policy implementation, and discourages aspiring teachers from entering the teaching profession. Though Cross (2011) found out that schools in California and the U.S.A. employed mentorship and teacher development programs, teachers felt principal support, interaction, and check-in be enhanced. On further studies, Barnett (2017) and Cross (2011) revealed that delegation, principal-staff relationships, and transparency on challenges facing schools had enhanced teacher retention in urban, high minority, and high poverty-based schools in the U.S.A. Durnen (2021) and Hammond *et al.* (2018) pointed out that principals should provide coaching, a conducive work environment, and prioritize interaction to retain teachers. Hammond, (2018) study found that only 33% of rural district schools had purposely a strategic plan on retaining and attracting qualified staff, while 67% lacked the focus. It is important for schools to have and implement strategic plans for teacher retention to ensure quality learning and a smooth continuity of school programs and activities. In the Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine in Florida, the Bronsard (2012) study assessed factors that influence the retention of beginning teachers. The researcher established that satisfactory teaching assignments, collegiality, collaboration, and principals' leadership styles were

key reasons for retention, for they provided a good working environment for teachers in Catholic schools.

Tosso *et al.* (2020) and Podolsky (2016), in a study on interviews with female education practitioners in Madrid, noted that teachers faced isolation when faced with physical and mental health challenges. In addition, pressures from protecting and supporting students' health and stress in preparing the teaching materials and managing time reduced their retention. The research also pointed out that probable teachers declined to enter the teaching profession, thus creating a gap in teaching. Madrid (2014), a study in a private Catholic school in Houston, found that the principal capitalized on a structured professional friendship policy that enhanced sociability, practical and emotional support that enhanced teachers' professional growth, retention, and upholding of school culture. In the study, teachers noted that, despite the disagreements they encountered, they enjoyed open and honest communication, team spirit, mutual support, and harmonious working, which enhanced their friendship and retention.

A study by Binti Ibrahim (2021) on teacher workload in Malaysia noted that teachers' workload had a significant relationship with teacher satisfaction. The researcher found out that principals provide appropriate and sufficient resources to teachers, which enable them to cope with the workload and reduce stress, thus enhancing job satisfaction, and retention. The provision of the required resources enabled the teachers in Malaysia to prepare lessons and implement their tasks appropriately and with ease, thus enjoying their work.

In contrast, (The UNESCO Report, 2021) established that teachers in Slovakia are faced with stress on lesson preparation, work, time, and learning resources. A stressful environment triggered their attrition for other jobs, schools, or early retirement. Too much stress on teachers triggers burnout and health complications such as high blood pressure that develop with time. Teachers experiencing health complications are likely to offer inefficient and ineffective teaching. The research report upheld that effective school principals considered emergency planning to mitigate disasters, maintain and retain the teaching staff through remuneration, empowerment, teacher welfare, health insurance, sensitization, and assigning a manageable workload to reduce stress.

Most researchers noted that most teachers seek jobs in private institutions just in wait for a chance to move to public secondary schools where they feel there is job security. Teachers prefer public to private school institutions for pensions and less work. Private schools pose job insecurity and require a lot of work. For example, Heffernan *et al.*'s (2022) study on the reasons behind Australian teachers' intention to leave the teaching profession established that heavy workload, wellbeing and health, and dissatisfaction had an influence on their attrition. Inconsistency in teacher retention contributed to student panic in examination and unrest, and teachers felt job insecurity. However, Heffernan *et al.* found that Australian school teachers were retained by promoting career stages and high-salary positions like being in senior teacher positions. Further, Matas (2015) instructed principals to offer opportunities to teachers to develop human, social, structural, and psychological capital to enhance their retention. Formal mentoring and

inducting programs are needed for beginning teachers. In addition, principals were encouraged to spare considerable time and energy and inculcate school culture, mission, and school goals so as to give direction and positively influence teachers' attitudes.

Positive conflicts based on different ideologies, attitudes, personalities, and sensitivity bring about growth and understanding of each other. However, Goksoy & Turkan (2016), a study in a study Bolu Central District, Turkey, found out that unresolved conflicts caused stress, sorrow, tensions, disputes, discouragements and deviations from school norms, hence triggering teachers to leave the profession or the institution. According to the Uzun & Ayik (2017) study, teachers perceived the principal's effective communication was vital in managing and solving conflicts among them, hence creating a good working environment that encouraged them to stay. Teachers suggested that the avoiding strategy be used minimally. Teachers in South Africa enjoyed support from the school administration that enabled them to manage work-family conflicts, hence work-life balance (Makhuzeni & Barkhuizen, 2015). According to Owan (2018), principals need to be well-equipped with more strategies for conflict resolution in order to promote a friendly and motivating working environment to enhance teacher retention for a long time.

Liu *et al.* (2021), in exploring the relationships between resilience and turnover intention in Chinese high school teachers, pointed out that teacher burnout is caused by heavy workload, unconducive environment, lack of support and high pressures on student outcomes by principals, had a significant relationship with teacher turn over intention. Chen (2010) further pointed out that talented teachers were not satisfied with low wages. These pressures demoralise teachers and demotivate their spirits of working well. However, Zhang *et al.* (2015) noted that authoritative leaders used effective communication skills, while coaching-style leaders employed incentives as strategies to retain talented teachers. The school leadership has the responsibility to adopt strategies that will enhance teacher retention and relieve teachers from stressful working conditions.

