



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***REASONS FOR ATTRITION AND RETENTION AMONG SECONDARY
SCHOOL TEACHERS IN NIGER STATE, NIGERIA***

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By

AMINU ALIYU WUSHISHI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

July 2014

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Maulana Sheikh Ibrahim Inyass (R.T.A)



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Abstract of thesis presented to the senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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July 2014

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Niger state is considered as one of the less educationally developed states in Nigeria with high attrition rate among secondary school teachers of about 47.5% between 2010-2012. This study explored reasons for attrition and retention among secondary school teachers in Niger state, Nigeria. A qualitative method was employed with the use of case study in order to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Twelve participants were selected. Nine serving teachers purposefully selected from three different secondary schools and three teachers who left the profession were reached through snowballing. All the participants were interviewed in English and each session of the interview lasted for about an hour to two hours. The interview was recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed manually. In addition, observation took place in the schools and some documents related to the data were scrutinized. The trustworthiness of the study was ensured through triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking and Audit trail.

The findings revealed that, language problem among students, delay in promotion, poor salary, late payment of salary, workload and large class size, poor status of teachers in the community and students' disciplinary problems are among the major reasons for attrition among teachers. Another finding of the study discovered, increase in workload of the existing teachers, increase in the burden of school administration, affects students' performance, cost implication in recruiting another set of teachers, as effects of teacher attrition. The findings also indicated that; housing and car loan, good working condition, regular promotion, regular payment of salary, increase in salary, spiritual motivation, support from school principals, opportunity for further studies and benefits from Endwell (Teachers' Financial Co-operative Association) as reasons for retention among teachers in Niger state secondary schools. Based on the findings certain recommendations were proffered, these includes; Government should consider increasing the teachers' salary above all other staff in the state, considering the importance of education and the role of teachers as prime movers. Government should make the payment of teachers' salaries as prompt as possible and their promotion should be regular as stipulated in the state civil service rules. On the issue of language problem among students,

government should cancel the use of English as official languages and one major local should be adopted as official language as done in many South-East Asian countries. Government should provide a sort of car and housing loan to teachers so as to ease their transportation problems and enable them settle in their own houses. Principals should also support the novice teachers by giving them all the necessary support so as to enable them have confidence in the teaching profession.



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sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**SEBAB ATRISI DAN PENGEKALAN DALAM KALANGAN GURU
SEKOLAH MENENGAH DI NEGERI NIGER, NIGERIA**

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Negeri Niger merupakan salah satu negeri yang kurang maju dari aspek pendidikan di Nigeria dengan kadar "*attrition*" yang tinggi, iaitu lebih kurang 47.5% antara tahun 2010 hingga 2012 dalam kalangan guru sekolah menengah. Kajian ini meneroka faktor berkaitan "*attrition*" dan pengekalan (*retention*) guru di sekolah menengah di Negeri Niger, Nigeria. Kaedah kualitatif dilaksanakan dengan memanfaatkan kajian kes demi mendapatkan pemahaman mendalam terhadap fenomena yang diselidiki. Dua belas peserta telah dipilih. Sembilan orang guru yang sedang berkhidmat dipilih secara bertujuan daripada tiga buah sekolah menengah manakala tiga guru yang telah meninggalkan profesion keguruan dicapai melalui kaedah "*snowballing*". Semua guru telah ditemubual dalam Bahasa Inggeris dan memakan masa satu hingga dua jam untuk setiap sesi temubual. Semua temubual telah dirakam, ditranskripsi, dan dianalisis secara manual. Tambahan pula, pemerhatian telah dilakukan di sekolah dan dokumen yang berkaitan dengan data telah dianalisis. Kebolehpercayaan kajian telah dipelihara melalui triangulasi, "*debriefing*" rakan sejawat, penyemakan peserta serta "*Audit trail*".

Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa masalah bahasa dalam kalangan pelajar, penangguhan dalam kenaikan pangkat, gaji yang tidak memuaskan, lambat dalam pembayaran gaji, beban kerja dan saiz kelas yang besar, status guru yang rendah dalam masyarakat serta masalah disiplin pelajar merupakan faktor utama menyebabkan "*attrition*" dalam kalangan guru. Dapatan kajian juga mendapati peningkatan beban kerja dalam kalangan guru yang sedia ada, peningkatan beban pentadbiran sekolah, kesan pencapaian pelajar, kos untuk menggaji guru lain sebagai kesan kepada "*attrition*" guru. Dapatan kajian juga memaparkan kemudahan pinjaman kereta dan rumah, keadaan kerja yang baik, kenaikan pangkat yang lazim, pembayaran gaji mengikut jadual serta peningkatan gaji sebagai faktor yang menyumbang kepada pengekalan guru dalam profesion keguruan. Kajian ini seterusnya mendapati motivasi kerohanian, sokongan dari pengetua, peluang untuk melanjutkan pelajaran dan faedah daripada Endwell (Koperasi Guru) telah dilaporkan oleh guru sebagai sebab mereka kekal dalam profesion yang diceburi. Berdasarkan dapatan yang diperolehi beberapa cadangan telah dikemukakan yang antara lain termasuk kerajaan perlu menaikkan gaji guru tinggi daripada staf lain di dalam negeri serta mempertimbang kepentingan pendidikan bersekali dengan

peranan guru sebagai penggerak utama. Kerajaan juga perlu membayar gaji guru mengikut jadual dan kenaikan pangkat guru dilaksanakan seperti mana yang termaktub dalam peraturan perkhidmatan awam. Berkaitan dengan isu bahasa dalam kalangan pelajar, kerajaan disarankan agar mamansuhkan penggunaan Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa rasmi dan salah satu bahasa tempatan dijadikan bahasa rasmi seperti mana yang berlaku di Negara-negara Asia Tenggara. Kerajaan juga perlu menyediakan pinjaman kereta dan pinjaman rumah untuk membolehkan guru mengatasi masalah pengangkutan dan membolehkan mereka menginap di rumah sendiri. Pengetua juga perlu menyokong guru baharu melalui apa jua sokongan untuk membolehkan mereka bertindak yakin dalam profesion keguruan.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TCE	Teacher Certificate Examination
NPE	National Policy on Education
NSSEB	Niger State Secondary Education Board
NCE	Nigeria Certificate of Education
NUT	National Union of Teachers
NECO	National Examination Council
WAEC	West Africa Examination Council
JSS	Junior Secondary School
SS	Senior Secondary
9-3-4	9 years of Primary school and junior secondary, 3 years of senior secondary and 4 years of University

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In Nigeria, there are concerns about the fact that teaching is a profession which is characterised by high rate of attrition (Bashar 2011). The problem of teacher retention is regularly headlined in the media and attracted series of researches among scholars in the country. The worry lies within the fact that many teachers in Nigeria who had invested time and effort into qualifying to teach had chosen to leave the profession. Growing concern about nationwide teacher shortage has focused considerable attention on education and teaching profession, several conditions account to this national crisis including increasing population of students' enrolment and teacher attrition (Garba 2012).

Throughout the decade, Nigerian schools required annual infusions of many new teachers to meet the demands of growing students' enrolments, expanded years of schooling, and teacher attrition issues (Bashar 2011). In a similar report, Adamu (2010) commented that school staffing problems are primarily due to excess demand resulting from a 'revolving door' where large numbers of teachers depart from their jobs for reasons other than retirement. While few numbers of Nigerian teachers remained stable in their positions, more teachers left the teaching profession than had entered. Thus, schools are losing more teachers than they are recruiting or retaining (Adamu 2010).

In Northern part of Nigeria, teacher attrition rate has rapidly raised within four years, in 2008 the rate was 13.9% but increased 20.1% in 2012, majority of the teachers moved to other profession due to some reasons like; improved condition of service in other profession, less stress, and working hours (Garba 2012). This clearly indicated that, the rate of attrition was high and teachers who moved to other jobs complained that the condition of service in teaching is not favourable to them and the stressful nature of the teaching profession is worrisome with a lot of numbers of hours putting in the profession.

