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Job Stress and Turnover Intention among In-Service Teachers in Lira City and Wakiso District, Uganda

Okello Ivan Odongo^{1*}, Prof. Kibanja Milly Grace, PhD² & Dr. Kobusingye Kiiza Loyce, PhD²

¹ Lira University, P. O. Box 1035, Lira, Uganda.

² Makerere University, P. O. Box 7062, Kampala, Uganda.

* Author's ORCID ID; <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-6391-9151>; Email: iookello@lirauni.ac.ug

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*Job Stress,
Turnover,
Turnover Intention,
and Environmental
Conditions.*

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between job stress and turnover intention among in-service teachers. We specifically examined the level of job stress, teacher turnover intention, and the nexus between these variables. A quantitative research approach and a correlational research design were used to examine the relationship between these two constructs. A sample of 500 respondents was identified using stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data collection was done by use of self-administered questionnaires and analyzed using Stata 18. The hypothesis was tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r). Results revealed a low level of job stress (mean = 2.86 SD = 1.34) among in-service teachers with some elements of variations in responses. This implies that there could be some teachers who were experiencing job stress though the majority don't. For turnover intention, an overall mean score of 3.10 with an SD of 1.46 obtained in this study shows a moderate level of turnover intention among teachers, representing a range of sentiments on retention and work satisfaction. There was no significant difference in the level of job stress ($t=1.15$, $p > .05$) and turnover intention ($t=1.41$, $p > .05$) between teachers from Lira City and Wakiso District. Further results revealed a significant positive correlation between job stress and turnover intention ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.05$). We concluded that job stress significantly influences turnover intention thus reducing job-related stressors could potentially suppress the development of turnover intention among in-service teachers. We, therefore, recommend the need to reduce job stress by addressing workload concerns through hiring or recruiting more teachers, reducing class sizes, creating a supportive work environment, and having regular breaks or time off to reduce burnout and stress so that employees can rejuvenate both physically and emotionally. Besides, teachers need to be empowered with stress management strategies.

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, retaining top-notch employees or teachers is an uphill battle (Afsar et al., 2018; Mugizi, et al., 2019; Namusoke et al., 2017). In England, Foster (2018) conducted a study to examine "the relationship between recruitment and retention of teachers" and the results of this study affirmed that turnover intention and actual turnover attested in the past years and continues to rise. Further results indicated that by November 2016, 22% of teachers who joined in 2015 had left. In the global south, that is, Africa, research conducted by Symeonidis (2015) in sub-Saharan African countries on the fate of the teaching profession revealed that the situation was grave with a turnover rate of primary school teachers reaching 44%. This created a serious shortage of teachers among other unpleasant effects. Turnover intention and actual turnover among teachers in most African countries continue to rise up to date and if not addressed then the education system may lose competent people and the realization of educational goals might be a dream. In Uganda, where this study was conducted, most schools have transient staff (Biribawa, 2018). The teaching profession loses thousands of dedicated professionals each year (Sol et al., 2022) thus realization of quality education remains exigent in most schools.

The turnover intention which refers to the sentiment of employees to leave their current job or organization for another (Albaqami, 2016; Belete, 2018; Muhangi, 2017; Varghese & Kumar, 2019) is triggered by several personal and environmental factors. Several researchers have linked job stress to turnover intention (Khainza, 2022; Kyeyune, 2018; Liu et al., 2019; Omar et al., 2020) though findings show a lack of congruency. Whereas some researchers found out that a job might be more rewarding and beneficial for an employee but the stress associated with some careers may still trigger turnover intention (Ssenyonga & Hecker, 2021; Al-Suraihi et al., 2021; Owusu & Nkyi, 2021; Salama et al., 2022; Suarthana & Riana, 2016), some researchers believe that turnover intention is expedited by other factors (Namboozee, 2019; Kyaligonza & Kamagara, 2017). Besides, some circumstances may suppress the development of turnover intention among employees irrespective of how stressful the job might be. Therefore, such dissimilar findings make it indecipherable for practitioners and researchers to explain the relationship between these two constructs.