Similarly, in developing countries, the teacher retention challenge has been persisting. Williams *et al.* (2021) study in Georgia found that rural and black schools struggled to retain effective, qualified teachers because the majority moved to either other districts or to sub-urban and urban areas to access enhanced facilities. Further, Locklear (2010) revealed that teachers felt their roles had considerably increased, but their salaries were low, thus provoking them to leave for other careers. However, Williams *et al.* (2021) and Locklear (2010) established that those who remained in teaching were encouraged by intrinsic rewards, salaries, relationships and a good school climate that made them enjoy their teaching. Teachers who are intrinsically motivated will stay in a school longer despite the extrinsic conditions.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, several schools, including private, had limited resources for disaster preparedness and management. According to Kurtz (2020) and the UNESCO Report (2021) on the gendered impacts of COVID-19, there was a gap in online digital-skills preparedness that caused a high level of stress and discouragement

among the female teachers in Pakistan, hence triggering their attrition. Further, a lack of physical materials and financial resources forced private institutions to reduce salaries and retrench teachers, thus triggering the attrition of teachers. Akram and Bilal (2013) noted that teachers left teaching when their expectations were not met. However, they also found out that private institution principals in Pakistan created flexibility in work and offered good incentives as strategies to motivate teachers to stay longer.

Africa is facing teacher retention challenges, just like the first world countries and beyond, as identified by different studies. Muremela *et al.* (2021) study in South Africa revealed that inadequate teaching resources and unequipped laboratories pose stress on mathematics and science teachers. Further inadequate school structures, water supply, a lack of electricity, and the negative attitude of learners triggered teacher attrition, either in Western countries or urban schools, for better incentives and less stress. A Shortage of teachers provoked student unrest, strikes, boycotts, and student attrition, which negatively impacted the financial position of schools in cases where damages and replacements were to be well addressed. According to Mabeya (2019), new teachers are expected to bring in new ideas and expertise. However, they established that learners take time to adjust. A study by Pitsoe (2013) found that strategies of collegial mentoring, autonomy in planning, and induction of new staff enhanced teacher retention and delivery of the intended curriculum in South Africa, but policies on attraction and retention were silent. In addition, Mafora's (2013) study revealed that principals in rural districts embraced a strategy of promoting discipline and high performance among students in order to attract and make teachers stay longer. Although Mafora found out that the majority of principals provided a conducive environment, they did not focus on teacher retention.

Abioye (2021) and Allen & Sims (2018), in their study on the retention and efficiency of qualified teachers in rural Nigerian secondary schools, found out that many teachers move from rural to urban for higher remuneration, adequate facilities, and career progression. Oke *et al.* (2016) study on retention and attrition in Nigeria observed that some teachers opt to retire due to age, bad leadership style of principals, unconducive rural environment, personal reasons, dismissal, an alternative profession, need to have children, dissatisfaction of the teaching job, student indiscipline and large classes. However, teachers were motivated to stay when given opportunities to advance in their careers to secure higher positions and high remuneration. On the same line, in Ogun State, Faremi (2017) revealed that teachers in private schools stayed longer due to teacher mentoring, inclusive staff participation, and safety programs employed by the principals. In Akwa Ibom State, findings by Agboola & Offong (2018) showed that promotion, occupational incentives, and job security made them stay, hence enabling them to develop quality leaders who can promote the sustainable development of society.

Teacher motivation has a high influence on teacher retention. Motivation further enhances teacher satisfaction, hence effective teaching and learning. The motivation of teachers could be extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is associated with what the school environment and principal offer to the teachers in terms of promotion, incentives,



teacher professional development, an amicable salary and a conducive working environment that results in high teacher retention. However, a study by Myers (2017) in Liberia found that low salaries, incentives, a lack of induction, and policies to enhance teacher career progression and development triggered teachers to quit teaching. This is in tune with Herzberg's two-factor theory, which postulates that the presence of motivational factors increased job satisfaction while the absence of maintenance factors, such as money and safety, led to dissatisfaction, hence triggering teacher attrition (Nyongesa, 2007).

Research by Samuel (2019) pointed out that delayed feedback, poor listening, and poor timing from the principal perpetuated misunderstanding and job dissatisfaction, hence teachers' attrition. Frugence & Mukadi (2021) study on the challenges that educational leaders face in enhancing students' academic achievement in Tanzania pointed out that principals should be well-trained on strategies to improve their roles in teacher motivation. Motivation for teachers takes different forms, like delegating authority, giving feedback to teachers after supervision, teacher inclusion, recognizing the teacher's efforts, giving rewards, and providing career progression opportunities, among others.

According to research carried out by Boniface (2016), teacher retention in Tanzania continued to decline due to a lack of housing and social services, inaccessibility to opportunities, and conflicts among the staff. The study proposed intra-school capital and extra roles granted to teachers to unite them and support each other. Further, Alagwa & Ligembe (2022) study on strategies for retaining secondary school science teachers established that strategies such as decision-making and recognition motivated and made them feel belonging, hence retention. In the same vein, the government enhanced teacher retention in Nyamagaro Municipal through compensation, yearly salary increments, and job security (Makisio, 2016), which made teachers feel motivated, hence working hard to achieve the institutions' goals.

In Uganda, Mugizi *et al.* (2019), who studied leadership styles and retention of teachers, found that laissez-faire style had a negative and insignificant relationship with teacher retention. The researcher pointed out that principals who practice laissez-faire only act on chronic problems but have little concern for what happens to the teachers. Delaying to respond to teachers' needs triggers their attrition. The researcher posits that transformational leadership has a significant impact on teacher retention by recognising their strengths and encouraging them.

In Kenya, according to the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) 2010-2015 Report, the number of teachers that were required was estimated to be 85,000 nationally. In 2016-2017, the national projection was 94,907 who were needed in both primary and secondary. Due to these great shortfalls and high rates of attrition, principals and their B.O.M. had to recruit more teachers to close the gap. The TSC Annual Report 2018-2019 noted that 1535 teachers in secondary schools were employed to replace those who exited naturally. From 2020 to 2021, about 8,134 teachers exited through natural attrition. Even though the Mid Term Plan of Vision 2030 was to employ 5,000 teachers every year to curb

the gap, there was still a deficit of 99,213 where the secondary section had 55,079. The situation meant that more teachers from private schools secured chances in public schools, creating a gap in them.

