

TEACHER RETENTION IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY
INTO PRINCIPALS' LEADERSHIP

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AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of *Mukunda Kumar Giri* for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in Educational Leadership*, presented on 9 October 2025, entitled *Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals' Leadership*.

APPROVED BY

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This study, conducted to explore teacher retention in private schools through a narrative inquiry into principals' leadership, reflects principals' experiences of helping teachers remain in their schools and how teachers narrate their stories regarding their retention. Here, I have attempted to identify the contributing dimensions that lead to teacher attrition or motivate them to continue their service.

Adopting an interpretivist paradigm, I used a narrative inquiry method to explore the intricate dynamics of teacher retention through subjective expressions as a qualitative research method, where I interpreted the narratives through the theory of transformational leadership, relational leadership, and Herzberg's Two-Factor motivational theory. The study stood for multiple realities as an ontological stance, where the knowledge was gained through the interpretation of interviews as an epistemological stance, and there was a value-laden axiology that valued the participants' voices. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews with six principals and three teachers selected intentionally from private schools in Bharatpur Metropolitan, Chitwan District, Nepal. The collected data or narratives were analyzed to identify leadership approaches and challenges for teacher retention.

The study reveals that teacher retention also depends on the principal's leadership approach in Nepalese private schools. It is the principal's relationship and approach to teachers that motivates teachers to work for the long term, being emotionally and professionally attached to the organization. Hence, the principal's role goes beyond administrative functions to emotionally support, give valued recognition, and manage professional growth of teachers. The narratives of the

participants demonstrated that the leaders who followed transformational leadership and relational leadership could effectively retaining teachers because they focused on inspiration, trust-building, and empowerment emphasizing meaningful relationships and psychological safety. The narratives also reflect that the effective principal's leadership aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, keeping balance in the hygiene factors with motivational ones and addressing layers of human needs. Critiquing the transactional leadership model, this study postulates another insight that intrinsic motivators are more important than extrinsic factors in teacher retention.

As a concluding insight, the study reveals that teacher retention can only be effectively achieved through a human-centric leadership approach. For this, the leadership has to address teachers' evolving needs and expectations. Every teacher expects to get respected and dignified recognition in the organization and opportunities for their professional growth, along with basic financial requirements. So, the leadership that fosters empathy, builds relational trust, and understands cultural sensitivity can emotionally attach teachers to their organization, and they have a sense of ownership towards the organization. This helps teachers to be motivated to continue their service. School administrators and policymakers can use the findings of this study as references to enhance teacher retention and improve educational quality in private schools in Nepal. It also offers practical human-centric leadership approaches that enrich leadership literature, enriched with culturally contextualized leadership models.

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9 October 2025

Mukunda Kumar Giri

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शोध सार

शैक्षिक नेतृत्व तथा व्यवस्थापनमा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर डिग्रीको लागि मुकुन्द कुमार गिरीको शोध प्रबन्धको शीर्षक “निजी विद्यालयहरूमा शिक्षक टिकाइमा प्राचार्यको नेतृत्वको भूमिका: एक कथात्मक अनुसन्धान” २३ असोज २०८२ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो ।

.....
प्रा. धनपति सुवेदी, पीएचडी
शोध निर्देशक

नेपालको निजी विद्यालयहरूमा शिक्षक टिकाइमा प्राचार्यको नेतृत्वको भूमिका अन्वेषण गर्नुनै यस अनुसन्धानको उद्देश्य रहेको थियो। यस अनुसन्धानले दुईवटा प्रश्नहरूलाई सम्बोधन गरेको छ, प्रथम, शिक्षकलाई विद्यालयमै रहन प्रेरित गरिएका अभ्यास बारे विद्यालय प्राचार्यहरूले आफ्ना अनुभवहरू कसरी बाँड्छन्, र दोस्रो, शिक्षकहरूले आफ्नो टिकाइको सम्बन्धमा आफ्ना कथाहरू कसरी बयान गर्छन्।

व्याख्यात्मक दृष्टिकोण (interpretivist paradigm) अँगालेको यस अनुसन्धानले कथात्मक अनुसन्धान (narrative inquiry) मार्फत गुणात्मक पद्धतिमा आधारित रही शिक्षक टिकाइका जटिल आयामहरूलाई उजागर गरेको छ। यसै सन्दर्भमा, यस अध्ययनले रूपान्तरणात्मक नेतृत्व (transformational leadership), सम्बन्धात्मक नेतृत्व (relational leadership) र हर्जबर्गको दुई-तत्व प्रेरणा सिद्धान्त (Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory) हरु लाई सैद्धान्तिक फ्रेमवर्कको रूपमा लिएको छ ।

यसै गरि यस अध्ययन गर्दा बनाइएको दार्शनिक आधार अनुसार यस अध्ययनले बहुविध यथार्थहरूलाई अन्तर्वस्तु (ontology) को रूपमा स्वीकारिएको छ। ज्ञान सिद्धान्त (epistemology) अनुसार अन्तर्वार्ताको व्याख्याबाट ज्ञान प्राप्त हुन्छ भन्ने मान्यता गरिएको छ, र मूल्यवाद (axiology) को सिद्धान्त अनुसार सहभागीहरूको आवाजलाई मूल्य दिइएको छ । अध्ययनको क्रममा तथ्याङ्क संकलनको लागि छ वटा निजी विद्यालयका प्राचार्य र तीन जना शिक्षकहरूसँग अन्तर्वार्ता लिइएको छ । सहभागीहरूको छनोट सेवा अवधि, लिंग र उमेरका आधारमा नियत रूपमा (purposively) गरिएको थियो।

यस अनुसन्धानात्मक अध्ययनले नेपालको निजी विद्यालयमा शिक्षक टिकाइको मूल कारक प्राचार्यको नेतृत्व शैली हो भन्ने देखाउँछ। नेतृत्व केवल प्रशासनिक कार्यमा सीमित नरही, भावनात्मक समर्थन, कदर र व्यावसायिक वृद्धिको अवसर सुनिश्चित गर्नुपर्नेमा आवश्यकता देखिन्छ। यसरी प्राचार्य र शिक्षकबीचको सम्बन्धले शिक्षकलाई संगठनप्रति भावनात्मक र व्यावसायिक रूपमा आबद्ध गराई लामो

समयसम्म टिक्न प्रेरित गर्छ भन्नेकुरा यस अध्ययनले देखाउँछ। सहभागीहरूको कथा अनुसार प्राचार्यहरूले रूपान्तरणात्मक र सम्बन्धात्मक नेतृत्व शैली अपनाउँदा शिक्षकहरू बढी टिकेको पाइन्छ भने यी शैलीहरूले प्रेरणा, विश्वास निर्माण, सशक्तिकरण र मनोवैज्ञानिक सुरक्षालाई प्राथमिकता दिएको देखिन्छ। साथै, सहभागीहरूको कथाअनुसार हर्जबर्गको दुई-तत्व सिद्धान्त र मास्लोको आवश्यकता श्रेणी (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs) सँग मिल्दोजुल्दो हुने गरि शिक्षक टिकाइमा आन्तरिक प्रेरकहरू (intrinsic motivators) जस्तै स्वामित्वको भावना, भावनात्मक सम्बन्ध, र पेशागत बिकासका अवसरहरूले बाह्य प्रेरणाहरू(जस्तै तलब)भन्दा बढी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका खेल्दछ।

यस अध्ययनले लेनदेनात्मक नेतृत्व (transactional leadership) लाई आलोचना गर्दै गहिरो सम्बन्ध र सांस्कृतिक संवेदनशीलतालाई महत्त्व दिने मानवकेन्द्रित नेतृत्वको वकालत गरेको छ। अध्ययनमा लामो समय सम्म शिक्षकलाई टिकाउन नेतृत्वले उनीहरूको व्यक्तिगत अपेक्षाको सम्मान, भावनाको कदर, पेशागत विकास र परिवार/समुदायसँगको समन्वयलाई पनि ध्यान दिन आवश्यकहुन्छ भन्ने देखिएको छ।

निष्कर्षमा भन्नु पर्दा, शिक्षक टिकाइ केवल मानवकेन्द्रित नेतृत्वद्वारा सम्भव छ। नेतृत्वले सहानुभूति, सम्बन्धमा आधारित विश्वास र सांस्कृतिक संवेदनशीलता प्रदर्शन गर्न सक्नुपर्दछ। यसैबाट शिक्षकहरू संगठनसँग जोडिन्छन् र उनीहरूमा स्वामित्व भावना बढ्छ, जसले उनीहरूलाई निरन्तर सेवा दिन प्रेरित गर्दछ।

यसर्थ नेतृत्व साहित्यलाई सशक्त बनाउन व्यवहारिक तथा सांस्कृतिक सन्दर्भमा आधारित नेतृत्व विधिहरू प्रस्तुत गर्दै शिक्षक टिकाइ र शैक्षिक गुणस्तर सुधारका लागि यो अनुसन्धान विद्यालय प्रशासक र नीतिनिर्माताहरूका लागि उपयोगी सन्दर्भ बन्न सक्दछ।

.....
मुकुन्द कुमार गिरी
उपाधी उम्मेदवार

२३ असोज २०८२

This dissertation, entitled *Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals' Leadership* presented by *Mukunda Kumar Giri* on 9 October 2025.

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I understand that my dissertation will become a part of the permanent collection of the library of Kathmandu University. My signature below authorizes the release of my dissertation to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, and it has not been submitted for candidature for any other degree at any other university.

.....

9 October 2025

Mukunda Kumar Giri

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my loving family, parents, and all the educators, especially school leaders, who prefer working with a human-centric leadership approach.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CEHRD	Center for Education and Human Resource Development
KUSOED	Kathmandu University School of Education
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NEP	National Education Policy
PABSON	Private and Boarding Schools' Organization Nepal
SESP	Nepal's School Education Sector Plan
SMC	School Management Committee
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overall discussion of the research, starting with the background that comprises unfolding the curtain or setting the scene, as my anecdote is followed by the statement of the problem in this theme, the purpose of the study, research questions related to the title, the rationale of the study, and the delimitation of the study area to introduce this research study on “Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals’ Leadership.”

Setting the Scene

Having worked as a teacher for 15 years and as a principal for 15 years at private schools, I am closely aware of the role of school leadership in motivating and inspiring teachers. My journey began at 17 when I started teaching at a private boarding school. Simultaneously, I continued my higher education and earned two master’s degrees in English and Educational Management. As a result of my dedication and smart, hard work to produce remarkable outputs, I became a school principal after 15 years of teaching experience at different schools. Currently, I am serving as the school principal in a different location, facing the challenge of teacher turnover. During my entire tenure, I encountered various leadership styles at multiple private schools. In some schools, there were very supportive and caring leaders who gave ample opportunities for career growth. While in other schools, leaders were boastful and autocratic and strictly behaved with teachers to engage them in teaching-learning activities. Likewise, some schools that were rich in infrastructure provided good salaries and other remunerations, while some schools were executing their programs in poor physical management. However, the ratio of teacher turnover was surprising. Despite receiving a good salary, there was a frequent turnover of teachers in some schools, whereas in some schools, teachers continued their service by being dedicated and committed to providing the highest possible quality education despite receiving a modest salary. I also remained in certain schools for extended periods, while I left some schools after a short service period.

The schools where I worked for extended periods had supportive and nurturing leaders who acted as guardians, fostering a sense of ownership among teachers who always let us feel that we were integral to a big school family. As a teacher, while

talking with colleagues from other schools, I found teachers leaving schools despite good salaries and other amenities because the principals of those schools exhibited rude behavior and boastful responses as dictators and had exploitative attitudes in terms of making them work for more than 8 hours a day with low wages or without additional payment for overtime. This kind of scenario still exists in private schools. So, I realized teacher retention was not solely linked to tangible benefits such as salary and additional facilities. This experience has led me to believe that there may be a notable link between effective leadership of principals and teacher retention. It needed further exploration to understand the intricate dynamics of teacher retention through the perspectives of principals' leadership approaches.

In Nepali education, private schools play a vital role in providing quality education, alongside public schools. However, in 30 years of my career, both as a teacher and a principal in private schools, I have experienced the trend of the frequent turnover of qualified teachers after a short period of service, despite their quality performance and good relation with students. Everybody knows teacher retention contributes to the smooth operation and overall success of educational institutions. However, teacher attrition is a critical issue hindering the quality of education in private schools and has been a major challenge in private schools in Nepal. Good teachers who stay for a long time make the school better. However, teachers do not give long-term service in private schools; they either change their profession or jump to other organizations after serving for a few years. These schools are facing challenges related to teacher turnover.

Background of the Study

The facilities and remuneration that private schools provide are comparatively low (Chatkuli & Aryal, 2020; Lama, 2022; Salary Inbox, 2025; Osman, 2025). Generally, it is noticed how much teachers get paid, and the school's environment is very important for keeping teachers (Shrestha, 202). However, my observation says salary and the school's physical environment are not the only facets that encourage teachers to remain and determine their job satisfaction and quality performance. There can be other facets that motivate teachers to continue their service in an organization. When I was a teacher, many of my colleagues left school and joined college, foreign employment, government schools, government civil service, and some started businesses. Later, when I became the school principal, I explored and implemented various strategies to support teacher retention. I managed to provide

better facilities and remuneration. However, despite offering them competitive salaries, medical benefits, gratuity funds, and educational facilities, retaining teachers always remained a challenge. Teachers still jumped to other organizations after a few years of service. To my surprise, I observed that some teachers in other private schools, despite lower pay scales and amenities, exhibited a long-term commitment and played influential roles. This means that only the facilities and remuneration do not determine teacher retention. I realized that the prestige of a teaching job extends beyond organizational dimensions. Besides physical facilities and remuneration, it also covers how teachers perceive their work, how they are perceived by the organization, and how the community looks at their profession. So, to improve retention, some changes in policy, better compensation, improved work environments, and robust professional development support are essential (Ojha, 2016). So, as per Shrestha (2022), both the school's financial and the cultural aspects significantly impact teacher retention.

During my 15 years as a teacher, I looked to my supervisor or line manager as a guardian. I expected them to serve as professional counselors, guiding me not only in pedagogical strategies but also in providing feedback on career challenges. Essentially, I sought a mentor who could motivate me during difficult times. Whenever I received such support from them, I felt a sense of security and ownership within the organization. As a result, I served at that school for a long time. This let me feel that teacher retention can be enhanced through effective mentoring programs, and this mentoring can be supportive where mentors and mentees collaborate well, receive adequate time and support, and regularly assess the effectiveness of their collaboration as mentors and mentees. So, for teachers' retention at schools, Callahan (2016) suggests having good mentoring programs where mentors and mentees work well together, have enough time and support, and check if the mentoring is working. Leaders need to make everyone understand how important this is. Teachers have pride in their work, and money alone might not be enough to keep them teaching. Just paying teachers more won't always make them stay in their jobs; they also need to be respected and have chances to keep learning and getting better. It's important to make the place they work better, give them rewards, and respect their role. They should also have chances to keep learning and growing. So, working conditions, incentives, and status of teachers, as well as providing opportunities for their continuous learning and growth, need to be improved (Kavenuke, 2013). It is also seen that some teachers start

teaching jobs without confirming if that is their career goal. After graduating from a certain level of university education, they jump into teaching jobs as a platform, although they do not know what an educator means and what they are expected to perform. To address this challenge, a job induction program for new teachers is required that gives clear rules and principles of education and explains how they can get support from the respective organization in terms of their performance. In this respect, Adhikari (2022) advocates improving the job induction system along with developing a clear policy, designing a specific framework, managing adequate resources and support, and conducting regular evaluations and feedback. School leaders who perceive teachers as team members can help mitigate job stress and burnout; it fosters a sense of purpose of being in the organization among staff. This kind of thought can be particularly effective in the demanding educational sector, where burnout is a common issue leading to turnover of teachers (Sheikh et al., 2019). So, can the principal's care for teachers bring happiness and job satisfaction in schools and help teachers stay around? School leaders who show kindness and honesty and can inspire others create a good work environment. Can this kind of principal's leadership reduce stress and tiredness by making teachers feel like they are part of something important and that they belong to a family or a community? It is observed and noticed that teachers feel more involved and excited about their work when they have leaders who make their work feel meaningful. These leaders focus on building strong relationships and supporting each other, which makes teachers feel connected and ultimately makes them want to stay. If a teacher's own beliefs match the school's spirit of teaching-learning activities and overall school management, they'll probably want to keep working there. Feeling this match makes them happier, and they realize that they belong to a big family. How is this possible? What can the role of the principal's leadership be in creating such feelings among the subordinates? Can good leadership inspire coworkers to continue their service despite the moderate level of amenities they are being provided? This is yet to be explored. So, this research looks into the reasons teachers continue working in private schools in Nepal, focusing on internal motivations and the influence of leadership. It explores teachers' views on their roles and how school leaders can support their retention. The research aims to investigate teachers' job satisfaction, discover why they often leave, and see how leaders can encourage them to stay by appealing to their inner motivations.

Besides all these extrinsic motivational dimensions and the amenities that a school provides, how the school principal behaves or treats teachers and manages to keep their jobs prestigious seems to be the most important facet. Today, teachers are jumping to other jobs, leaving their school jobs within a short period of their service due to an uncomfortable school culture and low salary (Shrestha, 2022). Likewise, Adhikari (2023) also reported that 28% of new teachers intended to leave their jobs in Chitwan. If this trend of teacher attrition goes on, private schools will not only get students but also teachers because educators are leaving this job, thinking that it is a pool where they can drown (Education International, 2024; Neema Academy, 2025; Osman, 2025). As a consequence, private schools will be at high risk of collapsing. So, the role of the principal is not only to recruit teachers; it is rather to sustain them. If teachers are leaving their teaching jobs, it is urgent to meditate on why teachers are leaving and why they are not interested in continuing their service. The principal should be socially aware of this issue and learn what teachers are looking for and what problems they are facing. Is this happening because principals do not care about this issue? This aspect is overlooked; therefore, principals have not been able to address the issue of teacher attrition. There is no such study that reflects this issue and recommends any strategies to address it in Nepal yet. Therefore, I am interested in diving into this area to explore the real essence of this agenda through a qualitative study. Hence, the title “Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals’ Leadership” highlights the central theme, i.e., the role of principal’s leadership in teacher retention. How can the principal’s leadership help retain teachers with job satisfaction in a conducive work environment? So, it looks at the internal facets within private schools in Nepal that affect whether teachers stay or leave.

Statement of Problem

During my 30 years of career, both as a teacher and a principal in private schools, I observed and experienced that the dignity and contribution of private schools in the national educational sector are tremendous in the context of Nepal. In Nepal, most parents, who can even hardly afford it, prefer educating their children in private schools, because private schools are highly valued for their educational contribution to the national education sector, and parents are inclined towards private schools (Kadariya, 2025). The overall standard of education in the country is significantly influenced by the quality of teaching in these schools. However, it is equally challenging to retain such experienced and qualified teachers for the long term

in these schools. Their frequent turnover not only disrupts the learning process and affects student-teacher emotional connections but also increases operational expenses in teacher recruitment and adds a burden to school management. Students get connected to the teachers and feel comfortable learning from them. Their connection doesn't last long; soon, they get another teacher and start struggling to get connected. This tendency disrupts the quality learning environment in the schools. On the other hand, due to the scarcity of qualified human resources, schools are compelled to hire less experienced educators as well. Moreover, it also disturbs the stability and team spirit of the remaining staff. They also start feeling dissatisfied with their jobs unreasonably because of the frequent departure of their teammates. Consequently, the remaining teachers also have low morale and become demotivated, which damages the organizational dignity and prestige in the long run.

In this respect, teacher retention has been a critical issue that directly impacts the smooth delivery of quality education. The frequent turnover of teachers brings multifaceted negative impacts (Ingersoll, 2001, as cited in Farinola, 2021). It not only leads to additional expenses but also disrupts the smooth educational continuity and breaks emotional connections between teacher and students, and consequently, brings negative effects on the learning outcomes of students. Moreover, frequent changes in teaching staff can erode the trust and confidence of parents and students, which is detrimental to the institution's reputation and effectiveness in private schools. Hence, addressing this issue is crucial for maintaining educational quality in private schools of Nepal and requires further attention from policymakers, administrators, educators, and other stakeholders.

For the retention of teachers, the salary and incentives are moderately increased every couple of years in private schools. We used to offer eight thousand rupees per month for teaching six periods in a week four years ago; now we pay ten to twelve thousand rupees. Teachers are also provided with various opportunities for professional growth in private schools. The mechanism of performance appraisal is also introduced. All other recreational facilities and friendly working environments are managed as much as possible or as much as the owners can afford in many private schools. However, it is so controversial that some teachers are working happily with low wages; they have been working in private schools for long periods, even with low pay, indicating that leadership may be a key factor in teacher retention; this scenario suggests an area for further research. On the other hand, a significant number of

teachers are leaving the profession despite getting a moderate level of facilities, and some are jumping to other organizations, although they are not offered attractive facilities with comparatively much higher wages. What inspires some to stay in their service, and what motivates others to quit their service? Is there any role of the principal's leadership in that? Arthur and Bradley (2023) examine why teachers prefer to stay in some schools, though they are deprived areas; they studied using theories of motivation to understand their reasons and suggest some strategies to be implemented in schools to create supportive environments for teachers and students. However, they do not fully address how leaders can inspire teachers intrinsically in the context of private schools.

Despite continuous efforts from leadership and managerial aspects to reduce teacher attrition, the problem of teacher retention is increasing. Although teacher retention is crucial to ensure quality education, the issue of teacher attrition is overlooked by the concerned authority and policy makers, and why teacher retention has not been prioritized in private schools is a major concern here. If this issue is not addressed, it will create such a terrible situation in private schools that one day, private schools will be closed, not because they are not getting students, but because they are not getting teachers. When I joined my first school, I was selected out of 52 candidates for a single post; later, after 10 years, we could hardly get 10 applicants for a vacant post when I was the principal of the same school. Of them, getting a deserving one is tough. Therefore, it is essential to delve into the root causes of teachers' attrition in private schools. Much research on the themes of leadership and teacher retention is carried out. However, they do not cover the critical aspects of teacher retention in private schools in Nepal. Specifically, they lack comprehensive insight into three key areas, i.e., the role of the principal's leadership, intrinsic and extrinsic motivational dimensions, and other unexplored aspects like the work environment and career growth. Hence, we need to deeply explore how a principal's leadership attributes inspire teachers to be committed to serving for the long term. Meanwhile, it is also essential to learn what kind of leadership can be more effective in teacher retention. Likewise, it requires learning about the attributes of leadership and the facilities that the school provides to motivate teachers to continue in their jobs in the organization. Besides extrinsic motivational dimensions, what other motivational facets can keep them satisfied and more committed, and how can leadership play a role in fulfilling this? How can we tap into these other drivers to enhance teacher retention? This lets us

feel that many facets related to teacher retention have remained unaddressed in those existing studies. So, it requires investigating all those aspects that determine teacher retention; it can be beyond the obvious areas like salary and other remuneration. To bridge these gaps, further research is essential in the context of private schools in Nepal.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to explore the experiences of principals on the dimension of teacher retention in private schools through a narrative inquiry into principals' leadership. While doing so, it also explored the contributing dimensions that determine teachers' retention at their schools or their attrition from their schools and also reflected on what motivated them to continue their service.

Research Questions

In order to fulfill the aforementioned purpose of the study, the following questions became pertinent.

1. How do school principals share their experiences of helping their teachers remain in their schools?
2. How do teachers narrate their stories in relation to their retention in schools?

Rationale

This research is relevant and rational because it attempts to address the existing challenging issue of teacher attrition in private schools in Nepal. Teacher turnover not only increases operational and managerial costs of schools but also affects the stability, delivery, and quality of education. So, employee retention is essential for organizational success (Farinola, 2021). Despite different strategies, like periodic increments in salary, good infrastructure at school, free tiffin facilities, job induction, educational facilities for staff children, and so on, to encourage teachers to continue their service, the ratio of teacher retention in private schools has remained low. Many people perceive that only the financial aspect plays the most important role in determining whether teachers want to quit the profession or continue (Oke et al., 2016). However, there must be more to that. Therefore, this study aims to explain the pertinent role of principals' leadership in implementing intrinsic and extrinsic motivational dimensions to contribute to teachers' retention of their services. According to Demirtas and Karaca (2020), organizations require effective leaders with the necessary characteristics and skills to ensure their survival, professional and career growth, and achievement of organizational goals. It also considers the role of the

principal's leadership in determining teacher retention or attrition, particularly in low-income private schools, to improve educational outcomes. This research is useful in the Nepali context because it seeks to uncover and develop strategies that will enable educational leaders to motivate teachers for their retention. It helps to ensure the quality education provided through private schools, which is essential because only experienced, stable, and qualified teachers can significantly develop the academic standard; it also provides educational leaders with some strategic ideas to ensure the smooth operation and success of schools (Shrestha, 2022). Likewise, it reflects the reality of many Nepali private schools, where teachers join their teaching jobs and jump to other organizations within a short period before the impact of their performance is seen. Much research is conducted around the themes of leadership, teacher retention, and motivation. However, they seem to have failed to reflect the core feelings of teachers and leaders regarding the role of leadership in teacher retention, using both extrinsic and intrinsic motivational dimensions, along with creating a conducive work environment and providing opportunities for their professional and career growth. So, by providing actionable recommendations to school administrators and policymakers to enhance teacher retention and improve educational quality in private schools, this study partially contributes to making the standard of Nepali education higher. In this sense, this study intends to address the promise guaranteed by the constitution of Nepal in terms of making quality education accessible to all Nepalese. In this respect, this study ultimately supports the nation's educational advancement and long-term development.

Delimitation

The focus of this study was to explore the experiences of principals on the dimension of teacher retention in private schools through a narrative inquiry into principals' leadership. In this respect, the agenda of teacher retention is delimited to organizational climate, school culture, motivation, support, recognition, attachment, and professional growth managed by the principal's leadership in secondary-level private schools in this study. Through the interpretivist paradigm, this study explored the extrinsic and intrinsic motivational components of teacher retention as a narrative inquiry. Since this study didn't deal with all types of schools, like universities, community schools, or vocational training centers at the global level, the findings cannot be generalized to all educational institutions. It solely offers insight into the

school operating mechanism of private schools in relation to teachers' retention and attrition.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter comprises a comprehensive literature review that reflects multifaceted facets influencing the retention of teachers in Nepal's private schools. The central point of this study, "Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals' Leadership," is to explore the impact of leadership attributes on teacher retention. It delves into how leadership influences teachers' commitment to long-term service with quality performance despite moderate levels of incentives, remuneration, and other organizational facilities. In this regard, it is an exploration of how the role of the principal's leadership motivates teachers to perform better through long-term service and keeps them satisfied. So, this review section examines thematic, empirical, theoretical, and policy-related literature, aiming to construct a nuanced understanding of how leadership practices are harnessed to foster a conducive environment to retain skillful and experienced teachers that can enhance quality education.

Thematic Review

This section deals with various themes related to the title "Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals' Leadership." Here, some directly supportive themes of the research are discussed thoroughly.

Private Schools

"School" means a place where students study, and it is operated with both public and private investment, established under the prevalent law; the term 'school' means both community and institutional schools (Nepal Law Commission, 2018). A private school, in this regard, is an institution established and managed to execute teaching-learning activities as set by the Curriculum Development Center of the Nepal Government, in private investment by an investor or a certain group of investors, to educate students without receiving regular grants or funds from the government of Nepal (Chatkuli & Aryal, 2020). So, these schools are also known as institutional schools. In other words, according to this commission, any schools that are established and managed through private investment to provide early childhood development (ECD) classes, basic-level education, and secondary-level education are private schools. These schools, as determined by the Government of Nepal, are service-

oriented and dedicated to public welfare. I am exploring the circumstances of teacher retention in secondary-level schools.

We see teaching jobs at these private schools often do not provide long-term job security, nor do they offer any retirement benefits like pensions, as government schools do (Lama, 2022; Salary Inbox, 2025). Although the Nepal government has made it mandatory for all organizations to offer the Social Security Fund (SSF) compulsorily, this has yet to be implemented by all the schools (Lawneeti Associates, 2025). This is making teachers unhappy and discouraging teachers from staying for very long till their age of retirement. However, how long they remain depends on different dimensions, including how they are treated, what kind of leadership leads them, and what kind of working environment they receive at the school.

Retention of Teachers

Teacher retention is keeping teachers in their service through current positions within schools or the profession over time. It is the opposite of teacher turnover or attrition. Teacher retention is a crucial factor in ensuring quality education for children because their frequent turnover not only loses trust and faith in the school but also hampers the quality of education that the school is supposed to provide. However, teacher retention has been a global challenge. Shell et al. (2023) express that keeping teachers in the profession is a significant challenge and an issue for educational institutions globally. No single factor can ever determine teacher retention; various facets, such as legal provisions, school policy, school principals' preparation, teacher management system, etc., including school strategies and practices that aim to prevent teacher turnover, play crucial roles in teacher retention. Generally, teachers leave their jobs either to move to other schools or to exit the teaching profession. Sumipo (2020) identifies various factors that affect the decision of teachers to remain at selected private elementary schools. Of various factors, her study also indicates that the principals' traits and their behavior in communication management, acknowledgment of teachers' accomplishments, equitable evaluations, proper resource distribution, and teachers' participation in the decision-making process play a substantial role in retaining teachers. Her writing seems to indicate that teacher retention depends on leadership.

As teacher retention is very important for maintaining quality education and continuity of the school with the same dignity and the same school culture, it is essential to see if the trend in private schools in Nepal is the same or not, because the

high turnover of teachers leads to disruption in students' learning, increases expenses in recruiting skilled and trained teachers, and also damages the public trust and faith towards the school, which ultimately damages the dignity and image of the school.

Leadership

Leadership means the action of leading people or team members to achieve a common organizational goal. This study explores the principal's leadership in managing human resources, especially their retention in the service. It involves guiding, directing, and influencing the members of the organization to achieve the common goal, which cannot be accomplished individually. So, leadership is not just about holding a position of authority and giving direction to others; it is rather about inspiring the members to create a long-term vision of the organization and set the mission of the organization to achieve the common goals of the organization, working in collaboration and cooperation. According to Demirtas and Karaca (2020), every organization requires effective leadership that possesses the necessary characteristics and skills to ensure dignified survival, professional growth, and a conducive working environment to achieve the goal. In this respect, leadership facilitates individuals in collective efforts, influencing them toward common objectives.

As the principal is a leader, it is relevant to be familiar with various theories that explain how a leader is born or created. Some of them are the Great Man Theory, Trait Theory, Process Leadership Theory, Style and Behavioral Theory, Contingency Theory, Transformational Theory, and Transactional Theory. These theories have different perspectives on how a leader is created and how they manage to lead. The Great Man Theory says certain individuals are born with some inherent qualities of leadership. They are by birth skilled leaders. Trait Theory, on the other hand, says that leaders have certain attributes like personality, communication style, motivating skill, and persuasive abilities, along with some physical aspects like age and appearance (Aalateeg, 2017). Unlike this, Process Leadership Theory emphasizes the actions and behaviors of effective leaders rather than their inherent traits. It explains that there is not only one universal leadership style suitable for all situations and circumstances. On the other hand, style theory, a subset of behavioral theory, focuses on what leaders do rather than who they are. It identifies two distinct behaviors: Task Behaviors and Relationship Behaviors. Similarly, contingency theory explains that there is no universally most appropriate way to organize a company, manage an organization, or make decisions. It rather depends on both internal and external facets based on the

situation and circumstances. So, the leaders, as per contingency theory, implement their leadership strategies based on the current situation and circumstances. Likewise, transformational leadership looks into the needs of coworkers. They motivate and inspire coworkers to achieve greater organizational goals. Their inspirations become so strong that they forget their self-interest and pursue far-reaching objectives (Martin, 2021). Finally, transactional leadership is different: this leadership focuses on task-oriented behaviors. This theory implies the use of rewards and punishment to motivate the members. It is a method where leaders and subordinates engage in a social exchange that motivates through possible rewards for achieving set goals (Burns, 1978, as cited in Aalateeg, 2017).

Looking at all these, what kind of leadership is the most appropriate to help teacher retention in private schools in the Nepalese context is yet to be explored. It is because the principal's leadership plays a pivotal role in keeping teachers satisfied in their jobs and encouraging them to stay. In this respect, Ehule et al. (2024) also stated that the principals, as transformative leaders, focus on fostering a supportive school culture to motivate teachers. This includes involving teachers in the decision-making process, offering opportunities for their professional development, and attempting to address the key dimensions of teacher motivation, both intrinsically and extrinsically, giving them little professional autonomy, and building trustworthy workplace relationships. This tendency significantly impacts teacher morale, job satisfaction, and career fulfillment. As a result, teachers continue to serve with job satisfaction, having a sense of ownership.

