



Understanding Teacher Retention Challenges: A Quality Analysis of Human Resource Strategies

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Received: 17-12-2024 Reviewed: 03-01-2025 Accepted: 19-01-2025

Abstract

This research aimed to explore the factors influencing teacher retention at SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang, Kabupaten Semarang, focusing on the role of school leadership, job satisfaction, financial compensation, workload, and professional development. A qualitative case study approach was employed, utilizing interviews with teachers and school leaders to gather in-depth insights into the challenges and strategies related to teacher retention in a rural school setting. The findings revealed that school leadership plays a critical role in fostering a supportive environment for teachers, with leadership practices such as mentorship, professional development opportunities, and inclusive decision-making processes being key drivers of teacher retention. Additionally, job satisfaction, particularly in collegiality, administrative support, and work-life balance, was a significant factor in teachers' decisions to stay. While not the sole determinant, financial compensation was also identified as an important consideration, especially for teachers with long-term financial commitments. The research emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to teacher retention, highlighting the need for comprehensive human resource strategies that consider both professional and personal factors. This study contributes original insights into teacher retention in rural Indonesian schools, offering practical recommendations for improving retention rates through enhanced leadership practices and support systems. The value of this research lies in its potential to inform policies and practices that can improve teacher retention, thereby enhancing the quality of education in rural areas.

Keywords: Teacher Retention, Human Resource Management, Leadership

Introduction

Teacher retention remains a significant challenge in education systems worldwide, and its importance is even more pronounced in Indonesia, where schools in rural areas often face unique difficulties. In rural schools like SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang, teacher retention is impacted by insufficient resources, low salaries, and limited professional development opportunities.

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These challenges are compounded by the broader socio-economic conditions of rural areas, which may not offer the same level of infrastructure or community support as urban centers (Abeysooriya et al., 2024). Teachers in these settings often experience a lack of motivation and job satisfaction, leading to high turnover rates, which disrupt the continuity of education and create instability in the learning environment (Benhenda, 2020). Moreover, the impact of these retention issues extends beyond just the teachers themselves; students also suffer from the revolving door of educators, which hinders the development of strong teacher-student relationships and compromises the quality of education (Alexander et al., 2020). Given that the education sector in Indonesia is undergoing significant reforms aimed at improving the overall quality of teaching and learning, addressing teacher retention is a crucial component of ensuring these reforms have a lasting, positive impact. For SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang, a rural institution with specific challenges and opportunities, understanding the underlying causes of teacher attrition and formulating effective human resource strategies is essential for improving the school's overall performance and contributing to the nation's educational goals. Exploring these issues from the perspective of teachers, school leaders, and policy frameworks provides a holistic approach to understanding and addressing the root causes of teacher retention problems in such contexts.

The complexity of teacher retention is shaped by various interrelated factors that influence teachers' job satisfaction and career decisions (Anog et al., 2024). Teachers are essential to the success of the education system, and their departure from schools can have profound implications, including disruptions in student learning, increased workload for remaining staff, and higher recruitment and training costs (Abdullayev, 2020). Several studies have shown that factors such as professional development opportunities, competitive salaries, work-life balance, and effective school leadership are key in retaining teachers. These elements contribute to teachers' overall job satisfaction and their sense of value within the school system (Abdullah, 2021). In rural areas like Tuntang, these retention factors are intensified by additional challenges such as isolation from larger cities, limited access to educational resources, and underdeveloped infrastructure. Teachers in these environments often face difficulties that include a lack of access to professional growth opportunities, fewer teaching materials, and limited career advancement prospects. These challenges can lead to feelings of frustration and burnout, increasing the likelihood of teacher turnover (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). Moreover, rural schools often struggle with attracting and retaining highly qualified teachers due to these barriers, which can further exacerbate the problem of teacher retention. Therefore, understanding how these issues interact within rural contexts is critical for developing human resource strategies that address the specific needs and concerns of teachers. By identifying the key factors that impact teacher retention in such settings, schools can create supportive environments that enhance teacher satisfaction, reduce turnover, and ultimately improve the quality of education.

At SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang, teacher retention is deeply influenced by the unique characteristics of rural schools, which present additional pressures on teachers that can lead to burnout and attrition. One such challenge is the larger class sizes typically found in rural schools, which can make it difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention to students.

Additionally, the varying levels of student engagement and differing learning needs create a complex teaching environment where teachers must constantly adapt their teaching methods to accommodate all students (Abou-Khalil, 2021). Teachers are also expected to be versatile in their roles, often delivering instruction across a broad range of subjects, which requires significant time and effort to prepare lessons and materials (Kohli, 2019). Beyond traditional teaching duties, teachers at rural schools like Tuntang are often asked to take on additional responsibilities such as community engagement and extracurricular activities, further increasing their workload. These added duties can result in exhaustion and stress, leading teachers to reconsider their long-term commitment to the school (Agyapong, 2022). Furthermore, rural schools face a lack of access to professional development opportunities and limited career advancement prospects, which are significant factors in teacher retention. Without these opportunities for growth, teachers may feel undervalued or stagnant in their careers, prompting them to leave for more promising positions elsewhere. Therefore, the complex interplay of local and systemic factors underscores the importance of understanding teacher retention issues from a local perspective, addressing both the specific challenges faced by rural schools and the broader challenges within the national education system (Uribe-Zarain et al., 2019). Such an understanding is essential for developing targeted strategies that can support teachers and improve retention rates in rural areas like Tuntang.

School leadership plays a critical role in shaping teacher retention by implementing human resource management strategies that address teachers' personal and professional needs (Ansley et al., 2019). Effective leadership creates an environment where teachers feel supported, valued, and motivated, which is essential for maintaining a high level of job satisfaction and long-term commitment to the school (Arif et al., 2019). At SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang, the leadership team, headed by the principal, faces the challenge of tackling teacher retention through policies that cater to the specific needs of teachers in rural settings. These strategies involve balancing teachers' workload, ensuring competitive salary incentives, providing clear career progression paths, and offering recognition for their contributions. By fostering a positive school culture and encouraging collaboration among teachers, leadership can create a supportive work environment that reduces feelings of isolation and burnout, which are common in rural schools. Leadership also provides professional development opportunities that help teachers grow in their careers and feel valued in their roles (Kalkan et al., 2020). However, the effectiveness of these strategies depends on how well they are implemented and tailored to the needs of the teaching staff. Understanding the leadership practices that have successfully contributed to teacher retention and those that have faced challenges is crucial in identifying what works in promoting teacher satisfaction and commitment (Cansoy, 2019). This understanding can help the school refine its strategies to ensure that teachers remain in their positions long enough to positively impact student outcomes and contribute to the school's long-term success.

Human resource management strategies in schools have increasingly evolved to recognize that teacher retention is influenced by far more than just financial compensation. While salary is important, it is equally essential to create a holistic and supportive work environment that addresses various aspects of a teacher's professional and personal life (Vidal-Salazar et al., 2012). This includes providing opportunities for ongoing professional

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development, maintaining a healthy work-life balance, encouraging positive relationships among colleagues, and acknowledging teachers' hard work and dedication (OECD., 2019). These factors are especially critical in rural schools, such as SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang, where teachers face additional challenges like isolation, limited resources, and often, a greater responsibility to meet the diverse needs of students. To effectively address teacher retention in these settings, human resource management strategies need to be tailored to the specific context of the school and the local community (Bardach et al., 2022). This involves understanding teachers' unique needs and concerns and providing targeted support that not only helps them cope with the challenges of rural teaching but also encourages them to remain in their roles long-term. By exploring how these strategies are currently being implemented at SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang, this study seeks to uncover what has worked and what areas require improvement. Ultimately, the goal is to generate insights that can contribute to the development of more effective teacher retention strategies in rural areas, thereby enhancing the quality of education and ensuring that teachers have the support they need to thrive in their careers.