Achieng's (2018) study on how school environment influenced teacher retention in Nyatike–Migori County, pointed out that teachers who were affected by workload were 93.22%, professional growth opportunities were 90.9%, and school climate were 86.4 % hence influenced teachers to leave the profession. Nevertheless, the study revealed that a culture of professional development, career progression, job security, and a rewarding system motivated teachers to stay. Similarly, Sichari *et al.* (2017) in Homabay noted that 96.9% of the principals hailed recognition as a strategic tool used to make teachers stay as they felt appreciated. The researcher established there was a need for principals to find further motivational strategies of retaining teachers in Kenyan schools.

Another strategy that principals use to retain teachers is supervision. According to Nwosu *et al.* (2021), supervision is a means to guide and promote good rapport between teachers and their principal. Their good relationship enhances the implementation of teaching and learning programs, sharing knowledge and skills in the event of addressing teaching and learning issues. However, Nyongesa *et al.* (2018) pointed out that high supervision pressure caused tension and fear among teachers, hence implications for teacher turnover. Huma (2014) noted that in British curriculum secondary schools, training teachers on their subject areas and pedagogical issues was a strategy that made teachers feel valuable, competent, motivated, and professionally empowered. Further, the performance appraisal tool was also noted by the researcher as a contributing factor that equally enabled principals to address teachers' needs, such as controlling emotions, conflicts, and stress, thus creating a conducive environment to stay.

School principals encounter various challenges in curriculum implementation, such as financial resources. Several schools, including private ones, have limited resources for disaster preparedness and management. Effective school leadership considers emergency planning to mitigate disaster, maintaining and retaining the teaching staff through empowerment and sensitization on new skills and knowledge for effective teaching. In line with that, Edros *et al.* (2022) and Moraa & Kipngetich (2021) found that the inability of institutions to mitigate emerging issues led to increased job redundancy, job insecurity, low enrolments, and decreased employee retention in the private education sector. Some schools closed down, and others' enrollment, performance, and development dropped. In response to the management of upcoming issues, Mathew *et al.* (2022) revealed that principals in the USA provided the required resources for the safety of teachers and enhanced work-life balance in their schools. These strategies served well in keeping teachers in the profession and in their various schools, hence the continuity of effective learning.

Cherop's (2015) investigation on principals' strategies that influence teacher retention in private secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, found that 10% of teachers had the intention of leaving the school soon due to further studies, greener pastures, government employment, and job insecurity, poor communication among staff,

exorbitant penalties, too much supervision, and unsupportive principals, especially on student discipline. In the same vein, Emmanuel (2019) and Augustinah (2012) found that inadequate structures, reference materials, a lack of promotions, and little salaries subjected teachers to loan slavery, causing dissatisfaction. Respectively, Cherop's (2015) and Kiven *et al.* (2018) studies revealed that principals' democratic leadership, appreciation, motivation, and inclusive decision-making induced and enhanced teacher retention in Catholic private secondary schools. Munene's (2019) study noted that teachers in Mathioya sub-county were satisfied with the workload but felt they preferred areas of interest be assigned, and further strategies be employed for them to stay.

According to Muga (2022), the principal's laissez-faire leadership style influenced teacher attrition in Kisumu, Siaya, and Kajiado Counties. However, Wangithi (2014) pointed out that laissez-faire leadership had a moderate influence on teachers' job satisfaction in primary schools. Both studies showed that transformational leadership had a positive influence on teachers' job satisfaction, thus enhancing their retention. The study suggested that principals be trained to use transformational leadership styles to enhance teacher retention.

Principals have a responsibility to supervise teaching and learning for effective results and to improve relationships. A study by Atieno (2019) examined the effectiveness of principals' instructional supervision in enhancing teacher professional development in secondary schools in Nairobi and Kajiado Counties. The study revealed that principals lacked knowledge and appropriate skills in carrying out instructional supervision. They limited supervision to only checking the professional records for the teachers' and students' progress records. Further, Omondi's (2021) study revealed that teachers in Kajiado Central were stressed with instructional supervision, which subsequently led to stress and insecurity, hence triggering teacher attrition. In Isinya Sub-County, head teachers felt discouraged while carrying out supervision due to teachers' negative attitudes (Metuo, 2014). With such conditions, supervision failed to achieve the sole purpose of improving teachers' skills, knowledge, and enhancement of relationships. According to Kuviyo *et al.* (2022), policies need to be adopted, and training opportunities should be offered to principals to equip them with skills and knowledge on instructional supervision practices.

In accordance with that, teachers need to be empowered by principals through training, workshops, mentoring, and coaching, among others. Empowered teachers are well-equipped with the right skills, knowledge, and enriched experiences that keep them motivated to carry out effective teaching. According to the Atieno (2019) study in Kajiado County, only 23.9% of heads of departments (HODs) had undergone training, while 76.1% had never attended any course, which left them handicapped in new skills and knowledge. Consequently, only 29.4% of the teachers had gone for some courses, while 70.6% had attended none. This implies that many teachers are less empowered and, hence, may negatively influence their motivation to stay. All teachers need to be given the opportunity to develop in their area of interest to enhance their stay.

Orina (2014) assessed factors that contributed to the early retirement of teachers in secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. The research study revealed that teachers opted to retire or resign under the influence of hardship conditions, stagnating in job groups, and escalating teachers-principal conflicts. Some female teachers opted to join their spouse, and others were motivated to go for further studies, hence creating gaps that resulted in increased workload, indiscipline issues, increased recruitment costs, student dropouts, and poor results posted by several schools Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Notably, the imbalance of teachers in schools has a negative impact on curriculum implementation in Kajiado County. Several studies suggest that effective principal's strategies need to be adopted to maintain and enhance teacher retention (Munene, 2019; Mathew *et al.*, 2022).

