

NAVIGATING THE TEACHING PROFESSION: MOTIVATION, CHALLENGES, AND RETENTION OF EDUCATORS IN THE GAMBIA

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Master's Study Program of Education at the Faculty
of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

Master of Arts (M.A.)



by:

Amadou F. Jallow

04212320001

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA

DEPOK

2025

NAVIGATING THE TEACHING PROFESSION: MOTIVATION, CHALLENGES, AND RETENTION OF EDUCATORS IN THE GAMBIA

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Master's Study Program of Education at the Faculty
of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (M.A.)**



by:

Amadou F. Jallow

04212320001

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA

DEPOK

July, 2025

ABSTRACT

Amadou F. Jallow
04212320001
amadou.jallow@uiii.ac.id
Masters of Arts in Education
Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia

One of the most crucial concern in many education systems including that of The Gambia has been teacher retention, it is threatening quality education and overall learning outcome. Many educators have left for other jobs that offer lucrative incentives and better working conditions, despite government's efforts to improve teacher welfare. This has led to concerns on teacher motivation, shortage staffing, and school outcomes. For this reason, this research aims to explore the issues affecting current teacher retention policies and practices, investigate driving factors that motivate individuals to enter the teaching field, and the hurdles they face post-entry. A thorough comprehension of teacher retention would provide valuable insights into the motivations and frustrations circumnavigating the choices in education. Moreover, key significance of findings would create a roadmap for policymakers to design teacher-friendly policies, refine recruitment and retention strategies, and create incentive structures that would ensure long-term engagement. Given the importance of addressing gaps such as advocacy, working conditions, and professional development, portrays how this study has a direct implication on education stakeholders as it provides a guide to improve and add to the ongoing global discussion of teacher attrition and workforce sustainability in the Gambia. With the case study design of the qualitative research approach, this study collected data through focus group discussion, interviews and document analysis to understand teacher motivation, retention and challenges. Among the participants are education officers, school principals, public and private school teachers and pre-service teachers from Gambia College. Using the lens of Hirschman's Resistance Theory and Becker's Rational Choice Theory, the findings were interpreted to demonstrate how educational institutions devise mechanisms to retain teachers, and how teachers weigh their career benefits and challenges before embarking on the teaching field. While evaluating their insights subjectively, the study ensured participants' anonymity to ensure ethical considerations. While teacher retention strategies include teacher welfare and incentives, policy advocacy and inclusion, stakeholder engagement, further findings reveal that individuals are motivated to join teaching intrinsically by passion for teaching and extrinsically by societal influence and job security in teaching. However, inadequate incentives, large classroom size and workload, geographic postings have been identified as major barriers leading to premature exits of teachers. Future research should focus on longitudinal studies tracking teacher attrition pattern since the current research has set the stage for a deeper exploration of teacher retention strategies in the Gambia. Also, dwelling on a comparative analysis between rural and urban teacher retention and attrition could go a long way in understanding what best practices could be retained to help in teacher retention since the current study is only limited posits the urban version. Moreover, government institutions should revisit the process delaying teacher promotions, access to scholarship, support structures enhance teacher commitment while evaluating stakeholder involvement. Furthermore, implementing holistic reforms in teacher remuneration, policy inclusion, stakeholder collaboration, and classroom management can improve public perception of teachings as not just a viable and reputable job, but also one that stimulates intellect and reward. With that, the education system of the Gambia would be able to establish a strong, committed and well-motivated teaching workforce to perpetually deliver quality education for future generations.

Keywords: *Teacher, The Gambia, Motivation, Retention, Challenges*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I bow in gratitude to Allah, the Almighty, Most Merciful, and All-Knowing, whose divine guidance has illuminated my path and whose mercy continues to answer my prayers, wherever I am and whenever I call upon Him.

With immense humility, I extend my sincerest gratitude to all those who have contributed, in both seen and unseen ways, to the successful completion of this thesis. I am profoundly indebted to my initial supervisor, Dr. Tati Dr. Lathipatud Durriyah, Ph.D, whose steadfast mentorship steered me through the early stages of this research, particularly during the proposal defense. I am equally grateful to Dr. Bambang Sumintono, Ph.D and Dr. Alpha Amirrachman, Ph.D, whose scholarly insight, unwavering support, and critical guidance during the later phases of this project enriched the quality and depth of my academic work. Their constructive feedback and words of encouragement have left a lasting imprint on this journey.

A heartfelt appreciation goes to our ever-inspiring Dean of the Faculty of Education, Prof. Nina Nurmila, Ph.D, for her visionary leadership and tireless dedication to our academic advancement. I am also deeply thankful to Dr. Destina Wahyu Winarti, Ph.D and Dr. Charyna Ayu Rizkyanti, Ph.D, for their encouragement and kind support, which helped me persevere through the inevitable hurdles of academic pursuit.

To my cohort in the Faculty of Education and to my cherished Gambian brothers and sisters at UIII, thank you for your warmth, camaraderie, and shared wisdom. Our intellectual exchanges and moments of solidarity have truly enriched my academic and personal growth.

Special mention must be made of Mr. Abdou Barrow, who has been more than a mentor, a true brother. From the moment I began my application to the final pages of this thesis, his unwavering support and sincere belief in my success have meant more than words can express.

I am equally indebted to all research participants whose contributions have been instrumental to the success of this study. Your openness and cooperation made this work possible.

To my beloved parents, your prayers and enduring support are the backbone of all I have achieved. And to my devoted wife, whose grace, care, and resilience have held our family together, especially in caring for our daughter, Fatima, while helping me navigate every phase of this journey, I owe a debt of love and gratitude beyond measure.

Lastly, to all those whose names may not be mentioned here but whose kindness, prayers, and presence lifted me through this endeavor, I see you, I appreciate you, and I carry your support with me. Alhamdulillah.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	iii
ANTI-PLAGIARISM STATEMENT.....	iv
THESIS ATTESTATION.....	v
THESIS DEFENSE APPROVAL	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
APPENDIX.....	xiv
ABBREVIATION DIRECTORY.....	xv
CHAPTER I.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.1.1. Global Perspective on the Teaching Profession	1
1.1.2. Overview of the Education System in the Gambia.....	5
1.1.3. Significance of Teachers in the Gambia.....	6
1.2. Problem Statement.....	9
1.3. Research Questions.....	11
1.4. Research Objectives.....	11
1.5. Research Significance.....	12
CHAPTER II.....	14
THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	14
2.1. Introduction	14
2.1.2 Structure of the Gambian Educational System.....	14
2.1.3 Motivation for Entering the Teaching Profession	17
2.1.4 Challenges in Sustaining a Teaching Career	19
2.1.5 Policy and Practice in Teacher Retention.....	20
2.1.6 Novelty of the Study.....	22
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	23
2.2.1 Rational Choice Theory (RCT)	24
2.2.2. Applying Rational Choice Theory to the Research Questions	25

2.2.3 Theory of Resistance	26
2.2.4. Applying Resistance Theory in Retaining Upper Basic School Teachers in Gambian Schools.	27
CHAPTER III	30
METHODOLOGY	30
3.1 Introduction	30
3.2 Research Approach.....	30
3.2.1 Research Design	31
3.2.2 Participant Selection Strategy.....	31
3.3 Data Collection	32
3.3.1 Interviews	32
3.2.2 Document Analysis	33
3.2.3 Focus Group Discussions	33
3.3 Data Analysis.....	34
3.4 Ethical Considerations.....	34
3.4.1 Trustworthiness and Credibility	35
3.4.2 Study Limitation.....	35
CHAPTER IV	36
RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	36
4.1 Introduction	36
4.1.1 Demography of Research Participants	36
4.2. Research Findings.....	37
4.2.1. Findings for Research Question 1	38
4.2.2. Findings for Research Question 2	53
4.2.3 Findings for Research Question 3	61
4.3. Discussion.....	68
4.3.1. Enhance Teacher Welfare and Incentives	68
4.3.2. Advocacy and Inclusion	69
4.3.3. Role of Stakeholders.....	71
4.3.4. Factors Influencing Teaching Jobs	73
4.3.5. Nature of Teaching or Teaching as an Ideal Profession.....	74
4.3.6. Challenges in Teaching	76
4.3.7. Workload and Large Class Size	76
4.3.8. Inadequate Remuneration and Demotivation of Teachers.....	78

CHAPTER V	80
CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS	80
5.1 Conclusion	80
5.2. Recommendations.....	81
5.3. Implications of the Study	82
5.4. Final Thoughts	83
REFERENCES	84
APPENDICES	97

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	Research Participant Demography
-----------	---------------------------------

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1 Map Showing Study Location in The Gambia

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Interview Guide for Focus Group Discussion	96
Appendix 2 Interview Guide for In-Service Teachers	98
Appendix 3: Interview Guide for School Principals	101
Appendix 4: Interview Guide for Education Officer 1	103
Appendix 5: Interview Questions for Education Officer 2&3	104
Appendix 6: Sample of Focus Group Discussion with pre-Service Teachers	105
Appendix 7: Sample of Real Interview Transcript with Teacher Participant	107
Appendix 8: Quirkos Canvas Final Themes	112

ABBREVIATION DIRECTORY

ECD	: <i>Early Childhood Development</i>
ECE	: <i>Early Childhood Education</i>
FAO	: <i>Food and Agricultural Organization</i>
FGD	: <i>Focus Group Discussions</i>
FIOH	: <i>Future In Our Hands</i>
GABECE	: <i>Gambia Basic Education Certificate Examination</i>
GCE	: <i>General Certificate of Education</i>
GDP	: <i>Gross Domestic Product</i>
GO	: <i>General Orders</i>
GTU	: <i>Gambia Teachers' Union</i>
HOD	: <i>Head of Department</i>
LBS	: <i>Lower Basic School</i>
MDI	: <i>Management Development Institute</i>
MoBSE	: <i>Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education</i>
MoHERST	: <i>Ministry of Higher Education Research Science and Technology</i>
NAT	: <i>National Assessment Test</i>
NGO	: <i>Non-Government Organizations</i>
PISA	: <i>Program for International Student Assessment</i>
PTA	: <i>Parents Teachers Association</i>
RCT	: <i>Rational Choice Theory</i>
RED 2 W	: <i>Regional Educational Directorate 2 West</i>
SDG	: <i>Sustainable Development Goals</i>
SSA	: <i>Sub-Saharan Africa</i>
TIMSS	: <i>Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies</i>
UBS	: <i>Upper Basic School</i>
UNDP	: <i>United Nations Development Program</i>
UNESCO	: <i>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</i>
URR	: <i>Upper River Region</i>
UTG	: <i>University of The Gambia</i>
WAEC	: <i>West African Examination Council</i>

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discuss the background of this study where the researcher talked about the global perspectives of the teaching profession because our world today is a global village which means the teaching profession has some connectedness, where each country tries to follow best teaching practices to produce productive students. An overview of the Gambian education system follows this. Here, the researcher looked at the brief history of the education system in the running down to the progress and the challenges faced. Following this section is the importance of teachers in the Gambian context, where teachers are described as role models, guardians of the Gambian cultures, norms, values and shapers of future leaders. Also, in this chapter the researcher discussed the research problem statement, setting the stage by outlining key issues around teacher career choice, challenges, and retention. This is followed by the research questions and objectives. The last section elaborates the significance of carrying out this research. Here, the researcher dilated that the findings could be of great benefit for the Gambian education system and beyond given the issues surrounding teacher retention, challenges, and career choice are burning issues around the globe.

1.1.1. Global Perspective on the Teaching Profession

It is without doubt that teachers are essential in unlocking the potential of every learner and are also key devotees in attaining the long-awaited Sustainable Development Goals 4 (SDG 4), which advocates for quality education, set by UNESCO, intended to achieve educational inclusivity, equitability, and quality for all by 2030 (UNESCO, 2024). Furthermore, researchers have suggested that since the 1970s, teachers have been the most dominant and unarguably strongest determinant of student achievement; hence, they come into contact with students daily (Schwille et al., 2007). However, this claim has been debunked by Hattie (2003), stating that students are responsible for almost 50% of their achievement while teachers constitute 30%, and the home, peers, and school contribute to students' accomplishments between 5-10%.

However, it is important to note that the teaching profession has been reshaped by globalization, which resulted in increasingly interconnecting the globe, leaving this noble profession at a crossroads, given that teachers are facing numerous challenges like mental health, well-being, burnout, role expansion among others but with opportunities such as technology integration, lifelong learning, collaboration among others (Flores, 2023). Considering the complexity of this diverse cultural world, teachers are now challenged to navigate different and varied landscapes of different students' needs (Lourenço, 2018; Richardson, 2012).

Although there have been many definitions for the term globalization (Paine et al., 2016; Richardson, 2012), the researcher chose to settle with the one stated by Paine et al. (2016), who stated that globalization is the elimination of national legal or political borders while connecting universality despite local diversity and ethnic identity which returns human being into the system of communitarian values. In other words, globalization is the opposite of localization, where goods, services, and individuals are stuck to their boundaries. Our current generation is opposed to previous ones because we live in a world of an open market where economies, societies, and cultures are integrated and interconnected, allowing goods, services, and people to move around boundaries, all thanks to the advent of technology, thus making the world a global village (Vermenych, 2021). As a result of these movements, education, as an industry producing human capital, has now been challenged to meet the needs of training students to serve in the global workforce (Richardson, 2012).

According to Eriksen (2014), globalization as a concept was introduced in the 1960s but gained prominence in the 1980s, making it a center of focus in meetings, conferences, and both print and non-print media outlets around the globe. Moreover, this author reiterated that globalization was initiated by developed countries to impose economic, social, and philosophical superiority over developing ones, which was opposite to its initial aim of tackling climate change and other environmental hazards. Despite its continuous presence and its irresistible temptation across different settings, its pace varies due to access to information, communication, and transportation technologies of individuals living in different parts of the globe because they are aware that the world has been turned into a "single space" which does not simply denote "global unity" (Canlı & Demirtaş, 2017). In addition, developed nations have been making a lot of efforts to impose the concept of globalization on under-developed and developing ones and impose sanctions on those that have failed to adhere, thus killing the ideological sharing while forcefully imposing their own even when it does not suit that particular society (Tabash et al., 2024).

It is through this philosophical underpinning that some nation-states lost their political and economic sovereignty as they had to integrate with the more powerful nations, leading to a menace of not only losing the grip of their national sovereignty but also adopting imperial ideology, making them vulnerable to poverty while being dependent economically, socially, and politically on powerful nations (Goldberg & Pavcnik, 2007).

Despite the odds, globalization also paves the way for knowledge sharing, the application of technology in creating a new style of life, sharing and adopting educational policies, and business strategies that provide employment opportunities for different individuals across the world (Sait, 2021; Spring, 2008).

Despite its pros and cons, globalization has shaped the nature of teacher training, opening up to diverse teaching methodologies and learning resources (Gonzaga, 2023). Similarly, with the incorporation of different teaching varieties, teachers stand the opportunity to adopt international best practices and techniques to enhance their learners' learning experience, thus making students not just contribute but also add to their understanding and exposure to current trends of the globe.

It is for this reason Verger (2021) stated that Nordic countries such as Norway, Finland, and Denmark put teachers' expertise, professional autonomy, and occupational control at the helm of affairs, building a strong connection between the teaching profession and the state. Because teachers have been provided with all the necessary art and craft to perform complex tasks after having gone through a rigorous training process, these Nordic countries are left with no choice but to give these teachers not only professional autonomy but also trust them as professional experts. However, this has been the opposite in countries such as France and Southern European countries, as Verger (2021) referred to this system as default design, given that there is a high level of bureaucracy in the mentioned countries since there is limited autonomy for teachers.

Also, this phenomenon is said to have taken a different perspective in the context of many countries in the Global South, more specifically sub-Saharan Africa, because countries are faced with a low percentage of qualified teachers, teaching materials, and inadequate pre-service training, although, efforts are underway by relevant international players such as the World Bank to promote high levels of professional development in the teaching workforce (Bennell, 2004). It is through this lens Richardson, (2012) argued that teaching from the global perspective benefits far outweigh its disadvantages hence, it enables not only the sharing of knowledge and training of teachers but also the production of students who possess knowledge in the domains of languages, cultures, social systems, religion, and skills relevant to the global marketplace.

However, with the introduction of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS), and other multinational examination cooperation, Paine et al (2016) argued that measuring educational competence as well as hold teachers accountable for the progress and retrogress made yearly from global perspective has now been possible. These authors reaffirm that the rationale behind the creation of these cooeprations, PISA, TIMSS, WAEC, among others, is to give the world a picture of which system of education is doing well and what are instructional materials and practices being used to attain such success. However, there have been claims that these assessment structures do not portray a fair measurement of any system of education or instructional model, given the fact that countries that take part in various educational assessments might differ in size, culture, and resource availability (Zhao, 2020).

Moreover, with the advent of teaching styles, such as hybrid facilitator, and delegator (Ahmed et al., 2021; Vizhi, 2021) gaining the attention of the world, policymakers decided to restructure teacher development strategies to meet the needs of students. This resulted in the idea of asking which method is to be considered better than the other, which attracted the attention of scholars around the world (Awla, 2014). Going by this notion, there has been an increasing number of policy reports and empirical studies agreeing to focus on pre-service teacher education, teacher development, and teacher professionalism (Fadilla, 2020; Kabilan, 2013; Nurjanah et al., 2023; Suryadi et al., 2023) across the globe when they found out that schools in Japan have been doing well because their teachers had good training and development systems (Paine et al., 2016) thus adding to the increasing globalized policy interdependency.

However, there is still a debate as to whether the student-centered or teacher-centered method of teaching is the most effective (Elen et al., 2007; Ghafar, 2023; Serin, 2018). Serin (2018) argues that student-centered instruction teaching helps to develop critical thinking and autonomy of students, whereas the teacher-centered method relies on the theory of the behaviorist, which limits critical thinking since learners heavily rely on the teacher. This puts the teacher in a dilemma since they have to choose which approach suits their students, who are being entrusted to them to convey the needed skills and knowledge to equip them with global cultural understanding for jobs in the global market (Richardson, 2012). Also, for this information to be easily transmitted to students, it is important to restructure teacher training programs such that they can understand and adopt practices that foster cultural tolerance and global citizenship while being connected to the diverse realities reflecting the world (Verger, 2021).

Moreover, considering the status of teachers across the globe, accounting for an average of 82% across all levels of education, the majority of teachers across the world are termed civil servants globally (Stromquist, 2018). The author reiterates further that most of these teachers are under fixed-term contracts, particularly those in higher education. Japan, alongside a few other countries, has the highest number of full-time teachers. However, Büyükgöze (2015) highlighted that countries hiring teachers at the higher education institution such as lecturers on hourly basis is consider unfair and abusive.

Considering how teachers have been perceived and ranked among other professions across the globe, it was found that teachers rank third behind engineers and medical doctors, who are the most valued profession across the globe (Stromquist, 2018). Precisely, in most European and North American Countries like Canada and the USA, teachers are not the most respected professionals (Celkan et al., 2015; Koley et al., 2023) compared to countries such as Ivory Coast, Lesotho, Kenya (Africa), Sri Lanka, South Korea (Asia Pacific), and Argentina (Latin America) where teaching is highly regarded (Stromquist, 2018). At a closer look, it was also found that teachers teaching in higher institutions also have higher respect as opposed to those in the lower levels.

1.1.2. Overview of the Education System in the Gambia

The Gambia, a former British colony, is the smallest West African country on mainland Africa surrounded on three sides by its only neighboring country, Senegal. It (Gambia) gained its independence in 1965 and inherited its system of education from its colonial masters (Aikins, 2024). This small country covers approximately 11,300 square kilometers with a population of about 2.4 million people, with most people residing in urban and metropolitan areas (Kurang, 2020). Decades after independence, primary education was compulsory by law but was not free even with the scarce primary and secondary schools across the country. The entrance age for each child into formal education was seven years through primary school, where they sat the Common Entrance Examination (a public exam) at the time they reached the sixth grade. Successful students would then proceed to secondary technical school for four years or high school to sit for the General Certificate of Education (GCE) for five years. Moreover, candidates who succeed could stand the chance of schooling for an extra two years, where they sit for the GCE A level (Njie & Fye, 1991). Decades later and following the expansion of schools across the country, especially in the provincial area, the government at the time designed the 1988-2003 policy where the system of education shifted to the 6+3+3 system, where six years is spent in primary school, three years in middle school and the remaining three years are to be spent in senior secondary schools (Sarr, 2021). The idea was to improve

enrolment to 75% and the transition from primary to secondary school to 60%. With this new system, there should be six years of primary education, which should be followed by 3 years of middle school, making it easy for nine years of basic schooling as this was meant to boost and prepare school leavers with the needed skills for self-sufficiency and those with exceptional abilities to further their education into higher institutions available in the country or abroad (Barrow, 2023).

After the end of the first republic, following a bloodless coup in 1994, the lives of many Gambians changed not just in the way of politics but also in education, both with negativity and positivity (Kora & Darboe, 2017; Saine, 2008; Wiseman, 1996). It was during this era that the Gambian people witnessed a massive development in their education sector in terms of infrastructure, also with a lot of reforms. It was in this era that it became binding upon every citizen for compulsory and free basic education (Barrow, 2023; MoBSE, 2004). Moreover, the Gambia government during this era spent 2.8% of its national GDP on education, leading to being ranked 134th in spending on education in the world. This has yielded benefits since the country's literacy rate has been estimated to rise to 55.5% in 2022, which includes people in the age range of 15 and above. Of this literacy percentage, it has been found that 63.91% are males who can read while the remaining are females, showing a great improvement from both genders as opposed to previous ratings of the country's literacy rate (Barrow, 2023). According to a MoBSE (2022) report, as of 2022, there are 3,518 schools, and the total number of teachers in 2018 has increased from 20,450 in 2018 to 26,789. However, the same report has shown that the pupil-to-teacher ratio is 33:1 in public schools and 32:1 in private schools across the country.

1.1.3. Significance of Teachers in the Gambia

A UNESCO report has shown that children in many Sub-Saharan Africa suffer from high rates of poverty and illiteracy, which is why efforts are underway to solve the menace and could be done by improving the qualities and professional capacities of teachers as well as the school resources (Nwokeocha et al., 2023). As a cornerstone of development, teachers of every nation have influences that extend far beyond the classroom because, they do not only instill academic knowledge relevant pupils' development, but also instrumental in shaping the minds of the younger generation entrusted in their hands to make good decisions and guide them into high moral behaviors (Kumari & Kumar, 2023; Nazifah & Khairat, 2023; Rissanen et al., 2018).

In every Gambian community, teachers play a pivotal role in serving the needs of learners while serving as custodians to the cultures and values of the communities. Having

in mind the diverse socio-cultural landscape in the Gambia, Gambian teachers play a pivotal role in ensuring the integration of cultural heritage into the curriculum as a way of preparing their students to appreciate their roots while adopting to those on the wider globe (Sidibeh, 2021). Their dedication and embodying social responsibilities make them beacons for young learners, thus enabling the nurturing of essential skills and knowledge to enhance students to become proactive society members.

1.1.3.1. Teachers as Cultural Guardians

One of the ways through which teachers serve as guardians of the Gambian culture is through the integration of cultural heritages in the national curriculum. It is through this lens that students can build a high sense of national identity and a deep understanding of the diverse cultures within the boundaries of the Gambia and beyond (Baldeh, 2020; Jessop & Penny, 1998). Besides the use of traditional teaching and learning approaches, teachers in the Gambia showed their willingness to enrich their pedagogies through outdoor activities. These activities include visiting places that are of interest to students, particularly having an excursion trip to historical sites such as the National Museum, slaves' houses, and a host of other places that reignite the students' cultural identities.

Furthermore, teachers in the Gambia have acknowledged that these outdoor activities stimulate students' multi-senses, increase understanding, boost their well-being and health, develop their curiosity, improve their social connection, and also give students a sense of freedom and happiness (Baldeh, 2020). This makes educators not only impart knowledge but also install the Gambian cultural pride by weaving historical narratives and local customs in their teaching, thus building a bond that allows cultural transmission between teachers and their students, who would then appreciate their heritage and respect for others. Through their efforts in creating an environment that preserves and celebrates the richness of the cultures in the Gambia, students are empowered to carry these dynamic cultural values and heritages to generations ahead.

1.1.3.2 Gambian Teachers as Role Models

Part of the things that inspire most people to become teachers is to fulfill the desire that they had in them during their school days. The ethical behaviors and standards set by teachers make their role an exemplary one for their students to emulate. Embodying values like social respect, integrity, and a sense of responsibility makes students greatly influenced by their teachers, thus emulating them as their role models (Okeke & Drake, 2014).

Moreover, teachers' abilities to create a sense of community within the four corners of the classroom, which encourages participation and civic engagement within and outside the classroom, contribute to an impact beyond students' achievement in academia. For instance, the establishment of a student body that serves as an intermediary between students, teachers, and the school administration serves as a learning unit, teaching students on issues of leadership and other crucial issues that serve as guidance throughout their lives (Nwokeocha et al., 2023).

1.1.3.3. Teachers as Shapers of Future Leaders in the Gambia

Equipping students with critical thinking and problem-solving skills has been one of the most pivotal roles teachers play, which fosters an environment encouraging students to have a sense of responsibility while engaging with their communities both at home and outside the school. A host of scholars proclaimed evidence that when learners are in control of the contents and the process of learning, they build up their existing knowledge, leading them to be more effective and sustainable learners (Schweisfurth, 2013). In addition, Schweisfurth (2013) echoes emphasis from Freire and Dewey that while teachers avail the environment that does not undermine the freedom of the learners, they can develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavior needed for societal transformation.

In the Gambia, for instance, there have been a lot of teachers, especially females, who balance their professional responsibilities along with their family chores. In this case, they do not just serve as role models for female students but show an immense dedication to their profession just to see their students thrive (Edwards & Oteng, 2019; Wye, 2014). With the adaptation of these qualities, students are not only able to thrive academically but also stand the opportunity to instill resilient values, preparing them for future leadership roles and challenges.

