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Stakeholder Perspectives on Teacher Attrition in Private Early Childhood Schools in India

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2019

Abstract

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MA, University of Mumbai, 1998

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Teacher attrition is a problem that has consequences for children and schools in many countries; children are affected negatively both emotionally and intellectually, while schools suffer setbacks, such as financial stress and disruption of the learning environment. This multiple case study explored the perspectives of stakeholders in India regarding how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influenced students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and schools, as well as the factors that stakeholders identified as important for teacher retention in private early childhood education. The conceptual framework was Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. Data were collected through interviews with teachers and school leaders with at least 2 years of experience, and parents of children at affected schools. Twelve participants were selected via homogenous purposive sampling, with 4 in each group. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Results of data analysis showed that teacher attrition led to an increase in workload for the remaining teachers, causing mental and physical stress. Positive workplace relationships were needed to stem the problem. School leaders felt that teachers' salary should be commensurate with workload, while parents believed teacher contracts should include a minimum number of years of service required. Future research might focus on factors considered important to stemming teacher attrition such as flexible timetables, reduced workloads, and teaching independence. The study has implications for positive social change by providing insights to help policy makers and education leaders in India understand and possibly lessen the problem of teacher attrition.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate my achievement to my mother who has encouraged me whole-heartedly all through the years and helped me scale heights of success. I also dedicate this feat to my father who is no longer with us but whose blessings from his heavenly abode have given me strength to realize this journey successfully. Last but not the least, I dedicate this research study to my husband and daughter for supporting my endeavour with love and patience.

Acknowledgments

I am indeed fortunate to be blessed with a loving and supportive family that has been with me every step of the way as I have pursued my research study. My husband, Sandesh, has been a pillar of support and encouragement, and I thank him with all my heart for his positive words and unfailing inspiration, in spite of the rigid time commitments that have taken me away from many a familial duty. My daughter Anushka has been the smiling face beside me spreading positive vibes, and her unflinching faith in me has motivated me to strive to achieve this feat. My heartfelt gratitude goes to her, too. My thanks go to my mother, Susheela, for her immense confidence in me that has inspired me to complete this research study despite numerous hindrances that have befallen my path in these years. There have been major upheavals in my family situation in the entire period of this doctoral study, and it is only with the support of my family members that I have been able to complete the study successfully. My warm thanks to all.

Mention must also be made of my esteemed dissertation committee members for guiding me through the different levels of the research study with patience and support. My dissertation chair, Dr. Donna Brackin, has been the beacon that I have followed, and her advice, suggestions and words of wisdom meted out with laughter have aided me immensely in this long journey. Thanks also goes to Dr. Andrew Alexson for his suggestions regarding the methodology to be followed, and to Dr. Joel B. Goodin for his feedback as my University Research Reviewer. I extend my gratitude to schools that have been the base of my research, the participants of this study for their honest responses, and to my friend Sanghamitra for her support. I thank God for His blessings.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Teacher attrition is a major problem that assails educational systems worldwide in both developed and developing countries. This is evident from studies on teacher attrition, principally from developed countries (e.g., the United States, Australia, Canada, and Israel) that report high percentages of teachers leaving their jobs before the customary retirement age (Yinon & Orland-Barack, 2017). Scholars and stakeholders in many countries have sought to ascertain the extent of teacher attrition and its consequences, but reports contain incomplete data and contradictory information (Gray & Taie, 2015; Hanna & Pennington, 2015; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Mulkeen & Crowe-Taft, 2010; Pennington & Hanna as cited in Mason & Matas, 2015). Tiplic, Brandmo, and Elstad (2015) asserted that attrition is mostly seen in the early and late stages of teaching careers, following a U shape that reaches the highest points in the first 5 years of a teacher's career and then again near retirement age.

Researchers in the United States have reported that the percentage of teachers leaving their jobs 5 years after graduation from a teacher education program is between 30% and 50% (Hong, 2010; Ingersoll, 2001). In Australia, the rate is 30–40% (Ewing & Manuel, 2005; Milburn, 2011), and in the United Kingdom, the rate is 50%, although fewer than 40% enter the teaching profession immediately after graduating from the program (Espinoza, 2015). On the other end of the scale are countries like Hong Kong where reportedly only 4.8–5.0% of teachers leave their jobs early in their careers (McInerney, Ganotice, King, Marsh, & Morin, 2015). Another contradiction lies in turnover in other sectors, with some researchers reporting similar attrition rates to those

for teaching (Harris & Adams, 2007; Plunkett & Dyson, 2011) and others arguing that the attrition rates are much higher in the teaching profession (Ingersoll, 2001).

The effects of teacher attrition are negative for all involved: the students, the parents, the teachers, the institutions, and entire nations. Attrition has long been a source of concern for policymakers and educational professionals. The consequences range from loss of experienced teachers (Rinke & Mawhinney, 2017) to decreasing teacher inputs and financial burdens of as much as $1–2.2 billion per year (Alliance for Excellent Education [AEE], cited in Newberry & Allsop, 2017), and instructional and organizational disruption (Johnson & Kardos, as cited in Newberry & Allsop, 2017). For instance, teacher turnover carries significant fiscal impacts because schools must fund additional recruitment and carry out new hiring procedures, as well as provide professional development for new hires (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Laitsch, 2004). Chronic teacher turnover can negatively affect many factors, including class size, professional development, scheduling, collegiality, and curriculum planning, while also causing confusion and chaos to school operations and hindering student learning (Dee & Goldhaber, 2017; Laitsch, 2004).

The negative effects of teacher attrition on educational environments and students' education are matters of concern, yet there is little research on this topic in India. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders in India regarding how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools affects the students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and schools, as well as the factors that stakeholders identify as important for retaining teachers. The

study holds the potential for social change in terms of improving understanding of the conditions that facilitate a sustainable workforce in private early childhood education. The study findings contribute important insights into the teacher retention problem to help policy makers and educators in India understand, and possibly lessen, the problem of teacher attrition. In this chapter I present the study problem and background along with the research objectives, definitions of key terms used in the study, the conceptual framework, and limitations of the study. The data obtained in the study can be used to improve school conditions to facilitate both sustainable educational workforces and effective early childhood education.

Background

Instructional continuity—a major requirement for sustainably educating children—is the area most affected by teacher attrition. The exodus of teachers, often in the early stages of their careers, disrupts the smooth flow of instruction that occurs when children have the same teacher; this can lead to adverse effects on children's learning (Gallant & Riley, 2017; Newberry & Allsop, 2017).

Children's development, particularly of their personalities and social skills, is also hampered by the insecurity they face after the departure of a teacher with whom they had connected emotionally (Gallant & Riley, 2017; Newberry & Allsop, 2017). Emotional connection with a teacher leads to faith and trust, while sowing the seed for a positive relationship between teachers and students; high teacher attrition diminishes this sense of trust and attachment, leading to emotional turmoil (Ponder & Beaty, 2009). Thus, teacher

turnover is a key issue parents should ask about when evaluating early childhood education programs.

When one teacher leaves, it negatively affects the school's objectives and the remaining teachers' sense of collective responsibility, upsetting the learning environment. This is truer in recent times since the pressure to help children excel academically has become intense (Gallant & Riley, 2017; Towers & Maguire, 2017). The efficiency of school organizations as systems is disrupted when teachers leave; the teachers left behind often have no choice but to assume extra responsibilities to fill in the gaps. These responsibilities often become sufficiently burdensome that teachers can no longer manage even their own classes (Ponder & Beaty, 2009). High teacher turnover forces school administrators to hire novice, inexperienced teachers, which has a direct adverse effect on children's learning (Gallant & Riley, 2017).

Researchers have indicated that apart from the students, stakeholders such as teachers and principals are also negatively affected by teacher attrition (Newberry & Allsop, 2017; Ponder & Beaty, 2009). However, there is a gap in the research regarding this effect. As Laitsch (2004) noted, while the effect on students of teachers leaving is well documented, the system-wide impacts of high teacher turnover on school staff and community health and relationships between stakeholders is often overlooked. An even larger gap in research exists regarding the causes and influence of teacher attrition in India, given that most of the available research on this topic has been contributed from Western countries with little research specific to the Indian experience.

Data from research based in Western countries may not be relevant to India. Thus, my aim in this study was to add relevant findings from India to those from Western countries by analyzing the situation in Mumbai. Through my examination of the perspectives of participants on the influence of teacher attrition, this study might contribute important insights into teacher attrition that could guide policymakers and educators in India in understanding and perhaps lessening the problem.

Problem Statement

Teachers are the foundation of good early childhood education. Continuous changes in teachers negatively affect children, teachers, and school leaders (Buchanan et al., 2013; Elango, García, Heckman, & Hojman, 2015). For instance, when teachers leave, it affects children's language and vocabulary skills as well as their emotional stability (Wells, 2015). Teacher attrition also negatively impacts the effectiveness of the school as an integrated system, disrupting the learning environment and educational outcomes (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Attrition often leads to increased workloads among teachers as well as reduced morale (Gallant & Riley, 2017; Towers & Maguire, 2017), and families are affected because they know that their children's learning and development are being negatively affected by attrition.

Teacher attrition has led to a paucity of teachers in many countries (Brok, Wubbels, & Tartwijk, 2017; Cowan, Goldhaber, Hayes, & Theobald, 2016; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2012; With, 2017). Literature on attrition has shown that between 5% and 50% of teachers leave the profession, with the highest prevalence among young teachers (Harfitt, 2014). Many countries have given

priority status to the problem in their education research and policy framing (Ingersoll, Merrill, & May, 2014).

At the local level, teacher attrition is the result of various causes including low salaries, lack of professional status, work stress, and limited career development opportunities (Buchanan et al., 2013; Lynch, 2012). The negative effects of teacher attrition are not limited to students; stakeholders such as teachers and school principals are also negatively affected (Newberry & Allsop, 2017; Ponder & Beaty, 2009). Moreover, as Laitsch (2004) noted, the system-wide impacts of high teacher turnover such as on school health (among staff and in the larger community) and relationships between stakeholders are often overlooked.

The problem is that current studies on teacher attrition have been conducted mainly in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and Australia (Pek-Greer & Wallace, 2017), but there is still little research on the causes and influences of teacher attrition in India. A handful of researchers have addressed the quality of instruction and outcomes between public and private education in India (Kingdon, 2007; World Bank, 2016), as well as the current state of early childhood education as a field (Chandra, 2016; Reetu, Renu, & Adarsh, 2017). However, there is no literature on the outcomes of teacher attrition in early childhood education, specifically in private schools in the Indian context. The gap in the literature on practice is therefore the absence of validated practices that have been shown to help reduce attrition among teachers in early childhood education in Mumbai.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders in India regarding how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences the students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and the schools, as well as the factors that stakeholders identify as important to retain teachers. To obtain the study data, I interviewed 12 (four each from three separate schools) teachers, school leaders, and parents of children at schools affected by teacher attrition. The data from this study could improve understanding of the conditions that facilitate a sustainable workforce in private early childhood schools and more effective private early childhood education. The study could also contribute important insights to help policy makers and education leaders in India understand, and possibly lessen, the problem of teacher attrition.

Research Questions

I developed the following research questions (RQs) for this study:

RQ1: What are the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders on how attrition influences the teachers, parents, school leaders, resources, and operations of private early childhood schools?

RQ2: What are the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders on how attrition influences students' development and achievement in private early childhood schools?

RQ3: What factors do teachers, parents, and school leaders identify as important for retaining teachers in private early childhood schools?

Conceptual Framework

The ecological systems theory (EST), as developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), divides the environment of early childhood development into four systems, one within the other. The systems proceed from the innermost realm to the outermost segment, with each connected to the other. Bronfenbrenner postulated that human development takes place within a nested set of environmental systems: micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems. The systems have a direct link to children's development and teachers' job retention or attrition. The systems are arranged in a hierarchical order, distinguishing between levels of the system as they relate to the immediate surrounding of the child or teacher, and then extending to the outer realms surrounding them. In the case of my study, I used Bronfenbrenner's (1992) EST to understand the influence of teacher attrition on teachers, parents, school leaders, and students in private early childhood schools in India (microsystems).

The microsystem, which is the innermost level, comprises the patterns of activities, interpersonal relations, and roles experienced by developing individuals in a given setting with specific material and physical characteristics (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017). In the context of early childhood development, the microsystem is the layer of influence closest to the child; it involves structures that the child has direct contact with such as family, childcare environment, school, and neighborhood (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). The interactions between children's biology and their immediate family and community environments, as well as societal landscapes, influence their development (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017).

The schools where the participants in this study were located represent components of microsystems with which young children interact at this crucial stage of human development. This system includes the teachers and administrators who have responsibility for children while they are at school. Participants' insights from the microsystem offered the best insights into how children are affected by attrition at their school.

The mesosystem is the layer that connects the structures in the microsystem (Paquette & Ryan, 2001) such as between parents, school leaders, and teachers. I believe that the mesosystem level encompassed all the stakeholders involved most closely with the study. Children bring their experiences from their home and broader school environment into the classroom. Examining the mesosystem level allowed the opportunity to capture experiences outside of the classroom that affect children around the topic of teacher attrition.

The outer two levels of systems, the exosystem and the macrosystem, are secondary in this research. The exosystem includes friends, family, or the community the school is located within, and involves a much larger sphere of influence that would be difficult to investigate here. In addition, it is harder to find a direct correlation between teacher attrition and the exosystem.

I referred to the macrosystem briefly because the broader context of Indian society, including the current iterations of policy related to teaching (Anand & McKenney, 2015; Terway & Steiner-Kamsi, 2018), early childhood education (Chandra, 2016; Reetu, Renu, & Adarsh, 2017), and government oversight of education (Kaur,

2017) are relevant to this research. However, this information is included as background to the study, and not as an area that participants spent any substantial amount of time discussing in their interviews. We can assume that the culture of the school is impacted by policies and other governmental actions, which would impact all stakeholders in the school.

Bronfenbrenner's theory (1992), therefore, constitutes an appropriate lens through which to examine the influence of teacher attrition on the private early childhood education setting because both the micro- and mesosystems of the child are affected by teacher attrition (Paquette & Ryan, 2001). The essential quality of any component resides not in that component as an independent unit, but rather in the relationships that exist across the whole system. This emphasizes embeddedness within systems (Härkönen, 2002).

Nature of the Study

With this study, my purpose was to explore the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders in India regarding how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences the students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and the school, as well as the factors that stakeholders identify as important to retain teachers. I also sought to identify the factors the participants believed would contribute to improving teacher retention. According to Creswell (2013), researchers use qualitative methods to delve into social difficulties and understand their components, triggers, and connotations. This form of research is suitable when a researcher is studying the natural setting of an event or phenomenon and involves collecting qualitative data such as pictures and words. For this

case study, I interviewed relevant school stakeholders and used their interview responses as my qualitative data source.

A quantitative methodology was not appropriate for this study because it entails measuring and analyzing cause-and-effect relationships and making inferences for broad populations based on sample results (Maxwell, 2005; Robson, 2002). With this study, I did not seek to measure causes and effects of teacher attrition but to understand its influences by generating meaning from the perspectives of teachers, school leaders, and parents, including the factors they perceived as important for teacher retention. Rather than using quantitative methods, I conducted a qualitative study via one-on-one semi-structured interviews with a sample of 12 early childhood education stakeholders (four teachers, four school leaders, and four parents). In our interviews, I explored stakeholders' perspectives on the influence of teacher attrition in private early childhood schools in India, as well as the factors that stakeholders identified as important to retain teachers. The data analysis plan for this study was thematic analysis (see Houghton et al., 2015).

Definitions

Teacher turnover: This is a broad term describing the rates at which teachers leave employment in a school for reasons other than retirement, health challenges, or similar issues. There are three components of teacher turnover: area transfer (such as teachers changing their subject areas), migration (when teachers move from one school to another), and attrition (Mäkelä, Hirvensalo, Laakso, & Whipp, 2014).

Teacher attrition: Unlike teacher migration or area transfer, teacher attrition refers to the phenomena where teachers leave the teaching profession completely (Mäkelä et al., 2014). Teacher attrition is the focus of this study.

Early childhood education: Early childhood care and education (ECCE) generally defined as the care and education of children from birth to 8 years (Reetu et al., 2017). In India ECCE includes (a) early stimulation programs through crèches/homes stimulation for 0 to 3 year olds; (b) early childhood education (ECE) programs for 3-6 year olds (as seen in anganwadis, balwadis, nurseries, preschools, kindergartens, preparatory schools, etc.); and (c) early primary education programs as part of schooling for 6-8 year olds. It follows a play-based developmentally appropriate program and focuses on all-round development of the child by providing activities, experiences and opportunities for cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical and motor development. Under quality early childhood education program, age and developmentally appropriate activities related to different aspects of child development and school readiness are provided in an innovative and flexible manner to prepare young children for the primary grades in a stress free, enabling, and stimulating environment (Soni & Sangai, 2014).

Stakeholders: Stakeholders in education consist of teachers, students, parents, and any other individual that has a vested interest in the wellbeing and success of a student. Although these individuals have different motives, they often share similar outcomes of student achievement (Janmaat, 2016).

Assumptions

Assumptions are claims that researchers infer to be true but cannot verify (Schoenung & Dikova, 2016). My first assumption was that participants would answer the interview questions in an honest and candid manner. I assumed that participants are interested in contributing to the betterment of the school. My second assumption was that participants participated because they genuinely desired to contribute to the study and not because they wished to please the school administration or so that their children in the school would receive special favors. Participant interest in the study and desire to contribute are imperative to the validity of the data collected. My third assumption was that all participants had faced turnover in the education sector to some degree and had been affected by it in some way. Having experienced attrition, their answers would come out of personal experiences that are genuine and therefore, add depth to the study. The fourth assumption was that the school management would be supportive of the study, as such a study would be to the advantage of the specific school that is facing teacher attrition. This was assumed with the hopes that the results of the study might initiate and facilitate positive measures to solve the problem.

Scope and Delimitations

There have been numerous studies on teacher attrition, but these have largely been conducted in Western countries including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, among others. Such studies on teacher attrition are rare in Asian countries and contexts (Pek-Greer & Wallace, 2017), and in India specifically (Anand & McKenney, 2015). Similarly, most teacher attrition researchers have focused on causes

rather than examining stakeholders' perspectives on the influences of teacher attrition, particularly in early childhood education.

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge needed to address these gaps by focusing on privately owned and operated early childhood schools in Mumbai, India. I explored the participants' perspectives regarding how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and the schools as a whole. I then identified the factors that stakeholders identified as important to retain teachers. For the study, I restricted participants to teachers and school leaders at urban private early childhood schools in Mumbai who had been in service at the specific school for at least 2 years. I limited parent participation to those whose children were enrolled in the schools at the time of the study, choosing one person each from the four schools where the study was conducted. The primary reason for choosing these participants was that these individuals had experienced the effects of teacher attrition personally in some way, and thus should have more data to share.

Theorists have used the human capital theory framework to analyze individuals' career and workplaces choices, propounding that people weigh the advantages and drawbacks of the decisions they make (Yadav, Trivedi, Kumar, & Rangneka, 2018). In choosing careers and workplaces, teachers consider various factors such as working conditions, preparation programs, possible job stressors, mentoring, and their preferred school levels and types (Yadav et al., 2018).

Another framework from current literature was the burnout theory. O'Hair and Kreps (2013) defined burnout in terms of everyday negative events as job stressors. The

theory comprises multiple stages, the first of which is emotional exhaustion. In the school context, teachers might feel overwhelmed and frustrated while working in unpleasant environments, such as for school administrators who do not appreciate and support them. Depersonalization is the second stage of burnout theory; it refers to feeling disconnected from other people (O'Hair & Kreps, 2013). In schools, if administrators do not support teachers, teachers might become frustrated and discouraged and cease to trust their school leaders. Lack of personal achievement is the third stage of burnout theory; here, teachers become less productive, see few successes because they are not meeting their requirements, and hence feel progressive dissatisfaction (O'Hair & Kreps, 2013). Not all teachers who quit their professions do so because of burnout.

Data Validation Process

In order to ensure the highest level of data validity, I used transcript review and member checking. I provided each study participant with a copy of his or her interview transcript so that each could review their respective transcripts for accuracy. Later, participants reviewed a summary of findings and conducted member checking by examining the themes that emerged from the data and checking for accuracy. I attempted to minimize subjective bias by ensuring that I collected data accurately and analyzed it carefully. I recorded my notes and thoughts in a reflective journal during the interviews, which helped to deter me from making interjections or comments during participants' responses.

I also employed peer debriefing to enhance credibility and validity. The peer reviewer has experience in the school system spanning 2 decades working and holds a

doctorate in education with a specialization in curriculum development. I performed peer debriefing, as described by Creswell (2013), via an in-depth discussion with the peer debriefer regarding data that emerged from interviews. The peer debriefer had multiple responsibilities. She not only evaluated my coding of the research data, but also ensured that there was no bias in my analysis. Her efforts lay in adding credibility to the research results by ensuring that it is consistent, dependable, and trustworthy. She approved the data labels I sent, as well as the reasons and logic that led to the framing of these labels.

Limitations

However honestly and sincerely done, any study has limitations. This means accepting that all research studies present circumstances that are beyond the control of the researcher (Yin, 2013). Proper interpretation and suitable use of the results of a study are only possible if the limitations are recognized and the reasons for these understood. The following are the limitations of this study.

First, the inherent nature of the case study design could be considered a limitation of the study regarding transferability. Because the study involved one specific setting, as case studies generally do, transferability to other settings cannot be assumed. Second, I conducted each interview for only an hour for the convenience of the participants, which may not have been enough for in-depth question-answer sessions for all participants. It is possible that the level of richness of the data from these individuals might be considered a limitation. All participants were informed that they had the option of sending in further information via email after the interviews, if they wished to do so. Third, it is possible that responses from participants do not reflect the total truth i. Although I reiterated

throughout the interviews that it was imperative for participants to speak honestly and respond to the questions truthfully, this may not have been the case. Perceptions do not always reflect facts (Neuman, 2009). Fourth, simply completing a pilot testing, as described in Chapter 3, is not a guarantee of the success of the instrument. A subject matter expert evaluated the questions to establish the sufficiency of the data collection instrument to answer research questions. The subject matter expert held a PhD in social sciences.