Motivation

Motivation is another theme related to "Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals' Leadership." It is the process that intrinsically influences and inspires the members to act with goal-oriented behavior to achieve common or organizational goals. As a general meaning, this term refers to describing why a person frequently does something. For example, some teachers care for every child even in isolation and work extra time, without payment, for better learning; they conceive teaching as their passion, while some teachers work smart only for good pay. On the other hand, some teachers engage themselves physically, emotionally, and socially using their highest level of cognitive power for the best interest of the organization, feeling that they are an integral part of the organization, while some teachers work to complete the allocated job only. In this sense, whatever is motivating

them, motivation is the driving force behind their performance. Hence, effective leaders identify that motivation varies from person to person. Therefore, by analyzing the individuals, leaders must tailor strategies to implement for the members, taking into account their mental health and well-being to prevent possible burnout, discussing aspirations and promotional opportunities, and fostering a cooperative work culture (Farinola, 2021). Motivational dimensions play a crucial role in teachers' retention. When teachers are motivated, they have a sense of ownership towards the school and work as per the objectives and expectations of the organization. They need not be guided and instructed all the time to work.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivational Dimensions

There are two motivational dimensions, i.e., extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivational facets are those facets that motivate people to do an activity to attain some separable outcomes that come from outside a person (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It includes salary, grade amount, gratuity fund, social security fund, payment of accumulated leaves, transportation, communication, other recreational facilities, and all physical rewards as well as punishments. Intrinsic motivational facets, on the other hand, are those facets that come from within a person. It includes personal satisfaction, happiness in working, teamwork spirit, or excitement in work accomplishment, and organizational success. These facets motivate individuals to engage in behavior for its own sake, rather than for some external reward. It has emerged as an important phenomenon for educators to result in high-quality learning and creativity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The role of the principal's leadership is more important in creating intrinsic motivation than extrinsic motivation only. Extrinsic motivation can be created by the overall management system and the status of the organization. However, an effective leader or the principal can intrinsically motivate or inspire teachers to continue their service with a genuine commitment to the good faith of the organization. In some private schools, we find such motivating principals who retain teachers even with a moderate level of salary and other facilities. While in some private schools, we find exploitative principals who feel that teachers are paid to work as they instruct. The extrinsic motivational factors that they provide to teachers cannot be effective or everything to keep teachers satisfied if they lack intrinsic aspects. Job satisfaction is one of the major components of teacher retention. There are multiple other facets to make job satisfaction. Besides, there can be teachers working with some compulsion despite having job satisfaction. However, such teachers can leave

their jobs at any time to their comfort. Such schools, where job satisfaction through intrinsic and extrinsic motivational components is less valued, face high teacher attrition.

Empirical Review

This section deals with different research related to the title “Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals’ Leadership” in different contexts, different methodologies, and different participation.

In this respect, Mugizi et al. (2019) examined the relationship between leadership and teacher retention. Their study reflected the impacts of various leadership styles, like transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire in relation to teacher retention. Using a correlational research design, the researchers collected data using a questionnaire and analyzed it to examine the relationship between different leadership styles and their impact on teacher retention. Of various leadership styles, the researchers recommended that head teachers need to follow transformational leadership as the most effective leadership style for teacher retention. The rest of the leadership styles, i.e., transactional and laissez-faire, are not feasible and desirable for the retention of the teachers, respectively; so, they advised the head teachers to limit the use of transactional leadership style and avoid laissez-faire leadership in terms of teacher retention. Since this study implemented a non-experimental method to explore the statistical relationship between various variables related to the theme of leadership and teacher retention, it did not explain the causes of teacher retention or the impact of leadership attributes on the retention of teachers with in-depth stories of participants. However, my research is supposed to reflect the causes of teacher retention and turnover concerning leadership style, leaders’ behavior, and their relation with colleagues through a deep, subjective expression of the participants.

Adhikari (2024) also assessed the impact of the induction program on new teachers’ intentions to remain in their profession in Nepal. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study involved 250 new teachers from the Chitwan district in the interviews and survey. The finding revealed that 72% of new teachers intended to stay as a result of the induction program. The results show that there are substantial differences or disparities in induction support systems between European and Asian countries. European countries such as Germany, Austria, Sweden, France, and Romania have established crucial induction systems to assist new teachers. The induction program studied in Chitwan, Nepal, provided support for instructional skills,

a comfortable work environment, and effective mentoring and observation mechanisms that influenced their retention intentions. It also revealed that factors like task-oriented management, peer support for content knowledge, high-performance expectations, and emphasis on teaching skills negatively affected retention. Hence the study has identified several important factors like the managerial conduct of school principals, the support provided by colleagues in enhancing instructional competencies and content knowledge, the working environment, the quality of well-equipped observation facilities, the expectations placed on teacher performance, and a strong emphasis on effective practical teaching that substantially influence the decisions of newly appointed teachers regarding their retention. However, this study misses many other dimensions of teacher retention, such as the teachers who are jumping from one school to another in a short tenure. On the other hand, it also doesn't reflect the expression of those teachers who have been working for a long time in a certain school.

Similarly, Shrestha (2022) carried out a quantitative study to examine how teacher retention correlates with some factors or elements of job satisfaction in private schools. The research focused on the essentiality of retaining experienced, qualified, and stable teachers for the smooth delivery of regular classes to meet the standard of academic excellence. The research used structured questionnaires to carry out it as quantitative research in the Bhaktapur district. He found that there is a positive correlation between teacher retention and factors like leadership style, job satisfaction, teachers' recognition, opportunities for professional growth, and competitive salary and benefits. However, this research didn't cover subjective expressions regarding the role of the principal's leadership in teacher retention. Secondly, it was a quantitative research, and a qualitative research was required to capture the narratives of the participants that reflect the role of principals' leadership in teacher retention.

Becker and Grob (2021) studied the context of teacher retention. The research aimed to identify the tendency of teacher retention in the MERC (Metropolitan Educational Research Consortium) region and determine the dimensions influencing teacher retention at school, also evaluating existing policies and programs related to teacher retention, assessing their efficacy and cost-effectiveness. To achieve this, Becker and Grob reviewed several studies that carried out survey scales to examine the role of principals' leadership in retention. By reviewing the basic literature on the principal's role, they aimed to highlight certain areas for principals who desire to

enhance teacher retention. However, this research also fails to address the contextual scenario of private schools in Nepal.

With a perception that a principal who believes in spiritual leadership may perform better than ordinary leaders, a study by Zaharris et al. (2017) was reviewed. This study expressed that the leaders who believe in spirituality tend to be exemplary, and vice versa. This study intended to explore how integrating spiritual leadership into school leadership practices could offer a more holistic approach. The study was carried out through qualitative methodology; it examined the leadership practices, experiences, perceptions, and perspectives of six school leaders who were aligned with spiritual leadership and performing exemplary leadership attributes. As a key finding, the researcher indicated a reciprocal relationship between spirituality and exemplary leadership. In the paper, the researchers explored the leadership role, which is becoming more complex in the educational sector in this era. Such leadership, which is grounded in spiritual ethics, can motivate members to excel and envision a transformative future for the organization. It considers the well-being of both the leader and members. It emphasizes the importance of caring and mutual respect, which can inspire intrinsic motivation and lead to extraordinary organizational results. However, the researcher has not compared the effectiveness of extrinsic motivational dimensions and intrinsic dimensions. On the other hand, it was carried out with principals of public schools, where the scenario can be different from that of private schools. Secondly, it doesn't reflect the comparative study of the ratio of teacher retention caused by spiritual leadership rather than other monetary facilities. On the other hand, spiritual leadership may not be available in all the contexts of private schools in Nepal.

Buckman (2021) investigated the principal's critical impact on mitigating or exacerbating teacher turnover. He found that if principals are retained, it also impacts in teacher retention. So, by reducing principals' turnover, we can retain teachers. The study used a mixed-effects multiple regression model using various data to reveal two significant relationships between retention and turnover. The first relationship was between principal's turnover and teacher's turnover, and the second one was between principal's retention and teacher's retention. The study proposes a strategy that if we want to retain teachers, we have to retain principal, because retaining principals or reducing principal turnover significantly impacts the reduction of teacher turnover rates too. In this way, this empirical evidence underscores the pivotal role of principals

in shaping teacher retention dynamics; so, it emphasizes the need for strategic efforts to retain principals first. In the organization where I was working while starting this study, I was the third principal in four years of establishment. Therefore, there was a high turnover of teachers in that school. Later, when I left and joined another school, three teachers also left immediately after me. So, it is important to see not only the dimensions for teacher retention but also the dimensions of principal retention that further cause teacher retention.

Intending to see the relationship between leadership and teacher retention in a different school, i.e., missionary schools, a similar finding is seen. Jones (2016) investigated and found that there is a correlation between teacher retention and the leadership behaviors of principals or school leaders. He found that leadership style plays an important role in teacher retention. The research was done to study the correlational relationships between leadership behaviors and teacher retention within the American Association of Christian Schools. The study used a correlational research design and implemented a random sampling tool among 100 teachers. It employed the Pearson correlation method to determine if there was any link between the principals' behaviors and teacher retention. Since teacher retention is a critical concern in both community and private schools, this study contributes knowledge to school leaders, teachers, and stakeholders regarding the significance of leadership practices in enhancing the quality of schools through teacher retention. The research highlights several dimensions that cause teacher turnover, such as financial, student success, and morale-related issues. However, the context of Christian schools may be different than private schools in Nepal, where both the parents and students expect quality education to meet the skills and needs of the 21st century.

While reviewing all these research studies and journals that offer valuable insights into the impact of leadership on teacher retention, several research gaps remain, as mentioned above, after each review. In addition, there is a need for longitudinal exploration that can track teachers' experiences in the long run. It has yet to be investigated whether the trend of teacher turnover has been the same over time. If there is a change in this aspect, what matters is that change? Secondly, most of these studies generalize findings across various educational contexts; the context of private schools is unique: they have smaller class sizes, and they have distinct funding models and organizational cultures. So, the general notion based on these studies may not be relevant in the context of private schools in Nepal. Here, understanding how

leadership attributes specifically affect teacher retention in private schools is an important research gap. Most importantly, although the role of the principal's leadership in teachers' retention is acknowledged, further research is essential to explore specific leadership styles and their impact on teacher retention. For instance, it is important to explore if transformational leadership impacts teacher retention differently. If we investigate this aspect, the school leaders and stakeholders get insightful learning from the findings. Moreover, while all these studies often focus on principal perspectives, there exists a gap in understanding the teachers' voices on retention and job satisfaction. So, this research directly involves both the teachers and principals exploring their perceptions of leadership practices, job satisfaction, and reasons for staying or leaving private schools. Lastly, while existing studies emphasize extrinsic motivational dimensions such as salary and other facilities in teacher retention, there is a research gap regarding intrinsic motivators, too. How do leadership practices foster teachers' sense of purpose, fulfillment, and commitment to their profession? Addressing this gap is crucial for improving teacher retention strategies in private schools in Nepal.

Theoretical Review

This section deals with leadership and social theories related to the title "Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals' Leadership."

Several schools of leadership have been researched over the past twenty years. They are trait school, behavioral school, contingency school, relational school, skeptics' school, information-processing school, and transformational school. Trait School examines the innate qualities of leaders; the Behavioral School looks at the actions of leaders; the Contingency School deliberates that there are various dimensions to determine leadership; the Relational School explores the dynamics between leaders and followers; the Skeptics School challenges the necessity and existence of leadership; the School of Information-Processing delves into the cognitive aspects of leadership; and the Transformational School focuses on inspiring and transformative leadership (Aalateeg, 2017).

As I am studying teacher retention in private schools through a narrative inquiry into principals' leadership, the theory of leadership is effective. According to Demirtas and Karaca (2020), organizations require effective leaders who possess the necessary characteristics and skills to ensure their survival, professional growth, and

goal achievement of the organization. It is the leadership that has to involve in facilitating individual for collective efforts through influencing them to achieve the common objectives. While leadership represents a process, a principal is an individual who reshapes people's paradigms, creates a vision, motivates their members using internal resources, and fosters a belief that everyone contributes to shared goals. Leaders directly impact events and outcomes. In the context of Nepal, leadership styles in different organizations, including educational organizations, have changed with the flow of time. There was a time when people faced autocratic leadership, and with the advancement in organizational management, democratic leadership appeared. Now, it is the time of transformative leadership. In this respect, I am going to study Transformational Leadership as a useful leadership practice for teacher retention.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership is one of the leadership styles or practices that inspires and motivates team members. It aims to meet the needs and expectations of the team members through subjective aspects to act for the greater good of the organization. It inspires individuals to exceed self-interest of team members, and pursues far-reaching organizational objectives (Martin, 2021). Transformational leaders create an open and trustworthy culture, encouraging others to achieve the shared goals. They delve into the intrinsic motivational aspects and offer a more profound understanding than the situational leaders do. Situational leaders respond to immediate circumstances, addressing immediate needs of its members. They align closely with transactional leadership in terms of rewards and penalties. Whereas transformational leadership works for a long-term vision inspiring and motivating its members with commitment; they seek to inspire and elevate the members through motivation and ethical standards. Therefore, transformational leaders recognize and nurture the unique attributes of each individual and make them more committed to achieving organizational goals. They create a shared vision, goals, and values, and elevate both the leaders and subordinates to higher levels of motivation and morality. Such leaders are invested in their followers' growth, driven by core values, which strengthen their connection to the leader's vision (Aalateeg, 2017). Transformational leaders create a positive work environment, empower teachers fostering a sense of purpose and shared vision, recognize their contributions, and promote their professional growth; this enhances their job satisfaction and builds a strong commitment to the organization, which ultimately results in their retention.

Khan et al. (2016) analyze the process of developing leadership theories and their application. They state that leadership is an evolving process; therefore, leadership theories are continuously refined based on past knowledge to make them relevant within specific contexts. Examining the historical process of leadership theories, Benmira and Agboola (2021) value the significance of leadership in the context of the rapidly changing global scenario today. In other words, leadership is a multifaceted and intricate subject. There are various studies on this topic. However, in this fast-paced modern global context, the role of the principal's leadership is both fascinating and confusing. Some characterize it as an influential process aimed at achieving goals, and some define it as the art of inspiring others to achieve shared objectives. In this respect, there is not a single definition of leadership style universally accepted as the most effective leadership quality, though everybody accepts that leadership, which recognizes the essence of human capital and strategic management, plays a critical role in organizational success. According to Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy (2014), effective leadership is about guiding team members towards the set objectives that are aligned with their aspirations. So, in any educational organization, the leadership approach adopted by the principal significantly impacts the efficiency and success of that organization. Of various leadership styles and approaches, transformational leadership is regarded as a leadership style that is quite helpful in creating a conducive work environment where job satisfaction and overall contentment are seen. As this leadership fosters a culture of competitiveness and innovation within an organization, unlike other leadership styles, it is more applicable and effective in influencing organizational performance in private schools in Nepal.

Every private school has a typical organizational culture, values, and circumstances. Transformational leadership is the most effective in this context. This leadership style is a solution to address teacher retention in private schools, which is a distinct challenge. This leadership style cultivates a supportive and motivating atmosphere in the organization. As it aims to inspire team members to be committed to achieving organizational achievements, it aligns the school's core values with organizational mission and everyday responses, encourages sense of collaboration and cooperative learning environment among teachers, provides ample opportunities for professional development, and offers personal supports too. Hence, by embracing

transformational leadership practices, private schools can enhance teacher satisfaction and reduce turnover.

Relational Leadership Theory

Relational Leadership Theory is a dynamic leadership approach that emphasizes in building relationships with team members through collaboration and open discussion, inclusively giving them value and respect in an ethical working environment to achieve organizational goals. Uhl-Bien (2006) was the prominent person in exploring it in her article "Relational Leadership Theory: Exploring the Social Processes of Leadership and Organizing." It believes in motivating team members through communication, dialogue, verbal expressions of feelings and thoughts, interaction, and shared vision. Unlike traditional theories that focus primarily on the leader's traits, behaviors, or the situational context, Relational Leadership theory emphasizes human relations, trust, collaboration, support, and meaningful attachment between leaders and teachers. In other words, it centers on the social processes and relationships that occur between leaders and followers. This kind of leadership approach emphasizes human relationships, their interactions, and the social connections between leaders and followers within a social context as the foundation for effective leadership (Epitropaki et al., 2018). According to this theory, leadership is not something that a person has as authority to lead; it is rather something that is done through interaction and the dynamics of relationships. So, in the context of teacher retention in private schools, the principals, who follow Relational Leadership Theory, have interpersonal attachment with their colleagues, because such leaders provide them care and emotional support. They treat colleagues, not as a dictator, rather with empathy and respect as valued members of the family; this ultimately fosters loyalty, job satisfaction, and commitment (Lochmiller et al., 2024). So, we find a supportive and comfortable working environment in such places where teachers not only feel easy to communicate, but also feel valued and dignified, which leads to higher retention rates (Nguyen et al., 2024). The sources indicate that the principals, who believe in relational leadership, recognize teachers' contributions, give them valued responsibility, and trust them with autonomy. This helps teachers to have ownership of the organization; as a result, teachers feel confident and psychologically safe and supported, and they are more likely to remain in the organization for the long term.

Unlike the transactional leadership style, which deals with rewards and punishment as an exchange of behavior and response, the relational leadership style believes in creating harmonious relationships with coworkers. So, by acknowledging the necessity of moderate financial remuneration and other extrinsic facilities, relational leadership theory, as supported by the study's findings as well, suggests that intrinsic motivators foster a strong relationship through providing recognition, emotional support, professional growth opportunities, and a sense of belonging. These are more impactful in promoting long-term teacher retention. In this respect, this relational leadership theory is applicable to see how different leadership approaches impact teacher retention in this study of “Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals’ Leadership.” It is because private schools are such job places where teacher retention is often influenced by the working culture, relations with leadership, attachments, and opportunities for professional development. So, the principals who follow relational leadership can foster a culture of continuous growth, reducing turnover (Ismail & David, 2024). Hence, in this study, I am looking at the narratives shared by the participants as their experiences and practices of their leadership, through the point of view of relational leadership.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, developed by Frederick Herzberg in 1966, is also known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory. It acknowledges the underlying elements of job satisfaction and motivation in the workplace. This theory posits that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by two separate and distinct sets of factors, i.e., hygiene factors and motivators.

Hygiene Factors are extrinsic factors of the job; they are associated with the work environment or context. Motivational components, like salary, financial compensation, job security, company policies, working conditions, monitoring and supervision system, and so on, belong to the category of hygiene factors. These factors primarily prevent dissatisfaction. When these factors are inadequate or absent, they can lead to strong dissatisfaction among employees. However, it does not necessarily lead to high levels of satisfaction or motivation even if it is present and sufficient. They just create a baseline of satisfaction and prevent possible minor reasons of unhappiness, but do not actively motivate performance or commitment. Examples of hygiene factors often include salary and financial compensation, job security, working

conditions, company policies, supervision, and interpersonal relationships with colleagues and superiors.

On the other hand, Motivators are intrinsic components that play an intrinsic role in motivating coworkers for their jobs. Components like achievement, recognition, the work itself (whether that is interesting, challenging, or meaningful), responsibility, advancement or opportunities for professional growth are motivators. These components directly result in positive feelings of job satisfaction, high motivation, and psychological growth. The presence of these components can lead to job satisfaction and encourage individuals to perform better, invest more effort, and feel a sense of fulfillment.

This research is focused on exploring the role of principals' leadership in teacher retention in private schools in Nepal. This study explores the various components that determine teacher attrition and the contributing dimensions that motivate teachers to continue their service through the sharing of participants' experiences and practices. In this respect, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory provides a highly relevant theoretical framework to examine this phenomenon because it explicitly distinguishes between these two types of factors, hygiene (as extrinsic factors) and motivators (as intrinsic factors), which is crucial to understanding teacher satisfaction and retention. The study specifically aims to explain the pertinent role of principals' leadership in implementing intrinsic and extrinsic motivational dimensions to contribute to teachers' retention.

Therefore, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory offers a valuable lens through which to investigate how different leadership practices contribute to creating an environment that not only minimizes dissatisfaction but actively promotes the factors that lead to teacher satisfaction and long-term retention in the specific context of private schools in Nepal. This theory provides a theoretical foundation to explore how both the material aspects of the job and the psychological and professional aspects of the job, as experienced by principals and teachers, impact job satisfaction, and how these further result in teachers' retention. So, this theoretical understanding was used as a framework to interpret the teachers' experiences and principals' practices regarding the role of principal's leadership in teacher retention as presented in later chapters.

Policy Review

Besides thematic, empirical, and theoretical literature reviews, the policy review is equally important to learn about leadership and teacher retention. As per the constitution, Education Act, and policies, every teacher deserves to expect respect and dignity. The Constitution of Nepal (2015) also upholds the right to freedom of opinion and expression, assembly, and movement. It also ensures the right to do any profession and establish businesses. However, we observe teachers not getting the right of opinion and expression in all private schools. In part 3, the constitution states the “Right to Live with Dignity: every person shall have the right to live with dignity (section 16, no. 1). However, in some schools, we observe teachers being treated as servants. The constitution also protects the “Right to freedom of opinion and expression (Section 17, subsection 2 a),” and the “Right to Equality” mandating equal treatment before the law and prohibiting discrimination on various grounds, including gender, ensuring equal remuneration and social security (Section 18). So, every citizen deserves to live a dignified life. They cannot be discriminated against on any grounds like origin, religion, race, caste, tribe, sex, physical condition, disability, condition of health, marital status, pregnancy, economic condition, language or region, ideological conviction, or similar other grounds. Likewise, section 19 ensures the Right to Communication and section 27 ensures the Right to Information, stating that “Every citizen shall have the right to demand and receive information on any matter of his or her interest or of public interest.” Likewise, section 33, which details the Right to Employment, ensures (1) every citizen shall have the right to employment. (2) Every citizen shall have the right to choose employment. These are all underpinned by federal law. In this way, the Constitution deals with the general notion of public rights. However, it doesn’t ensure continuity of employment and the pursuit of their happiness (Nepal Law Commission [NLC], 2015).

National Education Policy (2019), in policy 10.30, talks about need-based inclusive recruitment of teachers and their merit-based promotion, rewards, and transfer. The policy directs the teachers to their accountability in their profession for quality education, learning achievements, classroom teaching-learning activities with teaching materials, the use of innovative pedagogical methods, and transparency of their service (Nepal Law Commission [NLC], 2019). Moreover, it also introduces the mechanism of teaching license and management of professional development in policy 10.32. However, it is limited to the teachers working in community schools. The

policy doesn't deal with any provisions for the retention of teachers and their professional growth serving at private schools. In policy 10.35, the school principal is allocated and empowered to execute managerial strategies for teaching and learning activities. In policy number 10.45, NEP provisions enhancing the teachers' professional skills as a responsibility of the principal.

Likewise, the National Education Policy 2019 (2019) and the Education for All program state that private schools are to be financially managed by the owner or group of owners themselves. The government doesn't fund these schools. The schools can receive fees as authorized by the government based on the category or classification of the school. With these collected fees, the schools are supposed to make an annual budget and bear all operational costs. Additionally, National Education Policy 2019 (2019) mentions that private schools are supposed to protect and promote the service of teachers and other working staff members and provide necessary facilities as prescribed by the government. Moreover, it also states that private schools should ensure a minimum pay scale as per the pay scale of teachers of community schools and provide leave provisions along with other facilities like health insurance. However, this direction is hardly implemented in all private schools. As a consequence, there is no attraction to working at private schools. If we look at the number of students studying in private schools, it is large. But there is no concern for the teachers working there. So, being citizens of the same country, the children studying in private schools seem to be deprived of care and concern at the policy level.

No other law can override national law. So, private schools also need to manage certain provisions to address the minimum procedure or criteria of school management as mentioned by the state's law. As the Education Act 2018 deals with the provision of teacher recruitment, service, and retention through the Teacher Service Commission under Article 11 for the community or the 'public schools in Nepal, private schools also need to follow a similar procedure, though a minimum one, that cannot override the national law. However, private schools do not seem to follow such provisions mentioned for community schools' teachers completely in terms of appointment, salary, other benefits like leave, medical facilities, retirement scheme, working conditions, and so on. Meanwhile, there is also my concern that even in these community schools, the matter of teacher retention as such is not much highlighted, because this commission is responsible for the recruitment and deployment of permanent teachers, the certification and regulation of teacher

qualifications, and the oversight of teacher appointments and transfers; but it doesn't explicitly deal with teacher retention (Ministry of Education [MoE], 1971). Later, the seventh amendment of the Act introduced provisions for temporary and contract-based teachers through School Management Committees (SMCs). However, the act doesn't postulate any strategies or policies for teacher retention. Similarly, the Labor Act 2074 (2017) also concerns the retention of all employees through the security of jobs. No organization can say that it will not follow the Labor Act. It acts to protect employment rights; it protects employees from termination from their jobs, provides compensation while terminating or departing, advocates to provide facilities for health, care, and professional growth, along with minimum wages for salary as remuneration for their service (Nepal Law Commission, 2017). British Council & MoEST Initiative (2022–2025) is a collaborative effort between the British Council, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), and the Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) (British Council, 2022; CEHRD, 2005). It has also developed some competencies of headteachers as a national competency framework for headteachers. This initiative is also a part of Nepal's School Education Sector Plan (SESP) 2021–2030. It emphasizes empowering principals to make strong school leadership through relational and instructional leadership and improving teacher retention through enhancing teacher motivation and promoting professional growth. Likewise, Nepal's Education Act (7th & 8th Amendments) and Education Regulation, 2059, also state 31 administrative and leadership responsibilities as the assignment of the headteachers. These responsibilities emphasize their role as managers and motivators rather than just classroom instructors.

The Nepal School Education Sector Plan for 2022–32 (Ministry of Education, Science & Technology [MoEST], 2022) is a roadmap planned for strengthening school education through enhancing teacher job satisfaction, retention, and school leadership to improve quality and accessibility of school education in Nepal. The plan aims to improve the quality of education, increase learning outcomes, and increase access and participation in education by ensuring that educators are well-supported, motivated, and equipped to lead schools effectively. This plan also covers strategies for academic performance, students' well-being, and skill development through professional development of teachers, compensation system to educators, and creating a positive work environment. It is believed to attract qualified teachers and encourage

them to serve for a long-term. However, the plan doesn't seem to deal with how leadership should act to retain teachers in private schools. The government is working hard to enhance the academic standard of the nation; however, the private schools that contribute a significant proportion to providing education do not seem to be directly influenced by such plans. This can be noticed through the rare participation of teachers from private schools in the professional development programs organized by the government.

The 16th National Plan of Nepal is a five-year development plan which focuses on good governance, social justice, and prosperity (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2024). This plan has set 40 goals across various sectors. Among them, one goal is also to make accessible quality education with improved literacy rate. This can be possible through quality educators teaching in a quality working environment, which further depends on good governance, social justice, and prosperity of school. Since, principal is the main person who is supposed to manage all these aspects in a school, it is the principal who can create such conducive and collaborative working atmosphere in the school. For this, the principal has to foster positive school culture, provide mentoring to new teachers, offer frequent counselling to teachers, manage occasional professional development opportunities, give value and respect to teachers, and so on. This will influence teachers' decisions to remain in the profession. Hence, the 16th Plan is a policy document of Nepal, which indirectly emphasizes on productivity, job creation, and sustainable resource management. This strategy supports the principals in teacher retention. So, all these policies seem to partially support the school head teachers to retain staff more effectively. However, no policy talks about the value of principal's leadership in teacher retention; in this respect, we notice a gap there in terms of addressing the specific role of principals in teacher retention within private schools. Hence, such policy needs to cover specific rules to attract teachers as their fundamental right to job, because, after all, they are associated with children who are the pillars of the nations. If the policy ignores their connection with students as a part of civil rights, the issue of teacher attrition remains the same and the education system remains weak in Nepal.

Likewise, if we see the educational policy document of a neighboring country like India, we find a similar document that deals with working conditions at schools and professional development of teachers to attract teacher retention, i.e., India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 (Ministry of Education, Government of India,

2020). It recognizes teachers as crucial to the educational system and the nation's future. It speaks for proper education through training and support to teachers. It focuses on continuous professional development (CPD) for career growth, improving the work environment, involving teachers in educational decisions, and providing clear career advancement paths, which are believed to support in retaining teachers. It acknowledges the valuable role of teachers in children's learning process and aims to enhance their recruitment and retention through various measures, like job security, career growth opportunities, and a positive work culture, where teachers are respected and valued for their contributions (UNESCO, 2021), so that the satisfied teacher can proudly work well for a long-term. Nepal government also needs to develop a similar policy to address the needs of Nepalese teachers working in private schools, so that teachers can retain to ensure access to quality education for every child (Sharma et al., 2023).

If we see the "Global Report on Teachers" made by UNESCO and the International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030 (2024), a joint project by UNESCO and a special international group that focuses on teachers' issues in educational world, highlights the serious need for more teachers around the world, as the future of the educational zone is much challenging. The report stresses on having qualified, strong, and supported teachers to keep learning throughout the life to reach the goal of giving everyone fair and good quality education by 2030 (UNESCO, 2024). This goal of access to quality education is one of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals. However, the current circumstance of worldwide teachers' shortage stands as a big challenge. The report says we need about 44 million more teachers to reach the education targets by 2030. To address the global teacher shortage and ensure enough educators for all children's primary and secondary education, experts suggest developing thorough teacher policies aligned with national objectives and educational strategies. These policies should cover all dimensions impacting teachers' retention through collaboration and open dialogue. By doing so, we can improve the teaching profession, achieve national educational goals, and address teachers' needs. Involving teachers and their organizations in policy-making can democratize education and make teaching more attractive. This report reflects the current scenario and predicts the future scarcity of teachers. However, it doesn't talk about how teachers, who are working at present, can be retained or extend their

service in advance, and what the principal should do to motivate the existing teachers to continue their service to address the future scarcity.

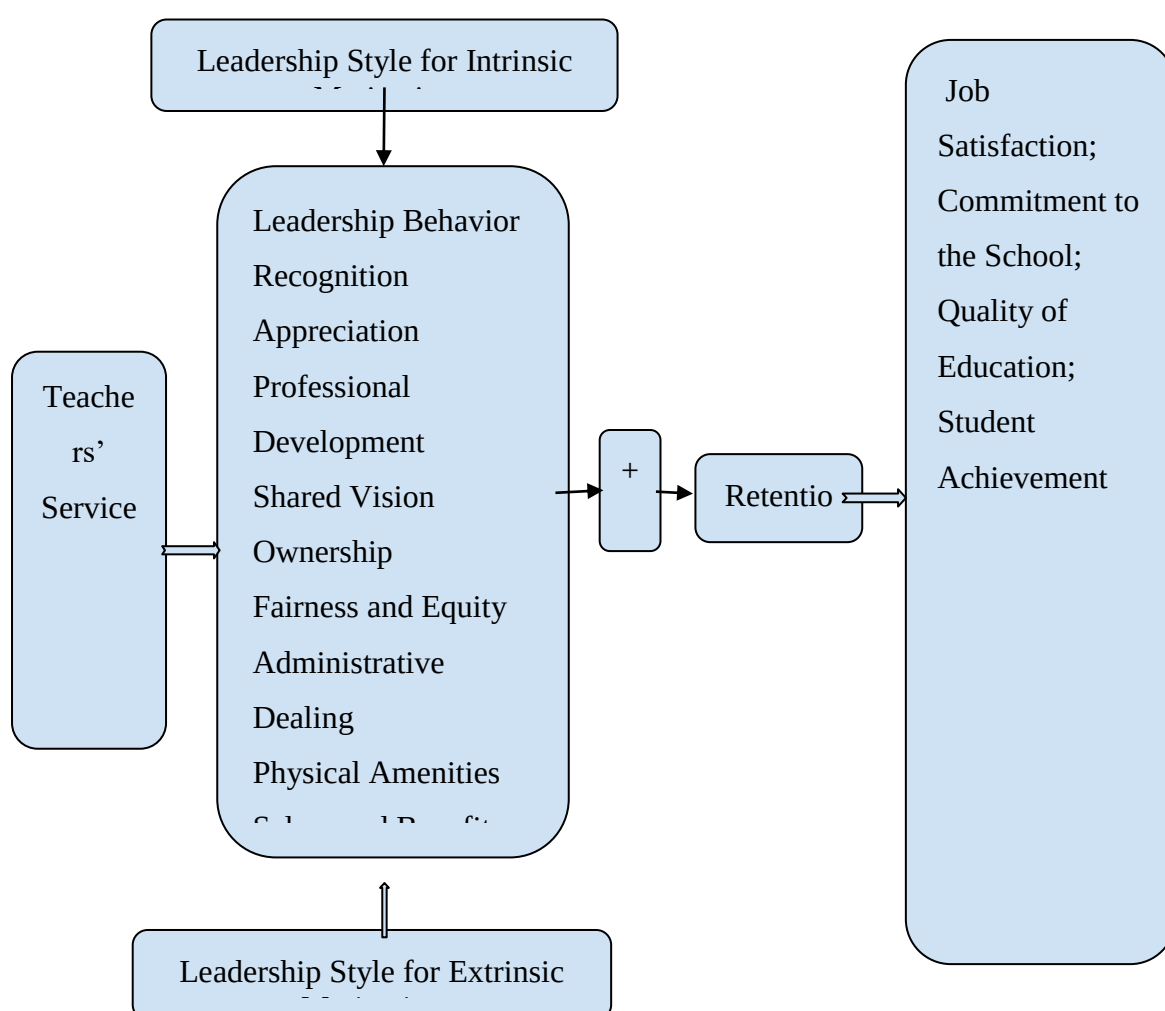
Having read all the literature above, extensive literature that provides references to policymakers and the stakeholders of school management is required. The frequent turnover of teachers poses a significant challenge to the foundation of quality education. Various dimensions like remuneration, professional opportunities, physical amenities available at the school, and many other extrinsic facets, to some extent, attract teachers to continue their service over time. However, these external dimensions do not determine teacher retention. Besides physical amenities and extrinsic facets, the behavioral aspect of the educational leader or the principal plays an equally important role in determining teachers' job satisfaction and making them committed to long-term service. In this respect, teacher retention depends on how the principal's leadership motivates, empowers, and guides them using both extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions for teacher retention within schools where every teacher feels valued, supported, and motivated to remain in their roles.

In a nutshell, while much research extensively examines extrinsic dimensions to determine teacher retention, they seem to have missed the crucial role of the principal's leadership in determining teacher retention. So, it is equally important to understand leadership attributes and how leadership practices, comprising their communication style, attitude, recognition of performance, and conflict management skills, influence teacher retention from the perspectives of participants. Much quantitative research has examined the link between independent and dependent variables, i.e., principals' leadership and teacher retention. However, they do not reflect the in-depth experience and perspectives of principals' leadership in teacher retention. For this, a qualitative study is required to learn through multiple voices regarding this issue in the context of Nepali Private Schools. By exploring this gap, future studies can inform policymakers to prioritize principals' leadership practices in terms of using both the extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions to foster a supportive work environment for teacher retention and to enhance the quality of education.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, I explored the intricate dynamics of leadership that influence teacher retention in private schools. In this respect, this research delved into various dimensions that determine teacher retention through job satisfaction. This started from effective leadership attributes to create organizational climate, culture, induction,

motivation, and professional development, sharing the organizational vision and goals, and responding to the teachers with fairness and equity, along with extrinsic facets. Besides them, I explored other administrative and policy levels of input to create a nurturing environment in the school. I found these components causing a level of satisfaction that was generalized through teachers' performance and the result of the quality education provided by the school. This ultimately resulted in teacher retention having a long-term impact. In this respect, this study aimed to inform evidence-based findings of the teacher retention through principals' leadership, which can be helpful to educators and educational leaders, along with other stakeholders.



