

# Strategies to Mitigate High Teacher Transfer: A Case of Selected Secondary Schools in Mudzi District

Mukucha Mugove<sup>1</sup>; Ndongwe Evershine<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Mudzi District, Zimbabwe.

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**Abstract:** Teacher transfer is a persistent challenge facing secondary schools in rural areas, including Mudzi District, significantly affecting education quality and school stability. This study investigated strategies to mitigate high teacher transfer in selected secondary schools in Mudzi District. The purpose of the research was to identify the underlying causes, effects, and potential solutions to teacher transfers that disrupt education delivery. A qualitative research approach was adopted, utilizing a case study research design. The sample consisted of 5 school administrators and 10 teachers, selected through purposive sampling to provide rich insights into the phenomenon. Data collection was conducted using semi-structured interviews and mail questionnaires, ensuring both depth and broad coverage. Data were analysed thematically, highlighting several causes of high teacher transfer, including proximity to family and relatives, lack of electricity, inadequate accommodation, poor communication and transport networks, lack of water, heavy workload, and limited professional development opportunities. The study revealed adverse effects such as teacher shortages, disrupted learning, delayed teacher replacements, poor school performance, and strained school-community relations. The findings informed recommendations for mitigating teacher transfer. These included providing decent and adequate accommodation, electrification of schools, teacher induction and mentoring programs, recruiting local teachers, improving school safety, offering professional development opportunities, internet connectivity, and clean water. Additionally, minimizing excessive supervision, creating time for teacher collaboration, and implementing teacher recognition and reward systems were proposed as strategies to enhance teacher retention. This research contributed valuable insights for policymakers, educational authorities, and school administrators aiming to address the persistent challenge of teacher transfer in rural districts.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The issue of teacher transfers has been recognized as a serious problem in several developing countries. While high-performing schools are well-known for stability and continuity of teaching, research has shown that teaching typically has been regarded as a profession with high levels of transfer (Ingersoll, 2022). Feng (2005) avers that since teacher transfer does not impede supply of public school teachers in a country, most pragmatic research have presumed it as less noteworthy. Desimone (2024) upholds that since the skill of teaching is a progressive process, it includes a multifaceted set of skills, several of which can merely be soundly refined on continual work experience, making the effect of teacher transfer on learning process similar to attrition. Thus, it has been crucial to safeguard the departure of the few available teachers by the school administrations, to minimize the effects of teacher shortages on teaching and learning.

Below is a brief overview of the problem of teacher transfers in USA, Africa, Zimbabwe, and Mudzi District in particular. Johnson (2022) opines that teacher transfers cause high teacher turnover rates in USA, particularly in urban and rural schools. There are high teacher shortages in subjects like Mathematics, Science, and special education. Johnson (2022) further argues that factors contributing to teacher transfers include lack of autonomy and support, poor working conditions and resources, low salaries and benefits, as well as high-stress environments. In Africa, teacher shortages and transfers are widespread across the continent. Transfers lead to teacher shortages, particularly in underserved areas. Adeyinka (2023) avers that teacher transfers in Africa cause disruption of learning impacting pupil performance and achievement. Loss of institutional knowledge and expertise due to loss of experienced teachers is another notable problem of teacher transfers in Africa. Adeyinka (2023) also reveals that frequent transfers demotivate teachers, leading to low morale and decreased job satisfaction. Teacher transfers exacerbate existing inequalities in teacher distribution, with urban schools often receiving more experienced teachers.

Transfers also limit opportunities for career growth and development, particularly in rural schools. Due to limited data management systems, tracking and managing teacher transfers can be difficult. High teacher turnover rates, particularly in rural schools causes teacher shortages in subjects like Mathematics, Science, and English language in Zimbabwe (Moyo, 2024). These shortages are likely to create a knowledge gap amongst pupils in hardly hit schools. As a result, their academic performance is negatively affected. In Mudzi District, the problem of teacher transfers is exacerbated by the remote location and limited amenities, making it difficult to attract and retain teachers. Chireshe (2022) avers that the district's rural schools face significant challenges in providing quality education due to high teacher turnover rates and shortages. Teachers in Mathematics, Science, and English language are frequently a challenge to retain. There is therefore, a challenge of poor pupil performance in these learning areas because pupils take much of their time without the services of expertise in these subjects. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes improving working conditions, providing career development opportunities, and offering competitive salaries and benefits.

The effects of teacher transfers on quality of learning are directly linked to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4): Quality Education in the following ways as alluded to by UNESCO (2020). Disrupted learning environment and loss of continuity hinder progress towards SDG 4.1 which stipulates that countries should ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education. With teacher shortages in critical learning areas like Mathematics, Science, and English language, the quality of education is compromised. Further notable effect of teacher transfers in "difficulty in building relationships and inconsistent teaching methods that affect SDG 4.3. This sustainable development goal focuses on ensuring equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational, and tertiary education. Lack of accountability and negative impact on vulnerable students relate to SDG 4.5 which focuses on eliminating gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable. Teacher transfers have the impact of reduced parental trust and long-term consequences that impact SDG 4.6. This development goal seeks to ensure that all youth and adults have relevant skills, including technical and vocational, for employment and entrepreneurship. Decreased student motivation and reduced student achievement also affect SDG 4.7: "Ensure that all learners acquire knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development..." By addressing the effects of teacher transfers, we can work towards achieving SDG 4 and ensuring inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all (UNESCO, 2020).

Amongst the nine districts of Mashonaland East Province in Zimbabwe, Mudzi district has the biggest number of requests for transfers. Mudzi district has about 414 secondary school teachers in post out of an authorised teacher establishment of around 638. An estimated 62 secondary school teachers request for transfer out of the district every

term. These figures raise interrogations about the professional gratification of teachers and have potential inferences for school general performance. As the school head in one of the secondary schools in Mudzi District, I am pleased to carry out this research and find out some contributions that may inform the actions to be taken in trying to address the factors contributing to high teacher transfer.

#### ➤ *Research Objectives*

The objectives of this research were to:

- Identify the root causes of high teacher transfer rates in selected secondary schools.
- Examine the effects of high teacher transfer on pupil performance and quality of education.
- Find out strategies that can be used to address the problem of high teacher transfers in rural remote schools.

#### ➤ *Research Questions*

- What are the causes of high teacher transfer in secondary schools in Mudzi District?
- What are the effects of high teacher transfer in secondary schools of Mudzi District?
- How best can schools minimize the problem of high teacher transfer in Mudzi District?

#### ➤ *Theoretical Framework*

Self-determination theory (SDT) by Ryan and Deci (2020) has become a highly influential theory of human motivation and well-being with a vast body of research evidence. It offers a blueprint for understanding the motivational basis of personality and social behaviour, and of the relation of basic psycho-social needs to well-being, social-psychological flourishing, and high quality of life. Diverging from most historical and contemporary approaches to human motivation that have treated motivation as a unitary concept - that is, one has more or less motivation - SDT instead has focused on varied forms of motivation (from autonomous to controlled motivation) to predict outcomes such as performance, engagement, vitality, and social-psychological health. The theory, in particular, distinguishes between autonomous and controlled motivations. To be autonomous involves acting with a full sense of volition, endorsement, and choice, whereas, to be controlled involves feeling externally pressured or compelled to behave whether by the promise of a contingent reward, fear of punishment, ego involvement, or other external factors. Hundreds of studies have shown that when people are autonomously motivated, either by intrinsic motivation or well-internalized forms of extrinsic motivation they display higher interest, excitement, vitality, and confidence, resulting in better performance, creativity, persistence, and overall well-being (Ryan and Deci 2020). SDT also postulates that there are basic social-psychological needs that universally must be satisfied for people to experience ongoing growth, integrity, and wellness, namely needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Although there are a vast number of human desires, goals and preferences; autonomy, competence, and relatedness stand out as essential nutrients for these

outcomes. Social environments that support the satisfaction of these psychological needs promote capacities for self-regulation and social relationships, and well-being whereas those that thwart satisfaction of these needs lead to a broad array of more impoverished individual and interpersonal outcomes.