A final limitation came from the working relationship between the researcher and participants. The study depended on self-reports by the participants without interference from me. Qualitative studies may also be subject to bias from the researcher, and a truthful study requires that the researcher present research data and findings without allowing personal biases, opinions, or experiences to cloud the interpretations (Malterud, 2001). I held the position of school director and faced the risk that participants could be persons I had worked with or even supervised. As a result, participants could have been inclined to respond how they thought I wanted them to respond. All participants were assured they could answer honestly and that truthful answers were desired.

Significance

The negative effects of teacher attrition are comprehensive and associated with long-term consequences for children and educational systems (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Lindqvist, Nordänger, & Carlsson, 2014). For children, these impacts can be devastating due to disruptions to development and lack of skills to cope with loss (Cumming, Sumsion, & Wong, 2015). With this study, I attempted to

understand the influences of the phenomenon of teacher attrition on private early childhood schools as systems and potentially pave the way for more studies on the subject. The data obtained from the study may improve researchers' understanding of the conditions that facilitate a sustainable workforce in private early childhood schools and more effective private early childhood education.

There are currently no studies examining teacher attrition in India with a focus on private early childhood schools; most of the available literature on the subject has been contributed by researchers from other countries. Thus, this study will contribute to filling this gap in the literature on practice in the Indian context; impacts of teacher attrition in India on students' development, teachers, school leaders, and schools as integrated systems may differ from impacts in other countries due to different cultural, economic, and societal variables.

Similarly, strategies to address teacher attrition in private early childhood schools in other countries might not be as effective in the Indian context. While important lessons and insights can be gained from other countries, educators and policymakers need to understand the dimensions of phenomena in their local contexts in order to plan effective solutions. This study's findings could contribute important insights to the problem and help policy makers and education leaders in India understand and possibly lessen the problem of teacher attrition. This research may become a resource for educational entities that serve urban private early childhood schools and could be used to combat teacher attrition on their campuses. This study could fill gaps in literature on teacher attrition in early childhood schools, with specific reference to South Asian countries.

Moreover, the study could potentially be applied in other countries and help practitioners employ strategies to reduce teacher attrition. The most significant positive contribution this study can make towards social change is to foster an environment in which teachers are treated like professionals by their school management. In such an environment, teachers are respected, supported, and given opportunities to grow, which can decrease teacher attrition in India. This could inspire teachers to translate their positive energy into effective classroom instruction, which could help early childhood schools to improve sustainability and to promote organizational growth and profitability.

Summary

Teacher attrition has substantial negative effects on all stakeholders: from students to parents, teachers, school leaders, and schools themselves to whole nations. Studies on the topic have been conducted in Western countries (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Dee & Goldhaber, 2017; Price & McCallum, 2015), but the problem exists on a large scale in India as well. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore participants' perspectives on how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences the school staff, parents, and school leaders as well as the schools themselves and their communities. The setting for the study was four preschools in Mumbai, India. I collected data from semi-structured interviews with 12 participants (four teachers, four school leaders, and four parents). I performed thematic content analysis to identify which groups valued which factors for decreasing teacher attrition in private early childhood schools in India.

This study will contribute to the body of knowledge needed to address the problem of teacher attrition in early childhood schools in Mumbai, India. The study focused on stakeholders' perspectives on how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influenced the students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and the schools as well as their perspectives on what is needed to retain teachers. The next chapter is the literature review for this study; in the chapter, I explored in-depth the conceptual framework for the study, as well as empirical and theoretical literature regarding the research topic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Teachers are central to providing quality education, and therefore, high teacher attrition rates are a concern for schools, governments, and policymakers (Béteille et al., 2012). Teacher turnover cannot be entirely avoided, and in fact, it has some benefits, such as integrating multiple generations of teachers into a teaching staff; however, excessive loss of staff is detrimental to organizations. The problem is that high teacher turnover is detrimental to schools (Béteille et al., 2012; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013), affecting the effectiveness of schools as integrated systems, disrupting learning environments, and educational outcomes (Cumming et al., 2015; Gallant & Riley, 2017; Towers & Maguire, 2017).

In early childhood education, the influence of attrition on students is even more severe because teachers' leaving negatively affects children's development (Buchanan et al., 2013; Wells, 2015). Specifically, teachers' leaving affects children's language and vocabulary skills as well as their emotional stability (Wells, 2015). This study explored the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders in India regarding how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences the students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and the school, as well as the factors that stakeholders identify as important to retain teachers. My aim was to understand the influence of teacher attrition in private early childhood schools in order to explore ways to possibly alleviate it.

In this literature review, I present the concepts and variables that are important for understanding the matter of teacher attrition. From the literature review and conceptual framework, three themes emerged: how teacher attrition affects students in early private

early childhood schools; how attrition affects teachers, parents, school leaders, and private early childhood schools; and factors that influence teacher retention. These themes informed the research questions I developed for this study.

I first present the literature search strategy, followed by the conceptual framework for the study. I then discuss the literature related to key variables, as well as an overview of the consequences of teacher attrition in early childhood schools.

Literature Search Strategy

The literature search strategy involved in-depth searches for recent literature on teacher attrition in databases such as Google Scholar, Sage, ProQuest, PsycINFO, JSTOR, and ERIC. I collected articles on the topic in journals and periodicals to gain deeper insight regarding the prominent causes and effects of teacher attrition. I also perused databases like Annie Casey, Bloomsbury, Childcare and Education, Child Stats, CQ Researcher, Kaiser, Nami, Project Muse, Psychinfo, and Soc Index, among others, but none of them yielded valid additional research to include in my review. I had perused peer-reviewed journals published by Taylor Francis, ProQuest, Sage DOAJ, Academic Search Complete and UNESCO, and while I found newer research articles related to teacher attrition, upon studying them closely, I found that all of them dealt with teacher attrition with reference to specific subjects like mathematics, science, rural schools, special education, and so on; none were related to early childhood education, which is my area of study. Perusing articles from Teacher Reference Centre also did not produce additional data for my research as it has no specific articles related to the topic of my

study. Taken together, the dearth of literature shows there is a need for this research, with a focus on early childhood teacher attrition.

The search process was enhanced through using key words and related phrases such as *early childhood teachers*, *teacher attrition*, *turnover in early childhood education*, *exit of teachers*, and *novice teachers*. I only included the materials I deemed most relevant for this study (based on content, language of publication [English], and date of publication). I considered both primary and secondary sources, excluding articles that were not relevant to the teaching profession, articles older than 5 years, and papers published in non-peer-reviewed journals. I did include reference materials and studies conducted longer than five years ago if these provided important contributions to the topic.

Conceptual Framework

Teacher attrition refers to the phenomenon of teachers leaving the profession entirely (Mäkelä et al., 2014); periodic attrition among teachers can be positive and may or may not affect schools in a significant manner. However, high levels of teacher attrition constitute an important problem for schools and school leaders. There are many theories that attempt to explain why this problem occurs, as well as its effects on the stakeholders and on schools as integrated systems. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) EST is perhaps the most widely known theoretical framework in human development. As I describe in the next section, this theory benefitted my study because it provided greater context and foundation to the research problem and understanding teacher attrition.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's EST guided this study. EST has made a seminal contribution to the understanding of the context and processes through which child development takes place (Houston, 2015). Bronfenbrenner explained that he developed the theory not to examine "the forces that have shaped human development in the past, but . . . those that may already be operating today to influence what human beings may became tomorrow" (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000, p. 117). He revised the original EST in 2006 to a bioecological systems theory in order to acknowledge the active role that individuals themselves play in the development process (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). The theory proposes that child development occurs within nested levels or interrelated systems of the environment: the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017; Jenkins, 2014). As indicated by the names, the levels range from the smaller microsystem to the larger and distal macrosystem, often represented graphically as a nested set of concentric circles, shown in Figure 1.

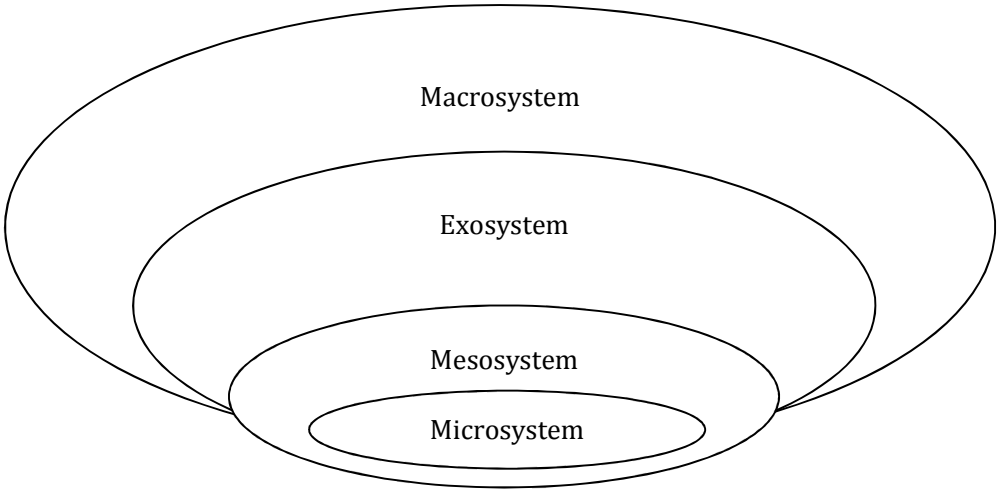

Figure 1. Nested Model of Micro-, Meso-, Exo-, and Macrosytems of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems adapted from Ettekal, A., & Mahoney, J. (2017). Ecological systems theory. In K. Peppler (Ed.), *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Out-of-School Learning.* SAGE Publications. p. 3

Microsystem. The most proximal ecological system is the microsystem. This is the interior level, and it encompasses the social relationships, actions, and roles that growing children experience in their unique settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1992; Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017). Children spend the majority of their time in microsystems with their families, caregivers, and fellow students; attachments and strong bonds are formed at the micro level. The microsystem is also where children develop secure identities, and learn socialization and morality. In the context of early childhood education, the microsystem affects children's development the most because it includes the people who are closest to them: in their families, at their schools, and in their neighborhoods. There is considerable research on the ties between children's home life, especially in their early years, and their

development, which can be considered in relation to social-emotional, cognitive, and academic development.

Building on EST, Galindo and Sheldon (2012) stressed the importance of home and school in the learning progress and development of early age children. Cognitive development, as well as children's behavioral patterns, depend on how they relate with each of these settings, how these settings interact with each other, and how information passes from one setting to another and vice versa for the benefit of children. The authors pointed out the proven advantage of roping in the influences of the home with active participation of family members in school activities with the assertion that children whose families are engaged with their wards' school endeavour display high achievement levels in reading and mathematics at the end of preschool.

Hampden-Thompson and Galindo (2017) emphasized the positive role played by family and school in the academic growth and development of children. The two settings and the constructive interactions between them are the main factors that lead to children's educational accomplishments. Home and school are the two settings closest to children, and the opinion of their family members regarding their school and its teachers, and how positively they interact with them, are key factors in their development. Family members who collaborate with their children's schools derive satisfaction from knowing that their children are in competent hands, and their optimism rubs off on the children, who fare better on the academic scale.

Newland (2015) drew a relationship between the child and his family, stating that a child is comfortable, healthy, and happy if his family reflects the same feelings. This

base of family well-being (FWB) is essential for a child to reflect the same feeling of well-being. Based on EST (Bronfenbrenner, 1989), this study elaborates on the importance of the microsystem, which is the family, on the attitude and feelings of children, as well as the importance of the related variables.

Children's development is negatively affected when their environments are typified by domestic violence, unpredictability, disrupted attachment, and poor socialization (Trach, Lee, & Hymel, 2018). A congenial relationship between a teacher and students works wonders for the student's social and emotional growth. A child's development into a healthy and happy individual requires the support of the teacher (Trach et al., 2018), and children with behavioral problems are no exception. A child who displays problematic behavioral symptoms from early childhood fails to form a bond with his teacher; rather, their relationship is rife with conflicts and unpleasantness, which in turn takes a toll on the educational performance and social outcomes of the child in the long run (Trach et al., 2018). This is similar to the healing power of a positive relationship between a therapist and a patient suffering from mental health issues cannot be undermined. This relationship has often proven to be more effective than the medical treatment given (Trach et al., 2018).

Private early childhood education schools, the setting for this study, are components of children's microsystems; the school microsystem comprises the teachers and other staff who are responsible for children while they are at school, and school relationships are focal in early childhood.

The microsystem for the teacher is the classroom, just as the microsystem for the child is his family (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The teacher's microsystem is linked to the requirements of the teacher such as curriculum and instruction. This classroom, which lies at the core of the teaching process, may contain aspects that may be unfavourable to teachers and thus lead to teacher attrition (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2004; Levine, 2006).

Mesosystem. The next ecological system moving outward is the mesosystem; this system is positioned between the microsystem and the exosystem and thus includes processes from multiple levels of development, making it significant (Jenkins, 2014). The ecological systems interact with each other; what happens at one level affects other levels.

The interactions between the various layers at the mesosystem level work together to provide meaning, structure, stimulation, and purpose for children, with differing impacts depending on a multitude of factors; for instance, children's mesosystems might encompass weak relationships or the absence of necessary intimate connections, which can affect developmental outcomes (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017; Houston, 2015). In the context of this study, the mesosystem is the layer that connects the individual microsystems of parents, school leaders, and teachers, making this level relevant for understanding the influence of teacher attrition on children.

When teachers venture out of the microsystem, which is the classroom, they enter the mesosystem—the school campus beyond the classroom— where s/he communicates with fellow teachers and other staff. Just like the microsystem, the mesosystem contains

aspects that may be unfavourable to teachers and can lead to teacher attrition (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2004; Levine, 2006).

Exosystem. The next level in ecological systems theory, the exosystem affects children indirectly. Children's development at this level is affected indirectly by the influence of other people in their lives (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017; Jenkins, 2014). Exosystems do not encompass children's immediate milieus; for example, social service departments are an exosystem for children whose parents use welfare services. In the education context, a parent working excessive hours might not pay enough attention to the needs of their children, including their progress at school (Houston, 2015). The exosystem exerts an influence on the child's microsystem. For the teacher, the exosystem includes the school board, since the decisions taken by this board affect the working of the school and the practices followed there (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Macrosystem. This level is defined as the overarching set of values, norms, and beliefs under which children develop; these elements are based on the religious, socioeconomic, and cultural organization of societies. This ecological system affects development within the other systems and serves as a lens through which individuals understand and interpret their future experiences (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017; Jenkins, 2014). For example, social class is an important macrosystem that influences the quality of education parents can afford, for example (Houston, 2014). From the foregoing review, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is an important lens through which to understand the influence of teacher attrition on children and teachers in the early childhood education setting, particularly at the microsystem and mesosystem levels.

Ecological systems theory has been used by many researchers to provide a framework for investigating issues of many different kinds. Cole (2016) used it in the field of developmental psychology to identify how life changes individually, while Feinstein, Driving-Hawk, and Baartman (2009) used it to examine individuality within a culture. The theory has also been used extensively by others in the field of education to identify how students learn differently (Fuqua, Hegland, & Karas, 1985; Kung & Lee, 2016) and to explain policy impact (Boon, 2015; Brady, Duffy, Hazelkorn, & Bucholz, 2014). There are also numerous other studies that draw on EST to analyze the role of teachers (Miller, Brownell, & Smith, 1999; Williams, Sheridan, & Sandberg, 2014). It is this wide set of previous research that encouraged me to choose the theory for this specific research study.

Still others have used Bronfenbrenner's EST to investigate teacher perceptions and interactions (Oswald & de Villiers, 2013; Price & McCallum, 2015). For example, Tudge, Merçon-Vargas, Liang, and Payir (2017) applied Bronfenbrenner's theory to the early childhood education context specifically, examining the role of the teacher in advancing children's development. According to Tudge et al. (2017),

> To the extent to which teachers are motivated to encourage challenges and persistent enough to ensure that it will happen, they are more likely to achieve enhanced development on the children's part. Each of the teachers' three main types of person characteristics is important here. There are the teacher's demand characteristics: those that the children first notice when they enter the classroom for the first time. There are her resource characteristics, such as the extent of

> experience she has teaching this age group. And there are her force characteristics, such as her motivation to establish positive and developmentally appropriate activities and interactions between her and her children, and among the children themselves. (p. 52)

It is evident that teachers have a major role in development of children, and it is imperative that each teacher use her resource, demand, and force characteristics prudently to guide children in positive ways for their future success.

In the context of this study, the early childhood education classroom is embedded in the school as a system. Systems can be controlled or uncontrolled. In controlled systems, changes are based on information; there are rules that guide the system, and there are means through which transactions are made within the system (O'Kane, 2015; Shaked & Schechter, 2017), and the entire system is maintained at equilibrium through transactions and communication. In designing curriculum activities, the whole school has to be considered. For example, it is important to consider teachers' workloads—time for administrative duties, school activities, and so on—when looking at the problem of teacher attrition as a whole. In their research on teacher well-being in Australia, Price and McCallum (2015) commented on the interconnectedness of various parts of the system. They stated:

> Working in partnership, a number of significant others can promote respectful working relationships, support networks, access to resources, and environments conducive to quality teaching. Professional learning communities can support graduating teachers as they transition to diverse school settings, such as rural,

> remote, hard-to-staff, and special education sites. Being valued as a member of a community also promotes increased engagement, participation, effort, and creativity, thus enhancing the quality of collective outputs and achievements. (p. 198)

In other words, the system requires integration and coordination of all its components or subsystems as they interact with each other (Porter & Cordoba, 2008; Shaked & Schechter, 2017).

The education system's many subsystems have to be well integrated for the school to achieve its goals. The learning experience subsystem of the school involves students' cognitive information processing; the instructional subsystem is the arena where teachers operate primarily (Trach et al., 2018; Tudge et al., 2017); the administrative subsystem encompasses all the administrative functions carried out by the school; and the governance subsystem may include the leadership at the policy and community levels including students' parents (Laitsch, 2004; Porter & Cordoba, 2008). The loss of teachers in private early education schools affects the learning experience, instructional, administrative, and governance subsystems.

Systems may be assessed using three approaches: holistic, reductionist, and functionalist (O'Kane, 2015; Shaked & Schechter, 2017). The holistic approach looks at the system as a complete unit, the reductionist approach investigates the subsystems, and the functional approach looks at the functions of the system. The interconnectedness between the subsystems should be acknowledged (O'Kane, 2015; Shaked & Schechter, 2017). In examining the influence of teacher attrition in early childhood education for this

study, it is important to examine the issue from holist, functionalist, as well as reductionist perspectives. Obtaining these perspectives may provide comprehensive and insightful examination of data that can be applied towards understanding the problem of teacher attrition in the early childhood schools in India.

Teacher Attrition

Description and Scope. Teacher turnover is a broad concept that has three components: teacher migration (moving from one school to another), area transfer (changing subject areas), and attrition (leaving the profession entirely) (Mäkelä et al., 2014). This characterization draws parallels with Luekens, Lyter, Fox, and Chandler (2004), who described teacher turnover in terms of the "stayers, the movers, and the leavers" (p. 1). While stayers remain in the profession and in the same school despite challenges, movers leave their jobs at specific schools to teach at other schools, and leavers leave the field entirely. The focus of this study was teacher attrition defined as teachers leaving the profession entirely, or leavers.

Teacher attrition constitutes an economic, educational, and social concern in many countries (Atteberry, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2017; Long et al., 2012). Unlike in the industrial and corporate sectors, where the positive and negative ramifications have been largely analyzed and ascertained (e.g., Meier & Hicklin, 2007; Mueller & Price, 1990; Price cited in Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzvosky, 2016), data on teacher attrition in the academic sector is relatively difficult to find. Miller and Chait (2008) described teacher attrition as educators choosing to leave the teaching profession for work that might or might not be related to education. attrition can be expected or unexpected, temporary or

permanent (Egu, Wuju, & Chionye, 2011). Temporary attrition occurs when teachers leave, for instance, to complete higher studies or start a family, and then return, whereas permanent teacher attrition reflects teachers' leaving the profession entirely (UNESCO, 2006). A major reason for teacher attrition has been found to be teacher discontent arising out of mesosystem-level issues, such as lack of support from school authorities, stress related to test-based accountability, and dissatisfaction with the salary as well as microsystem factors, such as considering the teaching profession as a disagreeable career option.

The largest share of available data is from the United States (Levy, Joy, Ellis, Jablonski, & Karelitz, as cited in Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzvosky, 2016; Milanowski & Odden, 2007). Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) revealed the difficult situation faced by the U.S. in the arena of teacher retention, and how the country is striving to provide quality teachers to its varied batch of students. Measured at 8% yearly, teacher attrition in the U.S. leads to demand for new teachers in the profession, and 90% of teachers who are demanded annually to fill in the vacancies are created by those who have left the profession. A staggeringly high percentage of teachers leave their jobs in the initial years, or some years into the job, and only a small percentage leave at the end of their career by retiring. The effect of teacher attrition spreads not only to the student population whose achievements drop at the sudden departure of the teachers, but to the school as a whole, throwing its smooth running out of gear, disrupting its stable functioning, and making it incur financial losses to the tune of $20,000 or more for the loss of each teacher in a city school (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Among new teachers, an estimated 40% to 50% exit the field in their initial years of teaching (Bousquet, 2012; Mäkelä et al., 2014; Shady, Luther, & Richman, 2013).

Stromquist (2018) asserted that the educational sectors of many countries have reported a problem with regards to teachers, either the existence of an excess of teachers or of less than the required number. A staggering 67% of unions grapple with a shortage of teachers, which is the direct result of teacher attrition. 50% to 57% of the unions responded that they face the problem to a certain degree at all levels of the education strata with the maximum shortage in ECE (25%) followed by in the secondary education sector (20%) and the primary sector (19%). The European countries of Spain, the UK, Sweden, Switzerland, and Georgia have this problem to an acute degree at the ECE level. The Asian countries of Japan, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka face this problem mostly at the ECE level.