In a report released by Niger State Secondary School Board, (2012) the rate of attrition from 2010-2012 was analysed. It has shown that as at 2010 the state has 12,280 teachers while in the same year a total of 1,338 which is about 10.9% exited out of the teaching profession. In 2011, the number increased to 1,702 amounting to 15.5%. The number of teachers who quitted out of teaching profession in year the 2012 was reported to increase to 1,950 which is about 21.1%. This shows consistent increase in teacher attrition in the state. Teachers are leaving the profession to other professions such as Immigration, Customs, Civil defence corps, Politics and other Civil service which has better payment. One fundamental aspect of the report was that, from the year 2010-2012, the state has lost a total of 4,990 teachers as a result of attrition, which is about 47.5%. Out of the three educational zones, Minna Educational Zone has the highest rate of attrition with 20.05%, out of the 47.5%,

Bida educational zone with 15.3% and Kontagora zone with 12.2% within the period covered by the report. In addition, the rate of attrition was higher among male than female and within the early period of teaching career.

Recent surveys conducted by Niger state secondary education board (2012) showed that, science subjects suffered the most in terms of teacher attrition. According to their report, the state has only 28 qualified Physics teachers and 18 out of the 28 are contract staff. This number is insignificant compared to the number of schools in the state and high population of students in the schools. The report is similar with that of Adeyemi (2008) who reported an alarming rate of shortage in science teachers within secondary schools in Ondo state. The state advocated for 60% increase in science teachers and 40% in non-science subjects, but as at the time of his survey, the state is having 33.0% of science teachers and 67.0% of non-science teachers. This is a clear indication that the rate of attrition is high particularly among science teachers in the state.

In a study conducted by Simon (2010) in Ogun state of Nigeria, found that almost two-third of new teachers completing their second year of teaching say it is “very” (20%), “fairly” (40%) likely that they will leave the teaching profession and go into some different occupation within the next five years. This sign of extreme discouragement with the teaching profession is particularly common among new teachers who participated in the survey. In schools with very high attrition rates, this can pose a number of challenges, including lack of continuity in instruction, lack of adequate teaching expertise to implement the curriculum and lost time and resources for replacement of new teachers and training them when recruited into the profession. This scenario of teachers intending to leave the profession is common among schools in Nigeria particularly in the Northern part of Nigeria where the level of education is low compared to the Southern part of the country.

A brief history of teaching profession in Nigeria

The history of teaching in Nigeria could be traced as far back as the missionary period, when the missionary trained and employed indigenous Nigerians to help in teaching various communities in the Western and Southern regions. As pointed out by Adeyinka (1971) the missionaries trained their teachers through the pupil-teacher system, a system where the school and pupils lived in the same compound as one big family. The aim of this system is to have a close monitoring of the pupils’ activities and progress in respect of what they have been taught, because at the end of the training they will be subjected to an examination which will qualify them to be recruited as teachers. Fajana, (1978) highlighted that the pupils who are within the age of 14 years had to passed the Standard V examination before their recruitment as teachers. The successful ones were recruited as teachers to receive an hour instruction daily from their head- teacher who taught them the elementary technicalities of teaching.

With the establishment of teacher training school in the Northern part of Nigeria in 1909, the system of teacher recruitment started to take a new shape. Having passed the Standard V examination, a candidate must have served as a pupil-teacher for two years as assistant teacher before enrolling into another two years course at the

Nassarawa school where he will be trained and made to sit and pass a prescribed Teacher Certificate Examination, (TCE) (Fafunwa, 1974).