Most studies on teacher retention and teacher attrition reveal that many researchers have focused more on their effect on academic performance (Orina and Omariba, 2017; Mannell, 2018; Mabeya, 2019 and Abioye, 2021) whereas very few studies have been conducted on how principals are coming up with strategies to enhance teacher retention. This prompted a study to be done in Kajiado County to curb teacher attrition as it affects the administration work of principals and students' learning. The data from the Ngong Diocesan Education Office on the length of stay of teachers in Catholic schools show that teachers who have stayed for one year and below were 52.94%, two years were 5.88%, four years were 23.5%, eight years were 5.88%, and ten years were 5.88%. The low rates of eight-year and ten-year teacher retention, 5.88%, implied that teachers do not stay for long in the catholic private secondary schools in Kajiado County. If teacher retention is not addressed, schools will continuously register low performance, low enrolments, high recruitment costs, and indiscipline issues such as boycotts, strikes, absenteeism, crimes, and student dropout that negatively impact learners' health and pose insecurity in society, thus hindering socio-economic growth (UNESCO Report, 2021 and Chumba, 2014). The situation in Kajiado is wanting. Hence, there is a need for other studies.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Catholic private secondary schools have been the choice of parents, students, sponsors, and other partners. However, there has been a great concern among education officials, the Catholic education management team, and other stakeholders that teachers hardly stay in Catholic Private Schools in Kajiado County. Studies have shown that the teacher retention challenge has affected how schools are run, general administration, workforce planning, increased recruitment costs, and compromised quality of education offered (Orina, 2014; Levy *et al.*, 2012). Studies confirm that teachers are stressed, feel insecure, and are in constant conflict with their principals, which is associated with their inappropriate skills and inadequate knowledge of instructional supervision, triggering their attrition (Omondi, 2021; Atieno, 2019; Nyongesa *et al.*, 2018; Simon, 2017 and Metuo, 2014). Studies also confirm that teachers are dissatisfied with laissez-faire leadership.

Further, less empowered teachers are demotivated because they are stagnated in

one job group (Muga, 2022; Atieno, 2019; Emmanuel, 2019; Orina, 2014). According to Boniface (2016), retention continues to escalate in many schools.

Despite several studies looking at teacher retention, they addressed what caused teachers' attrition and its effect on performance. However, there is still a gap in the literature on principals' strategies that will enhance teacher retention in Catholic secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya, hence leading to this study to be carried out.

### **2.1 Objective of the Study**

- 1) To find out the extent to which principal's motivation strategies influence teacher retention in catholic secondary schools in Kajiado County.

### **2.2 Research Question**

- 1) To what extent do principals' motivation strategies influence teacher retention in catholic secondary schools in Kajiado County?

## **3. Theoretical Framework**

This research study was anchored on Bass' transformational leadership theory to find out the principal's strategies that will enhance teacher retention. According to Liu (2018), the transformational theory originated in Downton (1973), in which Burns (1978) used the concept to study political leaders. Burns focused on "transforming" the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of staff members to inspire them to support the organization and one another. He also published a follow-up on transformational leadership in 2004 (Anderson, 2017). The theory further purports that a leader and followers should work together beyond their own interests, thereby moving to a higher level of morality and motivation.

Burns' transformational theory was further improved by an American scholar, Bass (1985), in the field of organizational behavior and leadership. Bass' approach to transformational leadership focuses on leader behaviors that stimulate, empower, and inspire followers, thus encouraging and motivating them to do more to achieve the best results beyond their expectations.

In the same line, Bass and Avolio (1994) gave shape to Burns's theory by identifying four aspects of the theory that specify how a leader influences the followers; the four aspects include inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration that contribute towards institutional transformation (Liu, 2018; Alatawi, 2017; Meng, 2004).

The theory purports that leaders who employ inspirational motivation, articulate vision and inspire the followers through shared knowledge and skills, communicate about the future goals, and provide opportunities and tasks to guide individuals and groups (Khan *et al.*, 2020). Leaders who embrace intellectual stimulation encourage creativity, innovativeness, and nurture, develop and support the followers (Liu, 2018; Alarifi, 2014 and Noruzy *et al.*, 2013). Leaders who use idealized influence provide a sense

of mission and visualise it in the organization with total commitment (Anderson, 2017). Leaders who adopt individualized consideration tend to be good listeners and put emphasis on their individual needs to guide, train, allocate tasks, supervise and advise, coach, mentor, support, and empower retention (Khan *et al.*, 2020).

### **3.1 Principal's Motivation Strategies in Enhancing Teacher Retention**

Motivational strategy is a vital tool in any organization or institution because it creates an environment that is conducive to employees and management at large, as represented by many researchers. A motivated employee tends to carry out responsibilities well, on time, and in a manner that is acceptable to the employer. Further employees feel encouraged, appreciated, belonging, and responsible. The motivation of the staff takes different forms and levels, thus taking into account individual and group needs. To enhance teacher retention, it is important that motivational strategies be considered so that students' needs are well met. From the literature reviewed, Kumar (2011) pointed to motivation as a strategy that enabled the administration to improve staff and institution performance. Their motivation to stay was alluded to by the principal's implementation of a reward program, career development, giving bonuses, recreation activities, and gifts, among others (Kiven *et al.*, 2018). According to Kumar (2011) and Gobena (2018), teacher motivation makes employees spend all their energies, time, abilities, giftedness, and talents giving the best, hence improving the rate of retention.

William's (2018) study focused on the relationship between a principal's leadership style, motivation, and teacher retention in public schools in Carolina, USA. The participating sample were teachers in public middle and high schools selected through a survey. The researcher adopted a quantitative, non-experimental research design. The instruments that were utilized to collect data included a multifactor leadership questionnaire, Deci and Ryan basic needs satisfaction, and a demographic questionnaire. Multilinear regression and binary logistic regression were considered to analyze the results. The leadership theories of Burns and Bass were appropriately used to show how leaders' motivational strategies have had an influence on the retention of teachers. Along the same line, Barnett's (2017) and Hughes' (2014) studies pointed out that teacher recognition and appreciation by the principal motivated teachers who then chose to remain in schools, such as awards and celebrating them. Williams' (2018) study concluded that the transformational leadership style has a significant impact on teachers' autonomous motivation to stay.

