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### **Teacher Attrition: Effects on Teachers' Well-being, Resource Allocation, Leadership Support, and Passion**

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#### **Abstract**

Teacher attrition has become a growing concern in Bhutan with an increasing number of teachers leaving the system. This study explored the implications of teacher attrition on teachers' well-being, organisational, and system-level effects. Using a sequential explanatory design, quantitative data were gathered from 68 higher secondary school teachers and qualitative data from 12 teachers. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while the qualitative data were analysed thematically. The findings showed that teacher attrition has increased the workload for remaining teachers, affecting their professional and emotional well-being. The findings also highlighted a need for a more responsive leadership from the Ministry of Education and Skills Development to connect policy with practice. At the school level, supportive leadership was found to motivate teachers, while authoritarian practices lowered teachers' morale. Despite these challenges, the findings showed that teachers' passion for teaching has not deteriorated. The study recommends structured succession planning and reducing non-teaching tasks for maintaining teacher motivation, lowering stress, and ensuring quality education in Bhutan.

*Keywords:* Teacher attrition, implications, challenges, professional development

## **Introduction**

Teachers in Bhutan exit the education system through three primary avenues: retirement after reaching superannuation age, voluntary resignation, and personal issues. In the context of this study, teacher attrition refers to voluntary resignation. Teacher attrition has become a growing concern in Bhutan with increasing number of teachers leaving the system. For instance, in 2021, 224 teachers voluntarily resigned, followed by 307 in 2022, 284 in 2023, and 1193 in 2024 (Sharma, 2023). The Ministry of Education and Skills Development has implemented measures to mitigate the gaps created through teacher attrition. These measures included recruiting expatriate teachers, extending the superannuation age, rehiring resigned teachers, and assigning teaching responsibilities to school principals (Lhamo, 2023). Studies indicate that when teachers leave, the burden on remaining teachers is exacerbated, leading to multitasking and strain, further impacting classroom climate (Hamre & Pianta, 2005). A similar scenario is evident within the Bhutanese education system. For example, four schools in a particular district have reported acute shortages of teachers, with the school management combining classes (Dolker, 2023). While there are studies exploring the implications of teacher attrition, there is a paucity of research on its broader implications for remaining teachers in the system. This research examined its potential implications for the remaining teachers. By addressing this gap, the study seeks to provide valuable insights that can inform policy and practice aimed at improving teachers' overall well-being.

## **Research Questions and Sub-Questions**

### **Main Question**

What are the implications of teacher attrition on the remaining teachers?

### **Sub-questions**

- How does teacher attrition affect the remaining teachers' professional, emotional, and social well-being?
- How does teacher attrition affect students' learning?
- In what ways does teacher attrition affect the remaining teachers' access to resources and facilities?
- What role does leadership play in addressing the challenges of teacher attrition?
- What effect does teacher attrition have on the remaining teachers' passion?

## **Literature Review**

Studies highlight the impact of teacher attrition on remaining teachers' professional well-being. Sharma (2023) reported amplifying responsibilities and exerting undue strain. Consequently,

both teaching and learning may be affected (McDonnell, 2023). While workload increases, teachers may not receive the time and support to take up these responsibilities (Timms et al., 2007), leading to adverse implications. For example, in Japan 60% of the teachers took leave of absence due to their inability to cope with the increasing work demand (Hojo, 2021). Increased workload exerts mental, physical, and emotional toll on teachers, affecting their motivation and attitude (McDonnell, 2023). Emotional exhaustion due to burnout is also reported (Madigan & Kim, 2021). Further, when the workload escalates, teachers have to take their work home, affecting their personal lives (Beck, 2017) and possibly compromising their professional standards (Wal et al., 2019). Teacher attrition also affects teacher interaction, staff cohesion, and school environment (Ronfeldt et al., 2015), increasing the likelihood of attrition (Borre et al., 2021).