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter deals with the methodological aspect of my qualitative research on “Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals’ Leadership.” As I was supposed to explore principals’ and teachers’ experiences, practices, perceptions, and perspectives regarding teacher retention, I attempted to address its philosophical underpinning, research paradigms, research design, Site and Participants, Means of Information Collection, data collection, data analysis, quality standard, and ethical considerations as a methodological foundation in this section.

Philosophical Underpinning of Research

Philosophical underpinning means the foundation of philosophical ideas and beliefs that support a specific approach, theory, or methodology (Singh, 2019). It includes different branches of philosophy like ontology, epistemology, and axiology. It is crucial to consider various perspectives, like ontological consideration, which explores the nature of reality, epistemological consideration, which delves into the nature of knowledge, and axiological consideration, which deals with what to value while choosing a research methodology. Hence, this study on “Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals’ Leadership” perceived the reality of teacher retention and acquired knowledge through the subjective expression of the participants, giving them value under the following ontological, epistemological, and axiological considerations:

Ontology

“Ontology” is a branch of philosophy, introduced by Aristotle, that deals with the nature of being or reality. Etymologically, the word “ontology” is derived from two Greek words, ‘onto’ and ‘logy,’ which mean ‘being’ and ‘study’ respectively. It is the foundational element of every research that deals with the nature of reality. While positivists believe in a single or objective reality that exists independently of the participants’ perception, interpretivist acknowledges multiple or socially constructed realities. Here, philosophers try to perceive the answer to the questions “What being is?” and “What are the features common to all beings?” (Maedche, 2002). As this study was supposed to construct the reality of the ‘role of principal’s leadership on teachers’ retention’ from the individual participants, its ontological stance was

multiple realities based on interpretivism. So, this study aimed to construct multiple realities out of the multiple expressions or voices of participants on the subject matter that examines the role of principals' leadership in teacher retention.

Epistemology

Epistemology is another branch of philosophy that studies the nature, origins, and limits of human knowledge. This term is also derived from two Greek words, "episteme" and 'logy,' which mean knowledge and study, respectively. Hence, epistemology is the study of knowledge; it deals with how knowledge is acquired or created. This philosophy is also known as the theory of knowledge (Stroll & Martinich, 2024). It is a branch of study that deals with different methods of knowing. Therefore, epistemology raises some basic questions, such as how we come to know something, whether knowledge is acquired solely through personal experience, or whether it can be gained through other means. Epistemology played a pivotal role in shaping the research journey within the context of my proposed study on the "Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals' Leadership." My epistemological stance in this study was to gain information or knowledge through data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the information gained from the interviews. Hence, in this study, epistemological considerations guided me on how knowledge is created or acquired. It helped me navigate the complexities of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Ultimately, this study developed new knowledge that enriched the common understanding of the dynamics of teacher retention in private schools.

Axiology

Axiology is another philosophy that studies the nature of value; it means what kinds of things are valuable in research (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2024). According to the philosophy of 'axiology,' the researcher gives value to certain aspects that impact the research process. Hence, it encompasses what the research values and how those values influence the study. In this respect, there are two main types of axiology, i.e., Value-Free Axiology and Value-Laden Axiology. While value-free axiology maintains objectivity and neutrality, value-laden axiology, in contrast, acknowledges that values influence research. In value-free axiology, individual participants' perspectives are not explicitly valued or prioritized. It rather focuses on empirical data collection and analysis. Here, the researchers impose their own values or judgments on the research. On the other hand, value-laden axiology gives value to the responses or

participants' voices. In this regard, as my study on "Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals' Leadership" focused on participants' perspectives, biases, and ethical considerations that shaped the study, participants' voices were crucial. In that sense, it was value-laden axiology. Here, participants' expressions about experiences, practices, perceptions, perspectives, and contributions to the organization were valued and respected. Their voices that covered multiple aspects of teacher retention became the central point, as a value-laden approach, to understand the role of principals' leadership in teacher retention.

Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a philosophical framework, a belief system, or a worldview that shapes how researchers approach their study regarding knowledge, reality, and process (Singh, 2019). So, it influences their ontological stance that views on reality, epistemological stance that deals with how knowledge is generated, and axiological stances that determine what to value, subjective expressions or numerical data? As I was supposed to study the 'teacher retention in private schools through principal's leadership,' it had to cover the perspectives of the participants in the form of their stories of experience and observation. So, I adopted an interpretivist paradigm that allowed me to explore the intricate dynamics of teacher retention through subjective expressions, rather than post-positivism, as it is believed that reality is socially constructed and subjective. As this paradigm emphasizes understanding social phenomena from the perspective of participants (Jansen, 2023), I valued the qualitative data obtained from subjective expressions, their context, and individual experiences, perspectives, or perceptions regarding the significance of principals' leadership in teacher retention. By giving value to participants' voices, I could uncover meaningful insights that could be implemented as practical strategies to improve teacher retention in private schools. As interpretivism identifies in-depth life experience (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022), I emphasized social phenomena through the participants' perspectives. In this study, as the voice of participants regarding leadership's impact on teacher retention was crucial, interpretivism was the most appropriate paradigm that aligned well to create knowledge through interactions and meaning-making processes.

Narrative Inquiry as Research Design

A research design is an outline of an overall plan for my study; it includes decisions related to research objectives, data collection methods, and data analysis. It

ensures that there is alignment between my research methods and my research goals and objectives. On the other hand, any specific approach and technique used by researchers to collect data and analyze it in a research study is the research method (Hassan, 2024).

The types of research methods to be used depends on the types of the research questions, types of data expected to be collected, and resources available. Therefore, researchers choose only the most appropriate method to meet their research goals. There are several methods commonly used in qualitative research. Chavez (2006) discusses narrative inquiry as a research method that focuses on individual stories, both as a method and as the phenomenon of study. I used the method of narrative inquiry so that I could collect and analyze narratives (oral or written) to understand individual experiences and perceptions regarding leadership and teacher retention. Hence, in my study, narrative inquiry could capture personal dimensions, teachers' stories or voices of their experience, and their perspectives or perceptions on the impact of leadership on the retention of teachers.

Looking at the nature of the title of my research, its problem, research questions, and research purpose, narrative inquiry was appropriate in my study because it could reflect the participants' voices on the role of the principal's leadership and its attributes to determine the retention of teachers through first-hand dialogue with the participants, and it was an interpretive approach. The narrative inquiry was the most suitable for my study because it aligned well with my study. Since narrative inquiry draws meaning out of individual participants, I used this method so that I could draw meaningful insights from the stories of principals and teachers. In teacher retention, understanding principals' and teachers' lived experiences, emotions, and motivations was crucial because both participants were the key stakeholders. Their perspectives on leadership practices, motivation, and retention dimensions gave valuable insights to the readers and other stakeholders. As teacher retention involved multifaceted dimensions, a narrative inquiry was helpful to capture the real-world complexity beyond quantitative measures.

On the other hand, this method could track the changes over time longitudinally because teacher retention is dynamic (Riley & Hawe, 2005). I could gain insight into evolving perceptions and decisions by following teachers' and principals' narratives over months or years. So, narrative inquiry allowed me to humanize the research by capturing their stories and perspectives (Bochner &

Herrmann, 2020). Hence, as I was supposed to investigate the role of principals' leadership in teacher retention, narrative inquiry allowed me to explore principals' and teachers' individual lived experiences, practices, challenges, and perceptions as well. It not only focused on the actual data but also helped me to explore the unique challenges, successes, and aspirations within specific private schools and let the reader and other stakeholders get the contextual richness in understanding the impact of leadership on teacher retention. After collecting and analyzing their stories, I could uncover valuable insights into how leadership practices influence their decision to stay or leave private schools. From this study, I feel that narrative inquiry captures the human dimensions that quantitative data alone cannot convey, so it is a powerful research approach (Chavez, 2006).

Research Site and Participants

Site and participants refer to the specific location or context where research takes place and who the respondents of that narrative inquiry are, respectively. In my case, the research site was Bharatpur Metropolitan, located in Chitwan District, Nepal. As I was working as the principal of Nepal Police School Chitwan, located in that metropolitan area during this study, it provided me with a relevant and accessible setting for my study. I found the metropolitan had unique characteristics, an educational landscape, and leadership dynamics appropriate to the study. Bharatpur is a rapidly growing city that has a population of about 369,268 people, with a literacy rate of 87.2% (National Statistic Office [NSO], 2021). Regarding the schools, it has 222 schools (CEHRD, 2081 B.S.). Of them, 115 are public schools, 99 are private schools, 6 are religious schools, and 2 are model schools. Looking through the levels of schools, we find 166 preschools, 205 basic schools, and 130 secondary-level schools. Out of them, 64 schools offer +2 programs. In this way, this rich educational landscape made Bharatpur a compelling site for me to carry out this study examining leadership narratives within institutional settings.

In my study, I involved six principals and three teachers as the participants from private schools within Bharatpur Metropolitan. The selection was intentional, as required for the study, based on long-term service, short-term service, gender, and age group. The principals, whose role significantly impacts teacher retention, shared their stories about motivating and inspiring teachers to continue their service despite comparatively lower salaries and fewer facilities. The six principals were finalized to follow up for detailed inquiry and their stories after assessing eight principals because

of sufficiency of the content, their readiness, presentability of data, and relevancy of the narratives. Likewise, three teachers, who are directly engaged with students and hold a pivotal position in the education system, were intentionally selected to learn their stories regarding the principal's role in their job retention; secondly, their involvement was also to justify the content of experiences, perceptions, perspectives, and the challenges expressed by the principals regarding teacher retention; of them, two were from the same schools. After the interviews, their stories were shared with them, and they were asked to add any other relevant information. As a result, this narrative inquiry was accomplished as a research method.

The first participant of my study was Mr. Chiran Paudel (pseudonym), the principal of Amrawoti School (pseudonym). He was a slim, simple, and polite person. He had started working in that school twenty-three years ago as a teacher. Then he became the school vice principal for five years. By the time the interview was taken, he had been working as the principal for three years. I selected him because he was a young principal who had been in the position of principal for only three years in a B-level school.

The next participant was Mr. Abdul (pseudonym), Director of Apex Academy Chitwan (pseudonym) and former principal of KVS. He was a mature, intellectual, and experienced principal. He was a polite and gentle person who was confident in his philosophy of school management. Physically, he was fat and average in height. As regards his involvement in private schools, he had been the principal of advanced schools, i.e., A-level schools. The school where he had been working was one of the most expensive schools on that site.

The third participant was Ms. Sraddha Dewang (pseudonym), principal of Golden Gate Academy (pseudonym), a tall and genteel lady. I selected her because she was a lady principal with long-term experience of more than two decades of principalship. She was a bold lady who looked strong in leading her school. Her behavior and responses were friendly, caring, and professional.

The fourth participant was Mr. Shivam Baniya (pseudonym). He was the principal of Sunshine Academy (pseudonym). He was of a normal height with a belly out. He had been a principal for more than a decade, and it was his fourth year at that school. I selected him because it was a school run by a company called GG Company (pseudonym). The financial aspect of that school was different than others.

The fifth participant was Mr. Kristal Ojha (pseudonym), the principal of Milan Academy (pseudonym). I selected him because he was the chairman of the private schools' association of the research site, and his school was located in the far corner of the site. Physically, he was a black, tall, and friendly person whose hospitality was very pleasant.

The sixth participant was Mr. Narahari Gautam (pseudonym), the school in-charge and founder of Oregon SS/College (pseudonym). He had been working in the academic sector for 23 years; of that, he had been leading the school for 16 years. He was a gentle, helpful, and polite person. Physically, he looked smart with an average body structure, neither thin nor fat, having white skin in appearance. I selected him because his school was located in the city.

Similarly, I selected three teachers as the participants of this study. Keeping teachers as participants of the study was essential to verify and balance the data that the principals shared and to justify the narratives shared about the teachers by the principals, along with proving how truthful their expressions were. Of them, the first was Ms. Binu Pokhrel (pseudonym), a teacher at the NP School. She was a young, beautiful, and dynamic teacher who had been working at that school for a long time. I selected her because she had been working at the same school where I noticed teachers frequently leaving their jobs while I was drafting the proposal for this study. Knowing how she could continue her service since its establishment was important for me. Secondly, her experience of all ups and downs during the tenure would be insightful for the study.

The second participant was Ms. Yamuna (pseudonym), who had been working at Shanti Academy for two years. She was a teacher of about 35 years old, active in nature, and an average body structure. She had joined that school after working for 16 years at Sunshine Academy (pseudonym). I selected her because she had left that school, where my fourth participant was the principal.

Similarly, the third teacher participant was Ms. Sital Neupane (pseudonym). She had been teaching the Nepali subject at Oregon School for 7 years. She was a simple-looking, gentle, and mature teacher; she was physically slim and white. That was her second school. I selected her as the participant because she was a teacher at the same school where my sixth participant was the school head, and she had worked at a community school before joining that school.

As the participants of my study, their voices shaped my research findings to be implemented by other researchers, policy makers, school management teams, principals, and all those who seek to learn how leadership practices impact teachers' decision to continue their service or leave the organization.

Means of Information Collection

In qualitative research, means of information collection means to collect non-numeric data or subjective expressions; it can be interviews, focus group discussion, observation, document analysis, case studies, and so on. Here, the researchers gain in-depth insights into concepts, opinions, and experiences of the participants through their subjective expressions (Bhandari, 2020). Of them, one of the suitable tools to collect qualitative information is an interview. During the interview, the researcher can directly interact with the participants to explore their perspectives, perceptions, and experiences related to the topic through their narratives. So, to inquire about the in-depth content of their experiences regarding intricate components of teacher retention, I used open-ended questions during the interview with all nine participants. The interview provided rich data that went beyond mere facts. Hence, I found interviews highly appropriate to my study because it allowed me to engage directly with the principals and teachers. I could explore how principals were helping teachers stay at their schools and how teachers were experiencing their leaders' behavior in their performance. Secondly, the interview stood as a platform for principals and teachers to share their stories, emotions, and nuanced experiences, having self-reflection on their relationship, responses to their colleagues. I could delve into the complexities of teacher retention, uncovering the factors beyond quantitative measures. Moreover, as the interview was semi-structured, because it consisted of both structured and unstructured questions, it could collect information relevant to the topic and objectives of the study with limited flexibility. It enabled me to collect data in a flow of stories based on each teacher's unique perspective, without open ends. On the other hand, the interview ensured informed consent, confidentiality, and respectful engagement with the participants.

Information Collection Process

Information collection process means collecting relevant data to address research questions in a systematic way. In qualitative studies, this process focuses on gathering in-depth individual expressions as qualitative data that has rich and contextual insights from the participants. As principals and teachers were the

participants of this research and the interview was supposed to serve as an appropriate channel for collecting qualitative data in my study, my approach started with making a list of appropriate principals and teachers with the highest possibility of meeting credibility and trustworthiness. Then I managed to meet them individually in a comfortable place where I introduced myself again, explained the purpose of my research, and sought their participation. The next approach was fixing the date and having in-person meetings where individual interviews took place at their comfortable hours in their respective schools in their preferred settings; it ensured a conducive environment for open dialogue. After taking interviews with eight principals, six were finalized for future information and follow-up; two were omitted because of their insufficient content and reluctance. These six principals and three teachers were interviewed twice and finally revisited as a follow-up for some clarifications. By following this approach, I could authentically capture the participants' experiences, practices, perspectives, and viewpoints about the leadership role in the retention of teachers; it ultimately contributed to valuable insights into the complex issue of teacher retention.

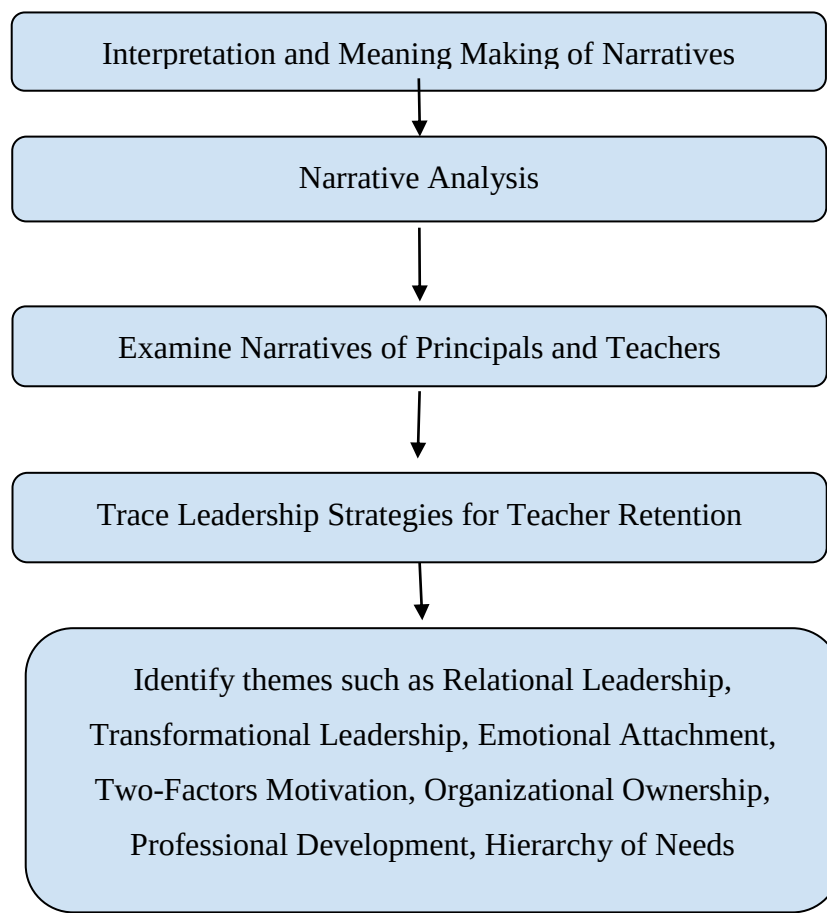
Interpretation and Meaning-Making of Narratives

Data interpretation and meaning-making is the next important phase of qualitative research after collecting qualitative data. This task comes under data analysis. It involves examining and interpreting the collected data or information to derive meaningful insights systematically. Here, the researcher traces the key points, uncovers the themes, and presents the underlying meanings of the qualitative information, aligning with different theories and perspectives (Flick, 2013). In this study, as the data was in the form of narratives, I had to interpret and analyze the data to make meaning, raise discussion, and draw the essence of the content aligning with relevant theories.

For analysis, the narrative inquiry can be thematic narrative analysis, narrative analysis, and analysis of narratives. I adopted the second one, i.e., narrative analysis, to explore the role of the principal's leadership in teacher retention. Through this type of analysis, I examined the collected narratives of both principals and teachers to trace the leadership strategies implemented to foster teachers' long-term commitment and drew the meaning out of their stories in terms of principals' leadership in teacher retention. This approach allowed me to delve into the lived experiences of school principals, identifying patterns, challenges, and leadership

strategies through their narratives (Riessman, 2008). Primarily, this analysis was to see how principals share their practices and experiences of helping teachers remain in their schools, as well as how teachers narrate their experiences of their principals' leadership that motivated them to continue their service at their schools.

I found this method of data analysis relevant in my study because it addresses my research questions, i.e., how school principals share their experiences of helping their teachers remain in their schools and how teachers narrate their stories in relation to their retention in schools. Following this method, I presented individual stories of principals and teachers and then interpretation, analysis, discussion, meaning-making, and the essence of the narratives. While interpreting, analyzing, discussing, and making meaning, I aligned with different theories of leadership and social aspects. This drew key insights for further implications and milestones for further research. In teacher retention, understanding teachers' and principals' lived experiences, emotions, and motivations was crucial for me because both participants were the key stakeholders. So, I presented the narratives shared by the participants and interpreted them and generated various themes like 'relational leadership,' 'emotional attachment,' 'caring environment,' 'professional growth,' and so on, that determine the retention of teachers. The following flowchart reflects the entire process:



Hence, the narratives presented in this study were not constructed like this on the first attempt. At first, I asked the participants some questions; the replies to the participants' questions addressed different aspects in a scattered form, not in a sequence of a story. So, combining all the contents, I crafted them as their stories with all aspects of the plot and got them verified by them. They were glad to hear their stories written by me.

By following this process, I gained valuable insights into how leadership practices influence teacher retention. As I believed that qualitative data analysis was iterative, it allowed me to refine my understanding while exploring the narratives shared by the principals and teachers as participants of the study.

Quality Standards

Quality standards refer to the criteria used to assess the rigor, trustworthiness, and overall excellence of qualitative research. These standards ensure that the study was conducted ethically, transparently, and with methodological integrity. Hence, this study, adhering to quality standards, involved documenting my research process, addressing potential biases, and ensuring that my findings are credible and relevant.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a feature of qualitative research; it stands for a level of confidence that the readers have in the findings of the study and it is the researcher's ethical responsibility to build up that trust (Stahl & King, 2020). It ensures that the research is conducted honestly following all methodological processes, which is transparent. In my study, trustworthiness was crucial because it would directly impact how the readers would perceive the findings of the research. So, I considered some aspects of trustworthiness like verisimilitude, replicability, pedagogy, and thoughtfulness.

As per the term 'verisimilitude,' I emphasized to make the stories feel genuine and relatable to readers so that the findings would sound authentic and truthful. As I was supposed to narrate the principals' and teachers' experiences, I presented the data naturally. Likewise, considering replicability, I documented the process thoroughly so that it would provide enough detail for others to understand and potentially repeat the study. Similarly, I considered the pedagogical aspect of my study. So, I always considered the educational value of my research during the study. I am sure my findings contribute to informing practice, policy, or future research. So, it aimed for pedagogical impact by offering insights that resonate with educators and leaders. Last but not least, thoughtfulness was another consideration for trustworthiness. Being thoughtful in the interpretations, I reflected on biases, assumptions, and preconceptions. Hence, I ensured my analysis wouldn't go beyond surface-level observations.

Credibility

Credibility, in a general notion, is the extent to which research methods and findings are trustworthy, reliable, and unbiased. Credibility focuses on the believability and authenticity of research (Stahl & King, 2020). It addresses whether the findings accurately represent the participants' experiences and perceptions. To get an in-depth expression of perception, perspectives, and experiences, I sincerely and deeply involved myself in listening to the voices of the participants. For this, I allocated sufficient time for rapport-building, empathetic listening, and recording or note-keeping; in other words, I immersed myself in their world. Moreover, I clearly described what I observed, how I interacted and collected data, and what I found in the report. I believed that transparency in methods would enhance credibility. So, I maintained an audit trail, a detailed record of my decisions, reflections, and changes

during the research process. This transparency was believed to allow others to follow my analytical journey.

Temporality, Sociality, and Specialty

As my study was supposed to go through the Narrative Inquiry Approach, I valued temporality, sociality, and specialty to enhance credibility while collecting the stories of the participants. Temporality refers to the timing and sequencing of events or phenomena. The past reflects significance, the present infuses value, and the future conveys intention. So, understanding the past and imagining future possibilities, the study took place from the viewpoints of the present. Since that present was also a reflection of the past, we could imagine their past out of their present expression, and also could assume future decisions based on their present context.

Sociality refers to the social interactions, relationships, and community dynamics within a research context. It can be both an external social condition and an internal personal condition. So, as external social conditions, the study attempted to cover cultural, institutional, social, and linguistic particularities and the nature of the relationship and interaction between participants and the inquirer. Likewise, it also attempted to address the internal personal conditions comprising feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions, existential viewpoints, and moral dispositions of the participants' character and stories.

Likewise, this study considered the specialty that is related to the space where the story was collected. The study took place in the concrete location, i.e., at the respective schools.

So, I explored the temporal (time-related) aspects of teacher retention, considering how experiences change over time. Moreover, I considered social dynamics for interactions, keeping relationships and spatial contexts, i.e., school environment, away from community influences.

Hence, both trustworthiness and credibility are interrelated. By demonstrating methodological authenticity, I ensured that my qualitative study reflects a common understanding regarding the dynamics of the retention of teachers as a result of effective leadership.

Ethical Consideration

In research, ethical consideration is a set of principles and guidelines that ensure the rights, well-being, and dignity of research participants (Bhandari, 2021). It helps to conduct the research with discipline, decorum, and dignity, maintaining

integrity and respect for the participants. In this respect, I considered some ethical aspects of a researcher, such as obtaining consent, maintaining confidentiality, being aware of potential harm, and communicating the results.

Taking consent is the primary stage of data collection. Before involving principals and teachers in my research, I conveyed clear information about the purpose of my study, procedures, expectations, and benefits of the study. I also stated there would be no professional or personal harm while participating in the process of study. I obtained their voluntary agreement to participate. Moreover, I circulated a request letter (see Annex 1) given by Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED) to cooperate in data collection. The letter helped to confirm that my visits and interviews were part of my study, and my participants agreed to respond to my questions.

To maintain anonymity and confidentiality, which protects participants' identities and ensures that the data shared by participants would remain private, I avoided using real names or any identifying information in my research outputs. Moreover, I kept the documents, like questions, responses, and other notes of interviews, including any sensitive information, in a safe folder.

Similarly, any potential harm was a matter of great concern for me. To avoid potential harm, I assessed any possible harm to participants as a risk analysis. I did not ask any such questions that they did not feel comfortable replying to. Secondly, I empathetically listened to their stories as an active listener but didn't ask any cross-questioning between principals and teachers. So, I handled such discussions professionally and with sensitivity. Moreover, I minimized any possible harm by creating a supportive environment during the interviews and respecting participants' boundaries.

Being sincere to the participants, I shared the narratives I had made out of the interviews taken with them. They were amazed and happy to read the stories I had written about them. Similarly, I also communicated the result with my supervisor, course facilitators, and the concerned authority. While communicating to all, I took my sincere steps to protect the participants: I did not mention their real names but only pseudonyms to the individuals. Finally, I shared the findings of my study that could be helpful to the leaders, teachers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to mitigate the challenge of teacher retention.

CHAPTER IV

PRINCIPALS' NARRATIVES

This chapter presents information about my participants along with their narratives. In this respect, I have presented their stories and experiences in the form of information. Secondly, I have interpreted their stories and experiences to make them intelligible to all the readers. Thirdly, the essence of the story and experiences are generated, and finally, they are discussed, connecting to literature and theories.

Narratives of Chiran

It was a sunny day on December 5, 2024; the weather was pleasant, and the school had resumed after two great festivals of Nepali Hindus, i.e., Dashain and Tihar. When I reached the school gate of Amrawoti School (pseudonym), I noticed children were excited and happy to join the school's various activities after the long vacation of festivals. I asked a student to show me the direction to the principal's office. He escorted me to the office. As I had already made an appointment for an interview with the principal, he welcomed me. He kept me in a room and told me he was busy for a few minutes with some visitors. I waited for him in the room; after a few minutes, he returned. Then we started our informal talks about school activities. After that, I explained why I had come there. Accordingly, I asked him to share his experiences of helping his teachers or colleagues remain in his school, starting with his short biography. He shared:

I am Chiran Paudel (pseudonym), the principal of Amrawoti School (pseudonym). I started working in this school twenty-three years ago as a teacher. Then I became the school vice principal for five years. I have been working as a principal for three years. Yes, I feel retaining teachers is one of my most important responsibilities in my job. Therefore, I always look for the mental state and happiness of my colleagues at the school. So, we strategically focus on different aspects like the working environment, counseling for teachers, support and concern, professional growth, and guardianship during their service period. The act of retaining teachers starts from the stage of recruitment. While recruiting, we check the candidates' backgrounds and ask for their commitment to long-term service at our school during the recruitment process. However, some teachers, if we do not support them in their living,

education, and financial crisis, are more likely to leave their jobs or jump to other schools.

His expression made me feel that the job at a private school was not in high public demand; it was just a negotiation with career. Teachers could leave schools at any time if there were no favorable circumstances for them. So, a principal has to work for the mental state and happiness of colleagues. Moreover, the principal has to manage the working environment, provide counseling for teachers, provide support in needs, address the teachers' challenges, arrange provisions for professional growth, and provide guardianship. In that context, it was the principal who had to tactfully manage them, lead them, motivate them, inspire them, and support them so that they could remain. So, I asked him again if he had done any special support for any teachers, which later helped him retain teachers. He said:

Yes, we had two teachers who were students themselves. After working for a year, one day, one of them approached me with a resignation. I went through the resignation process; she stated that the reason for leaving the job was only a "personal cause." I wanted to find out the truth, so I called her and asked about it. She said that she had joined for a master's degree, and her class at the college would be over only at 10 am. In that state, arriving at the school before 10 am was not easy for her. From her talk, I also learned that another teacher had the same issue, and she was about to resign for the same reason. Being like their guardian as well, I had to do something for their betterment along with being fair to the organization. I knew the other founder members would not accept teachers coming 45 minutes late every day. I was in a dilemma: neither could I easily let them come to school late, nor did I want to accept their resignation. Since I didn't want to miss them, I planned to convince the School Management Committee (SMC) to let them arrive at the school at 10:45 am. It was a new practice for SMC. However, after hearing my words, the SMC finally agreed with me about their strengths and the circumstances of human resources in the market. In that way, we managed to support them so that they could continue studying at university in the morning and teaching at school during the day. Now, they happily teach at our school after the first bell and are always ready to work, even on holidays, whenever needed. They are happy and say that the school has understood their need and

has respected them for their career growth. We also give them leave during their semester's exams.

It was a kind of support for their professional and career development. Those teachers were lucky enough to get a principal like Mr. Chiran, who considered himself their guardian. In private schools, most teachers are also students themselves: they teach during the day and study in the morning at college/university. Their study is more important than their job of teaching. In this respect, the school has to manage something that can attract them and engage them with an emotional attachment to the organization. In this respect, I asked him if he had been doing anything else that could attract the teachers in the long term, besides giving such support for study. He said:

Of course, in addition to supporting teachers in their education, we have started depositing 15% of provident funds in the name of the teachers who have worked for more than five years; we also provide them with a grade allowance. If they leave without the consent of the school, they are unlikely to get any additional facilities upon their departure. When there was no such provision earlier, teachers could leave at any time. Later, after this provision of creating the provident fund, the scenario of teacher attrition changed. As per the commitment, 90% of teachers have not left the school in the middle of the sessions; 10% are unavoidable.

That was a good initiative to support teachers financially during their departure. Appreciating their practice, I further asked what else they were doing to retain teachers. He further explained:

From my experience of working as the principal, I have realized that teachers highly require self-respect; we should think about it seriously if we want their retention. So, to honor senior teachers and to let them feel that they deserve to take ownership of the organization, we give them various responsibilities like coordinatorship and also give them fewer periods to teach and be flexible in supporting them. I remember, once a teacher's son came from abroad; she wanted a few days of leave so that she could spend some comfortable time with her son and travel around. Her son was always telling her why she needed to work while he was sending a good amount of money from abroad. He wanted her to rest at home, not to worry about such regular responsibilities. She was confused. I learned about her issue from other colleagues. When she came to appeal for leave, I accepted her request. After a week, she joined happily.

Later, her son returned. She continued working. She often says the school understands her emotions and says to everyone that they don't need to worry about such challenges.

Mr. Chiran seemed to have a human-centric approach in honoring senior teachers and letting them feel that they deserve to take ownership of the organization. His strategy of giving those senior teachers various responsibilities like coordinatorship, along with fewer periods to teach, and being flexible in supporting them was a good approach to keep relations with teachers following relational leadership. Secondly, it was his kindness to have an empathetic view towards a teacher who was a mother as well, I asked him to share his other experiences of helping teachers, which inspired them to be attached to the organization. He shared:

Sure, I still remember another event that motivated one of our teachers to work for the long term. He is Mr. Yadam (pseudonym), who once had an accident and broke his hand. He had two tensions: one, a broken hand, and the other was the chance of losing his job due to the need for a long leave for recovery. I went to meet him at his house. He looked serious, but I spoke kindly to counsel him. I understood he was also worried about his job because he needed one month to rest as per the doctor. Then, I ensured he would get one month's leave for recovery. After talking to SMC, we provided him with one month's paid leave. After a month, he joined the school happily with thankful words. Now, he has been working for seven years.

Not only this event, but I also remember another incident that we sometimes face. Once, one of our teachers was about to leave after another school offered him a better salary. He had been teaching at our school for only one year. I had a deep talk with him and negotiated how he would remain at our school. Then, with a little increment in the existing salary, though not the same as that another school had offered him, we managed to continue his service at our school. He has been working here for three years.

These are some incidents that I have experienced in terms of retaining teachers at my school.

Helping in a crisis becomes unforgettable to everyone, so leadership should capitalize on such moments. When teachers are in trouble, principals should be ready to support them; this wins their hearts and motivates them to be dedicated to the organization for the long term. On the other hand, principals also have to be tactful in

negotiations in need. When teachers leave due to certain influences, principals should deal with such a situation very tactfully and divert the teachers back to the organization.

Interpretation and Analysis of Chiran's Narratives

From Chiran's narratives above, I understand that the principal is not only the leader or the head of a school; s/he is the main guardian of the organization, while the teachers, along with other coworkers, are the family members. In our families, whenever we have any difficulties, we expect support from our guardians. Likewise, all the coworkers expect support from the principal. If there are such relations among the teachers, staff, and principal, the retention of teachers in such schools can be possible. In the narrative above, the principal played the role of a guardian. He helped his colleagues continue their service at their school by supporting two teachers in continuing their studies at the university in the morning, granting leave to a teacher for her time to care for and stay with her son, who had come from abroad, and by negotiating with a teacher to continue service that let the teacher feel valued. Allowing teachers to continue their university education in the morning justifies that he is aware of the professional development of teachers. Secondly, granting leave to a teacher who is a mother and wants to spend some time with her son, who has come from abroad, reflects his nature of proactive empathy. Likewise, his negotiation skills with the teacher to convince him to remain in the school exhibit that he is a strategic leader who cares about professional growth, happiness, and strategic retention of the teachers. On the other hand, his nature of supporting and helping coworkers in need created a family-like atmosphere in the organization that resulted in teacher retention.