In contrast, the present research addressed principals' strategies for enhancing teacher retention in Catholic private secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya, with a focus on strategies such as supervision, motivation, staff development, and challenges in implementing these strategies. Using only the quantitative method, as in Williams' (2018) research, does not allow in-depth explanations of the collected data. Therefore, the current study considered a mixed method to obtain appropriate data that is proper to address the research problem (Creswell and Clark, 2018). In line with that, questionnaires and interviews provided in-depth and complementary information from the

respondents. The researcher used Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 26), whereby quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequencies, means, and percentages, while qualitative data and inferential statistics were analyzed using the P-value and Pearson product-moment correlation to test hypotheses in place of the binary logistic regression tool.

A study by Eyal *et al.* (2011) in Israel evaluated principals' leadership and teachers' motivation among elementary school teachers in Israel. The research sampled 122 volunteered teachers from public schools who had worked with their principals for more than one year and were attending an in-service professional development course in Mathematics. The sample consisted of 107 females and 15 males. To collect data on teachers' perception of principals' leadership self-motivation and reported burnout, a Likert scale questionnaire was adopted, and data analyzed using descriptive statistics of means. The researcher found out that teachers' perceptions of transformational leadership were negatively associated with their burnout, whereas transactional leadership was positively correlated with their burnout. Therefore, the study established that autonomously motivated teachers find meaning in their tasks and enhance interest, hence being in the position to tolerate some setbacks in their services. This study provided inspiration on how a principal's leadership style impacts teachers' motivation. However, the study was limited to elementary mathematics teachers, who may have a different experience and attitude towards their school principals. Moreover, the impact of motivation would be perceived differently by teachers in other subjects like religious studies and language, while at the same time, females were overshadowed by male teachers. The current research targeted all Catholic private schools, all teachers, the Catholic education secretary, boards of management, and Principals to get varied information on strategies that enhanced teacher retention. The study employed interview schedules, questionnaires, and document analysis to collect comprehensive data for generalisation. The analyzed data was presented using tables and graphs.

In South Africa, Makhuzeni and Barkhuizen (2015) conducted a study to determine the effects of the total rewards strategy on teacher turnover intentions in North West Province. The researchers found out that work-life balance and work benefits fairly satisfied the teachers. However, the principals' strategy on compensation and career development was poorly applied. Consequently, teachers were triggered to leave teaching based on poor rewards. The study employed qualitative research using a case study strategy. The intention was to get to understand the turnover intention of the respondents by examining their experiences to identify real issues. A purposive convenience sampling technique was employed to select six participants, three male and three female, with more than ten years of experience to give an account of the reward system of the school. The purposive method is likely to be biased because it does not give an equal chance to all participants (Kothari & Garg, 2019). The sample was very small to allow generalization and was based on an African ethnic group, which is contrary to the topic's intention. Further, the researcher selected Semi-structured interviews, whereby recordings and notes were taken. Data was analyzed and presented in themes.

The current study was anchored on transformational leadership theory to determine principals' strategies for enhancing teacher retention in Catholic private secondary schools in Kajiado County. The study adopted a mixed method in which a phenomenological research design and a cross-sectional survey were used, which allowed inclusivity at all levels of teachers and enhanced in-depth information. The present study targeted all teachers despite their ethnic backgrounds, in contrast to the study by Makhuzeni and Barkhuizen, which was biased. This study used census sampling on schools and education secretary, purposefully selected the principals, and simple random sampling techniques on teachers and Board of Management (BOM) representatives will be included. This study will use questionnaires, document analysis, and structured and unstructured interviews to collect comprehensive data from the respondents.

The motivation of staff members is becoming a concern in many institutions. A study by Dartey-Baah and Amoako (2011) pointed out that principals motivate their staff in order to stay competitive and can harness the best from them. In line with this, Ofori (2021), in pursuit of examining effects of motivation on teacher retention in public senior high schools in Bekwai Municipality, Ghana, the researcher found that a motivational package, can be employed to retain teachers in Bekwai in Ghana. The research included a total of 370 respondents, of whom 204 were male and 166 were female. The study employed an explanatory research design using the quantitative method, which limits the voice of the respondents to be heard. Quota sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the sample size. A questionnaire was the only tool that was used for collecting data. This tool limited teachers' ability to express themselves. Data was analyzed using of percentages, mean, standard deviation, and chi-square. The findings revealed that prompt monthly salary highly influenced teacher motivation, hence relating to enhanced teacher retention. Other motivational packages included responsibility allowances, leaves, career advancement, promotion, and inclusive decision-making. However, teachers felt that training opportunities, bonuses, and car maintenance allowances were inadequately considered. Further, the study showed that 70% of teachers over 40 years had an intention to leave because of more family responsibilities. The study adopted Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, which purports that the needs of people should be addressed hierarchically from one given before moving to the next level. The theory used by the researcher is limited to specific cultures like Western countries, and further, human needs are dynamic and cannot be easily satisfied because they keep on recurring.

The current study adopted transformational leadership theory because the research topic considered the principal as key to implementing the strategies. This theory can also be used across all cultures. A mixed-methods approach was embraced to enhance the validation of the study findings (Creswell and Clark, 2018). The present research used both a questionnaire and an interview schedule to collect appropriate and complementary data from teachers, board members, and principals, respectively. The study addressed the specific motivational strategies that principals use to enhance



teacher retention in Catholic private secondary schools in Kajiado County, such as recognition, salary, rewards, and leaves. The collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and percentages, while for qualitative data, inferential statistics such as P-value and Pearson product-moment correlation are used to test hypotheses.