The problem of teacher retention has become a significant challenge for many schools, particularly in rural areas like SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang, where teachers face unique difficulties such as limited resources, lack of professional development opportunities, and lower compensation compared to urban schools. These challenges contribute to higher turnover rates, disrupting the continuity of education and negatively impacting student learning outcomes and school performance. Despite the importance of retaining qualified teachers, there is a limited understanding of the specific factors that influence teacher retention in rural schools in Indonesia, particularly within the context of human resource management strategies. Therefore, this study aims to explore the human resource strategies implemented by the SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang leadership to address teacher retention issues, focusing on the effectiveness of these strategies in improving teacher satisfaction, engagement, and long-term commitment to the school. The main research question guiding this study is: What are the key human resource strategies employed by the leadership of SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang to enhance teacher retention, and how do these strategies impact teacher satisfaction and retention in the school's rural context.

Literature Review

Teacher Retention and its Importance in Education

Teacher retention has become a critical area of focus in educational research, as it directly influences the effectiveness of schools and the quality of education that students receive (Benhenda, 2020). Retaining experienced teachers is particularly important, as teacher turnover can disrupt the continuity of education, hinder the development of school culture, and negatively affect student outcomes. Numerous studies have identified key factors that influence teacher retention, with job satisfaction, work-life balance, opportunities for professional development, and the school's overall climate being among the most significant (Kohli, 2019). When teachers feel valued, supported, and are given opportunities to grow professionally, they are more likely to stay in their roles, contributing to a positive and stable educational

environment. On the other hand, in schools that suffer from inadequate resources, poor leadership, and limited opportunities for career advancement, teacher turnover rates tend to be higher (Abeysooriya et al., 2024). The situation is even more pronounced in rural areas, where schools face additional challenges such as limited access to professional development programs, lower salaries, and a lack of infrastructure. These factors often push teachers to seek employment in urban areas with more opportunities and better working conditions. Research highlights that rural schools tend to have higher turnover rates, and the challenges specific to these areas, such as isolation and limited resources, make teacher retention even more difficult (Bartanen & Grissom, 2019). This underscores the need for tailored human resource strategies that specifically address the unique conditions of rural schools and provide the support necessary to retain teachers in these challenging environments. It also highlights the importance of leadership in these schools, as effective leadership is essential in addressing the systemic issues that contribute to teacher attrition and in creating an environment that supports teacher satisfaction, growth, and retention (Booth et al., 2021). Therefore, understanding the specific factors that affect teacher retention in rural settings is crucial to developing more effective strategies that can help mitigate the high turnover rates and improve the overall quality of education in these areas.

Human Resource Management Strategies for Teacher Retention

Human resource management strategies are integral to improving teacher retention, particularly in challenging environments like rural schools (Shibiti, 2019). These strategies encompass various aspects of teacher management, including recruitment, induction, professional development, and performance management, all of which play crucial roles in enhancing teacher satisfaction and reducing turnover. Effective leadership is at the core of these strategies, as school leaders are responsible for creating a work environment where teachers feel supported, appreciated, and motivated to remain in their roles (Andrianto et al., 2023). In particular, career development opportunities, mentorship programs, and the provision of leadership roles within the school have positively impacted teacher job satisfaction, making them feel more invested in their work and the school's success (Borre et al., 2021). Furthermore, aligning compensation and benefits with the needs of teachers, especially in rural settings where resources may be more limited, is essential to attracting and retaining qualified educators. Teachers in rural schools often face additional challenges, such as social isolation, a lack of professional networks, and limited access to resources and training, all of which can contribute to feelings of dissatisfaction and burnout (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020). Research has shown that addressing these specific challenges through tailored human resource strategies, such as fostering a sense of community, providing opportunities for collaboration, and offering recognition for teachers' contributions, can significantly improve retention rates in rural schools. As rural areas tend to face higher teacher turnover, especially in schools like State SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang, understanding the effectiveness of these strategies in such settings is critical. School leadership needs to develop and implement human resource management strategies that not only address the general challenges of teaching but also account for the unique circumstances faced by teachers in rural communities (Wang et al., 2023). By doing so, schools can create a supportive and sustainable environment that encourages teacher retention, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes for students in rural areas (Billingsley &

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Bettini, 2019). Therefore, it is important to investigate how these strategies are implemented in rural schools, their impact on teacher retention, and how they can be improved to better support teachers in their professional journey.