In this regard, Chiran's story illustrates that the principal's leadership plays a vital role in solving the issue of retaining teachers at private schools. Moreover, this narrative reflects how much a leader should compromise and strategically address the issues so that the school activities can function smoothly. For this, the leader has to be empathetic and strategic for the betterment of the organization. For the retention of teachers, the principal here seems to create a flexible workplace in the school. He understands the value of personal growth for coworkers, so he creates flexible working hours for teachers who are in need. Likewise, by negotiating for salary increments and providing emotional support to the coworkers, he has gained loyalty and commitment from them.

We analyze this story in this way in the context of increasing teacher turnover worldwide due to migration, competition for jobs, and personal ambitions. The current literature highlights that the intrinsic motivators, such as recognition and emotional support, as well as the extrinsic factors, such as salary and benefits, influence retention decisions (Muriithi, 2020; Springer, 2019). From Chiran's narrative, we also come to know that Chiran's leadership corresponds with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) in terms of belongingness and self-esteem needs; it justifies that these two components must be aligned with the leadership and working environment to make an employee satisfied. Additionally, his emphasis on frequent meetings to mitigate communication gap and to inspire for organizational commitment, addressing the emotional needs of teachers and offering them opportunities for professional growth, aligns with Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1990), which calls for leaders to inspire and empower employees to foster organizational loyalty. On the other hand, we also find Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966) implemented in Chiran's leadership, for it balances both hygiene factors, like salary, and motivational factors like emotional well-being. In this way, Chiran has been leading the organization to meet the institutional objectives, addressing the coworkers' desires, and creating a cohesive and sustainable professional image.

Discussion and Meanings of Chiran's Narratives

In the story above, we find relational and participatory leadership practiced. The principal cultivated such an environment where teachers felt valued and respected. This tendency strengthened trust and commitment among teachers. This ultimately not only boosts teacher retention but also helps the organization to have better morale and efficiency. In this way, these events exemplify a good practice of leadership that is effective for both the coworkers and the institution.

Here, Chiran's expression made me feel that the job at a private school is not in high public demand; it goes with a negotiation. Teachers can leave schools at any time if there are no favorable circumstances for them to work. So, a principal has to work for the mental state and happiness of colleagues. Moreover, the principal has to manage the working environment, provide counseling for teachers, provide support in needs, address the teachers' challenges, arrange provisions for professional growth, and provide guardianship. In that context, it is the principal who has to tactfully manage them, lead them, motivate them, inspire them, and support them so that they can remain. In private schools, most teachers are student teachers: they teach during

the day and study in the morning at college/university. Their study is more important than their job of teaching. In this respect, the school has to manage something that can attract them and engage them with an emotional attachment to the organization. One approach can be that principals need to have a human-centric approach in honoring senior teachers and letting them feel that they deserve to take ownership of the organization. They can give various responsibilities, like coordinatorship, along with fewer periods to teach, and they can be a little more flexible in supporting them. Helping in a crisis becomes unforgettable to everyone, so leadership should capitalize on such moments. When teachers are in trouble, principals should be ready to support them; this wins their hearts and motivates them to be dedicated to the organization for the long term. On the other hand, principals also have to be tactful in negotiations in need. When teachers leave due to certain influences, principals should deal with such a situation very tactfully and divert the teachers back to the organization.

From the Chiran's narratives, we can draw several key themes associated with teacher retention caused by the principal's leadership. Of them, leadership with an empathetic attitude towards coworkers, flexibility in making a conducive workplace, emotional skills, and motivational skills are some. In this sense, empathetic leadership, which is seen in Chiran's dealings with colleagues, is both maintaining the organizational integrity and addressing the coworkers' needs. This nature resembles a transformational leadership style because transformational leadership theory emphasizes fostering trust and empowering coworkers so that they can be inspired to be loyal and more committed to organizational goals. On the other hand, we also see Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory implemented in Chiran's practice. He has kept a balance in the hygiene components, such as salary, gratuity fund to seniors, flexible schedule to needy staff, motivating colleagues, recognizing, and emotionally supporting them. These approaches help to keep the coworkers satisfied in the long term, which ultimately results in teacher retention. Meanwhile, we also see that the organizational structure has failed to plan for employees' personal and professional growth. There is no organizational system for such facilities. Here, it is in the principal's hands to convince the School Management Committee and manage to provide such facilities. Despite what he did to make teachers satisfied and motivated, being flexible and emotional, it would be great if such provisions were already documented in the organizational policy. However, Chiran's actions reflect a relational leadership approach. Having an empathic and flexible nature for colleagues,

the nature of recognizing and valuing them, the nature of emotionally supporting them, and being dedicated to developing their professional skills, he has performed interpersonal connections and active involvement in teachers' lives that foster trust and long-term commitment (Uhl-Bien, 2006) that contribute to long-term teacher retention.

Essence of Chiran's Narratives

As an essence of the Chiran's narratives, we can claim to say that teacher retention relies on effective leadership. To be recognized as effective leadership, one needs to have skills and the ability to empathize, a strategic nature for making the workplace flexible, and recognize and honor coworkers. Furthermore, it highlights that we can get a motivated and loyal workforce through addressing individual needs and maintaining organizational integrity. As a researcher, I felt that even small, but thoughtful actions like providing emotional support, supporting the professional growth of coworkers, and recognizing coworkers as valuable personnel to the organization help the leader retain teachers. Hence, the essence of Mr. Chiran's leadership covers empathy, adaptability, and the philosophy of practical behavior, i.e., the people-first philosophy. This is solely intended to keep its teachers happy, progressive, and satisfied. The leader addressed all the unique demands and needs of his colleagues through flexibility, emotional support, and financial negotiation at both his personal and professional levels. This practice lets us feel that leadership can go beyond policies and organizational rules to make coworkers happy and satisfied, which ultimately results in their commitment to organization and their retention.

Narratives of Abdul

It was on November 25, 2024, when I visited Apex Academy (pseudonym). When I reached the school, I was requested to wait in the lobby. I was offered coffee. Before I finished the coffee, Mr. Abdul, the Academic Director of Apex Academy, came to receive me and led me to his office. I explained what I was doing and why I had come there. He was happy to know about my research and the selection of the relevant title. Then, fixing the microphone on his shirt, I asked him to share his career journey and experiences of his practices for helping teachers be retained in his school. He gently started to state that:

I am Abdul (pseudonym), director of Apex Academy Chitwan (pseudonym) and former principal of KVS. The aspect of teacher retention you have raised through this research is very relevant. Today, there is a high risk of not only

not getting students but also not getting qualified teachers. Students fly abroad after the 10th or 12th standard every year, while educated people or possible teachers go abroad for better employment. Those left in Nepal are jumping from one organization to another because of insecurity in finance and jobs, weak attachment to the organization, and poor professional development opportunities. The most important issue is that a maximum of teachers did not join this profession as their dream career; they were free and joined it easily. So did I. I wanted to be a doctor in life, but I joined this career in 1984 when I was free. At that time, anyone who had better English could easily get a teaching job. So, in Nepal, most of the teachers have been teachers, not because their ambition was to be teachers, but because they joined it, and life went on. Once someone joins the educational sector, it is the principal and senior stakeholders who can retain him/her. I am still in this profession because I was inspired and motivated to continue this profession in my initial phase.

The way he shared his career journey was attractive. Meanwhile, the issue he raised was very serious. There was a high risk of losing not only students but also qualified teachers, because students were flying abroad after the 10th or 12th standard every year, and educated people or potential teachers were going abroad for better employment. Those who were left in Nepal were also jumping from one organization to another due to financial insecurity and job instability, weak organizational attachment, and limited professional development opportunities. The most important issue he raised was that a maximum of teachers had not joined this profession as their dream career; they had rather joined it because they were free and it was easy to get a teaching job. His aim in life was different, but he became a teacher. So, I wanted to know how he was inspired to continue that profession despite having a dream of being a doctor. To address my curiosity, he added:

When I first joined my job, I was told to spend a few days in the school before starting to teach to be familiar with the students, the school environment, the culture, and the school system. My supervisor might have thought that my prompt involvement in the school, which was unfamiliar to me, might be uncomfortable for me, and I would discontinue or leave a bad impression at the beginning. So, I observed the school's activities in a relaxed manner the whole day without any stress. The next day, I made a map of Nepal on a muddy

wall and asked all the students to come with their photos. I pasted their photos according to their birthplace. Those who were from the same place were pasted using colorful thread and place-name tags. This decorated the wall. The classroom looked beautiful. Later, in a meeting, the chairman praised me for being a 'perfectionist.' That mass appreciation motivated me, and I desired to continue that profession. So, still, when I am the principal, I feel motivation is crucial in teacher retention, and I do the same for my colleagues. Not only appreciation but also many other components matter in motivation. That can be rewards, praise, promotion, opportunity, etc. My first five years were confusing for me. I frequently asked myself if I was in the right profession. Many schoolmates were in other positions of security and government offices, and some were employed abroad. As time passed, everything became normal for me, and I kept on enjoying my profession. I was always motivated and considered an important and responsible member of my school. This helped me become attached to the organization. In that situation, I could not leave immediately until I got another much better opportunity, which was justifiable for everyone to accept. After serving at various schools as a teacher, coordinator, and even acting principal, I became the school principal at Bright School (pseudonym) in 2009. So, one important thing is that the first five years for any teacher are difficult because s/he has not become a teacher; s/he has just joined because it was available. Later, when they are engaged with children and start enjoying teaching, feel attached to the school, and feel they are an integral part of the school, their retention becomes possible.

The first few months, and sometimes a few years, are very difficult for new teachers to decide whether to continue the profession or to quit. In that situation, if any leaders support them or motivate them, they are likely to continue their profession. Such motivation and appreciation of job performance develops the confidence level of teachers, and they start feeling attached to the organization, which ultimately lets them feel ownership of the organization. So, I asked him if he had done anything to retain teachers as the principal later. He said:

Yes, our attempts to retain teachers start with shortlisting the candidates during the recruitment process. When someone leaves, we become very conscious of the new candidate. We believe that a long-experienced one doesn't easily accept transformation, and the new and fresh one takes time to

learn. When someone learns and becomes adjustable after a hard effort and difficulties, the principal should perceive him/her as an organizational asset. So, being the principal and the head of the organization, I accept my organization as my family. As the guardian of a family cares for its members, I care for all the coworkers. This has helped in building trust, and teachers have become open with me. They, then, can have an open talk that solves many hidden issues and challenges. I think the principal should not be over-promising, "Gaf Laauney." The thing that you cannot do should not be promised. This spoils the trust of the principal. S/he should be aware of the basic needs of the coworkers. In this respect, the first thing that I prioritize as the principal is ensuring that the financial facility and the remuneration provided to the teachers can meet their basic needs. I am making a big effort to improve the financial situation of the organization. After all, retention can be achieved through employee satisfaction. The satisfaction is achieved basically from two things: growth and financial conformity. Growth means academic and professional growth. The learning environment they get through their profession keeps them happy in their profession. Teachers become happy when they get such opportunities. This happiness results in their retention. Similarly, teachers should not have any tension in managing food, educating children, transportation, and health due to the scarcity of financial resources received from their profession. The school should manage to address such needs through salaries and other policies like insurance so that they can be free from the tension arising from basic needs. This causes job satisfaction that ultimately results in retention.

These two components, i.e., professional growth and financial conformity, are prime aspects to keep any coworkers satisfied and attached to the organization. In this sense, Mr. Abdul was doing his best to promote these aspects. I wanted to be familiar with other components that he believed foster retention. So, I asked him to share his experience of motivating coworkers, besides providing professional growth and financial conformity, that helped them remain in the organization for the long term. He shared:

Participation in decision-making and little freedom in working gives ownership to the coworkers. These motivate them and let them feel that they are important members of the organization. There was a helper in my third

school who used to be asked how the school would look better instead of being instructed to do this and that work. I used to ask him if everything was fine. He was free to decide what flower to plant and what shape to cut the hedge. He used to be called to discuss and make decisions for organizing school events. He found himself important in the school. He worked till his last breath there and always thought that it was his school. The ownership he got gave him confidence and motivation to work for a long time.

So, what I believe is that, at least if you cannot provide sufficient financial facilities, sincere praise of the work performance can motivate teachers. In 1984, when I was teaching in a class, a District Education Officer came to observe our school, as our school was near his office. After my class was over, he asked me where I had studied. Then he asked if I had studied to be a teacher. I replied, 'Yes,' and everybody around him laughed. Later, he explained why he was asking me that. He was impressed by my class. When I heard my appreciation from his mouth, I became happy and motivated. Those initial motivational events led me to work as a teacher throughout my life.

Obviously, participation in decision-making, little flexibility in working, and occasional praise motivates coworkers to feel that they are valued members of the organization. However, these may not be sufficient to retain teachers. A principal has to be strategic to plan, manage, and act accordingly. So, I asked him if he had done any strategic activities to discourage teacher attrition. He said:

Yes, the principal has to introduce various strategies (or be strategic) to help the school have a better learning environment. This creates better performance, and that leads to better results. Better results create better satisfaction, and the satisfaction leads to retention. There was a teacher who was frustrated after teaching for a couple of years. She approached the office with resignation. The reason was that her students could not progress, and there was a flood of complaints from parents. The job was like a burden for her. I felt she was seeking love and care like a child, and I tried to make her feel light, and many teachers are like that. I convinced her that it was our common work; she was not only responsible for that. I said, "You have progressed; you see where you are now; see your growth." Then, I planned to do something to improve the performance of the students in the school at the principal's level. I introduced a strategy to reward those students who had

increased their learning achievements by 10%. Obviously, 10% could be increased only by those who had secured below 50%. After rewarding the students securing 30-40%, they gradually increased their learning achievements, and finally, there was no one left below 50%. This strategy helped her continue her service at my school. She is still working.

Teachers prefer a learning environment in the school so that they can perform better. Good performance doesn't only create a good image of the organization but also makes teachers happy with their job performance, and happy teachers retain. The most terrifying aspect for a teacher is to see their students' low achievements and face complaints from guardians. In this respect, Mr. Abduls' idea was mind-blowing in terms of encouraging students who had low learning achievements. Before concluding the interview, I wanted to know his final remarks about any other strategy for retaining teachers. He spoke:

Unofficially, one thing that I often think is that teachers should be kept engaged in some work throughout the day. It is correctly said that the devil resides in empty minds. When teachers are free, they talk about unprofessional things. Such unprofessional talk by one teacher demotivates others from working sincerely. As a consequence, they leave school thinking that this job is meaningless. So, it is always better to keep them busy with professional work or activities where they can learn something. I remember this kind of event in a school. In that school, teachers used to sit in the sun during their leisure periods and talk. Whatever they talked about used to come to my ear through others; their talks were unprofessional and irritating. Two staff members joined another school that was being negatively influenced by toxic communication. Their ears were filled with negative talk regarding the school; they became negative towards the school and finally left. Then I managed to engage my colleagues in planning, copy-checking, and making teaching aids. I prohibited them from sitting open in the sun and gossiping with each other. Later, I felt at peace in the school and felt everything was going smoothly. Hence, I think a principal should be aware of multiple components of teacher retention and be strategic accordingly.

I agreed with Principal Abdul's notion that the principal should be strategic to engage teachers in professional activities rather than letting them engage in unprofessional talk during school hours. Most importantly, professional growth,

financial conformity, motivational words, support for teachers to perform better, flexibility in working, and decision-making inspire teachers to be attached to the organization for the long term. This makes teacher retention possible, which is in the hands of the principal's leadership.

Interpretation and Analysis of Abdul's Narrative

Abdul's narrative above lets us feel that there is a complex interplay between leadership and teacher retention in the private schools in Nepal. As a researcher, I understood that socio-economic trends, career misalignment, and systematic challenges cause teacher attrition in private schools. This narrative reflects that private schools' teachers never aimed to be teachers in their lives. They happened to be teachers. They started their teaching careers in their free time and became teachers. Their retention depends on how their immediate supervisor, leader, or principal behaves with them. His/her motivating nature, respecting and valuing coworkers, and the nature of giving ownership to the colleagues matter a lot in their attrition and retention. Besides, there are some unavoidable circumstances, like going abroad or joining government jobs, where the leaders' even supportive behavior doesn't stop them from leaving the organization. The trend of going abroad for foreign employment is increasing in Nepal; it has become a kind of fashion or culture in Nepalese societies.

In Bharatpur, at least one is employed in a foreign land from almost every family. However, Abdul's leadership approach has created a supportive and engaging working environment where teachers are inspired and committed to long-term service. His leadership approaches align with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966) because he focuses on incentives or salary and other motivational components like recognition and emotional investment. Likewise, Abdul's narratives refer to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) for teacher retention in the sense that financial security and psychological belonging can make teachers satisfied, and satisfied teachers retain. Moreover, their satisfaction also extends to cover their recognition in the decision-making process in the organization and their involvement in professional development opportunities. In this regard, we find that the relational leadership theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006) was implemented in Abdul's leadership approach. In his leadership, he seems to prioritize such nations or ideas in his strategic activities. Moreover, his career journey that started from an educator and flourished to a committed educational leader also proves that he has a strong ability for environmental adaptation in career progression

as advocated by Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994).

Discussion and Meanings of Abdul's Narrative

Mr. Abdul raised a serious issue: there was a high risk of not only losing students but also qualified teachers, because students were flying abroad after the 10th or 12th standard every year, and educated people or potential teachers were going abroad for better employment. Those who were left in Nepal were also jumping from one organization to another due to financial insecurity and job instability, weak organizational attachment, and limited professional development opportunities. Most teachers had not joined this profession as their dream career; they had rather joined it because they were free and it was easy to get a teaching job. The first few months, and sometimes a few years, are very difficult for new teachers to decide whether to continue the profession or to quit. In that situation, leaders need to support them or motivate them; only then are they likely to continue their profession. Motivation and appreciation of job performance develop the confidence level of teachers, and they start feeling attached to the organization, which ultimately lets them feel ownership of the organization. There are two components, i.e., professional growth and financial conformity, that are prime aspects to keep any coworkers satisfied and attached to the organization. Other components are participation in decision-making, little flexibility in working, and occasional praise, which motivate coworkers to feel that they are valued members of the organization. However, these may not be sufficient to retain teachers. A principal has to be strategic to plan, manage, and act accordingly. Teachers prefer a learning environment in the school so that they can perform better. Good performance not only creates a good image of the organization but also makes teachers happy with their job performance, and happy teachers are retained. The most terrifying aspect for a teacher is to see their students' low achievements and to face complaints from guardians. In such a situation, principals need to support teachers with some innovative ideas. The principal should be strategic to engage teachers in professional activities rather than letting them engage in unprofessional talk during school hours. Most importantly, professional growth, financial conformity, motivational words, support for teachers to perform better, flexibility in working, and decision-making inspire teachers to be attached to the organization for the long term. This makes teacher retention possible, which is in the hands of the principal's leadership.

From Abdul's leadership approach, we get a valuable insight that both intrinsic motivators and extrinsic factors contribute to job satisfaction, which ultimately results

in teacher retention. So, all such activities that recognize and trust teachers, value them through involving them in decision-making, or provide professional development opportunities are intrinsic motivators that are found applied in Abdul's leadership approach. Likewise, we also smell the implementation of extrinsic motivational factors like financial support in his leadership approach. However, his leadership approach seems to critique transactional leadership models that prioritize give-and-take policy. In other words, he doesn't seem to provide these intrinsic and extrinsic motivational components so that he can receive something in return. He seems to advocate the transformational leadership style (Bass, 1990), where his behavior inspires and empowers colleagues to remain more committed to their schools. Besides his leadership style, his attempt to create a conducive working environment through recognizing teachers' contributions, providing financial security, and fostering ownership among staff addresses the concept of Psychologically Safe Work Environment (Edmondson, 1999), which ultimately reinforces job stability or teacher retention.

From the discussion above, we can generate some key themes like leadership and care, intrinsic motivation and recognition, and retention through satisfaction. In this respect, we can state that a principal's role extends beyond administrative work. S/he is a guardian of the entire organization and is required to foster meaningful relationships with teachers and other administrative staff. Moreover, a leader is supposed to work for the professional growth of teachers. His/her strategic activities for engaging teachers in the decision-making process, valuing them, trusting them, and appreciating them for their good performance intrinsically motivate teachers, which is more powerful in making teachers satisfied than a mere extrinsic motivational factor like incentives. So, a leader has to combine all intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors to retain teachers. To keep teachers satisfied, it is not something to give, like incentives, and get their service in return. There are many other intrinsic motivational activities that a leader has to think about for the teachers' satisfaction, which ultimately results in their retention.

On the other hand, from the narratives above, we can also see that Abdul's leadership philosophy is challenging a rigid, traditional top-down official protocol to work with coworkers for their retention. His leadership nature of flexibility, compassion, mentoring colleagues, and trust-building identifies his leadership as a transformative leadership style through a democratic leadership model in nature.

Essence of Abdul's Narrative

From Abdul's narratives, we underscore the critical role of empathetic leadership. Such leadership has to be flexible in working together to lead the team by providing financial stability, professional development opportunities, building trust, and recognizing them as valuable members of the organization. Such leadership can only be helpful for teacher retention. As a researcher, I learned that teacher retention strategies must balance institutional goals with personal aspiration, integrating both extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors to keep teachers more committed, satisfied, and retained. So, readers can generalize that leadership is not merely about managing the official system; it is more about fostering human connection, self and coworkers' adaptability, inspiring colleagues towards the organizational vision, motivating them to achieve that, and ultimately to inspire long-term service from them.

Narratives of Sraddha Dewang

It was Thursday afternoon on November 28, 2024, when I visited Golden Gate Academy (pseudonym). I reached there by using Google Maps after a telephonic conversation with the principal. I had to wait at the gate for some time. The gatekeeper asked me about my details and went to the principal's room for my appointment. After a few minutes, he arrived back at the gate and welcomed me with heartfelt greetings. I followed his direction to reach the principal's office. When I entered the principal's room, I saw some people talking to the principal. Later, I also learned that they were bankers and were talking about possible institutional loans. Since I was also the principal of Nepal Police School, they looked interested in talking with me. After a short talk, they departed, and we proceeded to talk about our business. I explained to the principal why I had visited her school on that very day. Then she offered me to have a look around her school, expecting me to express my impression and to give her feedback. We visited every classroom, hall, lab, library, toilet, canteen, and meeting room. After that, we came back to her office and started our interview. I asked her to share her strategies, experiences, and practices for helping her colleagues or teachers remain in her school for long-term service. She confidently and proudly started saying that:

I am Sraddha Dewang (pseudonym), principal of Golden Gate Academy (pseudonym), and I have been leading this school for over two decades. I understand that retaining teachers is vital for the sustainable establishment of any school. So, I try my best to become conscious of some crucial aspects that

can be helpful for teacher retention. First of all, I do not treat my colleagues like they are workers who are paid to work. In my opinion, if all the teachers feel that they are like shareholders who can get better benefits and more facilities along with the progress of the school, they are attached to the school and will remain to work for the long term. So, I treat my teachers like shareholders of my school; they are like equal partners for me. Secondly, I feel that the school is my family and all the teachers are its family members; I care about them as a guardian.

Her philosophy of caring for colleagues as a guardian was insightful for me. She was explaining everything confidently and proudly. Being conscious of how she could retain teachers was an important aspect for a leader. For this, her strategy of taking coworkers as shareholders and family members was a wonderful strategy. I wanted to hear about one particular event where she played the role of a guardian. So, as per my curiosity, she replied:

Last time, an accident occurred to one of my teachers. He was coming to school on his motorbike. On the way, he collided with a tractor. His bike was smashed. Some witnesses called the police, and the police called an ambulance. Somehow, somebody managed to inform me. No sooner had I heard than I rushed towards the hospital. When his wife saw me coming to the hospital, she embraced me and wept. I consoled and sympathized with her and said that everything would be fine, as I was there with them. The treatment had started. I stayed at the hospital for three days until he came to consciousness. I empathized with his wife and provided food from my house, and the school paid all hospital expenses. Finally, after one month of hospitalization, he was discharged. I managed to take him to his house. Later, whenever I called his wife to inquire about his status, she always expressed her grief about how she would manage everything since her husband had not been able to attend his job for a month, and he seemed to be unable to join school immediately. I always promised her the school would manage everything and comforted her, telling her not to worry about the financial burden. I gave him adequate sick leave, provided salary, substituted his class with a part-time teacher, and frequently asked if there was anything more needed. I told her not to worry about financial aspects; her husband needed only care and love at that time, which she should give him at home. Her family felt that I was like a savior and

a shield for her family at that critical hour. Later, although he was not completely recovered, he returned to his job one day. I didn't want him to join so early, but he insisted he would do it. So, I managed to give him little tasks and enough time to rest at school. His presence was meaningful to me. He said to everyone that he had remained alive due to the hope and support given by the school. He even shared how his relatives and neighbors were admiring the school's caring nature towards its staff. Now, he feels he is a member of my family; I am sure he will stay here for a long time. In this way, there are many other events when I have always attempted to let my colleagues feel that I am a shield to protect them from any physical, social, or economic hazards. Now, I proudly say they are confident that I am after them. Hence, for me, one of the most important things that a principal needs to have is a sense of guardianship to retain teachers.

It is crucial that people never forget your support when they are in need. So, great leaders work for their people to support them financially, emotionally, and socially. Here as well, providing care as a guardian was her nice idea and kindness, but there lies a question of whether this kind of care only keeps teachers satisfied; what about salary? I wanted to know what other components could be prominent in retaining teachers. However, stressing the guardianship, she again said:

Salary is another crucial aspect, but it comes after guardianship. I have not seen salary becoming the most important aspect in retaining teachers at my school. Our school was small earlier and was not able to pay a good salary. However, since then, the same teachers have been working for more than a decade. Now our school has grown to more than 1000 students, and we are paying salaries more than the government's scale. If salaries were the matter, they would have already left the school when we were not able to pay handsome salaries. But they continued working together like a family. So, I think they expect love, self-respect, and ownership of the organization, which I am giving them. After all, we have paid for their time, not their sentiments. However, sometimes, due to the trend of going abroad, when someone resigns, I counsel them about the charm of working in their home country. Last time, four years ago, one teacher came to the principal's room with a request to make a letter of his job experience and salary statement. I knew his intention behind such documents. I explained how people were struggling abroad, their

suffering, their invested amount, their income, and their sense of dislocation in a foreign land. I told him about the importance of living in the home country, patriotism, and how much we have saved rather than how much we have earned. He listened carefully and nodded every time. However, I told him I would make the documents as per his requirement and phoned the administration department from there to prepare the documents accordingly. He was speechless there and left my office in a kind of silence and confusion. Then, the next day, he came to my office again. He looked clear and bright in the face. He satisfactorily told me that he had canceled his plan of going abroad. Then he requested to cancel the preparation of the documents. Since then, he has not asked to make such documents any longer. I often tell similar things to my colleagues at our weekly meetings. This has helped me retain teachers, too. So, this kind of counselling and motivational skill is also required for a principal to retain teachers.

Counselling teachers as their guardians can help to retain them. So, a leader is supposed to lead his/her team in such a way that his/her colleagues should realize that they are getting love, self-respect, and ownership of the organization. However, if the teachers are negative in their attitude, such counseling may not work. In such a situation, avoiding people with a negative attitude is crucial. So, I asked her to share other practices that she was doing to be safe from such people and to retain teachers. She replied:

Yes, indeed, counseling people with a negative attitude is useless. We cannot keep them satisfied. So, another important thing that we do to avoid such negative or toxic people is to focus on recruitment. In this regard, I judge the candidate from the point of view of attitude and durability. I focus on this aspect more than the written exam. If we have a good interview, we can easily recognize the intention and possible durability of the candidate. Secondly, I tell my colleagues that they are like my fingers that should join together to make a big fist, i.e., power. However, if anybody tries to have unnecessary gossip, I warn them in a friendly way, telling them that "I have given my finger; if you try to pull it, I will unplug your hand." Besides, I give maximum moral lessons on being a great teacher. I advise them on how we can be happy in our profession. For this, we have to find out where we can find happiness. In this way, I achieve my target by keeping them happy, motivated, and inspired.

Though schools are formal places, being polite and formal may not always work to keep all the coworkers dedicated to the objectives of the organization. Sometimes, we face such negative or toxic people who understand and come to the mainstream only after strict and harsh communication, and sometimes, even action. The principal should be ready to face such scenarios as well, because there is not always a systematic, formal, and polite situation in our context for leadership.

Interpretation and Analysis of Shraddha's Narratives

After going through the experiences and stories of Shraddha Dewang above, I came to the point of understanding that teacher retention can be possible through relational leadership. In this narrative, we find a profound influence of relational leadership on Sharaddha's principalship that is helping her to retain teachers. Her sense of guardianship for her colleagues is strong enough to keep them attached to the organization. She not only looks caring to staff in need but also strict in controlling them. As a researcher, I was influenced and inspired by her behavior that reflected empathy, care, and meaningful connections among all the staff. This kind of relation shaped the school's working environment in such a way that everybody felt valued and committed there. It was because she treated everyone as family members or shareholders of the organization rather than mere paid employees, which is usually done in other organizations by their managers. This tendency fosters psychological safety that ensures a long-term dedication or commitment to serving (Edmondson, 1999).

Looking at Sharaddha's leadership style, which emphasizes trust, inspiration, and morale-building for a conducive working environment in the organization, we can declare that her leadership philosophy aligns with transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1990). Moreover, we notice that her role of principalship as a guardian reflects Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943). It is because, in her leadership, teachers are found feeling assured of safety and belongingness, which enables them to achieve self-actualization in their profession. Likewise, her nature of supporting coworkers emotionally and financially justifies her leadership, guided by Relational Leadership Theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006), which is connected to the personal well-being of coworkers, and it addresses the need for organizational stability through teacher retention.

Discussion and Meanings of Shraddha's Narratives

Ms. Shraddha expresses that principal needs to deal with colleagues as their guardians and perceive them as equal partners of the organization. Counselling

teachers as their guardians can help to retain them. So, a leader is supposed to lead his/her team in such a way that his/her colleagues should realize that they are getting love, self-respect, and ownership of the organization. However, if the teachers are negative in their attitude, such counseling may not work. In such a situation, avoiding people with a negative attitude is crucial. This is crucial that people never forget your support when they are in need. So, great leaders work for their people to support them financially, emotionally, and socially. Though schools are formal places, being polite and formal may not always work to keep all the coworkers dedicated to the objectives of the organization. Sometimes, we face such negative or toxic people who understand and come to the mainstream only after strict and harsh communication, and sometimes, even action. The principal should be ready to face such scenarios as well, because there is not always a systematic, formal, and polite situation in our context for leadership.

The way Shraddha has motivated, trusted, and conveyed a strong sense of belonging to her coworkers justifies that her leadership style is a transformational leadership style, which follows the Four Capital Theory as well. As per these theories, she is not only inspiring teachers and other coworkers but also empowering them in such a way that they feel recognized and valued. She has emphasized the organizational vision, motivated coworkers, and created meaningful relationships with all her colleagues, from gatekeepers and drivers to senior teachers. This nature has cultivated a conducive working environment where teachers are more committed to working for the institution's success (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This results in teacher retention as well.

As per Burns (1978), Shraddha's leadership attempt has gone beyond transactional leadership because she has ensured teacher retention through trust, empowerment, and professional opportunities rather than certain material incentives. Since she focuses on autonomy, competence, and relatedness as essential factors for job satisfaction, her approach aligns with Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Looking at the teachers' everyday activities through the Four Capital Theory, we find the four aspects of the Four Capital Theory, i.e., human, social, structural, and decisional capital, implemented in Shraddha's leadership, which has built institutional loyalty (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). For this, she has prioritized teacher development through mentorship, continuous feedback, and professional development

opportunities, which have empowered human resources. Likewise, her nature of supporting her colleagues, both financially and emotionally, in need, justifies her character of providing her coworkers with psychological safety. Similarly, her counselling to teachers for patriotism reflects her attempts to recognize socio-economic and cultural realities; it promotes patriotism and community bonds, which influence teacher retention (Fullan, 2016). Moreover, her practice of working together as shareholders or family members, where she involves teachers in the decision-making process, enhances the coworkers' commitment and job satisfaction (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Looking at Shraddha's narratives through the Transformational Leadership and Four Capital Theories, we find Shraddha's leadership style challenging Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. It is because Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory emphasizes financial rewards for excellent work performance, which causes job satisfaction and results in retention. But Shraddha highlights personal connection, trusting coworkers, caring for them as guardians, and prioritizing their professional development. This has created hope for the coworkers, engaged them in the organization, and provided institutional support in need, which has countered external migration trends (Herzberg, 1966).

Hence, through emotional connection with coworkers, involving them in decision-making practice, and their professional recognition, Shraddha has strengthened the teaching workforce and ensured a long-term commitment from them for the organization's success (Luthans, 2002).

Essence of Shraddha's Narratives

Shraddha's leadership approach is transformational because she fostered trust, emotional support, and shared leadership, which has created a conducive working environment where teachers feel valued and motivated (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Moreover, her leadership practices address human capital, social capital, structural capital, and decisional capital as per the Four Capital Theory. This kind of leadership boosts teacher retention.