High teacher attrition has a significant effect on students' learning. Ingersoll (2001) highlights high teacher turnover leading to gaps in instruction and inconsistency in teaching. Similarly, Ronfeldt et al. (2015) indicate that students experiencing high turnover are more likely to struggle academically. Other studies show that schools with more teacher turnover tend to have lower achievement rates (Boyd et al., 2005; Guin, 2004). Further, without timely teacher replacement, students' lower academic achievement can have negative consequences in their later lives (McDonnell, 2023). The impact of teacher attrition extends beyond academic performance. Hamre and Pianta (2005) report that students may experience feelings of insecurity, leading to decreased motivation and participation. Additionally, new teachers often require time to establish rapport with students and adapt to the classroom environment (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

Teacher attrition has implications for school resources and facilities. Buckley et al. (2005) reported many teachers purchasing basic supplies. Similar trends were noted by the National Education Association (2003). When teachers leave, these personal investments are lost, creating inefficiencies and widening resource gaps. Research also shows that poor facilities contribute to dissatisfaction and turnover, and may contribute to a cycle of further attrition (Kolber & Rice, 2019). Ladd (2011) found that negative perceptions of facilities strongly shape teachers' intentions to leave. Earthman and Lemasters (2009) report that frustration in poorly equipped classrooms lowers morale.

Research highlights that passionate teachers are committed to their students' intellectual growth and performance, foster care and motivation – key elements of engaging classroom environments (Altun, 2017). Passion also keeps teachers engaged and helps them overcome challenges and

find fulfilment in their work (Day, 2004). It was noted by Day and Qing (2009) that workload, school culture, and policy reforms affect teachers' passion. Positive experiences enhance enthusiasm, while systemic pressures or heavy workloads can weaken it. According to Keller et al. (2014), good leadership and support from colleagues are crucial for sustaining long-term commitment and intrinsic motivation. Additionally, Wang et al. (2025) posit that supportive leadership, workload, and professional development opportunities influence teachers' passion. Teachers' passion can be nurtured and sustained through supportive leadership, reduced administrative burdens and strong professional learning communities (Jang & Vallerand, 2025).

Leadership also plays an instrumental role in shaping teachers' professional experiences. Supportive leadership creates a positive school climate, enhancing teachers' enthusiasm and dedication (Nguyen et al., 2024). Leadership that supports autonomy leads to the development of passion, improving teachers' sense of meaning and reducing the risk of burnout (Jang & Vallerand, 2025). Moreover, leaders who recognise teachers' efforts, and involve them in decision-making, and offer tailored professional development opportunities boost intrinsic motivation (Keller et al., 2014). However, heavy administrative workload, and lack of recognition can hurt motivation, leading to frustration, and eventual turnover (Wang et al., 2025). While supportive leadership encourages resilience, unsupportive environments can weaken commitment, causing emotional exhaustion and higher turnover (Day & Qing, 2009). Supportive leadership also correlates with greater teacher commitment, higher job satisfaction, and a better chance of retention (McTigue, 2024). School leaders who recognise challenges and offer specific support help maintain teacher motivation and engagement, however, a lack of supportive leadership increases burnout and may speed up turnover (Nygaard, 2019).

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a sequential explanatory design by Creswell and Creswell (2018). Through the combination of the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, the study aimed to comprehensively investigate the research problem and enrich the findings.

### **Data Collection**

Survey was chosen as the primary method of data collection. To ensure validity of the questions, a pilot test was conducted. For the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted. A purposive sampling approach was used in selecting the interviewees who were willing and could provide the most relevant information to meet the study's objectives. The survey population consisted of 582 teachers from 68 higher secondary schools from four regions: east, west, central, and south. Interviews were conducted with 12 teachers, three from each of the four

regions.

### **Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistical analysis using mean, standard deviation, and frequency was used to analyse the survey data. The interpretation of the mean scores was based on Orlanda-Ventayen and Ventayan (2017) as presented in Table 1. Interviews were thematically analysed following the procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke (2018). To ensure participants' anonymity, strict measures were implemented. Pseudonyms were used for the interview data, and participants' consent was obtained for their participation in the study and for audio recording the interviews.