1.1.3.4 Teachers as Shapers of Behavior and Values

Through the consistent enforcement of rules, especially those formed by the school and in the classroom, teachers can shape not only students' academic achievement but also behaviors. This can be done through the establishment of a structured environment where students' values and attitudes are influenced not only through academic engagements but also by modeling behaviors, which breeds a sense of community involvement in the lives of the students (Mameli et al., 2019; Idris, 2023).

For instance, in a society where quality education persists, especially in the rural area, Gambian teachers serve a vital role in reinforcing knowledge and discipline across cultures and societies. This instigated the introduction of the hardship allowance, which aims to retain and attract qualified teachers in rural areas, which aids in bridging the educational divide between the urban and rural areas of the Gambia (Pugatch & Schroeder, 2018). Through this initiative, there have been clear-cut proof of how teachers impact educational norms and standards, making them promoters of culture and respect for community values, thus enhancing students' opportunities in the future.

1.2. Problem Statement

As the 2030 Global Education Agenda relies on quality education, which can only be attained when teachers are well-trained, motivated, and remunerated adequately, Craig et al. (2023) argued that teacher motivation is falling globally, leading to teacher shortages in most countries. Similarly, Western countries such as the U K, Germany, the USA, and Australia have reported teacher shortages, and they believe teacher motivation needs to be addressed before considering shortages while they are on the verge of renewing their interest in the causes of this menace (Han & Yin, 2016).

Moreover, there has been a surge of articles since the mid-1930s lamenting staffing difficulties, thus making the subject matter not new in the educational arena (Kotok & Knight, 2020). Subjects such as science, mathematics, foreign languages, and special needs have been lacking teachers, thus adding to the problem (Kotok & Knight, 2020; Sutchter et al., 2019)

For the attainment of SDG 4, quality education, UNESCO has projected an additional 44 million teachers to be recruited worldwide, which could cost the world US\$120 billion, and sub-Saharan Africa, where this study is based, needs an additional 15 million teachers to curb the rapidly expanding school-age population but also there is a worrying trend in the number of teachers quitting the profession in countries such as the Netherlands, France, Japan, the USA and England (UNESCO & International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2024).

Adding to this menace is the introduction of the Education for All policy, which resulted in the number of students to be enrolled in schools thus leading to the increasing demand for qualified teachers (International Institute for Educational Planning, 2016). This report reiterated that in some countries where the demand for qualified teachers has not been met, unqualified teachers are recruited instead, although there has been a long-

standing debate among scholars as to who is qualified to teach and who is not (Cochran-Smith et al., 2008).

However, this adds to the problem of attaining quality education considering the complex process involved in teaching; hence, it relies on multi-layered knowledge. Thus, this noble profession is underrated since such recruits might not be fully equipped with the comprehension of the social, emotional, cultural, and learning nature of different individuals (Bruno-Jofre & Johnston, 2014).

Meanwhile, a survey of students who sat the PISA exams in 2006 showed that only 10% are interested in becoming teachers, although they all agreed that teachers have the most decent salary among all other jobs (Stromquist, 2018). However, it turns out that only low mathematics achievers, which constitute 10% of those wanting to become teachers, this shows that the teaching job looks likely the last option for such students.

Narrowing to the context of the Gambia, where a report has indicated an increase in the number of schools from 2, 945 in 2018 to 3, 518 in 2022, whereas teachers have also increased from 20, 450 in 2018 to 26, 789 in 2022, which improves the pupil-to-teacher ratio from 38:1 to 33:1 in public schools and from 36:1 to 32:1 in private schools across the country (MoBSE, 2022). Also, there has been a boost in enrolment in 2022, 747,216 compared to 631,375 in 2018, which indicates an additional 115,841 students within the four years. Analytically, this would be considered a great achievement given that schools, teachers, and students have increased in number. Yet, the question lies in whether all these teachers will stay for an entire academic year or a term within the academic year. Although the same could apply to students, the issue is worse when teachers quit, hence, they leave 33 or 66 students, provided that the teacher is on double shift (teaching morning and afternoon classes), unattended to.

Furthermore, sustaining teachers in the educational landscape of the Gambia is at a critical point, given that teachers do not only serve students with knowledge and skills but also a sense of responsibility toward their environment and community (Nwokeocha et al., 2023). This author and colleagues added that factors such as economic constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and community support, among others, add to the issues of teacher retention in the Gambia.

Although there are studies such as those of Björk & Brandt (2016) and Drammeh & Samba (2023) talking about teacher motivation and challenges faced while their study is based on rural teachers and that of Gomez (2016), which is centered on teacher turnover in Urban Gambian private senior secondary schools opens a gap in the literature for this research to fill. For instance, Björk and Brandt (2016) focused on in-service teachers who

took part in the Future in Our Hands (FIOH) training program and concluded that teachers to choose to teach to help students read and write. Also, the study of Drammeh and Samba (2023), aimed at understanding teacher attrition in public schools in the Upper River Region, concluded that student migration, poor performance, and increased workload are significant challenges leading to teacher attrition. Moreover, the study by Gomez (2016) also concludes that student behavior, workload, and class size are factors causing teacher attrition despite being provided with attractive work environments and salaries.

Given that the above pieces of literature have not dwelled on teacher retention and career choices, paves the gap for this current research to fill. However, the above studies have dilated on the challenges faced by teachers in rural areas and private schools, it also opens a literature gap for this research to fill since it intends to focus on public upper basic schools in West Coast Region which is the most densely populated and diverse region in the Gambia (Aikins, 2024).

1.3. Research Questions

Considering the background and the above-stated problems, this research intends to answer the following questions:

1. How can education policies and practices be improved to enhance the sustainability of the teaching profession in the Gambian upper basic schools?
2. What factors drive individuals to pursue a teaching career in Gambian Upper Basic Schools?
3. What challenges and obstacles do Gambian Upper Basic School teachers encounter in maintaining their careers?

1. 4. Research Objectives

Based on the above research questions, this research intends to achieve the following research objectives:

1. To evaluate current educational policies and suggest actionable recommendations for enhancing teacher support, professional development, and overall job satisfaction to promote retention in the teaching profession among upper-basic schools teachers.
2. To identify and analyze the key factors that attract individuals to pursue a career in teaching upper-basic schools, including personal, social, and economic influences.
3. To explore the various obstacles upper basic school teachers encounter, such as inadequate resources, low salaries, job security, and socio-cultural factors, and how these challenges affect their professional longevity.

These questions and objectives would provide a comprehensive framework for examining the complexities of the teaching profession in The Gambia.

1.5. Research Significance

As there is a continuous demand for teachers across the four corners of the globe, the researcher believe the findings from this research could be generalized in other contexts to help in solving this long-standing issue. As the aim is to find out what motivates people to enter the teaching profession, the researcher believe that findings from this research, along with other findings, could be blended to curb the situation of teacher shortage since Gambia employs teachers across several teachers across West Africa. For instance, research projections have shown that an additional 44 million teachers are needed globally for SDG 4 to be achieved. By looking into this figure, it has also been projected by the same author that out of the 44 million people, 15 million additional teachers need to be recruited only for countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (UNESCO, 2024). Considering this fact and also the fact that the current study context is part of Sub-Saharan African countries, this study would be useful for governments in these regions to understand factors that lead pre-service teachers to enter into the teaching profession. Moreover, because teacher shortage is a global phenomenon, the findings, along with other literature, can help policy designers with a guide to addressing this issue. This means that the findings from this research can be used by policymakers across the globe to draw policies making the teaching profession a lucrative one for young people to join.

Furthermore, it is part of the significance of this research that issues relating to teacher career sustainability could be known, especially in the context of the Gambia and SSA in particular. It is believed that the findings from this research can also be used to understand some of the challenges that teachers face a few years after they enter the teaching profession, which leads them to quit for another job, thus adding to the ongoing menace of teacher shortages. However, there are criticisms regarding the efforts made in the retention of teachers because some ineffective teachers should not be encouraged to stay, yet it is obvious that retaining teachers at a 100% rate is also an unwise objective. A study by Johnson and Kardos (2008) have also shown that competent teachers mostly leave the teaching profession, thus making the situation even more delicate (Johnson & Kardos, 2008).

The researcher believe with the outcome of this research, issues relating to early teacher career changes will be identified. Once these issues are identified, policymakers and education ministries of the Gambia will stand a better chance to comprehend the issues

that lead to early teacher career change. The issues identified in this study can be contextualized in other SSA countries and beyond since they are termed to be the most vulnerable countries. Despite being a small country with a small population, the Gambia is known for peace. It, therefore, has allowed the diverse existence of people within its boundaries and served as a haven for its neighboring countries, such as Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, and Sierra Leone, during civil unrest. This makes it possible for the findings to be generalizable since refugees from these countries send their children to the Gambian public schools and some of them serve as teachers in most regions of the Gambian public and private schools (Migrants Refugees, 2022).

As this study intends to evaluate current educational policies and suggest actionable recommendations, policymakers would be provided with empirical evidence regarding strategies needed to enhance teacher retention. Once policymakers are provided with these strategies, they should be able to draw plans toward making the teaching job lucrative, especially in the context of SSA. Attaining this goal will attract a lot of students graduating from colleges and universities into the field of teaching, thus making the teaching profession optimize its status among other professions such as engineering and medicine. Additionally, this would reduce the recruitment of less educated people and also meet the ongoing demand of teaching staff in the continuously increasing pupil enrollment, thanks to the policy of Education for All (Bennell, 2004; Yüce et al., 2013).

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1. Introduction

This chapter elaborates about the structure of the Gambian education system, which is divided into three, basic, secondary, and tertiary education, respectively. Both basic, which includes grades 1 to 9, and secondary, which entails grades 10 to 12, are under the jurisdiction of the MoBSE, whereas tertiary institutions, such as Gambia College, Management Development Institute (MDI), and higher education institutions like the University of The Gambia fall under Ministry of Higher Education Research Science and Technology (MoHERST). This section is then followed by reviewing literature relevant to this study. In so doing, the thematic literature review is used, where the works of literature are divided into three themes: motivation for entering the teaching profession, challenges leading to quitting the teaching profession, and policies and procedures drawn to retain teachers. Beneath the analyzed literature is the novelty of the study, this section is where the researcher explained the gap in the literature for this current to fill. Moreover, following the novelty of this research is the theoretical framework guiding this research. In doing so, this research is utilized two theories: the Rational Choice Theory (RCT) of Gary Becker and the Resistance Theory by Hirschman. The rationale behind the use of these theories is that the RCT deals with choice and how such choices made by individuals affect them in their later teaching career, makes it limited to unravel the mystery on how policies could be designed for such teachers to be retained. It is for this reason, the resistant theory needs to fit in to complement the RCT. The Resistant Theory has been used to understand what policies can be drafted to suit the need for teachers to be retained since it is a theory that perceive things from the employer's perspective and not the employees'.

2.1.2 Structure of the Gambian Educational System

Over the years, the education system in the Gambia has undergone a series of changes, these metamorphoses could either be radical transposition reform or partial structural reform, which are all aimed at responding to the needs and situations that the nation faces both from global or national experience or perspectives (MoBSE, 2004). Currently, the education system in the Gambia is structured in the 3-3-3-3-3 model with each block known as a 'STAGE' (MoBSE, 2023). The first stage comprises Early Childhood Education (ECE) with an entrance age of 3 years and it lasts for 3 years. Then

followed by 6 years of primary education before proceeding to upper basic, where three years are required, and the last stage is the senior school, which have grades ranging from 10, 11, and 12 respectively with students having the opportunity to choose or be in a field of study. These fields include sciences, art, commerce, and technical streams (Barrow, 2023; MoBSE, 2016). From the above, it is important to note that the officially recognized starting of formal schooling is entry into grade one, where a child is expected to be either at the age of seven or near to that. However, parents are encouraged to send their children to ECE centers once they turn 3 years and above as this would help develop their skills in learning and mastering certain contents as opposed to those that might skip the ECE stage (Barrow, 2023).

2.1.2.1 Basic Education in Gambia

Early Childhood Education (ECE) or Early Childhood Development (ECD): this is the first level of basic education in the Gambia, catering children between the ages of 3 to 6. The idea behind this level is to increase the enrolment rate and children's readiness in lower basic schools and reduce school drop-outs, repetition of grades, and delayed entry into lower basic schools. Moreover, one of the key strengths of ECD programs is to strengthen early learners' educational foundations to enable them to easily transition to either a nearby lower basic school or the very lower basic school to which the ECD center is attached. Also, the program has the potential of making such children join the labor market at a much earlier age, adding significant value to their lives at an older age while adding more human capital in the Gambia's labor market and beyond (MoBSE, 2016; World Bank, 2017).

Lower Basic School (LBS): the normal age of children entering this level is expected to be between 6 and 7 years of age. This is the second level of basic education, where children at this stage are expected to build innate potential through a child-centered method of teaching. The grades in this level range from 1-6, where the first stage, as mentioned above, is referred to as lower grade, which ranges from grades 1-3, and the second stage is called the upper grade, ranging from 4-6. Unlike the previous years, when children at this stage sit for the Common Entrance Examination, children in the current educational system sit for the National Assessment Test (NAT) when they reach either grade three (3) or grade five (5) for both public and most private schools sub-vented by the government (MoBSE, 2016; World Bank, 2017).

Upper Basic School (UBS): this is the final stage of basic education in the Gambia where learners are expected to spend at least three years, from 7-9. The age range of students in this level is expected to be 13-15 after transitioning from 6th grade. Moreover, children at this stage are not only expected to have developed their literacy and numeracy skills but also are prepared to know their interest in what areas to study at the subsequent level, which is why they are exposed to four compulsory subjects, English Language, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. They choose other subjects such as agriculture, woodwork, metalwork, French, Arabic, Islamic studies, literature in English, home science (mostly chosen by girls), and so on based on their interest, added to the core subjects. In their final year, students in the ninth grade sit for the Gambia Basic Education Certificate Examination (GABECE). Performance in this exam determines students' acceptance or rejection of their senior school of choice, but that does not stop them from pursuing senior school education at a school that had not been their choice (MoBSE, 2016, 2023).

2.1.2.2 Gambia Senior Secondary School System

Despite being a three-year level, it is the highest level under the MoBSE. The grades range from 10 to 12. Depending on the resource availability of the school, children have the opportunity to specialize either in sciences, commerce, arts, or technical streams (MoBSE, 2023). Students at this level are expected to be within the age range of 15 to 18 years old. By the time they get to grade 12, students sit for an international exam organized by the West African Examination Council, successful candidates in any stream are mostly given scholarships to study within the country or abroad. Moreover, children from rich and middle-income families always have the chance to further their studies to the next level more than their poor counterparts (MoBSE, 2004, 2023). Furthermore, there are lots of other challenges faced by students at this level, especially for the girl child who is often taken out of school to be married but also some of the youth at this level engage in the perilous journey through the unforgiven weathers of the Sahara Desert and the forever hungry Mediterranean sea to Europe in search of greener pasture (Olagbaju, 2024). All of these add to the yearly number of school dropouts.

2.1.2.3 Tertiary Education

This is the only education level under the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (MoHERST). Unlike many countries, the Gambia has two public

universities to serve its citizens' higher education needs. The University of the Gambia was established in March 1999 by an Act of the National Assembly during the second republic (UTG, 2024). However, plans are on the way to establish more universities in the country to answer the demand for higher educational needs of the ever-growing population. So far several private universities are operating either online, on-site, or hybrid courses. These universities include the American International University, which is located on Kairaba Avenue and offers undergraduate degrees in the medical fields. Euclid University, located in Brusubi, is an international and intergovernmental university charter offering distance learning courses as well as other courses in their Campus (Access Gambia, 2024). Founded in 1952, Yundum College (now Gambia College) is one of the oldest teacher training institutes in The Gambia. It later became the Gambia College when the School of Nursing and Midwifery, School of Agriculture, and School of Public Health were all merged into it in 1978. This institution was under the supervision of the Department of State for Education now called MoBSE and has been the only institute training nurses, public health officers, agriculturists, and most importantly teachers (The Gambia College, 2024).

2.1.3 Motivation for Entering the Teaching Profession

Teacher motivation had not gained attention compared to other professions until recently when a plethora of empirical and literature reviews surged (Han & Yin, 2016; Richardson et al., 2014). Since Watt and Richardson authored *Learning and Instruction* in 2008, there has been plenty of researches (Arbaugh & Appova, 2018; Bardach & Klassen, 2021; England, 2019) dwelling on key factors circumnavigating teacher motivation (Richardson et al., 2014). Indeed, this area needs attention so that the challenges of teacher shortage which do not only affect under-developing countries but also developing and developed countries such as the UK, Germany, Canada, and the USA, among others can be sorted (Han & Yin, 2016).

The key elements in every education system are teachers since they implement the curriculum and nurture twenty-first-century skills in students (Kolikant, 2019), which makes them (teachers) vital in achieving the set goals of quality education. Meanwhile, it is crystal clear that the metamorphosis of the twenty-first century has been continuously affecting the teaching professions across all contexts (Kolikant, 2019). Despite this challenge, every organization urges its employees to be effective and efficient at all times, forgetting to create the environment for such standards to prevail. Moreover, one of the key elements in milking the best out of employees is to understand what motivates them to join such a profession, specifically the teaching profession (Yarım et al., 2022).

To support this claim, a study in turkey revealed that Turks are driven into the teaching profession positively by internal factors while negatively driven by exogenous (external) factors. Given that positive motivational factors ensure teachers' competence, they advise for such to be maintained, hence, it affects the attitudes and concepts of individuals venturing into the teaching profession. Similar to the above is the study by Shak (2022) and Calkins (2023) who revealed that people enter the teaching profession due to altruistic and intrinsic factors, despite the two studies being held in Brunei and the USA, respectively. After the transformation of the teacher, leading to people becoming teachers only when they are masters degree holders in Brunei education institute, people have close bonds with the profession and a passion for imparting knowledge (Shak, 2022). Meanwhile, it has been found that teachers' self-efficacy to manage classrooms, teach in multicultural classrooms, and keep learners engaged positively correlates, and therefore, external or extrinsic factors had little to do with motivating teachers to join the teaching profession in the USA (Calkins, 2023).

However, this is not the case in the study by Zhu et al. (2020), whose study is staged in China, arguing that factors such as finance and family background are reasons for some people to join the teaching profession. However, the same study has countered this claim when it posits that one of its respondents joined the field of teaching for personality and the attached stipend. Going by this statement, it is easy to conclude that finance, family background, and the stipend are all external factors that pull people to enter the teaching profession, extrinsic factors also lead people into the teaching profession. Similar to the outcome of this study are ones made by Bates et al. (2024) and Björk & Brandt (2016), all of which are done in the context of Australia and the Gambia, respectively. While aiming to explore what draws pre-service teachers to the teaching field despite facing low-career status as reported by the media, people entering the teaching profession in Australia are motivated to become social entrepreneurs using such instincts as a means of propagating social change (Bates et al., 2024). This denotes the feeling teachers have to propagate useful skills, such as enabling children to be able to read and write for the greater good of their society and beyond (Björk & Brandt, 2016).

Unlike any of the above pieces of literature, the study by Sayed and McDonald (2017) has a different idea. Since it revealed that some people could be motivated to join the teaching profession by external factors such as job security and intrinsic factors such as service to the children and admiration for the job.

Upon wearing gender lenses, the researcher found a comparative study revealing that females are more motivated to teach than their male counterparts, who perceive teaching

to be a comfortable leisure time job (Onder, 2022). A further scrutiny of the paper highlighted that where Turkish men perceive teaching to be a necessity, men in the USA do enjoy teaching older children on specific subjects but have no desire to teach younger children (Onder, 2022).

Given that people have different motives for joining the teaching profession, and therefore what motivates people to join the teaching profession is diverse. For instance, what tempts people from the global south to join the teaching profession might not be the same reason tempting another in the global north. This reveals a research gap for this current study to fill despite having reviewed literature similar to the current study context. As in the case of (Björk & Brandt, 2016) done in the same context with the current study, focuses on in-service teachers who attended the Future In Our Hands (FIOH) training and concentrates only on primary school teachers. In contrast, this current study focuses on college-trained teachers in upper basic schools in the West Coast Region, Gambia.

2.1.4 Challenges in Sustaining a Teaching Career

Teacher retention has been a longstanding and increasing trend in many countries today, including countries such as the USA, Australia, and many other European countries (Booth et al., 2021). This has led to losing a lot of teachers with great potential, thus probing the education domain with inadequate staff or leaving them with less competent ones, thus leading to poor quality education.

Several factors lead to the acquittal of most teachers, among which are the behavior of the students, workload, and, worst of all, they have not been properly remunerated, leading to attrition and burnout (Azabo et al., 2023; Mafukata & Mudau, 2016; Xue, 2021). Since their wages are not commensurate with the standard of living and the market prices, teachers end up being indebted before long; their jobs become insecure since the debt keeps on accumulating, thus leading to looking out for other most lucrative jobs or sometimes thinking of leaving their country for other countries in search of better pay jobs (Mafukata & Mudau, 20116). Similarly, Alemu (2024) added that since the salary is very small and cannot meet their daily needs alongside their families, it leads to indebtedness. Once the societies that they live in become aware of this, they lose respect, thus leading the job to be less regarded in Ethiopia.

Furthermore, aside from salary, there factors such as inadequate mentorship, scarcity of teaching and learning materials, teacher adversity, drawn policies that suppress teachers' rights, unfair postings, autocratic leadership, and inadequate monitoring and evaluation also adds to the voids of teacher acquittal since such scenarios demotivate

teachers (Ceesay, 2006; Dadvand et al., 2024). Considering the nature of the teaching job is such a sensitive one, and they do not have adequate professional training or get promotions like their fellow civil servants, they lose respect in the community, thus leading to the challenge of sustaining them, especially when they are posted to a place that is far from their native homes (Gomez, 2016).

The study by Drammeh and Samba (2023) from the Gambia has found that once the incentive programs designed to keep teachers in the provinces were not enough, leading them to be unsatisfied, burned out, and attrition, they left their post and thus leaving the government with no option but to hire unqualified teachers instead.

Given that the above studies are done in different contexts except for the studies of Ceesay (2006); Drammeh & Samba, (2023); and Gomez, (2016), which are all done in the Gambia still opens the gap for this current study to fill. Because the study of Ceesay was done almost two decades ago and done at a time when the 2016-2030 policy was not in place. Also, the study of Gomez (2016) was centered on private school teacher attrition in the urban areas specifically Region 1 of the Gambia, also opens a gap for the current study given that it will focus on both public and private schools in Region 2. Last but not least is the study of Drammeh and Samba (2023), despite being the latest among all the three, it is centered on public school teacher burnout in rural Gambia and precisely Region 6.

2.1.5 Policy and Practice in Teacher Retention

Teacher attrition has been an issue derailing quality education around the globe, though all educational stakeholders have expressed concern, despite having in mind that the increase in the number of student enrollment has been one of the factors (Acheampong & Gyasi, 2019). With all the designed policies to tackle this menace, little progress has been made in retaining teachers, thus probing the question of whether those policies have been implemented well or whether there has been no one way to solve such a problem, especially in the countryside as opposed to the urban centers. This can make people living in rural areas denied their rights to quality education, making the situation frowned upon by international organizations such as the World Bank, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Education for Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). Citing from the Merriam-Webster dictionary, Acheampong and Gyasi (2019) defined teacher retention as the capacity to keep a teacher from the time of recruitment to retirement and along the line sharpening their professional skills considering the dynamism of the teaching profession.

In the study of Geiger and Pivovarova (2018), it has been understood that compensation monetary is not the best form of retaining teachers, however, they concluded that it improves the quality of teaching. Similar to the above is the one made by Ackah-Jnr et al. (2022) who conducted their study in the context of Ghana and reached the conclusion that if teachers are to be retained then their salary, compensation, and incentives need to be enhanced. They reiterated further that factors such as teaching preparation, supportive learning, sustained leadership, reduced teacher accountability, lessened 'certificationalization' (qualification) of teaching, and reasonable class size also need to be considered when designing policies to retain teachers. Moreover, in their quest to retain teachers in very remote areas, the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education has created allowances such as hardship allowance but also built staff quarters for staff in rural areas and attempts to organize best teacher awards with its partner donors such as the Gambia Teachers' Union (GTU).

However, the study of Shuls and Flores (2020) has a different thought from the above stating that supportive administration, breeding a culture of trust, openness to academic freedom, personalized professional freedom, induction for new teachers, and capacitating school leaders on current educational issues help in retaining teachers in Missouri, USA. Similarly, the study of Nguyen et al. (2024) adds that aside from supportive leadership, teacher authority, and professional development, teacher voices also contribute to factors that retain teachers. This conclusion has been reached after a deep dive into 355 pieces of literature by Nguyen et al. (2024). Also, Nketsia et al.'s (2022) study found that in-service training, professional development, teaching level, family, and community are among the factors helping in teacher retention in the context of Ethiopia. A policy brief by Berry et al. (2021) added that some of the ways to retain teachers in Carolina are to create an avenue for professional learning and collaboration, community support and parent engagement for teachers to have collective practice and efficacy, time for teaching, and be able to manage student conduct. In their quest to find possible solutions for novice teachers to have long teacher careers, they suggested that novice teachers should be mentored either by the school administration or by retired teachers (Rodgers & Skelton, 2014).

Different generational age groups have different choices in many aspects of life, and so is their job choice. Does it also imply their retention? Let us find out from the study of Meneghella et al. (2019), who stated that different age groups have different job expectations based on a survey they conducted. For instance, the study found that Millennials teachers prefer mentoring and coaching while other age groups prefer disciplinary performance management. Moreover, it has surfaced in the same findings that

Gen Xers prefer remuneration while Millennials perceive it to be exploitative. Further findings unravel that Baby Boomers and Millennials are friends to good workplace culture, but Gen Xers do not perceive things that way. Despite all age groups agreeing to the fact that job security contributes to their retention, Millennials would not mind to quit if they are unfit for the job.