In Lira City, which is located in the northern part of Uganda, teachers face myriads of challenges, the working conditions are pitiable, and schools are understaffed hence workload is overwhelming and

stressful (Lira City Record, 2023). Given the paucity of research in this regard, it's undefined if this accounts for the high rate of job turnover and turnover intention among teachers in the community as witnessed in some parts of the country (Azabo et al., 2023; Kyaligonza & Kamagara, 2017). Scholarly work on the roles of job stress as a predictor of turnover intentions within educational institutions is gaining attention though findings from the available literature seem to gainsay one another. Besides, some school administrators or managers are egocentric and careless about the welfare of other colleagues. Therefore, examining the relationship between these two constructs may help in creating awareness among different stakeholders.

Research Objective

The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between job stress and turnover intention among in-service teachers in Lira city and Wakiso District.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Sangadji (2020, p.67), job stress is “a condition of tension that creates physical and psychological imbalances, affects emotions, the process of thinking, and the condition of a teacher”. Sangadji (2020, p.67) added that “too much stress can threaten a person’s ability to deal with the environment”. A person's emotional and physical limitations often result in job stress when they are unable to handle their expectations or external demands placed on them by others (Kavita & Hassan, 2018). A conflict between the professional expectations placed on an individual and their degree of influence over accomplishing those goals can also lead to job stress (Bhui & Dinos, 2016). In the event of job overload (Salahudin et al., 2016) and time pressure, job stress arises too (Plessis, 2020). Alternatively, work stress can also emanate from multiple factors linked to the workplace environment (Wan & Duffy, 2022) and the nature of the work itself (Ekabu et al., 2018). Such stress

affects the physical and mental well-being, and behavioural characteristics of teachers (Tziner et al., 2015). However, these perceptions are sometimes very subjective because stressful situation lies in the eye of the beholder (Wettstein et al., 2020).

The level of stress varies among teachers and not all forms of stress are harmful. “Low levels of stress result in immobility and laziness while an optimal level of stress (eustress) can motivate employees, in this case, in-service teachers towards work” (Nydegger, 2016, p.458), enhances their creativity (Salahudin et al., 2016), and result in high performance (Bienertova-Vasku, 2019; Gulzar et al., 2022). While distress or high levels of negative stress commonly displayed by some teachers causes dissatisfaction, demotivates workers (Clarine, 2019), reduces harmony at the workplace (Ibrahim et al., 2022), hampers productivity, results in burnout (Salama et al., 2022) and affects the health of workers (Gulzar et al., 2022) and can lead to turnover intention or actual turnover if not addressed.

Job turnover is the act of quitting or vacating jobs either voluntarily or involuntarily (Anzazi, 2018) while turnover intention refers to the desire or interest of an employee or a teacher to leave his or her current job in a voluntary manner (Salama et al., 2022). “It is a conscious willfulness of an individual to leave an organization within a predictable future” (Mir et al., 2021 p.295). “Turnover intentions just like actual turnover manifests itself in two ways; first, an employee (teacher) develops the intention to leave the employer within the same profession and second, an employee (in-service teacher) develops the desire to change the profession altogether” (Larkin et al., 2016 p.2). Employee turnover has been continuing without cessation for several years or decades within institutions or schools, organizations and companies (Albagami, 2016; Ssali et al., 2019). Some researchers believe that turnover intention is one of the causes of real turnover (Wong et al., 2021). This is worrying because when an employee voluntarily leaves, the

school or organisation has to bear many costs, both hidden and apparent that eventually affect the organisation or institutional performance (Nawaz & Pangil, 2016). Job turnover is one of the many challenges common in most organizations and schools (Oke et al., 2016). When an employee resigns, schools risk losing valuable expertise, experience, and implicit knowledge that cannot be easily replaced by recruits (Namusoke, 2017). Therefore, suppressing the development of turnover intentions that cause actual turnover among teachers is the centre of focus for most schools, organizations or companies.