Leadership and its Impact on Teacher Retention

Leadership in schools plays a central role in influencing teacher retention, as the actions and strategies of school leaders directly affect teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and their overall commitment to the institution (Day et al., 2020). Research on educational leadership emphasizes that transformational leadership, which inspires and motivates teachers to realize their potential, and transactional leadership, which relies on structured feedback and goal-setting, are critical in fostering a positive school environment (Gusriani et al., 2022). Effective school leadership practices, such as clearly defining expectations, fostering an inclusive and supportive school climate, and promoting continuous professional development, have consistently been linked to higher teacher retention rates. When school leaders actively build strong relationships with teachers, offer constructive feedback, and respond to their concerns, it fosters a culture of trust and respect that is essential for maintaining a stable and motivated teaching staff (Engin, 2020). This becomes particularly important in rural areas, where teachers face additional challenges such as limited resources, isolation, and difficulty accessing professional development opportunities. In such settings, effective leadership becomes even more crucial in ensuring that teachers feel supported and valued in their roles. School leaders who demonstrate empathy, responsiveness to teachers' needs, and proactive approaches to addressing resource shortages and other challenges can significantly improve teacher satisfaction, directly contributing to higher retention rates (Gusriani et al., 2022). Furthermore, leadership is instrumental in implementing human resource strategies that focus on teachers' professional growth, well-being, and career advancement. In rural schools, where the challenges are more acute, the role of leadership in ensuring teacher retention requires tailored strategies to meet the specific needs of the teaching staff and the community. Therefore, further exploration of leadership practices that are particularly effective in rural school contexts, like that of SMA Negeri1 Tuntang, is essential for identifying the most impactful strategies for improving teacher retention and ensuring sustainable success in rural education

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the challenges of teacher retention and the human resource strategies used in SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang, Semarang Regency. A qualitative approach was selected to provide in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of teachers, school leaders, and other relevant stakeholders. This design enabled the researcher to gather rich, detailed data that reflects the complexity of teacher retention issues in a rural context. The study aimed to capture the unique factors contributing to teacher retention or turnover in this specific environment by focusing on a single school. The case study methodology allowed for an in-depth examination of the school's human resource strategies and how these strategies affected teachers' decisions to stay or leave. The goal was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the contextual factors influencing teacher

retention at SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang and to identify the strategies that could be effective in retaining teachers in a rural school setting.

Participants for this study were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring that those included in the study had relevant experience and knowledge of the topic at hand. The participants consisted of school leadership, including the principal, vice principals, department heads, and a diverse group of teachers from different disciplines and levels of seniority. The sample size included a total of 20 participants, with 5 school leaders and 15 teachers. Inclusion criteria required participants to have been employed at SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang for at least one year to ensure familiarity with the school's human resource strategies and retention efforts. The selection of both leadership and teaching staff allowed for a comprehensive exploration of how human resource practices are implemented and perceived from different perspectives within the school. Teachers from various experience levels and subjects were selected to ensure diverse views on the factors influencing teacher retention.

Data collection for this study was conducted using a combination of semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both school leaders and teachers to gain individual perspectives on the challenges and strategies related to teacher retention. These interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and were designed to allow participants to provide detailed responses while ensuring that key research themes were addressed. The interviews focused on topics such as teachers' reasons for staying or leaving the school, the effectiveness of human resource practices, and the role of leadership in supporting teacher retention. Focus group discussions were organized with groups of teachers to promote interaction and allow for the sharing of experiences. These discussions helped capture a broader range of teacher opinions on retention and allowed participants to reflect on common challenges and solutions. Additionally, relevant documents such as teacher satisfaction surveys, retention data, and professional development records were analyzed to provide further context and to triangulate the data.