2.1.6 Novelty of the Study

Based on the above-mentioned pieces of literature, teaching career choices, teacher attrition, and retention have stood out to be one of the crucial topics discussed in the arena of teacher education and curriculum development many countries across the globe including developed countries like the UK, the US, and developing countries like Turkey, Ethiopia among others. This makes it a concern across educational stakeholders at all levels since the deadline for SDG 4 is just around the corner. The reviewed works of literature from different contexts have shown diverse empirical findings regarding what motivates people to venture into the teaching profession, the challenges they face, and strategies to maintain them. Given the significance of this study topic, there have been several researchers who made a similar study in the Gambian context but has left a gap that needs to be filled as the sole purpose of embarking on this research is to bring a newer perspective to be added into the list of available works of literature in the knowledge world. For instance, the study of Björk and Brandt (2016) aimed to understand how teachers in Gambian primary schools experience their motivation to teach. Also, the study by Gomez (2016) explored teacher turnover in Gambian private senior schools. Of late, Drammeh and Samba (2023) made a study focusing on teacher motivation and attrition in public schools in the Upper River Region (URR).

The above scholars perceived teacher motivation and attrition in a different context, which sets a clear-cut distinction from this current research and proves that this research is going to bring a different aroma to the world of knowledge. Besides that, the researcher has not come across any research that talks about teacher retention strategies in the context of the Gambia after having used keywords such as “teacher+retention+Gambia” on Google Scholar, which sets a cutting edge distinct between this work and those stated above considering the ongoing outcry in both developed, developing, and under-developing countries regarding teacher retention.

With the adoption of a deductive method, the researcher presented pieces of literature on teacher retention starting from the global perspectives, regional, and national levels to

select from the body of available literature to identify a gap on this subject matter. Doing this, allowed the researcher to identify a gap in teacher retention literature, giving the importance of teachers in attaining SDG 4, which highlights the significance of quality education. With these in mind, the researcher deem it fitting and necessary to study and present a new perspective of strategies to retain and understand what motivates and challenges teachers face in the context of the Gambia, thus probing the uniqueness of the current study.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This research utilized two theories: rational choice theory (RCT) and Resistance Theory. With these two theories, the researcher was guided on what motivated people to join the teaching profession, the challenges they faced, and how to retain them. Given that both theories are widely used by study studies in educational research by Abowitz (2000), Bosetti (2004), Glaesser & Cooper (2014), and Pitt (1998) makes it famous. The reason for using the two is the fact the flaw of one could be handled by the other, which is why utilizing the two theories was of great benefit for this project to attain its aims. For instance, Rational Choice Theory stems on how individuals make choices that maximize their utility in an organization. This helped to understand how and what micro and macro benefits are there in the minds of many people in the Gambia to join the teaching profession. Afterward, how those decisions and choices have led to their choice of staying or leaving the teaching profession was well be understood through the lens of this theory. However, because policies are not drawn by individual choices but by organizations, thus limiting the understanding of the choice group of individuals would need to be taken into consideration before tailoring our policies. This aligns with Becker and England's (2020) critiques that RCT lacks attentiveness to power dependencies and interpersonal, organizational, and cultural behaviors in shaping social behavior.

Hirschman's framework of the resistance theory contributes significantly to the public service domain, where it shows in his famous book that exit and voice are the main ways for public servants to express their dissatisfaction with ineffective and undesirable policies laid by an organization. This theory further posits that a lack of exit increases the voice of the employees, however, loyalty reduces exit, making the framework suitable to comprehend how public servants perform responsibly and effectively despite the presence of high exits and voices among citizens and employees when they feel dissatisfied. Despite the extensive citation of Hirschman's work, which is urban citations, the framework fosters

a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between different kinds of citizen responses and how to achieve quality services through policies (John, 2017).

2.2.1 Rational Choice Theory (RCT)

Since individuals decide by choosing the option relevant to their choice and utility, they act in a manner that chokes their satisfaction and constrains the RCT suitable to posit decisions made by teachers in the context of the Gambia (Dekker, 2017). Furthermore, this theory has also been considered the most renowned theory for explaining choices made by educators in the domain of educational sociology and psychological behavior. Despite the parallel dimensions that sociology and behavioral psychology possess, Stocké's (2019) study has confirmed through empirical evidence that both aspects serve the need to explain important aspects of choices made by people, especially in the domain of education.

The theory was said to be pioneered by Cesare Beccari and Jeremy Bentham, who were trying to understand the models of social and economic behavior of human choice. Although early philosophers posit this framework from the classical lens of criminology while trying to understand the difference between human will and decision-making, soon scholars from other domains expanded and used the theory in various disciplines (Baumann, 2021). By the end of the Second World War, scholars such as George C. Homans, Peter M. Blau, Raymond Boudon, and James S. Coleman influenced the development of the theory drawing from the perspectives of the great Max Weber and Karl R. Popper (Diekmann & Voss, 2018; Orsini, 2024). They contributed to the evolution of the theory as well as incorporating its applicability in other sociological and systemic behavior analysis theories (Diekmann & Voss, 2018; Orsini, 2024), thus leading to its versatility and broader applicability into various fields like economics, politics, education among others (Kaiser & Leeson, 2023). However, RCT has been widely criticized by Janos Kornai for its applicability in the economic domain. This scholar believes that behavior cannot be explained from an economic perspective. János Kornai has challenged its applicability across disciplines, arguing for a more nuanced understanding of economic behavior beyond the theory's axioms, thus highlighting the ongoing debate about the theory's scope and relevance in explaining complex human behavior (Kaiser & Leeson, 2023).

To effectively address the choice made by young Gambians to join the teaching profession and the challenges they face afterward, Gary S. Becker's (1930-2014) Theory of Rational Change is suitable to be utilized. This author's framework has shown that the economic approach could provide a unique nuance to understanding human behavior. Also, essays have been widely read and utilized to predict human behavior in many disciplines

like crime and punishment, marriage, and family, and others use them to gauge irrational social behaviors (Becker, 1976; Espinel, 2022). From this, it can vividly be understood that his framework has gone beyond traditional economic choices since it encompasses individual decision-making processes and social issues thus showing its applicability from a multidisciplinary lens, making it align with the current study on motivations and challenges in the teaching profession (Becker, 1976; Galbács, 2021). Furthermore, the plethora of details provided in this framework makes it easy to comprehend how decisions are reached individually based on their preference, constraints, and the information available to analyze motivations and career sustainability crucially. Moreover, this theory helps to explain the trade-off teachers face when deciding to enter or leave the profession, which is central to the maximum utility of this theory, making it fitting and reliable to be used in this study (Becker, 1976, 2009). With this theory, the research was able to analyze the robust foundations of Gambian teachers' motivations to join the teaching profession and the challenges they face few years later.

2.2.2. Applying Rational Choice Theory to the Research Questions

The researcher breaks the theory into five steps to better understand the applicability of this framework. Through these steps, it can be easy to understand how people make choices in joining the teaching profession and how attaining those choices leads to challenges upper basic school teachers face in the Gambia.

1. **Identify Preferences:** human beings are well known for weighing their options in any situation. These choices determine which type of motivation has a higher impact on their choices. In the case of this research, the researcher was interested in knowing what altruistic, intrinsic, and extrinsic factors lead young Gambians to choose teaching as their career. For instance, factors such as passion for teaching, desire to add value to society, job security, salary, and professional development could be gauged through this scope, thus leading us to know what motivates people to become teachers in the Gambia. However, when these factors are derailed either due to intrinsic or extrinsic factors, were also be determined through this lens (Krstić, 2022).
2. **Evaluative Alternatives:** considering the uniqueness of every human, this becomes one of the ways through which people use their rationale in choosing well from the available options at hand. In other words, what a person considers and understands as rational depends on what and how they are wired to the larger web of society. This determines their evaluation of the available alternatives of their choice either consciously or unconsciously (Dekker, 2017). In the case of this research, applying this

theory enables the researcher to understand how the teaching profession is compared to other career jobs available while assessing the options such as income, job stability, status, and professional development people make while scrutinizing their options.

3. **Assessing Constraints:** because decisions are binary in sequence, people are careful to weigh their available options to attain long-term benefits and reduce short-term risk. Falling into these risks comes with a grave challenge in sustaining individuals in their workplace, thus leading them to lose interest in their current job. Identifying these constraints would be crucial in attaining one of the objectives of this research because it provided its readers with the nuance of how decisions made by Gambian teachers have contributed to their long and short-term benefits as well as challenges leading them to job attrition (Gabay-Egozi et al., 2010).
4. **Calculated Expected Utility:** for this part, it is quite understood that human beings are selfishly goal-oriented, and attaining these goals for every human being is different because each would try to weigh their input while considering what benefits to gain after the input. This shows how individuals develop and present their utility functions, which shows a clear reflection of their choice. These choices are then used to measure their attitude and behavior toward the risks involved, thus reflecting their risk acceptance, neutrality, and aversion (Ainsworth, 2020). In other words, this involves how and what teachers weigh before getting into the teaching field while estimating their expected utility and benefits in the teaching profession and other careers.
5. **Decision making:** after weighing all their benefits, utility, as well as the risks involved, they are now at a point of making a decision. The decisions reached at this point could be influenced fully by society or individual preferences, which in the context of this framework is referred to as social choice or game theory respectively (Ainsworth, 2020; Becker, 2019).

2.2.3 Theory of Resistance

Albert Otto Hirschman's (1915-2012) resistance theory does relate to any a specific profession, which makes the resistance theory flexible to examine educational frameworks (Rosensweig, 2022). Although Hirschman's works are known to focus mainly on education and economic theories while emphasizing the dynamic changes and adaptations of systems, this manifests how resistance theory can be used to perceive both the reaction and product of power structures (Rosensweig, 2022). Since then, resistance theory has gained attention over the past decade as it has been described as a response to spontaneous and disorganized defiance to situations generating discomfort to employees or teachers in the specific context

(Gutiérrez-Sastre et al., 2024). One of the key strengths of this theory is its ability to derive general lessons for developing policies in less developed countries, given that Hirschman looks at firms from an observation and reality lens rather than a preconceived theoretical scope. This makes it parallel in view from conventional planning and brutal authoritarian regimes of how firms operated after the world wars. In other words, the goal of Hirschman was to create a broader space while sharpening the analytical space instruments for employees to be able to discuss the possible mechanism for the process of change to advance, which was opposed to most other policy developers at the time and traces of these can be found in modern-day work context (Kesting, 2022).

Dornschneider (2023) highlighted that there are two forms of resistance: collective and non-collective, both are very costly but collective resistance tends to weigh higher than non-collective in oppressive environments. This does not insinuate that individuals who are characterized under the non-collective form of resistance, despite having low visibility and targeting their goals indirectly, should not be regarded as an unrecognized form of resistance because they constitute vital efforts that deliberately obstruct oppressive regimes. Therefore, such personnel cannot be regarded as disloyal or not suffering from fear as lots of political theories may claim, but they offer an important addition to the common response to oppression, though not identified as violence in response to oppression. In oppressive settings, Hirschman's framework has been conceptualized into exit, voice, and loyalty (Kan et al., 2023). Exit is the act of withdrawing from the demands of the organization they serve, voice is giving information to the organization, and loyalty is the act of sticking up to the organization under various circumstances (Gans et al., 2021). Furthermore, Hirschman highlighted in his famous text that when members of an organization are dissatisfied with its performance, they voice out their discontentment or exit. In the domain of politics, loyalists are more likely to exit, hence they are sensitive to the underperformance of the regime (Wong et al., 2023). In other words, it is believed that loyal members are more likely to air their dissatisfaction and less likely to exit the firm. This claim has been proven during an analysis of a wide variety of work contexts such as consumer behavior, labor economics, migration decisions, and marriage issues (Wong et al., 2023).

2.2.4. Applying Resistance Theory in Retaining Upper Basic School Teachers in Gambian Schools.

Hirschman resistance framework helped to address teacher retention in upper basic public schools because it underscores how individuals respond to organizational decline

thus enabling its application in understanding teachers' challenges in response to the Gambian education system as well as help policymakers understand what mechanism to be put in place to cope these challenges (Hirschman, 1970). To better apply this framework, the researcher posits to perceive the theory into three dimensions: exit, voice, and loyalty.

1. **Exit:** from this dimension of Hirschman's framework, the researcher was able to understand the challenges teachers faced, which leads to dissatisfaction, attrition, and later job acquittal. The factors leading to these include inadequate resources, poor conditions of their work, low salaries, and inadequate professional development opportunities. Through this dimension, policymakers and all other relevant stakeholders can draft policies that would help reduce teacher attrition, which is a crucial factor leading to teachers' exit. By addressing factors such as salaries, teaching and learning resources, and offering professional development, MoBSE and all other stakeholders can reduce the likelihood of teacher exit and thus boost quality and relevant education (Glazer, 2018).
2. **Voice:** through the dimension of this theory, the researcher was made to understand how employees express dissatisfaction as well as give relevant information in an attempt to improve the situation or their working conditions through feedback, advocacy, and making their voices heard by the top management (Allen, 2014). Using this in this study context allows the opportunity to encourage teachers to use their voices in identifying and addressing issues leading to their dissatisfaction. This enhances teachers to build a sense of belonging to schools and makes them feel valued and heard, especially when MoBSE creates such a medium through its policies platforms for teachers to share and participate in decision-making while fostering positive changes.
3. **Loyalty:** this indicates the commitment and loyalty people have towards their organization, making their decisions influential despite their challenges. Similarly, when employees feel a strong sense of loyalty to their work environment and colleagues, the chances for their stay and work to improve their institution, and this builds a supportive environment (John, 2017). To achieve this, MoBSE and all other parties need to create a rewarding avenue where hardworking teachers are recognized and provided with incentives that enhance their sense of community and belonging. Once the teacher feels loyal to their job, they will stay and contribute to providing quality and inclusive education to achieve the success of the school.

Applying this theory, the researcher can better understand and address the factors that influence teacher retention, ultimately creating a more supportive and motivating environment and policies for teachers.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher explains the methodological procedures for the current study by stating how and why choosing qualitative research method, and a case study design, have been selected. Here, the researcher unravels why and how the participants from West Coast Region in The Gambia were recruited for the study, and also shows how data is was collected through interviews, focus group discussion, and document analysis. Also, it discusses the manner of data analysis, notwithstanding like any other research, this research also have great ethical considerations showing how participants' were consented while retaining their identity to remain anonymous. The researcher considered in making sure the data collected is valuable and reliable by triangulating the with different data sources. Finally, the limitation of the study was indicated as the researcher reiterated that due to the current location, there can be no direct contact with participants.

3.2 Research Approach

To comprehend the driving forces, difficulties, and retention of educators in the Gambia, this study employed a qualitative research methodology. Creswell claims that the primary goal of qualitative research is to address research questions that ask why and how to comprehend the meaning that people or groups assign to a problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach mainly focuses on ideas, perceptions, opinions, experiences, behaviors, beliefs, and social phenomena that numerical data cannot measure. Additionally, this approach is merited to allow researchers to explore complex issues in their natural settings, providing rich, descriptive insights according to Denzin and Lincoln (2018).

Considering the researcher's intention to focus on the motivations, challenges, and retaining educators in the Gambia, a qualitative approach is believed to be appropriate. It allows the researcher to explore participants' experiences and perspectives on teacher motivations and challenges posed in sustaining educators, which is central to understanding the dynamics of the teaching profession in the Gambia. In a nutshell, this approach was used to collect data through interviews with stakeholders relevant in demystifying teacher motivation, challenges, and retention. Also, documents such as the General Orders (GOs) was reviewed to evaluate what mechanisms could be developed to help in teacher retention.

3.2.1 Research Design

Exploring the Gambia through a context-based frame makes this study unique, hence the researcher adopted a case study design. As to Creswell and Creswell (2018, p 51), a case study is a qualitative research technique that enables investigators to investigate a particular entity, such as "an organization, program, event, or individual," in its actual setting. In other words, a case study design is use to deeply navigate through a specific research subject in its real-life context and useful for answering 'how' and 'why' questions especially when boundaries between the subject and it environment are not clear. Furthermore, by thoroughly examining a phenomenon, this approach enables researchers to uncover intricate subtleties and intricacies that other approaches would overlook (Yin, 2006).

This design is ideal for this study as it allowed the researcher to investigate the teaching profession holistically in The Gambia, focusing on educators' lived experiences and the systemic factors influencing their motivations and challenges. Thus, by focusing on a specific context, the case study design enables unique and context-dependent factors relevant to addressing my research questions. Given that teacher motivation, challenges, and retention fall within real-life and contemporary settings of the Gambian education system and need to be understood from an in-depth perspective, a case study design fits this current study since it allows collecting non-numerical data from interviews, document analysis, and focus group discussion.

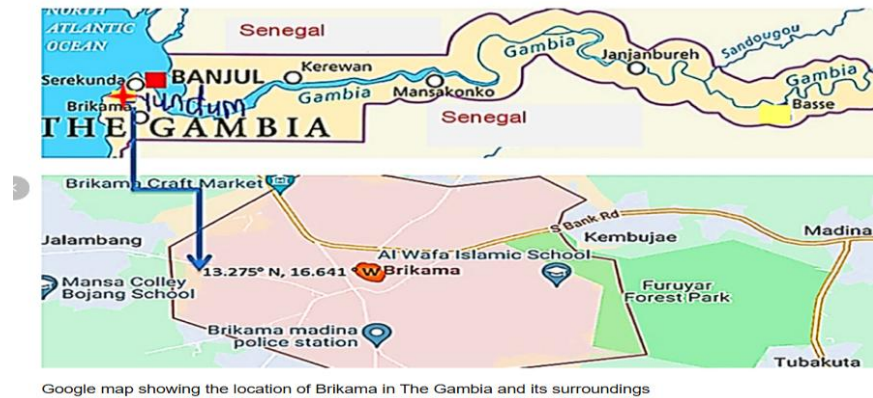
3.2.2 Participant Selection Strategy

Participants in this study were sampled through a purposeful sampling strategy, which involves deliberately selecting individuals or groups most knowledgeable about or experienced in the topic under investigation (Patton, 2002). This is justified because it ensures the study encompasses participants who can provide rich, relevant, and diverse insights into the teaching profession. It involves recruiting teachers, principals, and education officials to comprehensively understand educators' motivations, challenges, and career sustainability from multiple perspectives. Purposeful sampling ensures that the collected data is relevant and deep concerning the study's objectives.

Participants for this study were recruited from schools in the West Coast Region of the Gambia in the Upper Basic category. Given that, it is one of the biggest regions in the country coupled with the fact that it hosts most of Gambia's Upper Basic Schools and teachers, makes it an ideal region to recruit participants. Additionally, this region hosts a diverse category of teachers compared to other areas. Thus, this allowed me to get diverse

perspectives in my inquiry. Therefore, two (2) principals and five (5) teachers came from the aforementioned category of schools while two (3) education officers were recruited from the 2West) in the West (Brikama).

Figure 3.1 Map Showing Study Location in The Gambia



Source: image from (Ayua & Camara, 2024).

3.3 Data Collection

The motivation behind the collection of multifaceted, comprehensive, integrated data for this investigation, a semi-structured interviews was used among the three different interview types. The careful selection of this data collection method is not because of the mere fact that they are non-numerical data collection tools, but also they fit for the current study, and that others might not be possible considering the research context (Gambia) and the location of the researcher (Indonesia).

3.3.1 Interviews

John W. Creswell defines an interview as a research data collection technique in which researchers ask people open-ended questions to obtain information (Creswell, 2012). Furthermore, Peters and Halcom (2015) argued that the interview process is an art that can be honed and refined via practice. To provide a clear path for the study, researchers are advised to simplify the vocabulary and main ideas of the interview questions. Therefore, to collect detailed information during these interviews, I employed a semi-structured interview strategy.

One interviewing method that uses open-ended questions is semi-structured interviews. These inquiries are used to elicit from participants their perspectives and experiences regarding a specific topic being studied (Adamson, 2006; George, 2022). Through this kind of questioning, the researcher is not restricted to a specific pattern. Instead, I can ask follow-up questions where necessary for additional information. Thus, Tegan George highlighted that a semi-structured interview is a technique that asks questions within “a predetermined thematic framework” (George, 2022). Notwithstanding, it is crucial to note that these questions are not set in order, they are asked with the help of an interview guide. Semi-structured interviews were conducted among teachers, principals, and education officials in understanding motivations, challenges, and strategies for sustaining educators. Most importantly, the flexibility of this method makes it certain that the participants can elaborate on their singular experiences, thus yielding rich detailed data.

3.2.2 Document Analysis

The researcher employed documents as an additional source of information to enrich and diversify my data source. This process involved the systematic examination of existing documents, such as policy reports, training manuals, and records related to the teaching profession (Bowen, 2009). By looking at the laws, rules, and historical patterns that influence educators' experiences in The Gambia, this approach was utilized to put the results of interviews into context. Document analysis provides additional layers of evidence, helping to triangulate the findings and enhance the study's credibility. Documents such as General Orders (2013) revised editions was analyzed and triangulated with the data from the interviews. This document is accessible through Public Service Commission's website (www.pscgov.gm). This document serves as the guide to all civil servants serving in various positions in the Gambia government offices.

3.2.3 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions (FGDs) are interactive group settings where participants discuss specific topics guided by a facilitator to generate data (McLafferty, 2004). In this study, FGDs was conducted with pre-service teachers as a means of triangulation approach to compare individual information given by teachers during interviews. This method encourages the exchange of ideas and helps uncover shared experiences or divergent views, contributing to a richer understanding of the topic. The reason for choosing pre-service or

current teacher trainees at the Gambia College is to understand the current motives leading people to pursue a career in the teaching field than other professions.

This is ideal because the researcher has the opinion that every generation group has their unique reasons to get into the teaching field. Moreover, most in-service teachers had their teacher training at the Gambia College for free and with stipend, while the current pre-service teachers are not enjoying such benefit because they are asked to pay for tuition and not given stipend. This involved three (3) participants, and it lasted for almost 90 minutes. It was done via WhatsApp audio call hence it was the only medium convenient to the selected participants.

3.3 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used in this study to analyze the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, 2019), this method entails finding, examining, and interpreting themes or patterns in qualitative data. Getting to know the data, creating preliminary codes, looking for themes, evaluating themes, and defining and labeling themes are some of the stages that were involved. It has been a consistent iterative process through which this systematic and rigorous analysis captures the intricacies in participants' experiences and the contextual factors influencing the teaching profession.

Thematic analysis, in this study, becomes highly feasible because it provides a flexible yet robust framework through which the organization of qualitative data may be conducted to provide detailed insight into research questions. Considering the amount of data expected during the data collection, and that using manual coding, categorizing, and eventually theming could take time and a lot of energy, therefore Quirkos was used as an analysis tool in this project. According to Johnson and Christensen (2020), using computer programs to analyze qualitative data helps in storing and organizing a lot of data and reduces time consumption in analyzing huge data.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

Considering the fundamental aspects of ethics in conducting research across various fields, the researcher ensured the protection of subjects and maintain their integrity during and after the research process. These issues range from considering fair treatment and securing the identity of the subjects (Loh & Arroyo, 2017).

Moreover, since the researcher's location is far from the researcher's context, making data collection easily accessible only through information technology, the researcher was mindful of disclosing the pictures and voice recordings of the research participants. This

was to ensure that subjects are not being discriminated against, and also safeguarding their identity despite the common outcry of privacy in the internet world, thus promoting digital responsibility between the researcher and research respondents (Aldboush & Ferdous, 2023).

3.4.1 Trustworthiness and Credibility

Ensuring the data collected from this research is transferable and credible, the researcher employed data triangulation. According to Creswell and Miller (2000), data triangulation is a process of corroborating findings from several data collected during the process of data collection. In other words, it is a way of validating data by looking into another form of data set to ensure the findings are credible and trustworthy. According to Kakar et al. (2023) qualitative data trustworthiness is measured by ensuring credibility, transferability, conformability and dependability of the research process, design, and action. Credibility, on the other hand, provides the validity of the actual data about the understudied phenomenon to reduce biasness of the researcher.

Given this circumstance, the interview data with the in-service teachers was triangulated with pre-service teachers' FGD, to ensure data was trustworthy and credible since related patterns that emerged from the data were used and presented in the findings. Moreover, interviews with education officials and in-service teachers were triangulated with the data from the analyzed document and presented in the findings. All these showed how this piece of research intended to ensure data reported should be reliable and valid.

3.4.2 Study Limitation

Similar to most other international students researching while being in a foreign land, this research also posits some limitations rendering it potential limitations. Given that the researcher is currently in Indonesia while the study context is in The Gambia, limits the researcher to access research participants physically. This adds to the challenges of not directly observing the research phenomena, conducting one-on-one interviews, and unable to engage in fieldwork activities. Moreover, the significant time difference of 7 hours between the Gambia and Indonesia can complicate real-time communication and coordination, especially for conducting interviews and FGD. This adds to the issue of communication barriers because there were challenges in effectively communicating with research participants considering poor internet connectivity during data collection.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

With a firm comprehension of previous chapters, our focus now shifts to stating the results of the findings by looking into the data that emerged from focus group discussions, interviews, and reviewed documents. Hearing valuable insights from school leaders, education officers, pre-service and post-service teachers, and relevant government documents has helped to unravel and demystify what practices and policies could be applied to assist in teacher retention, understand what motivates people to become teachers, and the challenges they face afterwards. During the data analysis process, the researcher ensured that the data was perceived through the lens of Hirschman's (1915-2012) Resistance Theory and Becker's Rational Choice Theory, given that both theories were helpful as they complement each other. One looks at how individuals make choices by weighing their cost, benefits, and available alternatives while the Resistant Theory helps in understanding how institutions draw policies to ensure they reduce exit and voice and maintain loyalty of employees. Before demystifying the findings, it is necessary to give a quick synopsis of the demography of the research participants.