Research has shown that stress among in-service teachers is caused by several factors and is not limited to work demands (Salahudina et al., 2016; Manas et al., 2018). These stressors often affect teachers' ability to function effectively (Atugonza et al., 2021), mental health/psychological well-being (Prilleltensky et al., 2016), cause burnout (Udho & Kabunga, 2022; Owusu, 2021), can cause conflict among colleagues (Hecker et al., 2018), turnover intention (Owusu, 2021) and actual turnover. Stress at the workplace has become a significant concern due to its potential to severely impact both organizations and their employees (Saleem et al., 2021). High levels of stress can impair teachers' performance and result in negative behavioural and attitudinal workouts (Tziner et al., 2015). Studies have shown that chronic work pressure induces a feeling of overconsumption of energy that undermines the entire well-being of employees (Kamau et al., 2021). This pressure is very common among primary school teachers in Uganda. Such feelings or pressure can ignite turnover intentions (Ong & Bin, 2022; Owusu & Nkyi, 2021) and real turnover (Anzazi, 2018) among employees (teachers) if not addressed.

According to Ong and Bin (2022), work stress is one of the main sources of teacher turnover intention in several institutions or schools. In a situation where teachers see that the work demand supersede their ability, leaving for another job or school is

sometimes seen as one possible solution. This implies as the level of job stress increases, turnover intention increases as well. In another study, Salahudina et al. (2016) investigated the "relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention" among school teachers in Malaysia and results indicate that teachers with a high level of job stress demonstrated higher levels of turnover intentions as compared to their counterpart without any job-related stress. This means employees' comfort and peace of mind in a given career suppresses the emergence of turnover intention among most employees. Owusu and Nkyi (2021) in their study on the "Impact of Occupational Stress and Burnout on Turnover Intentions among Senior High School Teachers in the Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana," found out that teachers' intention to leave for another job or organisation and occupational stress has a strong and positive correlation between these constructs. The challenge of job stress is recurring not only among teachers in Uganda but also a global phenomenon, however, the clarity on its sources and connection with turnover intention remains under-explored by researchers among primary school teachers.

In a study conducted by Afebia (2016) on "Assessment of Turnover Intentions and Employee Commitment among Teachers in the Bolgatanga Municipality," half of the teachers who participated in the study had the intention of leaving before retirement basically because of low pay, poor condition of service and occupational stress. Occupational stress among teachers (in-service teachers) does not only affect their well-being (Akgunduz et al., 2023) but also students and the learning process (Carroll et al., 2022). Teaching is considered one of the most stressful professions (Carroll et al., 2022). The high expectations and greater need to perform effectively increase occupational stress on the side of teachers as they are not only expected to teach but to shoulder the responsibility of moulding or shaping citizens for a better future (Falk et al., 2020). This may increase their intention to quit.

Many teachers in the profession struggle to find time to balance their responsibilities at home with their dedication to teaching (Owusu & Nkyi, 2021). Clark et al. (2021) added that the personal lives of their families are greatly affected by the work they do. This was quite challenging during the Covid-19 lockdown when mothers had to balance both teaching and work-related activities. Teachers' inability to dedicate themselves to their work and the intention to leave or quit is partly caused by this unpleasant experience (Afebia, 2016). The loss of expertise and skill from seasoned workers, such as teachers, is concerning because it is a major issue in the modern world, not just in educational institutions but also in other fields (Chiao et al., 2021; Rawashdeh & Tamimi, 2019). This might continue to persist if not addressed. Therefore, understanding the connection between occupational stress and turnover intention might be of great value.

Teachers play a vital role in building and training future generations toward success and they are the basic precursor to high levels of student achievement (Amerstorfer & Kistner, 2021; (Emoja, 2016). The achievement of learners and progress in all other sectors largely depends on the teacher's level of commitment (Bolliger & Martin, 2018). Therefore, understanding the sources of their grief and addressing their misgiving or misapprehension and stress may help solve many challenges. The effect of job stress on turnover intention has been reported in several studies (e.g. Owusu & Nkyi, 2021; Salama et al., 2022; Siddiqui & Jamil, 2015). However, most of these studies concentrated on sources of job stress (e.g. Salahudina et al., 2016; Ebbers & Wijnberg, 2017; Manas et al., 2018; Mukanzi & Senaji, 2017; Wu & Zheng, 2019) and are foreign-oriented. No studies have been conducted within the scope of this study to examine the relationship between job stress and turnover intention among primary school teachers. This study therefore aims at bridging this research discrepancy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

A quantitative research approach and correlational survey research design were used to examine the nexus between job stress and turnover intention among in-service teachers.