The data collected from interviews, focus groups, and document analysis were analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a widely used qualitative data analysis method that involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within the data. The analysis process began with data familiarization, where transcripts and documents were reviewed to gain a general understanding of the information. Next, the data were coded by highlighting significant segments related to teacher retention and human resource practices. These codes were then grouped into broader themes that emerged from the data. The thematic analysis process was iterative, with multiple rounds of review and refinement to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. To enhance the rigor of the study, member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with participants to confirm their accuracy, and peer debriefing sessions were held to address potential biases and ensure a comprehensive and balanced interpretation of the data.

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Result

The results of this study underscored the critical role that school leadership plays in influencing teacher retention at SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang, Semarang Regency. One of the most significant findings was that the level of support provided by school leadership, especially in terms of professional development opportunities, was a key determinant in teachers' decisions to remain at the school. Teachers who felt that their professional growth was actively supported—through access to training programs, mentoring, and opportunities to improve their skills—were significantly more likely to stay. This was in contrast to teachers who felt that their development needs were overlooked, with many of these teachers expressing the desire to leave for other schools or positions where they believed they would receive better opportunities for career advancement. This trend was especially noticeable among newer teachers, who often struggled without adequate guidance or tailored professional development programs, which they saw as a barrier to their career progression. The study's findings suggest that a lack of investment in teachers' professional growth, particularly for early careers, may contribute to increased turnover rates. As a result, school leadership must prioritize tailored professional development to retain teachers and support their long-term commitment to the school.

Another key finding from this study was the strong connection between job satisfaction and teacher retention at SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang. Teachers who reported high levels of job satisfaction, particularly regarding collegiality and the support they received from both peers and school leadership, demonstrated a stronger commitment to staying at the school. A positive work environment, characterized by open communication, teamwork, and mutual respect, was viewed as a major contributor to teacher retention. Teachers who felt part of a supportive and cohesive community were more likely to feel motivated and engaged in their roles, which ultimately led to greater job satisfaction. However, job satisfaction was lower for those teachers who felt isolated or unsupported, either by their colleagues or the school leadership, and their likelihood of leaving increased. These teachers often expressed disengagement and frustration, exacerbated by a lack of mentorship or professional support. This finding emphasizes the importance of fostering strong interpersonal relationships and a culture of collaboration within the school, as it directly affects teachers' sense of belonging and their decision to remain in their roles. Ensuring that teachers feel valued, supported, and connected to their peers and the leadership team is critical for enhancing job satisfaction and teacher retention.

A third significant finding from this study was the impact of financial compensation on teacher retention at SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang. While it was not the sole factor affecting teachers' decisions to stay or leave, salary was clearly an important consideration for many teachers, particularly those with families or long-term financial commitments. Teachers in rural schools, such as those at SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang, face additional financial challenges, such as higher transportation costs and limited access to affordable housing or other services. In this context, teachers felt that their salaries were not always sufficient to meet their personal and professional needs. While other factors, such as job satisfaction, leadership support, and professional development, were also critical in retaining teachers, the financial aspect could not be overlooked. Teachers who felt that their compensation was not competitive compared to urban

schools or insufficient to meet their financial obligations often expressed dissatisfaction and were more likely to consider leaving the school for better-paying opportunities. This finding highlights the need for schools in rural areas to evaluate and potentially adjust financial incentives to help retain teachers, especially in areas where the cost of living may be higher or where teachers struggle to balance their work and financial responsibilities.