**Table 1**

*Scale for Interpreting Overall Mean Scores*

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<b>Score Range</b>	<b>Mean Rating</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
3.41 – 4.20	Agree	High
2.61 – 3.40	Neutral	Moderate
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Low
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

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### **Result**

The results are presented under the following themes: Professional well-being, Emotional and social well-being, Students' learning, Resources and facilities, Leadership, and Passion for teaching

#### **Professional Well-being**

The items on professional well-being are reflected in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Professional Well-being*

<b>Professional well-being</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Level of Opinion</b>
Teacher attrition has affected my workload and responsibilities.	4.01	0.96	High
Teacher attrition has impacted my teaching effectiveness.	3.61	1.04	High
Teacher attrition has made it difficult for me to maintain a sense of continuity and consistency in my teaching approach.	3.32	1.07	Moderate
Teacher attrition has created uncertainty and instability in my teaching environment.	3.35	1.07	Moderate
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.57</b>	<b>1.04</b>	<b>High</b>

The average mean of 3.57 and SD of 1.04 indicate that teacher attrition has highly impacted the remaining teachers' professional well-being. In the interview, teachers reported that their teaching workload and other responsibilities increased due to teacher attrition. For example, CT02 said, "We have to take extra classes, remedial classes. We have to sacrifice the weekends for the students." Other participants (CT04, CT05, CT10, CT11) said that replacement was a challenge, with some classes remaining without a subject teacher for extended periods. Contract teachers were recruited to address the teacher shortage. However, they were often recent university graduates without formal teacher training and thus lacked essential teaching skills (CT02).

The implications of increased workload were also evident in other areas. Many teachers (CT01, CT03, CT04, CT09, CT12) shared that their teaching effectiveness was compromised, leading to a decline in their professional practice, particularly through increased reliance on teacher-centred approaches. CT03 expressed, "The method that most teachers use is lecture because there is hardly any time to prepare and use other strategies." The same participant also said, "We have learned many strategies and technologies from colleges but we don't have time to include in our teaching." This strain on the teachers' professional and personal lives can lead some to leave, further aggravating teacher attrition (CT03).

**Emotional and Social Well-being**

Table 3 presents the items on emotional and social well-being.

**Table 3**

*Emotional and Social Well-being*

<b>Emotional and Social Well-being</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Level of Opinion</b>
Teacher attrition has increased stress and burnout in me.	3.69	1.01	High
Teacher attrition has affected my motivation.	3.59	1.06	High
Teacher attrition has affected my morale.	3.19	1.10	Moderate
Teacher attrition has made it difficult for me to feel comfortable and focus in my classroom.	3.32	0.99	Moderate
Teacher attrition has affected my overall satisfaction and commitment to the school.	3.40	1.05	Moderate
I have effective coping strategies for managing work-related challenges.	3.53	0.90	High
The social and emotional support of my teacher and staff colleagues are positive, inclusive, and enabling.	3.57	1.00	High
My teacher colleagues are forthcoming and willing to provide academic and professional support.	3.88	0.79	High
Collaboration and teamwork with colleagues are strong.	3.95	0.82	High
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>High</b>

With an average mean of 3.6 and SD of 0.97, Table 3 shows that teachers’ emotional and social well-being were highly affected. In the interviews, all teachers reported that they feel demotivated and their stress levels have considerably increased due to teacher shortage, leading

to compromised family time. According to CT09, “We do not get free periods, and even if we do, it is all about correction and planning. I always have to work late at night, and my family time is compromised.” The demotivation teachers feel also stem from the general discourse on teacher attrition. For example, CT01 said:

The general view is that teachers who have left the system are the better ones, and they perform better in the language tests. Those who are left behind are perceived as inefficient and incompetent to go abroad. So, it is very demoralising in one way.

The levels of opinions for the last three items are high, indicating that teacher attrition has not affected teachers' collaboration, and the standard deviations also show relatively consistent opinions. Interview data support the survey findings. For instance, CT10 said, “Those of us remaining behind will have to lead a friendly life, supporting each other. We talk to each other and help each other. When we work together in one institute, we cannot afford to have problems among ourselves.” The item *I have effective coping strategies for managing work-related challenges* with a mean of 3.53 and SD 0.90, indicate that teachers have effective coping strategies. However, in the interviews, many teachers reported limited time for exercise or maintaining a healthy lifestyle (CT03, CT05, CT10, CT12).