The problem of teacher attrition is particularly dire in India; despite the country's enactment of the Right to Education Act in 2012, India expects a deepening teacher crisis due to attrition (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015). One of the Act's ambitious plans—namely, maintaining a healthy pupil-teacher ratio—remains unaccomplished with little progress being made. India faces a shortage of 370,000 teachers to meet its education demands (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015). Research by Sharma (2013) explained the phenomenon of the movement of teachers from developing countries, and India in particular, to developed countries to fill in the vacancies created there due to teacher attrition. Developing countries like India have become the hunting ground for teachers, as developed countries adopt dynamic strategies to encourage teacher migration

to their schools. In turn, this outward migration deprives these developing countries of competent teachers, thereby negatively affecting the educational system of these countries.

The most effective way to control teacher attrition is to first understand its causes (AEE, 2014; Boyd et al., 2010; Gray & Taie, 2015), as well as how attrition affects the groups and processes that make up the educational system (Harfitt, 2014), particularly in specific country and local contexts. This study may, therefore, promote understanding of why there is high teacher attrition in the private early childhood schools in India, as well as determine how it affects these schools. Such insights can in turn help policy makers and education leaders to develop appropriate strategies for lessening the problem and building a sustainable workforce in this sector.

Factors affecting teacher attrition. Teacher attrition is influenced by a wide range of factors, which may be personal, professional, extrinsic, intrinsic, or even contingency-based (Espinoza, 2015; Glennie, Mason, & Edmunds, 2016). While I attempt to present those factors in a clustered manner in the following section, it is important to note that reasons for attrition are unique to each individual or context, and overlaps can and do occur. The categorization made here is done for the purposes of clarity only.

***Personal factors*.** Personal factors related to the needs of teachers as members of society can be extrinsic or intrinsic. Extrinsic personal factors include monetary incentives received and workplace conditions, and intrinsic factors include social status, concerns over job security, and career satisfaction. According to Maslow's hierarchy of

needs, intrinsic factors supersede extrinsic factors. At the same time, an interplay occurs between the two types of factors such that people desire more once their primary needs are fulfilled (Yudhvir & Sunita, 2012).

Both intrinsic and extrinsic personal factors are pertinent in the Indian context. Teaching was an attractive profession a century ago, but it has since been overshadowed by the vast opportunities for better salaries across the country. For instance, Verma (2012) explained that the salary of a call center worker is double that of a mid-level private school teacher, which they consider demoralizing.

The study by Ainley and Carstens (2019) brought to light the indirect nexus between human resource and stakeholders, with the assertion that, in spite of its incidental effect on the development of students, it has a major role to play in the hiring of teachers and ensuring their continuance in the job. This relationship also affects the extent of teachers' work satisfaction and their training opportunities and the environment associated with them.

Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (2013) revealed that teachers from very few countries felt they received societal approval for the job they do; the only countries reporting in favor were Abu Dhabi, Finland and Singapore (OECD, 2014). The reason for societal indifference to this profession needs to be analyzed with the expectation that due societal prestige will serve the purpose of attracting deserving candidates to the job and give them the motivation to continue in the field. Besides, there is also the problem of attracting candidates to this job; deserving candidates choosing other rewarding sectors instead. The motivation for opting for a particular job depends on

its worth in terms of rewards, the utility it provides to the worker, and the way society values it. Ainley and Carstens (2018) have stated that the tendency of deserving job seekers to opt for jobs outside their field is unique in the education sector.

Studies show that nearly 14% of teachers leave the profession due to lack of job satisfaction, with the main stressors being absence of administrative support and stress at work (Baker, 2007; Espinoza, 2015; Glennie et al., 2016). Illustrating this point, Weiqi (2007) found that work achievement, leadership, working conditions, administration support, and salaries were important for teachers' job satisfaction and had the most effect on teacher attrition.

Teachers, especially during the early phase of teaching, need supportive leadership; administrators who provide guidance to new teachers and listen to their concerns are more likely to facilitate their retention. If this support is lacking, the teacher will be inclined to find another school that is more supportive (Ndoyde, Imig, & Parker, 2010). Supportive leadership also improves teacher morale and confidence, whereas ineffective leadership can be associated with serious problems with academic achievement and burnout among teachers who are struggling (Ndoyde et al., 2010). Addressing a broad spectrum of factors to promote social status, job security, and career satisfaction may therefore be important for teacher retention.

Professional factors/work conditions. Mesosystem factors found to influence attrition in the education sector include low wages, lack of opportunities for career development, poor workplace environments, overwhelming teaching workload, and high stress levels, as well as fear and insecurity among new teachers (Buchanan et al., 2013).

Lack of support and poor work environments have perhaps the most impact, and inadequate support particularly affects new teachers adversely, making them lose interest in their fledgling careers. Lack of support can manifest as a lack of mentoring programs and collaborative assignments to help new teachers build confidence in their new careers and environments (Boyd et al., 2011). When teachers do not have access to mentors, feedback, excellent peers, and opportunities for collaboration, the result is that their performance plateaus after some years of teaching due to poor morale, leading to high attrition rates (AAE, 2017).

Poor working conditions in India could affect both the decision to enter the teaching profession and the decision to remain in the profession. Mäkelä et al. (2014) studied why teachers were leaving the profession based on the premise that teacher turnover promotes instability in teaching and found that area transfers (teachers' changing their subject areas) accounted for 23% for teachers who had graduated from training between 1980 and 2006. The authors also found that young teachers mostly left the profession entirely while older teachers mostly left the subject area (Mäkelä et al., 2014).

Terway and Steiner-Kamsi (2018) brought to the forefront a recurring problem faced by schools in remote areas of Kerala, India. Aspirants to the job of teacher who clear the Kerala civil service examination are posted in schools in remote areas, but at the first opportunity they apply for transfer to more accessible places. Their subsequent departure leaves the related posts in these remote schools empty for up to three years at a stretch.

Male teachers tended to leave earlier than female teachers, and those who left the school made that change earlier than did those who only changed their subject areas (Mäkelä et al., 2014). The reasons for leaving included poor working conditions, administration, workload, pupils, respect, and compensation. These findings had implications for this study because they suggested gender and duration of teaching as important environmental factors equivalent to poor working conditions, workloads, and compensation in the context of reducing teacher attrition.

Stromquist (2018) pointed towards the significance of the low salary teachers receive, which is not commensurate with their academic qualifications and period of experience. A survey of different countries reveals that in 79% of them, the salaries of teachers are much less than that of candidates working in other sectors, although they may have similar qualifications and years of experience. Only a meagre 17% of ECE and Technical and Vocational Education and Training teachers are satisfied with the salary they receive. Another inhibiting factor is late payment of salaries, with many Latin American countries reporting it to a major degree, while 79% of teachers in Africa receive their salaries only after they travel to distant collection centres.

Podolsky et al. (2016) cited less than appropriate salaries and the small size of classrooms as the major reasons for teacher attrition, with two-thirds of teachers choosing to leave their jobs precisely for these reasons. The absence of proper support of the school administration, in spite of the stressful work handled by the teachers, is another major reason for their desire to leave (Ingersoll, 2016).

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) pointed out that one of the steps to arresting teacher attrition is to raise teacher salaries so that they are on par with those of workers in other sectors or in comparable schools in neighboring areas.

Psychological factors. The psychological factors that affect teachers' turnover are both extrinsic and intrinsic; extrinsic factors are external in nature, for instance, resourceful, safe working environments (University of Arkansas, 2010) or high salaries, whereas intrinsic factors are internal, such as self-esteem and feelings of ownership and satisfaction (Abell & Lederman, 2014). Fulfilling psychological factors is important for increasing teachers' morale and willingness to teach. In turn, this teacher engagement leads to higher levels of academic achievement and development for their students (Egu et al., 2011). Other intrinsic factors that contribute to teachers' attrition include disrespect and job insecurity, which play especially important roles in teaching in low-resources contexts such as India, where teachers' psychological needs are disrespected and disregarded (Verma, 2012).

School characteristics. Researchers have also investigated the influence of school characteristics on teacher attrition (Hancock & Scherff, 2010). According to Lynch (2012), both the location of the school and the teacher's position significantly affect teacher attrition; urban schools tend to have higher attrition rates than those in suburban and rural areas. Teachers who work with low-achieving students also tend to have higher attrition rates than teachers of high achievers, possibly because working with low-achieving students is less appealing and experience burnout at much faster rates (Lynch, 2012). In a separate line of study, teachers are also more likely to leave specific schools

for low salaries and poor working conditions (Jenkins, 2014; Lynch, 2012), which could be significant for private preschools in India.

Policy issues. Decisions at various policy levels, or at the macrosystem level, have consequences for teacher attrition and retention. At the country level, governments may lack effective policies on teacher welfare, or existing policies may be poorly implemented (Verma, 2012); such scenarios lead to feelings of dissatisfaction among teachers and eventually to attrition. In India the problem is twofold: The government instituted policies too late and without adequate support for proper implementation (Lynch, 2012; Verma, 2012).

There is already a shortage of teachers in India, and this is compounded by the Right to Education Act, which stipulates that the teacher-to-student ratio should be 1:30. Neither the government nor the private sector has enough teacher training schools, and new graduates are not interested in teaching, which widens the gap between policy and real-world practice; better teaching opportunities outside the country or in multinational corporations compounds the problems of poor planning and implementation by government agencies, low wages, poor working conditions, and the view that teaching is not an attractive profession. All of these contribute to teacher attrition in both private and public schools all over India, including in Mumbai (Lynch, 2012; Verma, 2012)

Highlighting the importance of school-level policy and program support in teacher attrition, the AEE (2015) recommended comprehensive induction that involves ongoing support from leaders, focused and high quality mentoring, and common planning in order to promote job satisfaction among teachers; the alliance made five policy

recommendations for states and districts to increase teacher retention: regular teacher evaluation using multiple measures; implementing high-quality teacher development; improving teaching conditions; enabling collegial collaboration; and comprehensive induction programs for new teachers. In summary, it is important to develop and implement policies that support teacher engagement and satisfaction and ensure that they are being implemented efficiently.

Teacher Attrition in Early Childhood Education

The impact of teacher attrition in early childhood education is felt across the entire system, with children, teachers, school leaders, processes, and families being affected adversely (Dunn, Farver, Guenther, & Wexler, 2017; Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014; Macdonald, 1999; Wilkins, 2014). According to Lindqvist et al. (2014), while the negative influences of teacher attrition are seen at all levels of education, the effects are most negative on the children, remaining teachers, and supervisors in preschools. Totenhagen et al. (2016) identified that problems manifest among caregivers, teaching assistants, and even administrators. I next review the empirical findings on the effects of teacher attrition.

Children's emotional development. Ronfeldt et al. (2013) studied both the short- and long-term effects of teacher attrition on children; the authors observed that the inability to form constructive relationships in preschool directly affect the ability to form meaningful relationships later, and children who had these difficulties displayed behavioral problems and lagged academically. Similarly, Commodari (2012) stated that children thrive most in a caring atmosphere where they feel secure and close to their

mentors. In the school system, those mentors are the teachers. Secure attachments to teachers create self-assured and bright students with good communication skills and the ability to explore and learn independently. On the other hand, frequent change in teachers deprive children of this attachment, care, and trust, leaving them confused and insecure, which hinders their development and success (Commodari, 2012).

Expanding on this observation, Khawary and Ali (2015) asserted that teacher attrition is difficult for children. It is natural for children to form loving bonds with their teachers and look to them for advice and guidance; a sense of trust and stability results from constant interactions with the teacher, during which children become used to the teacher's style of teaching, method of communication, and way of dealing with situations (Khawary & Ali, 2015). When their teachers leave, children must process both the loss of their favored teacher and adjusting to the new teacher, who may have different approaches and teaching and communication styles (Khawary & Ali, 2015). This process is emotionally exhausting and difficult for young children, and it usually takes time that children are not afforded. The emotional distress is, therefore, compounded by the fact that the children must immediately begin to attempt to master alien systems; these types of emotional disturbance have direct negative effects on children's development (Khawary & Ali, 2015).

Parallels can be drawn between the lack of consistency in caregivers and the same lack in teacher-student relationships. Ranson and Urichuk (2008) noted that many children suffer setbacks in development when they are subjected to frequent changes in caregivers, such as multiple changes in a single year. Short durations of contact limit

caregivers' ability to foster development in the children under their care, and high teacher attrition makes it impossible for parents and children to develop positive relationships with the teachers, which is unfortunate given that children's optimal development requires joint efforts between teachers and parents (Commodari, 2012; Cowan et al., 2016). Through these combined avenues, teacher exit creates psychological stress on children and negatively affects their emotional development (Dunn et al., 2017).

Student achievement. Research has shown the negative influence of high teacher turnover on children's academic achievement. Investigators have found that fewer children from schools with high teacher turnover meet state math and reading standards, although the results are not always connected (Guinn, 2016; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Teacher attrition limits student achievement for reasons related to the quality and effectiveness of teacher input; teachers' ability to impart positive and appropriate inputs to children is the main factor for effective student learning (Dunn et al., 2017; Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014; Ndoye et al., 2010).

Teaching experience is essential for gaining skills, and the initial years of teaching are very important in this respect (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007; Rockoff cited in Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014). When experienced teachers leave and are replaced with less-skilled teachers, there is a direct impact on student achievement (Adnot, Dee, Katz, & Wyckoff, 2016; Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014). Student routines are further disrupted when permanent teachers are replaced with substitutes, who then leave after a short time as well (Ronfeldt et al. as cited in Jones, 2016). The ways teachers relate to each other and to their students also have direct effects on student achievement. Teacher

attrition leads to loss of positive relationships, forcing children to start again, and student achievement is harmed when attrition disrupts both forming and maintaining these relationships (Guinn, 2016; Ronfeldt et al., 2013).

The negative effects of teacher attrition on student achievement set in before teachers even leave because teachers who have already made the decision to leave usually withdraw from the job emotionally before they actually quit. At that point, they feel less commitment to and engagement with their teaching responsibilities (Horn & Kinicki as cited in Wilkins, 2014). For instance, Wilkins (2014) reported that such teachers may be impatient with disruptive behavior in the class and do not put in the effort to solve problems in constructive ways that would lead to better student outcomes.

Henry and Redding (2018) calculated the loss of teaching days when a teacher leaves to be approximately 32 to 72 teaching days, which comes to almost one-sixth to half of all working days. Hanushek et al. (2016) reflected on the effect of teacher attrition on schools where the developmental achievement of students is already hampered due to other reasons, asserting that these schools are doubly affected because of the departure of teachers with experience. In such cases, the existing teachers are allotted duties in other classrooms that make them overburdened, which takes a toll on their capabilities.

Curriculum planning and implementation. High attrition rates among teachers negatively affect class size, scheduling, and curriculum planning, which in turn interferes with classroom work (Guin, 2016; Jenkins, 2014; Zinsser & Curby, 2014); curriculum planning and implementation are less effective because replacement novice teachers may not yet be fully trained (Karsenti & Collin, 2013). Teachers can also be allocated to teach

subjects outside of their knowledge expertise when teachers depart suddenly, which reduces teaching quality (Latifoglu, 2016). These effects may not occur in isolation; schools are systems, and change impacts throughout the system, whether negative or positive. As noted by Özoglu (2015), teacher attrition has direct adverse effects on student achievement, the commitment and performance of the teachers who stay, curriculum and related planning, the administrative process, and the general atmosphere in the school.

Remaining teacher morale and performance. Researchers have stated that teacher attrition has both immediate and long-term effects on school systems (Cumming et al., 2015; Gable et al., 2007; OECD 2006) and immediate and direct effects on teaching quality (Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzvosky, 2016), as remaining teachers attempt to fill in the gaps left by the departing teachers in addition to their regular responsibilities. Educators who remain in school systems with high attrition are also directly affected psychologically by the loss of their colleagues; these effects manifest as stress, anxiety, and depression (de Schipper et al. as cited in Cumming et al., 2015; Groeneveld et al., 2012; Whitebook & Ryan 2011). These negative feelings limit teachers' abilities to deliver optimal performance, thus compromising the quality of their teaching; moreover, their well-being and physical health are negatively affected (Cumming et al., 2015).

School administration. Increased teacher turnover adversely affects the organization and utilization of administrative capital within school systems (Holme & Rangel, 2012; Holme et al., 2017). Administrative capital comprises structural, relational, and cognitive aspects: The structural aspect is related to the links between persons in the

school at the microsystem and mesosystem levels; the relational aspect relates to the personal links that leads to a sense of confidence and mutual commitment in the school community; and the cognitive aspect relates to the collective comprehension of the structures (Glennie et al., 2016). Teacher turnover leads to an imbalance in the relational and cognitive aspects as novice replacement teachers must go through a learning curve in order to adapt to the system and function in sync with the other members of the school (Glennie et al., 2016).

Jain (2013) asserted that teacher turnover weakens an institution's stability as it affects organization, consistency in practices, and the distribution of communal responsibility. Frequent changes to the administrative structure and policies due to high attrition leaves the basic framework of the organization weak and unable to support sustainable development (Golhaber & Cowan, 2014; Nations, 2017). Other researchers made similar observations, finding that turnover of 25% negatively affected organizational effectiveness and performance (Sass, Flores, Claeys, & Perez, 2012). The vision and mission of affected schools may be compromised, in turn negatively affecting students and their achievement (Bryk, Gomez, Grunow, & Lemahieu, 2015; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2009; Holme & Rangel, 2012; Smylie & Evans, 2006; Spillane et al. as cited in Holme et al., 2017). The extra duties added to the workloads of the remaining teachers affect both their morale and the efficiency of the school (Wushishi, Fooi, Basri, & Baki, 2014). The whole process may become a cycle in which teacher attrition leads to negative administrative outcomes,

which in turn demotivates teachers, leading to higher attrition (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Elmore, 2003; Finnigan & Daly, 2012).

There is also loss of human capital with the exit of experienced teachers, particularly teachers who received training (Holme & Rangel, 2012; Holme et al., 2017; Manuel & Hughes as cited in Latifoglu, 2016); their institutions waste valuable resources on frequent recruitments and trainings, reducing the resources available for other activities, which can demotivate teachers who remain at the school and still have their own activities to pursue, which in turn reduces school efficiency (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, as cited in Latifoglu, 2016). Managers of preschools face difficulties attempting to maximize available resources to hire new staff (Zada, 2014).

Frequent turnover creates financial burdens on institutions (Totenhagen et al., 2016). Researchers have observed that the exit of teachers triggers a chain reaction in which more teachers are influenced to do the same; schools then suffer the financial costs of repeated advertising and recruiting and inducting new teachers (Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Wushishi et al., 2014).

Figures reveal the drastic effect of teacher attrition, with annual losses in the United States for instance of $2.2 billion from approximately half a million teachers' leaving their jobs each year (AEE, 2015; Lynch, 2012). The turnover rate is also more pronounced for high-poverty schools because of low achievement and the poor learning environments. Given the size of the population of India, one can infer that the costs associated with teacher attrition at the national economic level would be astronomical.

Relationships between school communities and parents. Teacher attrition also has negative impacts on parents, who recognize that constant teacher changes hamper the development of their children; childcare centers where teachers frequently depart are often deemed inferior and inefficient (Dunn et al., 2017; Zinsser & Curby, 2014). Just as the bonds between children and teachers are affected by teacher attrition, the bonds between parents and the schools are also affected (Cassidy, Lower, Kintner-Duffy, Hegde, & Shim, 2011), mostly from parents' withdrawing their children from schools with high teacher attrition (Simon & Johnson, 2015). The conceptual framework and empirical information I reviewed guided the research design and instrumentation for this study and were reference points in interpreting my findings. In the next chapter, I present my study methods and procedures in detail.

Teacher Retention

The need to retain teachers is the main reason for studies on teacher attrition. As seen from the review of the literature, the variables that influence teachers' choices to either stay or leave include individual and organizational factors, and the organizational factors can be structural or/and perceptual (Boyd et al., 2011; Egu et al., 2011).

Job satisfaction. Teachers who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to remain in the job. Küskü (2003) defined employee satisfaction as the degree to which an individual's needs and desires are met and the extent to which the person's coworkers perceive this factor. Job satisfaction looks at employee satisfaction from the perspective of the worker. As noted by Weiqi (2007), factors such as work achievement, administration support, leadership, working conditions, and salaries are important for

teachers' job satisfaction and retention. These factors are tied to every level of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, from the conditions in the classroom (microsystem) all the way out to the general respect and compensation of teachers as professionals (macrosystem).

Motivation. Job satisfaction is linked to motivation and has been described as a function of motivators (Nawab & Bhatti, 2011), and work motivation is the psychological processes that influence the decisions made at work. When appropriate motivators are in place in the work environment, workers will have a positive emotional affect and judgment of job experiences and will be more likely to remain in the job (Nawab & Bhatti, 2011). Motivators are environmental factors such as good salaries, fringe benefits, and good relationships with coworkers and supervisors (Holochwost, DeMott, Buell, Yannetta, & Amsden, 2009).

The psychological factors that affect teachers' retention are both extrinsic (such as resourceful and safe working environment) and intrinsic (such as increased salaries and incentives). The intrinsic motivational factors can build the individual's self-esteem, promote a feeling of ownership and satisfaction (Abell & Lederman, 2014). These psychological factors increase the morale of teachers' and their willingness to devote maximum efforts to motivating their students and instilling knowledge in them (Egu et al., 2011).

Work conditions. In their study on factors that promote teacher retention, CooperGipson Research (CGR) (2018) found that improving in-school support for teachers is necessary for retention; this includes greater understanding of managing pupil

behavior, the ability to have open conversations, and giving greater autonomy to teachers (reducing feelings of pressure from scrutiny and reducing unnecessary workload). CGR (2018) found that significant reduction in negative school atmosphere helped teachers reconsider their decision to leave the school or the profession. Similarly, Boyd et al. (2011) noted that mentoring programs and collaborative assignments contribute to new teachers' staying in their schools because they help teachers build confidence in their new careers and environments (Boyd et al., 2011). In contrast, performance plateaus after years of teaching without opportunities for collaboration, having experienced peers and mentors, and good feedback, the lack of which lead to high attrition rates (AEE, 2017).

