
Is there an issue with teacher retention in the UK?***If so, what are the major causes and what measures could be used to minimise the issue?***

INTRODUCTION

In the current economic and political climate, the media plays a major role in influencing public opinion and perception. A simple internet search will list numerous articles over recent years about the issues in the teaching profession, from workload to training and the retention of teachers.

The media's role in creating the perception of a "crisis" in teacher retention is evident. However, is this an issue unique to teaching? Or rather, as all public services are increasingly stretched due to the current economic conditions, are the issues in teaching the same as other services but are just more publicised.

Teaching, as with other professions, requires a certain level of qualifications and training in order to enter the career. Therefore, people have already completed years of training and education to enter the profession, demonstrating a certain level of commitment and perseverance. This suggests that there must be strong reasons as to why people would then choose to leave the profession.

All careers have stresses and pressures associated with them. Personal performance and efficiency are constantly being monitored and tracked in all careers, increasing the expectations and personal accountability on employees. This is not unique to the teaching profession. However, there is a significant amount of data and performance indicators used to evaluate and rank school performance across a large range of factors.

As with all public services, budgets and funding have been increasingly cut leading to more pressure on schools to perform with less resources and to demonstrate that they are working efficiently from a financial perspective yet still maximising pupil outcomes. All these pressures and judgements can lead to an increasingly difficult and strained working environment which undoubtedly has the potential to have a negative impact on the work force.

As a teacher that has qualified within the last ten years, I have become increasingly aware of the pressures and strains within the profession. Both from the perspective as an employee and from the picture painted within the media of the situation. This has caused me to become interested in ascertaining whether the issue of teacher retention is specific to teaching. Furthermore, whether there are differences in other education systems around the world that would appear to be having a positive impact on teacher retention.

METHOD

Evidently, the factors behind an individual's choice to leave a particular career will be wide and complex. Potentially ranging from personal circumstances, availability of jobs, health, future prospects to the simple fact as to whether you enjoy your job or not.

A number of these factors will be difficult to measure and quantify, along with the fact that each individual person will have a unique set of personal circumstances and mindset. In reality, it might be problematic to identify a single, specific factor that precipitates an individual's decision to leave their chosen career. For the

purposes of this literature review, I will focus on measurable factors and try to identify general traits or commonality in the factors or reasons leading to teachers deciding to leave to profession.

As outlined in the title, there are some specific areas of interests within the issue of teacher retention. Initially, literature regarding teacher retention rates within the UK will need to be sourced. This will provide a start point and a foundation to make a conclusion as to whether there is indeed an issue with teacher retention within the UK. As this has been a well-publicised issue in recent years, there is highly likely to be a large amount of literature available; a certain number of filters will need to be applied during the database searches.

As the education system in Scotland and England & Wales have slight differences, a natural filter is to search for literature specific to England & Wales. However, in order to compare data from different education systems, literature that is based on the Scottish system might also prove useful.

Within the teaching profession, there are various phases and roles that an individual could be employed in. Potentially, the reasons behind people choosing to leave the profession might differ within these. As a secondary school teacher, my personal interest would be with secondary state schools. Therefore, when searching the online databases for literature keywords such as “secondary” and “England & Wales” will be used.

To endeavour to maintain the validity and strength of the literature used in the review, journals and articles that have been peer reviewed will be used where possible. Peer reviewed articles have already been closely examined by experts in the field to ensure that appropriate research methods were used and that the articles have significant enough findings to contribute to the field or discussion. These will be the most authoritative sources available for use. In addition, relatively recent literature, published within the last ten to fifteen years, will be selected as this will give insight into the current situation.

In order to search for relevant literature a selection of databases will be used. Primarily, the EBSCO database as it is a specifically education-based database but also the British Education Index (BEI) as this would provide specifically British literature. Other databases such as the Teacher Reference Centre and Zetoc might also prove useful for finding literature based on overseas education systems or teacher retention in specific phases respectively. Finally, in order to establish whether the issue of staff retention is unique to teaching, data on retention rates in other professions will need to be sourced.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fundamentally, the number of teachers required is based upon the number of school age pupils there are at a given time. Predictions based on birth rates and immigration numbers mean that the number of teachers needed is fairly clear. Pupil numbers have been falling since 2011, however over the coming decade this is set to increase. Challenging targets, changes to the curriculum and increasing pupil numbers means that it is imperative that teacher numbers also increase.