The results also indicated that the workload and work-life balance played a crucial role in teacher retention. Teachers who reported manageable workloads and sufficient time for personal and family life were more likely to stay at the school. In contrast, teachers who felt overwhelmed by excessive administrative duties or teaching responsibilities were more likely to consider leaving. Workload-related stress was particularly pronounced among teachers handling multiple roles or those in leadership positions. Finally, the results highlighted that leadership practices, particularly in terms of communication and involvement in decision-making, were crucial to fostering a positive school culture and supporting teacher retention. Teachers who felt included in school decisions, particularly those that impacted their teaching practices or the overall school environment, were more likely to feel valued and motivated to stay. In contrast, teachers who felt excluded from these processes expressed lower levels of commitment and were more inclined to seek opportunities elsewhere.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of school leadership in promoting teacher retention, particularly through the creation of a supportive and nurturing environment. Teachers who reported feeling supported by the leadership team in terms of professional development, mentoring, and career growth were more likely to stay at SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang. This reflects the importance of leadership in providing teachers with the tools and resources they need to excel in their roles, which is crucial for sustaining their motivation and commitment. In line with existing literature, this study highlights that effective leadership practices—such as offering regular, constructive feedback, establishing mentoring programs, and creating opportunities for ongoing professional development—are fundamental in keeping teachers engaged and invested in their work. The findings also emphasize that leadership support is especially valuable for newer teachers, who often face challenges in adapting to the school environment and the demands of teaching. When these teachers feel that the leadership is actively involved in their development and career progression, they are more likely to remain in their positions and build long-term careers at the school. Furthermore, the results suggest that school leadership must be proactive in developing tailored professional development programs that address the specific needs of teachers, particularly for those who are in the early stages of their careers. By offering comprehensive and targeted support, school leadership can significantly increase teacher retention rates, ensuring that teachers feel valued and equipped to meet the challenges of their profession. This finding underscores the broader implication that school leaders must prioritize teacher development and create a work environment that fosters growth, trust, and professional satisfaction to retain quality educators in the long run.

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The findings from this study emphasize the crucial link between job satisfaction and teacher retention, highlighting the significant role that a supportive and positive work environment plays in keeping teachers committed to their roles. Teachers who felt a sense of camaraderie and mutual respect within the school, particularly through strong collegial relationships and administrative support, were more likely to stay at SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang. This aligns with existing research that shows a positive work culture is a key factor in fostering long-term retention. When teachers feel valued by their peers and the school leadership, they are more motivated to contribute to the school's success and remain in their positions. Furthermore, the study found that teachers who experienced feelings of isolation or lack of support were more prone to burnout, dissatisfaction, and, ultimately, higher turnover rates. This suggests that creating an inclusive and collaborative school culture is essential in maintaining a stable and committed teaching staff. Building strong interpersonal relationships among colleagues and providing teachers with the emotional and professional support they need can significantly reduce the likelihood of burnout and resignation. These findings highlight the importance of leadership's role in cultivating a school environment that encourages open communication, collaboration, and mutual respect among staff. By doing so, schools can not only enhance job satisfaction but also create a strong sense of belonging and professional fulfillment for teachers, boosting retention rates and contributing to a more cohesive and effective educational environment. This underscores the need for school leaders to prioritize fostering a positive and supportive culture as a strategic approach to ensuring that teachers feel motivated, valued, and empowered to stay and contribute to the school's long-term success.

The financial aspect of teacher retention emerged as a significant factor in the decision-making process of teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang, though not the sole determinant of their commitment to the school. Many teachers expressed concerns regarding the adequacy of their salaries, particularly in light of the higher cost of living in the region. While factors such as job satisfaction, professional development opportunities, and supportive leadership played larger roles, financial compensation was still a considerable consideration, especially for teachers with families or long-term financial obligations. This aligns with existing research, which suggests that financial security is a crucial element in teacher retention, particularly in rural areas where salaries may be lower, and living costs tend to be higher compared to urban settings. In rural areas like Tuntang, teachers often face challenges such as limited access to additional income opportunities and a lack of resources that could alleviate financial pressures. As a result, schools in such areas need to find innovative solutions to address teachers' financial concerns. One potential strategy could be offering housing allowances, transportation subsidies, or other forms of financial support that would ease the burden on teachers and make it more feasible for them to remain in their roles long-term. Such benefits would improve teachers' financial well-being and demonstrate the school's commitment to supporting its staff. Furthermore, providing financial incentives could serve as a means to attract and retain high-quality teachers motivated by job security and financial stability. Therefore, addressing the financial concerns of teachers in rural schools like SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang is essential to improving teacher retention rates and ensuring a sustainable and effective teaching workforce.