### Students’ Learning

The impact of teacher attrition on students’ learning is shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
*Effect on Students’ Learning*

<b>Students’ Learning</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Level of Opinion</b>
Teacher attrition has impacted student learning outcomes and academic performance.	3.86	1.04	High
Teacher attrition has declined the overall quality of education provided to students.	3.74	1.02	High
<b>Average</b>	3.8	1.03	High

Table 4 shows that teacher attrition has highly affected students’ academic performance and

quality of education. All teachers interviewed agreed that teacher attrition has cascading effects on students' learning, with most (CT01, CT02, CT05, CT11, CT12) confirming a decline in students' examination results. For example, CT05 said, “[Classes] Seven A, B, C, sections were left without an English teacher, maths teacher, and science teacher. The result was not good.”

Teachers shared that finding replacements for technical subjects such as Accountancy, Maths and Science was difficult, leading to poor performance in these subjects (CT02, CT08). Students were most affected when experienced teachers left (CT01, CT08, CT11), becoming demotivated, as evidenced by the quote by CT01, “ Last year we had an experienced Chemistry teacher. And this teacher left. This led to students losing motivation.” When experienced teachers leave, students are unable to adapt to new teachers' instructional methods (CT02), and new teachers require time to understand students' learning needs and preferences (CT10). To address teacher shortages, schools have initiated multiple strategies. First, they combined all sections and conducted classes in multipurpose halls, however, the teaching was reported to be ineffective (CT03). Second, they prioritised students preparing for board examinations (Class XII), leaving other classes (IX and XI) without teachers, negatively affecting students who did not receive teachers' direct instruction (CT10).

### **Resources and Facilities**

Table 5 reflects the implications of teacher attrition on resources and facilities.

**Table 5**

*Implication on Resources and Facilities*

<b>Resources and Facilities</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Level of Opinion</b>
I have a conducive working space in my school.	3.51	1.04	High
The classroom conditions are conducive to facilitating teaching and learning.	3.44	1.09	High
The technology resources provided are sufficient for my teaching purposes.	3.10	1.25	Moderate
The school provides sufficient resources that assist me in my teaching responsibilities.	3.20	1.13	Moderate
My school provides financial resources to support innovation and creativity.	2.81	1.11	Moderate
I have access to resources that support my overall well-being.	3.13	1.02	Moderate
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>1.15</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

With an average mean of 3.15 (SD =1.15), Table 5 shows that remaining teachers perceive the overall availability of resources and facilities in their schools to be moderate. However, the high level of spread in responses suggest that while some teachers reported satisfactory availability and access to resources, others reported otherwise. This is echoed in the interview with CT03 describing the lack of teaching resources as ‘demoralising’ and ‘frustrating.’ Commenting further on this, CT12 stated, “Lack of sufficient teaching resources often makes the job frustrating and inefficient. We have to share one projector and purchase other teaching materials from our pockets.” However, not all teachers shared this concern. For instance, CT07 expressed satisfaction, noting, “I think now we have enough resources. Although my school is remote we have improved internet connectivity.” Teachers also shared that lack of resources could be a contributing factor to teacher attrition (CT03, CT05).

### Leadership Support

Table 6 shows the support provided by MoESD leadership.

**Table 6**

*Leadership at MoESD*

<b>Leadership Support</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Level of Opinion</b>
The leadership at MoESD supports my professional development and growth.	3.01	0.99	Moderate
The leadership at MoESD effectively addresses the challenges faced by teachers.	2.60	1.05	Low
Policies and programmes from the Ministry of Education and Skills Development address teacher workload and well-being.	2.61	1.14	Moderate
<b>Average</b>	<b>2.74</b>	<b>1.06</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

Table 6 shows that teachers received only moderate support from the MoESD leadership. The leadership at MoESD received a mean of 2.74 (SD =1.06) for addressing teachers’ challenges, indicating that support in this area was perceived as limited, with some variation in responses among teachers. In the interviews, teachers reported burnout due to additional responsibilities resulting from teacher attrition. They raised concerns about the MoESD leadership’s slow response to pressing issues. For instance, CT10 observed, “Although the Ministry says education is a priority, they ignore the teacher shortage problem every year.” Similarly, CT04 noted that sometimes MoESD takes up to a year to send replacements for teachers who have left.