4.1.1 Demography of Research Participants

For the purpose of research ethics and the importance of ensuring the research participants' identity remained concealed, this researcher referred to all participants working under the Regional Educational Directorate 2 West (RED 2 W) as education officers, irrespective of their role and responsibilities for the purpose of anonymity and confidentiality. Meanwhile, school leaders were also referred to as principals. At the same time, teachers were numbered, and participants in the focus group discussion are labeled FGD collectively.

To start with, the research included three regional office staff. Education Officer 1 has five years of experience as a regional education officer. Education Officer 2 has 8 years of experience working as an education officer, while Education Officer 3 has five years of experience as an education officer. Altogether, three (3) education officers participated in this research. Meanwhile, two principals in region two participated in the study. One was a female principal in a public school, while the other was a male principal working in a private school. The female principal has 20 years of leadership experience, whereas the

male principal has five years of school leadership experience. As for the teachers, a total of five participated, which includes three male teachers, all the two are from a private school, while the other male and two female teachers are from a public school. The male teacher from the public school was labelled teacher 1, and he has almost 11 years of teaching experience. In comparison, teacher 2 has nearly 12 years of teaching experience, and teacher 3 has four years of teaching experience. Moreover, the researcher convinced two other ladies from different public schools to participate. They were labelled as teachers 4 and 5, respectively. Teacher four has 10 years of teaching experience, whereas teacher five has almost 12 years of teaching experience. This completes the list of respondents. Notably, these respondents are labelled based on the time they were available to participate in the research and not anything else.

Table 4.1 Participant Demography

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Years of experience</i>	<i>School type</i>
<i>1</i> <i>Education Officer</i>	5 years	
<i>2</i> <i>Education Officer</i>	8 years	
<i>3</i> <i>Education Officer</i>	5 years	
<i>Principal 1</i>	5 years	Private School
<i>Principal 2</i>	20 years	Public School
<i>Teacher 1</i>	11 years	Public School
<i>Teacher 2</i>	12 years	Private School
<i>Teacher 3</i>	5 years	Private School
<i>Teacher 4</i>	10 years	Public School
<i>Teacher 5</i>	12 years	Public School
<i>Focus Group Discussion</i>	First-year students	Gambia College (School of Education)

4.2. Research Findings

Here, the findings of the above three stated research questions that choke the researcher's mind are unravel and elaborated upon. It is crucial to note that the generated

themes were meticulously synthesized and analyzed from the data. This made the researcher reach eight themes for the three research questions. Accordingly, the emergent themes include enhanced teacher welfare and incentives, advocacy and inclusivity, role of stakeholders, attractions to the teaching profession, nature of teaching profession, geographic location of school, workload and classroom management, and remuneration.

4.2.1. Findings for Research Question 1

Following a deep dive in the data collected from teachers, school leaders and education officers, the researcher generated three themes to answer the first research question. The themes were generated through a meticulous interaction with the data, which was categorized to arrive at final themes and also triangulated thus allowing the data to be trustworthy and credible. The themes discussed below include those teacher welfare and incentive, advocacy and inclusivity, and stakeholder involvement.

4.2.1.1. Enhance Teacher Welfare and Incentives

A thorough interaction with the data shows that most subjects, including the regional education officers, are apprehensive about teachers' welfare. They believe that, despite the government's efforts in creating a special allowance for teachers called the Retention Allowance, it is still not enough to guarantee that teachers will stay till retirement. To some extent, teachers posted to hard-to-reach areas benefit from allowances such as "hardship allowance," teachers undergoing professional development benefit from study leave with salary as indicated in the General Orders (GO) for public service in the Gambia. Given that our study context is in an urban area, shows that teachers in urban areas do not benefit from such allowances but rather conduct extra classes with students, which, to some extent, need to go through some form of bureaucracy before approval. Meanwhile, here is what one of our subjects has to say:

"But for us in Region Two (RED 2), we are not fortunate enough to have that hardship. Schools around the border enjoy automatic double-shift because their school is located near the border, even if the school operates on a single shift."
(Education Officer 1, 12/04/2025).

This implies that schools near the troubled regions of the southern part of Senegal, Cassamance, enjoy an allowance that encourages them to remain in that location. They are

paid a double-shift allowance even if the school operates only on one shift. Because the current study context is in the heart of the Gambia, teachers posted in such locations do not enjoy such benefits, but benefit from organizing extra classes with students. Due to mutual agreement, these classes are often held on the school grounds, the child's home, or the teacher's preferred location. The study classes vary between public and private institutions, and Principal 1, who works in a private school, said they stand a better chance of retaining teachers than public schools. To prove this point, here is what he said:

“So, but (name withheld) is entirely private. So, private schools in this country can retain their teachers better than public schools. Government schools cannot retain. They have a zero retention rate” (Principal 1, 11/04/2025)

The researcher supports this claim, given that the subject has been a teacher in private and public schools before holding a leadership position. Moreover, this participant has been part of the Senior Management Team of one of the best schools in The Gambia. One of the reasons that his current school of headship can retain teachers at a higher rate than public schools is not just because they strictly enforce all policies. Still, it is during their teacher recruitment process where they ask teachers to “come with [their] pay slip, from the school you [they] are coming from. The school will look at it when they come with that pay slip” Principal 1. With the pay slips of the teachers they want to recruit, they can improve their pay grades by two points. For instance, if the teacher had been paid grade 7, they would pay grade 9. This pay is also commensurate with their allowances. Interestingly, teachers can stay for study classes for just one and a half hour after normal school time, where they earn four times as much as their monthly pay. This could be attested as thus:

“So at the end of the term, some teachers taking more classes will go home with 44,000 Dalasis [*name of Gambian currency*] apart from their salary. So those taking one class will sometimes go home with 18 to 20,000 Dalasis [*name of Gambian currency*] at the end of every term. So with that, (name withheld) can retain teachers entirely” (Principal 1, 11/04/2025)

Aside from earning through their toiling by organizing study classes, teachers in all school types feel that their plight has not been considered, given that they can only earn

through monthly salaries, making them indebted before they receive their next month's salary. As conveyed by a respondent, that:

“When those with financial problems come to us, we sometimes use the little fund we have here and give it in the form of credit them until the end of the month.”
(Principal 2 (15/04/2025).

This circle has been ongoing among teachers for quite some time, and they believe it is unfair, given that they are the producers of the workforce needed for all sectors to function. Yet, they remain the same while others easily climb the social ladder. For this to end, the government needs to look into their welfare by considering the:

“Welfare of the teachers and let there be a hospital bill for the teachers whenever they have an issue; let them be given priority to be taken care of at the hospital” (Teacher 2, 13/04/2025)

This is in total agreement with the GO. However, the benefits do not reach the teachers, citing from the same respondent that security personnel can get faster medical attention in a hospital queue than teachers. Furthermore, an education officer also shared that:

“You see, I can quote from (Name withheld). If their family members get sick, they take them to any hospital or pharmacy they think has the best medical care and facilities in town for better medical treatment” (Education Officer 1, 12/04/2025)

This respondent added, "Because this is what we need," thus emphasizing that teachers, like any other civil servants, deserve medical insurance for their family members. However, this also begs why other civil servants enjoy other benefits while others are blatantly denied, especially those under the teaching domain.

Moreover, as part of efforts and practices to sustain teachers and maintain their welfare, a close look at the data has shown that when the work environment is conducive, teachers would stay. Given the context of respondent 5, who stated that:

“Yes, I do have support. I do have support from my colleagues and my HOD. When I just entered the teaching system, like the heads that I have, I could not say anything about that. My colleagues also help because sometimes, even if something is not easy, if I ask them to step in for me because I am going to be absent, if I ask for help, they do help me” (Teacher 5, 30/04/2025)

Given the nature of a teaching job, sometimes a teacher could be overwhelmed with lots of work and home chores, especially in the Gambia, where women are the sole custodians of home chores in many homes. This support system, which is built through collaboration and mutual support between teachers and their supervisors, often called Head of Department (HOD), helps reduce the workload of teachers, especially those in public schools where the number of students could be up to 100 in a class.

To ease the troubles in the classroom, teachers deem it fitting and needful to have adequate resources. This enhances maximum delivery and quality in their work, given that most public schools use the traditional blackboard with chalk, which, if caution is not taken, may lead to several diseases for the teacher and the students as well. For more details, here is what one of our respondents stated:

“Also, as a teacher using chalk in the classroom, it is obvious if they are writing while doing the explanation, but writing using this chalk. It is not healthy. At least they should be digitized. We have to improve” (Teacher 4, 29/04/2025)

Indeed, the government should help teachers move out of the traditional chalk and blackboard into a digital classroom, which would not only help to ease lesson delivery but would also help to ease the teaching workload. As in the context of Principal 2 arguing that “I have to increase more teaching and learning resources for my teachers,” once the teacher, along with the students, has been provided with all the needed materials, teachers can cover their syllabus on time and engage in revision rather than the opposite. This can only happen if the resources, such as textbooks, are available and the classrooms are digitized. Once this is done, standards of quality education delivery would be attained, and most importantly, teachers would be retained, especially in public schools, where, according to Teacher 4,

she has up to “64 students in [her] class”. This vast number is too much to manage, not to mention giving the full attention needed for quality education delivery.

Others believe that teachers' “take home” as indicated by Education Officer 1 is not lucrative; therefore, the government, despite making efforts in increasing the salaries of all civil servants, has still not satisfied the needs of teachers because:

“...other departments, even with their salary, have other avenues to tap in money. They are paid, and even for the trips they do, they are paid for those allowances. But unlike the teaching field, we do not have such. We only have our salary. Other allowances are available unless you reach that jamming point, which is the senior teacher level, where they give you a small allowance to carry out certain functions in the school.” (Principal 2, 15/04/2025)

Based on the above, it is clear that despite the government's recent salary increase, teachers face financial challenges, which also contribute to draining their welfare. Looking at the current economic situation of the country and where teachers who can only benefit from their monthly salary are doomed, especially when they compare themselves to other civil servants who, after few years of service, can establish themselves with cars, houses, and many other amenities that the teacher cannot afford even after serving for decades. It is for this reason that almost all of my respondents claim that teachers should also benefit from schemes such as “loans with less interest”, “housing scheme”, and “car loans”, said Teacher 4. As indicated in the GO, such things as a car or a motorcycle would allow teachers to receive allowances for owning such vehicles. Moreover, the GO further reiterated that the amount allocated for transport allowance should be reviewed periodically to align with the consumer price index.

Another important aspect of teacher welfare that could increase teacher loyalty and retention is to show appreciation for their efforts by promoting them accordingly. The GO fully supports this: after a permanent civil servant has undergone one year's probation in their newly appointed role, they are subject to promotion, discipline, and demotion. However, no specified criteria has been set to guide how promotion should be done in the GO. Moreover, it has been stated that an outstanding officer can receive more than one increment within their grade when approved by a commission. Meanwhile, the recent Scheme of Service (SOS) has made many teachers move from one status to another. According to Education Officer 3, teachers are now well placed, given that most teachers

who had never thought of being promoted got promoted. The splitting of schools creates more avenues for teachers to be well placed. SOS has also contributed to teacher retention. More of such avenues should be replicated to enhance teacher retention.

Moreover, some teachers believe that awarding their achievements and recognizing their efforts can influence retention. Despite agreeing in totality that salary and resources are key to their sustenance, they also believe that recognizing efforts made by teachers during the academic year also helps to boost their morale and instill a sense of positive competition for other teachers to follow. This, according to one of our respondents, can be done:

“Sometimes, you can also organize workshops to provide them with meals. During meetings, you keep on praising them, or during staff development workshops. All those things can be organized for them. All these are a sort of motivation for your teachers.” (Principal 2, 15/04/2025)

Going by the above statement, it can be understood that retaining teachers is not just limited to vanity but rather showing them that their efforts cannot go unnoticed. This way, teachers build a collaborative environment, making them feel the workplace a second home and its members as family. With all the above stated, teachers who participated in this research believe that once their plights are respected, it could lead them to stay in the teaching profession till retirement. One of our respondents stated that he would be more than willing to keep in his entire career and “spend my [his] entire career in the teaching field if all these things are available.”

4.2.1.2. Advocacy and Inclusion

Aside from enhancing teacher welfare and incentives, it has also surfaced how teachers have shown concern regarding the adoption of several policies. For this reason, they deem it fitting not to be left out when the government wants to propagate particular policies. This would help reduce the number of industrial actions the current government has been facing as opposed to the previous one. At some point, when teachers express their concerns regarding their welfare to the Gambia Teachers Union (GTU) or their school principals, much heed is not taken. For this reason, “they may resort to strike or, in some cases, resignation,” as stated by Education Officer 1 (EO1). This could be because most teachers do not have maximum trust in their union or are impatient. Whatever the case, it

would have been better for all parties to have engaged in a dialogue rather than a strike. This claim has been further reiterated by one of our respondents, stating that:

“I think sensitization is more productive. Yes, sensitization to my opinion because a strike leads to a conflict, which will never solve any problem. So I think dialogue with sensitization, and most so, our teachers are not reading.” (Education Officer 1, 12/04/2025)

There have often been mistrust and misunderstanding between MoBSE, GTU, and teachers, specifically the young ones. Young teachers are considered being impatient with how specific processes are being made. As a result, they either engage their union as stated or resort to a strike, which often does not affect the teachers or top government officials but rather the children of the masses. For issues such as these not to replicate, it is ideal for all parties to be engaged by putting up a mechanism to engage with teachers rather than allowing them to go on a sit-down strike.

Moreover, it has also surfaced that most teachers are not fully conversant with the GOs and other relevant documents that could help guide their conduct in their posts. However, the GO clearly stated that all newly appointed should not just “be provided with the legal and regulatory instruments of the Public Service” of the Gambia but are also “required to undergo inter alia an intensive induction training course on legal and regulatory instruments of the Civil Service and any other relevant subjects”. Interestingly, one of our respondents has revealed that most teachers do not read the GOs, nor are they acquainted with some legalities governing their jobs. Here is proof:

“When given your appointment letter, some of you were told to familiarize yourself with the regulations. How many teachers are reading? So that is another thing teachers are not reading. People will sometimes come to me telling me, I want to go for paternity leave or I want to go for my confinement leave, or I am a lady that had delivered, but my baby passed away. What should I do? So these show that teachers are not reading.” (Education Officer 1, 12/04/2025)

The above narration shows how teachers, especially the young ones, have been lost in knowing and asking for their rights and learning some of the privileges set aside for them. The GO stated clearly that any pregnant female employee, as confirmed through a medical officer's report, shall be entitled to six months of maternity leave starting from a month before the expected delivery and should be paid full salary. Equally, a male spouse shall be entitled to ten days of paternity leave with full compensation. Underneath is the description of sick leave and other leaves that every civil servant is entitled to upon approval by their head of ministry. A thorough mirroring of this case shows that MoBSE and its teachers have some grave sensitization to do, which would indeed encourage teacher retention.

Moving forward, many subjects in this study context perceive that they have been left out when drawing policies that affect them directly in the classroom. One of our respondents stated that:

“I will say that those policies are not favorable at all. We always try to sensitize our experience on certain policies for them and be very cautious. And know that some of these policies will not benefit our society.” (Teacher 1, 10/04/2025)

Here, this respondent tries to show concern about how several policies are made and how they affect them through the classroom. To him, the policies have not been designed to fit the local context but to satisfy donors. When probed further as to whether he has an issue of mistrust with people representing them during which these policies are designed, he suggested that:

“The way they can do that is best to come and then ask those who are rightly engaged with the policy in the classrooms, and then ask them how they feel, how they go about it when they are in the classroom? So that when they are drafting policy, they can also invite those personnel. But do not draft somebody's way of teaching or way of life in a different part of the world, and then inculcate it with your policies. You expect things to work. It does not work like that. Things do not work like that.” (Teacher 1, 10/04/2025)

From this excerpt, it is pretty clear that how policies are drafted does not fit societal context, and therefore, at the end of the extract, emphasis was laid that it “does not work like that”. This shows that teachers are not only battling with how policies have been drafted, which do not fit the local context, but also why they are not involved in forming such policies. This would enhance their voice and make them see themselves as front liners in making key decisions that suit the nation’s quality education rather than backbenchers.

One of our respondents emphasized that teachers feel left out, which affects their understanding and implementation of certain policies when asked if they feel they are well represented in key decision-making. He conveys that:

“I am not sure because people representing us are representing themselves, or they know what they are representing. But I cannot say they represent teachers because our voices are unheard.” (Teacher 2, 13/04/2025)

This voice has been more emphatic regarding the fact that those whom they call representatives only represent themselves, but not teachers, given that their voices as teachers are not heard. Here again, it manifests in what practice the government, through MoBSE, should do to ensure teachers are not just sensitized to the policies made, but also be included, and not just design policies and dump them on them.

In another version, one of our respondents added that the government has not included teachers in policies or decisions affecting them. This respondent believes that personnel such as school principals and regional education officers should also be involved in policy making since teachers have more time to interact with these officials, if not daily, but at least once a week or fortnightly. They believe that many things are shared during their interaction with such officers. At some point, these officials are eyewitnesses to several incidents that occurred in the schools, leading to teacher attrition. As indicated:

“...if they embrace the bottom-up approach, whereby they will put teachers who are going into the classroom. By doing that, they will create an inclusive policy for everyone because they will know about teachers' challenges.” (Teacher 3, 19/04/2025)

Having trusted their fate in the hands of several officials does not mean they should turn a blind eye to what teachers are facing, but rather, teachers expect such officials to be on their side, rather than the government or donor agencies. Once teachers are sensitized and included in policy making, it would go a long way in aiding teacher retention. Hence, they are the people who should benefit more because they are doing the heavy or the “difficult job in the school”, said TR3. Indeed, teachers are faced with all the outcomes of any decisions that have been made by top officials in the government, who at some point had either good intentions when making such decisions or the opposite, which in this case is the issue of the introduction of the child’s rights policy and the abolition of corporal punishment.

It has become a common phenomenon that most of the teachers in both public and private schools are unable to distinguish the terms “child rights” and “corporal punishment”. Therefore, more light must be shed on this issue before things get out of hand. For instance, one of our respondents, a school leader, has said that the teacher workload has been the same during their time as teachers as it is today. She emphasized that “it must be the salary issue and some of the incentives that other departments have and we do not have.” To this respondent, salary is the main reason teachers cannot be retained in the teaching profession. However, this respondent thinks that most of the teachers she has been working with are now afraid to correct or discipline students due to the high emphasis put across by both government and NGOs that children are not supposed to be punished at school at any cost, even if they commit the most heinous of all crime. For this reason, teachers are now afraid to act or correct any behavior that a child does in and outside of the classroom. This could be attested as thus:

“We do not have the right over our students because of the child rights issue.

A teacher is not supposed to do corporal punishment now compared to our time. So now it is with this series of rights that the students have. So I think maybe that one should be one of the factors for them to leave, but not the workload. Nowadays, we have so many undisciplined actions happening in the schools. Students, you talk to them; they do not listen to you or take your advice. They do not respect you as a class teacher.” (Principal 2, 15/04/2025)

Based on the above, it becomes clear that most teachers, including some experienced school leaders, do not understand the difference between corporal punishment and correcting student behavior where and when necessary.

On the contrary, the education policy has never condemned correcting student behavior; how it is applied has changed. To attest to this claim, here is what one of the respondents has to say:

“One thing I came to realize is that corporal punishment has not been abolished entirely. What the policy is saying is that corporal punishment is not allowed. If it is executed in the school, it will be executed by the principal or the vice principal only. But sometimes, the vice principal can also delegate to a senior teacher to exercise corporal punishment. But when it is executed, it should be recorded and logged.”
(Principal 1, 11/04/2025)

Indeed, it is how student behavior should be corrected as indicated in the education policy of the Gambia. Still, the multi-million-dollar question goes begging: how many teachers know this? Or do they know and want to execute it to make students fear them? The best way to answer many of these questions is through an intensive induction and dialogue between the employer and the employee.

In the West, where many believe these policies emanated, they also took disciplinary actions. To support this claim, here is an excerpt by one of our respondents who, through their partnership with schools in the UK, Germany, and the Netherlands, shared that:

“But when I traveled to the UK, I saw punishments that are harsher than corporal punishment being executed in senior schools in the UK. I visited three schools. We have seen corporal punishment. We have witnessed detention. We have seen students being kept for an extra three hours after closing. The parents will be informed because parents typically come and pick up their children from school. Parents will be notified to pick up their child three hours later because their child will be in detention for doing X, Y, and Z.” (Principal 1, 11/04/2025)

The narration of the above clearly shows that specific policies need to be tailored to the societal context. This can be done as “when a stakeholder meeting is conducted, it is just to learn good practices from each other,” PR1. Indeed, private, public, and MoBSE officials must work together to copy good practices for quality education and a better society where our teachers are fully equipped with all the training they need before allowing them to enter the classroom. Through these means, Gambian teachers, as they are known, would be able to instill the actual values and norms of their children rather than bringing policies that, according to PR1, “to satisfy the donors, not to satisfy us.” Or “give us [policies] that are not good for our cultural and traditional aspects.”

4.2.1.3. Role of Stakeholders

It is a common saying that the education system in the Gambia is tripartite, where the parents, teachers, and school leaders each play their role for the school to achieve its objectives. In contrast, the different angle rests on the shoulders of school leaders, all of whom leave the student in the middle. The decision from all three holders of each angle affects the learner negatively or positively. For this reason, it is believed that when one angle fails, the others malfunction and thus lead to their presence being futile. Hence, the decisions would not be made inclusively. Therefore, when teacher retention is addressed thoroughly and fairly, it would be unwise to involve several stakeholders like parents, teachers, school principals, and the teachers' union, which in this case is the Gambia Teachers Union.

Teachers spend plenty of time with students as opposed to all other stakeholders, except for the parents, who spend most of the time with their children after school under normal circumstances. For this reason, they contribute to the upbringing and well-being of their children under any circumstances. The data from this current study have pointed out that, aside from insufficient incentives, children's ill-mannered behavior is the second leading factor to teacher attrition. For this reason, parents must be involved in correcting the behavior of their children, which can result in teacher retention. As we could attest in one of our respondents, who stated that:

“Because even if it is not within the confines of the policy, if the PTA agrees, it becomes binding. So we will send the minutes to the regional office so they know this is the step taken by [name withheld] PTA at that meeting.” (Principal 1, 11/04/2025)

In addition to the above manifestation, part of the solution to teacher retention is to ensure that school leaders, in collaboration with the PTA, draft policies that suit the betterment of their children. This way, it would be easy for teacher attrition to be reduced, thus enhancing teacher retention since policies are tailored to the needs of the society and not those that donors have propagated.

Moreover, teachers at some point also play a role in instilling behavior into children. For instance, teachers who always like to be considered friendly and caring to students might, at a certain point, make such students go beyond their limits because they always want to look impressive in the sight of the students, even when they did something wrong. The behavior of such teachers might often be perceived as general to all teachers. This does not go against the fact that teachers should not have good rapport with their students, but such rapport should have limits and within the confines of teachers' job ethics. If anything goes beyond that, the relationship between such a teacher and students becomes abnormal, and as a result, such teachers are not respected. For this reason, teachers, according to one of our respondents, lead:

“Some of them cannot read or write. So molding should start from their initial stage, from the nursery to the upper basic, which will help them to have an impact because if they have that attitude of respect, morals, and concentration, they will most likely not be trouble makers.” (Teacher 5, 30/05/2025)

This respondent further claimed that for this menace to be reduced, children need to be molded from the very first day of their entry into school by a teacher who not only inculcates book knowledge in the minds of the children but also good behavior and attitude into the children. She believes that this is in the hands of both teachers and the parents, and once it is not done, “the upper basic teachers are not going to face problems in the way these kids are molded in their early stage of education,” said TR5. For this reason, she is pleading that:

“Their immorality within themselves, at home, and with their parents should help them build their moralities. If they have that attitude with them, they are always cool, and it will be easy for you. But if the student misbehaves, most of the time, through how they are molded, it is not that easy. That is why we are finding the most difficult thing”. (Teacher 5, 30/05/2025)

Going by the above, it shows how indeed a crucial role both parents and teachers can play to reduce teacher attrition and enhance teacher sustainability through collaboratively disciplining and correcting the student behavior amicably.

Furthermore, school principals also play a crucial role in teacher sustainability, because they see and interact with teachers daily compared to other education officials. This gives them an edge over other stakeholders in fully grasping what practices must be done to sustain teachers. Due to individual differences, it is challenging to satisfy teachers, but that does not defy the fact that it is impossible to attend to each of their needs for sustenance, especially the quality ones. It is understood that most schools lack the funds to organize refresher training for teachers, where they would be sensitized to certain developments trending in the teaching world. A respondent advised that "... sometimes you can even organize fundraising, whatever fund is generated, you organize a capacity building workshop for your teachers. To empower them." PR2. This would help solve the issue of not having funds and provide the teachers the chance to learn new things and develop a bond between themselves and the school admin. As in the final claim, "to empower them".

In a situation where the school has enough funding and is interested in sustaining teachers, a respondent recommends that:

"I also said if the fund is there, you can provide them meals, like lunch and breakfast, if possible. Some of the basic things like sugar, milk, and other things, as an administrator, if I have those in your school, you can buy them so that they will only buy their bread and come. So all those things will motivate your staff. When they have those things at school, they feel at home and work up to your expectations." (Principal 2, 15/04/2025)

This indeed is an avenue that if all school heads pay heed to, it would contribute to sustaining teachers and, without a scintilla of doubt, lure many teachers to their school. Additionally, such benevolence would also contribute to teachers' punctuality and regularity in school as they would not pay heed to making or preparing breakfast at home since there is one in the school.