After sometimes there were lots of criticism on the Missionary's system of teacher training and recruitment. In 1925 a committee was set up by the colonial administration to look into the issue. According to the report of the committee as stated by Jekayinfa (2005) the Missionary system of teacher training was unsatisfactory, the pupil-teacher was over-worked, under-paid, and the curriculum was poorly conceived. So an effective cadre teacher was suggested by the committee, they added that there should be significant improvements in the conditions of service of the teachers in order to attract the best candidates into the profession. The recommendation of the committee was implemented, teaching became a profession with teachers becoming highly respected, they played a key leadership role in the local communities and acted as role models. They were next to Colonial masters in order of ranking, so they were valued. They were seen as people sent by God to take ignorance away from the land in substitute for fortunes and good tidings. Because of the respect attached to teachers, they hardly touched their salary as the community provides almost all their daily needs, (Usman, 2008). This practice continued not until 1955 when the Western part of Nigeria introduced the Universal Education which led to massive enrolment of students into schools these led to employment of many untrained teachers which make it difficult for the Colonial government to cater for. Few years later, a commission was set up to review policy on teacher employment. In their report according to Adelabu (2005) it recommended the gradual elimination of untrained teachers in the schools, improvement of teachers' condition of service, the promotion of efficient teachers to the highest professional grades. But the report was later not implemented probably because of political reasons.

This scenario marked the beginning of crises in the teaching profession in Nigeria. At present teaching is no longer respected, the situation and conditions of teachers is said to be poor, the profession is becoming a class occupation. Teachers no longer form the base of the educated class in the society, the profession no longer carries the social prestige and respect accorded to it in the past. Teachers are today followers rather than leaders (Mohammed, 2006). There are so many factors that led to the relegation of the teaching profession in Nigeria which includes; their payment, their status in the eyes of the community, the kind of condition they work at, and so many others (Sunday & Lasun, 2009). For example, looking at the issue of salary, teachers in Nigeria are the least paid among other professionals like Medicine, Engineering and Law. Jagaba (2008) pointed out that a lot of disparities do exist in terms of teachers' salaries compared to other profession. They receive less salary compared to the work they performed. A lot of them could not cope with the stipend given to them at the end of the month. Low salary and condition of service affect teachers' performances which result to qualified and productive teachers moving out to other places in search of better working conditions, (Bala, 2009). Low salary is among the reasons why teachers hold to other jobs to supplement their living, (Lockhead et al, 1993).

Teachers are the centre-piece of any educational system. No education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Teachers whose morale is low are not likely to perform as expected in the school system. According to Ajayi and Oguntoye (2003)

the numerous problems permeating the entire educational system in Nigeria such as cultism, examination malpractices, drug abuse, indiscipline, persistent poor academic performance of students in public examinations and many more seem to suggest that teachers have not been performing their job as expected. Fadipe (2003) posited that teachers, apart from students, are the largest most crucial inputs of an educational system. They influence to a great extent the quality of the educational output. Teachers' low pay package (when compared to other public workers), societal perception of the job and many more have dampened the morale of teachers.

Administration and Financing Secondary Education in Niger state

Secondary school education occupies a very important position in the educational system of Nigeria. It is the level that determines the academic and professional career of students, at this level the student determines what career he/she wants to choose and what to become in future. The National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004:4) has defined secondary education as "the type of education children receive after the primary education and before the tertiary education".

From the above, the strategic importance of secondary education is no longer in doubt, it is the bridge between the primary and tertiary education. Ajayi et al. (2009) added that, the aim of secondary education is to provide opportunity for quality education for primary school leavers, cater for the differences in talents of the pupils, develop Nigeria cultural heritage, produce a generation of people who respect the dignity of labour, foster Nigerian unity and to inspire its students with the desire for achievement and self- improvement both at school and in later life.

Before the Nigerian independence, the administration of secondary schools lies within the jurisdiction of the Colonial government, but after independence in 1960 the Nigerian government took over the schools from the Colonialist (Usman, 2008). In Nigeria there are two kinds of secondary schools, the Federal Government owned secondary schools and the state owned secondary schools. Two Federal Government secondary schools are located in each of the state of the Federation. The financing and the administration of the schools is solely shouldered by the Federal government, all issues regarding recruitment of staff and their salary, provision of learning facilities in the schools and whatever the school may require are provided by the Federal government.