According to CT12, “More targeted support, such as improving resource allocation and addressing mental health concerns and workload, would be beneficial.”

The item, *Policies and programmes from the Ministry of Education and Skills Development, addresses teacher workload and well-being*, revealing a moderate level of opinion suggest that teachers perceive partial effectiveness of the policies and programmes. In line, the interview data highlighted that teachers were burdened with increased workload because of teacher attrition. For instance, CT03 shared that while the number of periods teachers are supposed to take is 18 hours a week, in reality, teachers end up taking more classes. In addition, performance evaluation system such as IWP moderation was cited as negatively impacting teacher well-being and motivation. For example, CT11 stated:

Even hardworking teachers are resigning due to poor conditions and no promotion. Some get ‘Needs Improvement’ in IWP, which is demotivating. I think the biggest problem is IWP. Even good teachers get ‘Needs Improvement’ because the system needs someone to be in that category. It is very sad.

Teachers have pointed out that MoESD must have policies and regulations to reduce teacher workload, thereby improving their well-being and student learning.

### **Leadership Support at the School Level**

Table 7 shows leadership support at the school level.

**Table 7**  
*Leadership Support at the School Level*

<b>Leadership Support</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Level of Opinion</b>
The leadership at my school adopts and practices an open and collaborative approach in dealing with teachers and staff.	3.51	1.01	High
The leadership at my school is sensitive and responsive in addressing my concerns and challenges.	3.44	0.95	High
The leadership at school provides adequate support in my teaching, learning, and assessment endeavour.	3.64	0.86	High

The leadership at my school establishes a positive and conducive school culture and climate that promotes effective teaching and learning.	3.57	0.97	High
<b>Average</b>	<b>3.54</b>	<b>0.94</b>	<b>High</b>

Teachers generally hold a positive view of leadership at the school level, with an average mean of 3.54 (SD of 0.94), indicating that they receive support from school-level leadership. The item on teaching, learning, and assessment support was rated the highest (M = 3.64, SD = 0.86), indicating that adequate instructional support was provided by school leaders. However, the interview data presented a more complex picture. Teachers reported having experienced leadership as both supportive and, at times, authoritative and demotivating. For example, CT08 said, “The leaders in my school are very supportive. They create a supportive and collaborative environment. Our principal frequently organises staff meetings to discuss challenges.” On the contrary, other teachers described their experiences with authoritarian leaders. For example, CT07 shared:

If the teachers do not get along with the leaders, they are blacklisted. They only look for the mistakes that the teacher commits and never appreciate the good things done by the teacher. I have been one of the victims.

Participants highlighted that authoritarian leadership create a stressful environment that can escalate burnout, especially when they are already grappling with managing heavy workloads. Some teachers shared that poor leadership is one of the reasons for teacher attrition.

**Passion for Teaching**

The impact of teacher attrition on teachers’ passion is depicted in Table 8.

**Table 8**  
*Passion for Teaching*

<b>Passion for Teaching</b>	<b>Mea n</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Level of Opinion</b>
I became a teacher because of my passion for teaching.	3.78	1.14	High
I love teaching because it is fulfilling.	3.85	1.01	High
My initial attraction to a career in teaching is strong.	3.84	1.00	High
My passion for teaching has grown over the years.	3.47	1.14	High

My passion has been reinforced by experiences in my teaching career.	3.64	1.02	High
I integrate my interests and passions into my teaching.	4.00	0.80	High
<b>Average Mean</b>	3.76	1.02	High