Part of the relevant stakeholders that could join in teacher retention in the Gambia is the GTU, the only renowned teachers' union with significant influence. This union has been collaborative and a relevant partner for the government and teachers nationwide. Many teachers think that they have tried in so many ways, while another teacher still doubts if the GTU truly serves the interest of teachers because:

“GTU sometimes does things differently. Because I am having a salary problem. For the past two months, I have been deducted. I do not know where my money is going. The last time I went to their office in [name withheld], they told me to go to their main office. I went to their main office; they said they had realized the issue and would work on it. So I do not know whether my next salary will be realized.” (Teacher 5, 30/04/2025)

Issues of this sort are not supposed to be raised by teachers, given that it is the leading pressure group that should stand firm and fight for the welfare of teachers. If the institution that is supposed to fight for teachers' rights and be their voice is not taking the teachers' issue with maximum respect, then it needs to be dissolved.

Contrary to the above, others think that GTU has been trying for them:

“In many ways, I think they are also trying; they are doing their best to ensure that the teachers have their liberties, freedoms, and enjoyment. I guess the GTU also is playing a very integral role for the teachers, you know. But we are still not yet 100 percent satisfied with what they are doing. We still want them to do better, but since we want them to do better, they are doing well too.” (Teacher 2, 13/04/2025)

For this reason, they need to adjust their efforts to fulfill teachers' expectations in the best way they can. This could be done by introducing policies that help with teacher retention. As indicated by one of our respondents, the GTU should engage the government, MoBSE in particular, on how best policies could be curtailed to the best interest of the teachers and not just draft those that satisfy donors. To prove this claim, here is what our respondent proclaimed:

“They should always try to engage with GTU to see how best their interests are put forward to the government or policymakers. For policymakers, they should always try to make policies that are reflective of everyone. They do not have to make policies that only suit the interests of maybe the top, like the principals, the directors, or the regional officers. So they have to make a policy that reflects everyone. The teachers who are going to the classroom should be the ones who should benefit more because they are doing the heavy or difficult work in the school.” (Teacher 3, 19/04/2025)

Indeed, GTU has stood firm in ensuring that such things prevail for the teachers and improving their livelihood, but it failed the teachers at some point. It is about time for them

to serve the needs of teachers just as they have always been doing. Putting pressure on the government to ensure teachers' plight is respected to the pinnacle. Once that is done, as portrayed by one of our respondents:

“So I believe teachers will not need to leave when the government takes care of that. A teacher will work for almost retirement without even buying a plot of land for himself, and cannot buy a car to drive. Even a motorcycle is what GTU CCU is playing a part in. Teachers can now change motorcycles, and most of them have their compound plots given to them by GTU CCU on a credit basis; then, every month on an installment basis, they pay. And now they have their compounds. But that was not happening before because some teachers would retire without a place to call home.”
(Education Officer 3, 09/04/2025)

From the above, it has become a clear manifestation of how and what some of the GTU interventions are still doing. As others have claimed earlier that they still need to adjust, some of the intervention areas need by the GTU is not just ask the give such things as car, compound, and motorcycle loan to teachers but need to engage the government to do so because they could only earn from their monthly salary. Moreover, the GTU, since it is the wealthiest credit union in the Gambia, should also open up to incentives such as awarding scholarships to teachers who have admission to the UTG and organizing a yearly teacher award system.

4.2.2. Findings for Research Question 2

After a deep dive and surfing through the data, the researcher through an inductive method arrive at two themes that influence people to becoming teachers in the current study context. These factors were grouped into factors influencing teaching job and the nature of teaching job or the ideal nature of teaching. Under each theme, several factors are elaborated showing how different teachers have diverse factors pulling them to becoming teachers.

4.2.2.1. Factors Influencing Teaching Jobs

Many regarded teaching as a noble profession FGD, which is why many who entered the field had different factors pulling them. As in the context of this research, factors such as passion for teaching, society, peers, and teachers' influence have stood out for entering the teaching field.

First, passion for teaching is one of the main factors that drives most young people to become teachers. This comes in different forms. For instance, while others saw how their friends interacted with children, it triggered their desire to become teachers. This could be attested in one of the responses of our respondent, stating that:

“The key factor that encouraged me to join the teaching field number one was the kids, because I have a friend whom I used to see how he mingles with the kids and how kids come close to him. Especially teaching the primary school and then the ECD. I was motivated by that.” (Teacher 2, 13/04/2025)

Indeed, many regard children as a gift from Allah (SWT), and as youngsters, seeing such a relationship between adults and little children could inspire them to pursue a job. Moreover, many believe that children, aside from their parents, the only outsiders who want to see and care for their best are teachers. At some point, some children become more attached to their teachers than their parents, building a relationship beyond blood and marital bond (researcher’s opinion). This has also been attested by our respondent from the FGD, who conveyed that:

“So, kids are being nurtured to create productive citizens. So I decided to go on this journey and make things easier for students. The other side might be the passion for teaching because I love teaching. At senior school, I loved standing before my colleagues to give out whatever I had in mind.” (FGD, 06/04/2025)

As perceived by this respondent, teachers without a scintilla of doubt have all that it takes to see the best in their students. Imagine this respondent had developed a passion for teaching since he was in senior school by helping his colleagues in areas they did not understand.

Meanwhile, others have different perspectives regarding their reason for entering the teaching job. In this case, peers can influence one another in either good or bad behavior, which could lead to either dropping out or living together for the rest of their lives. Here we are considering the positive ones. Our FGD mentioned that some people are driven into teaching as early as their school days. For instance, when teachers are not around and a lesson needs to be delivered, a student who is said to be conversant with the area often steps up to help colleagues. This could be either through mutual agreement or voluntarily. From these deeds, the particular student becomes influential and thus grows a passion for

teaching, leading them to become teachers later in their lives. To prove this point, here is what a respondent has to say:

“I started that in grade eight in [name withheld]. So, because I was very good at literature and mathematics. So, most of the time in our class, people who are very good in certain areas convene when a teacher is not there. We volunteer and start sharing ideas. So that was the thing that also motivated me.” (Teacher 2, 13/04/2025)

This respondent's desire and passion for teaching started in eighth grade. All thanks to his influence and motivation from his peers, who told him that “with the way you teach, you can make a good teacher in the future”. For this reason, he was motivated and progressed through the arena of teaching. Now, he has become a good teacher who taught in different parts of the country.

Rather than the above-mentioned, people who had a great rapport with their teachers to the extent of becoming their role models also became teachers through such influence. From such a relationship, the desire to become a teacher emerged. This has been conveyed by one of our respondents, stating that:

“When I was in school [senior], one of my math teachers told me that it would be good if I became a teacher though my dream was to become a nurse by then. But in my senior school, my field was the arts. During that period, I will discuss with him, and he will tell me that if you become a teacher, it will be good because you can help students. That is where I got my motivation for becoming a teacher.” (Teacher 5, 30/04/2025)

The relationship between teacher and student could greatly benefit not just the student but also the teacher, given that this particular participant would never forget what and how the teacher had helped shape and aid her to decide her career path. Deciding on a career is as important as knowing your worth; in this case, teachers can help; hence, teachers can identify their students' ability from the inside out, thus aiding them in making a great decision. Similarly, the response from the FGD has also stated that:

“Not only the community, but also my teachers. They also motivated me. The teachers told me that you are great. You are outstanding at teaching, but I already have that passion and love before. I was in love with the mode of transition that was going on because I was trying to change those people and attempting to help. Trying to show me ways to be a better person.” (FGD, 06/04/2025)

Given the above narration, it becomes pretty clear that teachers who serve as role models not only inculcate knowledge in the minds of their students but also serve as complete guides towards their future.

Another factor leading people to join the teaching profession was their intention to contribute their quota for societal progression. Although different societies have different perceptions towards the teaching job, societies that genuinely perceive it as a career path encourage their descendants to venture into the teaching field rather than other jobs. Although teaching has been regarded as noble in many societies, it is a job for those who could not have better options in life or had poor grades during their schooling. As a result, the only possible option was to become a teacher. This made others perceive teaching as “low esteemed within the society, as teachers are always regarded as low class within the civil society of the Gambia”. Despite all these perceptions, others still believe such a mindset could be changed only when they venture into the teaching profession. To support this claim, here is what one of our respondents has to say:

“Even though money is not there, society does not encourage it, and society may despise it. But what I found most joyful was having the ability to impact students' lives, like changing their mindset and everything.” (Teacher 3, 19/04/2025)

Such is the perception of society against teachers, and as a result, others might perceive it similarly. However, in some other societies where education for the girl child has been disregarded, teachers are perceived differently. The reason is that upon one of the girls attaining her teaching certificate and becoming a teacher, she was regarded as a high-value individual in her society. This paved the way for more girls to acquire the quality and relevant education needed for societal progress. This could be conveyed as follows:

“Yes, it does. Because society values you and then some when they see you on the street, in the way you look. Because I am [name withheld], and for them, education [for the girl] is for you to attend this Arabic education, have a few lessons, then get married. Sometimes not even at the age of 15. But like in our society, when we came here, we motivated others because they saw us, girl children, going to school and college, becoming something in the future. It has motivated a lot of parents to allow their kids to become educated.” (Teacher 5, 30/04/2025)

Interestingly, becoming a teacher as a girl child from such a community has not had an impact on the money they earned, but as a game changer for the girl child who had, for a long time, been perceived in such societies as second-class citizens. The patriarchal society decides their fate and forgets that the first school that any child could have is their mother. Still, the multimillion-dollar question goes begging: What if that girl child has not had enough education?

On the other hand, pre-service teachers already knew how society would perceive them when they become teachers shortly. For instance, one of them claimed that “So the people of the community” would “see me [them] as someone very great,” hence “they can teach” FGD. This is indeed interesting, how society perceives teachers could trigger students or children to join the noble profession.

4.2.2.2. Nature of Teaching or as an Ideal Profession

Despite diverse jobs, the teaching job has a uniqueness that other jobs envy. As a result, people prefer to become teachers rather than venture into other skilled labor jobs like construction, tailoring, nursing, among others. Key features that teaching has in its uniqueness that other professions do not have are its ability to provide job security, stable pay, growth, and exposure.

Compared to many jobs, the level of job security in teaching could be compared to none; for this reason, many prefer to be in the teaching field rather than in other jobs. For instance, it takes a teacher to commit a heinous crime like murder, sexual abuse, among others, before their services are terminated or jailed. Given that a teacher who defaults in their job prescription is either engaged in serious dialogue or moved to another school as a way of discipline. This, along with many other reasons, made teaching a heavenly job in the context of our study, as opposed to other jobs like banking. Besides that, before privatizing the major teacher training school, Gambia College (School of Education), many would prefer to become teachers to save themselves from series of applications before being appointed in several government or non-government positions because it takes one to have a substantial social capital before getting either scholarship to further their education or secure a job. Given the nature of this situation, most people would prefer to save their energy from job searches by buying the Gambia College form to get trained and a paid stipend, while being guaranteed a job after three years of training. During those moments, the individual is offered full tuition and stipend upon acceptance; this was a life-changing moment for some people, even if society perceives them otherwise, because this offer was incomparable to unemployment. To support this claim, here is what a respondent stated:

“Yeah, that will also count because if you go to college, you are assured that you will be employed. But if you go to other institutes, finding a space in that one may be difficult. But for the college, job assurance was there because from there you are posted, unless you are posted to an area that does not favor you. But 100% assurance of you having a job after college graduation. “(Teacher 5, 30/04/2025)

Now that Gambia College has been transformed into a private entity according to FGD participant, things are different, and as a result, students would have to pay tuition fees upon acceptance. Although the government does help pay the tuition of some students, others struggle to pay for their tuition throughout their time as students of the Gambia College. However, this has not stopped people from applying to become teachers due to their passion for the job, but most importantly, they consider it a secure job.

In addition, the data has also pointed out that despite most of the research subjects being engaged or having some other career preferences, they still chose teaching over their previously intended jobs because when:

“I looked at that one [tailoring] very well and thought about my job security as a teacher by then. It was more advantageous because if I become a teacher by then, nobody will sack me, while I was just an apprentice, so one day I can have issues with my boss, and if he sacks me, where will I be? So I thought the teaching field was a better place.” (Teacher 2, 13/04/2025)

The excerpt above shows how this particular respondent was weighing options between his apprenticeship jobs as a tailor and when he started teaching. Upon meticulously weighing up the two, teaching was considered over tailoring despite being the job with the lesser pay because of its security, as mentioned above, he might be asked to leave if issues arise between them. Thus, that is going to be the end.

Although many consider teachers to be earning only through monthly salaries, while others regard them as poor earners, the teaching job, compared to most other labor, has stable pay. For instance, the tailor could mainly depend on social or religious occasions. At the same time, the farmer relies primarily on the rainy season, but the teacher could earn their salary even when schools are closed. For this reason, many choose to be teachers instead of other daily paid jobs like construction and carpentry. One of our respondents could attest that they follow construction personnel to serve as apprentices to mold blocks, during which they are paid on a daily wage based on mutual agreement. This could not

continue because it takes time for such opportunities to prevail. Sometimes, the boss might cut their pay if there is a misunderstanding or when the boss thinks the task has not been completed. This and many similar situations lead to misunderstanding and distrust between the employer and the employee.

Meanwhile, a participant who was tailoring while being accepted at the Gambia College has this to share:

“The advantage is in the teaching. When I saw these two opportunities in my first two weeks, I concluded that teaching has more advantages because when you look at the tailoring, yes, it is a self-employment job, but looking at the advantages of the financial part of it, which only occurs when you can get money. But when you come to teaching, at least every month, there is a package for you.” (Teacher 2, 13/04/2025)

Yet again, it is clear that people prefer teaching to other self-employed jobs because of its pay stability. Others would like to secure a teaching job even if the earnings are not up to their expectations, but because the pay is stable. That means a lot compared to the occasional pay scale. Although all government employees have stable incomes, the accessibility of a teaching job is comparable to that of none, thus making it a path to reaching high posts in government or non-governmental organizations.

In addition to the above, our participants have also shown that part of the reasons they join the teaching profession over other professions is not just the financial benefits but also the growth and exposure that the teaching job offers. Unlike many other professions, teaching exposes people to different social contexts, making them understand people's behavior and attitudes. To some others:

“The most important reward is when you see your students excelling in life. After almost 10 years of teaching, the people I have taught work in various sectors. I can say most of them are now in higher places. So, it is one of the most important rewards anywhere I go in public, I am always seen as somebody who has imparted knowledge to them.” (Teacher 1, 10/04/2025)

Although the teacher considers students' success the most rewarding aspect of teaching, the students they teach will never forget them in their lives, serving as social capital. For instance, a student who works in a hospital or other profession would always give their teacher privilege, which could be rewarding and provide exposure.

Meanwhile, a response from our FGD showed that one of the key reasons for their choice of teaching over their previously intended job was a result of the fact that teaching trains them to have several qualities that other jobs do not, which could be conveyed as follows:

“I wanted to become a nurse before. Later, I came to understand that before being a nurse, you need to have some qualities of patience. You need to have empathy and sympathy for people. But later, I did not understand again that you need to start from somewhere to be such a person who will have patience, empathy, and sympathy for people. That is teaching because there you meet different individuals with different problems.” (FGD, 06/04/2025)

Indeed, teaching as a profession helps people not just have empathy and patience but also the ability to become an orator. This makes the teaching job stand out despite the undesirable pay.

Moreover, others perceive teaching not just to develop skills or serve the community to better their future, but also for personal gains, like getting a promotion. For this participant, the intention of joining the college was:

“First to equip myself better...because I was already going to the university at that time. So I knew if I stayed in the field for a long period, I would get promoted quickly. That is why I was promoted after my second year, so I could complete my program.” (Teacher 3, 19/04/2025)

To this participant, teaching was a stepping stone to get to some higher positions, like becoming a school principal or an education officer, because that is the fastest way to get a promotion within the teaching profession. Although there is a shift in the current status quo regarding teacher promotion, the question remains how long will it continue?

Another driving factor leading people to choose teaching over other professions as highlighted by one of our female respondents, is the nature of balancing work and family life. To this respondent, family comes first because it is not worthy pursuing money when her children would not have a proper upbringing. For this reason, she said:

“Yes, I will still choose this because even if I am sitting with my colleagues, I tell them that teaching favors me. Yes, because of my family. Because of the family

that I have. I do not want to leave my kids from morning to 6 o'clock.” (Teacher 5, 30/04/2025)

Despite having the desire to develop other children, developing her own also matters. Given that children are easily influenced by bad behavior over good ones. By weighing her options, she found out that teaching allows one to work on one shift, which requires a teacher to serve for just six hours a day. This was enough for this participant compared to those who would be at work from morning to evening, with little time for their family, more especially their children.

4.2.3 Findings for Research Question 3

As rewarding as it is, teaching in our modern-day classroom is not without challenges, which makes it difficult for people to be retained till retirement. Although different people have different reasons for joining the teaching profession, they also have their reasons for quitting just a few years later. That being said, this current research has found that teaching has become unsustainable, hence they do not like the geographic location of their school postings, workload, extensive classroom management, and last but not least, remuneration.

4.2.3.1 School Geographic Location

Every year, MoBSE, through its Human Resource Directorate, posts teachers in different schools nationwide. This ensures teachers are posted to schools where their services are most needed. Despite their positivity in this endeavor, some teachers found it challenging to relocate to a different area due to how society perceives teachers. This has been conveyed by one of our respondents:

“Well, you know our communities differ. In some communities, teachers will be motivated, while in other areas, teachers will not be motivated. However, in some communities, they think that when teachers come there, they are going to spoil their children. Meanwhile, in other communities, they see teachers as role models.” (Principal 2, 15/04/2025)

For this reason, some teachers find it very challenging when they are posted to communities that perceive teachers negatively. As in the saying, bad news travels faster than good news, such tales are typically shared between the newly recruited teachers; thus, if their posting location has not been changed, they quit. Sometimes, some will join other

sectors even after obtain a teaching certificate. This becomes a loss for the government and the individual, since they might require extra years to have the professional training needed for their new job.

Another challenge teachers face, leading to their attrition due to school geographical location, is the country's harsh weather conditions, especially in rural areas. A respondent cited the example of an individual who was born in the western part of the country and was posted to the farthest school in the country to serve. Many a time, such an individual is faced with issues like:

"Sometimes, if you want to eat the type of diet that you want to eat, you would not be able to have it in those areas. And even the housing, where to stay comfortably in those areas, you may not even have it there. So these are some of the challenges experienced by some of the teachers." (Principal 2, 15/04/2025)

Although the government has been trying to build quarters to make life easy for teachers posted to these areas to cope, it is still difficult for some people to stay because there are several amenities that the urban areas could offer, but the rural areas do not. For some others, they prefer to quit their profession when all negotiating options fail, because:

"Some will have families around here, and they are far from their families. Some could be sick because of the environment, which is also different here. So some of those things, if they have a genuine case. This is why they like me. I will look at it critically; sometimes I must have an approachable face. So, sometimes I also need to do it because I have to ask them to bring their medical papers. So, if the medical paper shows that they should be closer to the hospital." (Education Officer 1, 12/04/2025)

From the excerpt above, we see that an education officer often serves for a long time before being reassigned, and most of the time, they are only moved due to promotions. They may not experience the same nightmare as the teacher respondent, who emphasized, "No, posting is one of my problems. I have that problem with posting." Indeed, the yearly postings are a nightmare for all teachers, regardless of whether they like their current posting location. Even those who seek a change in postings may not be fortunate enough to be assigned to their desired location; when that happens, they often prefer their previous location over an undesired one.

4.2.3.2. Workload and Large Classroom Management

Although some of our respondents regard the workload of teachers as always being the same during their time and now, and for that being the case, they do not perceive it to be one of the reasons leading to teacher attrition. However, they fully acknowledge that teachers face a grave challenge in the child rights policy. A policy, which has been wrongly perceived by many as saying that children are not supposed to be disciplined when they do wrong in schools. Given this situation, teachers and school administrators find managing student behavior in and outside the classroom difficult. This could be attested thus:

“It is a big pressure with this child rights protection, child policy, whatever. It frustrates teachers a lot. That is why most of the best teachers are uncomfortable with the teaching field; the disrespect is too much. They feel like leaving or quitting their job for another one. So I think the pressure is too much regarding the teacher-student relationship. So it is very frustrating.” (Principal 2, 15/05/2025)

From the excerpt above, it becomes clear how students are taking advantage of their rights, claiming the freedom to behave however they wish, yet they go unpunished because they believe their misdeeds should not be addressed. This leaves teachers and school administrators at the mercy of the students, especially when they struggle to manage their tempers. For instance, when a child is disciplined at school for misbehavior, they may refuse to accept the punishment. If force is used, the situation can escalate to the police, demoralizing the teacher and the school administrator. To support this claim, here is a statement from one of our respondents:

“That greatly challenged the entire education system because the internal laws were changing. You know, the model of presence for a change. How do we administer punishments to regulate certain behaviors that are also changing? So that makes teachers helpless.” (Principal 1, 11/04/2025)

In the past, things were the opposite, where the teacher had the almighty right to discipline students in the manner they deemed necessary. Although during those days, some teachers also overdid their disciplinary actions by hurting students, leaving them with injuries, thus prompting policies to be drawn to change that status quo, and today we are faced with the reverse.

In addition to indiscipline, scarcity of learning resources contributes to teacher challenges, thus leading to attrition. For instance, one of our respondents stated that despite

a science laboratory in the school, they are not allowed to use it as upper basic school teachers. This is unfair and leads them to improvise their materials, given that not all science materials can be improvised in some circumstances. For this reason:

“As a science teacher, you must use your resources or money to buy some of the materials at the market, and come to the class to experiment. And that one you know that it does not save us at all.” (Teacher 4, 29/04/2025)

Considering the teacher's meagre salary, this is not favorable; hence, her monthly salary is meant for the efforts made during the class and not to buy resources for children to use. Perhaps, a thought could be why the teacher cannot ask the students to contribute to buying the resources needed. That would be another case to be judged by the highest court because most students are dishonest and might overprice their parents. Also, the Gambian policy forbids levying students at all costs.

Class size has also contributed to teacher attrition, as the insights from our research participants have shown. Given the popular demand for education, especially in urban area, and also for the fact that many parents perceive schools in urban areas as having better teachers and resources making them outperform those in the rural areas in both national and international exams. This has brought a lot of pressure to the teachers in the urban area. As a result of this, a respondent has this to convey:

“The class size is also a big problem in [name withheld] up to today. Imagine this year, I have 64 students in my class. And looking at that, controlling the students and knowing their behavior is another challenging thing. Their attitude is not friendly, and their behavior towards teachers is sometimes awkward. So, handling a class of such size is another problem.” (Teacher 4, 29/04/2025)

What makes this situation worse is that parents would often listen to their children's narration, while the school administration would not intervene when such a thing happens. For this reason, teachers would not only find it challenging to manage a large classroom due to their inability to do so, but rather an unsupportive system. For this reason, the only possible way for them to save their skin is to quit whenever the chance is available.

Large classroom size also adds to teacher attrition during the time of assessment. Considering a total student body of about eighty or above, when time for assessment emerges, often teachers would prefer to set questions of low standards so that they could mark, grade, and submit their grades to the school administration to avoid conflict. For this

reason, a large classroom size also contributes to the decline of quality education standards. For this reason, concerned parents and school administrators often point fingers at teachers for not doing their work as expected. This leads to conflict in some schools, especially where the teachers are impatient or have reported an issue, yet the school administration refuses to take the steps required to solve the problem. To some extent, such teachers are transferred to another school, or they quit for a better-paid and less stressful profession.

4.2.3.3. Inadequate Remuneration and Demotivation

Despite the notion that teaching is not a money-making profession, the amount of compensation for teachers still stood out as one of the factors leading to their attrition and, thus, resignation. Although the current government has tried to increase the wages of its civil servants, many believe that the increase has not been impactful because it favors the top brass. For this reason, many teachers perceive that the nation's current economic state does not reflect on their salaries. This could be attested in one of our participants stating that:

“Starting with the country's economic condition, I believe the first challenge is the salary. Most of the young teachers feel that the salary they earn cannot sustain them. These are the reasons why most of these young teachers quit teaching and venture into other areas for greener pastures.” (Principal 2, 15/04/2025)

To further support this claim, let us also hear from a teacher respondent who reiterated how his monthly spending and workload are in total contrast:

“Never, it's sufficient. My brother and I spend nothing less than 20,000 per month. Every day, I exclusively give 400 dalasi to my family, with the money to use for credits and transport. If you count that for 30 days, it will equal 12,000. My salary is less than 12,000. So, how do I do the rest? I have to buy my other needs, and they [family] have to do other activities. So you see, it is never commensurate.” (Teacher 2, 13/04/2025)

This is truly sad and difficult for any man or woman full of responsibilities. Meanwhile, many could not quit despite this deplorable condition because they “...see ways to improve the society. And that is what keeps us still in the field.” Teacher 1. The question remains lingering, but how long can we keep such diligent and dedicated people in the teaching profession? Their salary might be better than that of so many civil servants.

Yet, they cannot develop such things as houses, buy cars, or enjoy the fanciful lifestyles enjoyed by the rest of the civil servants who, at some point, had been their classmates during school days or their students. For this reason, they quit and look for “greener pastures,” as put to us by one of our education officers.

Although the recent promotion made by the government has at least given hope for most of the young teachers that they do not need to wait till the time near retirement to be promoted. However, it has been traumatic for many in the field as to when they would be promoted, which is often associated with an upgrade in pay. Before last year’s promotion, it took teachers and school administrators at least a decade or more to earn a promotion. This is unfair compared to other sectors where, after serving for five years, they are promoted automatically, as conveyed by one of our respondents. One of the reasons sounded in the mind of the vulnerable teachers is that “there are many teachers” TR5. Indeed, the number of teachers outnumbers all civil servants, but does that justify the unfair treatment? It is the government’s responsibility to educate its citizens. This has contributed to teachers' challenges, leading them to quit for other jobs. To attest to this claim, here is what one of our respondents has to say:

“Looking at the West Coast Region, I do not think any school has a full set of teaching staff. You have to manage by giving one teacher two or three subjects to teach. Schools have to improvise because there is a problem in all areas, especially in the sciences, when it comes to physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, and further math. In an area, a chemistry teacher could be teaching three to four subjects.” (Principal 1, 11/04/2025)

This respondent reiterated further that one of the reasons for these teachers to quit is demotivation. In this case, when they see their colleagues in other sectors living a fanciful life while they remain stagnant, they only want to quit and be part of those enjoying the national cake. In this case, respondents showed that “A lot of teachers move from the teaching field to the Ministry of [name withheld] and NGOs because in those areas, aside from their salaries, they have a lot of allowances”. PR1. Adding that employees of these institutes could save their salaries and depend only on their allowances, which they could use for personal and community development. Such motivational strategies are lacking among teachers and other education employees, thus leading to attrition and acquittal for better-paid jobs.