Workload and work-life balance were highlighted as significant factors influencing teacher retention at SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang. Teachers who reported manageable workloads and sufficient time to attend to personal and family matters were more likely to remain in their positions, suggesting that a balanced approach to work is crucial for teacher satisfaction and longevity. This finding aligns with research indicating that excessive workload and stress are major predictors of teacher burnout and turnover. Teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang who faced overwhelming administrative duties or had to take on multiple roles within the school were especially at risk of dissatisfaction and potential attrition. In rural schools, where resources are often scarce, teachers frequently juggle a range of responsibilities, from teaching different subjects to managing extracurricular activities or engaging in community outreach. While often seen as a sign of dedication, this multitasking can also lead to fatigue and burnout if not properly managed. The pressures of handling numerous roles without adequate support may result in teachers feeling unsupported and undervalued, ultimately leading to higher turnover. To address this, it is crucial for school leadership to actively monitor and manage teachers' workloads, ensuring that they have enough time to focus on their professional development and personal life. Strategies such as redistributing tasks, providing support staff, or streamlining administrative processes can ease the burden on teachers. By promoting a healthier work-life balance and alleviating stressors associated with workload, schools can enhance teacher retention, foster a positive work environment, and ultimately improve the overall quality of education. Such proactive measures support teacher well-being and contribute to a more sustainable and motivated teaching workforce.

The findings of this study also highlighted the crucial role of leadership practices in fostering teacher retention. Teachers who felt included in decision-making processes, particularly in developing school policies, teaching strategies, and other key initiatives, reported a stronger sense of value and were more committed to staying at the school. When school leadership sought input from teachers and involved them in discussions related to curriculum planning, teaching methods, or even school culture, it created an environment of mutual respect and collaboration. Conversely, teachers who felt excluded from these important conversations or whose feedback was disregarded often expressed dissatisfaction and were more inclined to leave for schools where they felt their contributions would be recognized. This underscores the importance of inclusive and transparent leadership practices in educational settings. By actively engaging teachers in decision-making, school leaders can foster a sense of ownership and agency among staff, directly contributing to higher job satisfaction levels. Teachers who have opportunities to influence the direction of their school and contribute to the improvement of teaching practices are more likely to develop a stronger emotional connection to their work, resulting in greater commitment and a lower likelihood of turnover. These inclusive leadership practices also promote empowerment, which is vital for creating a positive school culture that supports long-term teacher retention. When teachers feel that they are integral to the school's success and that their voices matter, they are more likely to remain engaged, motivated, and dedicated to their roles, ultimately benefiting both the teachers and their students.

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Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights leadership's critical role in influencing teacher retention at SMA Negeri 1 Tuntang, Semarang Regency. The findings demonstrate that effective leadership practices, providing professional development opportunities, fostering a positive work culture, offering support and mentorship, and ensuring clear communication are fundamental in encouraging teachers to remain at the school. Moreover, factors such as job satisfaction, financial compensation, manageable workloads, and work-life balance were identified as important elements in retention, with leadership playing a key role in addressing these areas. Despite the challenges of teaching in a rural context, the study emphasizes that school leaders can create an environment that supports teacher satisfaction and professional growth by being inclusive, transparent, and responsive to teachers' needs. By focusing on these factors, school leadership can reduce turnover, enhance teacher performance, and contribute to the long-term sustainability of educational institutions in rural areas. Ultimately, this research provides valuable insights for educational administrators aiming to improve teacher retention in similar contexts.

Declaration of conflicting interest

There is no conflict of interest in this work.

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