Yet, in recent years the government has repeatedly failed to reach teacher training targets. As Nick Gibb, schools minister states, ensuring “there are sufficient high-quality teachers in our schools for the long term, by delivering our teacher recruitment and retention strategy” is now a priority of the current government. The government has focused on promoting and encouraging NQTs into the profession which has resulted in an increase in the number of NQTs rising from 24,000 in 2011 to 25,600 in 2017. Conversely, in the same time period, the percentage of teachers leaving the profession per year has increased from 9.2% to 9.9%. These figures are increasingly concerning when solely secondary school teachers are analysed; within the secondary phase, teachers leaving the profession has gone from 9.4% to 10.4% from 2011 to 2017. Delving deeper into various statistics published by NFER (Worth, 2018) also reveals that teacher attrition in certain

subjects such as maths, science and modern languages are even higher. While recruiting NQTs is important, maintaining qualified, practising teachers is clearly vital to ensuring demand is met.

Scott (2016) reported that teacher attrition rates are at the highest levels in ten years, with 9.5% leaving the profession in 2016. Various sources would seem to confirm to the current rate of attrition being approximately 10%. Nationally, this is a significant number of individuals and if current trends are to continue this percentage could well rise over the next decade causing serious concern for the UK government.

Simultaneously over the past decade, the number of police officers leaving the force has slightly decreased and appears to have levelled out at approximately 7% in 2016 (Home Office, 2000-2016). In comparison to these policing figures, teacher retention does appear to be an issue. However, this problem is not unique to teaching; retention rates within nursing display a very similar trend to that of teaching. With the average attrition rate of nurses increasing from approximately 5% to as much as 21% in certain areas of the country over the past decade (Buchan et al, 2019).

Union leaders are increasing vocal about the issues arising within the teaching profession with the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) going as far to claim that the role of a teacher prevents people from leading normal lives. Echoed by Santry (2016) and Ward (2016) who state that experienced teachers are taking early retirement or leaving the profession in order to lead less stressful lives. Feelings so strongly that they are no longer able to cope with the demands and expectations of the profession that they are prepared to take a reduction in salary in order to achieve a healthier work-life balance. With the amount of data and feeling out there, it is hard to argue that there is not an issue of teacher retention within the profession.

It is unrealistic to expect no one to leave a profession, individuals will retire and personal circumstance will always mean a small percentage will leave. In fact, the number of teachers retiring has actually fallen since 2011 which has helped to off-set some of the attrition in other age demographics. Alarming, the number of working age teachers leaving has increased significantly from 25,000 in 2011 to 36,000 in 2017, a 44% increase. Furthermore, teacher retention rates in early career teachers continue to fall. Notably, only 67% of teachers remained to the profession after five years. These figures enforce the perception that there is an issue with teacher retention in England and Wales.

These early years are critical to keeping people in the profession. With the right opportunities, support and options to progress; employees are more likely to remain in their chosen career. It is here where the current government initiatives appear to be aimed; sabbaticals and an early career framework are some of the recent proposals. From an economics stand point, it is in the government's interest to retain teachers as they have made large investments in NQT training and offered bursaries in key shortage subjects.

Throughout the literature there appear to be certain commonalities to the factors that impact on teachers' decisions to leave the profession. In addition, it is evident that there are differences in the factors in different social or geographical areas. As mentioned in the National Audit Office's (2016) report, the government needs to address these specific problems rather than taking a national approach to the problem.

A predominant issue is the geographical area as this encompasses many of the factors attributed to high rates of teacher attrition. Urban areas such as the south-east of England face increasing levels of immigration which increases pupil numbers and puts pressure on teacher to pupil ratios. In contrast, rural areas are harder hit by school closures and lack of opportunities. These issues start to influence a working environment which is strained and stretched.

In contrast to England, in Wales, there are large rural regions with fewer urban areas along with a unique culture and language. The specific characteristics of each country could lead to issues in Wales that are not as prevalent in England and vice versa. Comparisons to research from other countries could be complex as every country has its own unique social dynamics; although in a broader sense recurring themes in the causes of teacher retention issues might be present.

Parallels can be drawn from Handel, Watson et al (2018) research into why teachers chose to teach in rural areas of Australia. Australia, like Wales, has rural communities which are often based around agriculture. In order to obtain the relevant qualifications of teaching, people from rural areas often need to relocate to urban areas to access university facilities. Once qualified they then face the decision as where to look for employment. Rural locations have possible draws such as lower living costs, more affordable housing and the features of a rural lifestyle. These could be attractive to some people whereas others might prefer an urban environment.