CGR (2018) also found that opportunities for career and personal growth in the workplace supported teacher retention, and pay was important as well; pay includes salaries that reflect teachers' experience, education, and dedication, and it is very important in the early childhood education setting. As Whitebook (2014) noted, there is a perception of early childhood education as being an easy field and one in which the teachers do not have as much education as teachers who work with older children. In fact, this is not the case. Early childhood education teachers have to be skilled in both content areas and child development in order to deliver the kind of information that is appropriate for assimilation by young children. Leadership is an important part of preschool teachers' work experiences; supportive leadership improves teacher morale and confidence and leads to greater teacher retention (Ndoyde et al., 2010).

Policy environment. Local and national policies that support teacher welfare and effective execution of good policies also influence teachers' decisions to stay in the

profession (Verma, 2012). My findings from this study suggested policy implications that I discuss in Chapter 5.

Summary and Conclusions

With this literature review, I sought to provide a conceptual framing for this qualitative case study on teacher attrition in private early childhood schools in Mumbai, India, by presenting the concepts and variables that were important for understanding the issue. The major themes in the literature are how teacher attrition affects preschool students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and schools themselves as well as factors that influence teacher retention. Teacher attrition is caused by personal, professional, and psychological factors, work conditions, school environment, and policies. Teacher attrition affects student achievement and emotional development, curriculum planning, remaining teacher morale and performance, school administration, and relationships between the school and parents. Teacher retention is facilitated by personal factors, work conditions, school characteristics, policies, job satisfaction, and motivation.

What is not discussed in the literature is how these factors influence teacher attrition and retention in the Indian context; most of the extant research was conducted in the contexts of Western countries. With the present study, I contribute to filling this gap in the literature by providing insights on stakeholders' perceptions of the influence of teacher attrition on teachers, parents, students, and school leaders in private early childhood schools in India. The findings from the study will help policy makers and education leaders better understand the problem and possibly lessen its occurrence.

This study is important given that early childhood interactions and relationships critically affect children's development. The conceptual framework for the study comprised Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. The microsystem and mesosystem of ecological systems theory particularly provided a lens for understanding the influence of teacher attrition on children and parents. Bronfenbrenner guided my understanding of this influence through the concepts of systems and subsystems and guided how to approach this investigation. The next chapter presents a detailed description of the study's research methodology.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders in India regarding how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences the students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and schools, as well as what is needed to retain teachers. Data came from interviews with 12 participants, 4 teachers, 4 leaders, and 4 parents of children at private early childhood schools in Mumbai, India. With the interviews, I aimed to elucidate the issues related to teacher attrition in Indian private early childhood schools. In this chapter I present the research design and rationale, the researcher's role, the study methodology and trustworthiness, and the ethical procedures I followed during the study.

Research Design and Rationale

The research questions for the study are as follows:

RQ1: What are the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders on how attrition influences the teachers, parents, school leaders, resources, and operations of private early childhood schools?

RQ2: What are the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders on how attrition influences students' development and achievement in private early childhood schools?

RQ3: What factors do teachers, parents, and school leaders identify as important for retaining teachers in private early childhood schools?

Teacher attrition involves educators leaving the teaching profession for other fields that might or might not be related to education (Miller & Chait, 2008). Although

the terms are often used interchangeably, attrition and turnover are not the same thing. Teacher turnover is a broader concept that has three components: (a) teacher migration, moving from one school to another; (b) area transfer, changing teaching subject areas; and (c) attrition, leaving the profession completely (Mäkelä et al., 2014). Temporary attrition occurs when teachers leave the profession temporarily to pursue higher education or travel, for example, but return after a certain period of time. Permanent teacher attrition, the focus of this study, occurs when teachers leave the profession permanently (UNESCO, 2006).

I used a qualitative case study research design. I made this choice after reviewing various research methods and carefully deciding that the qualitative research tradition was most suitable for this research because it involved reflecting individuals and their perspectives (Creswell, 2013; Moustakas, 1994). This design permitted exploration of the problem based on the personal viewpoints of the participants.

The process of choosing the appropriate research design involved in-depth review of different methodologies. The qualitative methodology suited my research study, having its foundation in anthropology and sociology (Kirk & Miller, 1986, as cited in Creswell, 2009), and emerging as a design distinct from traditional scientific methods and quantitative inquiry which are objective, linear, deductive and positivist (Trochim, 2007). On the other hand, qualitative inquiry is subjective, non-linear and inductive (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2002) and accentuates interpretivism or understanding (Patton, 2015). The qualitative design is a relatively newer approach in comparison, and Borg and Gall

(1989, as cited in Creswell, 2009) explained that it "has only recently been adopted by educational researchers" (p. 194).

I chose the case study approach because it involves interactive inquiry and is open-ended and inductive (Creswell, 2007; Maxwell, 2002). This involved collection of data based on the personal experiences of teachers, school leaders, and parents, and analysis of those data in the context. Additionally, such an approach enables the researcher to concentrate on each case within set boundaries (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Hatch, 2002; Patton, 2015) and gives the participants the role of co-constructors of the research (Creswell, 2009).

I chose case study after carefully reviewing and rejecting ethnographic, narrative, and grounded theory research strategies as unsuitable for the purpose of the study. The ethnographic research design was suitable because the participants did not share a culture or background, being associated with different schools with different management bodies and following different school policies. I rejected the narrative research design because the research necessitated the inputs of different participants telling their different stories. My own experiences did not find a place in the research, nor did I add to the inputs of the participants, although my educational background, opinions, and experiences helped me to comprehend the viewpoints of the participants. I did not adopt a grounded theory design because formulating a theory was not the purpose of my research. Ultimately, the case study design allowed me to interview individual participants whose personal experiences and viewpoints helped me form a general picture of the situation.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher in any study has primary responsibility for the conduct and outcomes of the work, and this role is even more pronounced in a qualitative study because the researcher bears the prime responsibility of collecting and analyzing data (Hatch, 2002). For this study, I was the sole researcher. I took concrete steps to ensure the data collection and analyses were as rigorous as possible. I recorded the one-on-one interviews with the study participants and took written notes on nonverbal participant responses as well as recording my own thoughts in a reflexive journal.

Additionally, I performed transcript review and member checking by providing each study participant with a copy of his or her interview transcript so that each could review their respective transcripts for accuracy. Later, participants reviewed a summary of findings and conducted member checking by examining the themes that emerged from the data and checking for accuracy. This checking was an attempt to ensure that I minimized any researcher bias (see Creswell, 2013) because I have a connection to this work. My work in education spans 19 years, first as a school counselor and subsequently a director. As a school counselor, I received training on how to conduct interviews, and I applied that skill to conduct the interviews for this study.

Because I had been in this profession in the same city as my study, there was a chance that a participant had participated in training sessions for which I served as a resource person or facilitator and thus had a prior professional relationship with me. This circumstance did not occur, but I did not intend to exclude anyone for this reason if they had met the criteria for participating in the study. I did assure all participants that I

genuinely wanted their honest, straightforward answers and I intended to maintain everyone's confidentiality.

Methodology

Participant Selection

The participants of this study were limited to school leaders, teachers who had taught in private early childhood schools for at least 2 years, and parents of children from private early childhood education schools in Mumbai. The sampling method for this study was homogenous purposive sampling. The sample consisted of participants I chose with the objective of the research and the features of the population in mind (see Dworkin, 2012; Patton, 2015). The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders in India regarding how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences the students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and the school, as well as the factors that stakeholders identify as important to retain teachers. Therefore, participants were drawn from the population mentioned, which is teachers and school leaders who worked in private early childhood education schools and met the 2-year teaching criteria, as well as parents whose children were enrolled in those schools.

When sample size is too large, it may hinder detailed investigation as interviews can become impractical and unmanageable, especially given time constraints. Conversely, a small number of participants can facilitate in-depth investigation as the entire process of planning the study, conducting the interviews, transcribing and reviewing the emerging data for authenticity, and finding relevant parallels can be done in depth and in detail (Stake, 2006). In order to facilitate an in-depth investigation, I

sampled four school administrators and a similar number of teachers and parents for a total of 12 participants. The participants also worked in private early childhood education schools with high attrition rates, and so they knew about this problem. Participation in the study was voluntary; all participants were notified that they could leave the study at any point in time.

I was granted approval for the study from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (09-11-18-0576538), after which I contacted the respective school management boards were contacted. After the school management boards self-reported that the schools had high teacher attrition, I then proceeded with officially seeking permission from the school leaders to conduct the study and approach the teachers and the parents of students. I requested permission to conduct the study at the respective schools both verbally and in writing.

Once I obtained the permissions, I visited each school and discussed the purpose of the study with teaching staff and school leaders. I gave them each letters of invitation to participate, requesting those with at least 2 years on the job willing to participate to contact me directly. Contacting me directly was a measure to protect the identity of those who participated in the study. I sought permission from the school management to approach the parents either before or after school, as a personal approach is culturally expected in India. I briefly told the parents about the study and provided them with the invitation letter explaining the study. I emphasized that I was not connected with the school nor did the school require them to participate and I assured them no one at the school would treat them differently if they decided not to be in the study. Further, I told

them that my contact information was on the invitation letter to allow them to convey their interest to participate in the study. Again, parents were asked to contact me directly so as to ensure confidentiality.

Once the willing teachers, school leaders, and parents expressed interest by contacting me, I emailed potential participants the consent form with full information including the goals, purpose, risks, and benefits associated with the study, and my contact information. I also called the potential participants to discuss the study, allowing time for questions. I indicated to potential participants that they were welcome to ask questions if they needed further clarification about the study either by phone, email, or in person, or to contact the IRB office (indicated on the consent form) before signing the consent form. An in-person interview was then set up in a mutually agreeable private location to protect identity. The time and place of interview was chosen as per the convenience of the participants. In India, it is the norm to interview at the school. So given the cultural context, all meetings and interviews were conducted at the convenience of the participants at the school. These took place in the private area of the library.

Before the interview, I discussed the parameters of the study, verified that participants met the criteria for the study, went over the consent form, and then asked participants to sign the consent form. I informed participants that participation was voluntary and that they were free to leave the study at any time and for any reason, should they choose to not participate. I also provided an explanation of the interview steps to inform participants that I would be audio recording and taking notes. On

receiving verbal responses from the participants that they were willing to be interviewed for the research, I presented the consent form for them to sign.

Instrumentation

One of the tools to conduct non-experimental research is the interview guide (protocol), which allows the participants to express their opinions regarding the topic by answering relevant interview questions and citing personal experiences to supplement their beliefs (Popham, 2010). This research study was conducted adhering to the interview procedure (Appendices C, D, E), which was based on the three research questions, and invited the participants to narrate their perspectives on attrition in the private early childhood schools (refer to Appendices C, D, E). The interview questions were framed after rigorous perusal of existing literature related to the problem statement of this qualitative study. I studied published peer-reviewed journals, and the results mentioned in these journals formed the basis of the interview questions. It was, however, imperative to modify the questions in order to match the culture of the place of study, and to avoid confusion.

To ensure that the interview protocol was valid and relevant, I pilot-tested the questions with one teacher, one school leader, and one parent in the private early childhood education school. Pilot testing is a small-scale pre-testing of a research tool in order to ensure that the tool is appropriate and effective for the study, specifically, that it will capture the information that it was designed to capture (Creswell, 2013). The goal of the pilot study for this research was to find out whether the questions aligned with the goals of the study. The pilot-study process also provided me with training on how to use

the tool in the interview process, which enabled me to detect errors. I analysed feedback and constructive comments from the pilot process, which subsequently served as the basis for the final interview protocol.

Like all other steps in this study, I conducted the pilot study after I received IRB approval. I did not obtain signed consent forms from those involved in the pilot study. I used my connections in the teaching profession to find three volunteers for the pilot study, who were 1 teacher, 1 school leader and 1 parent who was a friend. The pilot study took place at their convenience and lasted approximately 30 minutes. The pilot-testing process also contributed to establishing the internal validity of the research instrument. The subject matter expert evaluated the questions to establish sufficiency of data collection instrument to answer research questions. We scheduled two face-to-face meetings to review the questions and discuss her feedback. The subject matter expert gave feedback on the sequencing of questions and the veracity of the questions. The subject matter expert holds a Ph.D. in social sciences.

Establishing Content Validity

The purpose of an interview in research is not just to generate socially constructed conversations, but to generate meaningful data on a specific issue. The development of the interview protocol therefore, constituted an important part of the study process. It was important to establish the sufficiency of the interview protocol research questions. This was done by assuring that the interview questions lined up with the research questions and were thus able to capture data that answered the research questions. Content validity was also established by assuring that the interview questions were derived from the

conceptual framework of the study. A preliminary assessment of sufficiency based on the initial interview protocols is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Establishing Content Validity of Research Instruments

Research Questions	Aligned interview questions
What are the perspectives of teachers, parents and school leaders on how attrition influences teachers, parents, school leaders, and the private early childhood education schools?	T: Questions 6, 7, 8, 9 SL: Questions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 P: Questions 5, 8, 9
What are the perspectives of teachers, parents and school leaders on how attrition influences students?	T: Questions 7 SL: Questions 7 P: Questions 5, 6, 7
What factors do teachers, parents and school leaders identify as important to retain teachers in private early childhood education?	T: Questions 10, 11, 12 SL: Questions 10, 11 P: Questions 10, 11

Note. T = teachers, SL = school leaders, and P = parents.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Recruitment procedures. As noted previously, only teachers and school leaders who had completed 2 years on the job were chosen as participants, along with the parents of children whose teachers had left the school. Upon procuring approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study, the next step was to meet the school management of private early childhood education schools in Mumbai in order to select four urban, private, early childhood education schools that had experienced high attrition for the study. For the purposes of this study, schools with high

attrition were identified through a self-report received from the school management, rather than using statistical figures, since the size of each school and the number of teachers leaving varied for each school. A minimum of one teacher leaving every 6 months was taken as an indication of high attrition.

I requested meetings with school management (the persons in charge of running the school) at private early childhood schools to apprise him/her of the research, verified that the school experiences significant teacher attrition (as defined above), and requested and obtained his/her permission to recruit in the said school. I determined high attrition for this study by asking school management if they had the problem of teachers leaving the school relatively frequently, at least one teacher every 6 months. The respective authorities were informed that the researcher was trying to identify schools to use as settings for the case study. On confirming which schools had high teacher attrition, I proceeded with the process of seeking permission from the leaders of the school to conduct the study. I obtained permission verbally and in writing from the school leaders to conduct the study at the respective schools.

Once I obtained permissions, I visited each school and discussed the purpose of the study with teaching staff and school leaders. I gave them letters of invitation to participate (Appendix A), requesting that those willing to participate who had completed at least 2 years in the job contact the researcher directly. Contacting me directly was a measure to protect the identity of those who participated in the study. I sought permission from the school management to approach the parents either before or after school, as a personal approach is culturally expected in India. I briefly told the parents about the study

and provided them with the invitation letter explaining the study. I emphasized that I was not connected with the school, nor did the school require them to participate. I also assured them that no one at the school would treat them differently if they decided not to be in the study. Further, I told them that my contact information was on the invitation letter to allow them to convey their interest to participate in the study. Again, parents were asked to contact me directly so as to ensure confidentiality. Once the willing teachers, school leaders and parents expressed interest in possibly participating in the study by contacting me, invitation letter and consent form, was emailed to each potential participant. I also called the potential participants to discuss the study, allowing time for questions. I indicated to potential participants they were welcome to ask questions if they needed further clarification about the study either by phone, email, or in person, or to contact an IRB office address (indicated on the consent form), before signing the consent form. An in-person interview was then set up in a mutually agreeable private location to protect identity. The time and place of interview was chosen as per the convenience of the participants. In India, it is the norm to interview at the school. So given the cultural context, all meetings and interviews were conducted at the convenience of the participants at the schools in a private area of each school's library.

At the beginning of the interview meeting, I discussed the parameters of the study, verified that participants met the criteria for the study, went over the consent form, and then asked participants to sign the consent form. Participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that they were free to leave the study at any time and for any reason, should they choose to not participate. I provided an explanation of the

interview steps to the participants, to apprise them of the steps that would be taken, such as audio recording and notetaking. I assured them that I would stop the audio recording of the interviews at any point if they were not comfortable with it. Only participants who signed the consent forms participated in the interview.

Data Collection: The data collection method of this study was in-depth interviews so as to facilitate participants fully expressing their opinions about how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences the students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and the school, as well as their perspectives on what is needed to retain teachers. I conducted interviews individually with each participant. There are two main types of interviews: structured interviews and in-depth interviews. While the first one has a rigid structure comprising a questionnaire with carefully thought-out questions, the latter was more flexible (Babbie, 2003), with scope for varied and more instinctive responses. Flexibility in the interview process can allow for additional details and new data to emerge from reflections (Ary et al., 2009). The interview questions for this study were open-ended, so that participants could respond to them at length and in detail. The order of the questions asked did not always adhere to the original order in the interview protocol, but instead followed the previous response of the participants. According to Smith and Osborn (2015), the research topic should serve to guide participant responses to make sure that responses are relevant to the subject being explored. Other questions following should build on this focus. The research topic for this study served as a core guide for questions as well as a focused mindset across the entire interview dialogue.

The time of interview was chosen as per the convenience of the participants. However, in India, it is the norm to interview at the school. Accordingly, given the cultural context, all meetings and interviews were conducted at the convenience of the participants at the school. These took place in a private area of the library. Each interview lasted for approximately an hour. The interview began with general questions related to their experiences as an educator, school leader, or a parent, respectively, and then open-ended questions related to teacher attrition. Responses to interview questions are a key part of the data collection process in qualitative research and they must be recorded carefully. Accurate and efficient recording of the interview process is an important factor for objectivity and accountability (Krueger & Casey, 2015; Smith & Osborn, 2015). Each interview session in this study was recorded with a digital audio-recording device. Recording ensured the no data was lost, which is inevitable if it is being written down, as there is the possibility of getting distracted, or even leaving out important points while writing responses of the participants. Use of audio-recording also carried the advantage of enabling me to observe interviewees while they responded to questions, in order to catch any nuances that would have been lost if I was taking extensive notes (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

I took comprehensive notes on nonverbal responses as well as to track transitions between dialogues. Some interviewees became more open as the interview progressed, as well as when participants became more confident in their responses. Both natural statements and prompted responses were meaningful; responses to re-directed questions were marked as separate from natural responses. I treated these carefully in order to

decipher the perspectives of the interviewee objectively. Where the participant incorporated my prompts into their responses, I made a notation to indicate that such responses may be possibly biased. Such observations are important considerations regarding quality and validity, especially where there are multiple records of such potentially biased responses (Creswell, 2014).

The digital voice recordings were transcribed within 24 hours after the completion of each session. Additionally, I maintained a data log of all relevant information about each participant. To protect the identity of the interviewees, I assigned a number as well as a pseudonym, and their responses were stored under these numbers and pseudonyms, rather than their real names. Any scope for identification of the participant was avoided in the data presented, which included direct quotes that might be attributable to a specific person. The transcripts of respective interviews were returned to respective participants within 72 hours of their interview for them to review it for accuracy. Two interviews were scheduled per day across the 12 expected participants. Although I anticipated that the interviews would be completed in 3 weeks, they were actually completed in less than 3 weeks.

Exit Strategy and Follow-Up: On completing the interview process, participants received sincere verbal thanks. I informed them that they had the option of sending in further information via email after the interviews, if they wished to do so. Participants received a copy of the interview transcript (respective to each person) within 72 hours, to enable him/her to check its accuracy. They also received a copy of the themes that came out of the data analysis within 3 weeks for them to check for accuracy as well. This

practice, known as member checking, followed qualitative analysis to ensure the reliability and accuracy of findings in the study. The process allowed participants to see how the data that they provided had been interpreted and to suggest corrections, if they felt these were needed (Doyle, 2007). No one requested changes in either document. The exit strategy also included sending thank you cards to the participants that were delivered by hand.

Data Analysis Plan

The approach to data analysis I adopted for this study was thematic analysis (Houghton et al., 2015), which involves a systematic review of information in order to develop a list of concepts or themes that reflects the patterns within the collected data and is facilitated by a process of thematic coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Turner (2010) described codes or themes as consistent expressions, ideas, and phrases that were commonly found among study participants.

After I conducted all 12 participant interviews, I began to analyze the data. I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis steps, which entailed searching for and determining the most common and significant patterns from across the data gathered. The six phases of the thematic analysis were the following: 1) "familiarization of oneself with the data; 2) generating initial codes; 3) searching for themes; 4) reviewing themes; 5) defining and naming themes; and 6) the production of the final report" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87).

The first phase of Braun and Clarke's (2006) qualitative thematic analysis approach was familiarization with the data; during this phase, I read and reread the

participants' interview transcripts, highlighting and noting relevant words and phrases that related to the study questions and purpose (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The second phase of the thematic analysis was generating initial codes and collating the data that were relevant to each code (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). The next step in Braun and Clarke's process was searching for themes across all interview transcripts; during this step, I sorted the codes into potential themes and again examined all data that were significant to the potential themes of the study.

The fourth step of Braun and Clarke's analysis was reviewing the themes, for which I checked to determine if the themes that formed corresponded to the codes uncovered in the previous phases. The fifth phase was defining and naming themes; I continued to refine and modify the themes based on the data that emerged from the participants' responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I grouped together themes that had the same meanings and named them accordingly, and I also coded the corresponding participant responses under the appropriate themes.

Following the thematic analysis, I entered the coding files into NVivo12 to organize and tabulate participant responses under each theme; the software was significant in determining the major themes, which received the most references, and minor themes, those that received fewer but still repeated references. I also identified subthemes that corresponded to specific examples and points shared by the participants in relation to the major and minor themes of the study. I also identified subthemes that corresponded to specific examples and points shared by the participants in relation to the major and minor themes of the study. If there were discrepant cases, my plan for to

recode and reach out to participants to verify accuracy of statements. Two statements were discrepant. Themes were recoded and I reached out to participants to verify accuracy. These statements were treated as discrepant cases and were included in the discussion in Chapter 4 to fully identify all perceptions and experiences shared by the participants. . I felt this would be helpful in seeing the difference in the participants' perspectives and experiences as they answered the research questions of the study. Appendix E contains the coding tables used for the three research questions, the codes, emergent themes, and the sample responses per theme.

Trustworthiness of Data

Trustworthiness is a quality indicator that shows that the study findings are accurate from the researcher's standpoint as well as the standpoints of the participants and other persons who read the account (Creswell, 2014). Trustworthiness can be established based on three criteria: credibility, dependability, and transferability (Guba, 1981).