On the other hand, each and every state has its own secondary schools. In Niger state for examples, there are about 215 secondary schools spread among the three educational zones of Kontagora, Minna and Bida. (Niger State Secondary Education Board, (NSSEB) 2012). The administration of these schools is run by the state government. Teachers are recruited by the State Secondary Education Board. Qualified applicants are shortlisted for an interview before their employment as teachers. The minimum qualification of teaching in secondary schools is Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE), although the board also recruit those without teaching qualification, like holders of B.Sc and B.A degrees in other fields due to shortage of teaching staff with the teaching qualifications.

As the States controlled the affairs of secondary schools in the area of administration they are also in charge in the area of finance, despite the fact that each State relied on

the monthly subvention from the Federal government added to the internally generated revenue to enable them pay the salary of workers (teachers inclusive). The States also are to provide all the necessary facilities to their established secondary schools. Keith (2002) added that, payment of Teachers' Salary, provision of Instructional Materials, building of classrooms in the state owned Secondary schools is the responsibility of the State.

In Niger state the case is the same, all the state established secondary schools are financed by the state. Teacher salaries, construction and maintenance of classrooms and other facilities in the schools are shouldered by the state government. Though there is clear evidence that the Government of Niger state is not living up to expectation in the area of financing education. For example, from the budget of 2009, 2010 and 2011 the money allocated to education was insufficient as indicated in the Table 1.1

Table 1.1: NIGER STATE GOVERNMENT APPROVED BUDGET

Year of Budget	Total Budget of the state	Allocation to Education	Percentage
2009	N 69,090,088,075:00	N 1,590,085,257:21	0.23%
2010	N 115,935,318,818:00	N 1,939,454,377:00	1.67%
2011	N 129,611,730,715:00	N 1,799,826,989:28	1.39%

Sources: Niger State Budget and Planning office 2011

NB. 1 USD is equivalent to N155 (exchange rate)

From the Table above, it is glaring that the fund allocated to education was very minimal. According to UNESCO (2010) the required budget allocation to education should be 26% of the total budget estimate. Looking at the above allocation in Niger state, it is clear that in 2009 Education received 0.23% of the total budget, while the allocation increased in 2010 to 1.67%, later dropped to 1.39% in 2011. This is a clear indication that within the last three years, education was unable to get 2% of the total state budget estimate. By implication of this analysis it is clear that Education is not given much appropriate priority in the state, and that could be another reason why the state is the lowest paid in terms of teacher salaries among the neighbouring states of Kogi, Nasarawa, and Kaduna States. The Tables below show salary of graduate teacher in Niger state and Nassarawa States for comparison.

Table 1.2: Salary of Graduate Teacher (GL 08/01) in Niger state

Salary before and after monthly deductions

Annual Salary	N 384,750.91
Monthly Salary before deductions	N 32,062.38
Pension Scheme	N 2,404:69
Federal mortgage	N 801:56
Union deduction	N 961:88
Pay as you earn	N 774:27
Total Deduction	N 4942:40
Monthly salary after deduction	N 27119.98

Source: Account Dept. Niger state Secondary Education Board (2012).

Table 1.3: Salary of Graduate Teacher (GL 08/02) in Nassarawa State.

Salary before and after monthly deductions

Annual Salary	N 794,359.92
Monthly Salary before deductions	N 66,196.66
Pension scheme	N 2,604.69
Federal mortgage	N 801.70
Union deduction	N 901.00
Pay as you earn	N 794.27
Total deduction	N 5101.66
Monthly salary after deduction	N 61095.00

Source: Account Dept. Nassarawa state secondary education board (2012)

NB. In Niger state a graduate is employed on Grade Level 08 step 01, while in Nassarawa state a graduate starts with Grade Level 08 step 02.