Merton's (1957) work acknowledges that people can be categorised by their approach or incentives to work; including categories such as "settlers" and "transients". Arguably, membership of these categories is fluid, with an individual fitting into the different categories depending on their current circumstances and stage in life. This could impact upon teacher retention as the reasons which lead teachers to seek employment in rural areas could change and cause them to leave the profession to seek employment or a situation that better suits their needs over time.

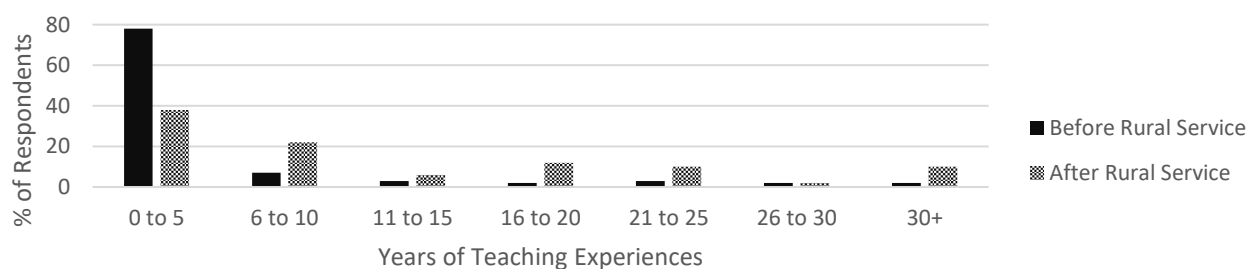


Table 1 – Trends in teaching experience before and after rural service - Handel, Watson et al (2018)

The data obtained from one hundred and ninety-one rural secondary school teachers during the Australian research shows that the vast majority had under five years teaching experience. In addition, nearly 40% of the teachers questioned left their rural post after 0 to 5 years. It could be concluded that a significant number of teachers start in rural locations with little experience and stay for a relatively short period of time before leaving the rural location.

Interestingly, this study also split the participants into male and female and examined their feelings and thoughts separately. Gender differences could also provide individuals with differing reasons to remain or leave the profession. This is an additional variable that could be considered. However, this study does not provide information as to whether the participants that left the rural posts remained within the teaching profession but in an urban location or whether they left the profession. The qualitative data generated seems to confirm the notation that there are a wide number of factors and influences that lead to people wishing to change jobs or location. Similarities are evident with UK based research with recurring themes of workload, personal circumstances and opportunities all mentioned.

Delving deeper into the geographical factor, funding or the lack of, seems to play a major contributing part in the problems that are arising. Local education authorities, as with all public services, have seen their budgets cut significantly over recent years. This has led to schools dropping subjects, increasing class sizes and reducing staffing levels in order to reduce deficits. This has fostered a climate of insecurity and job uncertainty. The number of permanent posts is decreasing with temporary or fixed term contracts becoming

increasing common. Clearly, this is going to impact on teacher retention as people could leave the profession in search of more certain and secure career options.

Ultimately, salary is going to play a significant role in the choice of job or career path an individual chooses. Teachers are graduates and often they could demand higher salaries in industry or financial institutions than offered in teaching (Ward, 2016). This is particularly true for graduates of shortage subjects such as mathematics and sciences. Since the financial crash of 2008, the annual increase in teachers' salaries has been fixed at 1% (Busby, 2016). Over the same time period, the private sector has seen salaries increase by approximately 2%; compounding the perception of teaching as a less attractive career option (Coughlan, 2013). Leading to individuals to a question as to why chose to teach when you can get a better salary in an alternative career.

The increased drive by the government to recruit new teachers by offering alternative teacher training routes, bursaries and other financial incentives has meant that a significant number of people have changed career in order to opt into the teaching profession, in direct contrast to the existing teachers that have chosen to leave. Research into the motivation behind "elite-career changers" has focussed mainly on the importance of developing resilience in order to succeed in the initial teacher training and further into the new career (Wilkins and Comber, 2015). Mirroring other research on existing teachers that identifies resilience as being central in enabling teachers to cope with the challenges and demands of the profession.

It could be assumed that highly educated people with previously successful careers in various fields would have the skills and resilience to "survive" initial teacher training and forge another successful career in teaching. However interestingly, Wilkins and Comber (2015) actually concluded the opposite, that "elite-career changers" were significantly less likely to complete the training, though no compelling explanation is provided for this. In addition, a major limitation with this research was that only participants that completed the training were interviewed and questioned for their opinions. Meaning that the results are some what biased as the experiences of the participants that left the training were not collected. This highlights the major problem with researching teacher retention or attrition rates in general as it is difficult to gain access to individuals who chose to leave.