A study by Kituto (2011) investigated factors that influenced job satisfaction among teaching staff in large public secondary schools in Nairobi County-Kenya. The study dealt with rewards, school culture, leadership, and training. The research established that teachers were not trained on the job, and the reward system was not satisfactory. Poor pay, an unfair reward system, and an uncompetitive salary led to teachers' low motivation, which could trigger attrition. The researcher also acknowledged that school culture endowed with strong values, ethics, and principal support had a moderate effect on teachers' job satisfaction, while a conducive environment played a key role in motivating. The research adopted a quantitative cross-sectional descriptive survey design in which 96 teachers were selected from a target of 481. The researcher explained the term satisfaction in relation to Herzberg's theory of motivation and addressed the theory by highlighting the extrinsic and intrinsic aspects. A semi-structured questionnaire was the only tool the researcher used to collect data. Even though the researcher tended to use questionnaires they may get lost or returned late or incomplete, hence may hamper the results. The use of frequencies and percentages for quantitative data was done appropriately. The researcher recommended that supervision, mentoring, and staff development be enhanced to increase job satisfaction. The researcher suggested that research be carried out on the impact of reward and recognition in relation to job satisfaction on all groups of teachers.

In the current study, a mixed-methods design was used. Census sampling was adopted to select schools and the diocesan secretary, while simple random sampling was used to select teachers and board members. The researcher pegged the results and explanation to transformational leadership theory. This research used questionnaires, structured and unstructured interviews, and document analysis in order to collect comprehensive information from respondents and draw conclusive results from the study.

In analyzing the data, Kituto (2014) used mean scores to explain the results of responses, but the responses to the variables were not displayed. These could imply that the figures were imagined. The current research displayed participants' responses and analyzed quantitative results using frequencies, means, and percentages, while qualitative themes were used. Kituto suggested that research should be carried out on the impact of reward and recognition on teachers' job satisfaction, leading to retention. Therefore, the present study examined principals' motivational strategies, such as rewards, recognition, and leaves, among others, that enhance teachers' stay in Catholic private secondary schools in Kajiado County.

Teachers need favorable working conditions to carry out their teaching effectively. To achieve the school's set objectives, a conducive environment for teachers enables them

to be committed and enhances their satisfaction at work. Ekabu *et al.* (2018), in examining working conditions in relation to turnover intentions in secondary schools in Meru County, Kenya, established that teachers had very low motivation, commitment, and morale, which alluded to poor working conditions that triggered them to leave their jobs. The research recommended that the board of management at the national and county governments give priority to working conditions as a factor in motivating teachers, like improving infrastructure, recognizing teachers, showing appreciation, and setting friendly policies on appraisal and contracting. To carry out the study, the researchers adopted a mixed-methods descriptive survey design that sampled 503 teachers and schools using stratified sampling and randomly selected 15 principals, as well as two staffing officers. To collect complementary data, the researchers used a questionnaire and interview guide. Analysis of the data was done using means and standard deviations: chi-square and Pearson product-moment correlation were used to find a relationship between working conditions and turnover intention.

The present study focused on finding out principals' strategies that enhance teacher retention, with an emphasis on motivation, supervision, and staff development in private Catholic schools in Kajiado County. The population targeted was all Catholic private schools, all teachers, all principals, the diocesan education secretary, and the board of management. Census sampling of schools was used. The study sought to find the strength of the relationship that exists between principals' motivation strategies and teacher retention in Catholic private secondary schools.

In addition to these studies, Huma (2014) conducted a study to find out how teacher motivation strategies influenced teacher retention in British Curriculum secondary schools in Lang'ata Division, Nairobi County, Kenya. Huma's research considered training needs, performance appraisals, incentives, and measures that can facilitate teacher motivation and retention. The researcher observed that teacher training had a positive effect on career progression, thus enhancing their motivation. The study also noted that performance appraisal enabled the reduction of conflicts, enhanced self-awareness, and influenced teacher retention. In line with this, Cherop (2015) found that appreciation, inclusivity, and teacher motivation enhanced teacher retention in Uasin Gishu County. Further, Tony (2013) recommended that friendlier and more professional supervision be carried out to enhance teacher motivation. The researcher adopted a mixed design to enable the research to get both qualitative and quantitative data, which gave way to enhanced interpretation and well-informed conclusions about the study. To get more information, the researcher included all eight schools in the research and sampled 120 teachers from those schools using a simple random sampling technique. Teachers had a questionnaire to fill out, while principals were interviewed to give further information about the study and draw an unbiased conclusion about the study. Both descriptive and inferential analysis were key, and the results were presented on tables using frequencies and percentages.

The current study was interested in finding out the principal's strategies for enhancing teacher retention in Kajiado County, Kenya. This study not only included

teachers and principals but also the board of management members and the education secretary of Ngong Diocese. A mixed-methods research design was used, whereas a questionnaire, interview guide, and document analysis were instruments for data collection. The current study targeted seven Catholic private secondary schools using census sampling. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequencies, means, and percentages, while qualitative data inferential statistics will be analyzed using P-value and Pearson product-moment correlation to test hypotheses.

#### **4. Research Methodology**

The study employed a mixed-methods research paradigm of convergent parallel design. Phenomenological and cross-sectional survey designs with respect to qualitative and quantitative designs were adopted. Census, purposive, and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires, structured interview guides, and document analysis. Content validity and split-half reliability were used to ensure the validity and reliability of quantitative instruments. Member checking, peer review, and triangulation of data were used to check the reliability of the qualitative instrument. Both inferential (correlations) and descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data, which was presented in frequencies, percentages, tables, and graphs. Qualitative data was analyzed using a thematic approach and presented in the form of narratives and direct quotations.

#### **5. Research Findings**

##### **5.1 Principals Motivation Strategies on Teacher Retention in Catholic Secondary Schools**

The first question of this study was to find out whether principals' motivation strategies influence teacher retention in Catholic secondary schools in Kajiado County. The teachers were requested to choose the response that best represented their opinions on a five-point scale. The scale of rating is presented in Table 7: 1. SD-Strongly Disagree. 2. D-Disagree 3. NS-Not sure 4. A-Agree, 5. SA-Strongly Agree.

The findings of the study, as depicted in Table 6, reveal that slightly more than half of the teachers (57.3%) disagreed with the notion that the principal provides monetary rewards to teachers who achieve good results in national examinations. Conversely, a minority (1.0%) of teachers expressed agreement with this statement. The findings suggest that a considerable portion of teachers in the surveyed catholic schools do not perceive monetary rewards as a significant incentive for producing good results in national examinations.