➤ *Relevance to the Study on Teacher Transfer*

SDT begins with an organismic metatheory, which refers to a set of philosophical assumptions about the nature of people. The theory assumes that human beings are inherently active, with liberally evolved tendencies toward assimilation, seeking and mastering challenges, and the integration of new experiences. Organismic metatheory views organizations as living systems, emphasizing interconnectedness, adaptability, and growth (Richardson, 2024). It focusses on the dynamic relationships within the organization and its environment. Organismic metatheory hinges on: holism, teleology, developmentalism, and contextualism. Holism focusses on understanding the organization as a whole, rather than just its parts. It stretches to recognizing how teacher turnover affects not only individual teachers but also pupils, colleagues, and the broader school community (Richardson, 2024). The systemic perspective views teacher transfer as a symptom of larger systemic issues, such as administrative support, school culture, or community engagement. Contextual understanding considers the unique context of each school, including its history, values, and environment, and how these factors contribute to teacher transfer. Furthermore, relationships and dynamics perspective examines the relationships between teachers, administrators, pupils, and the community, and how these dynamics influence teacher retention. Laszlo (2023) acknowledges that the school system has emergent properties that arise from the interactions and relationships within it, and that these properties can either contribute to or mitigate teacher transfer. Finally, non-linearity perspective understands that small changes in the system can have significant and disproportionate effects on teacher transfer, and that addressing these issues require a non-linear, adaptive approach (Richardson, 2024).

Teleology refers to the purpose, direction, or goal-oriented nature of a system. In relation to high teacher transfer, teleology identifies the underlying purposes or goals that drive teacher transfer decisions, such as seeking better working conditions, career advancement, or personal circumstances (Johnson, 2024). It also examines the direction or trajectory of teacher transfer trends in secondary schools including patterns, rates, and destinations. Moreover, teleology recognizes how teachers' goal-oriented behaviour such as new challenges or opportunities, contributes to transfer decisions (Rist, 2023). According to Clarke (2021), teleology seeks to understand teachers' aspirations, values, and motivations, and how these align with or conflict with the school's purpose or goals. Environmental influences examine how external factors such as district policies, community expectations, or socioeconomic conditions influence teacher transfer decisions and the school's purpose. By examining teleology in relation to high teacher transfer, schools can better understand the underlying drivers and purposes that

contribute to teacher turnover, ultimately informing strategies to attract, retain, and support teachers in achieving the school's mission and goals.

Developmentalism refers to the growth, evolution, and adaptive change of a system over time. According to Edwards (2023), developmentalism involves teacher growth and development, school evolution, systemic adaptation, emergent development, contextual influences, teacher-school fit, phase transitions, and self-organization. Teacher growth and development recognizes how teachers' career stages, training, and experiences influence their transfer decisions. School evolution examines how schools adapt and change over time, including responses to teacher transfer. Laszlo (2024) stresses that systemic adaptation considers how the district and schools respond to internal and external pressures such as policy changes or community needs. Emergent development acknowledges how new patterns, relationships, or structures emerge from teacher transfer and school interactions. According to Edwards (2023), contextual influences understand how local context, culture, and history shape teacher transfer and school development. Teacher-school fit examines how teachers' values, goals, and practices align or conflict with the school's culture and goals. Phase transitions identify critical points or phases in teacher careers or school development that trigger transfer decisions. Laszlo (2024) highlights that self-organization recognizes how teachers, schools, and districts self-organize and reorganize in response to internal and external changes. By examining developmentalism in relation to high teacher transfer, schools can better understand the dynamic and adaptive nature of teacher careers and school systems, ultimately informing strategies to support teacher growth, retention, and effective school evolution.

Contextualism, in the milieu of organismic metatheory, refers to the consideration of the external and internal environment, history, and culture of a system. It involves local context, school culture, teacher experiences, environmental influences, historical context, community engagement, contextualising teacher transfer, and emergent context. Adams (2023) opines that local context examines the unique characteristics of the most affected district, such as socioeconomic conditions, culture, and community values. School culture investigates the specific culture, history, and values of each secondary school. According to York (2022), teacher experiences deal with the individual familiarities, backgrounds, and motivations. Environmental influences, on the other hand, analyse external factors such as district policies, national education reforms, and economic conditions. Contextualism seeks to understand the historical development of the schools, districts, and community. It also involves community engagement which examines the relationships between schools, teachers, and the local community. Laszlo (2024) propounds that contextualising teacher transfer recognises how teacher transfer is influenced by and impacts the local context. By examining contextualism in relation to high teacher transfer, schools can better understand the complex interplay of factors contributing to teacher turnover, ultimately informing

context-specific strategies to support teacher retention and effective education.

Within SDT, the basic psychological process through which this occurs is referred to as organismic integration, which is a manifestation of people's proactive, synthetic nature to become more differentiated and coherent in functioning. The theory recognizes that, although these organizational processes are inherent to human nature, they do not develop fully or operate effectively without certain psychological nutrients (Ryan, et.al. 2020). Specifically, effective functioning of organismic integration requires the ongoing satisfaction of basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Supports for these need satisfactions in the social context (both developmentally and situational) facilitate growth, engagement, effectiveness, and well-being, whereas contexts that interfere with or thwart the satisfaction of these needs often catalyse defence, rigidity, and various forms of ill-being and psychopathology (Ryan et al. 2020). As an organismic framework, SDT thus embraces both the assumption of inherent integrative or growth tendencies and an interest in the elements within environments that support them. In addition, it embraces empirical research strategies for identifying these propensities and their supports, at every level of analysis from physiology and neuropsychology to macro-social structures such as economic and political systems (Ryan et al. 2020).

Although self-determination theory (SDT) is a macro-theory, it comprised of six mini-theories that have been developed to explain a circumscribed set of motivational phenomena. The first is cognitive evaluation theory, formulated to explain the effects of social contexts on intrinsic motivation. The second, organismic integration theory, explains phenomena concerned with the internalization and integration of extrinsic motivation. The third is causality orientations theory, dealing with general individual differences in motivational orientations. The fourth, basic psychological needs theory, addresses the issue of psychological well-being and ties together the first three mini-theories. The fifth is goal content theory, concerned with the "what" or content of people's life goals and lifestyles, and the processes through which these develop. Finally, the sixth is relationships motivation theory, promoting high-quality close relationships. Although the six mini-theories together do not constitute the whole of SDT, most phenomena elucidated within this theoretical tradition can be located within one of these mini-theories (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

#### ➤ *Causes of High Teacher Transfer in Secondary Schools*

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) explains a set of phenomena related to intrinsic motivation and the social contextual conditions that undermine, maintain, or enhance it. Intrinsic motivation refers to the inherent motivation that energizes people to do things they find interesting and enjoyable. In relation to high teacher transfer, SDT suggests that factors undermining authority, competence, and relatedness contribute to decreased motivation and increased transfer (Laszlo, 2024).