Therefore, though studies that specifically focus on "elite-career changers" have been completed, and the general consensus as to the reasons behind leaving mirror the themes identified in teacher attrition research, the exact reason as to why the attrition level within this sub-section is unanswered. It is not fully known why a section of high-calibre, highly motivated individuals with previously successful careers are less likely to complete teacher training than individuals with significantly less employment experience straight out of university.

Another consequence the financial crash of 2008 is the consistent cuts to public sector funding over the past decade. Resources are becoming increasingly stretched, within the education sector this has forced many schools to cut the number of subjects offered to pupils in order to maximise teacher to pupil ratios. Teachers trained within certain subjects are finding it increasing difficult to find a position teaching their subject specialism and a significant number of teachers have to teach outside of their specialism. Vaughan (2016) confirms this issue and states that headteachers are becoming increasing worried about the quality of the applicants they have to appoint for certain vacancies. The cyclic nature of this problem is cutting subjects leads to less jobs and less employment certainty, which in turn mean that existing teachers could potentially lose the opportunity to teach their specialist subject or become disillusioned with the lack of opportunities within their subject specialism. All the while perpetuating the negativity and increasing frustration within the profession.

Fenwick and Weir (2010) case study of Scottish secondary school geography teachers concur with these points. Although the context of this research is based in Scotland, parallels can easily be made with the

issues within the English and Welsh system. Over the past decade an increasing number of NQTs have struggled to find permanent roles. Indeed, in 2008 in Scotland almost half of the 89% NQTs employed in teaching were in temporary or supply roles. This lack of employment certainty in the UK means that people are starting to question the suitability of teaching as a long-term career option.

Though Fenwick and Weir's (2010) findings were based upon a fairly small sample size of thirty-two student geography teachers, it represents a sizeable portion of the 100 student geography teachers that completed their teacher training in 2006/2007. Significantly, they found that approximately 75% were still teaching in Scotland just three years later. This implies that a quarter of the teachers had left the profession. If this is representative of the teaching profession as a whole, this would signify a large wastage of both of time and money for training these individuals.

Current employment status	Number of Student Teachers	Percentage of Student Teachers
Permanent in Scotland	6	19
Supply in Scotland	18	58
England or Ireland	2	6
Outside UK	3	10
Changed profession	1	3
Temporarily out of profession	1	3

Table 2 – Employment statistics for secondary geography teachers - Fenwick and Weir (2010)

As the table shows the quoted "75%" only includes the teachers employed in Scotland. When the teachers that were employed in England or overseas are accounted for the teacher retention percentage appears far more favourable at approximately 90%. In actual fact only two of the original thirty-two student teachers included in the case study have left the profession after three years. Analysis of the raw data generates a less damning picture of a crisis in teacher retention.

Although the small sample size means the figures are perhaps not as stark as you would be led to believe; the research does identify commonalities with other research on teacher retention. Essentially the themes of employment uncertainty, salaries caps, lack of opportunities and work load are the recurring themes that run through the literature.

How people respond to the issues that they may face in their jobs is influenced by both their professional and personal circumstances as acknowledged by Day and Gu (2007). Merton's (1957) concepts of different types of workers can also help to explain why people might opt or be forced to change career path. "Settlers" and "transients" are identified in Fenwick and Weir's research, so perhaps different types of people will respond or adapt to issues in differing ways. "Settlers" are defined as individuals that are restricted to a relevantly small geographic area which allows them to travel to work for personal and family reasons. Consequently, this group of people would be forced to leave the profession and contemplate alternative career options within the given geographic area should the pressures of a teaching career ultimately prove too much. This is especially relevant to Wales, as the rural nature of large areas of the country often mean that people are "settlers" and would not consider leaving an area.

In contrast, "transients" have a more fluid opinion on geographical area and their increased mobility means they are prepared to move to find work. In the modern world, it could be argued that the number of "transients" is increasing either due to personal preference with better transport links and the desire to travel or perhaps through the necessity of securing permanent and stable employment. In a wider context the nature of the global work force is constantly changing with developments in technology and political

changes so within the microcosm of teaching maybe we should not be surprised that change is occurring also.

As highlighted, teachers may move to secure a job, although this does not necessarily mean that they have left the profession. A growing number of teachers are finding employment overseas in international schools, where demands on staff are reduced and pay is often higher. Factoring other lifestyle choices, these overseas vacancies look increasingly favourable. Especially when research suggests rising numbers of teachers believe that the UK government changes to curriculum along with national assessment processes, leave them feeling increasingly frustrated and exploited (Ruskin 2016).