From Tables 1.2 and 1.3, it is clear that a graduate's salary in Niger state after the monthly deductions is N27,120.18 (USD 175.00) per month, while his counterpart in Nassarawa state earns N61,095.00 (USD 395.00) per month, after deductions. A part from the salary differences, the condition of secondary schools in Niger is unfavourable, although it is not Niger state alone but virtually many states in the country as reported by Ekundayo, (2010) which itemised the followings as problems associated with secondary education in Nigeria:

Inadequate Funding: Lack of proper allocation of fund is one of the obstacles that is affecting the efficient management of secondary education in the country. Aghenta (1991) added that the success of any secondary school depends upon the resources made available to it. So this is a clear indication that fund is very important in this regard because, all other vital things in the school can be obtained and maintained, such as the school building, purchase of equipment, payment of teachers' salaries and allowances and running expenses. In Niger State, so many secondary school principals are finding it difficult to run the affairs of their schools because of inadequate funds. Some schools levied the students to enable them raise funds to run the administration of their school (Fati, 2010).

Inadequate Facilities: School facilities are the material resources that facilitate effective teaching and learning in schools, it makes instructions clearer and understandable. Jaiyeoba and Atanda (2005) commented that educational facilities are those things which enable a skilful teacher to achieve a level of instructional effectiveness that far exceeds what is possible when they are not provided. Most secondary schools in Nigeria have their laboratories virtually empty, classes were over populated and some of these classes are without chairs and desks for students to sit and learn.

Poor Supervision of Schools: Effective instructional delivery and maintenance of standards in the school system are enhanced through regular internal and external supervision. The primary responsibility of inspectors is to see that high standards are maintained and that schools are run in accordance with the laid down regulations. While it has been argued that the principals have been discharging their duties as internal supervisors, the external supervisors (inspectors from the Ministry of Education) appear non-functional as they seldom visit schools to monitor the operations in these schools.

Frequent Changes in Policies: Unlike many countries where policies are consistent and adhered to, in Nigeria the case is different, no matter how good a policy is, once the government that enacted the policy is gone, then the policy will be affected. For example, our educational system experienced series of changes, from 7-5-4, 6-5-4 to 6-3-3-4 and now 9-3-4 system.

1.2 Statement of the Problem.

The current situation of teacher attrition in Niger state is a concern to all including government and the society at large. Research indicates that teachers are increasingly leaving the teaching profession to other jobs (Bashar 2011). Low salary, poor working condition are among the factors for teacher attrition (Joshua & Modupe 2012; Ahmed 2003). These contributing factors bolster the perceptions that "in the decades to come it will be critical to attract, support, and retain teachers to meet the growth of the school-age population.

One of the problems in the attrition and retention literature is that attrition and retention studies are mostly quantitative and survey-based. The central focus is often on the external factors and conditions that cause teachers to stay or leave the profession; not enough money, lack of mentoring, leadership style of the school principal, lack of community support, and so on. These themes are researched

continuously, solutions are offered and tried, but the problem continues (Katkus, 2007). This study tend to look at attrition and retention in qualitative manner with the aim of unveiling more reasons why teachers are leaving the profession and discovering possible solutions that will help in retention of teachers in the teaching profession. This discussion of the literature identifies a need for a study concerning teacher attrition and retention in an effort to explore additional conditions or reasons on teacher attrition and retention attitudes and dispositions. The internal reasons propelling teachers to their retention decision and the interaction between the external and internal reasons suggests this may be an important area of exploration. Considering that internal reasons for different teachers can be different, the interaction between the particular external factors and teachers' internal reasons can lead to different patterns of teacher attrition and retention. Thus, to understand the internal reason and the interaction between the internal and external reasons, a qualitative research methodology is necessary to explore deeper into teachers' reasons for attrition and retention (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Over the years, secondary school teachers in Niger state have complained of government inability to satisfy their needs. Their salaries are not paid as at when due, their promotion is delayed and when implemented, the financial involvement is not paid from the time the promotion took place. The classrooms where they teach are over-crowded and in some cases, the children sit on the floor to learn (NUT, 2011). In line with these, Okpala (2006) added that, many secondary school children in Nigeria learn under the shade of trees, while many sit on the floor to learn in their classrooms. This makes it difficult for the teacher to manage his class effectively. These with many other factors contributed to the increase rate of teacher attrition in Niger state. In a report released by Niger State Secondary School Board, (2012) the rate of attrition from 2010-2012 was analysed. It has shown that as at 2010 the state has 12,280 teachers while in the same year a total of 1,338 which is about 10.9% exited out of the teaching profession. In 2011, the number increased to 1,702 amounting to 15.5%. The number of teachers who quitted out of teaching profession in year the 2012 was reported to increase to 1,950 which is about 21.1%. This shows consistent increase in teacher attrition in the state. Teachers are leaving the profession to other professions such as Immigration, Customs, Civil defence corps, Politics and other Civil service which has better payment.