#### ➤ *Autonomy*

Research on the causes of high teacher transfer across the globe indicates that all factors undermining autonomy demotivates teachers ultimately leading to increased transfer. In the USA, excessive standardised testing and curriculum requirements limit teacher autonomy (Mustakova-Possardt, 2022). There is a "No Child Left Behind Act" which emphasises the importance of serious consideration of every school pupil. High-stakes accountability measures and Ofsted inspections restrict teacher autonomy in Britain. According to Smith (2024), the Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) inspection framework in Britain evaluates schools and education providers based on quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, leadership and management, as well as early years provision. Inspectors evaluate these areas through observations of teaching and learning, review of documents and data, and surveys and feedback from parents and pupils (Greany, 2024). Although the Ofsted inspection framework has a number of positive outcomes, its negative effects on teachers including stress and anxiety, teaching to the test, workload and burnout, lack of autonomy, fear of judgment, as well as limited focus on teacher well-being force high teacher transfer especially in hard to reach areas. In Australia, the Centralized Curriculum and Assessment Requirements contributes to high teacher transfer in hard to reach areas. Limited autonomy, one-size-fits-all approach, high-stakes testing, workload and administrative burden, lack of creativity and innovation, teacher burnout, limited opportunities for professional growth, and mismatch between curriculum and pupil needs contribute to high teacher transfer rates in Australia as teachers seek more autonomy, flexibility, and fulfilment in their careers (Rice, 2024). In Kenya, overemphasis on national examinations and rigid curriculum limits teacher autonomy (Mwangi, 2024). Kalimba (2024) revealed that strict curriculum and pedagogical requirements in Rwanda restrict teacher autonomy. According to Mawere (2023), over-centralized education system and lack of resources in Zimbabwean schools limit teacher autonomy.

#### ➤ *Competence*

In the USA, the issue of competence significantly contributes to high teacher transfer from hard to reach schools. Zeichner (2024) revealed that lack of support for struggling teachers can lead to transfer decisions. Inadequate training, mentoring, or resources can lead to feelings of incompetence, causing teachers to transfer to schools with better support systems. High-stakes testing and accountability in the USA curriculum framework also significantly contribute to teacher transfer decision. The emphasis on standardised testing and teacher evaluation create undue stress leading competent teachers to transfer to schools with less emphasis on testing (Zeichner, 2024). McNally (2024) avers that poor school leadership also cause teachers to transfer. Ineffective or unsupportive leadership can erode teacher confidence, and this has led to a large number of teachers transferring from some schools in USA. Research in Britain revealed that limited opportunities for teacher professional development and career progression caused stress and the desire to transfer. McNally (2024) opines that teachers seeking new challenges or opportunities

for growth in Britain transfer to schools offering more prospects leaving those schools denying them the opportunity to do so. In Australia, insufficient support for teacher professional growth, particularly in rural areas leads to high teacher transfer. Inadequate teacher training and resources, especially in underserved areas in Kenya leads to high teacher transfer, resulting in teacher shortages in rural schools (Odoyo, 2024). In Rwanda, research has also revealed that limited opportunities for teacher professional development and career advancement directly leads to high teacher transfer (Twagirayezu, 2024). Lack of resources and support for teacher professional growth contributes to high teacher transfer in hard to reach areas in Zimbabwe (Mawere, 2023).

#### ➤ *Relatedness*

Relatedness refers to the fundamental human need to feel connected, valued, and supported in relationships with others. According to Deci (2022), relatedness involves experiencing a sense of belonging, acceptance, and understanding within social groups, such as workplaces, communities, or personal relationships. In the context of teacher well-being and motivation, relatedness encompasses feeling part of a supportive community, experiencing positive relationships with colleagues and leaders, receiving recognition and appreciation for one's work, having opportunities for collaboration and team work, and feeling valued and respected as a professional. Research by Deci (2022) in USA revealed that poor school leadership and lack of teacher support in some schools in the hard to reach areas promotes high teacher transfer. For instance, high principal turnover in most remote schools in the USA significantly attract high teacher transfer due to partly feared strange leadership style by the incoming principal or already exhibited unfriendly leadership. Inadequate teacher well-being support and high workload in Britain cause teacher stress and burnout. In her research, McNally (2024) in Britain revealed that emotional exhaustion makes teachers feel drained, depleted, and demotivated. She also revealed that poor work-life balance due to long hours and high job demands blur boundaries between work and personal life. These factors contribute to high teacher transfer rates by eroding relatedness, leading to: feeling disconnected from colleagues, leaders, and the school community; reduced sense of belonging and commitment to the profession; increased stress, burnout, and mental health concerns; decreased job satisfaction and engagement; and increased likelihood of seeking alternative employment where well-being and work-life balance are prioritised (Mutton, 2024). In Australia, limited opportunities for teacher collaboration and social support leads to isolation, lack of shared knowledge, reduced problem-solving, decreased job satisfaction, and increased stress. Johnson (2024) in his research in Australia alluded that teachers feel disconnected from colleagues and lack a sense of community. Limited collaboration hinders sharing of best practices, resources, and expertise. On the reduced problem-solving construct, Johnson (2024) alluded that teachers face challenges alone, without collective support or solutions. He further highlighted that limited social support and collaboration in Australia lead to lower morale and engagement. As such, teachers bear sole responsibility for pupil learning, without shared workload or emotional

support. Poor school leadership and lack of teacher support, particularly in rural schools has been reported in Kenya as one of the causes of high teacher transfer under the construct of relatedness (Odoyo, 2024). In Rwanda, limited opportunities for teacher social support and collaboration including teacher mentorship programs has been revealed as basic causes of high teacher transfer under the construct of relatedness (Twagirayezu, 2024). Finally, the noted causes of high teacher transfer by research in Zimbabwe were lack of resources and support for teacher well-being (Mawere, 2023).

## II. EFFECTS OF HIGH TEACHER TRANSFER IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

#### ➤ *Decreased Autonomy*

High teacher transfer from remote rural secondary schools negatively impact on the general performance of the institutions. Notable negative effects of high teacher transfer include, but not limited to, disrupted learning environment, reduced teacher quality and experience, decreased community trust and engagement, increased administrative burden, and negative impact on pupil achievement and well-being. Research carried out by Ingersoll (2024) revealed that frequent teacher changes create instability, affecting pupil learning and academic achievement. Pupils struggle to form relationships with new teachers, leading to decreased motivation and engagement. Disrupted learning environment is a significant effect of high teacher transfer, particularly in the USA. Self-Determination Theory outlines that a disrupted learning environment undermines pupils' basic psychological needs, leading to decreased motivation, engagement, and academic achievement (Ingersoll, 2024). High teacher transfer disrupts school programs and curriculum implementation in Chicago Public Schools (Fredricks, 2023). In Britain, research has shown that teacher shortages limit subject offerings and curriculum breadth (Smith, 2023). For instance, there is high teacher shortages in Mathematics and Science in some schools in the United Kingdom. In Australia, teacher turnover affects school leadership and decision-making, especially in New South Wales where there is high principal (Lee, 2022). High teacher turnover in Kenya seems to be disrupting school operations and exam preparation especially due to teacher shortages in rural schools (Odhiambo, 2023). Rwanda Education Board's school performance reports indicated that teacher transfer affects school performance and pupil outcomes (Niyonzima, 2022). Teacher strikes and transfer in Zimbabwe impact school operations and pupil learning (Mawere, 2023).

#### ➤ *Decreased Competence*

Research carried out in USA revealed that novice teachers replacing experienced ones can lower school performance (Rodriguez, 2022). This is due to the need for adaptability, confidence building, gaining experience as well as getting used to operational systems and the environment. Taylor (2023) avers that teacher shortages in deprived schools in Britain affect pupil achievement. Pupils especially in disadvantaged areas are left for quite lot periods without teachers. They are later on subjected to public examinations without efforts to compensate for the lost time unattended. In Australia, Nguyen (2022) revealed that teacher turnover

affects pupil outcome, especially in rural and remote schools. High teacher turnover disrupts pupil learning and exam preparation in Kenya as indicated by Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education results (Mwangi, 2023). Rwanda Education Board's school accountability reports exposed that teacher transfer affects pupil performance and school accountability as teachers regularly transfer out of schools (Uwizeyimana, 2022). New teachers including school leadership are deployed timeously, as such, no one will be accountable for the systems and operations of schools. According to Chireshe (2024), Zimbabwe School Examinations Council's exam results showed that teacher transfer impacts pupil learning and achievement.