Credibility (Internal Validity)

I adopted several strategies to ensure the credibility of the study. I was reflexive in order to reduce the possibility of researcher bias on data collection and analysis. Simply defined, reflexivity defines how engaged a researcher is with the research process. As noted previously, I examined personal assumptions regarding the topic being investigated in order to assess their implications on the study. I kept a reflective journal

across the entire research process. Reflexivity establishes both credibility and confirmability in a study.

As stated previously, I used member checking to validate data and findings. I asked participants to review the categories, themes, and subthemes, which helped to ensure an unbiased interpretation and presentation. I also adopted peer debriefing as a means of checking bias in the study. The benefits of peer debriefing in the process of a qualitative research are many, prime among them being ensuring reliability of the emerging data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Additionally, peer debriefing ensures the reliability and dependability of the findings and is thus of immense worth. In the opinion of Lincoln and Guba (1985), it is imperative that the person who does the debriefing is acquainted with the process of qualitative research and has appropriate knowledge in the topic under consideration so that his/her inputs lead to positive additions to the research. Additionally, his/her inputs should pave the way to further examinations of the topic and challenge the researcher to look at the topic in multiple ways. An acquaintance with a Doctorate in Education and twenty years of working in the school system was selected as a peer for the debriefing process. I did not require the peer debriefer to sign a letter of confidentiality, as I did not use participants' names. She was also not connected in any way to the schools where the study was being conducted, as her involvement was on a private and voluntary basis. The peer debriefer examined the data, discussed the analysis and interpretations to make sure there was no intended bias, and substantiated the themes found. The peer debriefing process took place prior to the compilation of the final report and lasted approximately 3 hours.

Triangulation of data also contributed to the credibility of the study as it provided multiple lenses from which the results were interpreted. Triangulation involves combining two or more sources of data, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches, in order to understand and strengthen the findings from a study (Thurmond, 2001). Triangulation for this study involved the use of a variety of information sources - audio-taped information, interview transcripts, theory in the conceptual framework, secondary data in the literature review, and the results of member checking to arrive at rational explanations for the themes established in the study.

Transferability (external validity)

Transferability means that the data retrieved from specific research may be transferred to various other situations (Creswell, 2014). To ensure transferability, I noted the eligibility and selection criteria of the participants. The school leaders and teachers were currently employed in the school had at least 2 years of experience. The parents involved in the study had children were enrolled in the school and had experienced a change in their children's teaching staff. However, the potential for the transferability of this study was threatened by the fact that participants were unique individuals affected differently by the same experience, and the resources available for managing teacher attrition at various early childhood education schools did vary. The findings may transfer well to areas with similar demographics, such as other schools in Mumbai with high attrition rates, and India more broadly. Transferability of the findings worldwide is limited by differences between cultures, economic standards, and school systems, among others. This research ultimately provided thick, rich descriptions and direct quotes from

participants to provide evidence for the findings. In qualitative studies, it is up to the reader to determine transferability to other contexts.

Dependability

Dependability is a quality indicator that describes the ability of other researchers to repeat the various processes used in a study (Creswell, 2014). This indicator is a qualitative counterpart to reliability in research and any issues that limit the ability to find accurate answers to research questions comprise threats to dependability (Creswell, 2014). Dependability can be established by using clearly defined and valid procedures. In this study, the use of purposive sampling established dependability. Furthermore, data triangulation also established both credibility and dependability; I compared data gathered from multiple sources to determine the extent to which findings could be confirmed. The subject matter expert also evaluated the interview questions to establish sufficiency of data collection instrument, and I conducted a pilot study to ensure dependability of the interview questions to address the research questions.

Confirmability

Confirmability ensures impartiality, and measures how objectively the research processes were carried out. It may also point out the extent to which other researchers agree with the results of the study. For this study, I established confirmability through a peer-debriefing process, reflexivity and triangulation, all of which improved confirmability in qualitative research. Creswell (2007) believed that the peer debriefer is the devil's advocate for the researcher.

This debriefing followed the following steps. Upon completion of the preliminary data analysis and interpretations, the debriefer read the transcripts and we discussed initial codes and themes to consider different interpretations and enhance validity and trustworthiness. Following this, I held a phone conference with the peer debriefer to discuss the analysis and interpretations. I took notes on the conference and made changes to the writing and explanation of the research study as appropriate.

Prior to the final report, I conducted an audit; this involved inspecting all research documentation, looking at the raw data, data collection process, research instruments, analysis, and all research procedures to assure that the study was carried out following the approved plan. Such inspection also contributed to demonstrating objectivity in the study.

Ethical Procedures

An important part of any study is the ethical protection of participants' rights. On getting approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board (**09-11-18-0576538**), the next step was to collect data for this study and follow the subsequent procedures that had been sanctioned. Before beginning data collection, I gained consent from the schools' management. The trustees of the school signed a written Letter of Cooperation before data collection took place. Next, I gave letters of invitation to participate to those teachers and school leaders who had completed at least 2 years in the job and who were willing to participate in the research. I distributed letters of invitation to participate to parents whose children have been enrolled in the school for a minimum of two years.

Once teachers, parents, and school leaders expressed interest in participating in the study by contacting me, I mailed the invitation letter and consent form to each potential participant. Participants contacted me directly to ensure confidentiality. I conducted interviews at the school site due to cultural expectations, but we met in a private area of the library.

One of the important criteria for this case study was ensuring ethical protection of the participants. Yin (2009) and Stake (1995) have suggested formulating various steps to ensure such ethical protection of participants. These steps include ensuring that the study is conducted only after receiving informed consent, keeping the entire interview confidential, and protecting those who might be at risk if their responses are made public. As recommended by Creswell (2003), I ensured ethical protection by concealing the identity of the participants by using pseudonyms to refer to them and the related places. All teachers, school leaders, and parents volunteered to be a part of the research, and all of them were given a consent form from Walden University to sign (see Appendix B). A clause under the risk and benefits in the form assured the participants they could retract their decision to take part in the study any time they wished to.

I did not use participants' names; instead, I used code numbers and pseudonyms to refer to them. I also ensured I was the only person who knew which set of data belonged to which participant. All the documents including the digital recordings and notes were placed under lock and key in my home. The transcribed notes were password protected and could only be accessed by me.

All the documents including the digital recordings and notes will be destroyed

after five years of the research study being concluded. I will shred paper records. I will erase records stored on a computer hard drive using commercial software applications designed to remove all data from the storage device. I will physically destroy data on audiotapes.

Summary

This chapter presented the methodology for this study on the influence of teacher attrition in private early childhood education. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders in India regarding how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences the students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and the school, as well as the factors that stakeholders identify as important to retain teachers. I adopted a qualitative study design that entailed conducting in-depth interviews with participants and conducting thematic analysis of their interview responses. I used a homogenous purposive sampling method, which also ensured that the interview questions were framed after rigorous perusal of existing literature related to the problem statement of this qualitative study. I pilot-tested the interview questions with one teacher, one school leader, and one parent to ensure that the interview protocol was valid and relevant. I avoided researcher bias on collecting and interpreting the data by using a peer debriefer, which established both credibility and conformability in the study. I protected the identity of the participants by using pseudonyms when writing about the data. The use of triangulation and peer debriefing ensured confirmability and dependability, while I explicitly stated the selection and eligibility criteria of the

participants so that transferability might be possible. Chapter 4 contains the results of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter contains the results of the thematic analysis of the interview data. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders in India regarding how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences the students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and schools, as well as the factors that stakeholders identify as important to retain teachers.

The EST guided my data analysis process. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), there are four identifiable systems operating in the context of early childhood development: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem. In order to examine the impacts of teacher attrition on the ECE context in India, I focused on the microsystem, mesosystem and exosystem levels because these are the most directly implicated in how teacher attrition affects small children in private preschools.

I conducted thematic analysis of the interview transcripts using NVivo12 to systematically organize, code, and tabulate the final themes in order to address the following three research questions that guided the study:

RQ1: What are the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders on how attrition influences the teachers, parents, school leaders, resources, and operations of private early childhood schools?

RQ2: What are the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders on how attrition influences students' development and achievement in private early childhood schools?

RQ3: What factors do teachers, parents, and school leaders identify as important for retaining teachers in private early childhood schools? This chapter contains the following sections: the setting of the study, the data collection process, the data analysis employed, the results containing the themes and verbatim responses of the participants, evidence of trustworthiness, and a summary of the results.

Setting

Before considering the specific details of the sites where I conducted my study (the school or mesosystem level), it is relevant to examine the macrosystem in order to set the broader context. The macrosystem refers to the societal and legislative issues that frame my study. As Price and McCallum (2015) pointed out in their study on teacher retention in Australia, "The broader political, economic, legal, and cultural influences make up the macrosystem which can have filtering effects into the teachers' microsystem" (p. 199). Therefore, I will take a moment to give the broader context, since the macrosystem ultimately has implications for the microsystem level where teachers, school leaders, and parents interact with students.

A World Bank (2016) assessment of private schools in India showed that a quarter of children in rural areas aged 6-14 attend private school, while more than half of children in urban areas attend private schools. The rise of private schools in India speaks to a contradiction in the country's education system: public schools are more accessible than ever, but students enrolled in the country's public schools consistently achieve below-grade-level results in areas such as reading.

One of the measures included in the 2009 Right to Education Act decreed that 25% of seats in the country's private schools be set aside for students from economically disadvantaged families. Based on estimates from the Indian government, Banks and Dheran (2013) suggested that fully implementing the plan will require about 20,000 new primary schools, as well as the upgrading of about 70,000 existing primary schools. This act reflects recognition by the government of India that education is integral to the country being able to maintain sustainable long-term growth of its economy (Banks & Dheran, 2013; Chandra, 2016; Reetu et al., 2017).

Mumbai is considered the financial capital of India, so the implementation of the Act in its schools is deeply integrated with the city's short and long-term economic growth. People from across the country throng to Mumbai for the job opportunities available within this city. Mumbai is a cosmopolitan city where the expansions of the suburbs happened alongside its western railway lines and the central/eastern railway lines. Due to this expansion, a lot of private early childhood schools have been established to cater to the needs of the ever-growing population.

Four private early childhood schools—three located in the western suburbs and one in the eastern suburbs of Mumbai, India—were the targeted settings for this research study. There were a minimum of two other private early childhood schools within close proximity of the target schools. The target schools were located in a densely populated residential locality consisting of upper middle-class families. The families belong to diverse linguistic communities and thus the student population reflects the diversity of the locality. Each of the early childhood schools serve approximately 250 students and

enrollment is non-selective. At all the schools, each grade level (play group to Kindergarten 2) have an average of 21 students to a class. All the schools work in two sessions per day, with both sessions being conducted by the same set of teachers.

I determined high attrition for this study by asking school authorities if they had the problem of teachers leaving the school at the rate of 1 every 6 months. The authorities and representatives of the schools provided their consent to conduct the research study at their respective schools. Participants of the study were school leaders, teachers who had taught in private early childhood schools for at least 2 years, and parents of children at the said schools. Overall, I recruited four school administrators, four teachers, and four parents for the study.

Data Collection

Upon obtaining approval from the IRB, I met with the management of private early childhood schools in Mumbai to select four schools that had experienced high attrition. I requested meetings with the school leaders of the private schools and communicated the purpose of the study and the need to interview different stakeholders (school leaders, teachers, and parents) from their schools. With their permission, I contacted the potential participants and informed them about the study and their participation. I obtained informed consent forms from the participants before formally starting the interview sessions.

I collected data through in-depth interviews with all 12 participants. The interviews were conducted at the convenience of the participants at their respective schools in Mumbai, India, as dictated by cultural expectations. An interview protocol

served as a guide to ensure that all questions and topics were covered during the interviews. Each interview was audio-recorded and lasted for approximately 1 hour. Interviews were conducted in a private area of the library inside the participants' schools. Two interviews were scheduled per day across the 12 participants. Although I anticipated that the interviews would be completed in 3 weeks, they were actually completed in less than 3 weeks.

Hughest and Tight (2013) stated that it is imperative for a researcher to recognize the principles and prejudices that one holds even before the commencement of the study for transparency to be maintained, which is an essential component of objectivity. Ortlipp (2008) suggested taking recourse to a research journal to maintain transparency as it serves the purpose of having the entire process involved in the study in a written form from which the researcher may identify any underlying bias on reflection that he had overlooked earlier. To maintain transparency and, thus, objectivity, I kept a reflective journal to record my observations, thoughts, and other relevant data from the interviews. This journal was helpful in the next stages of the study, and in confirming or disconfirming the data from the findings. I considered the journal a supplementary data source. The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and were then transcribed. I stored all the recording and interview transcripts on a password-protected PC to maintain the security of my data. The data collection did not change in any way from the plan presented in Chapter 3.

Data Analysis

After I conducted all 12 participant interviews, I began to analyze the data. I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis steps, which entailed searching for and determining the most common and significant patterns from across the data gathered. The six phases of the thematic analysis were the following: (a) familiarizing myself with the data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) producing the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). While I was cognizant of EST during all six phases of my thematic analysis, I incorporated EST fully into my data analysis in stage three, as I looked for themes across interviews.

The first phase of qualitative thematic analysis was familiarization with the data. During this phase, I read and reread the participants' interview transcripts, highlighting and noting relevant words and phrases that related to the study questions and purpose (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). The second phase of thematic analysis was generating initial codes and collating the data that were relevant to each code (see Braun & Clarke, 2006). For example, in relation to RQ 1 (about how attrition affects the participants), several codes emerged during phase two of the data analysis. I used such as "flow," "continuity," "policies," "programs," "knowledge," and "planning" when coding interviews with teachers. These codes reflect the challenges of keeping continuity in the classroom and in the school with changes in personnel occurring. "Knowledge," "processes," and "training" are codes that emerged from my interviews with school leaders, which reflected their unique institutional concerns in relation to teacher turnover. Finally, based

on parents' comments generated codes such as "fear," "trust," and "confidence." These codes reflected participants' concerns with the emotional impact of their children's teacher leaving the school.

The next step in Braun and Clarke's (2006) process was searching for themes across all interview transcripts; during this step, I sorted the codes into potential themes and again examined all data that were significant to the potential themes of the study. At this stage, I began to fully incorporate Bronfenbrenner's EST into my analysis, as I considered the themes that were emerging in relation to the four ecosystems: the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem.

For the most part, the codes and themes with all three interview groups were related to the microsystem; paraphrasing Bronfenbrenner, Rosa and Tudge (2013) explained this as "the most proximal setting, with particular physical characteristics, in which a person is situated, such as the home, child care, playground, and place of work, and in which the developing person can interact in a face-to-face way with others" (p. 246). Comments from all three groups of participants generally focused on the school as the site where their interactions were taking place. As a result, many of the codes focused on school-based activities. One example of a theme that came from interviews with teachers is "affects parents' trust and confidence in schools." This theme shows how the teachers who stayed at the school felt obligated to account for the actions of their colleagues who had departed. They were aware of the possible negative impacts on children's parents, who were impacted by staff turnover. Codes under this theme include "trust," "confidence," "issues," and "problems."

Parents also offered the opportunity to examine the mesosystem of child development, since they commented on the interplay of two microsystems: the home and the school. Rosa and Tudge (2013) described the mesosystem in relation to the microsystem: "rather than the activities and interpersonal roles and relations occurring within a single microsystem, they occur across settings" (p. 246). Parents were uniquely situated to provide insight on the multiple effects of teacher attrition on their children's activities at home and school (academic performance, behaviors while at school, etc.). For example, one theme that emerged about the mesosystem level is "Affects children's behavior when teachers depart." This theme includes codes such as "absence," "missing," and "attachment," based on parents' descriptions of how their children were impacted by teacher turnover in their preschool classroom.

In general, participants did not reference many exosystem level influences, which refers to a setting the developing person does not actively participate in, but which can affect them (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). In the case of the preschool children that are the focus of my study, the exosystem could refer to their parents' work environment, as well as the home environment of the teachers and school leaders at their school. Children do not experience these settings directly, but they could have an impact on their lives through the choices their teachers, school administrators, or parents make.

Participants also did not make many references to the broader social and political context, which Bronfenbrenner (1979) described as the macrosystem. Rosa and Tudge (2013) referred to this system as the "institutional systems of a culture or subculture, such as the economic, social, education, legal, and political systems" (p. 247). For the most

part, our interviews focused on the child's more immediate environment, and we did not discuss the broader economic or policy context of India.

The fourth step of Braun and Clarke's (2006) analysis was reviewing the themes, for which I determined if the themes corresponded to the codes uncovered in the previous phases. The fifth phase was defining and naming themes; I continued to refine and modify the themes based on the data that emerged from the participants' responses (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I grouped together themes that had the same meanings and named them accordingly, and I also coded the corresponding participant responses under the appropriate themes. For example, the theme of managing increased work responsibilities was referenced by several of the school leader and teacher participants. Codes under this theme include "physical and emotional well-being," "additional classes," and "additional responsibilities." Table 1 below offers a more thorough list of codes and themes.

Following the thematic analysis, I entered the coding files into NVivo12 to organize and tabulate participant responses under each theme; the software was significant in determining major themes (those that received the greatest number of references) and minor themes (those that received fewer but still repeated references). I also identified specific examples shared by the participants in relation to the major and minor themes of the study. Two statements with one reference only were also included in the discussion as discrepant cases, in order to fully identify all perceptions and experiences shared by the participants. This was helpful in seeing the differences in the participants' perceptions and experiences as they answered the interview questions.

Appendix F contains the complete coding tables used in addressing the three research questions. The tables contain the assigned codes, emergent themes, and the sample responses per theme. I also indicated whether the themes refer to microsystem (MI), mesosystem (ME), exosystem (ES), or macrosystem (MA) factors. Finally, the last phase was producing this report, which I present in Chapter 5 of this study.

Results

In this section, I present the results as they pertain to the study research questions, including themes supported by the participants' verbatim responses. This section is organized according to the three research questions and the participant groups interviewed for the study.

Participants' Perspectives on the Influence of Attrition on Private Early Childhood Schools

With the first research question, I explored the study participants' perspectives on how attrition influences the teachers, parents, school leaders, resources, and operations of private early childhood schools. I interviewed three sets of participants, four each of teachers, parents, and school leaders. All the interviewed teachers and school leaders highlighted the direct effect of managing increased work responsibilities as teachers leave their position. The majority of parents believed that teacher attrition negatively impacts the parents' trust and confidence in schools. Research Question 1 focuses on the stakeholders who occupy the microsystem of the school: teachers, parents, school leaders, and children. However, as Appendix F Table F1 coding of research question 1 indicates, there are also mesosystem and exosystem impacts reflected in these codes.

Group 1: Teachers. The first group of participants shared three themes regarding how attrition influences teachers, parents, school leaders, and schools' resources and operations in private early childhood education. Most of the interviewed teachers believed that attrition greatly increased workloads and work responsibilities in the microsystem layer; in particular, the teachers reported how these changes in their responsibilities affected their mental and physical health as well as their daily time management and scheduling. Less frequently cited themes emerged as well regarding the impacts of teacher attrition on teachers: (a) effects on schools' knowledge flows and process continuity; and (b) effects on parents' trust and confidence in schools. I will only be discussing the major themes with the most responses here; the other themes can be found in individual tables. Table 2 displays all the themes related to the first research question as shared by the teachers interviewed for this study.