Study Population

The target group for this study was made up of full-time primary school teachers from Lira City and Wakiso District, regardless of their gender, credentials, experience, level of training, age, and the category of school where they teach.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size was identified using Slovin's formula (1960). To cater for errors that may merge during data collection, more samples were incorporated and data was collected from a total of 500 respondents. Respondents were identified using stratified and simple random sampling techniques.

Instruments and Measures

Data collection was done by use of Self-administered questionnaires with known psychometric properties. These questionnaires were arranged in three sections that is, section A, B and C. Section A captured the demographic data or background information of the respondents. Section B captured information aimed at measuring the level of job stress among teachers whereas section C of the questionnaire captured items that measure Turnover Intention.

Job Stress Index Scale developed by Bernas and Major (2000) to measure the occupational stress of working employees was employed to examine the perceptions of the teachers concerning job stress. The original version of this questionnaire contains 12 items rated using a five (5) point Likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree) with a reported internal construct validity and internal consistency of 0.97 (Torvisco et al., 2022). It focuses on the nature of the job, work conditions,

environment and how individuals feel about their job. With the help of this scale, respondents were therefore asked to rate themselves according to the given scale based on how they felt about themselves.

Turnover Intention Scale (TIS) developed by Roodt (2004) was adopted to measure the extent to which teachers intend to leave their current jobs. In this study, we used a shortened version of the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) adapted by Roodt (2004) from his original version with a reported reliability of 0.80 (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). This scale measures turnover intentions more reliably and has a sound criterion-predictive, differential and factorial validity (Bothma & Roodt 2013). This revised scale has six items designed using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Quality Control Measures

Respondents were alerted early enough not to participate in the study if they had previously done so to avoid double responses. The researchers also sought expert opinions on construct validity and content validity to guarantee the validity of the research tools. Copies of these questionnaires were given to other specialists to determine whether the instruments measured what they were supposed to assess and to check the wording and phrasing so that ambiguity and respondents' misinterpretation were minimized. To determine if the questionnaires measure what they claim to measure, the Content Validity Index (C.V.I.) was employed.

The reliability of these tools was examined using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Test (1946). These tools were pre-tested among 38 teachers who were not part of this study in a few but carefully selected schools. This was ten percent of the minimal sample size recommended for piloting (Connelly, 2008). To assess the instruments' dependability, the gathered data was examined, and the reliability of the above questionnaires was .86, and .71 for job stress and turnover intention respectively. The reliability

threshold of 0.70 was adopted as the hallmark for this study. Given that the Alpha (α) values for the tools were greater than 0.70, this suggests that these instruments were reliable.

Data Management and Analysis

For effective management of the dataset, different variables were assigned specific codes as follows. Demographic data or background information was coded A. Specific information within this section was assigned different numerical values. Job stress was coded B with items taking codes B1-B12. The turnover intention scale was coded C with items taking codes C1-C6.

Data was analyzed using Stata 18, a computerized system for analyzing data. Mean and standard deviation were computed for continuous variables. A normality test of residuals was conducted to ensure the validity of the model and its results. An independent sample t-test was run to examine the variations in the level of job stress and turnover intention among teachers from Lira City and Wakiso District. The relationship between job stress and turnover intentions was examined using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis.

Ethical Considerations

During data collection, consent from heads of institutions where data was collected was obtained. The privacy of the respondents was respected. The researchers did not in any way use force to gather data. Respondents were given chances to respond freely with no salient intimidation or promise of reward. Contributions of other authors in this study were acknowledged and cited in the references and presentations of the most findings were generalized.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics for Job Stress

The analysis for these variables is presented in terms of frequencies with corresponding percentages, mean and standard deviation. These variables were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from

1=Totally Disagree (TD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Not Sure (NS), 4=Agree (A), to 5=Totally Agree (TA) and results obtained were as presented in Table 1 that follows.