#### ➤ *Decreased Relatedness*

High teacher turnover in high-poverty schools in USA disrupts teacher-pupil relationships and school community (Brown, 2022). The school loses experienced and receives new teachers every term. It takes time for both teachers and pupils know and study each other. As a result, sour relationships remain the order of the day in schools. In Britain, Evans (2023) in his research "Teacher Shortages and Teacher Collaboration" exposed that teacher shortages affect teacher collaboration and pupil support. This creates heavy teacher workload and stress. Research conducted by Anderson (2022) in Australia on "Teacher Turnover and Teacher Morale" revealed that teacher turnover affects teacher morale and school culture. High teacher turnover in Kenya disrupts teacher-pupil relationships and school cohesion (Kiplimo, 2023). This was revealed on the research conducted on teacher shortages in rural schools. Results from the Rwanda Education Board's teacher collaboration initiatives showed that teacher transfer affects teacher collaboration and pupil support (Bizimana, 2022). Research conducted in Zimbabwe indicated that teacher transfer impacts teacher morale and school community (Machingambi, 2024).

#### ➤ *Strategies Implemented in USA to Mitigate High Teacher Transfer*

Self-determination theory (SDT) posits that human behaviour is motivated by three innate psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. In the context of high teacher transfer in secondary schools, SDT can inform strategies to mitigate this cancer by addressing the causes and effects on teachers' motivation and well-being. Highlighted causes of high teacher transfer include: lack of autonomy-which includes micromanagement, and limited decision-making; inadequate support for competence-insufficient professional development, and inadequate resources; and poor relatedness-unsupportive school culture, and isolation. Unpacked effects of high teacher transfer include: decreased teacher motivation and engagement; reduced teacher well-being and job satisfaction; and negative impact on pupil learning and achievement.

#### ➤ *Upholding Teacher Autonomy*

Under the autonomy construct of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), strategies to mitigate high teacher transfer in secondary schools in the USA focus on enhancing teachers' sense of control, agency, and volition.

#### ➤ *Teacher Autonomy in Curriculum Design*

In the USA, teachers were allowed to design and implement their own curriculum, within state and national standards. For example, schools like the Denver Public Schools' teacher-powered schools program allow teachers to design and implement their own curriculum (Coburn, 2023). Research by Coburn (2023) unpacked that schools in USA were resourced with adequate teaching and learning materials, and support for teachers to develop innovative and engaging lesson plans rendered.

#### ➤ *Flexible Instructional Methods*

In the USA, Johnson (2023) revealed that some schools encourage teachers to use various instructional methods such as project-based learning, flipped classrooms, or personalized learning, and further provides guidance for teachers on how to implement these approaches in their classrooms. They go further supporting teachers in experimenting with new approaches and technologies.

#### ➤ *Decision-Making Power*

Involving teachers in school-wide decision-making processes such as budgeting, scheduling, and policy development helped retain teachers in some secondary schools. According to the research carried out by Darling-Hammond (2023) in the USA, giving teachers more autonomy in decision-making leads to increased job satisfaction, motivation, and retention. He further argues that encouraging teacher leadership and ownership of school initiatives and projects play a critical role in empowering them thereby reducing their chances of seeking transfer.

#### ➤ *Professional Development Autonomy*

Professional development autonomy impacts on teacher growth, retention, and pupil achievement. Gulamhussein (2023) argues that giving autonomy to teachers in their professional development in USA leads to increased motivation, job satisfaction, and effectiveness in the classroom. He further asserts that allowing teachers to choose their own professional development opportunities such as workshops, conferences, or courses helps retain them in some schools in USA. Supporting teachers in pursuing specialised certifications or degrees motivates them to remain in such schools.

#### ➤ *Classroom Environment Control*

In the USA, research has revealed the importance of classroom environment control in secondary schools, providing strategies and techniques for teachers to create a positive and productive learning environment. Marzano (2023) highlights that teachers who have control over their classroom environment are better able to manage pupil behaviour, increase pupil engagement, and improve academic achievement. Schools should give teachers autonomy to design and organise their own classroom environments. They should also provide resources for teachers to create a comfortable and inclusive learning space.

#### ➤ *Scheduling Flexibility*

The concept of scheduling flexibility in secondary schools, its benefits and challenges, as well as practical

strategies for implementation have been provided in the USA education system. According to the research conducted by Hackmann (2023), flexible scheduling leads to improved pupil engagement, increased teacher autonomy, and better work-life balance for educators. Schools in USA offer flexible scheduling options such as telecommuting or flexible start/end times. They also allow teachers to have input in their schedules and workloads.

#### ➤ *Teacher-Led Initiatives*

Research carried out in USA revealed that the concept of teacher-led initiatives, where teachers take on leadership roles and drive school environment efforts reduced the rate of teacher transfer. Berry (2023) argues that teacher-led initiatives can lead to increased teacher autonomy, improved pupil outcomes, and more effective school reform. Schools in the USA encourage teachers to develop and lead school-wide initiatives such as clubs, programs, or events. They also support teachers in taking ownership of their ideas and passions.

By implementing these autonomy-enhancing strategies, secondary schools in the USA can increase teacher motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction, ultimately reducing high teacher transfer rates.

#### ➤ *Promoting Teacher Competence*

Under the competence construct, the following strategies were implemented in secondary schools in USA to mitigate high teacher transfer: professional development opportunities; mentorship programs; and teacher residency programs.

#### ➤ *Professional Development Opportunities*

In the USA, professional development opportunities helped teachers enhance their skills, stay updated on best practices, and advance their careers. Workshops and conferences, courses and certification programs, coaching and mentoring, online resources and webinars, as well as teacher leadership programs are being carried out to keep teachers abreast with the fast pacing technologies and professional development needs. Guskey (2022) revealed that National Board Certification, workshops, conferences, and courses on topics like technology integration, project-based learning, and culturally responsive teaching are frequently administered across the country. He further revealed that organizations like the National Education Association (NEA) and the Learning Policy Institute (LPI) offer high-quality professional development opportunities to enhance teachers' skills and knowledge (Guskey, 2022).

#### ➤ *Mentorship Programs*

In the USA, mentorship programs are designed to support new teachers, reduce turnover rates, and improve pupil outcomes. Research carried out by Kardos (2022) revealed that new teachers are matched with experienced educators who provide guidance, support, and feedback. Mentors receive training on effective mentoring strategies, communication, and coaching techniques. Mentors and mentees meet regularly to discuss challenges, share experiences, and set goals. Mentors help mentees set and

work towards achieving professional development goals. Kardos (2022) further revealed that mentors observe mentees' classes, provide constructive feedback, and suggest improvement strategies. Mentors introduce mentees to professional networks, resources and opportunities. Programs evaluate mentorship effectiveness, provide support for mentors, and address any challenges or concerns (Kardos, 2022). Research conducted by Searby (2023) in the USA revealed that New Teacher Project, National Education Association Mentorship Program, and Instructional Coaching Initiative are examples of mentorship programs implemented in the USA. New Teacher Project is a comprehensive mentorship program for new teachers. National Education Association Mentorship Program pairs experienced teachers with new educators. Instructional Coaching Initiatives on the other hand, focuses on instructional coaching and support. According to Searby (2023), these mentorship programs benefitted the education system in a number of ways. These include improved teacher retention, enhanced teacher effectiveness, increased job satisfaction, and better pupil outcomes.