With an average mean of 3.76 (SD = 1.02), Table 8 shows that remaining teachers have a high level of passion for teaching. Consistent with the survey, teachers (CT01, CT03, CT05, CT07, CT08, CT10) pointed out that despite teacher attrition, their passion for teaching has not decreased. They expressed that their decision to join the profession stemmed from their genuine passion, which continues to motivate them to remain in the profession. For example, CT05 voiced, “I see myself continuing in the teaching profession for the long term because I love teaching.” However, two participants (CT06, CT12) expressed uncertainty about their commitment to teaching. For example, CT06 remarked, “Currently, I am not thinking of leaving the profession, but in the long run, I do not think I will be interested in being a teacher.” Participants emphasised the need to improve the system and policies to sustain teachers’ passion. CT01 shared that the issues related to the IWP system and teacher workload need to be addressed to sustain teachers’ passion. Besides, a leader is expected to show kindness, as this could help reduce teachers’ stress. If the leader is not kind, teachers feel stressed and do not want to handle it, which causes them to want to leave. The intrinsic passion of the majority of current teachers keeps them committed, even though teacher attrition has increased workloads and responsibilities. However, this passion could eventually be threatened in the absence of proper support and policy changes (CT09).

### Discussion

*Professional Well-being.* The study revealed that teacher attrition negatively affected the professional well-being of remaining teachers, increasing both teaching load and non-academic responsibilities. This finding is congruent with Sharma (2023), who reported that teacher attrition increases the workload of remaining teachers, often requiring them to multitask, which exerts undue strain. The increase in workload often impacts teachers’ professional life, intensifying existing challenges, and may contribute to a cycle of further attrition (McDonnell, 2023). Further, while the practice of recruiting contract teachers to mitigate teacher shortage is initiated, these individuals often lack the requisite skills, which may result in adverse implications for students’ learning. Additionally, increased responsibilities were reported to reduce teaching effectiveness, with teachers often using teacher-centred approaches due to time constraints. Notwithstanding the training on different pedagogical approaches, teachers were unable to implement these strategies. Research highlights that overworked teachers cannot teach

effectively, consequently compromising students' learning (McDonnell, 2023). To protect the professional well-being of remaining teachers, the school and the Ministry need to implement teacher succession plans.

*Emotional and Social Well-being.* The finding showed that teacher attrition affected the remaining teachers' emotional and social well-being. Teachers reported feelings of demotivation and heightened stress. They expressed working late at night and during weekends, compromising their personal lives. The prevailing public perception that teachers who remain in the system are those who are incompetent further demoralised them. This may have future implications, with remaining teachers opting to leave the system to showcase their competency. These findings corroborate the literature (Madigan & Kim, 2021). On a positive note, teachers recognised the importance of supporting and maintaining collegial harmony, understanding that they could not afford to create additional challenges within their professional community.

*Students' Learning.* Teacher attrition has a negative impact on students' learning. In some cases, classes were left without subject teachers for extended periods, leading to students' poor performance. This raises concerns about fairness and equity in their education. Ingersoll (2001) highlighted the adverse effects of high teacher turnover, emphasising that it creates instructional gaps and inconsistency in teaching. The poor academic achievement is also reported by other researchers (Boyd et al., 2005; Guin, 2004). The study points to challenges in recruiting replacements, particularly in specialised subjects such as Accountancy, Mathematics, and the Sciences. The departure of experienced teachers further compounded the problem as students had built trust and confidence in them over time. This bond does not form immediately with new teachers, even when replacements are eventually recruited. Hamre and Pianta (2005) noted that when teachers leave, students may experience feelings of insecurity, which can reduce their motivation and participation.

*Resources and Facilities.* The study revealed that teachers generally perceived resources and facilities as moderate, although perceptions varied. Despite the high number of teachers leaving the system, the remaining teachers continue to share equipment and purchase materials themselves. One possible reason could be that resources are allocated based on student numbers. Interviews also indicated that teachers often used their own money to buy classroom materials, consistent with previous literature (Buckley et al., 2005). Teachers additionally reported receiving insufficient financial resources to support innovation and creativity, indicating that they face constraints in implementing innovative teaching practices. This could impact teachers' motivation, the quality of instruction, and ultimately students' learning. Studies highlight that

frustration in poorly equipped classrooms often lowers morale (Earthman & Lemasters, 2009). Further, Ladd (2011) suggests that negative perceptions of facilities strongly shape teachers' intentions to leave. These findings imply that teacher attrition has systematic implications, as it both reflects and perpetuates resource challenges for teachers.