Considering the perpetual diverse learning style of students in the classroom, requiring the modern-day teacher must upgrade themselves to meet this demand. This

failure in many developing countries, specifically in the current study context, has led to declining quality education standards. The decline of standards has been commonly shouldered by the teacher, even if they share the blame with other stakeholders like school administrators, parents, and students thus leading to frustrations of teachers. Many a time, this lead them to request for a transfer of service to other departments or sought for other less stressful jobs. Although, the current government through the MoHERST has been trying to bridge this gap by trying to ensure that teachers, upon gaining admission from the University of The Gambia, Gambia College or other training institutes, are given scholarship to develop themselves yet many have felt that it is still not enough due to the demand made by teachers as we hear from a respondent stating that:

“And the other one is entirely from the Ministry of Higher Education. However, it is far apart if you look at the number of sponsors they will sponsor in a year and the number that apply. So what they sponsor is minimal compared to the number in the system, hoping for higher educational pursuits. But the MRC Holland is helping them a lot. But MRC Holland is also concentrating more on the rural areas.”
(Principal 1, 11/04/2025)

Indeed, both institutions are trying to make sure that teachers sharpen their knowledge to meet the demand of students in every way possible. Although MRC Holland has been trying, as it still leads the development arena in the Gambian education sector. Still, its focus is only on teachers in provincial postings. MoHERST on the other hand provides scholarships to teachers, whose concentration is in the pure sciences and technology-related areas, after meeting specific requirements.

However, responses from our teachers have shown that access to such scholarship only requires luck and continuous prayers if you do not know anyone on the board. This makes access to scholarship, as stated by all the teacher respondents, unfair because:

“At some point, it will be based on whom you know. Scholarship award would be based on nepotism and favoritism. While studying at the university, before I had a scholarship, it was based on more favoritism and nepotism.” (Teacher 1, 10/04/2025)

From this perception, it takes a teacher to apply for a scholarship many times before they are considered, when they do not know anyone on the board. Sometimes others would require compensation for such an opportunity to be granted to them, sadly.

4.3. Discussion

This section contains the discussion of the data where the researcher interprets the data. Given that answering the research questions has led to eight themes, this paves the way for the division of this section into eight sections. It is believed that this would help guide the readers through to understanding the interpretation of each emerging theme above.

4.3.1. Enhance Teacher Welfare and Incentives

One of the key strategies that could help enhance teacher retention, as shown in the works of literature and the data of this current research, is to ensure that teachers are remunerated sufficiently so that they do not envy employees in other departments. Indeed, many believe that teaching as a profession is not a money-making avenue, yet that does not mean that teachers should not be considered when it comes to their take-home pay. Given that, teachers are crucial for producing the workforce as well as developing the expertise needed for all other departments to function, it is clear that teachers' salary needs to be considered because once the teaching fraternity malfunctions, the whole system follows. This may perhaps lead to the downfall of the entire government system. For instance, doctors, nurses, engineers, pilots, drivers, and all other known professions must go through teachers. If all these professions do not undergo proper training, it means the sick would not get the required treatment hence the nurse would give wrong prescriptions. The roads would be wrongly constructed, there would be a series of plane crashes and road accidents just because the teachers' role has not been fulfilled. This substantiates the fact that if a nation is to be destroyed, then one has to meddle with their education system, of which teachers are very key. Since among all the stakeholders they are the only entity who has direct contact with the children and as such their welfare needs to be taken with absolute seriousness.

Therefore, the emolument should be prioritized to maintain them in the teaching profession and as part of a key strategy to attain quality education (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018) that every country aspires for by 2030. Moreover, these findings align with Hirschman's resistance theory under the dimension of loyalty. This dimension of the resistance theory posits that loyalists support the various circumstances within the organization, which in this case is the upper basic school teachers and MoBSE. It is important to note that if teachers are to support MoBSE, their financial welfare should be considered so that they remain loyal. In this case, MoBSE needs to consider providing teachers with incentives such as medical insurance, houses, cars, and other allowances that other departments have to prevent their teachers from quitting. Given this revelation, the

current study has offered more needs for the teacher than Geiger and Pivovarov (2018), who only identify teachers to be compensated for quality delivery and retention.

Moreover, the importance of any work environment also affects level of its productivity, which is why many experts have echoed the teaching environment should be conducive and learner-friendly. Given the sensitivity of the teaching job, if the teacher, being the guide, coach, and tutor, loses their humor and openness, it reflects in their delivery, making them partially attend class while partially holding on to an issue that eats them up. For this reason, it is advised that school administrators be fully observant of the nature and behavior of their teachers and, where necessary, try to help rather than put more pressure on them. To achieve this, the school administration must build a culture of trust and openness among teachers and the school administration to enhance cooperation and productivity (Shuls & Flores, 2020). Teachers' workplace, as many experts suggest, should not be a graveyard nor is it supposed to be as loud as a marketplace, but rather be maintained between the two, making the teaching job even more sensitive than most other jobs. Hence, they deal with the human mind. This delicate device could be in demand as it develops.

Considering the ever-evolving needs in the classroom, the current study highlights that teachers need to equip themselves to serve the needs of the students which is enhanced by their confidence in lesson delivery. Once the teacher can deliver to expectations, students build confidence and trust in the teacher as the leading guide in the classroom, which makes the teacher's work much easier and less stressful. This adds to teacher sustenance rather than quitting as indicated by Acheampong and Gyasi (2019), who highlight that professional development and other amenities like accommodation, transport, and electricity, encourage teacher retention in rural areas. What makes this current study stand out from the above-mentioned literature is its depth in highlighting other avenues that could serve as a shoulder-tapping device for teachers. Indeed, awards and recognition show how much a teacher's effort has been appreciated as a standout among the rest and encourage other teachers to do so. For this reason, if the criteria is clear for teachers to be awarded at school levels from cluster, regional, to national level, it goes a long way in telling the entire country how important the role of teaching job is.

4.3.2. Advocacy and Inclusion

Many firms have achieved their goals by allowing their employees to voice their views regarding how they perceive the institution could succeed if things are done in specific ways (Hirschman, 1970). For this reason, many are now graduating from creating a boss or dictatorial leader and turning to such things as transformative, coach, or collective

leadership, where they allow the voice of their employees to be heard. The logic behind this is to ensure employees feel comfortable and perceive the workplace as their second home, as they are also part of the decision makers who could influence how certain decisions are made. Failure to do this could hamper employees' willingness to work as expected, and thus lead to the unsustainability of employees. Given this situation, many teachers in the current study context believe that part of the cause for teacher unsustainability is due to drafting policies from a top-down rather than a bottom-up approach. They believe that such policies like the child right policy is alien and therefore would want policies that align with their country context because it is not helpful to the current education system. Since some students now take advantage of the situation to bully teachers and to sometimes attack them to inflict harm or even attempt to murder them. This was not the situation before when teachers were regarded as role models, custodians of cultural norms and values. This is not how the some in the current generation of students perceives teachers. It is time to restore teacher authority through supportive leadership and ensure teachers' voices are heard (Nguyen et al., 2024) by students and all relevant stakeholders.

However, many teachers and school leaders think that one of the best ways to solve this canker is by reintroducing corporal punishment. This term is commonly used to describe student correction behavior, as it can be attested in the data above. Given this misunderstanding, it is deemed fitting and needful for teachers and school leaders alike to be sensitized to what could be referred to as corporal punishment and what steps should be taken when a child misbehaves in the school or the classroom. Many respondents believe that the only possible means to correct student behavior is to strike them either on their hands or bosoms with a cane, forgetting other non-physical means such as detentions or using guidance and counselling knowledge learned during their teacher training from the Gambia College. Since the current teacher population is mainly young adults, engaging them in a mentoring process as indicated in the study made by Rodgers & Skelton (2014) and Meneghella et al. (2019) to correct student behavior and to prevent them from quitting is necessary. Comparatively, the current study has been more elaborate since it identified that teachers need more mentoring. However, the current study has not been as elaborate as the latter-mentioned literature, which has identified what each generational age group prefers and needs to be sensitized to.

4.3.3. Role of Stakeholders

Findings from the current study further reiterated that parents and guardians of school-going children are partners in every aspect of school development; for that reason, they are required to play a crucial role in teacher retention. The time students spend with their parents is second to none, except that teachers are considered to spend about six (6) hours of the day with the children. Given this situation, teachers and parents must join forces in ensuring children succeed academically and in their lives ahead. As it has been portrayed in this current study, children's indiscipline behavior contributes to teacher unsustainability; therefore parents need to collaborate with other stakeholders to ensure that their children behave well in school. Many a time, the current study has established that when children have an issue with their teacher, instead of trying to find out what had happened, the issue is taken to the police or the regional educational office for steps to be taken against the teacher, rather than just engaging in a dialogue with the teacher concerned. This has threatened many teachers and school administrators so much that even if a teacher has been involved with such a situation, he/she is left to battle it out on their own rather than gaining support from the authorities concerned. This situation has been so bad that, to some extent, school-going children would often attack their teachers with a knife or life-threatening weapons if they feel they have an issue with a teacher. Given the nature of this situation, it is time for parents and teachers to engage in a dialogue regarding this issue. With dialogue, teachers would once again have the community support as they can directly engaged with the parents of their students, which would boost their efficacy as they correct student conduct. This claim has been supported by Berry et al. (2021) findings. Indeed, the workplace for the teacher would feel safe, and they would operate without fear of being restricted to doing things in the way they deem right, yet being cautious of going against set standards and rules guiding their profession.

School leaders also have a significant role to play because they work with teachers daily. In other words, school principals, being the sole custodians of teachers, also need to provide teachers with the resources they need to make teaching easy and create an environment where teachers would open up to them by sharing issues they are facing within and outside the school. This makes teachers feel empowered, thus pushing their loyalty to the school administration, which in turn boosts their efficiency (Hirschman, 1970).

Moreover, once there is full loyalty, collaboration among teachers would go a long way in helping them cope with most of the issues they face in and outside the classroom. Imagine teachers coming together to have breakfast and lunch in a school; it would go a long way in fostering unity and collaboration between such teachers and the school

administration. This bond is as significant as providing and enhancing their incentives because it leads teachers to develop empathy among themselves. Where empathy emanates, teachers feel their school is not just a workplace. Also, they live in such a school as a family or a community, aiming to attain their goals by supporting each other whenever such need arises. Similar to this claim is could be found in the study made by Nketsia et al. (2022).

In addition, the above narration shows how relevant the school principal is to the teachers because they not only perceive them as their leaders or managers but also as big brothers or sisters, given that they see them daily. This makes their role crucial in teacher sustainability; hence, when all the above-stated have been met, teachers will under any circumstances stick to their work and perform to expectation (Hirschman, 1970).

Furthermore, a teachers' union in every corner of the world always serves as the teachers' mouthpiece. Therefore, their function is also very crucial as far as teacher retention is concern as shown in this current study's data. Although the current study's data has shown that teachers express their frustration about the GTU, that does not mean they are not doing or making an effort. Teachers at some point need to understand and be patient about how certain bureaucratic decisions are made, even if it takes a long time. Meanwhile, GTU has been doing a lot for its members regarding their welfare, as the data has shown. Among the interventions made by the GTU is to ensure teachers have access to movement, especially those posted to the hardest-to-reach areas. This was done by loaning motorcycles to teachers who, after a few months or years, became the owners of the motorcycles, an important intervention that supplements the government's effort to ease teacher movement and welfare. Additionally, the GTU has also intervene in allocating land for its members. The idea came as a result of the fact that teachers upon serving till retirement would still be renting and to stop such from continuing, they loan lands to their members so that teachers could also be established a home after decades of service as indicated in a MoBSE (2016) document. All these have been done to help in teacher retention and need to continue to expand the services they render to teachers, as most of them still feel that GTU has not been helpful when it comes to holding the government accountable in designing specific policies leading to teacher burnout. For this reason, many teachers feel that their voice is not echoed as in the way it should be. This leads them to be helpless since the only official avenue to air out their wounds is not doing it as expected, which, to some extent, lead to their exit (Hirschman, 1970). To avoid the teachers' exit, their voices need to be heard, which, in this case, is the sole responsibility of the GTU. They need to ensure that the government brings in policies that enhance teacher support and development. This aligns with the study of Ackah-Jnr et al. (2022), adding that the government should also lessen

teaching certification and reduce teacher accountability. The current study has not elaborated much on this issue, and may disagree; hence, data has shown that standards are derailing. Therefore, if teacher certification is lessened, the standards in the current study would deteriorate even further.

4.3.4. Factors Influencing Teaching Jobs

Many believe that teaching is not the profession for which one can gain riches overnight, which is why teaching has been regarded as a noble profession. The reasons that influence people's decisions to join the teaching profession are individuals' choices and how they are perceived by society.

One of the key reasons for people to join this noble profession, as indicated by many respondents in this current study and reviewed literature, was their passion for teaching. Teachers' salaries are regarded by many as not lucrative; however, the teacher status in most societies is second to none, given that they serve as role models and a source of inspiration for society. For this reason, many who ventured into the teaching profession have been admirers of such status, like the respect and the composure of the individual referred to as teachers, as opposed to other social service workers. Given such a situation, many desire to become teachers to fulfill their passion and desire to attain such status, having deemed it necessary to add their part to societal development through becoming a teacher (Sayed & McDonald, 2017). These authors highlighted further that financial gain, an extrinsic motivational factor, could trigger joining the teaching profession in their study context. These findings differ from the current study but align with their findings that people venture into the teaching profession for altruistic and intrinsic motivational factors.

In addition, teachers who had a close rapport with their students also influenced their students to become teachers. Interestingly, the attachment between teacher and student could be so strong that they influence each other's career paths. This comes not as a result of the teacher wanting their students to inherit their post but rather because teachers can see several potential in their students, just like their parents could do, or even more. Although, some other students due to lack of knowledge other careers are easily carried away by their teachers career since they perceive them as role models, many of those who ventured in teaching due to this often do not regret doing so because it allows them to grow and be exposed to the sea of knowledge which other careers do not offer (Bates et al., 2024). Such individuals usually become social entrepreneurs, who advocate for social change as they address social issues while in their mind they pursue a social mission.

Different societies perceive teaching as a profession differently, despite the two notions, people are still eager to change that perception by becoming teachers. Given the different narrations of some of our respondents, one indicated that despite society perceiving the teaching job as one that is equal to poverty, the participant still deemed it necessary to change that notion by joining the teaching profession, as in the case of this participant, teaching is meant for societal good (Richardson et al., 2014). In other words, becoming a teacher helps instill beneficial knowledge in children, who will shoulder the affairs of society shortly (Björk & Brandt, 2016). Indeed, helping children to read and write goes a long way in building awareness and reducing the rate of illiteracy, especially in developing countries like the Gambia.

Peer influence has also stood out as a factor leading people to pursue a teaching career. This comes in many forms, as indicated by data, which shows that students who had the courage and the desire to see themselves and their fellow students succeed had developed a passion for teaching way back in their middle school days. Based on the desire to see others succeed, their peers, through interaction, encouraged them to pursue teaching since they could help others to succeed just like them. This aligns with the study of Shak (2022), who highlighted that others desire to join teaching as they love to instill success in others. It also corresponds with that of Onder (2022), partially since it looked at the desire for teaching from a gender perspective. It indicated that females venture into teaching for personal fulfillment and necessity for teaching, while Turkish men do not. Although the current research has not dwelt on the issue of gender preference as a factor influencing decision for teaching entry. It has highlighted how a female teacher was regarded as a factor for influencing other ladies to venture into teaching.

Overall, these findings correspond with the rational choice theory. Hence, teachers gauge their options before deciding to become teachers. In this aspect, the gauge options are those of personal fulfillment and the desire to positively impact society (Becker, 1976; Becker, 2019; Dekker, 2017).

4.3.5. Nature of Teaching or Teaching as an Ideal Profession

Compared to other industrial jobs, teaching offers a stable market since there are not frequent layoffs. A key reason for this is that education is a fundamental part of societal development, making a needful and consistent demand for qualified teachers. Societal need for teachers does not stop them from recruiting teachers even when the world experiences economic downturn, thus making it a steady profession (Zhu et al., 2020). Moreover, the teaching profession, backed by central governments across the globe, makes them less

vulnerable to market fluctuation compared to other private sector jobs. Also, long-term benefits such as pensions and predictable career progression make teaching unique since it follows a structured career path with an increment in yearly salary and promotion to other portfolios in the teaching domain. This aligns with the Rational Choice Theory (RCT) as it posits that human beings are rational beings and, as such, before making a choice, they use their utility to understand the cost. This is a clear manifestation given that people who venture into the teaching profession meticulously weigh their options, as in this case, they look into other professions before choosing to become teachers (Dekker, 2017).

Given that the above findings relate to extrinsic motivation, which contrasts with the findings made by (Yarim et al., 2022) that only internal factors positively motivate teaching and external ones negatively. This shows that intrinsic factors motivate teaching positively, and exogenous factors just like salary and job security do.

Despite the need for teachers to sharpen their knowledge to meet the demand of the ever-evolving multicultural classroom, teaching does not lack in molding and shaping teachers in their everyday work. As in the saying of the great English playwright, William Shakespeare, that the best way to learn is to teach. Similarly, this noble profession is a give-and-take profession because it exposes teachers to both individual and diverse experiences, which leads to continuous development. Their constant exposure to different educational theories, methods of teaching, and technological advancement ensures their intellectual engagement throughout their careers (Kolikant, 2019). With the interaction of students from various cultural and ideological backgrounds, teachers are being exposed to a broader worldview, making them develop communication skills, patience, empathy, critical thinking, and a host of other skills that do not just benefit them in the teaching domain but also their social setting. As they acquire these skills, teachers can adapt to many environments, given that their job demands that teachers be constantly engaged in creativity and problem-solving, which fosters their ability to engage students while thinking outside the box (Calkins, 2023). This feature makes many who desire knowledge, growth, and popularity over vanity choose teaching over other jobs, as teaching remains dynamic, intellectually stimulating, and emotionally rewarding as they grow alongside their students, who would at any given point in time remain loyal to their teachers under any circumstance.

Also, work-life balance is a factor that attracts people to teaching compared to other jobs. Despite being considered a demanding job, teaching offers the morning or the afternoon and also provides schedules such as holidays, which other corporate jobs do not offer. This makes teaching ideal for many who chose it as they can balance their lives with their work (Han & Yin, 2016). This paper offers a deeper exploration of this area since it

delves into the works of literature worldwide, highlighting key issues that probe teacher motivation and attrition.

4.3.6. Challenges in Teaching

The yearly posting has become a nightmare for most teachers posted in both rural and urban Gambia, given that they would be moved to a new community where they had never known anyone. That in itself is the start of every stress that teachers are faced when postings are out thus leading others to either quit or join private schools within the urban areas. Those who endeavor often face communities that are hostile to teachers due to previous encounters with teachers. As a result, such societies would often perceive all teachers to be the same. For this reason, teachers would find it difficult to rent a house, especially in areas with no staff quarters available. However, the study is centered on urban centers where such is uncommon. However, when teachers who enjoyed decades of postings in the urban area are posted to the rural area they end up quitting for other jobs especially when they have issue such as family, marriage, health or other issues that are genuine and are not considered to be transferred to a school that is ideal for their conditions. This aligns with the findings made by Ceesay (2006), but the reasons for unfair postings in the current study have not been given in full detail. Where a community is not reluctant or hostile to teachers, such communities would have inadequate and unreliable transport services, which makes it challenging to commute due to their isolation (Dadvand et al., 2024). The current study is more explicit than the one listed above; hence, the current one does have perceptions from both teachers who have experience in both urban and rural environments, and not limited to the era of COVID-19.

4.3.7. Workload and Large Class Size

Overcrowded classrooms have become the norm in most public schools in urban Gambia because most parents in rural areas perceive urban schools to have better teachers and resources. At the same time, some move their children to urban centers when they complete the highest level of school near their community, thus leading to rural-urban migration. Given this situation, teachers in urban areas are often overwhelmed with high student ratio which adds to their workload thus making them burnout and attrition. Because they find it challenging if not impossible to handle student behavior, provide personalized instructions, fulfill administrative task, and work life balance (Azabo et al., 2023; Xue, 2021). Another finding aligned with the above was made by Gomez (2016), stating that

large classroom size adds to teachers' challenges; hence, they find it difficult to manage student behavior. What made the current study stand out from the previous one is its ability to identify the real cause of children's misbehavior, which is none other than the adaptation of the child rights policy and other policies that support children's welfare.

Moreover, scarcity of teaching and learning resources has become a challenge in many public school in the Gambia, given that most schools are still using the traditional blackboard and chalk which is detriment to the health of both teachers and students. They both inhale the chalk dust and also some particles enter their eyes when erasing the blackboard. Also, where such things as labs are available, often some students are denied access or have limited equipment, leading enthusiastic teachers to endeavor to buy materials to help their students understand certain concepts. Although teachers at the time of their training at the Gambia College are taught how to improvise certain learning materials to help build students' conceptual understanding of specific topics, it is important to note that not all learning materials can be improvised. This leads diligent science teachers, as in the case of this current study, to endeavor to buy because they fear students could overprize their parents when asked to contribute, and also, the current policy does not allow levying on students. This aligns with the findings of Drammeh and Samba (2023) and Gomez (2016), given that both studies highlighted how teachers struggle to provide the resources necessary to aid their daily classroom activities. Despite both studies were conducted in different contexts of the Gambia, the current study has provided new insight regarding inadequate resources, thus showing how this issue has been longstanding without government intervention.

In addition to workload and inadequate resources, large classroom sizes have a unique share in teacher turnover and attrition. Aside from denying teachers to denying teachers to have one-on-one interaction with their students, which makes it hard to build strong connections, teachers are often overwhelmed with fulfilling several administrative tasks such as daily lesson planning, scheme of work, curriculum delivery plan, among others. Teachers would often decide to set assessment of low standards which leads to poor quality to be able to finish marking scripts and submit before the due date. This contrasts with the findings of Ceesay (2006), which stated that there is no proper evaluation and monitoring of teacher activities, but is in line with Gomez (2016). Nevertheless, the current study delves deeper since it unravels the real challenges teachers face in the classroom, and not just stating them. Teachers are being monitored on their lesson plans and schemes, and even how they set exam questions recently, so as a result of these, they often have issues

with their head of departments or school administration, thus leading to their transfer to or quitting for a less stressful job.

4.3.8. Inadequate Remuneration and Demotivation of Teachers

Inadequate Salaries and incentives have also been a long-standing issue, and in fact, one of the main reasons why most teachers quit for other jobs in search of greener pastures for a better life and less stress. That being said, almost all the reviewed works of literature like (Alemu, 2024; Ceesay, 2006; Drammeh & Samba, 2023; Gomez, 2016; Mafukata & Mudau, 2011) have attested that salary and incentives are key in teacher attrition and resignation. Given the confirmation of inadequate remuneration as one of the key factors leading to attrition, the current study has delved deeper compared to the previous one as to how low wages affect teachers compared to other civil servants or professions. This can be put as the fact that teachers' only money-making avenue is their salary, while other workforces have other means of acquiring money. With that, they soon become owners of beautiful edifices and enjoy fanciful lives while teachers remain the same. The sad thing is that some of these individuals had once been classmates with those teachers or their students. For this reason, teachers are tempted to quit and venture into other professions to improve their living standards and conditions. Despite the current government's efforts to implement salary increments, many teachers believe such an initiative has not been impactful due to the current economic crisis the world is undergoing, thus making salary and spending incommensurate.

As part of government efforts to keep teachers, especially those that have been in the system for quite some time without having chance to upgrade themselves, the recent Scheme of Service (SOS) has impacted the lives of many teachers of such as they have been promoted to new roles with an upgrade in their pay. This was a commendable gesture made by the government through its Public Service Commission (PMO). Many teachers have regarded this as unfair since the criteria set were based on longevity instead of merit. However, many applaud the gesture but still question why it has not been implemented yearly since teachers who are bound for retirement also retire when their retirement time is due. Moreover, teachers who were unlucky to be promoted because they had the chance to upgrade themselves have not fallen into those who were promoted due to merit, felt unfairly treated, and thus many of them decided to quit for greener pastures. These findings align with those of Booth et al. (2021) while defying those of Gomez (2016), who supports the claim that there is a lack of promotion. However, the current study has highlighted that teachers are now being promoted, unlike before, when they had to wait for somebody's

passing before occupying their position. However, this has become an issue of the past, but still leads to a challenge, leading teachers to quit because of the criteria used for the recent promotion.

Unlike the study of Booth et al. (2021), Ceesay (2006); Drammeh & Samba (2023) and Gomez (2016), the current study has highlighted one of the key reasons for the lack of professional development. This makes the current study bring to light what the previous ones were unable to unravel as to the reasons behind inadequate opportunities for access to professional development. As it unravels that despite the chance available for them to get scholarship to upgrade themselves, some teachers are denied because they do not know anyone in the board of directors responsible for giving out scholarships, while they have admission from the universities in the country or the teacher training college. Another finding revealed that the number of teachers who apply yearly outnumbers the available scholarship packages, which is tantamount to a slight chance of being awarded a scholarship. Also, higher education's priority of giving scholarships to mainly science-related fields limits the chances of other teachers gaining scholarships. At the same time, MRC-Holland's priority of rural teachers also adds to the disadvantage of scholarship access to teachers in the current study context.