By providing new teachers with guidance, support, and feedback, mentorship programs help mitigate high teacher transfer rates and improve overall education quality.

#### ➤ *Teacher Residency Program*

These are programs aimed at providing comprehensive training, coaching, and support for new teachers during their early years. Berry (2022) propounds that teacher residency programs in the USA involve graduate-level training, mentorship, coaching, residency, placement, stipend, and commitment. At graduate-level training, residents earn a master's degree or certification while teaching. The program typically includes completing graduate-level courses in education with the focus on curriculum design, instructional strategies, classroom management, assessment and evaluation, special education, and diversity and instruction. Berry (2022) argues that these programs aim at equipping teachers with relevant professional qualifications while at work. Whilst these programs will be running, experienced teachers will offer guidance and support to residents. Regular feedback and coaching on teaching practices will be rendered by coaches or mentors. The research outlined that residents teach alongside mentors for 1-2 years. Berry (2022) argues that residents are placed in high-needs schools or subject areas. Residents receive a decent stipend while teaching. Residents commit to teaching in the district or school for a set period such as 3-5 years.

Identified benefits of teacher residency program include improved teacher retention, enhanced teacher effectiveness, increased job satisfaction, and better pupil outcomes. Residents are more likely to stay in the profession as stipulated by their commitment timeframes. Residents receive extensive training and support while on placement period. Residents also feel prepared and confident through their time with mentors and adequate practice. Effective teaching practices lead to improved pupil achievement. Examples of teacher residency programs in the USA include Boston Teacher Residency, Chicago Teacher Residency, and

National Centre for Teacher Residencies. By providing comprehensive training, support, and mentorship, Teacher Residency Programs help mitigate high teacher transfer rates and improve overall education quality.

➤ *Safeguarding Teacher Relatedness*

In the USA, research revealed the importance of teacher collaboration time, mentorship and coaching, as well as teacher recognition and rewards as strategies to mitigate high teacher transfer in secondary schools.

➤ *Teacher Collaboration Time*

Research on teacher collaboration time in the USA has yielded valuable insights into its impact on teacher retention, pupil outcomes, and school culture. A study by Kraft et.al. (2020) on “Collaborative School Cultures and Teacher Retention” investigated the relationship between school culture, collaboration, and teacher retention. He found that schools with strong collaborative cultures tend to have lower teacher turnover rates and higher teacher satisfaction. Research by Grissom (2018) on “Teacher Time Use and Collaboration” analysed time-use data from over 1000 teachers and found that collaboration time is often limited, averaging around 10-15 minutes per day. This research showed that teachers who reported more collaboration time also reported higher job satisfaction and engagement. These studies demonstrate that teacher collaboration time can have a positive impact on pupil achievement, teacher morale and retention, as well as school culture and collaboration (Kraft, et.al. 2020). Teacher collaboration time fosters sense of community and belonging among teachers. It also encourages knowledge sharing and peer support. Teacher collaboration time enhances collective problem-solving and innovation among group members. Schools like High Tech High (HTH) network prioritize teacher collaboration time to foster a sense of community and shared responsibility. However, the research also highlights the challenges of implementing regular, high-quality collaboration time, including time constraints, scheduling difficulties, inequitable access to collaboration opportunities. By understanding these findings, schools and policymakers can work to create more supportive environments that prioritize teacher collaboration and ultimately benefit both teachers and pupils.

➤ *Mentorship and Coaching*

Research on mentorship and coaching in the USA has explored its impact on teacher development, retention, and pupil outcomes. “Mentorship and Teacher Retention” by Redding, et.al. (2020) examined the relationship between mentorship and teacher retention in schools in USA. Redding et.al. (2020) found that mentorship can play a critical role in reducing teacher turnover, particularly for new teachers. Knight et.al. (2017) conducted a research on “Coaching for Instructional Improvement” and investigated the impact of coaching on instructional improvement. They found that coaching can lead to significant improvements in teaching practices, particularly in areas such as lesson planning and classroom management. These studies demonstrate that mentorship and coaching can leave a positive impact on teacher quality and development, teacher retention and job satisfaction, and pupil achievement and outcomes. Research

revealed that mentorship and coaching proffers personalised guidance and support to teachers. The program improves teaching practices and pupil outcomes. It also enhances teacher confidence and self-efficacy. Programs like the Instructional Coaching Initiative (ICI), and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) Coaching Initiative provide teachers with regular feedback and support. However, researchers also highlight the importance of high-quality mentorship and coaching practices, consistent and ongoing support, and contextual factors such as school culture and leadership (Redding, et.al. 2020). By understanding these findings, schools and policymakers can design and implement effective mentorship and coaching programs to support teacher growth and development.

➤ *Teacher Recognition and Rewards*

Research on teacher recognition and rewards in USA has explored its impact on teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and pupil outcomes. “Teacher Recognition and Rewards” by Garcia et.al. (2020) investigated teachers’ perceptions of recognition and rewards programs. They found that teachers value recognition and rewards, but often feel that programs are unfair or ineffective. Wang et.al. (2018) on “The Effects of Teacher Recognition on Teacher Self-Efficacy” explored the relationship between teacher recognition and teacher self-efficacy. They discovered that recognition can enhance teacher self-efficacy, leading to improved teaching practices and increased job satisfaction. These studies demonstrate that teacher recognition and rewards can have a positive impact on teacher motivation and job satisfaction, teacher retention and reduced turnover, pupil achievement and outcomes, as well as teacher self-efficacy and teaching practices (Wang, et.al. 2020). Teacher retention and rewards boosts morale and motivation, encourages excellence and innovation, and demonstrates appreciation for teachers’ hard work. Initiatives like the National Teacher of the Year program and the Milken Educator Awards recognize and reward teachers for their hard work and dedication. Conversely, researchers highlight the importance of fair and transparent recognition and rewards systems, meaningful and timely recognition, as well as aligning recognition and rewards with teacher values and goals. If not professionally implemented, the program may be perceived as superficial or tokenistic. It can create competition rather than collaboration. Finally, the program may not address underlying issues driving transfer.

These strategies aim to address the root causes of high teacher transfer such as lack of autonomy, inadequate support, and poor working conditions, by promoting teacher motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction. The strategies can be effective in mitigating high teacher transfer by building a sense of community and belonging, providing personalized support and guidance, and recognizing and valuing teachers’ contributions in education.

### III. STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED TO MITIGATE HIGH TEACHER TRANSFER IN AFRICA

#### ➤ *Autonomy*

In Africa, research on strategies to mitigate high teacher transfer has explored the impact of teacher autonomy on job satisfaction, motivation, and retention. Chilwa, et.al. (2017) investigated the relationship between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction in Zambia. They found that teacher autonomy is positively related to job satisfaction and retention. On their research “Teacher Autonomy and Job Satisfaction: A Strategy to Mitigate High Teacher Transfer in Zambia”, Chilwa, et.al. (2017) revealed that there is a positive correlation between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction. They also discovered that teacher autonomy significantly predicts job satisfaction. They further disclosed that teacher autonomy also predicts teacher retention in Zambia. Providing teachers with autonomy can mitigate high teacher transfer. Teacher management policies should prioritise teacher autonomy to enhance job satisfaction and retention.