Table 2

Themes Addressing Research Question 1 (Teachers)

Themes	Number of references	Percentage of references
Managing increased work responsibilities * *Affects teachers' mental and physical health* * *Time constraints*	4	100%
Affects schools' knowledge flows and process continuity	2	50%
Affects parents' trust and confidence in schools	2	50%

**Note: Specific Example/s*

Major Theme 1: Managing increased work responsibilities. The first major theme to emerge in this study was the effect of teachers' needing to manage increased workloads and responsibilities in the microsystem layer. All four teacher respondents

stated that the remaining teachers are left with the duties and tasks of the teachers who abruptly leave their classes and positions; they shared the difficulties they faced when other teachers left unexpectedly, including without notice. Teacher 1 stated that, in her current school, numerous teachers had unexpectedly resigned. The interviewed teacher then shared how she was left with no choice but to manage two classes with two planners, two curricula, and a different set of children. Her long list of daily responsibilities and duties for the children became taxing in the long run:

> Many times, this situation has arisen … It was a big challenge initially with me because when I joined in ... I was supposed to take a particular class, but then what happened was due to some reason, the class teacher left, and it was like me shuffling between two classes throughout the year; so, it was very difficult for me. It was a great challenge for me to follow two planners, two curriculums, and a different set of children; it was difficult for me but then I took it up as a challenge because I knew that somewhere I had to face it. I had to take it, so it was a little difficult for me, difficult in the way like there were two separate classes which I was managing in one class. I had to follow two different planners in the same class for two set of children. (Teacher 1, personal communication, September 24, 2018)

Similarly, Teacher 2 added how teacher attrition greatly affected the remaining teachers; ultimately the teachers have no say in the additional responsibilities that are subsequently assigned to them. In addition, Teacher 2 shared that another concern was communication with the children. The teachers shared that as new and unfamiliar

teachers taking over another's class, they found it challenging and time-consuming to get to know the children and address their needs accordingly:

> It impacts the other teachers as well because they start to get additional responsibilities and we get additional classes. There are already so many responsibilities on your head, and now you have to take care of another class. And you do not know the ins and out of that class. See if I am required to take that class, I do not know what has been done I do not know what is the routine of the child. Especially the snack time … this is where the teacher knows best about the child than the new teacher. (Teacher 2, personal communication, September 24, 2018)

Teacher 3 explained how overall classroom processes and routines change when teachers leave during the school year. She also touched on the need to manage added tasks such as the planner and the children left with no teacher. Lastly, Teacher 3 discussed that the teachers built relationships and bonds with each other and that sudden departures also affected faculty morale:

> Surely it will affect them because as the work is divided if there is only one teacher in a class and before there were two ... it all comes to that one teacher only …. So, it becomes difficult for her because now she has to handle everything. First, the work was divided into two, now only one has to manage everything …. it becomes difficult at a times [*sic*] to handle the children and to handle the planner which she has to follow in the class. We are working for so long and we

> are bonded to each other ... So, we really miss the teacher who is leaving. (Teacher 3, personal communication, September 24, 2018)

Lastly, Teacher 4 shared the processes at his current school. The school had very few teachers, and attrition was thus a tremendous problem for those who remained after it happened. Teacher 4 discussed how the remaining teachers had to work together to cover the responsibilities of teachers who left:

> Over here, there is no extra teacher. There is only one teacher for pre-nursery, there is only one teacher for nursery, there is only one teacher for K1. So, if even one teacher leaves, it falls upon the other teacher to handle everything. They tell us that "you take this class, half of the class you handle this. If they are having the tiffin time then ask the maid to settle them. Make sure that you come to the pre-nursery and make them settle." It's like handling their class and handling their work. It becomes very difficult for them to find another teacher...or hunt for another teacher who is as good as that old teacher ... but I feel the entire work pressure comes on that particular teacher because of it ... That particular teacher has to do overtime and finish her work as well as we missed out teacher's work. So obviously, it really affected the other teacher. (Teacher 4, personal communication, September 24, 2018)

Example 1: Effects on teachers' mental and physical health. One example that arose under the major theme was shared by Teacher 1: The heavy workloads can become unmanageable and lead to mental and physical health effects, an influence experienced in both the microsystem and the exosystem. Teacher 1 had suffered extreme mental and

physical stress from a prior sudden increase of his workload. She shared how her blood pressure had become unstable and how she had been always mentally distracted as she attempted to process all her responsibilities:

> This [teacher leaving abruptly] in turn affected me. I felt sick and my BP used to shoot up, and I used to just keep on thinking like my K1's I have to do this …. Oh my god again the K2 I have to do this …. That used to work on in my mind …. Even when I used to go home, I was thinking about that I did this with K1 and this is pending, I have to finish that tomorrow… So, I was really mentally …. it went on in my mind constantly …. I was mentally disturbed because I could feel that justice was not done from my side. (Teacher 1, personal communication, September 24, 2018)

Example 2: Time constraints. Another example that emerged was the new time constraints that faced the remaining teachers because of their increased and heavier workloads. This again represents a crossover of microsystem and exosystem influence. Teacher 2 reported that the sudden departure of a teacher left the remaining teachers with new tasks and responsibilities, and this took time beyond what the teachers needed to prepare for their own classes. Teacher 2 shared an example of how her schedule had become irregular and her work hours had increased:

> Then they are the challenges that the time slot. For example, I finish at two thirty and then the out time is at three thirty, but because of the additional workload, I sometimes have to stay back till seven o'clock. Because I have to manage both the classes; I have to look at the decoration for this class, and I have to look for the

decoration for that class. (Teacher 2, personal communication, September 24, 2018)

Group 2: School Leaders. The second set of participants was four school leaders; eight themes emerged in their interview responses that pertained to the first research question of this study: one major and three minor themes. Three of the four interviewed school leaders indicated that attrition affected the workloads and responsibilities of the remaining teachers; they also shared that the remaining teachers' mental and physical health and their productivity and competence were negatively affected by these increased burdens. The three minor themes that emerged were that teacher attrition (a) affected parents' trust and confidence in schools, which (b) led to the misuse of schools' resources and (c) affected schools' knowledge flows and process continuity. Table 3 contains the breakdown of themes from the school leaders' interview responses that pertained to research question 1.

Table 3

Themes Addressing Research Question 1 (School Leaders)

Themes	Number of references	Percentage of references
Managing increased work responsibilities **Affects teachers' mental and physical health* **Affects teachers' productivity and competence of teachers*	4	100%
Affects parents' trust and confidence in schools	3	75%
Misuse of schools' resources **Constantly training irregular faculty and staff* **Needing to overwork other school staff members*	3	75%
Affects schools' knowledge flows and process continuity	2	50%

**Note: Specific Example/s*

Major Theme 2: Managing increased work responsibilities. The second major theme that emerged from the interviewees' responses was the need to manage increased workloads and work responsibilities due to teacher attrition at the microsystem level. For three of the four school leaders interviewed, it was indeed very challenging to manage the work left by departed teachers. In particular, the school leaders discussed the remaining teachers' resulting heavy workloads, their associated mental and physical health, and their overall productivity and competence. School Leader 1 stated that, simply put, two factors are usually affected by teacher departure: managing the syllabus and managing the related stakeholders: "The biggest challenge is managing the curriculum, parents, and the remaining staff. The remaining staff especially are overloaded with work" (School Leader 1, personal communication, September 26, 2018).

Example 1: Effects on teachers' productivity and competence. One example that emerged under this theme was the effects of remaining teachers' increased workloads on their overall productivity and competence. Three school leaders shared how the remaining teachers' divided focus and attention affected their efficiency. In particular, for School Leader 2 the main disadvantage of teacher attrition was the new and burdensome tasks that eventually drained the teachers left behind and decreased their efficiency. This school leader further noted that the teachers who remain lack the energy to be creative and innovative in their lesson planning and presentation, which then affects education quality as well:

> Like, the teacher's efficiency is reduced because if the other teacher would have been present in the class, she would have worked with the children with a lot of

> enthusiasm and with a lot of ideas coming to her mind. “Ok, let me try this new activity; let me do something new with the children that they like.” All that gets disturbed because then teachers would have that kind of a mentality … “Where I'm anyways the only one in the class ... why should I do something new for the children? Let’s just follow the way it is. I don't want to do anything new, anything innovative...” So that again gets hampered ... So, the teacher's mentality becomes to let it be “I don't try anything new, then again it leads to a downward curve in the creativity of the teacher. That’s the whole point: that the teacher is in the school because she is creative and she knows how to handle children. So that they again get hampered. (School Leader 2, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

School Leader 3 provided another example of how teachers’ efficiency is affected. With the extra tasks and responsibilities, the remaining teachers and their staff members have less time overall for all work duties, leading to delays in school activities and other schedule matters:

> It does affect the efficiency when it comes to time, time-bound activities which are expected from you. Like if you have a set time that within this time you need to complete this task and your resources are less, so you need to have an extension at times; you can't do that thing in the delivered expected time ... reason being the resources are not available at that time. So, time-bound specific task … such as a, for example, we need to decorate the child classroom according to the theme of the day or the theme of the month; we need to set the classroom. So, with one

> teacher it is not possible, she needs help, so then obviously who will help? One of the staff or one of the *didi* (maid)? It's a live example. We have … like, we had a task that was supposed to be done on Saturday but we couldn't do it—reason being less of manpower and the time was not there, so it had to be spilled over to Monday. (School Leader 3, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

Finally, School Leader 4 highlighted how it is not easy to replace teachers who leave. He explained that the process is usually lengthy and that the remaining teachers and staff members must continuously adjust to accommodate the additional workload:

> Absolutely its effects ... we start as a team with the teachers, and we start on board, and suddenly one or two drops out. It gets a burden for the rest of the teachers, and by the time a new teacher comes in, it's a long gap to get a new teacher who will fit into this. Then again, the teachers who have a bonding internally because there are two teachers in a class, and they are bonding, and their working relationship … again, you have to start from scratch. So ideally what happens with a teacher who remains, the class is a big setback, and she is like worried now that it is a big burden for me. So, the replacement is not that fast for preschool teachers. (School Leader 4, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

Example 2: Effects on teachers' mental and physical health. The second example that emerged under the theme was the effects of the increased workloads on the remaining staff members' mental and physical health. As mentioned above with reference to teachers, mental and physical health represent both a microsystem and an exosystem

influence. School Leader 2 shared how the remaining teachers and school's leaders were usually are the ones left to manage children, lessons, and even parents, including their complaints about the change of teachers. This participant described one remaining teacher who experienced mental and physical fatigue from assuming the role of the original teacher:

> Then, of course, it affects the school leader as well because the school leader is answerable to all parents of that particular preschool. So that gets affected as well plus the teacher who is now taking care of the children, who is all alone. It affects her mental health, and physically she is exhausted, and that leads to a lot of other things as well. (School Leader 2, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

Group 3: Parents. The third group interviewed was composed of parents; two themes emerged—one major and one minor—from the analysis of their interview responses. For most of the parents, teacher attrition affected their trust and confidence in their children's schools; a less-frequently cited observation was that sudden teacher departures also affected children's behavior. Table 4 contains the themes from the parents' responses that pertained to the first research question of the study.

Table 4

Themes Addressing Research Question 1 (Parents)

Themes	Number of references	Percentage of references
Attrition affects parents' trust and confidence in schools	3	75%
Attrition affects children's behavior when their teachers depart	2	50%

Major Theme 3: Effects on parents' trust and confidence in schools. The third major theme of the study was the influence of teacher attrition on parents' trust and confidence in their children's schools. This impacted the microsystem and mesosystem layers, as it impacted the school environment, as well as the child's home environment. Three of the four parent participants believed that constant teacher could have troubling causes that school leaders needed to be addressing. They also shared that it was difficult for children to adjust to different teachers, which could have long-term consequences for their overall growth and progress.

Parent 1 shared her personal experience when her child's teacher left in the middle of the school year; she reported that initially very difficult for him to settle down and behave in school. One teacher had been able to bond with her son and control his behavior, but this teacher had left abruptly and without notice, and her son had been greatly affected. This parent expressed how she became anxious every time her child left for school because the other teachers could not manage him in the same way as his original teacher:

> One teacher left and she was the teacher who had settled my child. So, after that, he came every day to school and asked, "Where is that teacher?" So, I had to tell him that she has gone home or that she is not well. So, when the new teacher came, he did not go to her because he was used to the other teacher... Again, the staff has changed. The children were running around in the class; they did not know what to do, and the teachers could not handle them ... After that particular teacher who had left, she was very good ... And then after that, everything has

> changed. Specifically, I think children get very unsettled as they form an emotional bond.
>
> Yes definitely. Because I had a fear because it took him fifteen days to settle. And then suddenly the next day you come to know that the teacher is not there. So, I was like "What now" Will he start crying again? Will he not settle in school? Will he not show that much of concentration that he had and that he was so happy going to school?" So, I lost trust and was afraid. Trust because as a parent I was promised of consistency in staff, and there was also fear as I was constantly worried if my child would have eaten at school, or stay calm and still in class as he had taken time to settle, and when he has settled again, a change had set in. Very often it was seen that children were hitting each other, and the new teacher didn't seem to care, and the new teacher was transferred from another class. She had probably the stress of handling two classes at the same time, so she didn't seem to care too much even if children hit each other. (Parent 1, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

Parent 2 added that it takes time for the parents to build good, trusting relationships with the teachers and that thus, if teachers constantly leave after building strong bond with the parents, the parents come to find it difficult to entrust their children to new and unfamiliar faces:

> It depends on what rapport she has built with the parents. So, if a new one is coming in ... it takes a little longer to build in the same rapport, and you don't

> even know whether you can build the same rapport or not. So definitely it does get affected. (Parent 2, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

Finally, Parent 4 shared her experience of how attrition had affected her as a parent. She explained that she believed that teachers have the greatest impact on a young child's development and that when teachers constantly change, they cannot fully learn and address children's needs. This parent even reached the point of asking her school's leader to return her money because she truly believed that the school was not doing its part in hiring competent and capable educators:

> When so much attrition happens, I came to a point where I reached the head office: 'So, if so much attrition, gives me the money back. I don't want to keep my child here. I will manage something.' It has also gone to a stage also where they said, 'How does that impact?' Of course, it impacts the child, because I know what kind of teacher I am offering to my child. It is not the school that you go for…. it is a teacher that you go for; at least I believe that because that is what will bring the result. The stone wall and a fancy school will not give you a result if it doesn't have the fabulous teachers there, and I knew the teacher from way before. So, and that was the reason why I was ready to pay the money upfront. That says it all, so it did impact me a lot when this attrition happens. (Parent 4, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

Participants' Perspectives on How Attrition Affects Students' Development and Achievement in Private Early Childhood schools

The second research question explored the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders on how attrition influenced students' development and achievement in private early childhood schools. All the teachers, school leaders, and parents believed that teacher attrition greatly affects the students' emotional and learning needs especially once they have formed close bonds and relationships with the said teachers.

Group 1: Teachers. The majority of teacher participants believed that attrition indeed affected the children because they were left with the aftereffects of their broken attachment and closeness when their teachers departed. In particular, these participants believed that children usually felt uncomfortable and unstable during teacher transitions and that their socialization and communication skills were disturbed as well. These influences represent both microsystem and mesosystem effects, as they impact the children in both the home and school environments. Table 5 presents the themes that emerged from the teachers' interview responses pertaining to the second research question of the study.

Table 5

Themes Addressing Research Question 2 (Teachers)

Themes	Number of references	Percentage of references
Aftereffects of extreme attachment and closeness **Feeling uncomfortable and unstable during the transition (crying, unsettled)* ** Socialization and communication skills are affected*	3	75%

**Note: Specific Example/s*

Major Theme 4: Aftereffects of extreme attachment and closeness. The fourth major theme of the study was that children tended to suffer when their primary teachers departed; three of the four teacher participants shared how children were unstable for a period of time, crying and being unsettled in class as they adjusted to their new teachers. Another observation was that abrupt teacher departures disrupted students' socialization and communication skills.

Example 1: Feeling uncomfortable and unstable during the transition (crying, unsettled). The first example of the study is the children's feelings of discomfort and instability during the transitions from their old to their new teachers. The teachers in this study believed that once students grew attached to their original teachers, it was very difficult for them to adjust to and accept replacement teachers. Teacher 2 shared that the biggest challenge for the new teachers was attempting to meet parents' expectations, while matching the kindness and skills demonstrated by the previous teachers. She described an example of a child who had been progressing but whose development experienced a setback when her original teacher left abruptly:

> The teacher is very attached to the class. She has made the class very interesting ... a person like me, or a teacher who is very enthusiastic, very nice and loving to watch the kids. It is impacting the child because the kids are very small. They only have their mum and now they have started socializing; so, they are starting to see the other person apart from their mum, so it becomes a very different impact on the child when the teacher leaves.

> The children actually get sick; they puke, and they are uncomfortable in the class. When the kids are disturbed, they argue, and they stop socializing. Have a really good example: My cousin sister's daughter goes to a daycare in Navi Mumbai. I will not tell you the name or even the child's name or the teacher's name. "The kid was so attached to the teacher and the teacher left the job in three months that my sister's daughter didn't speak for the last six months." She was communicating very well at that time but now all communication has gone down as well. (Teacher 2, personal communication, September 24, 2018)

Teacher 3 gave another example of how children's moods and attitudes change with unfamiliar teachers, such as to when a teacher suddenly leaves in the middle of the school year. Attrition is especially challenging when the teachers and students have already formed a bond:

> Sometimes it happens that a child who has just joined the school and he is very comfortable one with one teacher, and that teacher is not present on that day. He will search for her, and when he doesn't find her, he starts crying. Then he is not in the mood because that teacher is not there to whom he or she will go to. So, it becomes difficult for the child to settle in on that day, and for the teacher also to make the child settled on that day is difficult. (Teacher 3, personal communication, September 24, 2018)

Lastly, Teacher 4 echoed the other two participants by sharing her own observations. She believed that the children, their families, and classroom helpers always wonder where their original teachers have gone when they do not see them after some

time. And when it is confirmed that the teacher has left, the children act atypically and are unsettled, even crying continuously and refusing to go back to school:

> But it happens a lot of times that after being so emotional and even the parent being so well connected, even if I go and drop that child, they ask me that haven't that teacher come. It even happens with the parent, it happens with the child, it happens with the father, it happens with the maid. That emotional connection happens.
>
> If in case the teacher leaves all of a sudden, it really affects the child psychology, the child gets unsettled. Child has to complete the whole preschool; child needs to be settled from day one and made comfortable. But if a teacher leaves, you have to do it all again, and the child misses that figure. Because of that, the child doesn't want to come to the school, the child starts crying. Even the mama says that "My child doesn't want to go." Because of that, there are health issues of the children; they actually become so unwell, and they want the teacher; then coming to school is for that teacher only. I do not know about others, but I feel that it plays a very major child's mind; the child gets unsettled. It really affects the child I will say. (Teacher 4, personal communication, September 24, 2018)

Group 2: School Leaders. All the interviewed school leaders believed that the children suffer the most from teacher attrition; as with the other groups, leaders had observed that children felt uncomfortable and unstable as they adjusted to new teachers. A minor theme that emerged was the belief that teacher attrition leaves the children's learning perspectives disordered, which particularly influences the microsystem. Table 6

contains the themes from the school leaders' analyzed interview responses pertaining to research question 2.

Table 6

Themes Addressing Research Question 2 (School Leaders)

Themes	Number of references	Percentage of references
Aftereffects of extreme attachment and closeness **Feeling uncomfortable and unstable during the transition*	4	100%

**Note: Specific Example/s*

Major Theme 5: After effects of extreme attachment and closeness. The fifth major theme of the study was the school leaders' belief that children suffered from the aftereffects of extreme attachment and closeness to their teachers; specifically, the participants had observed children's discomfort during teacher transitions. School Leader 1 asserted that children suffer from the constant teacher changes, especially ones they have formed strong bonds with. Children miss their teachers and find it difficult to adjust to their normal routines and activities:

> From the emotional and social perspective, if I have to say, during the settling period the child develops that bonding with one particular teacher; now that teacher is gone, the child will start missing the teacher. Because he has created that rapport with her, then he will find difficulty in adjusting. Gradually he will, but then that would be a forceful acceptability. So, these are some of the ways how children can get impacted. (School Leader 1, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

School Leader 2 added that children usually take time to get comfortable and open up to their teachers. He explained that when teachers are constantly changing, the students have no choice but to adjust and create bonds, which could eventually affect their overall progress and development:

> It has big effects ... If they are attached to one particular teacher and that teacher suddenly leaves, the child gets very uncomfortable, the child feels insecure because, you know, he or she builds that comfort zone with that particular teacher. So, a child gets unstable, but that's only a temporary thing. Later on, when the teacher is replaced; again, he takes time to build up that bond, but once the bond is built up… (School Leader 2, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

Lastly, School Leader 4 also explained how young children have difficulty adjusting to changes in their environments, particularly when they are outside of their comfort zones. Young children see their teachers and classmates as their families, and when teachers are constantly changing, children may find it difficult to accept the incoming teachers and create unique and effective relationships:

> As a school head, I feel that when teachers leave and go, especially in the midterm for whatever features and factors that you get in other schools… it damages trust of the parents, trust of the children, because the children look up to the teacher and in preschool, they get so attached to the teacher that if a different face is shown it creates big vacuum for the child. As simple as a maid change in the classroom creates a vacuum for a child. So, a teacher is a big person, and then the parents get insecure, and then the parents complain about it ... Like I am

> currently losing out on three teachers, I have already lost them for whatever reason, and it has made a big impact because then the parents are watching them. It makes a big impact. (School Leader 4, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

Group 3: Parents. The final group of participants had varying beliefs on how children are affected by teacher attrition; the parents' responses revealed their key concerns, which focused on how children's learning perspectives were disrupted by teacher turnover and they suffered the aftereffects of their attachment and closeness to the teachers within both the microsystem and the mesosystem layers. Similar to the previous themes, the parents observed changes in their children's socialization and communication skills and their feelings of discomfort and instability during teacher transitions; parents reported that children would cry, feel sick, and refuse to go to school. Meanwhile, only one parent reported that teacher attrition did not affect her child because the child was too young to understand changes in her environment. All the themes that emerged from the parents' interviews pertaining to the third research question received comments from only 50% or less of the total sample population. Therefore, there is a need to conduct more research to confirm these data. Table 7 shows the breakdown of the themes from the analysis of the parents' responses.

Table 7

Themes Addressing Research Question 2 (Parents)

Themes	Number of references	Percentage of references
Children's learning perspectives are confused	2	50%
	2	50%
Aftereffects of extreme attachment and closeness **Socialization and communication skills are disrupted* **Feeling uncomfortable and unstable during the transition (crying, unsettled)*		

**Note: Specific Example/s*

Factors Important to Teacher Retention in Private Early Childhood Schools

The third research question of the study related to the factors that the teachers, parents, and school leaders identified as important for retaining teachers in private early childhood schools. All groups of participants shared rich and meaningful perspectives on how teachers may be retained. All teachers interviewed believed in the effectiveness of promoting positive workplace relationships to encourage the teachers to stay in their respective positions. Meanwhile, all school leaders suggested the possible positive effects of the provision of rewards, compensation, and an increased salary to the teachers. Finally, parents had varying recommendations which centered on the proper salaries of the teachers, a need for training and development, and the stipulation of the teachers' minimum length of stay in their contract.

Group 1: Teachers. All interviewed teachers believed that teachers will be encouraged to stay at their schools if positive workplace relationships are promoted at the microsystem level; strong relationships can be promoted by building good teamwork and relationships among staff members, communicating openly with the teachers, and

practicing fair and equal treatment. Other important factors were unveiled but received fewer references than the major theme. Three participants suggested the need to match teachers' workloads with proper salaries, and two shared other suggestions: (a) being flexible with teachers' schedules; (b) reducing workloads (logbooks, events); and (c) providing teaching freedom and independence. These factors represent a confluence of microsystem and exosystem influences; since they extend beyond the teachers' professional life to their home lives as well. Table 8 shows the themes pertaining to the teachers' views in response to the last research question of the study.

Table 8

Themes Addressing Research Question 3 (Teachers)

Themes	Number of references	Percentage of references
Promote positive workplace relationships	4	100%
**Build good teamwork and relationships among staff members*		
**Communicate openly with teachers*		
**Practice fair and equal treatment*		
Match teachers' workloads with proper salaries	3	75%
Be flexible with teachers' schedules	2	50%
**Provide work-life balance for teachers*		
Reduce workloads (logbooks, events)	2	50%
Provide teaching freedom and independence	2	50%
**Prevent pressure from management and parents*		

**Note: Specific Example/s*

Major Theme 6: Promoting positive workplace relationships. The sixth major theme of the study was the suggestion of the interviewed teachers to promote positive workplace relationships; the teachers believed that this could be achieved by building good teamwork and relationships among staff members, communicating openly with the

teachers, and practicing fair and equal treatment. The interviewed teachers identified the importance of a positive atmosphere at work, especially in terms of rapport and relationships with colleagues.

