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SCHOOL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS AND PRACTICES, TEACHER TURNOVER, AND TEACHER RETENTION IN
THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: A TRIANGULATION APPROACH

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Abstract

School leadership and school leaders' behaviors and practices can significantly affect the behavior of teachers. Retaining teachers in the teaching profession is important. Unfortunately, many teachers around the world have left or are deciding to leave this profession, a phenomenon called "teacher turnover." High teacher turnover affects the overall quality of teaching and learning. Based on 2015 data from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, teacher turnover is high in the United Arab Emirates. There are many factors that contribute to teacher turnover. This study investigated the factors affecting teachers' turnover by exploring the role of school leadership behaviors and practices on teacher turnover and retention. The main research questions guided the study to explore teacher turnover factors and drive suggestions for teacher retention. Using a convergent/triangulation approach, the research employed mixed methods to analyze both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 404 schoolteachers in Al Ain. The qualitative data were drawn from semi-structured interviews with nine school teachers that aimed to delve deeply into this phenomenon. The results showed that the personal factor of collegial relationships among teachers, as well as system-related factors—including compensation, incentives, and recognition—mitigate teachers' turnover intentions. Conversely, heavy workloads and a lack of appreciation are school leadership-related factors that worsen turnover rates. School leaders can enhance retention by praising, rewarding, trusting, and supporting teachers. The findings also revealed that teachers believe school leaders should cultivate a relationship of mutual trust, respect, and support among teachers to retain teaching staff.

Keywords: school leadership, leadership behaviors and practices, teacher turnover, teacher retention