Narratives of Shivam

It was December 6, 2024, when I visited Sunshine Academy (pseudonym) to take an interview with its principal, Mr. Shivam Baniya (pseudonym), as per our previous telephonic communication. There was no easy access to his school: the security system at the gate was strict. I waited at the gate till my arrival was conveyed to the principal. Then, I was escorted to the principal's room. After having a little

informal talk, I jumped into the subject matter. I fixed the microphone and started explaining the purpose of my visit and the process of the interview. So as to address my research question, I directly asked him to share his experiences and practices of helping teachers remain in his school. Then, he said:

My name is Shivam Baniya (pseudonym). I am the principal of Sunshine Academy (pseudonym). I have been a principal for more than a decade, but this is my fourth year at this school. Teaching is a connection between teachers and students. We do not teach subjects, curriculum, or texts; we teach students. A principal is connected to teachers, which means the principal is concerned with teachers' growth, needs, and demands for retention. We often talk about why we are appointed and how our team can help each other for better performance.

Teacher retention is challenging at the lower secondary level. This is because teachers at this level usually have not finished their formal university education; they are more likely to move to other professions or schools once they finish their university degree. Teachers at the secondary and primary levels are more stable; secondary-level teachers have completed their university degrees, and primary teachers have left to continue their studies. On the other hand, primary teachers are less ambitious; they rarely jump from one school to another. Foreign employment can attract them; however, a little difference in salary makes no difference to such teachers. In my experience, regular counseling for teachers is very important.

Counseling teachers is a good practice for retaining teachers in private schools. In a sense, it is also a tactic to keep teachers influenced or enchanted for their retention. However, one thing is certain that frequent such talks can clear confusion regarding leadership and school management. In many schools, we find a chaotic environment due to a communication gap. So, doing counseling for teachers for their best performance while adhering to the ethics of being teachers is a good practice. In addition to it, the principal is indeed supposed to work for the growth, needs, and demands of teachers for their retention. Having frequent talks over what teachers are supposed to do and how the school can support them to work for that objective helps to keep them emotionally attached to the organization. Once they are emotionally attached to the organization, they start having a feeling of ownership. So, I asked him

to share what scenario of that school he found at his recruitment and what he did after joining the school as the principal. He responded:

When I joined this school, I found teachers who were just like workers in any industry. They used to come to school and teach in the classroom and leave. I smelled that their emotion was not aligned with the philosophy of education and being a teacher. Then I started conducting regular meetings, i.e., every Friday. At the meeting, I started telling my colleagues about the dignity, essence, and responsibility of being teachers and being associated with the academic sector. After a few such sessions, I felt teachers feeling or realizing their responsibility and duty towards students. We often talked about the morality and ethics of being teachers in such meetings. Everybody conceptualized that if other employers of any industry leave, it will make no big difference because they have a relationship with production, but in teaching, there is a relationship with human beings. If a teacher leaves, it will disturb the emotional attachment with students. Moreover, I convinced them to feel that the school is their second home and that students are their children. Now, as a result, our school is running like a formal family, and teachers are professionally committed to their responsibilities.

To convince them or to let them feel so, I lead. It is said that we have to run after animals to make them move or walk fast, but we have to run before human beings as a role model to lead them or to make them follow us. So, I always become smart and punctual and sincerely carry out my responsibilities so that my colleagues can learn from my practice as well.

Treating teachers as members of an educational organization, not as workers of a company or factory, is important for a leader. Secondly, all the members need to have common thoughts about the philosophy of education, how that particular school views education, school culture, and the importance and ethics of being a teacher. In this respect, it is the principal who is supposed to construct such common thoughts among teachers. Here, Mr. Shivam is attempting to do the same through regular meetings on Fridays. On the other hand, being a role model is essential for any leader. Only then do the followers obey the leader. So, if the principals are ideal in their performance, the teachers can trust their principals. This acts as an idealized influence for motivation. Trust is important to let teachers feel dignified when working at that school. So, it is the principal's role to let them feel dignified. If principals are careless

and disreputable in society, nobody likes to work under such principals. Even though you are smart and professional, other schools often manipulate your good teachers to join their schools, offering a little higher wage and having some influential talks. In this respect, I asked him to share his strategies for retaining such teachers. He replied:

Yes, it is often seen that, sometimes, other schools try to hire our good teachers by offering a slightly better salary. In such circumstances, we usually convince them very professionally and remind them of their commitments, as promised during enrollment, and the ethics of being teachers, as shared in earlier meetings. However, we do not increase salaries or negotiate remuneration in such cases to keep them continuing their service at our school. Yet, sometimes, when some teachers try to leave school after working for some years, we judge them from the point of view that how many years they have worked doesn't matter much; how many quality years they have experienced or performed at the school, rather, matters.

To retain teachers, we respect and honor their sentiments. We create such a working environment that lets everyone feel that we are all connected as a family. We prioritize keeping relations with their family with a due professional gap. We also prioritize enrolling our former students as teachers: they have more attachment to the organization and are likely to remain for a longer period.

Obviously, the number of years is less important than the number of quality years someone gives to the organization. It was a good school culture to work as a family for making number of years, quality years. This connection acts as an individualized consideration of motivation. Recruiting former students as teachers is also an idea for better retention. It is because, if anyone has better ownership of any schools, it is only the students of the same school. No teacher says 'my school' after departure, but the students always say it is my school. So, if they are recruited, they work for the long term with confidence and a sense of ownership. In this respect, I wanted to know if he had practiced that idea in his real career and what the result was, along with his attempts to retain teachers. He said:

There was a student who had achieved a black belt in karate. We asked him to instruct other juniors to practice karate at the school. He did well. Later, after his +2 education, we enrolled him as a sports teacher. He has been happily working since then; he is more likely to stay for a longer period. In my

experience, I have usually found former students good at becoming teachers at the same schools. So, I give priority to our former students while recruiting as teachers. If former students are not available to enroll as teachers, we analyze whether the candidates are aware of the value of the teaching profession or not during the recruitment process. Moreover, our concern remains to recognize whether the candidates would like to work for a long period or not.

However, there are some unavoidable situations where teachers leave their jobs. For example, a visa accepted for foreign study or employment, marriage in other countries, or a government job received. Besides them, we keenly care for the retention of teachers.

Comparatively, former students have a greater sense of ownership towards the organization. It is said that no teachers or principals say that it is my school after their departure. However, it is the students who always say that it is my school. So, alumni have a deeper attachment to their schools. In this sense, prioritizing alumni in recruitment is also a considerable idea if it does not compromise the quality and eligibility. If they are recruited, they work happily and proudly for a long time.

Interpretation and Analysis of Shivam's Narratives

From Shivam's narratives above, I came to the point of understanding that a principal who plays a transformative role can retain teachers. When Shivam noticed teachers working as mere coworkers, without any educational philosophy and ethics of being teachers, in an industry, he started intrinsically motivating teachers and inspiring them on how they can be ideal teachers. It is his greatness to say that treating teachers as members of an educational organization, not as manual workers of a company or factory, is important for a leader. Moreover, in school, all the members need to have common thoughts about the philosophy of education, how that particular school views education, school culture, and the importance and ethics of being a teacher. In this respect, it is the principal who is supposed to construct such common thoughts among teachers through regular meetings. For this, his practice of conducting regular meetings and delivering moral lessons helped teachers develop their philosophy of being teachers. This future helped them become morally attached to the organization. This was also an insightful strategy to retain teachers. On the other hand, recruiting a teacher who was once a student of the same school was also a good practice if he deserved to be a teacher. In my experience as well, former students are found to be more attached to the organization, having a stronger sense of ownership towards the

organization. There are still two teachers working in the same school where I was principal for the first time. They were, of course, deserving; besides, they were former students too. Here, too, being a former student gave him ownership and confidence in working at that organization for a long time. It is because, if anyone has better ownership of any school, it is only the students of the same school. No teacher says ‘my school’ after departure, but the students always say it is my school. So, if they are recruited, they work for the long term with confidence and a sense of ownership. In this sense, prioritizing alumni in recruitment is also a considerable idea if it does not compromise the quality and eligibility. If they are recruited, they work happily and proudly for a long time.

Discussion and Meaning-Making of Shivam’s Narratives

Mr. Shivam expresses that counseling teachers is a good practice for retaining teachers in private schools. In addition to it, the principal is indeed supposed to work for the growth, needs, and demands of teachers for their retention. Having frequent talks over what teachers are supposed to do and how the school can support them to work for that objective helps to keep them emotionally attached to the organization. Once they are emotionally attached to the organization, they start having a feeling of ownership. Treating teachers as members of an educational organization, not as manual workers of a company or factory, is important for a leader. Secondly, all the members need to have common thoughts about the philosophy of education, how that particular school views education, school culture, and the importance and ethics of being a teacher. In this respect, it is the principal who is supposed to construct such common thoughts among teachers through regular meetings. The principal needs to be a role model. Only then, the followers obey the leader. If the principals are ideal in their performance, the teachers can trust their principals. Trust is important to let teachers feel dignified when working at that school. So, it is the principal’s role to let them feel dignified. If principals are careless and disreputable in society, nobody likes to work under such principals. Even though you are smart and professional, other schools often manipulate your good teachers to join their schools, offering a little more pay and having some influential talks. Recruiting former students as teachers is also an idea for better retention. It is because, if anyone has better ownership of any school, it is only the students of the same school. No teacher says ‘my school’ after departure, but the students always say it is my school. So, if they are recruited, they work for the long term with confidence and a sense of ownership. In this sense,

prioritizing alumni in recruitment is also a considerable idea if it does not compromise the quality and eligibility. If they are recruited, they work happily and proudly for a long time.

Shivam's leadership approach lets us feel that a principal who has the quality of transformative leadership can help teachers remain in the school for a long time. Such leaders can morally, emotionally, and ethically engage coworkers for the long term. In this respect, Shivam's leadership practice reflects the essence of Transformative Leadership Theory due to his emphasis on vision, the nature of empowering colleagues, and value-driven leadership (Bass, 1990). Likewise, looking at intrinsic motivation, relational engagement, and cultural alignment implemented in Shivam's leadership approach, we find him emphasizing human, social, intellectual, and cultural capital as philosophized by Four Capital Theory (Coleman, 1988). His nature of leadership challenges transactional leadership, as he is more concerned with inspiring, building trust, connecting professionally, and engaging ethically rather than using monetary motivators. In this respect, his ethical leadership practice embodies the relational leadership theory in the sense that he keeps meaningful relationships to create an engaged and cohesive workforce (Uhl-Bien 2006). So, he is emotionally supporting, mentoring, and leading by example, which is a more sustainable strategy for teacher retention. This strategy addresses teachers' psychological needs through mentorship and acknowledgment, which strengthens teachers' commitment to sustainable service as intrinsic motivation (Herzberg et al., 1966). Likewise, his attempts to include all the teachers in a professional family strengthen emotional attachments and dedication (Maslow, 1943). All these aspects help retain teachers in any school.

Essence of Shivam's Narratives

Shivam Baniya's narrative reveals that teacher retention aligns with transformative leadership that inspires colleagues and emphasizes their emotional attachment and ethical engagement in the organization. Likewise, it aligns with the human-centric nature of leadership. So, when teachers are intrinsically motivated, we can expect a commitment to a sincere, long-term service at our schools.

Narratives of Kristal

On December 4, 2024, I reached Milan Academy, following the directions given by Mr. Kristal Ojha on the phone. When I entered the school area, a man waiting for my arrival near the gate welcomed me and escorted me to the principal's

office. Mr. Ojha, the principal, was happy to receive me in his chamber. After gentle greetings to each other, he led me towards his school premises. I noticed he was friendly with children. After visiting almost all the classes and corners of the school, we came back to the office, where I fixed the microphone and started our interview. I explained why I had visited him that day and asked about his experiences and practices for keeping his teachers retained in his school. He replied:

I am Kristal Ojha (pseudonym), the principal of Milan Academy (pseudonym). The topic you have selected for your research is very useful and relevant. Running private schools with teachers for the long term is challenging. Everybody is looking for secure employment. So, they are always seeking alternatives or trying to go abroad. However, we always try our best to retain teachers. We give them training opportunities whenever conducted by any organizations outside, convince them that they are valuable in society, support them in their needs as a family, and so on. As a result, 50% of our teachers have worked for over 10 years. We cannot block the rest, because they are seeking other opportunities despite all our efforts. Those who have been working for the long term are mentally prepared to serve as teachers in their lives. The school has also provided them with a gratuity fund and increased grade allowance every year.

Since every teacher expects secure employment, professional growth, and dignified social recognition, all these practices, like opportunities for professional growth, gratuity, and grade allowance, are excellent to keep teachers retained. At the very least, every school should manage such provisions for its human resources. However, in this competitive world, it is tough enough to retain good teachers, because every moment, other schools are trying their best to convince such good teachers to join their schools with better offers. In this respect, I wanted to know if he had a similar experience and what his response was at that time. He said:

Yes, this often happens. Once, we planned to hire a mature teacher to coordinate school activities. We got one who had already worked as the principal of a school, too. He was good at teaching as well. After working for an academic session, he started working at another school. We waited for him for a few days. Later, we noticed he had joined that school because of the higher wages offered by the school. We met him and talked about why he had betrayed us. He was speechless. The principal of the respective school

apologized and stated that he had not been aware of his previous commitment to our school. Next year, he again approached us to work with us, but we refused. In this way, there are some teachers whose nature is always jumping from one school to another for certain personal benefits. They do not seem to feel the intimacy and emotional attachment with students and the organization. We don't like to recruit such teachers.

Despite a big effort to create intimacy with teachers and keep them emotionally attached to the organization for their retention, it may not happen as expected all the time. Sometimes, we enroll or recruit such people who feel comfortable jumping from one school to another. Such people cannot be retained. So, while recruiting teachers, the leader has to identify such candidates. Trust is the biggest component in any organization for better retention and job satisfaction. However, trusting everyone may not be practical. So, it is usually wise to care for those who are under our trust. In this respect, I wanted him to share his experiences of supporting or caring for his coworkers, which helped to result in better retention, and also wanted to know if he had any differential behavior based on their nature. He confidently and proudly shared:

Yeah, we have some events. Of them, I would like to share our practice for those who are working sincerely with us; we accept them as our family members. Once, our math teacher's mother fell sick. She was hospitalized, and she was in serious condition. The hospital demanded one lakh fifty thousand rupees for treatment. He phoned me when I was on a trip to Palpa. He explained everything in a painful voice and told me that he had only fifty thousand rupees, and he was worried about one lakh rupees. I empathized with him and told him not to worry. I told him to go and stand at the school's gate where a man would come up with money. Though I was on the way, I called a friend to provide him with the money. The man went to the school gate and handed over one lakh rupees in half an hour. Finally, his mother was treated in time, and she is fine now. That math teacher is still working with us. He is always thankful to be a member of this caring school. He tells this story to other colleagues as well.

In this way, there are two types of colleagues in my school: those who are working as a family member and those who are always looking for alternatives or better opportunities. I behave with them accordingly. For the first type, I

have an emotional attachment; for the second type, I have a more professional relationship.

It is seen that teachers trust their principal and accept him/her as their guardian if they receive support, care, and guidance when they are in difficulty. By helping a teacher in his difficulty, Mr. Kristal proved himself to be a guardian; he could build trust and good relations with the teacher. On the other hand, by keeping professional relations with those teachers who work for their benefit and supporting them professionally, he maintained a professional working environment in the school. So, supporting colleagues with a differentiated approach is also a good idea to bring all the coworkers towards the mainstream, although it may seem to be negative reinforcement. However, it is also a reward to those who are fully dedicated to the promotion of the organization. At the very least, there should be a general understanding that sincere dedication is highly praised and rewarded in various ways of support and recognition. Such rewards motivate them and let them feel attached and valued by the organization, which inspires them to serve for the long term.

Interpretation and Analysis of Kristal Ojha's Narratives

From Mr. Kristal Ojha's narrative above, I understood that the role of the principal's leadership in shaping teacher retention is important. It is the principal who builds trust, relational commitment, and strategic engagement that influence teachers' long-term attachment to their schools. In the narrative, the principal has won the teacher's heart by supporting him in his critical need. When his mother was sick and he needed money, the principal managed to financially support him within a short span of time. This built trust with the employers; this created a concept among all employees' minds that the organization helps them when they are in need. On the other hand, the principal encourages the students to work like family members. His strategy of providing a gratuity fund facility and increasing grades every year to the sincere and dedicated teachers who work as family members inspires others to be loyal to the organization. As a result, he has had teachers working for decades. So, as a researcher, I also realized that teacher retention doesn't solely depend on financial incentives; rather, it results from a deep emotional and professional connection entrusted by the school leadership.

Discussion and Meanings of Kristal Ojha's Narratives

Since every teacher expects secure employment, professional growth, and dignified social recognition, all these practices implemented by Mr. Ojha, like

opportunities for professional growth, gratuity, and grade allowance, are excellent to keep teachers retained. At the very least, every school should manage such provisions for its human resources. Despite a big effort to create intimacy with teachers and keep them emotionally attached to the organization for their retention, it may not happen as expected all the time. Sometimes, we recruit such people who feel comfortable jumping from one school to another. Such people cannot be retained. So, while recruiting teachers, the leader has to identify such candidates. Trust is the biggest component in any organization for better retention and job satisfaction. However, trusting everyone may not be practical. So, it is usually wise to care for those who are under our trust. It is seen that teachers trust their principal and accept him/her as their guardian if they receive support, care, and guidance when they are in difficulty. By helping a teacher in his difficulty, the principal proved himself to be a guardian; he could build trust and good relations with the teacher. On the other hand, by keeping professional relations with those teachers who work for their self-benefit and supporting them professionally, he maintained a professional working environment in the school. So, supporting colleagues with a differentiated approach is also a good idea to bring all the coworkers towards the mainstream, although it may seem to be negative reinforcement. However, it is also a reward to those who are fully dedicated to the promotion of the organization. At the very least, there should be a general understanding that sincere dedication is highly praised and rewarded in various ways of support and recognition. Such rewards motivate them and let them feel attached and valued by the organization, which inspires them to serve for the long term.

Mr. Ojha, in his narrative, is seen treating teachers who are dedicated to the organization for the long term as family members. This is his human-centric nature of leadership, which lets the coworkers feel psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999). Moreover, this lets the teachers feel protected, supported, and valued in their workplace. This tendency of distinguishing teachers between short-term dedicated and long-term deeply committed teachers and treating them accordingly aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966). This theory differentiates between hygiene factors like incentives and motivational factors like recognition and emotional well-being. Those who are professional but dedicated to the short term often value financial factors. So, Mr. Ojha's leadership approach emphasizes intrinsic motivation to teachers, offering emotional support, including financial security, for their long-term attachment to the organization. Likewise, Mr. Ojha's leadership approach aligns with

the person-organizational fit theory (Kristof, 1996), which advocates that teacher retention becomes strong only when the values align with the organizational culture. In this regard, Mr. Ojha's leadership style goes beyond the traditional model that focuses on financial incentives only for long-term commitment to the organization by the coworkers. This critiques the transactional leadership models, which emphasize financial compensation to maintain employees' loyalty. Here, Mr. Ojha is seen focusing on emotional aspects. This nature aligns with Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1990) because here the leader inspires his coworkers by fostering relational trust, professional development, and meaningful workplace connections. When his colleague was in an emergency, he provided financial assistance; it favored relational leadership, which emphasizes human connection as an important factor in maintaining workforce stability (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

Essence of Kristal Ojha's Narratives

Mr. Kristal Ojha's leadership approach teaches an interesting lesson: relational leadership plays an important role in teacher retention. His narrative highlights that salary alone doesn't determine teachers' happiness; the emotional support, opportunities for professional growth, and relational leadership matter a lot in keeping teachers happy with their job, which ultimately favors their retention through their emotional and professional attachment to the organization. His practice of building trust through emotional support, fostering meaningful engagement, emphasizing work ethic rather than incentives, and implementing ethical recruitment rather than a mere technical process illustrates that the principal's role is crucial in retaining teachers.

Narratives of Narahari

April 7, 2025, was the day I visited Mr. Narahari Gautam, the school's in-charge and founder of Oregon SS/College, at his school for the second time. During my first visit on September 18, 2024, there was much discussion about the same issue. However, for more clarification and more details of the data, I managed to revisit him. Due to the session break, regular classes were not held; only the administrative offices were open. We decided to meet at his school's chamber. As Mr. Gautam was familiar with my topic and content, he started sharing his experiences of how they are helping teachers remain in their school for long-term service. He said:

I am Narahari Gautam (pseudonym), the school in-charge and founder of Oregon SS/College (pseudonym). I have been working in the academic sector for 23 years; of that, I have been leading the school for 16 years.

Retaining teachers is a very challenging job because people are going abroad to study and pursue job opportunities every year, and the trend is increasing. As a result, there is a circumstance of brain drain. Now, we are running our schools with such teachers who are themselves students of a university/college. They work here till they pass a certain level of their academic journey. Once they complete their studies, they either plan to go abroad or jump into other organizations. In this situation, if we want to retain them in our organization, we need to have some strategies.

Once, a teacher who had been teaching at our school for three years passed his bachelor's degree and decided to join another school. He didn't say that to me himself; rather, I came to know from others. As he was doing well at our school, I wanted to retain him. Then, I started prioritizing him in various activities and frequently involving him in decision-making processes at the school. He looked happier and more active in instructing others and sharing his ideas and thoughts with me. Then, looking at his capacity, I entrusted him with the responsibility of coordinating extracurricular activities of standards 4 to 7 as an assistant coordinator for extracurricular activities, though there was already one for the same. Initially, we had one coordinator to coordinate extracurricular activities for all from standard 4 to 10. Now, to let him feel valued, we planned to separate the area of co-curricular activities into two sectors, i.e., from standards 4 to 7 and 8-10. After getting that new responsibility, he became very active. Later, I never heard anybody telling me that he was leaving our school. Now, he has been working as the full ECA Coordinator for five years. Hence, when we notice some colleagues likely to stay for a long time, we give them special responsibility and recognize them with certain positions of middle managers, like coordinators.

In the circumstances of our country, which is likely to face brain drain in the future if the trend of young people going abroad continues (Tiwary, 2025), retaining teachers by giving them valued responsibilities to recognize their dignified existence was a good leadership approach. For this, his strategy of involving the teacher in the decision-making process of the school and making him a coordinator is a good approach to keep him attached to the organization. Besides giving teachers value inside the organization, I asked him what he was doing to value, dignify, or recognize his colleagues. He responded:

First of all, we always attempt to create a working environment at the school where our colleagues can feel at home and work as family members. Our care and guidance to our colleagues are directed to let them trust their leader. Therefore, my colleagues often come to my office whenever they have any professional or even personal challenges. They share frankly, and I try my best to help them. When teachers trust their leaders, they are likely to be retained, I believe. Moreover, we jointly visit our colleagues' houses whenever invited for any celebrations. This trend has also united us as a family. Likewise, we go for staff picnics, tours, and holiday fun together. Such activities have motivated us to be together.

Creating a working environment as a homely environment is also a strategy to keep the teachers attached to the organization, though there might be some demerits. It not only lets teachers feel comfortable working but also lets them feel at ease communicating. Many schools have a toxic environment because of communication gaps. On the other hand, recognizing or giving value to coworkers in a social context is a good idea to motivate them for a better connection with the organization. Besides such recognitions, I wanted to hear about his other practices that had been helpful in teacher retention. In response to my curiosity, he replied,

Oh, yeah, besides such social and institutional recognition, another aspect that we focus on is the professional development of our colleagues. We regularly empower them by providing opportunities for professional development programs, along with having a family-like attachment. We conduct in-house professional development training and also send our teachers to attend training outside whenever PABSON organizes it. We frequently have sittings with teachers for their performance appraisals. I believe that giving opportunities for learning or professional growth and frequent sittings for counseling for their better performance can help and motivate them to continue their service for the long term.

It was a wonderful idea to give institutional value through engaging in a dignified responsibility and decision-making process, accepting coworkers as family members, attending different celebrations jointly, and giving opportunities for professional development for teacher retention. Meanwhile, my curiosity lay in the role of the principal's leadership for all those activities. He replied:

Obviously, whatever the components matter in teacher retention, it is the principal's role to plan, manage, and implement them. In this respect, the role of the principal's leadership is crucial. So, for teacher retention at my school and to create a better working environment, I, as the person in charge of the school, recognize my colleagues' potential and give them a forum or space for further exploration. Likewise, I always maintain a good attachment to my colleagues' families, which involves jointly attending any programs or celebrations organized by our coworkers' families, listening to them, and letting them feel that they are special and valued by the school. Moreover, for the same purpose, I often manage to organize or conduct training and workshops for the continuous professional development of our colleagues and host various programs to mark our success.

So, I believe training opportunities, special responsibilities, and attachments can retain teachers.

When there is only a personal relationship, it becomes easy to break. However, if that is related to the family and community, it becomes difficult to break. People are bound by social obligation. So, it is also a strategic activity for the leadership to maintain family attachment to the organization. This helps the leadership emotionally retain teachers in the long term.

Interpretation and Analysis of Narahari Gautam's Narrative

From Mr. Narahari Gautam's narrative, I understood that teacher retention can be possible through their 'emotional attachment to the organization, involvement in special decision-making activities in the school, and their recognition as important members of the organization, where there is a professionally growing environment. These components should be seriously perceived by every principal because there is the possibility of brain drain in Nepal in the future if the trend of young people going abroad continues (Tiwary, 2025), and retaining human resources, whatever we have, is the prime responsibility of every educational leader too. So, Mr. Gautam emphasizes family get-togethers for emotional attachment, responsibility allocation for valuing and recognizing potential coworkers, and professional development opportunities for all staff.

Mr. Gautam's leadership approach follows Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966) because it says that job satisfaction is shaped not only by financial incentives but also by intrinsic motivators such as recognition, a dignified role for meaningful job

involvement, and career growth opportunities. Likewise, we smell Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1990) implemented in his leadership style in the sense of inspiring, engaging, enhancing professional skills, and accepting teachers as family members to reinforce a shared vision.

Discussion and Meanings of Narahari Gautam's Narrative

Mr. Gautam raised a serious issue that Nepal is likely to face brain drain in the future if the trend of young people going abroad continues in the current ratio (Tiwary, 2025). Only good leadership can retain teachers by giving them valued responsibilities to recognize their dignity. For this, his strategy of involving teachers in the decision-making process of the school and giving them valuable responsibilities is a good approach to keep teachers attached to the organization. Creating a working environment as a homely environment is also a strategy to keep the teachers attached to the organization, though there might be some demerits. It not only lets teachers feel comfortable working but also lets them feel at ease communicating. Many schools have a toxic environment because of communication gaps. On the other hand, recognizing or giving value to coworkers in a social context is a good idea to motivate them for a better connection with the organization. It was a wonderful idea to give institutional value through engaging in a dignified responsibility and decision-making process, accepting coworkers as family members, attending different celebrations jointly, and giving opportunities for professional development for teacher retention. When there is only a personal relationship, it becomes easy to break. However, if that is related to the family and community, it becomes difficult to break. People are bound by social obligation. So, it is also a strategic activity for the leadership to maintain family attachment to the organization. This helps the leadership emotionally retain teachers in the long term.

Mr. Gautam's leadership approach emphasizes coworkers' emotional attachment to the organization, recognition as valued members, engagement in the decision-making process, professional growth, and family-like relationships between staff and school leadership to retain teachers. This approach builds a kind of confidence among coworkers and fosters a sense of ownership towards the organization. This intrinsically motivates coworkers to serve in the long term. This practice aligns with Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) because it says that three psychological aspects, i.e., autonomy, competence, and relatedness, motivate people intrinsically. By entrusting teachers with leadership roles and

engaging them in meaningful responsibilities, Mr. Gautam enhances their autonomy, competence, and relatedness as intrinsic motivation. However, Mr. Gautam's leadership approach goes beyond Self-Determination Theory in the sense that leaders engage with teachers' families and community events as a socio-cultural dimension of leadership for family-like attachment with coworkers.

From this narrative, we also understand that Mr. Gautam's leadership critiques the Transactional Leadership Approach. While Transactional Leadership Approach emphasizes extrinsic motivational components like financial incentives as give and take process to receive long-term service in return, his leadership approach addresses intrinsic motivators like emotional attachment, support, valued and dignified recognition, and meaningful engagement. In this sense, this approach aligns with transformational leadership theory, which advocates for inspiring colleagues through a shared vision and emotional connection (Bass, 1985). However, Mr. Gautam's approach of being connected with colleagues' families and communities challenges the transformational leadership theory. It is a very local and unique approach to keeping emotional attachment with coworkers in the educational context.

Likewise, Mr. Gautam's leadership approach challenges Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) in the sense that his leadership addresses multiple levels, such as emotional belonging, professional esteem, and self-actualization at a time, while Maslow's hierarchy of needs emphasizes a sequential fulfillment from physiological needs to self-actualization needs. Similarly, Mr. Gautam's leadership approach also challenges Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in the sense that job satisfaction relies on hygiene factors like financial stability, while his leadership approach addresses more than hygiene factors, i.e., recognition and relational attachment (Nickerson, 2025).

In this respect, a concept that emerged from Mr. Gautam's narrative introduces a new dimension to leadership discourse, i.e., relational leadership with contextual and cultural sensitivity. In the context of many leadership theories developed in a Western context, this leadership approach highlights the importance of aligning leadership with local sociocultural dynamics. In this regard, this new leadership dimension seems to advocate for a paradigm shift in leadership research from global theories to localized implementation as well.

Essence of Narahari Gautam's Narrative

Teacher retention depends on their job satisfaction, which further depends on their organizational recognition, attachment, and professional development

opportunities more than on financial incentives. So, every educational leader needs to be more strategic on human-centric approaches than on financial remuneration. In this respect, principals have to create a positive school culture, implementing certain strategies that can be helpful to address teachers' professional development, their meaningful and prestigious engagement, and their emotional attachment that gives institutional ownership to the teachers.

Commonalities and Differences in the Narratives of the Participants Aligned with Theories and Literature

All the narratives of the six principals, the participants of this research study, reveal several commonalities in their leadership approaches that follow the established theories for teacher retention. Transformational leadership (Bass, 1990) emphasizes inspiration, trust, and empowerment rather than transactional exchanges. Likewise, the relational leadership theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006) is also found to be implemented in their leadership approaches in the sense of prioritizing meaningful relationships with teachers and fostering loyalty and commitment. For example, Chiran supports teachers' professional growth and emotional needs, while Shraddha treats staff as family, ensuring psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999). Similarly, we notice Mr. Ojha providing financial and emotional support in crises that strengthen or reinforce trust towards the leader. So, in all these leadership approaches, we notice intrinsic motivational components, such as recognition as a valued member, emotional support in need, family-like attachment, and professional autonomy as ownership of the organization. These aspects are seen as more effective components in teacher retention than extrinsic motivators like financial incentives.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966) is also commonly aligned with the principals' leadership approaches of all the principals in the sense of maintaining balance in hygiene factors like salary and job security and motivational factors like recognition and growth opportunities. In this respect, Chiran not only negotiates salaries but also supports professional development. Abdul combines financial incentives with intrinsic aspects like verbal motivation. Likewise, Narahari takes care of both the financial aspect and emotional belongingness, which reflects that teacher retention requires both material and psychological satisfaction or emotional well-being. Additionally, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) is also addressed by all the principals' leadership approaches in the sense of belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. In this respect, Shraddha makes teachers feel like "shareholders,"

fulfilling their esteem needs, while Shivam mentors teachers to strengthen their professional identity, aligning with self-actualization. Most importantly, all these narratives collectively critique transactional leadership, highlighting that teacher retention depends on deeper relational and motivational strategies rather than mere financial incentives to receive long-term service in return.

Despite having all these commonalities, we notice some differences in their leadership approaches as well. Chiran is seen adopting a strategic and empathetic leadership approach, which balances working flexibility and professional growth in the sense of granting leave for university study. Abdul's leadership approach is seen as adopting a democratic and adaptive leadership approach, which encourages teacher involvement in decision-making, aligning with Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994). Likewise, Shraddha's leadership approach as a guardian treats teachers and other staff as family members and shareholders. Her support and care in need cause emotional bonds with the organization, while Shivam's moral leadership instills ethical teaching philosophies, going beyond standard transformational leadership. Kristal's human-centric approach provides emergency financial aid, fostering deep loyalty, whereas Narahari's socio-cultural leadership integrates family and community engagement, which is a unique, culturally specific strategy absent in Western theories.

These differences in leadership approaches let us feel that the context determines leadership approaches as well. In this respect, Shraddha and Narahari's leadership approaches challenge Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in the sense of prioritizing relational factors over financial incentives. Narahari extends Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) because it incorporates family and community bonds. Shivam's emphasis on ethical leadership introduces a moral dimension not fully captured by traditional transformational theory. Moreover, all the principals are seen addressing organizational policy gaps differently. Chiran personally negotiates for financial incentives; Kristal awards long-term benefits like gratuity funds institutionally, and Narahari embeds cultural practices like family gatherings into leadership. From these variations, we can understand that the global leadership theories just provide a foundation; it is in the hands of the leaders to localize or adapt accordingly to make these approaches more effective for retention.

In conclusion, the principals' narratives demonstrate that teacher retention is best achieved through transformational and relational leadership, which balances hygiene and motivational factors and meets psychological needs. However, all these

leadership practices also reveal that there are limitations of Western-centric theories, emphasizing the need for culturally contextualized leadership models. The leadership approach of Shraddha through guardianship, the leadership approach of Narahari through emphasizing socio-cultural integration, and leadership approach of Shivam through ethical mentorship show that retention strategies must adapt to local realities or context. In this respect, this analysis enriches leadership literature by illustrating how empathy, relational trust, and cultural sensitivity enhance retention, particularly in developing educational contexts like Nepal. So, future researchers can also study the effectiveness of local leadership strategies, that bridge the gap between global theories and grassroot level of implementation. These insights can be applied in other places as well where there is high teacher attrition.

CHAPTER V

TEACHERS' NARRATIVES

This chapter deals with teachers' narratives, their analysis, and meanings derived from their lived experiences related to the role of the principal's leadership in teacher retention.