Although, as the saying goes, is the grass always greener? Various locations around the world could appear attractive propositions, based on climate or culture. Ibrahim and Al-Taneiji's (2019) study of teacher satisfaction in Abu Dhabi schools implies that the same issues and concerns are as prevalent overseas as they are in the UK. They categorise the concerns into two groups: motivational and maintenance factors. Motivational factors including job satisfaction, professional growth etc and maintenance consisting of more practical factors such as salary and working hours.

This small-scale research, based on nineteen teachers based in the UAE, mirrors the majority of the UK research in terms of the concerns raised by the participants. Obviously, the context of the issues differs slightly as the UAE and the UK are very different places; nevertheless, there are clear recurring themes. Salary, job security and work load are heavily mentioned by the participants that hail from a wide range of countries. This suggests that the themes for teacher discord are universal. Linking this literature with the data that more UK teachers are leaving to teach abroad, it might be interesting to see how many of these teachers remain in teaching even when abroad. As, if the same issues exist, what factor allows them to accept the issues abroad but not in the UK. However, such research would prove difficult to find as it would require a long period of time to complete and obtaining a sample would be problematic. UK based teachers that had left to teach overseas would have to be tracked until if or when they ultimately left the profession. As noted in the majority of the literature, maintaining access to individuals once they have left the profession, and therefore the studies, is a considerable problem.

A significantly larger, more detail study of teacher retention rates in Belgium, conducted over a five-year period, again resonates with the rest of the mentioned literature. This large-scale research has obtained a large amount of quantitative data allows it to be readily analysed and trends to be identified. However, the scale of the research means that some of the nuance, qualitative data that a smaller scale study would generate is not available.

The detailed data collected has enabled Dupriez et al (2016) to draw some interesting conclusions. Namely that regardless of gender or phase of teaching, e.g. primary or secondary, the attrition rate is considerably higher among early career teachers. This is clearly observable in table 3, along with other trends within the data. Most notably, there is a sizeable difference between the primary and secondary phase, with approximately a quarter of the secondary participants leaving after the first year of teaching. After the initial year of teaching both the primary and secondary attrition rates begin to level out and there is not such a marked difference between the two phases. Although, this data is based within the Belgian education system, averaging out the percentages appears to correlate with the approximate 10% teacher attrition rate widely quoted in the UK based literature.

In terms of explaining the observed trends within the data, Dupriez et al (2016) acknowledge that their collected data echoes the findings of many worldwide studies. From these studies, it emerges that attrition rates for teachers in the early years of their careers is very high, but that an individual's qualifications and the environment they work in are contributing factors to these high attrition rates.

Regards the teacher's gender, this study confers with Wilkins (2017) notion that the more qualified the individual the more likely they are to leave the profession. Highly qualified individuals are always going to be sort after and often will possess skills that are transferrable to a wide range of professions. As previously mentioned, higher salaries and more favourable working conditions will act as major draws away from a career in teaching. Indeed, this study concludes that secondary phase teachers are the more likely to leave for these reasons. This is not surprising as secondary teachers tend to have a specific subject specialism such as mathematics, sciences or languages which all readily lend themselves to other career paths outside of teaching.

<i>Primary</i>	<i>1st year</i>	<i>2nd year</i>	<i>3rd year</i>	<i>4th year</i>	<i>5th year</i>	<i>N</i>
2005-2006	9.7%	5.6%	3.3%	1.9%	1.9%	1603
2006-2007	11.8%	4.8%	3.4%	2.9%	4.2%	1572
2007-2008	11.0%	4.0%	3.2%			1666
2008-2009	11.3%	5.7%				1570
<i>Secondary</i>	<i>1st year</i>	<i>2nd year</i>	<i>3rd year</i>	<i>4th year</i>	<i>5th year</i>	<i>N</i>
2005-2006	25.1%	7.6%	4.7%	3.5%	2.3%	2716
2006-2007	28.9%	7.1%	3.8%	3.3%	3.5%	2636
2007-2008	25.4%	8.4%	5.7%			2679
2008-2009	27.6%	9.7%				2663

Table 3 – Annual exit rates of early career teachers in Belgium - Dupriez, Delvaux and Lothaire (2016)

However, in contrast to other studies this research seems to suggest that the socio-economic environment of the school has little impact on the attrition rates. This is a slightly surprising result as you would assume that schools in more challenging settings would have more of the negative factors that lead individuals to decide to leave the profession. Dupriez et al (2016) acknowledge that additional analysis is required to confirm this finding. However, they propose an interesting explanation for the perceived anomaly; that schools in areas with challenging socio-economic conditions often provide a relatively stable job option within that particular geographical area. Therefore, for individuals in these areas, "settlers", teaching might be a favourable career option compared to other employment opportunities.