**Table 6:** Principals Motivation Strategies on Teacher Retention in Catholic Secondary Schools (n = 96)

Principals' motivation strategies	SD		D		NS		A		SA	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	F	%	f	%
The principal gives monetary rewards to teachers who produce good results in National examinations.	17	17.7	55	57.3	16	16.7	7	7.3	1	1.0
I am motivated to stay in the school because the principal gives monetary rewards to all teachers at the end of the term.	13	13.5	44	45.8	24	25.0	11	11.5	4	4.2
I would like to stay in this school because the principal organises team-building sessions for teachers.	14	14.6	31	32.3	10	10.4	1	1.0	40	41.7
I would not wish to leave the school because the principal gives responsibilities to all teachers without discrimination.	7	7.3	67	69.8	10	10.4	6	6.3	6	6.3
I like being in the school because the principal considers the opinion of the teachers before making decisions.	12	12.5	00	00	20	20.8	00	00	64	66.7
I am happy to stay in the school because the principal provides a conducive working environment	6	6.3	80	83.3	10	10.4	00	00	80	83.3
The principal encourages and supports teachers to go for further studies	23	24.0	63	65.6	10	10.4	00	00	00	00
Our principal favors some teachers and ignores others	3	3.1	68	70.8	25	26.0	00	00	00	00

The findings from teachers seem to disagree with the findings from principals, following the argument of one principal who said:

*“As principal, I understand the situation of our teachers. As a result, I try to provide monetary rewards to boost their morale. In teaching remedial classes, we strive to ensure that almost all teachers receive some of these classes, where they are paid in addition to their salaries. This approach has been working, as I can see my teachers are motivated and their turnover rate is decreasing.”* (Principal 3, 21/05/2024)

The lack of agreement among teachers regarding the provision of monetary rewards by the principal could reflect several underlying factors. Firstly, it may indicate that teachers prioritise other forms of recognition or incentives over monetary rewards, such as professional development opportunities, increased autonomy in teaching, or a supportive work environment.

Additionally, the discrepancy in perceptions regarding monetary rewards could highlight disparities in the distribution or effectiveness of such incentives within the school. If a significant number of teachers do not believe they are rewarded for good performance, it could negatively impact their motivation and job satisfaction, leading to lower retention rates as teachers seek environments where they feel more valued and

adequately rewarded for their efforts. In line with this argument, a study by Bukhari (2023) on teacher motivation in Pakistan and Ofori (2021) in Ghana revealed that support in terms of monetary rewards and salary increments was a significant factor in fostering teachers' motivation and retention in schools. The catholic education secretary, in an interview, commented about rewards and resources in schools, arguing that:

*"We value effective reward systems when it comes to motivation of teachers. However, limited resources are one of the challenges that hinder the motivation and retention of teachers in schools. Schools often face budgetary constraints, which in most cases limit the ability of principals to offer competitive salaries, professional development opportunities, or incentives to retain teachers."* (The Catholic education secretary 4, 12-03-2024).

These findings seem to show that ensuring equitable and effective reward systems could be crucial for enhancing teacher motivation and retention in Catholic secondary schools in Kajiado County. Table 6 further shows that slightly more than half of the teachers disagreed with the statement that they are motivated to stay in the school because the principal gives monetary rewards to all teachers at the of the term. This fact suggests that monetary incentives alone may not be sufficient to motivate teachers to remain in the school, which agrees with what one of the members of the boards of management asserted:

*"Money alone might not motivate teachers to stay in a school. For example, without clear pathways for career advancement or opportunities for professional growth, teachers may seek opportunities elsewhere. Thus, principals of schools need to create avenues for career development within the school to retain talented teachers."* (Boards of management members 4, 12-03-2024).

This finding further implies that other factors, such as job satisfaction, professional development opportunities, and a supportive work environment, may play a more significant role in teacher motivation and retention. It highlights the importance of addressing various aspects of teachers' professional lives beyond financial rewards to ensure their long-term commitment and satisfaction in the school. In line with this argument, a study by Njanja, Maina, Kibet, and Njagi (2013) in Kenya asserted that monetary rewards (cash bonuses) have no effect on employee performance and motivation. Another study by Uzonna (2013) in Cyprus noted that when it comes to motivation, retention, and bringing out the best performance in employees, recognition and non-cash rewards are more effective motivators than monetary rewards (fringe benefits, bonuses, pensions, profit sharing, performance pay).

The majority (41.7%) of the teachers agreed that they would like to stay in their current school because the principal organises team-building sessions amongst teachers. Reading this finding, one of the principals had this to say:

*"In our school, we significantly value the retention of teachers. We do this by constantly motivating them through different means. For example, we conduct team-building among teachers, which is crucial for enhancing teacher satisfaction and retention. These sessions foster a sense of community and collaboration, enabling teachers to build strong professional relationships and support networks. I know that by improving communication and teamwork skills, teachers can share best practices, reduce feelings of isolation, and create a more positive work environment. This sense of camaraderie and mutual support contributes to higher job satisfaction, as teachers feel valued and connected to their colleagues."* (Principal 4, 23/05/2024)

Another principal regarding teacher motivation as a way to retain teachers argued that *"a cohesive and supportive work environment can lead to reduced stress levels and burnout, ultimately resulting in higher retention rates as teachers are more likely to remain in a positive and collaborative school culture, which enhances teacher retention."*

This finding suggests that such initiatives such as team building play a significant role in teacher motivation and retention. These team-building sessions likely contribute to a positive and supportive work environment, fostering camaraderie, collaboration, and mutual respect among staff members. When teachers feel connected to their colleagues and supported by their school leadership, they are more likely to experience job satisfaction and a sense of belonging, which can enhance their motivation to remain in the school. The support given by the transformative principal should be inclusive of being a good listener and considerate of individual needs so as to contribute towards enhancing the retention rate in catholic private schools (Khan *et al.*, 2020; Liu 2018). In a study by Rahamani (2023) in Iran, it was revealed that team-building activities promote professional growth and development by facilitating knowledge sharing, skill-building, and the exchange of best practices among teachers. This can enhance teachers' job satisfaction and retention.