Narratives of Binu Pokhrel

On March 10, 2025, I decided to take an interview with a teacher who was working at the same school where I was the principal. This research title was generated by looking at the attrition rate of teachers in the same school. While many teachers were joining the school and jumping to other organizations, Mrs. Binu Pokhrel was the one who had been dedicated to the organization since its establishment. Learning about her experiences was important to add charm to my study; after all, I was also planning to leave the organization sooner or later. So, I visited her chamber as a researcher and requested her to share her experiences. I asked her to explain in detail if she could share her journey as a teacher. She replied:

I am Binu Pokhrel (pseudonym) from Bharatpur Chitwan. I started my career while studying in standard eleven in 2066 BS at the age of 16. At first, I taught at Gyan Boarding School (pseudonym). It was a small school in our locality. Along with my upgraded academic background, I decided to move to Sunshine School because it was run by a renowned network of businessmen. It was more advanced and could offer better facilities. Later, when this NP School (pseudonym) was established in our locality, everybody believed that NP School would be a great organization in our community. As it was established by a welfare fund from the National Department, it had greater recognition and reputation for working here. So, I determined to join it, and following the process, I got recruited in it. I have been working here since its establishment.

Her expressions let me feel that she preferred to join the NP School due to its social prestige and dignity, because everybody believed that it was a great organization. I wanted to know what she thought could retain teachers, what aspects might discourage teachers from staying for the long term, and also what made her feel proud of working at that organization. In this respect, she said,

As per your question, teacher retention in our school has been a challenge as well, despite many factors that attract people to stay. Of them, long working hours, i.e., 9 am to 5 pm, discrimination against academic coworkers by the administration, and an uncertain future. Most teachers are in the initial phase of their careers. In this growing phase of their careers, they need support and encouragement. Unfortunately, whenever they feel an unhealthy working environment and a blindfolded career path, they seek to leave it in search of a bright and secure career path. Many of us are still confused about what I will be after five years of working here. However, we are serving here due to its dignity and reputation.

So, among various components to attract teachers, social dignity or social prestige is also one of the major components. Where you are working also equally matters, in addition to other physical, mental, and emotional facilities. However, any type of discrimination weakens attachment and ownership to the organization. I wanted her to share any typical incident when she felt that she was really working at a dignified organization. In this respect, she shared:

Oh, yes, I remember one incident that occurred in my life that also made me feel that I belonged to a reputable organization. Once I was traveling to Kathmandu to attend the conference of the Nepal English Language Teachers Association (NELTA) after being referred to attend it by our school principal. My flight was canceled, and it was difficult to reach there at that last hour. There was another group who had to reach Kathmandu by evening at any cost to see off their relatives who were flying to Australia. They managed to go by car. With my request, I could also travel with them. Two others were also traveling in the same car due to the cancellation of the flight. Being a lady, it was an uncomfortable moment for me to travel in another's car in the late evening. I was worrying about where the car owner would drop me off in Kathmandu and how I would reach my venue. The car owner was speaking as if I were a minor creature who was traveling in his car by his grace and favor. Later, halfway along the way, we were introduced to each other. When I told them that I was from NP School, the car owner seemed to have a different perspective on me and started talking respectfully. When we reached Kathmandu, he dropped me at my desired station. He gently waved goodbye, and I reached my venue in the late evening. That moment made me feel like I

was working at a dignified organization. After that, I always did my best for the organization. Even for my professional growth, I was always active in learning new ideas and pedagogical aspects.

Providing such opportunities, like attending conferences for professional growth, motivates teachers to serve for the long term. Additionally, if people recognize that you belong to a dignified organization and give you value, the attachment to the organization becomes stronger, and teachers do not like to leave for simple causes.

Usually, when people join any organization, they feel everything is strange and wonderful in the beginning. Later, the same things become minor for them, and they start saying that their organization is boring. So, I wanted to learn what aspects there were that were continuously attracting her besides the dignity of the organization. In response to my curiosity, she said,

Exactly, there should be some other facilities, besides the prestige of the organization, to attract people for the long term. If I have to say something, first of all, I would like to say something about the forum for professional development. In the initial years, there were occasional professional development programs facilitated by external experts, but later, after the arrival of the third principal, he introduced a system of In-house Teachers' Professional Development Programs (TPD) along with the continuity of the previous practice of hiring experts for occasional training. As per the in-house TPD programs, every last Friday of the month is allocated for certain training sessions that are facilitated by teachers ourselves. This trend has not only provided a forum to learn innovative pedagogical aspects but also developed the skills required to be facilitators. Since I aim to be a trainer as well, I always attempt to attend training, workshops, seminars, and conferences whenever available. Our school principal also always encourages us to attend such programs. As a result, I could attend a capacity-building program regarding counseling organized by TITI, some teaching-English-related workshops organized by NELTA, and some professional development programs organized by other organizations. Soon, I am planning to attend a conference in Bangladesh as well.

It was good to hear about her positive aspects and optimistic views. Her appreciation and positive thoughts for getting a forum for professional development

justify that the opportunity for professional growth is one of the most important components for teacher retention. Meanwhile, I also wanted to know if she ever went through any such circumstance when she almost decided to leave the job and what made her happy to continue her service later. She became serious with a nostalgic feeling and started saying in a mild, soft voice:

Yes, things do not always go as we expect. Sometimes, we have to go through such circumstances that really make us frustrated. In the beginning, when we joined this school, there was a kind of excitement and hope. The principal, along with the entire administration team, was always motivating. It might be because everyone was worried about the establishment of the organization. Not only me but also all the community members were proud of having this school in our locality. It was a matter of pride to have this school in our locality. I had also joined it due to its dignity and prestige. Later, sometimes, I also thought of going abroad because everyone from our locality was doing so. Working here for a long time without getting time for family and self-care was a little monotonous. If I were abroad, at least, I could convince myself I was doing well, concentrating on my work.

Later, there was a COVID-19 crisis when there was a vacant post of the principal. Since I was appointed to the post of school coordinator a little earlier than the lockdown started, it was my responsibility to execute the school's activities. In that difficult time, I managed to run teaching-learning activities virtually. After nine months, another principal was appointed. The initial phase of my coordinatorship with the new principal was fine and almost excellent. Later, he also left the school. I was more important in the organization. I was the only one leading and executing the school's activities from the post of school leadership in the organization. After that, another principal came. I welcomed him and oriented him to the school. There was good cooperation from him regarding managing school activities. He was like my guardian, who always encouraged me to grow my professional strength. He was kind enough to support me in both my personal and professional life. I remained a valued and responsible person in the school. Later, I got married. I became pregnant. During my pregnancy, our school principal cared for me like a guardian. I was proud of being one of the most important coworkers in the organization.

Then she paused. I admitted that it is not only the leadership that makes job satisfaction, but the administrative system also matters. So, it is the principal who can improve such an administrative system. From her perspective, I agreed that the principal's role doesn't end with administrative work during office hours. The principal needs to descend from that position and work with colleagues closely, having a human-centric approach. However, keeping colleagues satisfied constantly forever is tough. We happen to face some unavoidable circumstances or official obligations where we have to go through painful or unpleasant situations that make us feel frustrated. I asked her if she had ever had a similar feeling when she became frustrated and almost decided to quit the job. She looked serious and said in her grieved voice,

It is so difficult for me to recall the most painful situation I faced in my life. It was my bad luck or misfortune; one day, after six months of my pregnancy, I had to face a difficult time. I had to deliver a six-month-old baby who expired a few hours after birth. That was the biggest tragic moment in my life. According to the doctor, I had to rest at home for three months to recover. Staying at home with the pain of losing the baby was tough for me. I cannot express in words how difficult the circumstances I went through were at that time.

My absence from the school for a long time not only hampered the teaching but also the decision-making process through the school management committee (SMC), as I was the teacher representative in the SMC. The school principal, one day, came to see me. His presence at my home during my difficult time was a kind of physical counseling for me. Later, he phoned me about the substitution of my membership in the SMC until I came back to work at the school. As per our mutual talk, another teacher was enrolled as a member, i.e., a teacher representative of the SMC. However, when I resumed my job, I was not invited to any SMC meetings. It was a big humiliation for me. I remembered all those difficult times in the organization when I actively worked to continue all its activities smoothly. Now, when I was having difficulty, the organization didn't value my contributions and easily removed me from the SMC. I waited for some days, but there was no response for reentry in the SMC. Taking part in decision-making through SMC was a great source of pride for me; it attracted me to continue my career with this school throughout my life. But that moment broke my heart. I talked to the principal.

He also looked helpless because the administration had decided on it, and he seemed to be compelled to follow that. I was frustrated. I almost decided to resign from the job and join other schools or academic institutions.

I felt sorry again while listening to her tragic event that occurred in her life. Moreover, I became disappointed when she told me that the decision of removing her from SMC had broken her heart and she had almost decided to resign from the job because taking part in decision-making through SMC had been a great source of pride for her; it had attracted her to continue her career with that school throughout her life, and that removal was a big humiliation to her prestige. What made her stop resigning was my concern as a researcher. At the same time, it is also true that most people go through such circumstances and almost decide to leave their jobs. However, due to certain intrinsic motivational factors, they stop doing that. In this respect, I asked her to express the reason for not resigning from the post, despite feeling humiliated. She said:

Though I felt embarrassed and demotivated to work under such circumstances, I determined to face the challenges. After all, it was against my desire and commitment to the organization and community. I realized it was not useful to talk with the administration; I felt the principal was looking for a favorable moment to let me rejoin the SMC as the teacher representative. I felt I needed to communicate strategically. Then, I talked with the higher authority and explained everything; the higher authority was convinced that I was genuine enough to get that role again after my continuation at the school. When the principal got a communication from the senior authority about it, he managed to make a decision in the committee about my enrollment as the teacher representative with that reference.

Now, again, I have been an important person who takes part in the decision-making process; this gives me a kind of ownership of the organization and motivates me to continue my service at this school for the long term. I think I will serve here for a long time.

Being dignified or recognized as a valued member of the organization is every coworker's desire. It is one of the important factors that attracts coworkers to their organization. Salary and any other financial or material facilities are received as per the rules of the organization. However, the immediate leadership gives recognition,

responsibility, value, and ownership. So, it is the principal's leadership that determines whether to keep their colleagues satisfied with their jobs through such intrinsic factors.

Interpretation and Analysis of Binu's Narratives

Binu's narrative above reflects a complex relationship between teachers' experiences and the principal's leadership in the context of teacher retention. We can understand from this narrative that the principal's leadership influences teacher retention. The principal's role goes beyond administrative work. The principal has to strategically act to provide emotional support to teachers, give valued recognition, entrust them with dignified responsibility, and provide professional growth opportunities. In this respect, the principal's empathetic attitude, encouraging words, and trust-building behavior play a critical role in shaping teachers' career decisions, especially during challenging times.

In Binu's narrative, we find that the relational leadership theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006) is implemented in the principal's leadership approach in terms of caring for his colleagues and empowering them. The emphasis on the leader-teacher relationship provides psychological safety to the coworkers (Edmondson, 1999), which fosters stability of their service and attachment. However, the leadership also faces challenges in maintaining the school's prestige while managing internal conflicts. The circumstances created to exclude the teacher from decision-making weaken loyalty and cause frustration towards the organization, as seen in Person-Organization Fit Theory (Kristof, 1996). Moreover, we also find Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966) implemented in the principal's leadership approach in terms of providing emotional support to teachers, giving valued recognition, entrusting with dignified responsibility, and providing professional growth opportunities. In a nutshell, Binu's experiences demonstrate that principals who lead with care and invest in their teachers' professional growth can create an environment where educators feel emotionally supported, valued, dignified, professional, and secure, which makes them stay for the long term.

Discussion and Meanings of Binu's Narratives

Ms. Binu's expression reflects that people prefer working in an organization that has social prestige and dignity. Among various components to attract teachers, social dignity is also one of the major components. Where you are working also equally matters, in addition to other physical, mental, and emotional facilities. However, any type of discrimination weakens attachment and ownership to the

organization. Providing such opportunities, like attending a conference for professional growth, motivates teachers to serve in the long term. Additionally, if people recognize that you belong to a dignified organization and give you value, the attachment to the organization becomes stronger, and teachers do not like to leave for simple causes. Usually, when people join any organization, they feel everything is strange and wonderful in the beginning. Later, the same things become minor for them, and they start saying that their organization is boring. Opportunity for professional growth is one of the most important components for teacher retention. It is not only the leadership that makes job satisfaction, but the administrative system also matters. So, it is the principal who can improve such an administrative system. The principal's role doesn't end with administrative work during office hours. The principal needs to descend from that position and work with colleagues closely, having a human-centric approach. However, keeping colleagues satisfied constantly forever is tough. We happen to face some unavoidable circumstances or official obligations where we have to go through painful or unpleasant situations that make us feel frustrated. Taking part in decision-making through SMC had been a great source of pride for her; it had attracted her to continue her career with that school throughout her life, and that removal was a big humiliation to her prestige. Due to certain intrinsic motivational factors, they stop resigning. Being dignified or recognized as a valued member of the organization is every coworker's desire. It is one of the important factors that attracts coworkers to their organization. Salary and any other financial or material facilities are received as per the rules of the organization. However, the immediate leadership gives recognition, responsibility, value, and ownership. So, it is the principal's leadership that determines whether to keep their colleagues satisfied with their jobs through such intrinsic factors.

Binu's narrative reflects the significant impact of the principal's leadership approach on teachers' job satisfaction and, as a result, their service retention. From this teacher's perspective, we can assume that the leadership that addresses both emotional and professional needs can foster long-term commitment from the teachers. For this, Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1990) serves as a guiding lens because this leadership approach motivates teachers to overcome their challenges through principals' acts of inspiration, empowerment, and building trust.

From Binu's narrative, we find the principal's leadership approach contrasting with transactional leadership in terms of prioritizing administrative processes over a

personal give-and-take system. This critique aligns with Relational Leadership Theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006), which underscores the importance of meaningful relationships in fostering trust, recognition, and a supportive working organizational culture. So, from Binu's narrative, we can declare that teacher retention relies on relational strategies and a transformational leadership approach more effectively than extrinsic motivational factors like salary or any other material benefits.

From this narrative, we can trace some themes like emotional care and relational trust, which strengthen trust and deepen loyalty, as reflected when the leadership provides her support during her personal crises. This also further justifies that the teacher values the leaders who recognize their personal needs and provide emotional support at that time. Secondly, we trace professional autonomy and growth as another theme, which aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966). In this respect, we find the professional development opportunities intrinsically motivating the teachers to be happy in learning new things. The third theme we trace is value recognition and participatory inclusion for job satisfaction as suggested by Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943). In this respect, the teacher's involvement in the decision-making process cultivates a sense of ownership and shared responsibility, which lets the coworkers feel esteemed and a sense of belonging.

Essence of Binu's Narratives

From this narrative, we derive a notion that the role of the principal's leadership is crucial to teacher retention because it is the leadership that provides or gives emotional care, professional development opportunities, value, recognition, meaningful attachment, ownership, and so on. So, retaining teachers requires a balance of addressing all these components. As a researcher, this is insightful to learn that leadership has to strategically transcend from administrative functions to a human-centric force to shape teachers' commitment to their organizations.

Narratives of Yamuna Sharma

March 13, 2025, was the day when I visited Shanti Academy to take an interview with a teacher named Ms. Yamuna Sharma. As I had already obtained consent from the principal of the respective school to interview with his coworker and requested him to arrange our sitting in a room, the principal arranged it as per our communication, and we had our conversation. I explained the purpose of the interview and asked her to share her journey as a teacher, where she had started her career, and if she was still working there. I also asked her to share the aspects that were attracting

her to be attached to the current school, along with how long she might stay at that school. She said:

I am Yamuna Sharma (pseudonym); I have been teaching at Shanti Academy (pseudonym) for two years. I was born and educated in India. Becoming a teacher was not my career dream; I wanted to be a nurse. However, I could not study nursing or any other medical field. As my parents were from Nepal, they planned to spend the rest of their lives there. So, we came to Nepal. My English language skills were better than those of any average student in Nepal. When the principal of Sunshine Academy (pseudonym) noticed my English language level, he was impressed and invited me to visit his school. The next day, I went to his school. He offered me a job teaching. Then, I started my teaching career in 2062 BS. Initially, I taught at the primary level for two years, then I was promoted to the post of teacher for the lower secondary level. Due to my proficiency in the English language, I was involved in various activities. I was not equally good at the Nepali language, so I taught English to the students, and I learned Nepali from them. I was noted as an active and dynamic teacher at that school. My education in India not only made my English language better but also enabled me to control students in the discipline because I was trained in the National Cadet Corps (NCC). So, I was made the focal person for coordinating the Scout Troop at the school. In that way, I was both happy and proud of that school. At that time, the principal, Khemraj (pseudonym), was like a guardian. He was always caring, motivating, and visionary in identifying the teachers' potential. After his tenure, another principal, Mr. Dake, started leading the organization. He was an equally caring and visionary leader. Our service was more professional and friendlier under his leadership.

Proficiency in English is a merit point for Nepali private schools. Those who are fluent in English usually get dignified responsibilities in private schools. Private school owners can pick up such teachers on the spot. They do not need any formal recruitment procedure. Once they are enrolled or recruited, it is leadership's relationship with the colleagues that determines their retention, especially since teachers expect guardianship from their principal. So, she continued working happily in a professional and friendly manner. Despite her important and valuable role in the

school, I was curious to know the reason for her leaving the school. In this respect, she said,

Well, the initial phase was fine. Later, in 2075 BS, Gywali Group (GG) (pseudonym) took over the school by investing 60% of the principal amount. The initial phase of GG was very impressive and exciting for all the teachers. Many innovative ideas, pieces of training for teachers, and school activities were introduced. The group introduced the V-Star strategy and started evaluating and auditing our performance. The feedback we received was encouraging. We got many learning opportunities that made us feel proud to be the teachers of Sunshine at that time. We became very hopeful for better organization and better jobs. Unfortunately, I don't know exactly the reason for it, but our principal, Mr. Dake, left the school after one year of GG's involvement and their intervention in the school operation and started another school nearby. Some of our colleagues joined his school, some left the district after getting married, but I continued there.

Training for professional development and performance appraisal are good motivational aspects for teachers, because the feedback and appreciation of their performance encourage them to continue their service with greater effort in the days ahead. This supports teacher retention.

I have heard there is always hope that better things will happen when someone leaves, especially in leadership. It is said that, when the principal leaves the school, the coworkers feel that the school will have a better time with the arrival of a new principal, though they may feel that the earlier principal was better later. So, I wanted to know if she had similar feelings or not, if there was a better time or not. She said:

Yes, when Mr. Dake left, we felt that the new principal would be better, because the next principal was going to be selected from the central office. Unfortunately, things didn't go as expected; the school had a difficult time. We missed two principals in a short period: the third one left after a few months, and the fourth one passed away due to COVID-19. After 16 years of service in that school, we received the fifth principal, Mr. Shankar (pseudonym), at our school in 2078 BS. GG had appointed him at the central level. Since he was from outside our location, he was not very familiar with the culture, trends, and working circumstances of this locality. While some of my colleagues left the school when the second principal was leaving

and joined his new school, I didn't leave my school till we got the fifth principal. I had been serving with dignity and importance. However, gradually, I realized GG was not valuing the senior teachers. The senior personnel from GG didn't have any intimacy, nor did they have any individual attachment with any teachers. They used to just observe and evaluate our classroom instruction and other activities being conducted for the children, audit teaching-learning activities, and give feedback. They didn't personally talk to anyone about their challenges and expectations, nor did they offer any pleasant things. It was all very professional and technical. Moreover, we didn't feel the school would manage a provident fund or any gratuity fund. They didn't even bring any strategies for converting contract teachers into permanent ones. The previous principals had often talked about these aspects as future strategies. Some of them also assured us that we would get such facilities when GG was involved. In that circumstance, we got such a principal who always listened to GG, not to the teachers. He didn't value the senior teachers. He just forced us to implement whatever was instructed by the GG. I was in such a dilemma that I could not leave the school despite getting job offers from other schools. I waited for another year, hoping the next year would be better. Even then, the scenario remained the same. They didn't seem to manage any gratuity fund, nor did they seem to make any of us permanent staff. At that time, we missed our second principal, Mr. Dake, who was at least kind to us and a hope for our betterment.

It is also seen that when a principal leaves school, teachers who were once in a dilemma about whether to leave school or continue easily decide to leave. This happened later during my departure as well: when I left my school, two teachers also left immediately after my departure.

While listening to her, I remembered a poem, *Harlem (A Dream Deferred)*, by Langston Hughes, where Hughes says what happens if a dream is deferred or not fulfilled; he gives multiple possibilities, like if it dries like a raisin, remains as an aching wound, stinks, becomes sweet, remains as a heavy load, or explodes. As this powerful poem explores the consequences of delaying dreams, using vivid imagery to describe how they might dry up, fester, stink, crust over, sag, or even explode, her situation seemed to be similar through her words and expression. So, I wanted to know if she ever exploded or got a way out before exploding. She said:

Although I was severely disappointed, I didn't explode because it was not suitable for my profession. God showed me a path. During the same confusing circumstance, I happened to meet our second principal, Mr. Dake, one day. He talked about the vacancy he had published for this school. I was confused about whether it would be okay to apply. I still believed my school would understand us sooner. On the other hand, I was also confused about whether I would be selected because, after all, I might have been a little traditional after working 16 years in a school, in comparison to the young candidates. But Mr. Dake encouraged me to apply and assured me I would deserve that post. Finally, I applied, took a written exam, and then participated in a classroom teaching demonstration and got a positive result after the interview. I faced a bitter experience during the interview. I said my GG school would not allow me to leave the school. I said they would try their best to retain me there. Then, Mr. Dake called the head of the admin of my school. The mobile phone was in loudspeaker mode. I was listening to everything. He said he was enrolling me in his school. The head of the admin simply replied that I was one of the good teachers, a hardworking and dedicated teacher; however, Mr. Dake could take me to his school; they would enroll one more teacher in my place because they were about to hire some new teachers. His expression was beyond my imagination. I was expecting he would be a little shocked to hear the news that I was leaving the school after working for 16 years with full dedication and excellent performance. But he took that very lightly. I felt I was not valuable there. Even though I got positive results through the interview, I was not satisfied. The next day, I went to my school. I talked to the principal about everything: my enrollment process in another school, the interview phase, and the response of

Harlem (A Dream Deferred)

Langston Hughes

What happens to a dream
deferred?

Does it dry up,
Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore-
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over-
Like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags,
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

the head of the administration. To my big shock, he also replied normally. He didn't ask why I was leaving. He didn't even try to retain me. I was very sad at that moment because the school where I worked for 16 years as an important member didn't try to stop me from going away. Then, I went to a corner and wept alone. In that way, I was finally enrolled in this school.

Hearing her tragic event expressed in a painful voice, I was also disappointed with such so-called smart and professional supervisors who do not attempt to feel others' emotions. Teachers who have given their energetic time of youth to the organization really feel pain when they are not honored for their sincere devotion and long-term dedication they offered to the organization. In such circumstances, the administrative body in private schools seems to be less empathetic. So, in such a situation, it is only the leadership that can support the coworkers' emotions. Finally, I asked her to express her current state of emotions. She said:

I am still missing that school. Actually, I never thought of leaving the school where I worked for more than 16 years and where my daughter studied from nursery to standard 7. But the situation made me do so. If they had told me to stop, I would have remained there, as my daughter was studying there. Anyway, I joined this school with my daughter. My daughter is happy with new friends in a new school environment, and I am working with new students and new colleagues in a new working environment. One of the pleasant things for me here is that I am working with the same principal who has always remained our guardian, true inspirer, motivator, and counsellor for us. I hope this school will be my last school.

Teachers in private schools do not have a big dream of earning a lot of money and becoming powerful people. They are simple people who need love, value, and respect. If any organizations give them such intrinsic aspects, they can make it possible to motivate them for their long-term service.

Interpretation and Analysis of Yamuna's Narratives

From Yamuna's narrative, I came to understand that teachers' retention depends on the value and recognition given to them. Therefore, Yamuna joined another organization when she realized the existing organization of the Gywali Group (GG) didn't recognize her value, though she was a senior teacher. As a researcher, I also realized that it is very painful to the teachers when their organization doesn't value them despite their long-term contribution to the organization. From Yamuna's

narrative, we can trace that the leadership approach performed by GG and earlier leaders like Khemraj and Mr. Dake contrasts. While GG didn't value the emotional and sensitive attachment of the coworkers to the organization, Khemraj and Mr. Dake prioritized relational leadership and moral support. This aligns with Uhl-Bien's Relational Leadership Theory (2006) in the sense of giving importance to interpersonal relationships and care, which strengthens organizational loyalty.

This narrative also attempts to draw our attention to a systematic gap in the practice of private schools in terms of providing the facilities of provident funds, social security funds, gratuity, and permanent staffing strategies. These are some shortcomings that private schools have as challenges in creating a sustainable workforce. For leadership, it is the failure to focus only on technical aspects without addressing the emotional and professional dimensions of retention. In this respect, Khemraj and Mr. Dake exemplify transformational leadership, which gives individual attention and inspires them for loyalty and long-term service. Moreover, Yamuna's narrative aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966), which highlights both professional growth and recognition as intrinsic motivators.

Discussion and Meanings of Yamuna's Narratives

Ms. Yamuna's expression makes a point to note that private school owners can pick up qualified teachers on the spot without any formal recruitment procedure. Once they are recruited, it is leadership's relationship with the colleagues that determines their retention, especially since teachers expect guardianship from their principal. Training for professional development and performance appraisal are good motivational aspects for teachers, because the feedback and appreciation of their performance encourage them to continue their service with greater effort in the days ahead. This supports teacher retention. There is always hope that better things will happen when someone leaves, especially in leadership. It is said that, when the principal leaves the school, the coworkers feel that the school will have a better time with the arrival of a new principal, though they may feel that the earlier principal was better later. It is also seen that when a principal leaves school, teachers who were once in a dilemma about whether to leave school or continue easily decide to leave. This happened later during my departure as well: when I left my school, two teachers also left immediately after my departure. It is disappointing to have such so-called smart and professional supervisors who do not attempt to feel others' emotions. Teachers who have given their energetic time of youth to the organization really feel pain when

they are not honored for their sincere devotion and long-term dedication they offered to the organization. In such circumstances, the administrative body in private schools seems to be less empathetic. So, in such a situation, it is only the leadership that can support the coworkers' emotions. Teachers in private schools do not have a big dream of earning a lot of money and becoming powerful people. They are simple people who need love, value, and respect. If any organizations give them such intrinsic motivational aspects, they can make it possible to reinforce or motivate them for their long-term service.

Yamuna's narratives present an understanding that the role of principal's leadership is vital in teacher retention through balancing teachers' emotional attachment with the organization, their recognition as valued members, and running the organization in a professional system that follows organizational policies as guaranteed by the nation. Her experience demonstrates that relational leadership is more effective than a strict professional leadership approach that lacks emotional connection, recognition, and a complete system. In this respect, we find Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1990) more effective in fostering better commitment through intrinsic motivation. This is in contrast to the transactional leadership model, which solely focuses on technical efficiency as a give-and-take structure; this model fails to retain experienced teachers.

Hence, from Yamuna's narrative, we can generate some crucial themes relevant to promoting the challenge of teacher retention in private schools through the principal's leadership. Of them, value recognition is one. Everybody deserves some kind of respect and recognition, especially those who have been dedicated to the organization for a long time. Anyone who fails to win their hearts through due respect fails to retain their attachment. If we neglect senior teachers' contributions, it will lead to disappointment and ultimately to turnover. Secondly, relational leadership is essential to keep teachers happy and satisfied. Their attachment lets them feel emotionally attached to the organization. So, the leader who engages with teachers both personally and professionally fosters trust and loyalty, which ultimately fosters long-term commitment from them. Likewise, systemic retention practice is required to run any organization in a system that follows the policies issued by the government. This includes provident fund, gratuity, leave, professional growth opportunities, and so on.

Meanwhile, we also get an insightful learning that the transition in leadership also creates uncertainty among teachers. By comparing the relational leadership of Mr. Dake and the technical professional leadership of GG, we can claim that the relational model is useful in retaining teachers through their emotional attachment, happiness, and continuous professional growth.

Essence of Yamuna's Narratives

Yamuna's narrative reflects the crucial role of the principal's leadership in teacher retention through balancing emotional connection, professional growth, and running the organization in a system. Her story reveals that it is disappointing to neglect the senior teachers' contribution to the organization, which results in dissatisfaction and attrition among the teachers. So, relational leadership is required to foster loyalty and organizational commitment. Hence, as researchers, we learn that teacher retention requires multiple aspects like personalized care, value recognition, and implementation of systematic and sustainable organizational policies. In a nutshell, we can declare that leadership is a human-centric endeavor that must adapt to the teachers' evolving needs and expectations for their job satisfaction and long-term commitment.

Narratives of Sital Neupane

It was September 18, 2024, when I took my first interview with Ms. Sital Neupane. She was the first participant in my research after the pilot test. At that first meeting, after a telephonic conversation, we both were nervous because it was the first interview for both the interviewee and the interviewer. Then, we managed to sit in a room where we could communicate in silence. I asked her to share her journey as a teacher, her feelings about being a member of that school, and a moment when she almost decided to quit her job. She said:

I am Sital Neupane (pseudonym) from Bharatpur Chitwan. I have been teaching Nepali subjects at this school, Oregon School, for 7 years. This is my second school. I am happy with this job here because I have been respected as 'Sita Madam' both in my school and community. When many of my friends were preparing for government jobs and some others were calculating for foreign employment, I didn't think of all those things. I joined a government school as a contract teacher to be paid from local resources and started my teaching career. After working for five years, I had to face politics against my job there. There was a certain group of political parties that wanted to keep

their people in my place. Since I was not actively involved in any political parties, I didn't get favors from anyone. Consequently, I had to leave the job. Then, I got notice of a vacancy in this school and enrolled through a process. The facilities were not equal to my previous job; however, I got respect and honor from my supervisors.

This is really painful in our country, where politics plays a vital role in determining jobs and any opportunities offered by the government. At least, private schools go for real talent and performance; they objectively evaluate based on merit. In continuation of her expression, I asked her to express her experiences about what makes her feel proud in working in that organization, along with her opinion about what management the school should do to retain teachers.

In fact, I never prioritized money in my life because I think it is never sufficient for human beings. So, whatever I am getting from this school is satisfactory to me. I have been getting various opportunities for professional development organized occasionally at the school, and occasional awards or prizes for my good job performance have attracted me to continue my service here. I am updating my teaching and learning skills from there. We have a sharing culture at schools; we share our pedagogical aspects and learn from each other, too. I proudly say we have a stress-free working environment in the school. We are working together like a family. Whenever we have confusion in our teaching content, our principal supports us in a friendly and cooperative manner. This encourages us to work together as a family. Another aspect that has inspired me to have ownership of the organization is the connection of the school team with my family. Sometimes, the school team visits our home on various occasions. Last time, when my father-in-law passed away, the school team came to see us. I was in pain and difficulty. Their arrival not only gave me sympathy but also made me feel I was a valuable person in my school. This increased my dignity in my family and community. Likewise, the school team also attended my son's cultural ceremony, 'bratband.' Receiving the whole school team at my house on that occasion was really a matter of pride and happiness for me. My son was glad to see his teachers at his ceremony. Looking at this kind of family-like bond among the teachers and personnel in school leadership, my family members are proud of my job. So, my husband is very supportive of me in my profession. He understands my responsibilities, so

we never have any misunderstandings in the name of my service. There is a balance in my job and family life due to mutual understanding in the family as well. I never felt that I would leave this job because I am getting love, care, value, timely salary, and learning opportunities. Hence, I am likely to serve at this school till my last breath. If every school treats its coworkers like this and manages such aspects, their retention can be possible unless there are some unavoidable circumstances.

Like every teacher, she also prioritized opportunities for professional development and admired various programs that the school organized occasionally for her professional development at the school. The culture of addressing the best performers through occasional awards or prizes motivated her to continue her service. Moreover, the sharing culture at the school helped her update her teaching and learning skills. Likewise, the culture of working together like a family provided care in pain and difficulty, which not only influenced her but also her husband and family members, who felt proud of her being a member of such a caring school and became very supportive of her profession.

Hence, if there is anything that the teachers in private schools seek, that is love, recognition, value both inside the organization and in the community, regular moderate salary, and learning opportunities. After receiving such aspects, they are likely to serve for the long term.

Interpretation and Analysis of Sital's Narratives

From Sital's narrative, I came to understand that organizational culture and relational leadership play vital roles in teachers' happiness and long-term attachment to the organization, which positively impacts teacher retention. As a researcher, it was an insightful learning for me to see how respect, emotional support, and a familial work environment foster long-term commitment. Sital had to leave her previous job at a community school due to the political interests of certain groups. However, she could enhance her resilience through relational support and professional development in the existing school. This made her happy and satisfied with her job; moreover, she became proud of being an integral valued member of her new organization. This state of career aligns with Uhl-Bien's Relational Leadership Theory (2006) in the sense that interpersonal connections and collaborative dynamics strengthen organizational bonds.

Moreover, Sital's narrative also reveals that family-like bonds among colleagues and leaders influence organizational loyalty. In the narrative, we find Sital

feeling proud of being a teacher at her school; this has made her more committed due to the proactive involvement of the school team in her family celebrations, crises, and cultural and social connections. This state of job satisfaction is close to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) in the sense that emotional and social fulfillment motivate sustained commitment. Most importantly, the role of the principal's leadership in fostering a stress-free collaborative working environment, recognition, and professional growth reveals transformational leadership (Bass, 1990) implemented in the principal's leadership, which motivates and inspires teachers to view their roles as valued, integral members of the organization.

Discussion and Meanings of Sital's Narratives

Sital's expression lets us feel that this is really painful in our country, where politics plays a vital role in determining jobs and any opportunities offered by the government. At least, private schools go for real talent and performance; they objectively evaluate based on merit. Teachers prefer opportunities for professional development and other programs to reward good performers. The culture of addressing the best performers through occasional awards or prizes motivates teachers to continue their service. Moreover, the sharing culture at the school helps teachers update their teaching and learning skills. Likewise, the culture of working together like a family provides care in pain and difficulty, which not only influences teachers but also their family members, who feel proud to be associated with such a school and become very supportive in their profession. If there is anything that the teachers in private schools seek, that is love, recognition, value both inside the organization and in the community, a regular moderate salary, and learning opportunities. After receiving such benefits, they are likely to serve for the long term.