One fundamental aspect of the report was that, from the year 2010-2012, the state has lost a total of 4,990 teachers as a result of attrition, which is about 47.5%. Out of the three educational zones, Minna Educational Zone has the highest rate of attrition with 20.05%, out of the 47.5%, Bida educational zone with 15.3% and Kontagora zone with 12.2% within the period covered by the report. In addition, the rate of attrition was higher among male than female and within the early period of teaching career. Despite the attrition rate across all subjects, science subjects suffer the most. In 2010 the Board conducted Teachers Supply Analysis, they discovered that in Physics there were only 28 qualified teachers in the whole state and 18 out of the 28 are contract staff. This number is insignificant compared to the number of schools in the state and the high population of students in each school.

Besides, government officials, parents, and members of the community do not have respect for teachers. In support of this, Baiki (2002) added that teachers at present are not accorded the respect they deserved. In addition, to enhance their economy and

improve their living standard most teachers engage in other business ventures during the school period. The time and energy devoted to the business affects their commitment to duty and consequently hinders the performance of students (Nwuju and Uzoaru, 2010). When teachers are not adequately taken care of, especially with regards to regular and prompt payment of their salaries and other entitlements, their attitude to work will change automatically, and the next thing is to start thinking of an alternative job (Idogho, 2002). It is therefore very necessary to address these problems if not there will be no meaningful achievement in secondary education in Niger state.

Studies revealed Teacher attrition as one among the factors associated to failure in students' achievements in schools (Boyd et.al, 2008; Grace, 1991; & Konnac, 1996). Large decline in student's achievements in both Arts and Science Subjects can easily be observed in Nigerian Secondary Schools and Niger State as well. The failure rate is so alarming, from the analysis of the results released by the National Examination Council (NECO) and West Africa Examination Council (WAEC). In 2009, Senior School Certificate Examinations conducted by NECO, over 90% of the students who sat for the examination failed. Out of 236,682 candidates who sat for the examination only 1.8% made five credits including Mathematics and English language. In 2010 less than 25% of the total candidates of 132,357 that sat for the Examinations passed with five credits. In 2011 about 24.86% achieved the University entry requirement (NECO, 2011). The problem is almost the same in WAEC. In 2008 only 23.5% passed in Mathematic and English Language with credits in three other subjects. In 2009, the percentage increased to 25.99%, while in 2010 the number declined to 20.04% (WAEC, 2010).

In Niger State, out of the 22,827 candidates that sat for the 2007 WAEC Examinations only 621 Candidates passed with five credits including Mathematics and English Language representing only 2.72%. In 2008, the percentage increased to 3.29%. In NECO Examinations of 2007, the results improved sharply with about 19.59% of the candidates passed with five credits including Mathematics and English Language. Although there may be other factors that can causes students' failure in examinations, but this mass failure among students in Niger state secondary schools may be attributed to the shortage of competent teachers as a result of attrition. So there is the urgent need to explore on factors that will help in retaining teachers so as to arrest the issue of mass failure among our secondary school students with the aim of moving our education forward.