Table 1: Job Stress of Teachers

Items	SA		A		NS		D		SD		Mean	Std. Dev
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
I work under a great deal of tension.	48	9.6	146	29.2	59	11.8	131	26.2	116	23.2	2.76	1.35
I have too much work to do.	83	16.6	213	42.6	30	6.0	114	22.8	60	12.0	3.29	1.31
My working environment is very stressful.	46	9.2	135	27.1	42	8.4	155	31.1	121	24.3	2.66	1.34
I feel I cannot work long enough or hard enough.	46	9.2	123	24.6	56	11.2	162	32.5	112	22.5	2.66	1.31
I feel stressed by my job.	53	10.6	142	28.5	40	8.0	132	26.5	132	26.5	2.70	1.40
I feel as if I will never get all my work done.	34	6.8	134	26.9	63	12.7	171	34.4	96	19.3	2.68	1.25
It makes me tense to think about my job.	45	9.0	180	36.1	69	13.8	131	26.3	74	14.8	2.98	1.26
While at work, I feel there is too much pressure to get things done.	57	11.5	158	31.7	40	8.0	144	28.9	99	19.9	2.86	1.36
I have unwanted stress as a result of my present job.	55	11.0	160	32.1	54	10.8	132	26.5	97	19.5	2.89	1.34
I feel “burned out” after a full day of work.	79	15.8	160	32.0	52	10.4	137	27.4	72	14.4	3.07	1.34
The tension I feel at work makes me unhappy.	68	13.6	151	30.3	41	8.2	152	30.5	86	17.3	2.93	1.36
My job is stressful.	89	17.9	124	24.9	33	6.6	130	26.1	22	24.5	2.86	1.48
Average											2.86	1.34

Key: 5=Strongly Agree (SA), 4= Agree (A), 3= Not Sure (NS), 2=Disagree (D), and 1=Strongly Disagree (SD)

Results from Table 1 above reflect a low level of stress among teachers with some element of variability (mean = 2.86 SD = 1.34). Despite numerous complaints from teachers regarding the nature of the work, pressure and workload, the mean score range of 2.66 (SD=1.34) to 3.29 (SD = 1.31) for the items in the Job Stress Scale could be an indication that most of these teachers can withstand tension at work, does not see their job as a stressful

thing, are resilient enough or care less about the pressure at work.

Job Stress of Teachers by District

To ascertain whether there is a variation in the level of job stress between teachers from Lira City and Wakiso District, an independent sample t-test was run and the results obtained were as presented in Table 2 that follows:

Table 2: Independent Sample t-test for Job Stress between Teachers from Lira City and Wakiso District.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means					
	Mean	SD	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI of the Difference. Lower Upper
STLira	2.87	1.34	.19	.663	.15486	.880	.02	.12		-.21 .24
Wakiso	2.85	1.29								

Note: $p > .05$; ST = Stress

Results from Table 2 show that there is no significant difference in the level of Job Stress between teachers from Lira City and Wakiso District ($t = .15$, $p > .05$). The scores for teachers from Lira City (mean = 2.87, SD = 1.34) and Wakiso District (mean = 2.85, SD = 1.29) with a magnitude in the mean score (mean difference = 0.02, 95% CI = -.21 to .24) reflects a very marginal variation in the level of job stress among teachers from Lira city and Wakiso District. It also indicates that the stress level among these teachers across different groups was generally low. The overall SD for both groups show some elements of variations in responses. This

implies that there could be some teachers who are experiencing job stress though the majority don't.

Descriptive Statistics for Turnover Intention

Frequencies with matching percentages, mean, and SD were used to show the analysis for these variables. A five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "Totally Disagree" (TD), 2 "Disagree," 3 "Not Sure," 4 "Agree," and 5 "Strongly Agree," was used to quantify turnover intention. The results obtained were as shown in Table 3 that follows:

Table 3: Turnover Intention of Teachers

Variables	SA		A		NS		D		SD		Mean	Std Dev
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
I feel frustrated and always think about leaving this job.	102	20.2	151	30.3	32	6.4	81	16.2	133	26.7	3.02	1.53
My concentration at work has reduced because I don't see any future in this job.	58	11.7	104	20.9	45	9.0	138	27.7	153	30.7	2.55	1.41
Sometimes I feel changing to another profession may be of help.	130	26.1	143	28.7	41	8.2	90	18.0	95	19.0	3.25	1.49
I can still leave if offered another job at the same compensation level but for a different job.	140	28.1	122	24.5	50	10.0	93	18.7	93	18.7	3.25	1.50
I always dream about getting another job that	192	38.5	144	28.5	32	6.4	66	13.2	65	13.0	3.67	1.43