Regarding whether teachers would not wish to leave the school because the principal gives responsibilities to all teachers without discrimination, most of the teachers (69.8%) disagreed. The fact that a majority of teachers (69.8%) disagreed with the notion that they would not wish to leave the school because the principal assigns responsibilities to all teachers without discrimination suggests potential issues with teacher motivation and retention. In relation to opportunities and retention of resources, one of the principals had this to say:

*"I understand that not all teachers may feel equally recognized and supported. Some teachers in my school may feel undervalued or unsupported by the school administration, which can lead to dissatisfaction and attrition. With this knowledge, as a principal, I prioritize providing recognition, feedback, and professional support to all teachers to enhance retention."* (Principal 10, 12-03-2024)

This finding implies that there may be dissatisfaction among teachers regarding the distribution of responsibilities or the manner in which they are assigned. It could indicate that teachers feel their contributions are not valued or that they are not given opportunities for professional growth and development through varied responsibilities. Consequently, this lack of perceived fairness or inclusivity in assigning responsibilities may negatively impact teacher morale and could contribute to a higher turnover rate as teachers seek environments where they feel more appreciated and professionally fulfilled. This was further revealed by data from document analysis, which showed that there was a high turnover rate among teachers in catholic public secondary schools. In line with these findings, Cherop (2013), who conducted a study in Uasin Gishu County, revealed that when teachers are assigned administrative responsibilities, they feel motivated to stay longer.

The study findings showed that 66.7% of the teachers agreed that they would prefer being in the school because the principal considers their opinions before making decisions, while a minority of the teachers (20.8%) were undecided about the statement. This indicates that involving teachers in decision-making processes can contribute positively to their motivation and satisfaction within the school environment. On the contrary, Eisenbeiß and Boerner (2013) and Odumeru and Ogbonna (2013) pointed out that a transformational principal who puts emphasis on change but fails to welcome teachers' contributions of knowledge and skills may trigger demotivation, hence attrition. When teachers feel that their voices are heard and their input is considered, they are more likely to feel valued and respected, which can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and retention, as revealed by Alagwa and Ligembe (2022) study in Tanzania. However, the presence of a minority of teachers who are undecided about this statement suggests that there may be room for improvement in ensuring that all teachers feel adequately engaged in decision-making processes. Strengthening communication channels and fostering a culture of collaboration between teachers and school leadership could further enhance teacher motivation and retention.

There was a strong agreement from teachers (83.3%) that they are happy to stay in the school because the principal provides a conducive working environment. These findings suggest a significant link between the school environment and teacher motivation and retention. A positive and supportive work environment, fostered by the principal, plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher satisfaction and commitment to their roles. These findings agree with what one of the principals said in an interview:

*"I understand that when teachers feel valued, respected, and supported in their workplace, they are more likely to remain motivated and engaged in their duties, leading to higher retention rates. I also know that a conducive working environment can contribute to a sense of belonging and job satisfaction among teachers, which helps to reduce turnover and promoting stability within the school community." (Principal 3, 12-03-2024)*

The findings of the study showed that most of the teachers (65.6%) disagreed that the principals encourage and support teachers to go for further studies. This finding could point to the reasons for high turnover rates among teachers in catholic secondary schools in Kajiado County. When teachers perceive a lack of support for professional development and advancement opportunities from school leadership, they may feel undervalued and unappreciated in their roles. This could lead to feelings of stagnation and limited career growth prospects, prompting talented educators to seek opportunities elsewhere that offer better prospects for their professional advancement. Consequently, the absence of encouragement and support for further studies from principals could fuel dissatisfaction and disengagement among teachers, ultimately contributing to higher turnover rates within the school. In line with these findings, a study by Cheung (2024) argued that engaging in higher education exposes teachers to new ideas, teaching methodologies, and research findings, enhancing their passion for teaching and fostering a sense of intellectual fulfillment. Oke *et al.* (2016) further revealed that when teachers are granted opportunities to advance in their careers to secure higher positions, they tend to stay longer.

Table 6 further illustrates that a significant majority of teachers (70.8%) disagreed with the notion that their principals show favoritism towards certain teachers while disregarding others, suggesting a perception of fairness and impartiality in the treatment of staff. However, it is noteworthy that 26% of teachers were uncertain about whether such favoritism exists, indicating a level of ambiguity or lack of clarity in their observations. While the predominant disagreement may imply that principals strive to be considerate to all teachers, the presence of uncertainty suggests a need for transparent communication and proactive efforts from school leadership to address any perceptions of favoritism and ensure equitable treatment for all staff members.

When teachers are treated with equality and without favoritism, teacher retention tends to improve significantly. Equality fosters a fair and just work environment where all teachers feel valued and respected for their contributions. This equitable treatment promotes trust and morale, as teachers perceive that their efforts and achievements are recognized based on merit rather than personal biases. Consequently, job satisfaction increases, reducing feelings of frustration and resentment that can arise from favoritism, leading to lower turnover rates and a more stable and motivated teaching workforce. This argument concurs with the findings of a study by Ford (2024) that teachers are more likely to remain committed to an institution that upholds fairness.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the motivation strategies, such as monetary rewards, employed by school principals to retain teachers are not effective. As a result, the study recommends that principals conduct a comprehensive review and redesign of their motivation strategies to ensure they are effective in retaining teachers. This may involve shifting the focus away from monetary rewards toward more intrinsic



motivators, such as professional development opportunities, recognition for achievements, and a supportive work environment.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

As authors of this journal article entitled, *Influence of Principal's Motivation Strategies on Teacher's Retention in Catholic Private Secondary Schools in Kajiado County, Kenya*, we have no conflicts of interest to declare. We have all seen and agreed with the contents of the manuscript, and there is no financial interest to report. We certify that the submission is original work and is not under review by any other publication.

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