Strategies including financial incentives, in the form of a hardship allowance, travel allowance, or subsidized housing schemes, in addition to non-monetary incentives involving special study leave or better training opportunities have had positive effects on teacher retention in Africa (Craig, et.al. 1998). According to Mulkeen (2005), a good number of countries in Africa have hired this approach: Mozambique is one such example where a system of financial bonuses for teachers who locate in rural areas and those who teach two shifts has been prioritized. Two shift schools are mostly found in high population density areas. A flat bonus of 275 Maloti equivalent to \$47 has been made a monthly payment to teachers who teach in the mountainous hardship zones. Also, the government of Uganda introduced a hardship allowance of 20% of basic salary for “hard-to-reach” areas (Mulkeen, 2005). One more strategy in Ghana included connecting rural placement with a teacher education outreach program, aimed at helping female teachers to feel safe and a greater sense of control over their deployment (Hedges, 2000). The Education Management Information System (EMIS) data in Malawi exposes a strong relationship between the availability of housing in an area and the retention of teachers in schools especially female teachers (Mulkeen, 2005). Likewise, a study on secondary school teacher attrition in Uganda considered establishment of housing to be a fundamental aspect in guaranteeing teacher retention especially in rural areas, whereas in Mozambique, the same study revealed that the Ministry puts up a director’s house in some schools. In addition, some NGOs and local communities, have built teacher’s houses in an effort to make rural locations more attractive. Some NGOs and community groups in Lesotho have provided accommodation and it helped retain teachers (Mulkeen, 2005).

Recommendations from these studies suggest that schools and policymakers should prioritise teacher autonomy in teacher management and development policies. Teachers should be given more control over their teaching practices, curriculum, and assessment methods. Autonomy should be

balanced with accountability and support to ensure effective teaching practices.

#### ➤ *Competence*

Research conducted in Ghana by Osei, et.al. (2022) on “Teacher Professional Development and Retention in Ghanaian Schools” revealed that teachers who received regular professional development opportunities were more likely to stay in their schools. They further found that competence-enhancing programs such as mentoring and coaching, significantly predicted teacher retention. Osei, et.al. (2022) concluded that investing in teacher professional development can enhance competence and reduce teacher transfer in Ghana. Kiplimo, et.al. (2024) on their research “The Effect of Teacher Training on Retention in Kenyan Secondary Schools” discovered that teachers who received training showed significant improvement in their teaching practices and reported higher competence. Trained teachers were more likely to stay in their schools compared to the control group. They concluded that providing teachers with training opportunities can enhance their competence and reduce teacher transfer in Kenya. In South Africa, Mokoena, et.al. (2023) in their study “The Impact of Teacher Self-Efficacy on Retention in South African Schools” revealed that teachers with high self-efficacy (a measure of competence) were more likely to stay in their schools. Self-efficacy was found to mediate the relationship between teacher motivation and retention. They concluded that enhancing teacher self-efficacy through competence-building programs can mitigate high teacher transfer in South Africa.

These studies demonstrate the importance of competence-enhancing strategies in mitigating high teacher transfer in Africa. By investing in teacher professional development, self-efficacy, and training, schools and policymakers can support teacher growth and retention.

#### ➤ *Relatedness*

The study by Hedges (2002) discloses that Ghana gazetted a policy that involved posting newly qualified teachers in pairs and bored fruits. Those posted in pairs appeared to lure strength from the ready-made friendship, particularly in inimical societies, even if they had not known each other earlier. In Nigeria, the study by Oyinyola et.al. (2022) discovered that teachers who reported strong collegial relationships with colleagues were more likely to stay in their schools. Collegiality was found to predict teacher retention, mediating the relationship between teacher motivation and turnover intentions. They concluded that fostering teacher collegiality can enhance relatedness and reduce teacher transfer in Nigerian secondary schools. Mwakalebela et.al. (2023) on their research “The Effect of Mentorship on Teacher Retention in Tanzanian Secondary Schools” revealed that teachers who had mentors reported higher relatedness and were more likely to stay in their schools. Mentorship was found to predict teacher retention, particularly for novice teachers. Their conclusion was that implementing mentorship programs can enhance relatedness and mitigate high teacher transfer in Tanzanian secondary schools. “The Role of School Community Engagement in Teacher Retention in Ethiopian Secondary Schools” by

Tesfaye (1999) made the following discoveries: teachers who reported strong connections with the school community were more likely to stay in their schools. Community engagement was found to enhance relatedness, predicting teacher retention and mediating the relationship between teacher motivation and turnover intentions. Tesfaye (1999) concluded that encouraging school community engagement can foster relatedness and reduce teacher transfer in Ethiopian secondary schools.

These studies demonstrate the importance of relatedness-enhancing strategies in mitigating high teacher transfer in African secondary schools. By fostering collegiality, mentorship, and community engagement, schools and policymakers can support teacher growth and retention.

#### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore complex phenomena and gain insight into people's experiences and perspectives on a particular topic. It is particularly useful when researchers want to understand the meaning that people attach to their experiences or when they want to uncover the underlying reasons for people's behaviour. Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, et.al. 2023). This process involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. Clark and Ivankova (2023) aver that qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. Qualitative research can be defined as a research methodology that focuses on gathering, analysing, and interpreting non-numerical data to gain a deeper understanding of a particular phenomenon, concept, or experience. It involves exploring and describing the meaning, context, and perspectives of individuals or groups. Qualitative research is well-suited for understanding nuanced social processes, behaviours, and experiences, making it ideal when the goal is to explore how people perceive or interpret their realities. It allows researchers to gather rich, detailed data directly from participants in their natural contexts. This approach is particularly useful for addressing "why" and "how" questions that cannot be answered through quantitative means (Creswell, et.al. 2023). The emergent nature of qualitative methods makes it effective for studies that evolve based on initial findings, ensuring that the research remains participant-centred.

Nonetheless, qualitative research can be influenced by researcher's biases or interpretations that determine data collection and analysis process. To address this challenge, this research used triangulation by employing multiple data sources to ensure findings were consistent and reliable. Reflexivity was practiced by maintaining a researcher journal to acknowledge and address potential biases. According to Clark and Ivankova (2023), findings from qualitative

research are often context-specific and may not be easily generalized to other populations or settings. In addressing this challenge, this research provided thick, detailed descriptions of the context and participants to allow readers to determine the applicability of findings to their own settings. Creswell and Creswell (2023) argue that collecting and analysing qualitative data can be resource intensive and lengthy. In addressing this challenge, this research created a detailed timeline and schedule to manage data collection and analysis.

By acknowledging and addressing these limitations, this study ensured rigor while maintaining the depth and richness characteristic of qualitative methods.

##### ➤ *Population and Sampling*

The study was carried out in Mudzi District schools of which the 42 secondary schools in the District were grouped in clusters. As such, 5 school heads, and 10 teachers were purposively selected as the research sample. Purposeful sampling involves selecting participants who are particularly knowledgeable or experienced in the area being studied, and who can provide rich, detailed insights into the phenomenon of interest (Bazeley, 2022). Creswell and Creswell (2023) define a purposeful sampling as a strategy in which the researcher selects participants based on their expertise, experience, or unique perspective related to the research question.

##### ➤ *Data Collection and Analysis*

Data collection was done using interview guides designed for teachers while questionnaires were designed for school heads. The instruments in question were delivered via mail to both teachers and school heads. The researcher explained the purpose and guidelines to respondents on how to complete and/or respond to specific instrument. Proclamation of privacy of the given information was aptly specified.

A deduction of the existence of three thematic areas: the causes, effects, and potential solutions on teacher transfers was used in arranging, reviewing and analysing the collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). All said and done, the researcher got the chance to explore the sensitive and highly emotional issues relating the research title.