A constraint with a large-scale sample size is that the majority of the data collected will be quantitative as this enables the data to be collated and analysed readily. This means that the conclusions are based on far less qualitative data than that of a smaller scale sample. As the subject of teacher retention involves a multitude of factors often stemming from a person's perception or feelings, the lack of qualitative data could be considered a limitation of this large-scale research.

When qualitative data is collected, the feeling of exploitation and unreasonable demands resonate throughout the literature and also in the media coverage of the teaching profession. Unions such as the ATL claim that four in ten teachers will leave the profession within the first year, citing an unmanageable workload along with poor pupil behaviour as the major contributing factors for their decision to leave.

Workload concerns are also an issue with teachers located in rural areas. Possibly, you would assume that the work life balance in a rural setting would be preferable to an urban location. However, Handal et al (2018) found that teachers in rural locations have deep concerns over workload. A number of the participants noted that they are pressured into taking on head of department responsibilities, having to teach outside their specialism and that the smaller work force means there is less opportunity to share good practise and ask colleagues for advice.

In a UK setting, Marsh (2016) notes that up to 92% of teachers enter the profession in order to make a difference to pupils' lives; though many become quickly disillusioned by the day to day reality of the job. The government seems oblivious to the fact that people that have come into the profession for the right reasons whilst showing the commitment to train to achieve qualified status cannot cope with the demands of the profession.

Sceptics would say that teacher training needs to be more rigorous and accurately reflect the realities of a career in teaching. Meaning that qualified teachers enter the profession with a clear understanding of expectations and demands. However, the counter argument would be that the demands are unrealistic. Constant curriculum changes, assessment changes and bureaucracy, driven by the government, all exacerbate a teacher's work load and often distract from the job in hand of teaching a class the subject that the individual is passionate about.

Concurrently to the increase in teacher attrition rates, awareness of the importance of mental health and well-being has been on the rise. People are becoming more conscious of their mental health and some of the stigma around discussing the issues is decreasing. Teachers, along with all employees, are considering their well-being more than ever and evaluating the work-life balance. Future employment legislation might well recognise well-being more strongly but until then perhaps the teaching profession could be more proactive with its approach to teacher well-being.

Suggestions have been made that the inspectorate, Ofsted in this case, should look at teacher turnover when making judgements on a school (Woodcock, 2016). In addition, that schools should be held accountable for the well-being of their staff. These are well meaning but the viability of this type of suggestion is questionable. It is somewhat contradictory to make staff well-being a performance indicator when a major contributing factor to poor staff well-being is the pressures generated from performance indicators. Furthermore, the same research acknowledges that mirroring teacher attrition rates, the number of head teachers leaving the profession is on the rise, leading to the conclusion that yet another performance indicator could make the situation even worse.

Stress is thread running through a number of the factors that appear to contribute high levels of teacher attrition. It is a subjective area, as what an individual perceives as stressful differs from person to person. As Jepson and Forrest (2006) note different people will deal with stress in different ways. Their findings based on a group of ninety-five teachers, both primary and secondary, male and female, suggest that personality differences are crucial to understanding why some people suffer work-related stress where as others do not. As with a number of the studies included in this review, there does appear to be a difference between the primary and secondary phase but no significant difference between genders. Though Jepson and Forrest's (2006) work implies these conclusions, due to the relatively small sample size the correlations are weak.

However, some large-scale research on the impact of stress on teacher attrition is available. A Scottish paper by Mulholland et al (2017) based on nearly four hundred secondary school teachers identifies stress as a major issue within their working life. This research particularly focussed on middle leaders, individuals with a number of years' service in their teaching careers and who are prepared to increase their level of responsibility within their schools by becoming middle leaders. Referencing the majority of the literature on teacher attrition, these are teachers that have completed the early years of the career, showing resilience to overcome the stresses and issues identified by teachers that have left the profession. In spite of this, constant changes by the government to the education system mean that this sub-section within the teaching profession, 63% from Mulholland et al (2017), are becoming increasingly concerned with workload and the demands of their roles. This confirms that unless changes are made that the issue of teacher attrition within the UK will continue to be a problem and potentially the attrition rates over the next decade will increase yet further.