Example 1: Building good teamwork and relationships among staff members. The first example of the study was the recommendation to build good teamwork and relationships among staff members; two teachers felt that it was important for school leaders to ensure that the teachers were getting along and communicating openly. Teacher 1 shared how teacher attrition was common in his school and said that one key cause was the lack of trust and coordination with the other staff members: "Some of them were not getting along with the HO people. I cannot say really what happened…" (Teacher 1, personal communication, September 24, 2018).

Teacher 3 maintained that it was vital for teachers to be exposed to happy and positive environments. Given the nature of the profession, with its heavy workloads and high pressure, teachers need strong relationships with each other. Support from both peers and school leaders will help reduce the weight of teachers' work and overall stress:

> Second, I think the environment should be happy for them. Actually, when you leave your home and come to a job and when you find stress in the environment, it is very difficult to stay there; the coordination between the teacher and the staff and the colleagues should be very good and positive. The teacher will adjust herself because she will enjoy, and when you enjoy your work you are happy, even though if you are paid less. If the environment is very good over in the school, she will be very happy because she will feel that increment will be there

> after a year, so she will wait. But if the environment is very negative … I will personally not work in a situation where there is politics or the teachers are not treated as a teacher or something like that. So, this may be the reason why. (Teacher 3, personal communication, September 24, 2018)

Example 2: Communicating openly with teachers. The second subtheme that emerged was the need to communicate openly with teachers. For one participant, teachers' perceptions and feedback were crucial for improving school processes and overall workplace conditions. By openly communicating and even offering counseling, school leaders will have the opportunity to learn about teachers' concerns and attempt to address them, in order to avoid more serious issues that could lead to departure:

> Counsel as in have talk with the teachers, not a one-side story; this side also has to be heard. Very frequently come and visit the center; understand the teacher's point of view. If you are in the center, then you have a personal bond with the teacher as a management point of view, as a HR point of view. See you only see me when you recruit me, and then I will only see you once I come to take the cheque, so you do not have the interaction. The management should have any interaction, like how we have in the corporate sector.
>
> Ask the teachers what the concern is—it is really about the salary matter. If she is a really good teacher, then you have to retain the teacher. See economically, nowadays salary is more important rather than how comfortable you are with the center or with the place … it is more how comfortable is the teacher. Sometimes the center manager talks really bad with the teachers, and she has no option to

discuss with another person. (Teacher 2, personal communication, September 24, 2018)

Example 3: Practicing fair and equal treatment. The last subtheme that emerged was the call for fair and equal treatment for all teachers. Teacher 4 believed that a positive working environment entailed impartial treatment of teachers, and this was important because teachers need to feel safe and protected by their colleagues to be encouraged to work for the school and achieve their main goal of providing quality education to the children. Teacher 4 also shared that fair and equal treatment builds teachers' confidence to try new and innovative strategies that could improve their teaching instruction:

> The head of a school should not be partial—the head of the school should be a person who is crisp and clear … That you are coming and telling me this then I have to understand, have to stand in your shoes and then understand. Not that I will take that particular thing and take it to another group and discuss it as a gossip; when this thing happens, the teacher loses that confidence and loses that trust from the center head, and the teacher will never be approachable. If this is happening, then I will only go there and that topic will come to another level only and it will be created as a gossip thing.
>
> So, I feel a center head should be issued a highly tab of confidentially…. rather than just saying ... "You should be confident center head, and you should be practicing on a daily basis." If somebody is coming and has been discussing something to me, I have to be fair enough … that I have to listen to that person

and not listening and telling and going and telling into some other level only. (Teacher 4, personal communication, September 24, 2018)

Group 2: School Leaders. All four school leaders suggested the need to motivate teachers through rewards and compensation and to match teachers' workloads with proper salaries at the microsystem level. These findings from the responses of the school leaders indicate their desire to adequately compensate and recognize the hard work and service of their teachers. Correspondingly, two participants believed that teachers' workloads must be reduced, positive working relationships must be promoted, and contracts must correctly and completely state the expectations from and responsibilities of the teachers; these two participants suggested that contracts must stipulate the teachers' minimum lengths of stay and service and the penalties for sudden resignation. Only the themes with the most references will be discussed in this section. The rest of the themes are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Themes Addressing Research Question 3 (School Leaders)

Themes	Number of references	Percentage of references
Motivate teachers through rewards and compensation	4	100%
Match teachers' workloads with proper salaries	4	100%
Reduce workloads (logbooks, events)	2	50%
Promote positive workplace relationships		
**Build good teamwork and relationships among staff members*	2	50%
Stipulate teachers' minimum lengths of stay in their contracts	2	50%

**Note: Specific Example/s*

Major Theme 7: Motivating teachers through rewards and compensation. The seventh major theme of the study was the suggestion to motivate teachers through rewards and other types of compensation. Four participants highlighted their desire for teachers to be rewarded for their genuine care for the children as well as their passion to provide quality education. School Leader 3 suggested that schools must think of ways to periodically relieve teachers' stress and pressure; this participant believed that teachers would appreciate outings and other relaxing activities:

> Probably take them out for an outing. Like we had a teacher's day, so we all went to Imagica. Teachers will also start bonding because here, it's more like they come to work and they go back home; so, it's very important the teacher's bond with the organization, and then they will start loving come into work; then the attrition is not a part and parcel of their lifeline. So, the teachers need to get that training, that multiple task handling techniques, that they need help. Like there are a lot of teachers who are good in their artwork [, and t] here are teachers who are excellent in the execution of the curriculum, but they are zero in artwork. So, they get stressed— "How do I balance both?" Just to train the teachers in their grey areas and understand what the problems are. Everyone has their own problems, so help them out. I feel then they will feel a little more relaxed if they are not in that tensed zone; that can help in lowering attrition. (School Leader 3, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

This example shows the interplay of the teachers' stress in the exosystem layer and creating a positive working environment at the microsystem layer.

Meanwhile, School Leader 4 expressed the need for activities and actions that would motivate teachers for continued hard work. This participant discussed how teachers, and staff members as well, must feel that they are well appreciated by the rest of the community. This school leader believed that appreciation could be demonstrated by additional pay, bonus, and other gestures that would make teachers feel valued:

> Also, there should be some kind of motivational things to be given to the teachers. If you are having events, celebration and activities or something like an exhibition, do something for the teachers; do something for the staff that they come here and do something for you. You cannot expect all these things to happen free of cost. So, motivation, motivation in kind of additional pay, motivational in reward form, motivation in a bonus form. Something has to be done, and of course it has to be told to the teacher prior … that this is how the school is going to go ahead. So, it should not be a surprise package. Once they join and they get scared and they leave ... that's what happens. (School Leader 4, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

Major Theme 8: Matching teachers' workloads with proper salaries. The eighth major theme of the study was the school leaders' suggestion to match teachers' workloads with proper salaries. All four school leader participants believed that teachers, especially those who accommodate others' classes as a result of teacher attrition, must be financially compensated. School Leader 1 admitted that teachers complained that their salaries were not commensurate with their heavy workloads; this school leader reflected

that teachers are often overworked but are not given the reward, recognitions, and even proper salaries that they deserve:

> They feel that the salary is less and the amount of work that they are supposed to do is more. Like this teacher, she is good and she's kind and she is with us within her working hours and she does whatever she could do; even if she is being divided, she is doing it, but if there could be any other teacher, she may not willingly do it. But she might say that 'I can't do,' so bye-bye. It depends on teacher to teach how much they are in need of job; how much they are passionate about learning. By giving them like for example equal salary for what they deserve because ultimately that is what they are working for. All of us work for that. (School Leader 1, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

Similarly, School Leader 2 emphasized the direct relationship between how much teachers work and their pay. For this participant, these are the two main reasons for teacher attrition that school leaders and key stakeholders need to address. The second school leader highlighted how teachers would appreciate if they are provided with monetary compensation given their endless hard work, dedication, and effort:

> I see different factors, especially the kind of workload. The workload that we have here is a vast in terms of the time that the teachers are here for. I feel it's too less. They are here from 8:30 to 3:30—that is the time of our teachers—but they have two batches to take care of. So, the last batch ends at 2:30, and they leave by 3:30; they get only one hour to do a whole lot of things.

> That is some of the major drawbacks … not drawbacks, but these are the major reasons I feel that teachers are leaving over here, workload and salary: They feel that the workload is not balanced with the salary that they are getting. Sometimes teachers even wait back until about five thirty to six o'clock. They are appreciated no doubt, but then the teachers would expect something in monetary terms rather than just appreciation. (School Leader 2, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

Group 3: Parents. The last set of participants, the parents, again had varying perspectives on what would encourage more teachers to remain in their schools; from the thematic analysis of the interviews, the parents had numerous recommendations that would help reduce teacher attrition for the benefit of their children in the microsystem and the mesosystem layers. Two participants believed that school leaders and key policymakers must (a) match teachers' workloads with proper salaries; (b) provide proper training for teachers; and (c) stipulate minimum lengths of stay in teachers' contracts. Table 10 contains the complete breakdown of the themes from the parents' interviews in response to the final research question.

Table 10

Themes Addressing Research Question 3 (Parents)

Themes	Number of references	Percentage of references
Match teachers' workloads with proper salaries	2	50%
Provide proper training programs	2	50%
Stipulate minimum lengths of stay in teachers' contracts	2	50%

From the themes presented above, it can be observed that the three sets of participants had similar perceptions and beliefs about the causes and influences of teacher attrition in private early childhood schools in India. It was evident from the findings throughout the chapter that the teachers and school leaders agreed on the heavy workloads that teachers who remain at a school must face when one teacher leaves a position abruptly, and both teachers and school leaders verified how the remaining teachers' physical and mental health are greatly affected. This is because the remaining teachers have no choice but to step up and work as a team to fulfill the previous teacher's duties and responsibilities. Meanwhile, however, the parents' main concern was the inconsistency of schools' management that decreased their trust and confidence.

With regard to the second research question, again, the teachers, school leaders, and parents found that attrition indeed influence children's development, particularly when the students have formed strong, trusting bonds with their teachers; all sets of participants agreed on how attrition leaves students to face the aftereffects of their extreme attachment and closeness. The teachers and school leaders identified how students left behind felt unsettled and distressed, and their socialization and communication skills regressed within the microsystem and the mesosystem. The parents had varying perceptions but highlighted that another effect of attrition is on how children learn and understand their lessons. With constant changes in teachers, teaching instructions and methods change as well, children get confused, and their development may be affected.

Lastly, probing the third and final research question led to multiple suggestions for promoting teacher retention based on the participants' personal experiences and observations. The interviewed teachers expressed their desire for positive workplace relationships; they maintained that a positive atmosphere and supportive colleagues, can reduce the stress from the added workloads and duties they face due to teacher attrition. The teachers wanted to build good teamwork and relationships among staff members and have opportunities to communicate openly with other teachers.

The school leaders' responses underscored the need for the teachers to be remunerated and rewarded for their hard work and effort; they wanted to motivate teachers through rewards and compensation and even match teachers' workloads with proper salaries. Finally, the parents again had varying responses but expressed the importance of the following suggestions: matching teachers' workloads with proper salaries, providing training, and stipulating minimum lengths of stay in contracts.

Discrepant Cases

To resolve the discrepant cases a careful recoding was done. The recoding however did not alleviate the discrepant cases and I reached out to the participants to verify the accuracy of the information, and to make sure their responses were recorded accurately. After determining accuracy, the two statements with one reference are presented below to fully identify all perceptions and experiences shared by the participants. This was helpful in seeing the differences in the participants' perceptions and experiences as they answered the research questions of the study. The findings represented the perspectives of school stakeholders in Mumbai, India regarding how

teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and the schools. I also looked to account for factors that stakeholders identified as important for retaining teachers. All teachers and school leaders identified the direct effect of teacher attrition to be remaining teachers' need to manage increased work responsibilities. The majority of the teachers, school leaders, and parents reported that teacher attrition indeed impacts the children's development and achievement. With the need to adjust to the new teachers after forming relationships and bonds with their former teachers; as well as accommodate to the new teaching strategies, the students are believed to be the ones who are mostly affected.

Teacher 2 referred to a child who had been communicating very well until her original teacher left:

> The kid was so attached to the teacher, and the teacher left the job in three months… my sister's daughter didn't speak for the last six months. She was communicating very well at that time, but now all communication has gone down as well. (Teacher 2, personal communication, September 24, 2018)

The parents' responses revealed their key concerns, which focused on how children's learning perspectives were disrupted by teacher turnover and they suffered the aftereffects of their attachment and closeness to the teachers. Meanwhile, only one parent reported that teacher attrition did not affect her child because the child was too young to understand changes in her environment. This was the second discrepant case. The above are discrepant cases that emerged indicating the effect of attrition on children's socialization and communication skills. The above may provide another perspective of

the influence of attrition on children's' development, but as these were the sole comments, they was treated as discrepant cases.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified four criteria to ensure a trustworthy qualitative study was performed. As presented in the previous chapter, I established the study's credibility by triangulating three different data sources. These were the interviews with the four teachers, four school leaders, and four parents. To ensure that the interview protocol was valid and relevant, the questions were pilot-tested with one teacher, one school leader, and one parent in the private early childhood education school. The pilot-testing process also contributed to establishing the internal validity of the research instrument. The subject matter expert evaluated the questions to establish the sufficiency of data collection instrument to answer my research questions. My thematic analysis of the interview transcripts uncovered the most common and relevant themes regarding the participants' perspectives and experiences with teacher attrition's influence in private early childhood schools. I also identified factors that stakeholders identified as important for retaining teachers. To further establish my study's credibility, I conducted participant validation through transcript review and member checks. I e-mailed each participant his or her interview transcript and data analysis summary so that respondents could check and review my interpretations, thus ensuring accuracy. I conducted peer debriefing as well, another technique suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to increase credibility. Peer-debriefing was helpful in solidifying the confirmability of the data results. This technique, sharing my conclusions with another for their views on my interpretations,

was essential in confirming that all data reflected only the study participants' responses (Hays & Singh, 2012) and not my personal biases.

Other standards in ensuring the development of high-quality qualitative studies were the dependability and confirmability of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which I achieved by keeping a reflective journal containing the record of my decisions and actions in completing the study. I also achieved dependability with the constant review of the raw data along with the new findings. The third criterion was data confirmability, which I accomplished by repeatedly examining and comparing the newly generated themes against the original data or transcripts. I performed data confirmability steps again to ensure that the results of the study all derived from the original data and not my personal biases and preconceptions (Polit & Beck, 2008). I adopted peer debriefing as a means of checking bias. The final criterion for confirming a credible qualitative study was transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), which I achieved by providing thick, rich descriptions and direct quotes from participants to provide evidence for the findings. By doing this, future researchers may apply the current study in other research settings or contexts (Polit & Beck, 2008).

Summary

The fourth chapter of the study contained the results from the thematic analysis of the interviews with the teachers, school leaders, and parents. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perspectives of school stakeholders in Mumbai, India regarding how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and the schools. I also looked to account for

factors that stakeholders identified as important for retaining teachers. I carefully followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis, with the help of NVivo12, in managing and finalizing the themes of the study.

The four systems of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory also greatly informed the data analysis process. As I was generating codes and then themes, I looked to see how participants' responses fit in with an analysis of teacher attrition at the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem levels. Different stakeholders were situated within these systems, and their comments helped to shed light on the impacts most directly affecting children (microsystem and mesosystem), as well as those in the outer layers (exosystem). I did not encounter any responses related to the macrosystem.

In response to the first research question, all teachers and school leaders identified the direct effect of teacher attrition to the remaining teachers with remaining teachers' need to manage increased work responsibilities. These participants believed that the increased workload also influences the teachers' mental and physical health, with the stress coming from time constraints and overflowing workload, while the majority of the parents identified how teacher attrition may lead to their decreased trust and confidence in schools due to their inability to retain and manage their own personnel.

Under the second research question, the majority of the teachers, school leaders, and parents reported that teacher attrition indeed impacts the children's development and achievement. With the need to adjust to the new teachers after forming relationships and

bonds with their former teachers; as well as accommodate to the new teaching strategies, the students are believed to be the ones who are mostly affected.

All three groups suggested different strategies on how teachers can be encouraged to stay and how teacher attrition can be reduced. All the teachers interviewed found the need to promote positive workplace relationships through active communication and interaction. All the interviewed school leaders also discussed the effectiveness of motivating the teachers through rewards and compensation; and matching the teacher workload with the right amount of salary. Finally, the parents had varying recommendations, which focused on providing teachers with the proper compensation based on their workload, development opportunities, and a clear contract stipulating their minimum length of service at the school. The last chapter of the study contains the discussion of the themes in relation to the literature, as well as the conclusions and recommendations I arrived at following study completion.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Teacher attrition can negatively affect children's learning by affecting continuity of instruction (Gallant & Riley, 2017; Newberry & Allsop, 2017); it can also negatively affect children's emotional well-being (Ponder & Beaty, 2009; Trach et al., 2018). Further, teacher attrition affects the remaining teachers through increased workloads and lower morale (Gallant & Riley, 2017; Towers & Maguire, 2017). The purpose of this study was to address a research gap by addressing teacher attrition in India, given that the majority of existing studies have been in Western contexts (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Dee & Goldhaber, 2017; Pek-Greer & Wallace, 2017). Through interviews with teachers, school leaders, and parents in private early childhood schools in India, I elicited participants' perspectives regarding the impacts of teacher attrition on students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and the schools.

I found that attrition in early childhood education affects students, their parents, and their teachers, and disrupts the educational environment. Below I will show how the literature review for this study generally agreed with the findings discussed below. Through interviews and thematic analysis of data collected through one-on-one semi-structured interviews, I found multiple factors that participants believed affected teacher retention. The interview questions for this study elicited teachers', school leaders', and parents' perspectives regarding the negative impacts of teacher attrition on their school communities and factors the study participants identified as increasing teacher retention.

The school as a microsystem was the focus of the comments by teachers, school leaders, and parents in their interviews. However, their concerns were quite different. The

teachers and school leaders were mainly concerned about increased responsibilities, which left them feeling overwhelmed by their increasing workload. At times, they also expressed the emotional burden they felt relating to the children in their care at the school. They feared that the quality of attention received by each child could easily suffer with their increased workload. On the other hand, parents expressed their concerns in relation to concepts such as confidence and trust, not as much in relation to the work situation of the teachers and administrators. They felt that teacher attrition had a detrimental effect on their children's well-being, which led them to question entrusting their children to schools that teachers want to leave abruptly. Importantly, teachers, school leaders, and parents were all significantly concerned about negative student-teacher separation effects when teachers leave their positions. The welfare of the children was a common theme expressed by all three groups of participants in the study. Children experience these influences within the microsystem and the mesosystem layers.

Once teacher retention was identified as a problem, I asked participants to reflect on ways to retain the teachers that keep all stakeholders happy with their school situation. Teachers, school leaders, and parents all identified proper salary-workload compensation as important for teacher retention. This variable is important on the microsystem level, as salary and workload are directly under the purview of the school. However, the exosystem is relevant in relation to these comments as well. For example, salary impacts teachers' purchasing power and thus the attractiveness of the profession and their individual work situation. Teachers and school leaders identified reduced teacher workloads and positive workplace environments as important for retaining teachers, and

school leaders and parents viewed minimum teaching contract lengths as important to teacher retention. However, teachers did not support such contract length minimums; in fact, they valued independence from management and parents. In the case of the parents, they viewed the mesosystem impacts in relation to the economic costs and benefits of enrolling their children at that particular private school.

In the rest of this chapter I will offer interpretation of the findings, which entailed comparing the themes that arose in the study participants' interview responses with findings from the literature review. In another section of this chapter, I discuss the limitations I encountered as I conducted the study. Then I discuss my recommendations for practice and future scholars. The last section of this chapter contains the implications of the study, followed by my conclusions.

Interpretation of the Findings

Research Question 1

The first research question was: What are the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders on how attrition influences the teachers, parents, school leaders, resources, and operations of private early childhood schools? The key theme I identified during analysis was the excessive workloads for the remaining teachers. The findings align with those of Cumming, Sumsion, and Wong (2015), as well as Buchanan et al. (2013), who identified excessive workloads as detrimental to teacher retention. Consistent with these findings, respondents in this study identified the need to reduce teacher workloads as significant.

Latifoglu (2016) identified misuse of school resources, specifically financial and human capital, as another negative consequence of teacher attrition. This theme manifests as overworking the teachers who remain and training irregular teachers to compensate for the loss of regular teachers, which maps onto the themes from this study of managing increased workloads and knowledge/process continuity. Latifoglu (2016) mentioned how diverting funds to support training due to teacher attrition can diminish previous fund allocations and demotivate other teachers. Latifoglu also mentioned how burdening the remaining teachers with unfamiliar subjects can reduce teaching quality.

Dunn et al. (2017) and Zinsser and Curby (2014) found that teacher attrition negatively affected parents' perspectives regarding schools; both groups of authors posited that schools with high teacher attrition rates are viewed as inferior in quality. Compared with the parents and the school leaders, the teachers were less concerned with parents' opinions of schools, possibly because the teachers are free to leave their schools. What concerned the teachers was managing increased work and responsibilities, and knowledge and process continuity. In the Glennie et al. (2016) study, participants were concerned about knowledge and process continuity, given that novice teachers face learning curve challenges. Glennie et al.'s finding was consistent with the concerns of 50% of the teachers and 50% of the school leaders in this study who were concerned about ruptures in knowledge and process continuity when teachers leave. In other studies, teachers were also concerned about parents' confidence in their schools (Goldhaber & Cowan, 2014; Nations, 2017; Wushishi et al., 2014). In my study, 75% of school leaders were concerned about misusing school resources. School leaders shared in the teachers'

concerns, but were additionally concerned about misusing school funds due to teacher attrition as also found by (Latifoglu (2016). Parents were mainly concerned because constant teacher changes influenced their perspectives and even their confidence in the schools and their administrators, which is in line with the findings of Cassidy et al. (2011).