#### V. RESEARCH FINDINGS

##### ➤ *The Causes of Teacher Transfer*

The interview questions were administered to five school heads in Mudzi District and all responded. All the five school heads in the district pointed out that teachers transferred from the district to be close to their families, homesteads and relatives. They further revealed that teachers also sought transfer to be close to established towns and cities for better living conditions. Similar responses were given by all the five school heads in mail questionnaires. The findings from two different instruments used complemented one another. Responses from teachers were also captured using mail questionnaires. All the ten teachers who responded to mail questionnaires revealed similar reasons for teacher transfer requests. This, therefore, showed that the need to be

close to families, homesteads, relatives, and established towns was a genuine concern among teachers in Mudzi District. Another reason revealed by all the 5 school heads for pushing teachers out of Mudzi District was unavailability of electricity in most schools. Similar responses were also given by the same number of school heads in mail questionnaires. All the ten teachers who responded to mail questionnaires revealed that unavailability of electricity in schools was another major reason forcing them to transfer.

Poor state of teachers' houses and shortage of accommodation were indicated by 4 school heads as other factors threatening teachers' stay. This was echoed by the findings presented by 4 school heads in mail questionnaires received. All the ten teachers who responded to mail questionnaires revealed that shortage of accommodation forced them to seek transfer from the district. Of the 5 school heads interviewed, 4 indicated that poor communication and transport networks exacerbated transfer requests in the district. These sentiments clearly highlighted the existing transport and communication challenges that were forcing teachers to seek transfers from Mudzi District. Similar responses were drawn from mail questionnaires received from school heads. Four school heads pointed out that poor communication and transport networks exacerbated teacher transfers in Mudzi District. This was also echoed by responses from mail questionnaires received from teachers. All the ten teachers revealed the same sentiments. Thus, poor infrastructural development in electricity, teachers' houses, transport, and communication networks seriously threatened teachers' stay in the district. All 5 school heads agreed that water challenges had increasingly grown into a menacing factor on the transfer of teachers. These sentiments were supported by data revealed by school heads from mail questionnaires. Data received from teachers through mail questionnaires also highlighted water shortages as another cause of teacher transfers out of the district. Therefore, from the data gathered, we can safely report that water shortages pushed teachers to transfer from Mudzi District. All the five school heads interviewed opined that very high workloads due to understaffing greatly contributed to the transfer requests by teachers out of the district. Data gathered from mail questionnaires completed by school heads echoed the same sentiments. Five school heads revealed high workloads as one of the causes of teacher transfers from Mudzi District. Ten teachers who responded through mail questionnaires indicated that high workloads lead to occupational stress and burnout. As a result, teachers sought transfers as remedies to this challenge. As such, heavy workloads due to understaffing contributed to teacher transfers in Mudzi District secondary schools.

Finally, all the school heads responded that teachers transfer in order to pursue professional development opportunities. Data captured on semi-structured interviews conducted revealed that lack of professional development opportunities caused teacher transfers out of the district. This was echoed by data gathered through mail questionnaires from school heads. All the five school heads were in agreement that lack of professional development opportunities forced teachers to seek transfers out of the

district. All the ten teachers who responded through the mail questionnaires revealed lack of professional development opportunities as the root cause of teacher transfers in the district.

#### ➤ *Effects of High Teacher Transfer in Secondary Schools in Mudzi District*

From the interviews conducted, all the 5 school heads indicated that high teacher transfers led to teacher shortages which subsequently limited subject offering and the curriculum breadth. This effect led to high teacher-pupil ratio as indicated by all the school heads interviewed. This was complemented by data gathered through mail questionnaires from school heads. All the five school heads echoed their sentiments in semi-structured interviews. Ten teachers who responded through mail questionnaires revealed that the major effect of teacher transfers was shortage of teaching staff. Thus, teacher shortages in secondary schools in Mudzi District was directly linked to high teacher transfers most probably with no immediate replacement. Data generated from semi-structured interviews with school heads highlighted that high teacher transfer disrupted pupil learning. All the 5 interviewed school heads echoed this sentiment and further indicated that teacher-pupil interaction was also disrupted. Thus, teacher transfers led to disruption of learning and subsequently created poor pupil performance and skills gap. This was complemented by data gathered through mail questionnaires from school heads. All the five school heads echoed their sentiments in semi-structured interviews. Ten teachers who responded through mail questionnaires revealed that high teacher transfers disrupted teaching and learning processes. Thus, teacher transfers disrupted learning in secondary schools in Mudzi District. Another closely related effect revealed by all the 5 interviewed school heads was delayed replacement of transferred teachers by the ministry. Replacements were done depending on the budgetary capacities of treasury. The ministry requested for replacements to the treasury which then sat to deliberate on the feasibility of the exercise. If the treasury did not approve, then all the affected schools would operate with their shortages until it's feasible for the treasury to do so. This translated to disruption of learning and poor pupil performance. This was complemented by data gathered through mail questionnaires from school heads. All the five school heads echoed their sentiments in semi-structured interviews. Ten teachers who responded through mail questionnaires revealed that the greatest challenge schools were facing was delayed replacements of transferred teachers. Thus, transferring teachers were not immediately replaced thereby creating a visible human capital gap in secondary schools in Mudzi District. From the five interviewed school heads, four respondents showed that high teacher transfers lowered school performance across all disciplines. This was caused by delayed replacements of teachers, the need for adaptability, confidence building, and gaining experience on part of the newly employed teachers, if any. Poor pass rates, poor performance in sporting and other co-curricular activities, as well as teacher-pupil interaction and relationships became common phenomena in highly affected schools. This was echoed by data gathered through mail questionnaires from school heads. All the five

school heads were in agreement that poor school performance resulted from a combination of high teacher transfers and delayed teacher replacements. All the ten teachers who responded through the mail questionnaires revealed that high teacher transfers and delayed replacements of transferred teachers led to poor school performance. All the school heads indicated poor school-community relations as emanated from high teacher transfers and the subsequent effects of poor school performance and student achievement. Three of the five interviewed school heads revealed that poor enrolments resulted from high teacher transfers. These led to subsequent effects of poor student performance. As a result, strained school-community relations were witnessed. This caused poor overall school performance and stalled development.

This was echoed by data gathered through mail questionnaires from school heads. All the five school heads were in agreement that high teacher transfers strained the relationships between secondary schools and the communities. These emanated from poor pupil performance as a result of shortage of manpower. All the ten teachers who responded through the mail questionnaires revealed strained relations between communities and secondary schools. These were evidenced by sharp drops in pupil enrolments in local schools. Resultantly, high teacher transfers worsened the relations between secondary schools in Mudzi District and their communities due to poor school performance and student achievement.