Quite reasonable number of studies were conducted on teacher retention, but most of these studies were in developed nations like Britain, United States and Australia, although few studies can be found on Nigeria which majority of the conducted studies were carried out in the Southern part of Nigeria. No much studies on teacher retention in Niger State and the State is desperately in need of a research of this kind because of the rate at which teachers are leaving the teaching profession. There is the urgent need to conduct this study so as to bridge the gap and to also proffer possible solutions to the existing problem of attrition.

1.3 Research questions.

The research questions for the study are:

Main Research question:

Why do teachers leave or remain in teaching at secondary schools in the state of Niger, Nigeria?

Specific research questions

1. What reasons do teachers give for attrition among secondary schools teachers in Niger state, Nigeria?
2. How does the attrition among teachers affect secondary schools in the state?
3. What reasons do teachers give for retention of teachers in Niger state secondary schools?

1.4 Research Objectives.

This research has the following objectives:

Main Objective:

To explain reasons why teachers leave or remain in teaching at secondary school in Niger state, Nigeria.

Specific Objectives:

1. To explain reasons given by teachers for teacher attrition in Niger State secondary schools.
2. To describe how teacher attrition is affecting education at secondary school level in the state.
3. To explain reasons given by teachers for retention of teachers in Niger state secondary schools.

1.5 Significance of the Study.

As teachers continue to leave the teaching profession in Niger state, policy makers must identify factors related to attrition and possible ways of retention if the current situation needs to be addressed. This study tends to provide useful information that will assist Niger state ministry of education in understanding the problems associated with teacher attrition and provide the necessary measures that will help in the retention of teachers in Niger state secondary schools. The study will further help them in planning for incentives packages that will be attractive for workers in the field. The findings of this research will be helpful to the Personnel Department of Niger State Secondary Education Board in the area of recruiting and maintaining

standard on the process. Considering the vital roles of principals in schools, findings from this study will equip them with the knowledge on how to handle novice teachers, by way of rendering all sort of assistance with the aim of retaining them (novice teachers) in the job.

This study will provide policy makers and implementers in the Ministry of Education, Principals, and other interest groups with information on the significance of teacher retention in an educational organization and propose best ways on how to tackle the issue of teacher attrition among teachers of secondary schools in the state.

The research will also serve as a reference point to scholars who will be wishing and willing to study teacher attrition and retention in Nigeria, and will reduce the wide literature gap that exists in the field particularly in Niger state and Nigeria at large.

1.6 Scope of the Study.

This study is specifically aimed at exploring factors in relation to teacher attrition and retention in public secondary schools of Niger State in Nigeria. The study covered selected government established secondary schools in urban area of the state. It does not include any public rural secondary schools and none of the private established secondary schools was selected, this is because private schools are owned by individuals although government has responsibilities over formulating educational policies regarding their standard, but do not however have right over their recruitment policies and welfare of their staff. The major limitations to the study are; a qualitative method was used in carrying out the research with limited number of participants selected, the findings cannot be generalised because of the limited coverage. The study only focused on serving teachers and those that left the teaching profession.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Teacher: According to Afe (2002) Teacher in the educational process refers to the person who instructs to provide the teaching-learning process. He assumes various capacities as educator, instructor, tutor, lecturer, counsellor, professor and so on. He is the mainstay or prime mover of the educational system. According to Aghenta (1991) as an input operator into the educational system, the teacher plays a big role in the conversion of raw materials (particularly students) into finished products i.e. graduates. To this study, a Teacher is someone with or without teaching qualification, who found himself in the teaching profession.

Retention: According to Adelabu (2005) Retention is the act of putting all the necessary efforts to prevent teachers from leaving the teaching profession. It is also an effort to make teacher remain in teaching profession. In this study, retention means the same.

Attrition: Croasmum, Hampton & Herrman (2002) defined Attrition as the movement of employees out of the organisation or any permanent departure beyond organisational boundaries. In this study, attrition refers to voluntary exit of teacher out of teaching profession, it could be at the early, mid or late period in the teaching career.

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