Sital's narrative reveals some key components of teacher retention. Of them, transformational leadership is the prime one that acts as relational leadership, creates a conducive working environment, fosters positive organizational culture, inspires coworkers to be more committed, connects coworkers as a family, values and recognizes colleagues, and so on. This respect and interpersonal support motivate teachers for long-term services, even though the financial remuneration is not comparatively attractive. This state of leadership contrasts with transactional leadership, which solely emphasizes good financial benefits for good performance as a reciprocal relationship. This state of job performance aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966), which highlights that intrinsic motivators, such as recognition,

respect, and intimacy through familial practices, are more influential than extrinsic motivational factors, such as financial remuneration and other physical facilities, in ensuring teacher retention.

In this respect, family-like bonds, collaborative work culture, a stress-free working environment, respect and recognition, and emotional fulfillment can be conceived as the key themes in Sital's narrative.

Essence of Sital's Narratives

Sital Neupane's narrative reflects transformational leadership that works as a relational leader to create a family-like bond, a collaborative work culture, and a stress-free working environment; gives respect and recognition to the teachers; and fulfills emotional support, which can retain teachers. So, such principals who have transformational leadership qualities can keep teachers committed to the organization for the long term. Hence, as researchers, we learn that valuing teachers' both professional and personal lives, honoring their contributions, and accepting them as family members create a sense of pride and ownership among them; it further inspires loyalty and resilience.

Commonalities and Differences in the Narratives of the Participants Aligned with Theories and Literature

After going through all the narratives of my participants, on behalf of teachers, I came to this point of understanding that their narratives had both some commonalities and some differences. Regarding the commonalities, we can state that all the participants reflect a complex relationship between teachers' experiences and the principal's leadership in the context of teacher retention. One thing is commonly accepted: organizational culture and relational leadership play vital roles in teachers' happiness and long-term attachment to the organization, which positively impacts teacher retention. For this, the role of the principal's leadership is crucial because it is the principal who is supposed to balance emotional connection and professional growth and run the organization in a system. So, their narratives let us claim that the principal's leadership, which goes beyond administrative work, influences teacher retention. All of them admit that the principals have to strategically plan or manage to provide emotional support to teachers, give valued recognition, engage them with dignified responsibility, and provide opportunities for professional growth. In this respect, they have to do nothing more than have an empathetic attitude, speak encouraging words, and perform trust-building behavior, rather than providing a huge

salary and treating them like manual workers in a factory. From their perspectives, we can assume that the leadership that addresses both emotional and professional needs can foster long-term commitment from the teachers. For this, Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1990) serves as a guiding lens because this leadership approach motivates teachers to overcome their challenges through principals' acts of inspiration, empowerment, and building trust. This theory reveals that the role of the principal's leadership is to foster a stress-free collaborative working environment, recognition, and professional growth of the colleagues, viewing their roles as valued, integral members of the organization.

From the narratives of all the participants, we find that the relational leadership theory is implemented in the principal's leadership approach in terms of caring for his colleagues and empowering them through interpersonal relationships and care, which strengthens organizational loyalty. In other words, it fosters interpersonal connections and collaborative dynamics that strengthen organizational bonds (Uhl-Bien, 2006). From all these narratives, we sense that the teachers are happy for getting recognized as valued members of the organization, being emotionally supported, and getting professional development opportunities despite low financial remuneration. This state of job satisfaction is close to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) in the sense that emotional and social fulfillment motivate sustained commitment.

All the narratives emphasize that the leader-teacher relationship provides psychological safety to the coworkers (Edmondson, 1999), which fosters stability of their service and attachment. Moreover, all these narratives also reflect Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966) implemented in the principal's leadership approach in terms of providing emotional support to teachers, giving valued recognition, entrusting them with dignified responsibility, and providing professional growth opportunities. Likewise, in all these narratives, we find the principal's leadership approach contrasting with transactional leadership in terms of prioritizing administrative processes over a personal give-and-take system. In a nutshell, all these narratives demonstrate that principals who lead with care and invest in their teachers create an environment where educators feel emotionally supported, valued, dignified, professional, and secure, and can retain them for the long term. In this respect, we can declare that leadership is a human-centric endeavor that must adapt to the teachers' evolving needs and expectations for their job satisfaction and long-term commitment.

Regarding some differences in the experiences of the participants, we noticed that some teachers receive emotional support like a family member, while some do not. Sital, in this regard, is fortunate to be treated like a family member, while Yamuna and Binu are not getting treated accordingly. Binu's school follows official rules more than her emotions. When she was fit and fine and the organization needed her cooperation, she was entrusted with the responsibility of acting as principal in the absence of the school principal during the difficult time of COVID. Later, when everything was normal and she was absent due to her health problem, her position as a teacher representative was replaced with another teacher without her agreement or understanding. The office had nothing to do with her emotions; it just needed to follow the rules. Likewise, Yamuna's initial leaders used to treat her by addressing her emotions, but later, when GG intervened in its program, it also started treating the coworkers just as a machine. In the case of Sital's previous school, there was undue influence of politics; this kind of politics is not seen in private schools.

However, it is also genuine to say that the leadership also faces challenges in maintaining the school's prestige while managing internal conflicts. This takes the leadership away from giving emotional support as per the Person-Organization Fit Theory (Kristof, 1996).

CHAPTER VI

KEY INSIGHTS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND SELF-REFLECTION

This chapter covers key insights of the entire study in response to the research questions as a new learning, discussions aligning with theoretical references and literature, the conclusion, its implications in policymaking, leadership approach, and further study, and self-reflection. It begins with envisioning my research journey, expressing my feelings about how the principal's leadership plays a significant role in retaining teachers despite a lack of extrinsic motivational components. It also captures my experiences of developing it as the main issue of the study, the whole process of reflecting and creating the ideas about it, and travelling through the journey of drafting this dissertation.

Key Insights

In 30 years of my professional journey in education, both as a teacher and a principal, I have realized that private schools play a crucial role in maintaining the quality and standard of education in the national educational sector (Manandhar & Koirala, 2019). However, most of these private schools face the big challenge of teacher attrition (Shrestha, 2022). If we look keenly, we find the principal's leadership skills, strategies, and behaviors playing a prominent role in keeping teachers in the organization for the long term. I claim to say so because I have noticed teachers becoming happy and emotionally attached to the organization despite low remuneration in some schools, while, in some other schools, we see teachers leaving after a short period of service despite good salary and other additional good facilities. In this respect, I liked to explore why that was happening. My curiosity led me to study the experiences and practices of principals regarding their role, their strategies, and their perceptions about teacher retention. So, I planned to do this qualitative research, compiling subjective expressions and interpreting them to trace the components of teacher retention through their experiences and practices, which are performed by the principal's leadership.

In this respect, aiming to explore how the principal's leadership plays a role in determining teacher retention under the title 'Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry into Principals' Leadership,' I managed to do this narrative inquiry.

To mitigate this exploration, the study proceeded with two research questions, i.e., How do school principals share their experiences of helping their teachers remain in their schools? How do teachers narrate their stories in relation to their retention in schools? Then, as planned to do a narrative inquiry, I selected six principals as the participants of the research to share their experiences and practices about helping their teachers remain in their schools, along with three teachers to verify the role of the principal's leadership in teacher retention from the teachers' perspectives. After going through the narrative analysis of the data, I came to draw the following insights from the entire study:

A Principal's Relational Leadership Plays a Crucial Role in Teacher Retention.

Almost all the participants' narratives revealed a complex relationship between teachers' experiences and the principal's leadership. The narratives highlighted teacher retention in private schools as heavily influenced by the principal's relational leadership. The narratives of Abdul, Shraddha, Kristal, Narahari, Binu, and Sital reflected that Relational Leadership Theory was frequently implemented in principals' approaches in terms of focusing on caring for colleagues, maintaining intimacy, and empowering them through interpersonal relationships and care, which further strengthened organizational loyalty and provided psychological safety. Moreover, these narratives revealed that relational leadership, which emphasizes human connection, is more important for workforce stability and teacher retention than other components. Their stories conveyed that salary alone does not determine teachers' job satisfaction. They rather need emotional support, intimacy, ownership, and flexibility. If salary were the only factor to determine teacher retention, there would be a better retention rate in those schools that were offering a good salary. However, we don't find so; we rather see teachers leave their organizations after they are offered a better salary. Unlike this, if the teachers have a good attachment to and ownership of their organizations, they rarely leave their jobs. Their emotional attachment discourages them from leaving their job for a better offer from any other organization. So, all these narratives highlighted that teacher retention depends on job satisfaction, which is linked to organizational recognition, attachment, and ownership more than solely on financial incentives. For this, relational leadership is more effective than a strict autocratic leadership approach that lacks emotional connection, giving coworkers value, recognition, and intrinsic inspiration. Since transactional leadership focuses only on technical efficiency and a give-and-take structure, which may fail to retain

experienced teachers, all the narratives collectively critiqued this type of leadership, highlighting that teacher retention depends on deeper relational and intrinsic factors. So, one of the most important insightful learnings I got from all these narratives is that the principal's relational leadership plays a crucial role in teacher retention.

Transformational Leadership Helps Teachers Remain.

Basically, the participants expressed two components, i.e., professional growth and financial conformity, as the prime aspects to keep any coworkers satisfied and attached to the organization. In the context of Nepal, which is likely to face brain drain due to consistent exits of young people to foreign countries, the narratives emphasized treating teachers as members of an educational organization, not as manual workers of a company or factory. Secondly, the narratives also urged all the members to have common thoughts about the philosophy of education, how that particular school views education, school culture, and the importance and ethics of being a teacher. In this respect, it is the principal who is supposed to construct such common thoughts through inspiration. The narratives direct the principals to be role models and maintain the social prestige and dignity of the organizations. Only then do the followers obey the leader. If the principals are ideal in their performance, the teachers can trust their principals. Trust is important to let teachers feel dignified when working at that school. So, it is the principal's role to let them feel dignified. If principals are careless and disreputable in society, nobody likes to work under such principals. Even though you are smart and professional, other schools often manipulate your good teachers to join their schools, offering a little more pay and having some influential talks. So, the principal must have a transformative quality to inspire and influence teachers for the organizational mission.

The narratives of Chiran, Abdul, Shivam, Narahari, Binu, Yamuna, and Sital postulated an insight that transformational leadership that focuses on inspiring colleagues, emotional attachment, and ethical engagement is more effective in retaining teachers. Their narratives demonstrated that intrinsically motivated teachers were more likely to continue their service for the long term. From the narratives, I found that most teachers are students of university or colleges themselves, beside teaching in the day in private schools in the day; they teach during the day and study in the morning at college/university. Their personal study is more important than their job of teaching. In this respect, the school has to manage something that can attract them and engage them with an emotional attachment to the organization. So, these

narratives illustrated why educational leaders needed to be strategic on human-centric approaches and tactfully create a positive school culture that would address teachers' professional development, support meaningful engagement, and lead with emotional attachment, providing institutional ownership to address this situation. Most importantly, in the narratives of Chiran, Abdul, Narahari, Binu, Yamuna, and generally in all the principals and teachers, I saw teacher retention relying more effectively on a transformational leadership approach than solely on extrinsic motivational factors like salary or other material benefits.

Principal Who Descends from an Administrative Task to a Human-centric Task and Involves Teachers in Decision-making, Giving them Value, Respect, and Ownership, can Retain Teachers

In the narratives of Shraddha, Narahari, and generally in all the teachers, I found the principal's leadership going beyond administrative tasks; it was more effective because it strategically provided teachers with emotional support, gave them valued recognition, and entrusted them with dignified responsibility. One insight that I got is that it is not only the leadership that makes job satisfaction, but the administrative system also matters. So, it is the principal who has to both descend from administrative tasks and ease the administrative system of the organization to inspire teachers. Moreover, having a human-centric approach in honoring senior teachers and letting them feel that they deserve to take ownership of the organization, principals gave various responsibilities like coordinatorship, along with fewer periods to teach, and also became a little more flexible in supporting them. Two teacher participants, Binu and Yamuna, shared that leadership must transcend administrative functions to a human-centric force to shape teachers' commitment. According to them, teacher retention requires multiple aspects like personalized care, value recognition, and the implementation of systematic and sustainable organizational policies, because if there is anything that the teachers in private schools seek, it is love, recognition, and value both inside the organization and in the community, along with a moderate salary on time. Moreover, participation in decision-making, little flexibility in working, and occasional praise motivates coworkers to feel that they are valued members of the organization. However, these may not be sufficient to retain teachers. A principal has to be strategic to plan, manage, and act accordingly. So, I also found principals managing the working environment, providing counseling for teachers, providing support in needs, addressing the teachers' challenges, arranging provisions for

professional growth, and providing guardianship accordingly to retain teachers. In a nutshell, I learned that the role of the principal's leadership needs to be human-centric, which must adapt to teachers' evolving needs and expectations. Therefore, a principal must work to maintain the mental well-being and happiness of colleagues, creating a homely environment in the school. Likewise, I also found that the involvement of teachers in decision-making cultivates a sense of ownership and shared responsibility and fosters esteem and belongingness.

Principal's Motivational, Supportive, and Empathetic Attitude and Behaviors towards the Teachers Determine Their Job Satisfaction

One of the lessons I got from the narratives is that teachers in private schools do not have a big dream of earning a lot of money and becoming powerful people. They are simple people who need love, value, and respect. If any organizations give them such intrinsic aspects, they can make it possible to motivate them for their long-term service. In this respect, Chiran, Sital, Yamuna, and Binu also shared an insight that principals' empathetic attitudes, encouraging words, and trust-building behavior are critical in shaping teachers' career decisions, especially during challenging times. Through their narratives, I explored that working together like a family or family-like bonds among colleagues and leaders, including proactive involvement in personal and community events, can influence organizational loyalty and job satisfaction. In the narratives, I found that the principal who becomes ready to help in a crisis is recognized as a great leader and builds trust, because the help offered in a crisis becomes unforgettable to everyone. So, wise leaders capitalize on such moments. In the narratives as well, when teachers are in trouble, principals become ready to support them; as a result, principals have won the coworkers' hearts and been able to motivate them to be dedicated to the organization for the long term. This is important because people never forget your support when they are in need. So, great leaders work for their people to support them financially, emotionally, and socially.

On the other hand, the narratives reveal that principals who are tactful in negotiations in need can influence colleagues. For example, when teachers leave due to certain influences, principals who deal with such a situation very tactfully can divert the teachers back to the organization. Such principals can keep their colleague-teachers continuing for the long term. Schools are formal places where formal communication primarily takes place; however, the narratives also indicate that being polite and formal may not always work to keep all the coworkers attached to the

organization or dedicated to the objectives of the organization. It is because every organization has some negative or toxic people who create a toxic environment in the school. As appears in the narratives, it is the principal who becomes strategic in engaging teachers in professional activities rather than letting them engage in unprofessional talk during school hours. They may understand and come to the mainstream only after strict and harsh communication, and sometimes, even action. So, for a principal, it is natural to face such scenarios and diminish all communication gaps and office politics to create a conducive working environment because there is not always a systematic, formal, and polite situation in our context for leadership in Nepal.

The narrative of Chiran justifies that mental state and happiness retain teachers. Narahari's and Shivam's leadership approaches incorporated family and community bonds; it was a localized dimension as practiced in Nepalese contexts, unlike Western culture. The narratives align with eastern leadership theories like Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist, Gandhian, Ubuntu, etc, in terms of the leadership practices for relational, collectivism, and community-embedded leadership practices. Unlike this, Traditional Western theories like trait, transactional, servant, or even transformational emphasize individualism, hierarchical authority, and task-oriented performance, which we do not find in the narratives. Hence, these narratives also highlighted the importance of aligning leadership with local sociocultural dynamics. Moreover, Yamuna's narratives also generated an insight that leadership transitions can create uncertainty. When there is a change in the position of leadership, teachers also feel insecure and become distracted.

Teachers Become Happy to be Recognized as Valued Members of the Organization

In the narratives of Chiran, Abdul, Binu, Yamuna, and Sital, I found teachers becoming happy to be recognized as valued members of the organization, receiving emotional support from their leaders or supervisors, and getting involved in the decision-making process, despite the moderate level of the financial remuneration they were receiving. That state of feeling aligns with Maslow's hierarchy of needs because this theory advocates for the need for emotional and social fulfillment; it motivates them to be more committed. As shared by Yamuna, value recognition is crucial for retaining teachers, especially those who have been dedicated for a long time. In addition to this, all these narratives demonstrated that teachers expect their leaders to

fulfill their promises and ensure the implementation of systematic and sustainable organizational policies mandated by the government, such as provident funds, gratuity, leave, and professional growth opportunities. Implementing these provisions means giving value to the coworkers. As shared in the narratives of Abdul, Narahari, Binu, and Yamuna, value recognition and participatory inclusion contribute to job satisfaction. On the other hand, if a teacher's job is out of only on a personal relationship without any value, it becomes easy to break. However, if the teacher's job is related to the family and valued in the community, it becomes difficult to break. People are bound by social obligation. So, it is also a strategic activity for the leadership to give value to the teachers along with their family attachment to the organization. This helps the leadership emotionally retain teachers in the long term.

The Principal Who Leads with Care and Invests in Teachers' Growth can Keep Them Attached to the Organization

All these narratives gave me the knowledge that principals who lead with care and invest in their teachers' betterment and development can create a conducive working environment where they feel emotionally supported, valued, dignified, professional, and secure. This is essential because there is a high risk of losing not only students but also qualified teachers. After all, students are flying abroad after the 10th or 12th standard every year, and potential teachers are going abroad for better employment. Those who are living and working in Nepal are also jumping from one organization to another due to financial insecurity and job instability, weak organizational attachment, and limited professional development opportunities. Most teachers joined this profession in private schools, not as their dream career; rather, they joined it because they were free and it was easy to get a teaching job. So, the first few months or even years are very difficult for new teachers to decide whether to continue the profession or to quit. In that situation, leaders need to support them or motivate them; only then are they likely to continue their profession. Frequent counseling of teachers on what teachers are supposed to do and how the school can support them to achieve organizational objectives is essential for retaining teachers in private schools, where the principal is expected to work for the growth, needs, and demands of teachers to keep them retained. In this situation, motivation and appreciation of job performance also develop the confidence level of teachers, and they start feeling attached to the organization, which ultimately lets them feel ownership of the organization.

In the narratives of Chiran, Shraddha, Narahari, Binu, and Sital, I saw that kind of care and investment encouraging teachers to stay for the long term. Similarly, as shared by Chiran, Abdul, Kristal, Narahari, Binu, Yamuna, and Sital, emotional care and relational trust were two significant themes. In their narratives, I found that providing support during personal crises would strengthen trust and deepen loyalty. So, these narratives also taught me that retaining teachers requires a balance of addressing various components, including emotional care, professional development, value, recognition, meaningful attachment, ownership, and even financial aspects. Principals need to deal with colleagues as their guardians and perceive them as equal partners of the organization. Counselling teachers as their guardians can help to retain them. So, a leader is supposed to lead his/her team in such a way that his/her colleagues should realize that they are getting love, self-respect, and ownership of the organization.

Professional Autonomy and Growth are Important Intrinsic Motivators for Job Satisfaction and Long-term Service

Teachers prefer a learning environment in the school so that they can perform better. Good performance not only creates a good image of the organization but also makes teachers happy with their job performance, and happy teachers are retained. The most terrifying aspect for a teacher is to see their students' low achievements and to face complaints from guardians. In such a situation, principals need to support teachers with some innovative ideas, and give them professional autonomy and chances to grow themselves. If they are limited to certain responsibilities and instructed to follow whatever is instructed, they cannot grow themselves. So, these narratives also gave me an insight into the fact that professional autonomy and growth are also important intrinsic motivators, which aligns with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. I saw professional development opportunities intrinsically motivating teachers to learn new things in the narratives. Such opportunities, like in-house trainings, different workshops, conferences, and so on for professional growth, motivate teachers to serve in the long term. So, professional growth, financial conformity, motivational words, support for teachers to perform better, flexibility in working, and decision-making inspire teachers to be attached to the organization for the long term. This makes teacher retention possible, which is in the hands of the principal's leadership.

Hence, from all the narratives, we can sum up in a nutshell that transformational and relational leadership, along with hygiene and motivational

factors as recommended by Two-Factor's Theory, can best achieve teacher retention. So, the leaders need to adapt local realities and context to make better teacher retention strategies. For this, skills for having empathetic talk, building relational trust, and being culturally sensitive are required, especially in a developing educational context like Nepal.

Discussion

Looking deep into the insights drawn from different levels of analysis and interpretation of the entire narratives, I understood that teacher retention directly aligns with the principal's relational leadership in private schools. Relational leadership shapes a positive working environment and significantly influences job satisfaction (Dicke et al., 2020). As it emphasizes human connection, it is more important for workforce stability and teacher retention than other components. From the narratives shared by the participants, both the teachers and principals, there is a complex relationship between teachers' experiences and principals' relational leadership. The narratives highlighted teacher retention in private schools as heavily influenced by the principal's relational leadership. In this respect, Relational Leadership Theory was frequently implemented in principals' approaches while caring for colleagues, maintaining intimacy, and empowering them through interpersonal relationships and care; it further strengthened organizational loyalty and provided psychological safety to the teachers. The emphasis on the leader-teacher relationship provides psychological safety to the coworkers (Edmondson, 1999), which fosters stability of their service and attachment. So, all these narratives highlighted that teacher retention depends on job satisfaction, which is linked to organizational recognition, attachment, and ownership more than solely on financial incentives. This proved that salary alone does not determine teachers' happiness. They rather need emotional support, intimacy, ownership, and flexibility. These needs can only be addressed through a leadership approach to achieve job satisfaction. For this, relational leadership, which aligns with Herzberg's two-factor theory, is more effective than a strict professional leadership approach that lacks emotional connection, support, trust, collaboration, recognition, and a complete system (Cogaltay et al., 2016). Relational Leadership Theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006) underscores the importance of meaningful relationships in fostering trust, recognition, and a supportive working organizational culture. These aspects are more likely to make teachers remain committed to their institutions. Since transactional leadership focuses only on technical efficiency and a

give-and-take structure, which may fail to retain experienced teachers, all the narratives collectively critiqued this type of leadership, highlighting that teacher retention depends on deeper relational and intrinsic factors. So, the principal's relational leadership plays a crucial role in teacher retention. This knowledge aligns with findings of other literature reviews as well. The insight that the principal's leadership plays a crucial role in teacher retention is also the finding of the studies by Sumipo (2020) and Buckman (2021), who highlighted that the principal's role in retaining teachers is pivotal (Becker & Grob, 2021).

However, the same aspect may not be equally crucial in community or government schools due to structural and political factors. Teachers in those schools are aligned with different political parties; they have strong political affiliations and have different political views. The leader's relational approach works only with those who are either neutral or who have similar thoughts. On the other hand, permanent jobs are less affected or influenced by their relations; they take it as a challenge or office politics in the school. Those teachers' external networks influence their engagement with school leadership more strongly than relational leadership principles. In this context, the principals frequently attempt to assert authority, whereas teachers prioritize political connection over institutional leadership (Dhakal et al., 2023). There is a tendency to intentionally oppose the leaders by coworkers or coworkers by leaders in Nepalese community schools if they belong to different groups of thought. This reduces the impact of relational leadership on teacher motivation and retention. However, transformational leadership can influence colleagues with idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation (Bass, 1990).

So, as per the insights postulated from the narratives of Chiran, Abdul, Shivam, Narahari, Binu, Yamuna, and Sital, transformational leadership focuses on inspiring colleagues to have emotional attachment, ethical engagement, and a human-centric approach, which helps principals retain teachers. Their narratives demonstrated that intrinsically motivated teachers are more likely to continue their service for the long term. Their inspirations received from the leadership become so strong that they forget their self-interest and pursue far-reaching objectives (Martin, 2021). A leader who follows transformative leadership can motivate and inspire them to be dedicated to the organization's long-term objectives. So, transformational leadership is the most effective leadership style for principals to retain teachers (Mugizi et al., 2019). This

notion can be further justified through the studies carried out by Zaharris et al. (2017), Becker and Grob (2021), and Adhikari (2024), who also highlighted that the managerial conduct of school principals, principals' relation with teachers, and the working environment influence teacher retention. So, educational leaders need to be strategic on human-centric approaches and create a positive school culture that addresses teachers' professional development, meaningful engagement, and emotional attachment, providing institutional ownership for better job satisfaction to result in teacher retention. The state of job satisfaction is close to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) in the sense that emotional and social fulfillment motivate sustained commitment. Most importantly, the role of the principal's leadership in fostering a stress-free collaborative working environment, recognition, and professional growth reveals transformational leadership (Bass, 1990), which motivates and inspires teachers to view their roles as valued, integral members of the organization.

Likewise, another key insight that we generated from the narratives of Shraddha, Narahari, and Binu is that effective leadership goes beyond administrative tasks and strategically becomes busy in providing emotional support, giving valued recognition, entrusting dignified responsibility, and offering opportunities for professional growth. We find this insight further supported in the paper by Dhungana and Tamang (2024). In their paper entitled "Harnessing emotional intelligence for effective leadership in the technology sector," they emphasized the effectiveness of leadership that has emotional intelligence in having social relationships with colleagues. Leading is not only working as an administrator; the leader has to emotionally understand the colleagues' feelings as well. Similarly, the idea of a leader's job beyond an administrative job is also supported by Mishra et al. (2024), who highlighted that transformational leadership is more effective in employee engagement and commitment in Nepalese institutions. Additionally, Upadhyay (2008) also stressed the importance of relationships while examining the effectiveness of leadership in Nepalese service-oriented organizations. So, teacher retention requires multiple aspects like personalized care, value recognition, and the implementation of systematic and sustainable organizational policies. In this sense, principals need to follow Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966) in their leadership approach in terms of providing emotional support to teachers, giving valued recognition, entrusting them with dignified responsibility, and providing professional growth opportunities. In a

nutshell, the role of the principal's leadership needs to be human-centric, and it must adapt to teachers' evolving needs and expectations.

All the narratives reflect that the principal's attitude, behaviors, and relationship with the teachers determine their job satisfaction. Principals' empathetic attitudes, encouraging words, and trust-building behavior play an important role in building teachers' trust, valued and dignified feelings, and confidence in ownership. These aspects play a crucial role in shaping teachers' minds for career decisions, especially when they have difficult or challenging times. This idea is further justified by Deupa (2023), who explored how recognizing, supporting, and providing fair treatment to teachers can foster a positive work environment in the school, which leads to higher motivation and engagement among teachers. Likewise, Lama and Shrestha (2020) also emphasized that working conditions, leadership style, and institutional culture directly influence teachers' job satisfaction. The principals' nature of working collaboratively, as appreciative leaders, lets teachers feel valued and perform better. So, through the narratives of the participants, I explored that family-like bonds among colleagues and leaders, including proactive involvement in personal and community events, can influence organizational loyalty and job satisfaction. Narahari's and Shivam's leadership approaches incorporated family and community bonds; it was a localized dimension as practiced in Nepalese contexts, unlike Western culture. In the eastern leadership theories like Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist, Gandhian, Ubuntu, etc, there is relational collectivism, and community-embedded leadership practices are found (Dodamgoda et. al., 2024), while in Traditional Western theories like trait, transactional, servant, or even transformational, we find them emphasizing individualism, hierarchical authority, and task-oriented performance. They do not fully capture this aspect. Hence, these narratives also highlighted the importance of aligning leadership with local sociocultural dynamics. Moreover, Yamuna's narratives also generated an insight that leadership transitions can create uncertainty. When there is a change in the position of leadership, teachers also feel insecure and become distracted.

Similarly, I could also explore how teachers become happy to be recognized as valued members of the organization. The narratives of Chiran, Abdul, Binu, Yamuna, and Sital reflect that teachers become happy in being recognized as valued members of their organizations, receiving emotional support and care from their leaders or supervisors, and getting professional development opportunities, despite the moderate level of the financial remuneration they receive. This state of happiness is also

expressed by Thadathil (2017), who stated that public recognition and public appreciation significantly make teachers proud of their profession and boost their morale. Similarly, Bhandari (2021) also claimed that teachers who feel valued and respected by their institutions or leaders exhibit higher motivation and commitment. That state of feeling aligns with Maslow's hierarchy of needs because this theory advocates for the need for emotional and social fulfillment; it motivates them to be more committed. As shared by Yamuna, value recognition is crucial for retaining teachers, especially those who have been dedicated for a long time. In addition to this, all these narratives demonstrated that teachers expect their leaders to fulfill their promises and ensure the implementation of systematic and sustainable organizational policies mandated by the government, such as provident funds, gratuity, leave, and professional growth opportunities.

Moreover, the narratives of the participants also highlight that the principal who leads with care and invests in teachers' growth can keep them attached to the organization. This statement is further justified by the study of Adhikari and Rajak (2024); they also said that organizational support to teachers, their recognition, and a comfortable working environment at the institutions positively influence teachers' commitment to their institutions, particularly in the early years of their careers. Similarly, Neupane (2023) also supported this statement. His study highlighted the importance of investing in teachers' professional growth and maintaining a conducive working environment at the organization to keep the coworkers attached to the organization in private schools. Likewise, this statement is further justified by Shrestha (2022). He also emphasized how the school culture established by earlier generations, along with the emotional support that the teachers receive today from their leaders, can significantly impact their long-term attachment to their organizations. So, all these narratives gave me the knowledge that principals who lead with care and invest in their teachers' betterment and their professional development can create a conducive working environment where they feel emotionally supported, valued, dignified, professional, and secure. In the narratives of Chiran, Shraddha, Narahari, Binu, and Sital, I saw that kind of care and investment encouraging teachers to stay for the long term. Similarly, as shared by Chiran, Abdul, Kristal, Narahari, Binu, Yamuna, and Sital, emotional care and relational trust were two significant themes. In their narratives, I found that providing support during personal crises would strengthen trust and deepen loyalty. So, these narratives also taught me that retaining

teachers requires a balance of addressing various components like emotional care, professional development, value, recognition, meaningful attachment, and ownership.

Likewise, provisions of professional autonomy and professional growth are also important intrinsic motivators for job satisfaction to result long-term service. In this respect, Shrestha and Singh (2020) also highlight that empowering employees through giving them considerable leverage in decision-making and providing opportunities for skill development significantly enhances job satisfaction. From the narratives, we could also understand that professional autonomy and growth are important intrinsic motivators, which align with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The narratives reflect that professional development opportunities are intrinsically motivating teachers to learn new things. As shared in the narratives of Abdul, Narahari, Binu, and Yamuna, value recognition and participatory inclusion contribute to job satisfaction. Likewise, I found that the involvement of teachers in decision-making cultivates a sense of ownership and shared responsibility and fosters esteem and belongingness. These findings are reflected in other sectors as well. Not only in the educational sector, but also in other sectors, progression in career or career growth opportunities helps retain coworkers. In this respect, the study carried out by Pantha (2020) also shows the same insights regarding the level of job satisfaction in Nepal's banking sector. His study emphasized that the opportunities for career progression and recognition contribute to the long-term commitment of coworkers. Likewise, this insight is justified not only in secondary schools but also in colleges. In this respect, Mishra et al. (2021) found that the role of giving respect to teachers and providing them opportunities for professional development in Nepalese private colleges is crucial in fostering job satisfaction.

With consideration of all the discussions above, if I merge or fuse Transformational Leadership Theory with the key insights generated from my study, I come to know that Transformational Leadership Theory focuses on idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation (Bass, 1990). Out of these four aspects of transformational leadership, individualized consideration and inspirational motivation are used by the participants to retain teachers. For instance, in the narratives of Principal Chiran, we find him providing individualized support by helping teachers continue their university studies in the morning, granting leave for personal reasons, and negotiating to retain them. Likewise, in Principal Shraddha's narrative, we find her caring for her colleagues like

a guardian, providing emotional and financial support to those in need, and giving special responsibilities to senior teachers. Similarly, in Principal Kristal's narrative, we see his differentiated leadership approach based on teachers' needs to provide emotional attachment or professional development opportunities and to offer financial aid during crises. Likewise, in Narahari's narrative, we find him involving a teacher in decision-making and providing professional development opportunities. On the other hand, from the narratives of teacher Binu, we also find how she highlights the principal's emotional support during personal crises. Similarly, teacher Yamuna recalled principals like Khemraj and Mr. Dake, who provided personalized care and counselling. Likewise, teacher Sital mentioned that the principal provided friendly support during the confusion of teaching content. All these instances reflect principals attending to the individual needs and development of their teachers, aligning with individualized consideration.

Similarly, regarding inspirational motivation, Principal Shivam specifically discusses inspiring teachers by discussing the "dignity, essence, and responsibility of being teachers." This aligns with inspirational motivation, aiming to instill pride and purpose in the profession. Principal Shraddha also mentions aiming to keep teachers "happy, motivated, and inspired." Moreover, she focuses on the patriotic feeling of working in the home country. Teacher Binu mentions the principal's "encouraging words." While other principals used their "intellectual competency" or "patriotic flavor" to convince teachers to stay, Principal Shivam's focused on the "dignity, essence, and responsibility" of teaching to persuade teachers to stay; this could be interpreted as a form of ethical or philosophical guidance aimed at inspiring teachers' commitment to their profession and, implicitly, to serving within their country. This was also closer to inspirational motivation or possibly idealized influence.

From the narratives of Abdul, Shraddha, Kristal, Narahari, Binu, and Sital, we also realize that principals' leadership approaches often align with Relational Leadership Theory in terms of their concerns and activities for focusing on caring for colleagues, empowering them through interpersonal relationships, and fostering loyalty and letting colleagues feel psychological safety. In this sense, relational leadership is more effective than any strict autocratic leadership approach that lacks emotional connection, giving coworkers value, recognition, and intrinsic inspiration (Tianyang et al., 2023).