Variables	SA		A		NS		D		SD		Mean	Std Dev
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
will better suit my personal needs.												
I don't look forward to another day at my current job.	83	16.6	114	22.9	64	12.8	123	24.7	115	23.1	2.85	1.43
Grand mean											3.10	1.46

Key: 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3= Not Sure (NS), 4= Agree (A), and 5=Strongly Agree (SA)

Results from Table 3 above reveal that teachers often wish to work in a position that better suits their needs (mean = 3.67, SD = 1.43). This shows that some teachers are disillusioned with the teaching profession. The interest in pursuing alternative careers (mean = 3.25, SD = 1.49) and the desire to get another job even with the same salary (mean = 3.25, SD = 1.50) reflected in this study demonstrate discontentment with the teaching profession. The overall mean score of 3.10 with a standard deviation of 1.46 reflected in this study indicates a moderate

level of turnover intention with some elements of variability among teachers. It also shows a range of sentiments on work satisfaction, retention, and plans.

Turnover Intention of Teachers by District

An independent sample t-test was run to determine if there is a statistically significant difference in the level of turnover intention between teachers from Lira City and Wakiso District. The results obtained were as presented in Table 4 that follows:

Table 4: Independent Sample t-test for Turnover Intention among Teachers from Lira City and Wakiso District.

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances					t-test for Equality of Means						
		Mean	SD	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% CI of the Difference. Lower Upper
TI	Lira	3.13	1.48	.90	.34	1.41	494	.16	.19	-.13	-.07 .45
	Wakiso	2.95	1.41								

Note: $p > .05$; TI = Turnover Intention

Results from table 4 above show that there is no significant difference in level of turnover intention between teachers from Lira and Wakiso ($t=1.41$, $p > .05$). The scores for teachers from Lira (mean = 3.13, SD = 1.48) and Wakiso (mean = 2.95, SD = 1.41) with a magnitude in the mean score (mean difference = 0.19, 95% CI = -.07 to .45) reflects a very marginal variation in level of turnover intention among teachers from Lira City and Wakiso District. The small mean difference of 0.19 suggests that teachers in Lira had slightly higher

turnover intention than those from Wakiso, but this difference is not large enough to be considered significant. The SD for both groups shows variability in the spread of scores implying there could be some teachers who had strong intentions to leave, while others had low or no intention of leaving.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis stated that “there is no significant relationship between job stress and turnover

intention". The relationship between job stress and turnover intention was determined using the Pearson product-moment correlation analysis and

the results obtained were as shown in Table 5 that follows:

Table 5: Pearson Product-moment Correlation Analysis between Job Stress and Turnover Intention.

Variables	Turnover Intention	Job Stress
Turnover Intention	1.00	
Job Stress	0.69*	1.00

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Results from Table 4 above show that there is a significant positive correlation between job stress and turnover intention ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that as teachers experience an increase in job stress, their intention to leave increases too. Thus, the significant relationship suggests that reducing job stress could potentially decrease employees' intentions to leave their jobs. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between job stress and turnover intention was rejected.

DISCUSSION

The hypothesis for this relationship stated that "There is no significant relationship between job stress and turnover intention". The finding revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between job stress and turnover intention. This implies that as the level of job stress increases among teachers, their intention to leave for another job increases. Therefore, addressing job stress could be an effective strategy for reducing turnover intention among employees. The positive relationship between job stress and turnover intention found in this study is consistent with existing literature, which has widely documented the detrimental effects of job stress on employee retention. For example, studies by Manas et al. (2018) identified work demand and role ambiguity as significant sources of job stress among teachers, which in turn led to higher turnover intention. These findings align with the current study's results, indicating that stressors within the work environment can significantly increase the

likelihood of employees considering leaving their jobs.