Outside of the UK, locations such as the UAE might attract teachers with the lure of high salaries but the Scandinavian countries such as Finland regularly top polls for high levels of literacy and numeracy. Suggesting that the education system in these countries is functioning effectively and you might conclude that the teachers in these areas would have a positive perception of their jobs. As with some literature found about teachers' feelings in the UAE, a large-scale study of over a thousand Finnish teachers would seem to suggest that this is an incorrect assumption to make. Santavirta et al (2007) concluded that the primary cause of job strain within their group of teachers was high demands, however low decision authority played a contributing factor also. Decision authority was defined as an individual's ability to influence their work content and working methods. Nearly 70% of the teachers that identified as "emotionally exhausted" perceived both these factors to be present.

Though these results cannot be used suggest that all teachers in Finland have the same outlook, they do mirror the literature from both other countries and the UK. "Emotional burnout" due to an unmanageable workload appears to be a recurring theme running through the various literature reviewed. However, due to the subject matter, a significant amount to the data collected in these studies is self-reported. Bias could be amplified as teachers that are unhappy within the profession could be more likely to participate in these studies. In addition, the perception of stress and work load is subjective, as mentioned different individuals will deal with it in different ways.

In contrast to endeavouring to ascertain the reasons as to why people opt to leave the profession; it might be equally fruitful to investigate the reasons as to why people stay in the profession. Establishing the type of working environment and conditions that keep people within teaching could help inform to adapt future schemes or incentives to improve teacher retention rates. Less research is available on teacher retention rates in long-service teachers as the focus has been on high attrition rates of teachers within the first few years for their careers.

A government report (2004) suggests that there is a positive link between the length of service of teachers and pupil outcomes, as existing teachers are familiar with the National Curriculum or exam specifications but also that they have had time to get to know the pupils. Existing teachers also have years of experience in the profession dealing with the day-to-day problems and issues that inevitably arise. When these practitioners leave the profession, they take with them this knowledge and it is not passed onto lesser experienced teachers. In turn, these lesser experienced teachers feel overwhelmed and ill prepared to deal with situations and the cycle of attrition is perpetuated. As previously mentioned, high attrition rates also have economic costs as more teachers are required to be trained but also the costs involved for schools having to recruit new members of staff.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the quality or effectiveness of a long-serving teacher is not always higher than that of a less experienced practitioner. Research is divided on this matter, with some research suggesting that teacher's commitment increases over time. Day et al. (2007) found that long-serving teachers are more likely to become less effective with lower levels of commitment, demonstrated both in pupil outcomes and in personal perception. This causes a limitation to the research as it is purely looking to find reasons as to why teachers leave the profession and not to assess the quality of the teachers that leave or remain.

Chiong, Menzies and Parameshwaran (2017) research into the motivations of teachers with ten or more years teaching experience in England points out that there are a range of factors that contribute to an individual's motivation. Their research is based on a large group of over nine hundred teachers with a range of teaching experience, over thirty years in some cases. Gender, subject or which phase the teachers taught in was not separated; these differing sectors could possess differing views and opinions so the data produced is generalised as just the findings from experienced teachers. A longer time frame to carry out the

research might have allowed a representative sample to be used. A potentially significant limitation is that responses are heavily-based on the participants answering honestly. In addition, the smaller sample selected to participate in the questionnaire were not randomly selected. This may have resulted in “self-selection” bias as more enthusiastic teachers are likely to have replied over their less motivated colleagues. Therefore, the findings from the questionnaires are representative of the group but cannot be assumed to be categorically true for the whole teaching profession.

Intrinsic and altruistic factors both play an important role in deciding whether to remain in the profession. Consistently research in the UK noted extrinsic reasons such as salary and holidays play a lesser role. A key finding from Chiong et al (2017) is that teachers that remain in the profession appear to hold intrinsic and altruistic factors to a higher importance than teachers that have left the profession. This leads to an important conclusion that any future retention strategies need to encourage and nurture vocationally based reasons to remain within the profession rather than extrinsic incentives.

However, extrinsic factors cannot be dismissed as they do still appear to be contributing factors to the decision to remain or leave. Instead of considering extrinsic factors to be simple incentives such as “good holidays”, we should think of them as ways that teachers used to sustain their hectic lives and to enable them to achieve a healthy and sustainable work-life balance.

Resonating with Fenwick and Weir’s (2010) research on Scottish student teachers, reasons for staying or leaving the profession are complex and can or do change over time. It is possible for teachers to simultaneously increase their motivation altruistically, intrinsically, extrinsically or professionally but it is equally possible for motivation to decline for a variety of reasons. With long-serving teachers it appears that there is a fundamental feeling of validity in their choice of career that sustains them through difficult periods of time.