All these narratives also collectively critique transactional leadership in the sense that teacher retention depends on relational strategies and a transformational leadership approach more effectively than extrinsic motivational factors like salary or other material benefits. In a common understanding, we assume that extrinsic factors like salary and other physical facilities play an important role in job satisfaction; however, the narratives underscore the greater impact of intrinsic motivators, than extrinsic ones, such as recognition, emotional support, professional growth, and a sense of belonging or ownership of the organization for job satisfaction to result long-term service. These align with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Finally, from the overall findings of the study, as reflected in the narratives, we indicate that teacher retention requires a multifaceted approach involving emotional care, professional development, value recognition, meaningful attachment, and a sense of ownership. For this, principals need to transcend from administrative functions to a human-centric approach to shape teachers' commitment. So, principals need to adapt this kind of leadership to address teachers' evolving needs and expectations.

Hence, in a nutshell, from all the narratives, we can sum up that transformational, relational leadership and the two factors, i.e., hygiene and motivational factors as recommended by the Two-Factor Theory, can best achieve teacher retention. So, the leaders need to adapt local realities and context to make better teacher retention strategies. For this, skills for having empathetic talk, building relational trust, and being culturally sensitive are required, especially in a developing educational context like Nepal.

Conclusion

The issue of teacher attrition is one of the major challenges for private schools in Nepal. However, principals' leadership plays a crucial role in teacher retention through having a sense of organizational attachment, job satisfaction, and feeling like a valued and dignified member of the organization. The insights derived from this study suggest that teacher retention can be effectively addressed through the principal's leadership, rather than solely depending on financial remunerations and other physical facilities. So, the principal is supposed to demonstrate guardianship and be caring for teachers as family members through his/her leadership approach. The leadership that strategically plans and manages to provide opportunities for professional growth, recognizes colleagues as dignified and valued members of the

organization, and fosters a conducive working environment can retain teachers. The moderate financial remuneration and other extrinsic facilities can play a significant role; however, the principal's leadership, focused on these relational and intrinsic aspects, plays a more important role in teacher retention than such extrinsic facets. For this, principals need to transcend from administrative functions to a human-centric force that motivates teachers' commitment.

Implication

Policy Implications

Educational policies in Nepal focus on community school issues, while they partially address the need for teachers serving at private schools. Despite the significant contribution of private schools to the national educational sector and a large number of students studying there, there is a noticeable lack of concern at the policy level for the teachers working in private schools. This study reflects that teachers' attrition is a critical issue that needs to be addressed to prevent its negative impact on children. This is not only hindering the quality of education but also emotionally affecting children by breaking their emotional attachment, trust, and intimacy with their teachers and schools. While the Nepal School Education Sector Plan 2022/23-2031/32 outlines a roadmap for national educational development, it seems to be the roadmap for community schools and other government sectors because it does not specifically deal with how leadership should act to retain teachers in private schools.

Likewise, the 16th National Plan of Nepal also indirectly addresses the role of principals in retaining teachers through establishing good governance and taking responsibility for ensuring people get social justice (NPC, 2024). However, as a gap, we feel that the policy doesn't provide detailed guidelines or state special provisions that could motivate teachers to continue their service for a long term in private schools. Similarly, the Labor Act 2074 (2017) also concerned the retention of all employees through the security of jobs. However, there is a question of whether all the teachers working in private schools are enjoying the labor rights as promised by the labor law. How far has it been implemented for these teachers? Likewise, the British Council, MoEST Initiative (2022–2025), and CEHRD collaboratively developed some competencies of headteachers as a national competency framework for headteachers (British Council, 2022; CEHRD, 2005). This is yet to explore how effective they have been in terms of teacher retention. This initiative is also a part of Nepal's School

Education Sector Plan (SESP) 2021–2030, which emphasizes empowering principals to make strong school leadership. Likewise, Nepal’s Education Act (7th & 8th Amendments) and Education Regulation, 2059, also state 31 administrative and leadership responsibilities as the assignment of the head teachers. These responsibilities emphasize their role as managers and motivators rather than just classroom instructors. However, these narratives reflect how much they are implemented in practice. In this respect, this study can be a tool to revisit our existing policies.

Drawing inspiration from India’s National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 as well, which suggests strategies like improving work environments, offering career growth opportunities, and involving teachers in educational decisions to reduce teacher turnover, a similar policy for teachers in private schools is required in Nepal. This study also intends to say that policymakers should prioritize creating such policies that can address the issue of teacher attrition in the unique context of private schools, because the current policies solely focus on the issues of community schools, their work environment, professional development, and teacher involvement in decision-making. Hence, the next policy should make these aspects mandatory for management to run any private schools. If such policies are made with inputs from teachers teaching in private schools and their organizations as well, it could democratize education and make the teaching profession more attractive, and schools would get more qualified teachers, and, as a result, the entire academic level of the nation would flourish.

Leadership Practice Implications

As regards the implications of this study in terms of leadership practice, it can be a useful reference for developing new policies, bringing transformation to leadership approaches, and fostering a better working environment in schools. All the narratives highlight that the principals’ leadership approach plays a crucial role in determining teacher retention, much more than extrinsic motivational components or amenities. To shape teachers’ commitment to their organizations, principals need to apply a human-centric leadership approach, rather than being fixed to an administrative persona. For this, the leadership has to demonstrate guardianship to teachers, caring for them as family members, providing opportunities for their professional growth, recognizing them as dignified and valued members of the organization, and fostering a conducive working environment for them at the schools.

It is because we see effective leadership strategically providing emotional support to its colleagues, giving them valued recognition, entrusting them with dignified responsibility, and offering opportunities for professional growth. Moreover, we see such leadership having an empathetic attitude, always speaking encouraging words, and being dedicated to trust-building. So, these intrinsic motivators like recognition, emotional support, professional growth, and a sense of belonging are more impactful in fostering long-term commitment than any moderate financial remuneration or material amenities. To meet all these aspects, transformational and relational leadership styles are more effective in private schools because these leadership styles focus on building relationships with teachers, inspiring them, and attending to their needs and development.

So, if the insights or the findings of this study are implemented by the existing educational leaders, the ratio of teacher attrition is likely to go down. For this, principals have to prioritize human-centric approaches rather than financial approaches only.

Further Research

I conducted this study as qualitative research using narrative inquiry to explore participants' experiences and practices regarding the role of the principal's leadership in teacher retention. I claim to say that this study provides deep, subjective insights into the agenda. When I noticed many pieces of quantitative research examining the link between leadership and teacher retention, but not reflecting the in-depth lived experiences and perspectives of principals and teachers, I determined to reflect them through my study. I wanted to mitigate the gap of many existing studies that emphasize extrinsic motivational dimensions to motivate teachers for long-term commitment. So, I conducted this qualitative study. However, I am sure there is always certain research gap. I admit there is a research gap for a longitudinal exploration that can track teachers' experiences over the long run. It has yet to be investigated whether the trend of teacher turnover is the same over time and what factors influence changes in this aspect. On the other hand, if this research was carried out through a mixed method, including quantitative research, a deeper level of findings would be seen, which would better address the issue of teacher retention in private schools in Nepal. In this respect, as a researcher, I recommend a future study that could explore to what extent the principal's leadership practices influence teacher retention and to the extent the intrinsic motivational factors impact teacher retention in

private schools, both qualitatively and quantitatively. That research would recommend specific leadership styles, their impact on retention, and the teachers' voices more comprehensively with qualitative and quantitative data. Moreover, it could also investigate how localized strategies, like guardianship, socio-cultural integration, and ethical mentorship, apply in other high-attrition environments, bridging the gap between global theories and grassroots implementation.

Hence, as a researcher, I imply that if this issue of teacher retention were handed over to me to solve, I would have addressed it, emphasizing the findings and insights generated from the participants' entire narratives, focusing on implementing human-centric, transformational, and relational leadership strategies alongside advocating for supportive policy changes.

Self-Reflection

I started this research journey from the challenges I faced as the principal and the curiosities as a researcher regarding teacher retention that I experienced firsthand over three decades. Having worked for 15 years as a teacher and another 15 as a principal in private schools, I frequently observed the trend of qualified and experienced teachers leaving their positions shortly after joining, despite their significant contributions to educational standards, while in some schools, I found teachers working for the long term despite getting low remuneration and other material benefits. In normal observation, it seemed the principal's behavior or leadership was a crucial component to keep teachers for long-term services. However, it needed systematic research. This concept came to my mind from my journey as well, because I worked under both the supportive and caring principals who fostered a sense of family and ownership, as well as, those with rude or exploitative nature. I knew how teachers felt under both types of leadership. So, my experiences let me realize that retention was not solely tied to financial benefits; it was rather deeply linked to effective leadership and the overall school environment.

In undertaking this research, I realized that the knowledge and skills I gained from my master's level studies did not entirely support the specific demands of this inquiry. With the guidance and support received from my respected supervisor, Prof. Subedi, I could successfully conduct this qualitative study through the narrative inquiry method, navigating all its possible challenges in time. However, the theoretical parts under Chapter Two needed editing. While submitting the proposal, Transformational Leadership and Four Capital Theory were used as leadership theory

and social theory, respectively, to interpret the findings. However, I had to add relational leadership and replace the four capital theories with Herzberg's two-factor theory based on the participants' narratives.

I could complete the entire process of this study with my hard work and smart management of various steps, like adopting an interpretivist paradigm to explore subjective realities, intentionally selecting the participants based on their experiences, gender, and level of school, collecting rich qualitative data through semi-structured interviews to capture personal stories and perspectives, managing the data collection process systematically, and doing narrative analysis to interpret the experiences shared by the principals and teachers as the participants of the research. Moreover, for ethical consideration, I had to maintain trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, address potential biases, listen empathetically, and maintain a detailed audit trail during the entire process and documentation of the study.

After going through this entire process rigorously, working closely with the participants, and analyzing and interpreting the narratives of principals and teachers, I have come to a point of confidence where I feel capable of being able to conduct research at an individual level. This research, however, is not an end in itself. It is rather the beginning of my next journey as a researcher, building upon 30 years of involvement in teacher learning activities, both as a leader and a teacher. It has provided me with invaluable insights into the human-centric aspects of leadership for teacher retention and the profound impact of leadership that goes beyond mere administrative functions.

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Annex 1: Letter form KUSOED for data collection

Kathmandu University School of Education 12 November 2024 To Whom It May Concern Mr. Mukunda Giri (Reg. No. 012929-11) has been studying MPhil in Education with a specialization in Educational Leadership at the School of Education of Kathmandu University since February 2024. For the completion of his MPhil Dissertation, he is conducting research on "Role of Leadership in Teacher Retention in Private Schools: A Narrative Inquiry" In course of his research, he is currently visiting different places where he needs to consult schools, colleges, libraries, research centers, related government, and non-government organizations and educational institutions. Therefore, I would like to request the concerned organizations and personalities to co-operate with him on his research activities. Rebat Kumar Dhakal, PhD Head of Department (Acting) Department of Educational Leadership Hatiban, Lalitpur, Nepal +977 01 5250106, 5250524 admin@kusced.edu.np info@ku.edu.np www.kusced.edu.np GPO Box 6250, Kathmandu

Annex 2: Interview guideline

Interview Guidelines for Principals	
1. How do school principals share their experiences of helping their teachers remain in their schools? Possible Components to be addressed: Motivation, Mentoring, Influence, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualized Consideration,	Tone Setting 1. I give my introduction and explain why I am there to take an interview. 2. Would you once again give your introduction, and let me know how long you have been working in this position? हजुरको परिचय र यो पदमा सेवारत समयावधि ? Motivation 3. “Can you share a detailed story of a time when you successfully motivated a teacher to stay at the school, including the strategies you used to recognize and reward their efforts, and how you maintain high motivation levels among your staff to support them in their roles?” शिक्षकलाई दिर्गकालिन रूपमा सेवारत बनाउन प्राचार्यको तह बाट के गर्न सकिन्छ, तपाइले के कस्ता अभ्यासहरू गरि रहनु भएको छ । शिक्षकलाई प्रेरणा दिएको कुनै घटना वा अनुभव भए सुनाउनुस न Influence 4. Do you have any such experiences when you were influenced, inspired, or motivated to work at your school for a long time? ”बिद्यालयमा लामो समय काम गर्न प्रेरणा दिन वा आफ्नो काम प्रति सकारात्मक प्रभाव पार्न यहाले के कस्तो भूमिका खेल्नु भएको छ। कुनै अनुभव छन्। Intellectual Stimulation 5. What activities do you do for the betterment or deveopment of teachers? Do you have any experiences when teachers are impressed with your strategies implemented for their growth? शिक्षकको विकासका लागि के कस्तो व्यवस्था गर्नु भएको छ। शिक्षक

	बिकासका लागि तपाइले गरेको रणनीति प्रति शिक्षक प्रभावित भएको त्यस्तो कुनै अनुभव सुनाउनुस न। Principal's Role 6. What would be the role of principal in retaining teachers? बिद्यालयमा शिक्षकलाई टिकाउन प्राचार्य ले कस्तो भूमिमा खेल्नु पर्छ र तपाइले के कस्तो गर्नु भएको छ ? In a nutshell, what makes long term retention of teachers? संग्रहमा, शिक्षकको दिर्गकालिन सेवाको लागि, प्राचार्यको के भूमिका हुन सक्छ?	
Interview Guidelines for Teachers		
Research Question	Interview Questions	
RQ: How do teachers narrate their stories in relation to their retention in schools? Possible Components to be addressed: Job satisfaction, professional development, school environment,	Tone Setting: 1. I give my introduction and explain why I am there to take an interview. 2. Would you once again give your introduction, and let me know how long you have been working in this school? Can you share your journey as a teacher and what brought you to this school? तपाइको परिचय, कति बर्ष देखि के के पदमा कार्यरत हुनुहुन्छ । यो पेशामा तपाईं कसरि आइपुग्नु भयो ? तपाईंलाई यो पेशा कस्तो लाग्छ? Private school को शिक्षक भएरकाम गर्दा तपाइको भोगाई कस्तो छ ? के कुरामा खुशी लाग्छ? मतपाइको कथा सुन्न चाहान्छु । तपाईंलाई के कुराले आकर्षण गरेर यो पेशामा निरन्तर लागि रहनु भएको छ । कृपया तपाईंलाई तपाइको पेशाले खुशी बनाएको केहि अनुभव हरु बताउनुस न। अनि तपाइ भबिस्यमा कति समयसम्म यो पेशामा सेवारत हुनुहोला जस्तो लाग्छ? किन? Motivation: 3. Is this your first school? Why did you leave your previous school? What motivated you to join this school? तपाइको यो पहिलो बिद्यालय हो ? पहिलाको बिद्यालय	

support system, work-life balance	किन छोड्नु भयो? के कारणले यो स्कूल जोजिन गर्नु भयो ? यहा के राम्रो लागि रहेको छ ? Professional Development 4. How are you ensuring your professional growth? तपाइले आफ्नो पेशागत बिकास कसरि व्यवस्था गर्नु भएको छ । यसमा विद्यालयको के भूमिका छ। कुनै घटना वा अनुभव भन्न सक्नु हुन्छ जहाँ तपाईंलाई बिध्यालय ले सहयोग गरेको होस् । या नगरेको होस्. School Environment 5. Is there any relation of school's working environment, school culture, climate, and infrastructure to retain teachers? Who is responsible to maintain that? Do you have any experiences एउटा शिक्षकलाई लामो समय सम्म काम गुरु गुरु लाग्न बिध्यालयको बातावरण, संस्कार, भौतिक सुबिधा इत्यादिले के कस्तो भूमिका खेल्छ तपाइको बिचारमा बिध्यालयमा कस्तो बातावरण हुनु पर्छ होला. उक्त बातावरण निर्माण गर्न ककस्को भूमिका हुन्छ. कुनै घटना वा अनुभव छ जहा तपाईंलाई बिध्यालयमा काम गरेकोमा खुशी महसुस भएको वा दुखि भएको । Support System 6. What role can be there of the school principal in retaining teachers? Do you have any experiences that you almost decided to leave the job and the principal motivated you to continue your job? Or you left due to the principal's responses? एउटा शिक्षकले निरन्तर लामो समयको लागि सेवा प्रदान गर्नमा बिद्यालय प्राचार्यको कस्तो भूमिका रहनसक्छ ? तपाईं संग कहिल्यै बिध्यालय छोड्नु पर्यो भनि सोच्दै गर्दा प्राचार्यको कुनै ब्यबहारले नछोड्न को लागि प्रोत्साहन गरेको या प्राचार्यकै ब्यबहारको कारणले बिद्यालय छोड्नु परेको अनुभव वा घटना छ ?
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Annex 3: Sample data/Field Notes//Scratch Notes

All Field Notes of Principals

Research Question:

How do school principals share their experiences of helping their teachers remain in their schools?

Interview Question:

Could you share your experiences of helping your teachers remain in their school?

1. Asoj 2, 2081. I am Narahari Gautam (Pseudonyms), the School in charge and founder of Orbit SS/College. I have been working in the academic sector for 23 years; of that, I have been leading the school for 16 years.

Retaining teachers is a very challenging job because people go abroad to study and find job opportunities every year, and the trend is increasing. As a result, there is a circumstance of brain drain. Now, we are running our schools with student-teachers. They work here till they pass a certain level of their academic journey. Once they complete, they plan to go abroad. However, for those who are likely to stay for a long time, we give them special responsibility and recognize them with certain positions of middle managers, like coordinators. We give them training and have a family attachment, too. They feel like a homely environment at the school and work as a family member. We try our best to trust the leader. When teachers trust their leaders, they are likely to be retained.

For the retention of teachers, we provide training and counseling for better long-term service. We manage to conduct training and various programs to mark our success. I also keep a good attachment with the families of my colleagues. We jointly attend any programs or celebrations organized by our coworkers' families at their homes. I listen to them and let them feel that they are special to the school. They feel valued and work as a family member. We conduct in-house professional development training and also send our teachers to attend training outside whenever PABSON organizes.

So, I think training opportunities, special responsibilities, and attachments can retain teachers.

2. Interview 2: Mangsir 10, 2081. I am Abdul (pseudonym), Director of Ankuram Academy and former principal of Kopeela Valley Surkhet. This question and its aspect of teacher retention are very relevant. Today, after more than two decades of my

principalship in various schools, there is a high risk of not only getting teachers but also students. Students go abroad after the 10th or 12th standard, while educated people or possible teachers go abroad for better employment, and those left in Nepal jump from one organization to another. The most important issue is that a maximum of teachers did not join this profession as their dream career; they were free and joined it easily. So did I. I wanted to be a doctor in life, but I joined this career in 1984 when I was free. At that time, anyone who had better English could easily get a teaching job. So, in Nepal, most of the teachers have been teachers, not because their ambition was to be teachers, but because they joined it, and life went on. Now, the question is how someone can be retained in this profession.

For retention, multiple aspects result in teachers' continuation in their profession. When I first joined my job, I was told to spend a few days in the school before starting to teach to be familiar with the students, the school environment, the culture, and the school system. The next day, I made a map of Nepal on a muddy wall and asked all the students to come with their photos. I pasted their photos according to their birthplace. Those who were from the same place were pasted using colorful thread and place-name tags. This decorated the wall. The classroom looked beautiful. Later, in a meeting, the chairman praised me that I was a perfectionist. That motivated me, and I desired to continue that profession. So, I feel motivation is crucial in teacher retention. Many components matter in motivation. That can be rewards, praise, promotion, opportunity, etc. One important thing is that the first five years for any teacher is difficult because s/he had not come to be a teacher; s/he has just joined because it was available. Later, when they are engaged with children and start enjoying teaching, feel attached to the school, and feel they are an integral part of the school, their retention becomes possible. However, when someone leaves, we have to be very conscious of the new candidate. A long-experienced one doesn't easily accept transformation, and the new, fresh one takes time to learn. When someone learns and becomes adjustable after a hard effort and difficulties, the principal should perceive him/her as an organizational asset.

A principal is the head of the organization. The organization is like a family. As the guardian of a family cares for its members, the principal has to care for all the coworkers. This helps in building trust, and teachers become open with the principal. They, then, can have an open talk that solves many hidden issues and challenges. The principal should not be over-promising, "Gaf Laauney." The thing that you cannot do

should not be promised. This spoils the trust of the principal. S/he should be aware of the basic needs of the coworkers. In this respect, the first thing is that s/he has to ensure that the financial facility and the remuneration provided to the teachers can meet their basic needs. I am making a big effort to improve the financial situation of the organization. After all, retention can be achieved through employee satisfaction. The satisfaction is achieved basically from two things: Growth and Financial Conformity. Growth means academic and professional growth. The learning environment they get through their profession keeps them happy in their profession. Teachers become happy when they get such opportunities. This happiness results in their retention. Similarly, teachers should not have any tension in managing food, educating children, transportation, and health due to the scarcity of financial resources received from their profession. The school should manage to address such needs through salaries and other policies like insurance, so that they can be free from the tension arising from basic needs. This causes job satisfaction that ultimately results in retention.

Participation in decision-making and little freedom in working gives ownership to the coworkers, and they feel that they are important members of the organization. There was a helper in my third school who used to be asked how the school would look better instead of being instructed to do this and that work. I used to ask him if everything was fine. He was free to decide what flower to plant and what shape to cut the hedge. He used to be called to discuss and make decisions for organizing school events. He found himself important in the school. He worked till his last breath there and always thought that it was his school. The ownership he gave me gave me confidence and motivation to work for a long time.

At least if you cannot provide sufficient financial facilities, sincere praise of the work performance can motivate teachers. In 1984, when I was teaching in a class, a District Education Officer came to observe our school as our school was near his office. After my class was over, he asked me where I had studied. Then he asked if I had studied to be a teacher. I replied 'Yes' and everybody around him laughed. Later, he explained why he was asking me so. He was impressed by my class. When I heard my appreciation from his mouth, I became happy and motivated. Those initial motivational events led me to work as a teacher throughout my life.

The principal has to introduce various strategies (or be strategic) to help the school have a better learning environment. This creates better performance, and that leads

to better results. Better results create better satisfaction, and the satisfaction leads to retention. There was a teacher who was frustrated after teaching for a couple of years. She approached the office with resignation. The reason was that her students could not progress, and there was a flood of complaints from parents. The job was like a burden for her. I felt she was seeking love and care like a child, and I tried to make her feel light, and many teachers are like that. I convinced her that it was our common work; she was not only responsible for that. I said you have progressed; you see where you are now; see your growth. Then, I planned to do something for the better performance of the students in the school at the principal's level. I introduced a strategy to reward those students who had increased their learning achievements by 10%. Obviously, 10% could be increased by only those who had secured below 50%. After rewarding the students securing 30-40%, they gradually increased their learning achievements, and finally, there was no one left below 50%. This strategy helped her continue her service at my school. She is still working.

One unofficial thing that I think is that teachers should be kept engaged in some work throughout the day. It is correctly said that the devil resides in empty minds. When teachers are free, they talk about unprofessional things, and this demotivates others from working sincerely. As a consequence, they leave school thinking that this job is meaningless. So, it is always better to keep them busy with professional work or activities where they can learn something. I remember this kind of event in a school. In that school, teachers used to sit in the sun during their leisure period and talk. Whatever they talked about used to come to my ear through others; their talks were unprofessional and irritating. Two staff members joined another school that was negative towards our school, too. Then I managed to engage my colleagues in planning, copy-checking, and making teaching aids. I prohibited them from sitting open in the sun and gossiping with each other. Later, I felt a peace in the school and felt everything going smoothly.

Hence, the principal should be aware of multiple components of teacher retention.

3. Mangsir 13, 2081. I am Sraddha Dewang (Pseudonym), principal of Golden Gate Academy, working for more than two decades. To retain teachers, there are some crucial aspects that the principal should be conscious of all the time. First of all, they should not be treated as workers who are paid to work. If they feel that they are like shareholders who can get better benefits and more facilities along with the progress of the

school, they are attached to the school and remain to work for the long term. So, my teachers are like my family members whom I care about as a guardian.

Last time, there was an accident occurred to one of my teachers. I stayed at the hospital for three days until he came to consciousness. I empathized with his wife, provided food, and the school paid all hospital expenses. His wife was expressing her grief about how she would manage everything because her husband would not be able to join school immediately. I promised the school would manage everything. He was given adequate sick leave and frequently asked if there was anything needed. I told her not to worry about financial aspects; her husband needed only care and love at that time, which she should give him at home. Her family felt that I was like a savior and a shield for her family. Later, though he did not completely recover, he returned to his job. I managed to give him little tasks and time to rest at school. His presence was meaningful to me. He said he remained alive due to the hope and support given by the school. He shared that his relatives and neighbors were admiring how caring the school was. Now, he feels he is a member of my family; I am sure he will stay here for a long time. I always attempt to let all my colleagues feel so, that I am a shield to protect them from any physical, social, or economic hazards. Now, they are confident that I am after them.

While telling so, she was both proud and concerned about her colleagues. While saying so, she focused on the guardianship of a principal required to retain teachers. She further said salary can be one aspect; however, it doesn't seem so in my case. Our school was small earlier and was not able to pay a good salary. Since then, the same teachers have been working. Now our school has been bigger with more than 1000 students and we are paying salaries more than the government's scale. If salary were the matter, they would have left the school when we were not able to pay handsome salaries. So, I think they expect love, self-respect, and ownership of the organization, which is what I am giving them. After all, we have paid for their time, not their sentiments.

However, sometimes due to the trend of going abroad, when someone resigns, I counsel them about the charm of working in their home country. Last time, one teacher came to the principal's room with a request to write a letter about his job experience and salary statement. I knew his intention behind such documents. I explained how people were struggling abroad, their suffering, their invested amount, their income, and their sense of dislocation in a foreign land. I told him about the importance of living in the home country, patriotism, and how much we have saved rather than how much we have

earned. Then he canceled his request for the documents; he has not asked any longer since then. Whatever, I said to him, I often have such kind of discussion in our weekly meetings. This has helped me retain teachers, too.

While recruiting, I judge the candidate through the point of view of attitude and durability. I focus on this aspect more than the written exam. If we have a good interview, we can easily recognize the intention and possible durability of the candidate. Secondly, I tell my colleagues that they are like my fingers that should join together to make a big fist, i.e., power. However, if anybody tries to have unnecessary gossip, I friendly warn them, telling them that “I have given my finger, if you try to pull it, I will unplug your hand.” Besides, I give maximum moral lessons on being a great teacher. I advise them on how we can be happy in our profession. For this, we have to find out where we can find happiness. In this way, I achieve my target by keeping them happy, motivated, and inspired.

4. Mangsir 19, 2081. I am Kristal Ojha, principal of Milan Academy. The topic you have selected for your research is very useful and relevant. Running private schools with teachers for the long term is challenging. Everybody is looking for secure employment. So, they are always seeking alternatives or trying to go abroad. However, we always try our best to retain teachers. We give them training opportunities, convince them that they are valuable in society, support them in their needs as a family, and so on. As a result, 50% of our teachers have worked for over 10 years. We can not block the rest of them-they are seeking other opportunities despite all our efforts. Those who have been working for the long term are mentally prepared to serve as teachers in their lives. The school has also provided them gratuity fund and increased grade allowance every year.

Once we planned to hire a mature teacher to coordinate school activities. We got one who had worked as the principal of a school. He was good at teaching as well. After working for an academic session, he started working at another school. We waited for him for a few days. Later, we noticed he had joined that school because of the higher wages offered by the school. We met him and talked about why he had betrayed us. He was speechless. The principal of the respective school apologized and stated that he had not been aware of his previous commitment to our school. Next year, he again approached us to work with us, but we refused. In this way, there are some teachers whose nature is always jumping from one school to another. They do not seem to feel the intimacy and emotional attachment with students.

However, for those who are working sincerely with us, we accept them as our family members. Once, our math teacher's mother fell sick. She was hospitalized and she was in serious condition. The hospital demanded one lakh fifty thousand rupees for treatment. He phoned me when I was on a trip to Palpa. He explained everything in a painful voice and told me that he had only fifty thousand rupees and he was worrying about one lakh rupees. I empathized with him and told him not to worry. I told him to go and stand at the school's gate where a man would come up with money. Though I was on the way, I called a friend to provide him with the money. The man went to the school gate and handed over one lakh rupees in half an hour. Finally, his mother got treatment in time and she is fine now. That math teacher is still working with us. He is always thankful to be a member of this caring school. He tells this story among other colleagues as well.

In this way, there are two types of colleagues in my school: those who are working as a family member, and the next who are always looking for alternatives or better opportunities.

5. Mangsir 20, 2081. I am Chiran Paudel, principal of Amarawoti School. I have been working for 8 years. Yes, we focus on different aspects like the working environment, counseling to teachers, support and concern, professional growth, guardianship, and commitments from teachers during the recruitment for the retention of teachers. For example, there are two teachers with us; they are students themselves. We have managed to support them so that they can continue both studying at University in the morning and teaching at school during the day. So, they attend school after the first bell. They are happy and say that the school has understood their need and has respected them for their career growth. We also give them leave during their semester's exams. On the other hand, we have started depositing 15% of the provident funds in the name of the teachers who have worked for more than five years. Grade allowance is also provided. As per the commitment, 90% of teachers have not left the school in the middle of the sessions; 10% are unavoidable. Self-respect is highly required for the retention of teachers.

We give a little fewer periods to old teachers.

Once, one teacher's son came from abroad; she wanted a few days of leave. We provided her. Now, she is so happy that she often says the school understands our needs; we don't need to worry.

One teacher had an accident and broke his hand. He needed one month's leave

for recovery. We provided. He has been working for seven years.

Once, one of our teachers was about to leave after another school offered him a better salary. I had a deep talk with him and negotiated how he would remain there. Then, with a little increment in the existing salary, though not the same as that another school had offered him, we managed to get him to continue his service at our school.

6. Mangsir 21, 2081. I am Shivam Bagale, principal of Sunshine Academy. I have been working as a principal for more than a decade, but it is my fourth year at this school. Teaching is a connection between Teachers and students. We do not teach subjects, curriculum, or texts; we teach students. A principal is connected with teachers; that means the principal is concerned with teachers' growth, needs, and demands for their retention.

Teacher retention is challenging at the lower secondary level. This is because teachers at this level usually have not finished their formal university education; they are more likely to move to other professions or schools once they finish their university degree. Teachers at the secondary and primary levels are more stable; secondary-level teachers have completed their university degrees, and primary teachers have left to continue their studies. On the other hand, primary teachers are less ambitious; they rarely jump from one school to another. Foreign employment can attract them; however, a little difference in salary makes no attraction to such teachers.

One thing I attempt to do is I try my best to let teachers feel or realize their responsibility and duty towards students. We often have meetings to talk about the morality and ethics of being teachers. We say that if other employers of other organizations leave, that will make no big difference because they have a relationship with production; but in teaching, there is a relationship with human beings. If a teacher leaves, it will disturb the emotional attachment with students. Moreover, we convince them to feel that the school is their second home and that students are their children.

To convince or to let them feel so, we lead. It is said that we have to run after animals to make them move or walk fast, but we have to run before human beings as a role model to lead them or to make them follow us.

However, sometimes other schools try to take our teachers by offering little better salary; but we convince them very professionally and remind them of their commitments and the ethics of being teachers as shared in the earlier meetings. But we do not increase salaries or negotiate remuneration in such cases to keep them continuing their

service at our school.

Sometimes, some teachers try to leave school after working for some years. We believe that how many years you have worked doesn't matter much; how many quality years you have experienced, rather, matter.

To retain teachers, we respect and honor the sentiments of teachers. We let them feel that we are all connected as a family. We prioritize keeping relations with their family with a due professional gap. We also prioritize enrolling our former students as teachers: they have more attachment to the organization and are likely to remain for a longer period.

There was a student who had achieved a black belt in Karate. We let him instruct other juniors to practice karate at the school. He did well. Later, after his +2 education, we enrolled him as a sports teacher. He has been happily working since then; he is more likely to stay for a longer period. If not former students are available, during the recruitment, we also analyze if the candidates are aware of the value of the teaching profession. Moreover, our concern remains to recognize if the candidates would like to work for a long period or not.

There are some unavoidable situations where teachers leave their jobs. For example, a visa accepted for foreign study or employment, marriage in another district, or a government job received. Besides them, we keenly care for the retention of teachers.

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- Main - 10k - ... 10k -

① Teacher not but not good 10k at return

* about expects - matter reduction

family - study 10k 10k 10k 10k 10k

10k

② Student Teacher - abroad with 10k

Family asked at 10k 10k 10k 10k

10k Teacher Training 10k 10k - 10k.

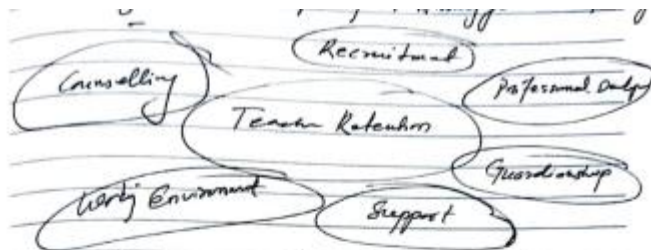
Sister Glimine Nampore

- 7 yrs 10k 10k
- 10k 10k 10k
- 10k 10k 10k
- 10k 10k 10k
- 10k 10k 10k

- 10k 10k 10k 10k 10k

- 10k 10k - 10k 10k 10k - balance.

- 10k 10k 10k 10k 10k 10k 10k

[illegible]

①- 4636 - 4637 exam 2nd - }
4638 1st semester exam - manage }
4639 College for 2nd - }

2) x वर - 2×10^4 वा 9×10^4 (मोटा कागद)
Grade System - 4×10^4 वा 9×10^4 (मोटा कागद)

⑧ Agreement - 90% follow - 10% unavoidable

⑨ self-respect - unless teachers have sense of ownership

⑥ Overload -
we give little less classes to old teacher.

① NO^- ଉପର ଉପର ସିଷ୍ଟମ ଦିଅ।

4) डाटा स्टोअर रीटर्न - व नरिनि विद्यार्थि