*Leadership Support.* The quantitative findings showed that teachers received only moderate support from the MoESD leadership. The qualitative findings revealed that teacher attrition has burdened the remaining teachers with additional responsibilities and workload, leading to burnout. Stronger and targeted support, policies, and regulations are essential to address workload, improve teacher well-being, and address pressing issues. These findings echo Day and Qing (2009) suggesting that effective leadership involves not just setting a vision but also addressing systemic barriers that affect teachers' ability to function and their well-being. Leadership at the school level received high ratings in the survey. Interview participants noted that supportive principals foster collaboration, appreciate teacher contributions, and provide mentorship. These behaviours reflect what Keller et al. (2014) considers the key aspects of effective school leadership. The qualitative findings also highlighted teachers' experiences with authoritarian leadership, which affected their morale and prompted thoughts of leaving the profession. This corroborates research that unsupportive leadership environments contribute to increased stress and teacher turnover (Day & Qing, 2009). The findings imply that while teachers appreciate supportive leadership, there are still gaps in how well leadership respond to their challenges. Improving collaborative leadership practices, along with ensuring clear connections between policy and actual practices, is essential for boosting teacher motivation, lowering stress, and enhancing teacher retention.

*Passion.* The finding showed that teacher attrition has not affected teachers' passion. Interviews revealed that many participants joined the profession because they genuinely loved teaching. Consistent with the findings, research shows that passion gives teachers a sense of purpose and identity, which in turn, boosts resilience and long-term commitment (Day, 2004; Day, 2011). However, findings also revealed challenges to maintaining this passion over time, with some participants expressing their scepticism about their long-term commitment to teaching. They noted heavy workloads and lack of leadership support as major hurdles. These concerns align with research suggesting that passion is dynamic and can decrease in unsupportive environments, especially when workloads, organisational culture, and leadership practices are not favourable (Day & Qing, 2009). Literature also emphasises that passion alone does not guarantee sustained engagement in teaching. Structural and organisational factors are equally important in fostering and maintaining teachers' motivation (Day, 2011). Supportive leadership, lighter administrative

demands, and opportunities for professional development are crucial to prevent systemic barriers from undermining intrinsic motivation (Jang & Vallerand, 2025). Overall, the findings indicate that while teachers show high levels of passion and internal motivation, keeping this passion alive needs support from institutions and leadership. Without these supports, even a strong initial passion can deteriorate over time, which could impact teacher retention and commitment to the profession.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Teacher attrition has led to increased workload for the remaining teachers, adversely affecting their professional and emotional well-being. This, in turn, has led them to rely mostly on teacher-centred instructional approaches, which negatively impacts students' learning. Schools have implemented multiple strategies to minimise the impact of teacher attrition, such as combining classes under a single teacher, recruiting contract teachers, or prioritising students preparing for board examinations, leaving other classes without adequate teacher support for extended periods. While these measures are commendable, there are concerns about fairness and equity in students' education. This highlights the absence of structured succession planning, a critical consideration for remaining teachers' professional and emotional well-being. Although teacher attrition has some impact on the availability of resources and facilities, classroom conditions and working spaces appear largely unaffected. However, limited financial support continues to constrain teachers in implementing innovative teaching practices. Stronger and more responsive leadership at MoESD is crucial in ensuring systemic solutions that ease teacher workload and enhance well-being. Supportive and collaborative school leadership sustains teacher motivation and retention, though addressing authoritarian practices and inconsistent decision-making remains essential. Although teachers displayed a strong passion for teaching, heavy workloads pose a risk of teachers leaving the system.

Teachers leaving the profession is largely unavoidable. Therefore, MoESD and school-level leaders need to implement a structured succession plan to identify and train potential candidates for both short-term and long-term needs. Such measures will ensure a smooth transition and minimise repercussions on remaining teachers as well as students. Efforts should also focus on minimising non-teaching responsibilities to maintain teachers' motivation and reduce work-related stress. Doing so will not only improve learning and teaching but also promote the overall quality of education in the country.

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