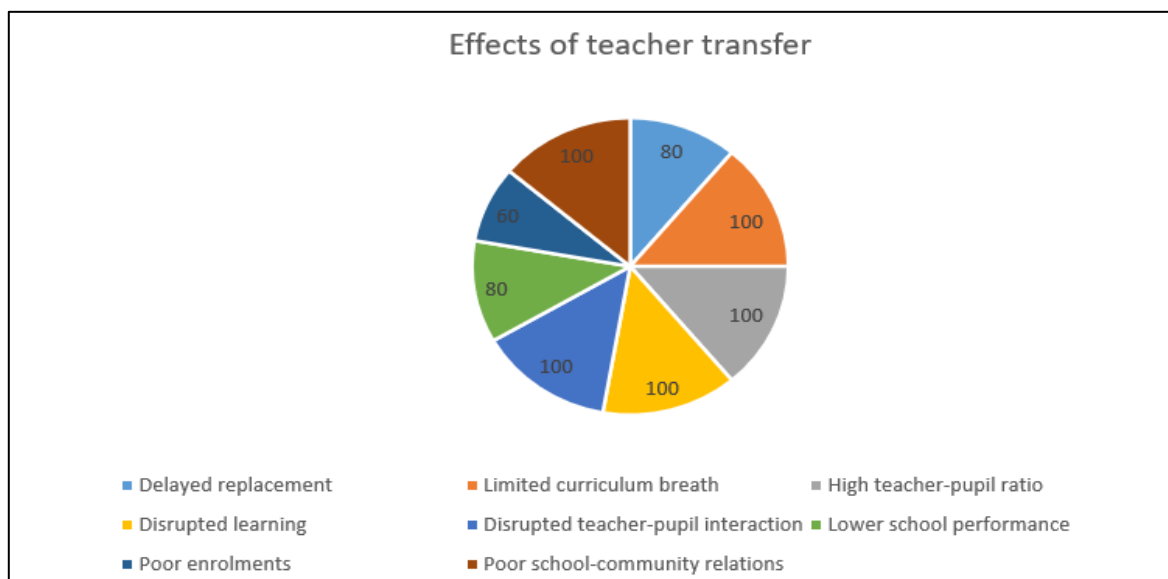


Fig 1 Pie-Chart The Pie-Chart below Shows Effects of High Teacher Transfer in Mudzi District Schools

➤ *Strategies to Minimize the Problem of High Teacher Transfer in Mudzi District*

Data collected using mail questionnaires on both school heads and teachers complemented data gathered through semi-structured interviews. All the five school heads who responded to interviews conducted cited the need to provide decent and adequate accommodation as one of the major strategies to abate high teacher transfers from Mudzi District. This strategy would help retain teachers in schools in the district. Another strategy found was electrification of rural schools to reduce power-related challenges teachers were facing in schools. The same sentiments were noted in mail questionnaires received from all five school heads. Ten teachers also revealed the need to electrify schools as a means to encourage them to stay. Furthermore, teacher induction and mentoring programs were also suggested as strategies to minimize teacher transfers from the district. Newly appointed teachers must be inducted and mentored to help them adapt to the needs and conditions of the district as well as the profession. Data gathered from mail questionnaires supported research findings from interviews. All the five school heads reported the need for induction and mentoring programs to reduce stress and anxiety. Also, all the ten teachers revealed similar findings. Moreover, this research revealed that recruiting local teachers strategically assists in reducing

teacher transfers. Four school heads opined that teachers from the local communities would not request for transfers since they are already close to their families and relatives. Mail questionnaires from both school heads and teachers shared similar responses. Four school heads echoed their sentiments in interviews while eight teachers revealed the importance of recruiting local teachers in abating high teacher transfer demands. School authorities must improve and ensure safety of both teachers and pupils in schools. Security for teachers would help reduce transfers as found in research findings. All the five school heads who responded in interviews conducted revealed that teachers’ safety is very important in teacher retention. All the five school heads reported similar responses in mail questionnaires conducted. Ten teachers revealed that teacher safety and security is a cause for concern. Ensuring teacher safety and security helps retain teachers in schools in the district. School leadership must provide teachers with professional development opportunities to keep them competent and growing. This helps to minimize transfer requests as they will be satisfied with their progress. Responses from all the five school heads on mail questionnaires revealed similar sentiments. Also, all the ten teachers shared similar responses as strategies to abate teacher transfers. Responses from five school heads interviewed revealed the need to provide teachers with

adequate tools of trades to keep them in their schools. Adequate textbooks, manila sheets, projectors, and laptops among other things would help reduce teacher transfers as these resources make work easier. All the five mail questionnaires received from school heads reported similar strategy. This was also supported by responses from all the ten teachers who responded to mail questionnaires. Connecting schools to the internet was reported to be another strategy school leadership can pursue in an effort to reduce teacher transfers from Mudzi District. The same sentiments were echoed by both school heads and teachers in questionnaires distributed separately. Nine teachers opined that connecting schools to the internet ease the teaching and learning process as researches would be easily conducted. This promotes better pupil achievement and overall school performance. Results from this research revealed that minimizing supervision can help reduce teacher transfers. This was supported by data gathered from both teachers and school heads using mail questionnaires. Three school heads showed that reducing the intensity of supervision would help improve teacher confidence and performance. Six teachers also revealed similar results confirming the relevance of minimum supervision on their performance and job satisfaction. Data gathered from two school heads indicated that schools with strong collaborative cultures have lower teacher turnover rates and higher teacher satisfaction. Only five teachers revealed this in the mail questionnaires received and two school heads echoed similar sentiments in mail questionnaires administered. Five school heads revealed that schools should be provided with clean and safe water to motivate teachers to stay. Mail questionnaires administered on school heads also revealed similar data. Teachers echoed the same submissions as all the ten respondents gave similar suggestions. Finally, data gathered from 3 school heads revealed that teacher recognition and rewards can also help reduce teacher transfers from Mudzi District. Teacher recognition and rewards has impact on teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and pupil outcomes. Similar results were obtained from mail questionnaires administered on school heads and teachers. Seven teachers suggested that teachers prioritize recognition and rewards for motivation and job satisfaction.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

The study had examined the causes, effects, and mitigation strategies for high teacher transfers, revealing a complex interplay of factors that contributed to this pressing issue in the education sector. The findings indicated that teacher transfers are primarily driven by personal, social, and infrastructural challenges, including the need for proximity to family and relatives, lack of electricity, inadequate accommodation, poor communication and transport networks, and insufficient access to clean water. These factors underscore the need for a supportive environment that addresses the basic needs of teachers to foster stability within schools. The effects of teacher transfers are profound and far-reaching. High transfer rates led to teacher shortages, which disrupted the continuity of students' learning and delayed the replacement of transferred teachers. This, in turn, contributed to a decline in school performance and created strained

relationships between schools and their communities. Such disruptions highlighted the need for urgent and strategic interventions to mitigate the adverse consequences of teacher mobility. To address these challenges, a multi-faceted approach is necessary. The study proposed a range of strategies, including providing adequate and decent accommodation for teachers, electrifying schools, and improving infrastructure. Recruitment policies should prioritize hiring teachers from local communities to enhance stability. Furthermore, initiatives such as teacher induction and mentoring programs, professional development opportunities, and recognition of teachers' contributions are critical to retaining and motivating educators. Enhancing school safety and security, ensuring internet connectivity, supplying safe and clean water, and minimizing excessive supervision are additional measures that can improve teachers' working conditions and reduce transfer rates. The findings emphasized the importance of creating an enabling environment for teachers, as their stability is directly linked to the quality of education and overall school performance. Policymakers, school administrators, and community stakeholders must collaborate to implement these strategies effectively. By addressing the root causes of teacher transfers and mitigating their effects, the education system can achieve greater equity, efficiency, and sustainability.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the above conclusions, the study recommends that schools improve living conditions of teachers through building or upgrading teacher housing with access to electricity and water. School leadership should ensure schools are connected to transport and communication networks. They should also enhance professional support through establishing mentoring and induction programs for new teachers. School authorities and stakeholders should offer regular, accessible professional development opportunities. Strengthen resource allocation through providing internet connectivity, learning materials, and essential school supplies. Policymakers should implement safety measures to ensure secure teaching environments. Both policymakers and school leadership should focus on teacher welfare through developing recognition programs and performance-based rewards. Also, school leadership should reduce administrative burdens and encourage collaboration time among teachers. Policymakers should promote local recruitment through hiring teachers from the local community to minimize transfers and foster stronger ties with the area.

This presentation ensures actionable insights to reduce teacher transfers, improve school performance, and strengthen teacher retention.

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