Given that human beings are rational beings, they anticipated all the above challenges, which, in the context of the two theories, is considered a cost in the RCT and exit in the resistant theory. In other words, despite their known challenges when employed as teachers, others choose to stay while voicing their challenges, and others exit after having voiced them. That being said does imply the fact that teachers in the context of RCT, teacher had evaluated their alternatives (Dekker, 2017) well before joining the teaching profession, assessed their constraints (Gabay-Egozi et al., 2010) while evaluating their alternatives (Ainsworth, 2020) before considering to exit because they have seen other avenues where they can earn for better living standards or stay loyal either because they have no other jobs open to them (Becker, 2019).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This is the final chapter of this study, where we present significant findings and how they contribute to the ongoing academic world. Additionally, recommendations and the implications of the study are also elaborated in this chapter.

5.1 Conclusion

This research is designed to investigate how current policies could be improved to enhance teacher retention, understand factors driving individuals into teaching, and challenges they face when they enter teaching in Gambian upper-basic schools. Upon collecting non-numerical data through focus group discussion, interviews and document reviews, the researcher arrived at the findings using Hirschman's Resistant Theory and Becker's Rational Choice Theory that teacher welfare, inclusion, and sensitizations should be considered to retain teachers whereas ideal nature of teaching and personal fulfilment motivates individuals to become teachers and issues such as workload, postings, and inadequate remunerations are factors leading to teacher attritions in the Gambia.

Teacher welfare and incentives were one of the significant findings in ensuring teacher retention in the Gambia, given the disparity between teachers' compensation and the current economic realities of life in the Gambia. Despite the government's introduction of retention allowance, teachers believe that it is minute compared to other civil servants who enjoy other financial benefits aside from their salaries, thus making them feel undervalued. Aside from incentives, working conditions like well-furnished classrooms, access to medical care, and a housing scheme are all significant to enhance teacher commitment. Pieces of literature have shown that incentives are not the only mechanisms to sustain teachers; also, such things as job satisfaction, appreciation, and respect help.

Moreover, the need for advocacy and inclusion in policymaking has also been identified as a key finding. Teachers argued that what makes the child rights policy and student discipline measures difficult to implement is as a result of it are imposed on them. This makes teachers perceive that some policies are brought to serve donor interest, hence they have been excluded from decision-making. Given such circumstances, teachers and other educators advocate for a bottom-up policy approach to reduce industrial actions and enhance harmony in the workplace.

Furthermore, key stakeholders such as school leaders, parents, education officers, and the Gambia Teachers Union (GTU) have a key role to play regarding teacher retention. For instance, parents and teachers need to collaborate in instilling discipline in children,

hence, this would reduce workload and improve quality, as indicated in the findings. As for the case of GTU, respondents have mixed opinions regarding their effectiveness because some teachers commend their role in providing housing and transport schemes, while others question their role in advocating for teachers' welfare at the policy level.

Findings indicate that, motivation for entering the teaching profession by individuals is both intrinsic and altruistic, including motivations as passion for teaching, society, and role models. Meanwhile, extrinsic factors such as job security, stable pay, growth and exposure, and work-life balance were compelling reasons for people to choose teaching over other jobs, as cited by the participants. These align with Rational Choice Theory, where individuals weigh their benefits and available alternatives before making informed career decisions.

Nevertheless, severe challenges leading to teacher attrition have also been unraveled by the findings. Teachers who enjoy long-term postings in urban areas often find it difficult to cope in rural areas due to transport, healthcare, housing, and other amenities. Moreover, excessive workload has not only added to teacher attrition but also derailed education standards. Also, teachers' inability to discipline students due to policy restrictions adds to teacher turnover. Despite a salary increment, the inadequate pay of teachers compared to other civil servants prompted them to seek opportunities elsewhere.

To sum up, teacher retention in the Gambia, as indicated in the current research, can be influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as improved wages, workplace, and policy involvement. These retention strategies can be effective if the government and all stakeholders adopt a more inclusive approach by addressing teachers' needs through increasing their remunerations, restructuring policies to fit the local context, and providing modern-day learning utilities.

5.2. Recommendations

Given the current status of The Gambia's economy as it is experiencing high inflation rate, which is why most teachers feel a mismatch between their salary and the economic status of the country, government needs to look into the welfare of teachers by enhancing salary structure to match the economic to ensure financial stability for teachers. Moreover, like any other civilian, teachers deserve a medical insurance scheme to cover their medical expenses and their immediate family members. As most teachers retire from teaching after decades of service with no permanent location or house on their own, the government should provide low-interest rates on housing and car schemes to enable teachers have establish homes and improve living standards. Meanwhile, as part of

MoBSE's logo, which they want to improve access, quality, and relevant education to the Gambia and her children, resources such as digital classrooms and laboratories could be the best solutions to attain their objectives.

Furthermore, it is important to strengthen teacher advocacy and inclusion to ensure policy formulations reflect classroom realities. Also, due to study participants stressing the reintroduction of corporal punishment, teachers, alongside school administrators, need to be sensitized on the correct interpretation of child discipline procedures, hence it will enhance compliance without fear of repercussions. To reduce frequent industrial actions, MoBSE, GTU, and teachers need to strengthen their dialogue mechanism.

Moreover, since the undisciplined children have been identified as the second factor leading to teacher turnover, teachers and parents need to collaborate to instill discipline in students and provide the necessary home support. To ensure teachers are always motivated, school principals ought to organize award and recognition schemes to foster collaboration, competitions, and motivation among teachers. The GTU should ensure teachers are not excluded from the decision-making process by lobbying for teacher-friendly policies.

As part of their efforts to reduce teacher challenges, MoBSE needs to provide well-equipped teacher quarters and transportation support for urban teachers relocating to rural areas. Recruiting more teachers and building more classrooms would help in reducing class size, whereas introducing a digital grading system and better curriculum structures would reduce teacher workload, especially at the end of the term. Last but not least, MoBSE, MoHERST, and MRC-Holland should reconsider their decisions of awarding scholarships to specified groups and leaving out others, which many consider as favoritism.

5.3. Implications of the Study

The significance of this research highlights a vital implication for all relevant education stakeholders, as it underscores the necessity for policymakers to ensure that teachers are included in formulating policies that directly affect their daily classroom work. Also highlighted in this study's findings is policy reform to enhance teacher welfare to reduce attrition.

It has also been stressed in this study that school leaders can enhance collaboration by ensuring that teachers receive the necessary support through incentives, appreciation, and recommendations for promotion, scholarships, and decision-making to foster retention and loyalty.

Teacher advocacy matters have been reinforced by the current study, highlighting that through collective voices, teachers can advocate for their welfare, such as salary

increments, improved workplaces, and respect. Moreover, for teachers to ensure their interests are prioritized, they are encouraged to be proactive in decision making, especially those that have to do it policies in the classroom.

This study underscores the necessity of partnership between the GTU, parents, and MoBSE in ensuring teacher support financially and socially. With this partnership, teacher retention can be enhanced, which would be beneficial for the entire Gambian education system and beyond.

5.4. Final Thoughts

In The Gambia, teacher retention is a complex issue requiring multifaceted approach in addressing policy, financial working condition challenges. The government can sustain a well resilient and committed teaching through improved teacher welfare, inclusive policymaking, stronger stakeholder collaboration, and address classroom challenges. This study has found that teacher attrition will continue without these interventions thus leading to gaps in education delivery. For The Gambia to ensure quality education for generations to come, it must prioritize teachers.

REFERENCES

- Abowitz, K. K. (2000). A pragmatist revisioning of resistance theory. *American Educational Research Journal*, 37(4), 877–907.
- Access Gambia. (2024). Access Gambia [Blog]. *Universities in Gambia*.
<https://accessgambia.com/extra/universities.html>
- Acheampong, P., & Gyasi, J. F. (2019). Teacher Retention: A Review of Policies for Motivating Rural Basic School Teachers in Ghana. *Asian Journal of Education and Training*, 5(1), 86–92. <https://doi.org/10.20448/journal.522.2019.51.86.92>
- Ackah-Jnr, F. R., Appiah, J., Abedi, E. A., Opoku-Nkoom, I., & Salaam, M. A. (2022). Quality Education: Critical Policy Considerations that Impact Teacher Retention in Schools. *European Journal of Education and Pedagogy*, 3(3), 26–32.
<https://doi.org/10.24018/ejedu.2022.3.3.345>
- Adamson, J. (2006). *The semi-structured interview in educational research: Issues and considerations in native- to non-native speaker discourse*.
- Ahmed, S., Khan Farooqi, M. T., & Iqbal, A. (2021). A Study of Teachers’ Teaching Styles and Students’ Performance. *Ilkogretim Online*, 20(2).
- Aikins, E. R. (2024). Gambia. *Gambia: Current Path*.
<https://futures.issafrica.org/geographic/countries/gambia/>
- Ainsworth, S. H. (2020, September). *Rational Choice Theory in Political Decision Making*. Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1019>
- Aldboush, H., & Ferdous, M. (2023). Building Trust in Fintech: An Analysis of Ethical and Privacy Considerations in the Intersection of Big Data, AI, and Customer Trust. *International Journal of Financial Studies*.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijfs11030090>
- Alemu, A. (2024). Challenges and Prospects: Understanding Teachers’ Attitudes towards the Teaching Profession in Ethiopia. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 10, 100933. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.100933>
- Allen, M. M. C. (2014). Hirschman and voice. In A. Wilkinson, J. Donaghey, T. Dundon, & R. B. Freeman (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Employee Voice*. Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9780857939272.00010>
- Arbaugh, F., & Appova, A. (2018). Teachers’ motivation to learn: Implications for supporting professional growth. *Professional Development in Education*, 44, 21–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2017.1280524>

- Awla, H. A. (2014). Learning styles and their relation to teaching styles. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 2(3), 241–245.
- Ayua, T. J., & Camara, M. (2024). Modeling and estimation of solar panel tilting angles and orientations in the Gambia: A case study of Brikama, West Coast Region. *Discover Energy*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s43937-024-00059-z>
- Azabo, I., Specioza, A., Mugenyi, E., & Gaite, S. S. (2023). Challenges of Retaining Teachers in Private Secondary Schools in Wakiso District, Uganda. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 14(9), 83–88. <https://doi.org/10.7176/JEP/14-9-11>
- Baldeh, M. (2020). *The Perceptions of Gambian Basic and Secondary Education Teachers about Outdoor Education* [Thesis]. Linköping University.
- Bardach, L., & Klassen, R. (2021). Teacher motivation and student outcomes: Searching for the signal. *Educational Psychologist*, 56, 283–297. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2021.1991799>
- Barrow, A. (2023). *The role of school leadership in improving the quality of teaching and learning: the case study of the gambia's basic and secondary education* [Thesis]. Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia.
- Bates, G., Fisher, R., Turner, K., Machirori, T. L., & Rixon, A. (2024). Raising the social status of teachers: Teachers as social entrepreneurs. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 51(4), 1405–1424. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-023-00646-4>
- Baumann, R. (2021). Rational Choice Theory and Friends. In *Theories of Crime Through Popular Culture* (p. (pp.59-68)). 10.1007/978-3-030-54434-8_6
- BECKER, G., & ENGLAND, P. (2020). Rational choice theory and its critique: james coleman. *Introduction to Sociological Theory: Theorists, Concepts, and Their Applicability to the Twenty-First Century*, 244.
- Becker, G. S. (1976). *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Becker, G. S. (2009). *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*. University of Chicago Press.
- Becker, R. (2019). *Research Handbook on the Sociology of Education*. Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788110426>
- Bennell, P. (2004a). Teacher motivation and incentives in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. *Knowledge and Skills for Development, Brighton*, 1(1), 1–52.
- Bennell, P. (2004b). Teacher motivation and incentives in sub-saharan africa and asia. *Briton*, 1(1), 1–52.

- Berry, B., Bastian, K. C., Darling-Hammond, L., & Kini, T. (2021). The Importance of Teaching and Learning Conditions. *Learning Policy Institute*.
<http://bit.ly/2WpZhM9>.
- Björk, S., & Brandt, L. (2016). *A minor field study on motivation among Gambian teachers who have participated in Future in our hands in-service training* [Thesis]. Uppsala University.
- Booth, J., Coldwell, M., Müller, L.-M., Perry, E., & Zuccollo, J. (2021). Mid-Career Teachers: A Mixed Methods Scoping Study of Professional Development, Career Progression and Retention. *Education Sciences*, 11(6), 299.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11060299>
- Bosetti, L. (2004). Determinants of school choice: Understanding how parents choose elementary schools in Alberta. *Journal of Education Policy*, 19, 387–405.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093042000227465>
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
<https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 589–597.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806>
- Bruno-Jofre, R., & Johnston, J. S. (Eds.). (2014). The European Setting: Erasmus, Bologna, and the European Higher Education Area. In *Teacher Education in a Transnational World* (pp. 247–248). University of Toronto Press.
<https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442619999-017>
- Büyükgöze, H. (2015). *A Comparison of the Employment of Public Sector Teachers in EU and TURKEY*. 7, 57–65. <https://consensus.app/papers/a-comparison-of-the-employment-of-public-sector-teachers-in-b%C3%BCy%C3%BCkg%C3%B6ze/1775c17910605711b78ac7c36c4c3dc8/>
- Calkins, L. (2023). Teacher Motivation and Self-Efficacy: How do Specific Motivations for Entering Teaching Relate to Teacher Self-Efficacy?. *Journal of Education*,.
<https://doi.org/doi:10.1177/00220574221142300>
- Canlı, S., & Demirtaş, H. (2017). The Impact of Globalization on Teaching Profession: The Global Teacher. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 6(1), 80.
<https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v6i1.2792>

- Ceesay, A. (2006). *A Study on Factors Responsible for Teacher Turnover in Public Junior and Senior Schools in The Gambia* (Issue 2006年, p. 80) [Masters Thesis, National Taiwan Normal University]. .
<https://www.airitilibrary.com/Article/Detail?DocID=U0021-0712200716095318>
- Celkan, G., Green, L., & Hussain, K. (2015). Student Perceptions of Teacher Respect Toward College Students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 191, 2174–2178. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.04.435>
- Cochran-Smith, M., Feiman-Nemser, S., MacIntyre, J. D., & Demers, K. E. (Eds.). (2008). *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts* (Third edition). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed). Pearson.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Philosophical Worldviews. In *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th edition). SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry. *Theory Into Practice*, 39(3), 124–130.
https://doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2
- Dadvand, B., Van Driel, J., Speldewinde, C., & Dawborn-Gundlach, M. (2024). Career change teachers in hard-to-staff schools: Should I stay or leave? *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 51(2), 481–496. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-023-00609-9>
- Dekker, S. W. A. (2017). Rasmussen's legacy and the long arm of rational choice. *Applied Ergonomics*, 59, 554–557. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apergo.2016.02.007>
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). Qualitative Inquiry Reaserch Design. In *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling*, 53(9).
- Diekmann, A., & Voss, T. (2018). Rational-Choice-Rezeption in der deutschsprachigen Soziologie. In S. Moebius & A. Ploder (Eds.), *Handbuch Geschichte der deutschsprachigen Soziologie: Band I: Geschichte der Soziologie im deutschsprachigen Raum* (pp. 663–682). Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-07614-6_34
- Dornschneider, S. (2023). Exit, Voice, Loyalty ... or Deliberate Obstruction? Non-Collective Everyday Resistance under Oppression. *Perspectives on Politics*, 21(1), 126–141. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592720004818>

- Drammeh, H., & Samba, M. (2023). Teacher Motivation and Attrition in Public Schools in The Gambia: A Case Study of Upper River Region (URR). *European Modern Studies Journal*, 7(3), 224–231. [https://doi.org/10.59573/emsj.7\(3\).2023.22](https://doi.org/10.59573/emsj.7(3).2023.22)
- Edwards, A. K., & Oteng, R. (2019). Attaining Work-Life Balance and Modeling the Way among Female Teachers in Ghana. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*, 15(7), 1–18. <https://doi.org/doi:10.22230/ijep.2019v15n7a851>
- Elen, J., Clarebout, G., Leonard, R., & Lowyck, J. (2007). Student-centred and teacher-centred learning environments: What students think. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 12, 105–117. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510601102339>
- England, L. (2019). Teacher Motivation. *Tesol Career Path Development*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429458484-4>
- Eriksen, T. H. (2014). *Globalization: The key concepts* (Second edition). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Espinell, C. O. (2022). Milton friedman’s empirical approach to economics: searching for scientific authority while shaping the university of chicago economics department. *Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 44(4), 600–621. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1053837221000481>
- Fadilla, R. (2020). Exploring pre-service teachers’ perception towards teacher professional development. *Journal of English Teaching, Applied Linguistics and Literatures (JETALL)*. <https://doi.org/10.20527/JETALL.V3I2.8753>
- Flores, M. A. (2023). Teacher education in times of crisis: Enhancing or deprofessionalising the teaching profession? *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 46, 199–202. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2023.2210410>
- Gabay-Egozi, L., Shavit, Y., & Yaish, M. (2010). Curricular Choice: A Test of a Rational Choice Model of Education. *European Sociological Review*, 26(4), 447–463. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcp031>
- Galbács, P. (2021). How the attitude of Chicago economics towards philosophy changed over time: An essay on what role some historical methods should play in practicing the philosophy of economics. *Journal of Philosophical Economics, Volume XIV Issue 1-2*(Symposium: How economists are...), 8666. <https://doi.org/10.46298/jpe.8666>
- Gans, J. S., Goldfarb, A., & Lederman, M. (2021). Exit, tweets, and loyalty. *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics*, 13(2), 68–112.

- Geiger, T., & Pivovarov, M. (2018). The effects of working conditions on teacher retention. *Teachers and Teaching*, 24(6), 604–625.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2018.1457524>
- George, T. (2022). Title: Semi-Structured Interview: Definition, Guide & Examples
 Author: Year 2022 Site: Scribbr [Blog]. *Methodology*.
<https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/semi-structured-interview/>
- Ghafar, Z. (2023). The Teacher-Centered and the Student-Centered: A Comparison of Two Approaches. *International Journal of Arts and Humanities*.
<https://doi.org/10.61424/ijah.v1i1.7>
- Glaesser, J., & Cooper, B. (2014). Using Rational Action Theory and Bourdieu's Habitus Theory Together to Account for Educational Decision-making in England and Germany. *Sociology*, 48, 463–481. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038513490352>
- Glazer, J. (2018). Learning from those who no longer teach: Viewing teacher attrition through a resistance lens. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 74, 62–71.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.04.011>
- Goldberg, P., & Pavcnik, N. (2007). Distributional Effects of Globalization in Developing Countries. *Development Economics*. <https://doi.org/10.1257/JEL.45.1.39>
- Gomez, G. S. (2016). *Teacher Turnover in the Gambia Private Senior Secondary Schools* [Masters Thesis]. National Taiwan Normal University.
- Gonzaga, F. P. (2023). Local Centers and Their Connectivity: Globalization and the Need of Centralization. *International Journal of Business and Management*.
<https://doi.org/10.5539/ijbm.v18n5p16>
- Gutiérrez-Sastre, M., Rivera-Navarro, J., González-Salgado, I., & Franco, M. (2024). Beyond exit, voice, and loyalty: The role of urban resistance in a deprived neighborhood of Madrid. *Journal of Housing and the Built Environment*, 39(1), 253–276. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10901-023-10088-0>
- Han, J., & Yin, H. (2016). Teacher motivation: Definition, research development and implications for teachers. *Cogent Education*, 3(1), 1217819.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2016.1217819>
- Hattie, J. (2003). *Teachers Make a Difference, What is the research evidence?*
- Hirschman, A. O. (1970). *Exit, voice, and loyalty: Responses to decline in firms, organizations, and states*. Harvard university press.
- Idris, M. O. A. (2023). The Relationship Between Head Teachers' School Rules' Implementation and Student Academic Performance In Secondary Schools.

- Journal of Namibian Studies : History Politics Culture*, 33.
<https://doi.org/10.59670/jns.v33i.683>
- International Institute for Educational Plannin. (2016). *Exploring the impact of career models on teacher motivation; Management of teachers; 2016*. UNESCO.
- Jessop, T., & Penny, A. (1998). A study of teacher voice and vision in the narratives of rural South African and Gambian primary school teachers. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 18(5), 393–403. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0738-0593\(98\)00039-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0738-0593(98)00039-X)
- John, P. (2017). Finding Exits and Voices: Albert Hirschman’s Contribution to the Study of Public Services. *International Public Management Journal*, 20(3), 512–529. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10967494.2016.1141814>
- Johnson, R. B., & Christensen, L. B. (2020). *educationl research: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches* (7th ed.). SAGE.
- Johnson, S. M., & Kardos, S. M. (2008). The next generation of teachers Who enters, who stays, and why. In *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (third, pp. 445–461). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Kabilan, M. (2013). A phenomenological study of an international teaching practicum: Pre-service teachers’ experiences of professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 36, 198–209. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.TATE.2013.07.013>
- Kaiser, A. J., & Leeson, P. T. (2023). Why rational choice? Reconciling Kornai with rational choice theory. *Acta Oeconomica*, 73(S1), 75–86. <https://doi.org/10.1556/032.2023.00034>
- Kakar, Z., Rasheed, R., Rashid, A., & Akhter, S. (2023). Criteria for assessing and ensuring the trustworthiness in qualitative research. *International Journal of Business Reflections*. <https://doi.org/10.56249/ijbr.03.01.44>
- Kan, M.-Y., Loa, S. P., & Richards, L. (2023). Generational Differences in Local Identities, Participation in Social Movements, and Migration Intention Among Hong Kong People. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 00027642231192023. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027642231192023>
- Kesting, S. (2022). Albert O. Hirschman’s Methods. Review of M. Alacevich, A.O. Hirschman. An Intellectual Biography, New York: Columbia University Press, 2021, and J. Adelman, Worldly Philosopher: The Odyssey of Albert O. Hirschman., *Annals of the Fondazione Luigi Einaudi: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Economics, History and Political Science: LVI*, 2, 2022, 2. <https://doi.org/10.26331/1192>

- Koley, S., Das, T., & Nandi, A. (2023). Perception of Higher Education Level Students Towards Teaching Profession. *International Journal For Multidisciplinary Research*. <https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2023.v05i05.6174>
- Kolikant, Y. B.-D. (2019). Adapting school to the twenty-first century: Educators' perspectives. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 28, 287–299. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2019.1584580>
- Kora, S., & Darboe, M. (2017). The Gambia's Electoral Earthquake. *Journal of Democracy*, 28, 147–156. <https://doi.org/10.1353/JOD.2017.0031>
- Kotok, S., & Knight, D. (2020). Revolving Doors: Cross-Country Comparisons of the Relationship between Math and Science Teacher Staffing and Student Achievement. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 21, 345–360. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2020.1770804>
- Krstić, M. (2022). Teorija racionalnog izbora – alternative i kritike. *Socijalna Ekologija*, 31(1), 9–27. <https://doi.org/10.17234/SocEkol.31.1.1>
- Kumari, J., & Kumar, J. (2023). Influence of motivation on teachers' job performance. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10(1), 158. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-01662-6>
- Kurang, A. (2020). *The Socio-Ecological Footprint of China Aid in The Gambia*. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.12624.79366>
- Loh, C., & Arroyo, R. (2017). Special Ethical Considerations for Planners in Private Practice. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 83, 168–179. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2017.1286945>
- Lourenço, M. (2018). Global, international and intercultural education: Three contemporary approaches to teaching and learning. *On the Horizon*, 26(2), 61–71. <https://doi.org/10.1108/OTH-06-2018-095>
- Mafukata, A. M., & Mudau, A. V. (2011). Exploring Teacher Mass Resignation and Early Retirement from Public Schools. *Dirasat, Human and Social Sciences*, 43(5), 2243–2255. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/28144018>
- Mameli, C., Caricati, L., & Molinari, L. (2019). The effects of teacher justice and academic achievement on Self and Other's resistant agency. *The British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90(4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjep.12335>
- McLafferty, I. (2004). Focus group interviews as a data collecting strategy. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 48(2), 187–194. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2004.03186.x>

- Meneghella, K., Walsh, J., & Sawagvudcharee, O. (2019). Strategies to Maximise Staff Retention Among Millennial Teachers in Bangkok International Schools. *Asian Social Science*, 15(8), 70. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v15n8p70>
- Migrants refugees. (2022). *Migration Profile: The Gambia*. Integral Human Development. <https://migrants-refugees.va/country-profile/the-gambia/>
- MoBSE. (2004). *Education Policy 2004-2015*.
- MoBSE. (2016). *Education sector policy 2016 – 2030 Accessible, Equitable and Inclusive Quality Education for sustainable Development*. Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education.
- MoBSE. (2022). *Education statistics summary report 2022* (pp. 7–28). Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education.
- MoBSE. (2023). *Curriculum Framework for Basic Education in The Gambia*. Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education.
- Nazifah, R., & Khairat, A. (2023). The Influence of Teacher Ethics in Forming the Character of Primary School Students. *International Journal of Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.58578/ijhess.v1i1.1848>
- Nguyen, D., See, B. H., Brown, C., & Kokotsaki, D. (2024). Leadership for teacher retention: Exploring the evidence base on why and how to support teacher autonomy, development, and voice. *Oxford Review of Education*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2024.2432635>
- Njie, G., & Fye, S. (1991). *Ministries of education in small states: Case studies of organisation and management* (M. Bray, Ed.). Commonwealth Secretariat Publ.
- Nketsia, W., Side, A. S., Opoku, M. P., & Gameda, F. T. (2022). Exploring the predictors of teacher retention among beginning teachers in Ethiopia. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 30(108), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.30.7236>
- Nurjanah, L., Wicaksono, B. H., Andini, T., & Effendi, M. I. (2023). Evaluation of teacher professional development program: A review of pre-service English teacher professionalism. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning (JETLE)*. <https://doi.org/10.18860/jetle.v5i2.23820>
- Nwokeocha, S., Kah, E. D., Njora, H., & Wodon, Q. (2023). *UNESCO IICBA STUDY 2023-3* (pp. 1–77). UNESCO IICBA,.
- Okeke, C., & Drake, M. (2014). Teacher as Role Model: The South African Position on the Character of the Teacher. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n20p1728>