The impact of future retention strategies could be even greater if they incorporated or enabled teachers to feel valued and have a sense of “perceived professional mastery”. As all the literature suggests the majority of the reasons, personal or professional, intrinsic or extrinsic, are somewhat intertwined but essential can be rooted back to whether individuals feel valued, capable and competent at doing the job for which they are employed. Ultimately, a motivated workforce will be a productive one, which in the case of teaching, would maximise pupil success and progress. Success breeds success so creating this ethos will initiate a positive cycle and lead to more teachers remaining within the profession.

Creating this type of working environment is the challenge that schools and ultimately the government has to face. Both the UK and specifically the Welsh government have suggested in recent years that teachers should be able to take sabbaticals a few years into their careers. This was suggested as recently as 2018 by the education secretary Damian Hinds, stating that five million pounds would be set aside to facilitate the scheme. Unsurprisingly, this suggestion has drawn both positive and negative comments. Opponents question whether the money set aside would be enough for such a scheme. Mulholland et al (2017) findings, specifically about middle leaders, would seem to approve of the option of sabbaticals for more experienced teachers. Potentially, giving them the chance to take a break from what is generally perceived to be an increasingly stressful and demanding working environment. However, what is to say that teachers taking sabbaticals would choose to leave the profession after perhaps having time to explore other employment avenues. Indeed, in contrary to solving the problem of teacher retention, opponents would argue this would only amplify the problem.

Other countries have also tried to solve the problem by setting aside funding for various schemes or incentives. The Australian study in rural schools reveals that housing subsidies, transfer incentives and bursaries could be implemented to retain or relocate teachers to areas with abnormally high teacher

attrition rates. This approach is echoed in the Abu Dhabi study with teachers being offered lucrative packages to teach in certain locations.

The findings from the research suggest that these would just be “quick fixes” as the issues at the heart of the problem of teacher retention will not have been addressed. Initially motivation from these monetary incentives will be generated but on the whole this effect will soon dissipate as the issues causing high teacher attrition rates take their toll.

Inevitably there will continue to be changes in the education system enforced by the government and to a certain extent, the work load will remain high. If monetary, extrinsic incentives are not a viable long-term solution then the alternative is to take a more holistic approach to the issues. As identified throughout the literature, stress and feeling undervalued are some of the more intrinsic factors that contribute to teacher attrition rates. With teachers having to deal with the increasing demands within their jobs, there is growing support for the use of meditation in both schools and in the lives of teachers (Konza and Pappas, 2008). Potentially, such a technique could equip teachers with the ability to regulate their work-life balance and maintain a healthy mind set.

In addition, both teacher training and programmes aimed at teachers in the early years of their careers need to have a greater attentiveness towards individuals (Dupriez et al, 2016). Teachers who feel secure and valued in their positions are more satisfied (Ibrahim and Al-Taneiji, 2019) and therefore less likely to leave the profession. Such schemes are currently being trialled on a small scale within the UK. The RETAIN teacher retention programme based in Cornwall is one such example.

In its infancy and only completed by a small number of early career teachers, the programme has been evaluated thus far by Ovenden-Hope et al (2018). Early outcomes are positive, as all participants had remained within the profession and in fact achieved a leadership role within their school, in sharp contrast to the general trends of teacher attrition observed nationally. The programme places an emphasis on coaching and mentoring the participants, providing support and advice. It also encourages participants to be self-evaluating and reflective practitioners, all aiming to allow the individuals to feel valued, respected and in control of their careers. Though there is no control group to compare the small sample size findings against, the qualitative data obtained through interviews does reflect positively how the RETAIN programme has enabled participants to remain in the teaching profession during their early years for their careers.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is clear from the various sources that the current levels of teacher attrition rates are an issue and will continue to be unless changes are made. Recurring themes such as workload, salary, career opportunities, geographical restrictions, job security and resilience resonated through the various literature both within the UK based and international sources. Efforts to alleviate the issues around these themes can essentially be divided into two groups: intrinsic and extrinsic. It would appear that the extrinsic based incentives will keep teachers within the profession to a point. However, in the longer term, effective intrinsic based schemes and incentives will seem to be more affective at solving the issue of teacher retention. It is crucial that teacher resilience and confidence remains high to cope with the increasing demand within the profession.

Perhaps importantly it must be understood that a “one size fits all approach” to teacher retention strategies may not prove affective. As each individual school and or geographical area has its own unique set of challenges and constraints so to do the individual teachers. In addition, throughout people’s careers their situations, both personal and profession will change, meaning that motivations and perceptions will alter. Essentially, it comes down to employees feeling valued and respected in their chosen career and working environment.

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