In agreement with these results, a study by Owusu and Nkyi (2021) also revealed a strong positive correlation between occupational stress and turnover intentions among senior high school teachers in Ghana. This highlights that job stress is not only a concern in Uganda but a global phenomenon, affecting teachers' intention to remain in their profession across various contexts. The recurring nature of job stress among teachers suggests that it is a critical factor influencing turnover intentions, making it imperative for organisations to address this issue to improve employee retention. Moreover, Afebia (2016) added that occupational stress, along with low pay and poor working conditions were primary reasons why teachers in the Bolgatanga Municipality had the intention of leaving before retirement. This reinforces the current study's finding that job stress significantly contributes to turnover intentions, as stressed employees may feel compelled to leave their jobs in search of better working conditions and lower stress levels. The negative impact of occupational stress on both teachers' well-being and their students' learning experiences, as noted by Carroll et al. (2022), further emphasizes the need for effective stress management strategies within educational institutions.

In line with these results, Ong and Bin (2022) found that, in several organizations or schools, work stress is a major factor in teachers' intentions to leave their jobs. If educators perceive that their workload

exceeds their capacity, they may consider taking a position at another company or institution. This therefore suggests that when job stress levels rise, so does the intention to leave the position. Salahudina et al. (2016) report shows that teachers who experienced high levels of job stress also had higher levels of turnover intentions compared to those who did not experience any job-related stress. That is the comfort and tranquillity of the workers. Owusu and Nkyi (2021) discovered a strong and positive correlation between teachers' intentions to leave for another position or organization and occupational stress. This indicates that this issue of job stress is not unique to Ugandan teachers; it is a worldwide phenomenon.

Personal factors, such as the inability to balance work and personal obligations, as discussed by Clark et al. (2021), can also contribute to employees' decisions to leave. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, many teachers struggled to manage their teaching responsibilities alongside personal and family-related stressors, which exacerbated their intentions to quit. This suggests that while reducing job stress is crucial, addressing other personal and environmental factors is also necessary to effectively reduce turnover intentions.

While the significant positive correlation between job stress and turnover intention is well-supported by the literature, it is important to recognize that job stress is a multifaceted issue. An individual might be stressed but still develop no intention to leave depending on personal conditions. However, various factors contribute to job stress, including workload, role ambiguity, and poor working conditions, all of which can increase turnover intentions. However, personal circumstances, such as work-life balance, also play a crucial role in shaping employees' decisions to leave. Therefore, reducing job stress within the work environment is essential. Organisations should also consider providing support for employees' well-being to comprehensively address turnover intentions.

CONCLUSION

As a reflection from the field results, it is therefore concluded that there is a significant positive correlation between job stress and turnover intention ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.01$). This implies an increase in job stress is associated with a rise in turnover intention among teachers in this population. Therefore, understanding the facets of this determinant can help organizations develop targeted interventions to reduce turnover intention and actual turnover. Therefore, reducing job stress could potentially suppress the development of turnover intention among teachers.

Recommendations

Based on the field results, the following recommendations were drawn:

There is a need to reduce job stress by addressing workload concerns. This can be done by hiring or recruiting more teachers to reduce class sizes, redistributing teaching responsibilities, as well as providing administrative support that prioritizes teacher well-being. Where possible, the teacher-learner ratio should be reduced to the smallest number possible to enhance efficacy and reduce workload pressure.

There is also a need to create a supportive work environment. Employees feel less anxious at work when there is social and emotional support from peers, leaders, and fair distribution of responsibilities. Fostering a supportive work environment reduces stress by promoting; psychological safety, open communication, reciprocal respect, and constructive feedback.

There is a need for regular breaks or time off to reduce burnout and stress. Employees can rejuvenate both physically and emotionally by taking regular breaks from their jobs. This lessens the possibility of burnout, a major cause of turnover and turnover intention. Employees are less likely to feel the need to quit their jobs when they have the chance to relax and maintain a positive work-life

balance. However, they are more prone to look for other possibilities if they feel overburdened. Therefore, taking time off is a crucial step in lowering the intention to leave.

Teachers need to be empowered with stress management strategies. Education programs that teach workers stress management strategies improve well-being and lessen job-related stress. Employee stress can be decreased by teaching them how to control their emotions, and handle conflict. They should be introduced to stress management strategies like engaging in progressive relaxation activities, using ego defence mechanisms and adapting to task-orientated strategies.

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