- Olagbaju, O. O. (2024). Exploring Community-Based Interventions in Boys' Education: Keeping Boys in School and Fighting Irregular "Backway" Migration. *Research Review International Journal of Multidisciplinary*, 9(6), 293–306.
<https://doi.org/10.31305/rrijm.2024.v09.n06.036>
- Onder, K. (2022). A comparative study on motivational factors in choosing teaching profession. I. *Nternational Journal of Comparative Education and Development*, 25(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1108/ijced-07-2022-0050>
- Orsini, A. (2024). The Theory of Rational Choice. In A. Orsini (Ed.), *Sociological Theory: From Comte to Postcolonialism* (pp. 529–584). Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-52539-1_13
- Paine, L., Blomeke, S., & Aydarova, O. (2016). Teachers and Teaching in the Context of Globalization. In D. H. Gitomer & C. A. Bell (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (Fifth, pp. 717–786). American Educational Research Association.
https://doi.org/10.3102/978-0-935302-48-6_11
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). (2002). Qualitative research and evaluation methods. Thousand Oaks, Cal.: Sage Publications. *Sage Publications*.
- Peters, K., & Halcom, E. (2015). Interviews in qualitative research. *Nurse Researcher*, 22(4), 6–7. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.22.4.6.s2>
- Pitt, A. (1998). Qualifying resistance: Some comments on methodological dilemmas. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 11, 535–553.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/095183998236449>
- Pugatch, T., & Schroeder, E. (2018). *Teacher Pay and Student Performance: Evidence from the Gambian Hardship Allowance*.
- Richardson, D. P. (2012). Teaching with a Global Perspective. *Inquiry: The Journal of Virginia Community Colleges*, 17(1), 42–51.
- Richardson, P. W., Karabenick, S. A., & Watt, H. M. G. (2014). Teacher Motivation Matters: And introduction. In *Teacher Motivativation: Theory and practice* (first, pp. 1–3). Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Rissanen, I., Kuusisto, E., Hanhimäki, E., & Tirri, K. (2018). The implications of teachers' implicit theories for moral education: A case study from Finland. *Journal of Moral Education*, 47, 63–77.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2017.1374244>
- Rodgers, C., & Skelton, J. (2014). Professional Development and Mentoring In Support of Teacher Retention. *I-Manager's Journal on School Educational Technology*, 9(3), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.26634/jsch.9.3.2614>

- Rosensweig., A. (2022). (2022). Whose Resistance Theory?. *Modern Language Quarterly*, *83*(3), 335–348. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1215/00267929-9791016>
- Saine, A. (2008). The Gambia's 2006 Presidential Election: Change or Continuity? *African Studies Review*, *51*, 59–83. <https://doi.org/10.1353/arw.0.0029>
- Sait, A. T. (2021). Book Review: Globalizing Education Policy. *Volume(45), Issue(1), January 2021*. <https://doi.org/10.36771/ijre.45.1.21-pp333-339>
- Sarr, O. (2021). *Leadership and Organizational Policies for Sustainable Development in The Gambia: Perspectives of Leaders of Public Institutions on the Role of Capacity Building*. Ohio University.
- Sayed, Y., & McDonald, Z. (2017). Motivation to become a Foundation Phase teacher in South Africa. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, *7*(1). <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v7i1.548>
- Schweisfurth, M. (2013). Learner-Centred Education in International Perspective. *Journal of International and Comparative Education*, *2*(1).
- Schwille, J., Dembélé, M., & Schubert, J. (with International Institute for Educational Planning). (2007). *Global perspectives on teacher learning: Improving policy and practice*. UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning.
- Serin, H. (2018). A Comparison of Teacher-Centered and Student-Centered Approaches in Educational Settings. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.23918/ijsses.v5i1p164>
- Shak, J. (2022). Shak, J. (2022). Motivations for entering into a teaching career in Brunei Darussalam: An update. 117,. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *117*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2022.103799>
- Shuls, J. V., & Flores, J. M. (2020). Improving Teacher Retention through Support and Development. *Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies*, *4*(1).
- Sidibeh, L. (2021). The positive effects of global partnership for mutual learning: the gambia – uk partnership. *International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research*. <https://doi.org/10.46609/ijsser.2021.v06i12.021>
- Spring, J. (2008). Research on Globalization and Education. *Review of Educational Research*, *78*, 330–363. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308317846>
- Stocké, V. (2019). *Chapter 4: The rational choice paradigm in the sociology of education*. Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788110426.00011>

- Stromquist, N. (2018). *The Global Status of Teachers and the Teaching Profession*. Education International.
- Suryadi, A., Purwaningsih, E., Yuliati, L., & Koes-Handayanto, S. (2023). STEM teacher professional development in pre-service teacher education: A literature review. *Waikato Journal of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.15663/wje.v28i1.1063>
- Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2019). Understanding teacher shortages: An analysis of teacher supply and demand in the United States. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 27, 35. <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.27.3696>
- Tabash, M., Elsantil, Y., Hamadi, A., & Drachal, K. (2024). Globalization and Income Inequality in Developing Economies: A Comprehensive Analysis. *Economies*. <https://doi.org/10.3390/economies12010023>
- The Gambia College. (2024). The Gambia College. *Historical Background-The Gambia College*. <https://gc.edu.gm/about-gc/historical-background>
- UNESCO. (2024). *Global report on teachers: Addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. <https://doi.org/10.54675/FIGU8035>
- UNESCO & International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030. (2024). *Global report on teachers: Addressing teacher shortages and transforming the profession*. UNESCO. <https://doi.org/10.54675/FIGU8035>
- UTG. (2024). About UTG. *Our History*. <https://www.utg.edu.gm/about/>
- Verger, A. (2021). Teachers and the Teaching Profession in Global Education Policy Theory: A Commentary. *Comparative Education Review*, 65(4), 790–806. <https://doi.org/10.1086/716451>
- Vermenych, Y. (2021). Globalization vs Localization: The Dialectics of Interaction in the Modern World. *Mіžnarodnì Zv'âzki Ukraïni: Naukovì Poşuki ì Znahìdki*. <https://doi.org/10.15407/mzu2021.30.207>
- Vizhi, M. T. (2021). Hybrid approach to instruction. *Coach*, 16(1).
- Wiseman, J. (1996). Military rule in The Gambia: An interim assessment. *Third World Quarterly*, 17, 917–940. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436599615182>
- Wong, S. H.-W., Ho, K., Clarke, H. D., & Chan, K. C. (2023). Does Loyalty Discourage Exit? Evidence from Post-2020 Hong Kong. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 58(1), 101–119. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096221124935>
- WorldBank. (2017). *The Gambia: Education Sector Public Expenditure Review* (Review No. Report No. ACS23503; pp. 1–130). World Bank.

<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/03bb3e54-44aa-58c9-a95f-844f41299ffe/content>

- Wye, P. (2014). *Yahaar Jallow and Female Teachers in The Gambia: A Comparative Study of the Ways in which Working Women are Balancing Their Responsibilities at Home with Those at Work*. <https://www.smcm.edu/gambia/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2014/11/pamwye.pdf>
- Xue, L. (2021). Challenges and Resilience-Building: A Narrative Inquiry Study on a Mid-Career Chinese EFL Teacher. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 758925. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.758925>
- Yarım, M. A., Yildirim, İ., & Akan, D. (2022). Motivation Factors Of Candidates Teachers For Their Professions. *GIST – Education and Learning Research Journal*, 24, 43–63. <https://doi.org/10.26817/16925777.1319>
- Yin, R. K. (2006). Case Study Methods. In *Handbook of complementary methods in education research* (pp. 111–122). Routledge.
- Yüce, K., Şahin, E. Y., Koçer, Ö., & Kana, F. (2013). Motivations for choosing teaching as a career: A perspective of pre-service teachers from a Turkish context. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 14(3), 295–306. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-013-9258-9>
- Zhao, Y. (2020). Two decades of havoc: A synthesis of criticism against PISA. *Journal of Educational Change*, 21(2), 245–266. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-019-09367-x>
- Zhu, G., Rice, M., Rivera, H., Mena, J., & Van Der Want, A. (2020). ‘I did not feel any passion for my teaching’: A narrative inquiry of beginning teacher attrition in China. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 50(6), 771–791. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2020.1773763>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Guide for Focus Group Discussion

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide for Pre-Service Teachers

Topic: Understanding Why Pre-Service Teachers Enter the Teaching Profession in
Gambian Upper Basic Schools

Theoretical Framework: Gary Becker's Rational Choice Theory (RCT)

Introduction (Facilitator's Opening Remarks)

- I. Welcome participants and explain the purpose of the discussion.
- II. Emphasize that all responses are valued and confidential.
- III. Briefly introduce **Rational Choice Theory**, explaining that it explores how individuals make career decisions by weighing costs, benefits, and available alternatives.
- IV. Encourage open and respectful discussion.

Participants' Demography

- A. Area of study.....
- B. Year of Study.....
- C. Gender.....

Discussion Themes & Questions

A. Career Decision-Making Process

1. What were the key factors that influenced your decision to become a teacher?
2. Did you consider other career options before choosing teaching? If so, what made you choose teaching over other professions?
3. How did your family, community, or peers influence your decision to pursue teaching?

B. Perceived Benefits of Teaching (Incentives & Rewards)

4. What do you see as the main benefits of becoming a teacher in The Gambia?
5. Was job security or salary an important factor in your decision? Why or why not?
6. Did you consider teaching because of non-financial rewards, such as social respect or personal fulfillment?

C. Perceived Costs and Challenges (Trade-offs & Risks)

7. Were you concerned about any challenges before entering the teaching profession? If so, what were they?
8. Do you think teaching provides enough financial stability to support yourself and your family?
9. If you were offered a higher-paying job outside teaching, would you consider leaving the profession? Why or why not?

D. Opportunities and Constraints in Choosing Teaching

10. Were there specific incentives (e.g., scholarships, training programs) that encouraged you to pursue teaching?
11. Do you feel that teaching offers enough career growth opportunities? Why or why not?

12. What policy changes or improvements would make teaching a more attractive career for future generations?

E. Commitment to the Profession

13. Do you see yourself teaching long-term, or do you consider it a stepping stone to another career?
14. What factors would make you more committed to staying in the teaching profession?

If you could change one thing about the teaching profession in The Gambia, what would it be?

Conclusion & Wrap-Up

- A. Summarize key insights from the discussion.
- B. Thank participants for their contributions.
- C. Encourage them to reflect on how their motivations might evolve as they gain more experience in the field.

Appendix 2 Interview Guide for In-Service Teachers

A. General Motivation and Decision-Making

1. Can you describe the key factors that influenced your decision to become a teacher?
2. What were your main career options before choosing teaching, and why did you select teaching over others?
2. How did you evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of a teaching career before making your decision?

B. Perceived Benefits (Incentives & Rewards)

3. What do you consider the most rewarding aspects of being a teacher in an Upper Basic School in The Gambia?
4. How important was job stability or security in your decision to pursue teaching?
5. Did salary and other financial benefits influence your decision to become a teacher? If yes, how?
6. Did you perceive teaching as a stepping stone for career advancement or social mobility?

C. Perceived Costs (Challenges & Trade-offs)

7. What were some concerns or risks you considered before entering the teaching profession?
8. Have you encountered financial or social challenges as a teacher that you did not anticipate?
9. How do you perceive the workload and working conditions in relation to the benefits you receive?

D. Opportunities and Constraints

10. Did family, community, or societal expectations play a role in your decision to become a teacher?
11. Were there any policies or programs (such as scholarships, training incentives) that influenced your decision to teach?
12. If you had better opportunities in another profession, would you still choose teaching? Why or why not?

E. Alternative Career Consideration

13. Have you ever considered leaving the teaching profession? If yes, what factors contribute to this consideration?
14. If teaching conditions improved (e.g., salary, workload, resources), would that strengthen your commitment to the profession?

F. Career Maintenance and Motivation

15. What factors have influenced your decision to remain in the teaching profession?
16. Have you ever considered leaving the profession? If yes, what are the main reasons?
17. What incentives or rewards (salary, professional development, recognition, etc.) motivate you to stay in teaching?

G. Economic Challenges (Costs vs. Benefits)

18. Do you believe your salary and financial benefits are sufficient compared to the cost of living? Why or why not?
19. How do financial constraints (salary delays, lack of allowances) affect your job satisfaction and long-term commitment?
20. Have you taken on additional jobs or income-generating activities to supplement your teaching salary?

H. Workload and Working Conditions

21. How would you describe your workload? Does it align with the benefits and support you receive?
22. Do you have access to enough teaching and learning resources? If not, how does this impact your ability to continue teaching?
23. Do you feel that classroom sizes, administrative burdens, and expectations from parents and students make teaching unsustainable?

I. Institutional Support and Career Growth

24. What support structures (mentorship, professional training, promotions) exist for teachers in your school?
25. Have limited career advancement opportunities influenced your decision to stay or leave the profession?
26. Do you believe that professional development opportunities are fairly distributed among teachers?

J. Social and Family Pressures

27. How does your family or social network perceive your teaching career?
28. Have societal expectations, community respect, or lack thereof influenced your decision to continue teaching?

K. Alternative Career Considerations

29. Have you explored alternative career paths? If so, what factors prevent you from transitioning to another profession?
30. If given a higher-paying job outside of teaching, would you leave? Why or why not?

L. Understanding Policy Impact

31. What education policies currently affect your teaching experience, positively or negatively?
32. Do you feel that teachers have a say in shaping education policies in The Gambia? Why or why not?
33. Have you experienced policy changes that improved or worsened your career sustainability?

M. Challenges and Response Strategies

34. What are the biggest obstacles that prevent teachers from staying in the profession long-term?
35. Have you considered leaving the profession due to unsupportive policies? If so, what were the reasons?
36. How do you and your colleagues express concerns about unfavorable policies (e.g., through unions, complaints, protests)?

N. Advocacy and Policy Improvement

37. What policies or practices do you think should be implemented to improve teacher retention?
38. Have you or your colleagues attempted to negotiate for better working conditions? If so, what was the response?
39. What role do teacher unions play in advocating for better policies?

O. Sustainability and Long-Term Commitment

40. What incentives (salary, training, job security) would make you stay in the profession longer?
41. How can the government and policymakers better support teachers in career development?

Appendix 3: Interview Guide for School Principals

A. Teacher Retention and Career Sustainability

1. From your experience, what are the biggest challenges teachers face in maintaining their careers?
2. What factors contribute to teachers leaving the profession in your school?
3. Have you observed a decline in teacher retention over the years? What are the main reasons?

B. Financial and Institutional Challenges

4. Do you think teachers' salaries and benefits are enough to keep them motivated? Why or why not?
5. Have salary delays, lack of incentives, or poor funding contributed to teacher dissatisfaction?
6. What strategies does your school use to support teachers facing financial or professional challenges?

C. Workload and Administrative Challenges

7. Do you think teachers in your school are overburdened? If yes, in what ways?
8. How does teacher workload impact their ability to remain in the profession?
9. What efforts have been made to reduce teacher workload or provide additional support?

D. Career Growth and Professional Development

10. Are there sufficient opportunities for teachers to advance in their careers within the education system?
11. What role does professional development play in retaining teachers in your school?
12. Do teachers express concerns about lack of promotions or career growth?

E. External Factors Influencing Career Sustainability

13. How do community perceptions and parental expectations affect teacher motivation and retention?
14. What policies or changes would you recommend to improve teacher retention in Gambian Upper Basic Schools?

F. Observations on Teacher Dissatisfaction

15. What are the most common complaints teachers in your school have about education policies?
16. Have teachers in your school ever left due to dissatisfaction with policies? What were their reasons?

17. Do teachers in your school feel empowered to voice their concerns about policies?

G. Strategies for Advocacy and Policy Change

18. How do you as a principal address policy-related complaints from teachers?
19. Have you engaged in discussions with education authorities to advocate for better policies?
20. What role do school administrators play in shaping policies that improve teacher retention?

H. Recommendations for Policy Improvement

21. What policy changes do you think would make teaching more sustainable in The Gambia?
22. How can the government ensure that policies reflect the actual needs of teachers?
23. What strategies should be implemented at the school level to make teaching more attractive?

Appendix 4: Interview Guide for Education Officer 1

Participant Demography

- A. Role or Responsibility at the Regional Office
- B. Year of Experience on Current Position
- C. Age

A. Policy Effectiveness and Challenges

- 1. What are the key policies in place to retain teachers in Upper Basic Schools?
- 2. Have you observed high teacher turnover? What do you think are the main reasons?
- 3. What mechanisms exist for teachers to express their concerns about policies?

B. Managing Teacher Resistance (Voice vs. Exit)

- 4. How do teachers typically respond when they are dissatisfied with policies (e.g., resignation, complaints, strikes)?
- 5. How does HR handle teacher grievances related to salaries, promotions, and workloads?
- 6. Have teachers' protests or advocacy efforts led to any policy changes? If yes, can you give an example?

C. Policy Improvement Strategies

- 7. What improvements should be made to education policies to ensure the long-term sustainability of the teaching profession?
- 8. Are there plans to increase teacher salaries, benefits, or professional development opportunities?
- 9. How does HR ensure that policies are aligned with teachers' needs and realities on the ground?

Appendix 5: Interview Questions for Education Officer 2&3

Participant Demography

- A. Role or Responsibility at the Regional Office
- B. Year of Experience on Current Position
- C. Age

A. Evaluating Current Policies

1. How would you assess the effectiveness of current education policies in retaining teachers?
2. What are the most common teacher complaints about policies that you have encountered?
3. Do you believe teachers have enough opportunities to express concerns about policies?

B. Teacher Resistance and Institutional Response

4. Have you observed teachers leaving schools due to policy issues? What were the main reasons?
5. When teachers resist certain policies (e.g., through complaints or protests), how does the education system respond?
6. Have you seen successful cases where teacher advocacy led to positive policy changes?

Policy Recommendations for Sustainability

7. What policy adjustments do you think could improve teacher retention and career satisfaction?
8. How can education authorities improve communication with teachers regarding policy decisions?
9. What role do cluster monitors play in bridging the gap between teachers and policymakers?

Appendix 6: Sample of Focus Group Discussion with pre-Service Teachers

Sample Focus Group Discussion

If you don't mind, I would like to give you my name. My name is Amadou Jallow. I am a Gambian by nationality. Currently studying Masters in Education in a very big country, it's series of diversity called Indonesia. Indonesia is a Southeast Asian country. And then the distance by time from Indonesia to Gambia is around seven hours. As you can see, you people are currently at 10:56. Correct me if I am wrong, but we are currently at 5:56. That's almost seven hours difference. Seven hours difference. Yeah, in few minutes time, we will be praying Maghrib. So, yeah, so this is the world for us. So, I am currently conducting a research and my research is based on teacher motivation, meaning what motivates young people to join the teaching field. And what are some of the challenges that they face? And then how can we be able to retain our teachers in the education system, giving the importance of teachers as far as education is concerned. First of all, first and foremost, I would like to seek for your consents if you do wish to participate in this focus group discussion.

Yeah, sure. Yeah. All right. Thank you. And then if you don't mind, please put your cameras on so that I can just take a photo of all of us to serve as evidence of collecting data. Can you please put your cameras on? I think it should be a video instead of this. Sorry? Um, if you don't mind, please... if you are not talking, just mute your mic so that um because I have started recording already.

All right. Yeah. What I'm trying to say is that... I think you should switch to video calls because right now I can't do it. I have no idea on how to switch. Okay. Don't worry. Let's leave it at that for now. Then maybe when we finish our discussion, then we can switch to a video call. All right. That's fine. Then have the photo session, yeah? So, that is the main objective. So, you people are selected purposely for me to understand what are some of the things that motivated you, pushed you or pulled you to becoming a teacher. I was a teacher before, so I want to understand why, you know, pre-service teachers. I know most of you are not teaching currently, you are not employed. Is that correct? Yeah, sure. Good. So, I want to understand how or why did you venture into the teaching field. But again, before going any further, I am looking at this from a theory called the rational choice theory. Have you heard about the rational choice theory before? Um, not really, not at all. Oh, okay. The rational choice theory is based on three dimensions. That is, that is to say, if anybody wants to make a choice regarding anything, okay? First, they will consider the cost. How much am I going to spend into this thing? Okay? And then

second, they will consider the benefits. If I put in these things, what are the benefits am I going to get or gain after spending? And then in between those two, they will also be looking into other alternatives. So those are the three dimensions as far as the rational choice theory is concerned. So, going into the first questions, okay? And regarding the questions, I will honestly need your opinion. There is nothing like a correct answer or a wrong answer. I need your understanding of any question that I will be posing onto you. Not necessarily trying to look for your intelligence or test your intelligence or whatsoever. I am trying to know and understand. I am, I want to get an opinion of yours, not necessarily what has, what uh, not necessarily trying to test your intelligence. Please put that at the back of your minds.

And feel free to say whatsoever that you want to say. And then we rest assured that um this recording will be purposely used only for the purpose of the research and nothing else. So that means your identities will remain unknown to anybody or everyone across the globe. Okay?

So now, let's go to the first questions. What were the key factors that influence your decision to become a teacher?

Who is going to go first?

####? Assalamu alaykum. Wa alaykum assalam.

Yes. Um, regarding to the first question you asked about what is the factors that influence my decision of becoming a teacher. Sure. That is for me, the factor that influence my decision to become a teacher was the passion I have for teaching, the capability that I can do it and the love I have for it. Okay. That's very good.

Appendix 7: Sample of Real Interview Transcript with Teacher Participant

Researcher: And for your info, I have started recording this session. Is it okay with you?

Participant: Yeah, it's okay. It's okay, no problem.

Researcher: And the any info that is here is not going to be shared or it's not going to be used anything aside from the research or for the purpose of research.

For the purpose of research.

Okay, no problem. I understood this place. Yeah. And then your identity is going to remain anonymous. Anonymous. Okay, no problem. So, are you willing to partake in my research?

Participant: Yeah, no problem. I'm willing.

Researcher: All right. Thank you very much. Uh, first of first and foremost, I would like you to give a brief bio of yourself.

Who you are, when you started teaching. Did you do HTC or you did HTC PTC or you did diploma?

Participant: Idid HTC.

And which grade were you which grade were you? Just give me a bio of yourself.

Quickly.

And briefly.

Participant: A resident of Farato Bojakunda. Um, I started teaching way back in 2013 with EC before pursuing my HTC at the Gambia College where I graduated in the year 2016 and then posted to Jamisa Upper and Senior Secondary School.

Um, since in the posted since I was posted to Jamisa Upper and Senior Secondary School, I was teaching both upper and then senior secondary school where I was teaching agricultural science, general science and now in the senior sector teaching animal husbandry.

Researcher: Yes. Thank you very much for that wonderful intro. Yeah. Um, my research is mainly centered on uh three key areas. Uh that is to say, I need to know what motivates people to become teachers in the upper basic school. Uh why the upper basic school is that um as you and I know that uh teachers in the upper basic school of the Gambia are fluent, meaning they are they are able to teach in both uh primary schools as well as senior secondary schools.

So now my first question. Uh please. Can you describe some of the key factors that influence your decision to become a teacher?

Participant: Uh the key factors that motivates me, you know, that keeps me to be in the teaching field is um there are so many factors that are led to me being a teacher in the upper basic school or that pushed me to be in the teaching field one. Looking at my status and then job availability at that time. And then area of study after completing senior secondary school. The tertiary institution that I ventured in was a tertiary institution designed purposely for teaching. So that's why that's what motivates me or keeps me to be in the teaching field.

Researcher: Uh what were your main career options before choosing the teacher the teaching profession? And why did you select teaching instead of other professions?

Participant: At childhood level, my career was to become a pilot. Okay. Yeah, was to become a pilot. But so along the line, the destiny lies within the teaching field as of now.

Researcher: How would you evaluate the advantages and the disadvantages of uh a teaching career before making your decision?

Participant: I was more into the science field.

Researcher: So you could have gone for public health officer. You could have also been a nurse, but why did you decided all of a sudden to come into the teaching field rather than these other fields, giving the fact that, if the same Gambia College that is training teachers is the same Gambia College that is also training both nurses and public health officials. So how were you able to evaluate some of the advantages and disadvantages of the teaching career that made you join the teaching field?

Participant: during my senior secondary school days, there were there was little knowledge on planning life after school. And the majority always venture into the teaching field. There was nothing like I was not aware of these other fields like public health or even agricultural field of study. Otherwise, I would have ventured to that area, but upon submitting my credentials, academic credentials, that was the time when I knew that I saw other science field that I can even venture. But despite I have already chosen that area which

I have known best more than the other areas. So that's how I continue to be in the teaching field.

Researcher: Okay. That's wonderful. Um, what did you consider the most rewarding aspect of teaching?

Participant: the most important Yeah, now that you have become a teacher. Yes, I'm hearing you. Yeah, the most important reward that comes out is whenever you see your students excelling in life. After almost 10 years of teaching, the people that I have taught in various sectors, in various areas of schools, I can say most of them are now in higher places. So is one of the most important reward anywhere that I go in public, I am always seen as somebody who has impacted knowledge to them.

Researcher: So how is it how important is job stability or security in your decision to becoming a teacher, giving the fact that um people who are in other jobs, they may likely lose their jobs with ease compared to the teaching field. So was it one of the reasons that uh made you to venture into the teaching field or there were other reasons?

Participant: there are no reasons to say um the stability of the job is fine.

Okay. Yeah, it's okay. The job requires dedication and then love. Okay. And that's why so many people those who love the job are still in the system. For those who don't love the job will have problem here and there and later on back up.

To them change or other others is as a result of a pull factor that makes them to leave the teaching field when the greener pasture comes.

Appendix 8: Quirkos Canvas Final Themes

Main Canvas Views

Quirks Canvas - Primary