Several authors (Cumming et al., 2015; Price & McCallum, 2015; Wushishi et al., 2014) identified the need to manage teachers' workloads from attrition because heavy workloads can cause physical illnesses. In the literature, I found concerns about teachers' mental and physical health connected to teacher attrition in their school environments: Cumming et al. (2015) posited that extra workloads could cause physical problems for teachers, while Wushishi et al. (2014) determined that extra workloads affect teachers' morale and school efficiency. In their research in Australia, Price and McCallum (2015) focused more on the concept of "fitness" to consider how teachers' retention is tied to their physical and mental well-being. The responses of the teachers and school leaders in my study were consistent with these study findings; some respondents were concerned about health problems due to heavy workloads, while others were concerned about reduced productivity.

The study participants' responses about the Indian context are generally consistent with the findings from studies carried out in Western countries (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Dee & Goldhaber, 2017; Price & McCallum, 2015), reflecting similar teacher stressors as well. Despite the similarities between the literature review

findings and the results in this study, the literature review findings do not identically reflect the unique teacher attrition problems in the Indian context.

Regarding the themes the respondents identified as affecting them with regard to teacher attrition, I found burnout theory (O'Hair & Kreps, 2013) to be relevant because teachers often resign from their positions, or from the teaching profession as a whole, due to the emotional, physical, or financial toll the profession takes on them. Also, Bronfenbrenner's EST helps to show how changes in one layer in the system (micro, meso, exo, or macro) affect the other layers in the system. In this context, since the study is ultimately concerned about the impacts of teacher attrition on children's development, the macrosystem or the school is the most impacted layer. However, high teacher attrition has a systemic effect throughout the school, including the leaders, teachers, staff members, parents, and the students. The influences on the mesosystem and exosystem layers are more evident in response to the second and third research questions.

Research Question 2:

The second research question was: What are the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders on how attrition influences students' development and achievement in private early childhood schools? The most notable theme in the respondents' views on the negative effects of teacher attrition on the students was the separation trauma the children experienced as a result of their extreme attachment and closeness with their teachers. Ponder and Beaty (2009) maintained that high teacher attrition negatively affects student-teacher bonds and creates emotional turmoil for students. This effect principally impacted children in the school microsystem, but teacher attrition could have

impacts on children's home as well. Interestingly, in this study, the teachers and school leaders saw this as more of an issue than did the parents, only half of whom viewed this as a problem.

On the other hand, parents were concerned about confusing children's learning perspectives with ever-shifting teachers, while the teachers and school leaders were not concerned about this. Following Ponder and Beaty (2009), if high teacher attrition creates emotional turmoil for students, it is possible that this emotional volatility could then disrupt students' learning. According to Commodari (2012), frequent changes in teachers negatively affected students' development and success in school. Teacher attrition may also negatively affect students' social skills (Gallant & Riley, 2017; Trach et al., 2018). Insights from these studies are consistent with the views of the respondents in this study that teacher attrition negatively impacts the students personally and developmentally.

Because only 50% of the parents felt that high teacher attrition led to separation anxiety and developmental problems, more research is needed on this theme. One parent claimed that preschool children are too young to be affected by teacher attrition, and interestingly, one teacher shared this view; this could suggest that given the same curriculum, teacher attrition does not affect children equally, if at all. While this view is not consistent with the findings from the studies I utilized for this paper, it may be worth examining in future research. Most of the major themes the respondents identified as being relevant to teacher retention are supported by the literature. There were two statements that were considered discrepant cases, but this does not necessarily discredit them; they may be unique to the problem of teacher attrition and the educational

environment in the Indian context. It may also be the case that there is simply not yet enough existing literature on teacher attrition in India.

Teachers, school leaders, and parents all viewed parents' trust and confidence in schools as significant. However, consistent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, the three groups also had different concerns, reflecting the subjective but systemic nature of how teacher attrition impacts all school stakeholders. Their perspectives vary somewhat based on their role in relation to the children at the preschool, as well as their position with the child's circles of proximal development (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). The themes uncovered in the current study point to two major impacts of teacher attrition: teachers who remain are left with an excessive workload, which can lead to mental and emotional stress. These impacts ripple throughout the school microsystem, with noticeable consequences for the stress and workload of teachers and school leaders, as well as parents' confidence in the smooth functioning of the school. In addition, delays in the learning development of the children is another key piece of evidence in viewing the negative impacts of teacher attrition. Teacher attrition is then believed to cause a disorder within the school processes and the functions of the organizations, slowly affecting the perspectives and experiences of the stakeholders toward the school and the quality of education provided.

Interestingly, teachers and school leaders agreed more on significant factors than either group agreed with the parents' conclusions. The significance of these shared views is that the teachers and school leaders generally perceived the same stressors to be problematic. By considering burnout theory (O'Hair & Kreps, 2013) in combination with

EST, this suggests that teachers and school leaders are likely to address these microsystem problems because they are more directly aware of the impacts on their work environment. Their greater awareness could improve conditions for teachers and reduce attrition.

Regarding the themes that the respondents felt affected the children, the micro level corresponded to the students' interactions in their classroom at their school, as well as their home environment. The mesosystem corresponds to interactions at the next higher level, where the school and home meet. The mesosystem could also refer to any phone or email interaction between parents and either a teacher or school leader. In this study, the respondents referred to children who suffered from emotional distress and social withdrawal due to teacher attrition. While this reflects microsystemic effects, school leaders and parents may also affect children at the mesosystem through their actions or inactions. For example, school leaders' mismanagement of teachers could exacerbate existing problems because teachers could suffer burnout or feel devalued, which would subsequently affect the students. Teachers' burnout or stress should be considered in relation to the exosystem, since they represent factors that do not impact the children directly, but instead are directly relevant to the teachers in their lives outside of their jobs.

Other factors outside the school can impact teacher attrition. For example, if a teacher leaves their job because their income is not sufficient to pay for their own child's education. This would be identified as an exosystem issue. Similarly, parental opinions could also influence school decision-making processes and policies, which could

indirectly affect the students. Parents' opinions could be influenced by any number of sources outside of the child's school and home environment, such as their work setting or other parents.

To mitigate the negative effects of teacher attrition at the micro level, students' separation anxiety must be addressed. Teachers, school leaders, and parents all shared their concerns for the students about the aftereffects of their extreme attachment and closeness to their teachers. It should be noted, however, not all respondents asserted that teacher attrition negatively affects children.

Research Question 3:

The third and final research question was: What factors do teachers, parents, and school leaders identify as important for retaining teachers in private early childhood schools? The microsystem theme of positive workplace relationships I found in this study is consistent with studies by Weiqi (2007) and Ndoye et al. (2010), who identified leadership and administrative support as important factors in teacher retention. Interestingly, whereas all four teachers identified positive workplace relationships as important for increasing retention, only two of the four school leaders shared this view. Instead, school leaders viewed rewards, incentives, and salary increases commensurate with workloads as the most important factors. This implies that school leaders saw the problem from more of a business perspective than as a personal or social perspective; it also suggests that school leaders do not understand teachers' concerns. This can be understood as poor leadership on the part of school administrators (Oke, Ajagbe, Ogbari, & Adeyeye, 2016). Given the research findings on the importance of leadership and

administrative support in teacher retention, poor leadership can be assumed to have negative implications for retention.

While respondent teachers in this study viewed income increases positively, they only did so in the context of salaries being commensurate with increased responsibilities. Other studies (Buchanan et al., 2013; Lynch, 2012; Verma, 2012; Weiqi, 2007) have identified adequate salaries as important factors in teacher retention. However, despite the importance of money, teachers in this study rated rewards and incentives as of low importance in their retention.

In addition to concerns about positive workplace relations, the theme of increased autonomy was important to the teachers; in fact, half of the teacher respondents preferred increased teaching autonomy. Anand and McKenney (2015) identified teacher autonomy as a key element in the professionalization of early childhood teachers in the Indian context. However, school leaders and parents did not prefer teacher autonomy; this could reflect leaders' and parents' desires to control teachers. Outside the Indian context, Lynch (2012), Verma (2012), Erss et al. (2016), and CGR (2018) identified teacher autonomy as important as well; schools that provided higher levels of teacher autonomy had higher-skilled teachers, higher-achieving students, higher retention rates, and better school environments.

Boyd et al. (2011) identified teachers' training as important for teacher retention. However, teacher training was one area where parents, teachers, and school leaders did not agree. For parents in this study, a significant theme was their belief that teachers needed proper training; it is possible that parents view teacher training as significant

because of their concerns over high turnover rates and their distrust of new, inexperienced teachers. However, it was noteworthy that teachers and school leaders in this study did not view training as important. School leaders may not have considered teacher training important because they believe they can mitigate losses by distributing more work on the remaining teachers. It is also possible that school leaders did not view training as important because they had plans to hire qualified and experienced teachers to fill vacated positions.

I did find discussions of minimum teaching contract lengths in some of the literature I reviewed for this study on India in particular. Chandra (2015) focused on the implications of contract teaching for teacher retention in public primary education in India. In her research, Chandra argued that "a dual system of pay (low salaries for contract teachers vis-à-vis regular teachers for the same work) impacts contract teacher motivation and morale with potentially damaging implications for the most disadvantaged children" (p. 248).

In their research on contract teaching in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Kerala, Terway and Steiner-Khamsi (2018) identified some macrosystem variation in the work conditions and professional status of contract teachers, depending on the state in which they work. They use these states as an example of India selectively borrowing these adjunct hiring policies from the global context. For example, they described that in Madya Pradesh, three-year contracts are "the standard for induction into the profession" (p. 212). Teachers who survive the period of the contract are typically offered a job, at which time their salary more than doubles, from Rs. 5,000 to 10,509 (p. 212). However,

in the state of Kerala, district-level authorities can extend one-year contracts, and then there is no standardized path to permanent employment. This state-by-state policy structure allows for great flexibility in hiring practices, but often leaves teachers in a precarious position.

In her analysis of recent developments in the professionalization of teaching in India, Gupta (2017) argued that the privatization of early childhood education, as well as these kinds of on-demand hiring practices, reflect the influence of global neoliberal economic trends on India's macrosystem. Gupta cautioned that the "quality of training might be compromised to a factory model of quick turnaround supply of 'teachers' who might lack passion or commitment to teaching, and may be swayed by incentives that position teaching as a gateway to a more lucrative career industry" (p. 234). The private preschools featured in this study represent the push-and-pull of these various forces on the teaching staff, which leads to higher attrition of teachers.

Importantly, the finding that parents and school leaders in this study, but not teachers, wanted to impose contract minimums reflect their desires for a policy approach (macrosystem) to reducing high turnover. The finding suggests that some school stakeholders see minimum contract lengths as tools to force teachers to stay in their positions, not as incentives to want to stay. The theme of schedule flexibility, which emerged in all three participant groups, is linked to the problem of excessive workloads caused by high turnover rates; several respondents cited this as a negative effect of attrition. Similarly, Ilies, Huth, Ryan, and Dimotakis (2015) reported that increased teacher workload did indeed produce other conflicts, not only in their work schedules but

also in their time with their families. To determine the consistency of the empirical findings with the literature, I also compared the themes that emerged from this study with nested levels or interrelated systems of the environment, as noted in Chapter 2.

In the context of early childhood development education, the teacher interacts with the child on a daily basis, providing a safe and healthy relationship and an environment for them to grow and prosper. According to Trach et al. (2018):

> Positive teacher–student alliances can be equally powerful in fostering students' positive social and emotional development. Supportive relationships with teachers are fundamental to healthy development across grade levels, perhaps especially for children with emotional and behavioural problems. (p. 13)

The themes that emerged in the study indicated that teacher attrition influences the students' emotional and learning needs, especially once they have formed close bonds and relationships with their primary teachers.

The microsystem for the early childhood educators is comprised of the classroom, with its diverse variables that affect job satisfaction. For the purposes of this study, these included the quality of interactions with students and their needs. The teachers in the study shared that, as new and unfamiliar teachers taking over another class due to attrition, they found it challenging and time consuming to get to know the children and address their needs accordingly.

One of the other factors in this study is that of the independence given to the teachers to make decisions in the proceedings of the classroom activities. This important microsystem-level factor affects teachers' job satisfaction. This is largely in the hands of

the school administration, as they decide how independently teachers may conduct classroom activities. Anand and McKenney (2013) defined the role of the school leader as "a coach and a guide to help problem solve, adapt and change practices in classrooms thereby building skills of the early childhood education teacher" (p. 89). The results of this study reveal that teachers derive more job satisfaction if this variable is in their favor, thus choosing to continue with their jobs and helping to prevent teacher attrition.

The mesosystem contains interactions between factions of the microsystem that occur when the child is absent. A parent's conversation with the child's teacher would occur in the mesosystem. Children's mesosystems might encompass weak relationships or the absence of necessary intimate connections, which can affect development outcomes (Ettekal & Mahoney, 2017; Houston, 2015). In the context of this study, the mesosystem is the layer that connects the individual microsystems of parents, school leaders, and teachers, making this level very relevant for understanding the influence of teacher attrition on children. Anand and McKenney (2015) also commented on how factors outside of the school environment, such as parent's opinions and the local community context, can deeply impact the school setting. They said:

> Local culture and beliefs about children and education, community dynamics, power relationships, expectations of a community from education (including preschool education) all have a great influence on the functioning of local ECE centers, the content taught as well as ways of teaching-learning. (p. 87)

This corresponds with the response of parents in the study, who stated that it takes time for parents to build good, trusting relationships with the teachers; thus, if teachers

constantly leave after building strong relationships with the parents, the parents come to find it difficult to entrust their children to new and unfamiliar faces.

The teacher's interactions with the mesosystem are more complex, as it includes his interactions with the classroom variables (microsystem), as well as with the interactions in the wider school setting; these affect his job satisfaction to a greater degree. A teacher makes decisions to continue in his job or leave it based on his overall workplace satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The themes that emerged in the study indicated that the teachers could not form collegial relationships with other teachers due to high attrition, the remaining teachers' mental and physical health and productivity and competence was negatively affected by the increased burden. Satisfaction derived from meaningful work, proper salaries, and positive workplace relationships may inform teachers' assessments of their careers and themselves.

The exosystem consists of components that are indirectly related to the student and whose effects contribute to his practices and experiences in the school situation even though he is not actively involved in its working. A teacher's experience in his or her workplace occurs within the exosystem. In this study, the remaining teachers stated that they are left with duties and tasks of the teachers who abruptly leave their classes and positions which, in turn, affected teachers mental and physical health and also led to working extended hours. Moreover, the employers determine the teachers' level of pay, the flexibility of their working role and hours. Although the developing child is not an active participant in this scenario, decisions are clearly being made which influence his/her experiences in the school setting.

Finally, another element of the exosystem is comprised of the school board, since the decisions taken by this board affect the working of the school and the practices followed there (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The teachers in the study stated that they had no independence with reference to curriculum and instruction and there should be impartial treatment of teachers by their superiors, thereby building their confidence and ability to provide a better quality of education. Additionally, teachers and school leaders also stated that their salaries were not commensurate with workloads.

Social systems like schools run on connected units that are dependent on each other for smooth running. These units are complex and collaborative, and a minuscule change in one unit affects the running of the overall system. In the absence of self-contained units, authorities have a greater responsibility to ensure that all units are conducive to development, as all are dependent on each other. The policies followed by a specific school separates any problem that the school faces into its different constituents, with each component tackled competently for the overall development of the school.

This study revealed that school leaders should give importance to the well-being of teachers, and ensure positive relationship between them and the teachers, as well as between the teachers themselves. A school is a composite unit comprising these different parts, and smooth running of its different parts is necessary for the smooth running of the school itself. To ensure this, it is imperative that school leaders support teacher needs, both physical and psychological, and provide opportunities for them to raise their esteem both in their own eyes and in the eyes of society, so that they remain motivated members of the teaching community and work to the best of their abilities (Maslow, 1998).

In the absence of proper incentives and respect for the teaching profession, Sharma (2013) cautioned that the present exodus of teachers from India to other countries "may lead to 'brain drain,' as when our own schools are facing shortage of well-qualified teachers, emigration of qualified teachers is likely to worsen the situation" (p. 272). Sharma (2013) goes further to point to other compounding factors in the exit of India's teachers from the profession, or from simply practicing the profession in India. She states:

> Moreover, due to falling attractiveness of the teaching profession in comparison to other corporate high-paying jobs, youth are not entering this field which further deepens the problem. Where teachers have been trained at public expense (subsidised public education system) and where their skills and expertise cannot easily be replaced, their loss may represent a major impediment to the achievement of educational goals. (p. 272)

The larger macrosystem context of the teaching profession in India, and globally, has a deep impact on the retention of qualified and passionate teachers.

The reductionist approach considers the effect of teacher attrition in terms of the instructional function. The unavailability of teachers is compensated by increasing the workloads of the continuing teachers as per the themes that emerged. In addition, some states may recur to hiring teachers on a contract basis in order to alleviate the temporary shortage of teachers. From the functionalist approach, what emerges from the study is that the school leaders assume they have the authority to take any action that ensures all the classes are being conducted as required.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by the fact that individual responses differed even within the same context; for example, even though all respondents were affiliated with schools that had teacher attrition, not all respondents viewed the emergent themes with the same level of concern. First, the inherent nature of the case study design could be considered a limitation of the study regarding transferability. Because the study involved one specific setting, as case studies generally do transferability to other settings cannot be assumed. Moreover, transferability was limited because my study participants came from four private, early education institutions in India. Different types of schools may lend themselves to different stressors or different responses in their respective environments. For example, even within the city of Mumbai, there will be a large variety of schools based on whether they are public or private, new or well-established, and other factors, stemming from mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem factors. Readers of this study must determine if these results apply in their contexts and settings.

Second, each interview was conducted for only an hour for the convenience of the participants, which may not have been enough for in-depth question-answer sessions for all participants. The topic of teacher attrition is multi-faceted, so more time for the interviews would have likely resulted in getting more thorough answers. The limited length of the interviews also made it challenging to establish rapport with the participants, which could have led to more detailed and complete responses. It is possible that the level of richness of the data from these individuals might be considered a limitation.

The third limitation was the possibility that the participants, particularly the teachers, may not have been as honest and truthful in their responses, given their fear of being identified by the school leaders and management. The teachers may have hesitated to fully express their thoughts and feelings when answering the interview questions on teacher attrition. To manage this issue, I constantly reminded the participants of the confidentiality of their identities; and that their names will not be mentioned in any part of the research paper. They were assigned with participant codes, which were employed throughout the research process. In addition, they were informed that all data will be kept secured and protected by the researcher in a password-protected computer; and only the researcher will have the knowledge of their research participation.

Fourth, simply completing a pilot testing, as described in Chapter 3, successfully is not a guarantee of the success of the instrument. The goal of the pilot study for this research was to find out whether the questions aligned with the goals of the study, the clarity of the questions, and the opinion of the test participants with regard to the delivery of the questions. The pilot-study process also provided specific training for the researcher on how to use the tool in the interview process and enabled the researcher to detect errors. Feedback and constructive comments from the pilot process were analyzed, and used as the basis for the final interview protocol.

Insights from this study may be beneficial toward studying teacher attrition in India, which is to date underdeveloped in scholarly literature. However, my study does build on available research in the Indian context on the areas of teacher attrition (Sharma, 2013), contract teaching (Chandra, 2015; Terway & Steiner-Kamsi, 2018), and teacher

professionalization (Anand & McKenney, 2015; Gupta, 2017). The findings of this study show that teacher attrition in the Indian context shares significant similarities with the problem of attrition in Western countries (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Smeeding, 2016). However, although there may be general overlap, findings on teacher attrition in India will benefit from additional studies in Indian contexts.

Recommendations

This study explored the perspectives of different stakeholders—teachers, school leaders, and parents—on how teacher attrition influences the students, teachers, parents, and school leaders, as well as the school itself. The participants in this study shared valuable opinions and perspectives, which generated numerous meaningful topics and issues to investigate. Future investigators could study larger sample sizes from Indian early childhood schools, both private and public. Different areas as well as demographics must be considered in future studies. While schools that confront teacher attrition may share general similarities, future researchers should consider how different factors can cause different reactions; for example, a school's funding could affect whether school leaders believe they are misappropriating funds due to teacher attrition. Future researchers could also study different teacher training curricula with student performance data to determine how continuity is affected by teacher attrition.

Themes that were mentioned by 50% or fewer of the respondents in a particular group require more nuanced research to gain a better understanding of the responses. Future researchers can explore the divergent views reported in the current study in more detail to determine why certain themes seemed to be less problematic. For example, the

teacher who did not view students' separation anxiety as an important effect of high teacher attrition might have been less attached to their students than other teachers. It is also possible that this teacher had more resilient and mature students or students who were not emotionally dependent on teachers to begin with. Other topics of study might include the impact of minimum teaching contract lengths and teacher training

Future researchers should also consider the possibility that children with attachment needs can bond with teachers regardless of changes, and attempt to determine which factors affect the students' bonding with their teachers (Repetti, Sears, & Bai, 2015; Thompson, 2015; Trach et al., 2015). For example, researchers could attempt to determine how children view trust and how trust is brought about. Comparatively, additional research on this theme should explore how children who do and do not attach to their teachers perform in their learning development.

Researchers conducting future studies should look into the three themes (flexible schedules, reduced workloads, and teaching independence) that the teacher respondents in this study considered valuable. Investigators could study how these three in particular compare with each other to determine which is the most influential. Such studies could also aid in understanding other factors not mentioned in my study that could affect teacher retention.

Implications

Exploring the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders in India regarding how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences stakeholders is significant for several reasons. The results of the study may impact the local setting by

initiating strategies to increase retention, add to the empirical literature especially in the Indian context on early childhood education teachers, and be a catalyst for social change. Continued teacher attrition and administrative malpractice could also lead to systemic effects, consistent with general systems theory and Bronfenbenner's (1992) ecological systems theory.

The main goal of a school is to ensure the whole development of the children, with the parents entrusting them to the hands of the teachers, other staff members, and the school leaders. However, consistent with Bronfenbrenner's (1992) theory of ecological systems, child development cannot be properly achieved if the system/s and environment of the children is unstable. Early childhood schools cater to children who are at a crucial stage of their human development (Tudge et al., 2017). Teachers then have the responsibility of providing the best possible learning environment and atmosphere to the children. However, the main issue found in the study was the unfavorable working conditions for the teachers; which leads them to lose motivation and ability to educate and nurture the children in their care. An end result for the teachers' feelings of vulnerability would be their susceptibility to leave their positions prematurely. Importantly, children's development suffers the most in those circumstances, especially ones who have already built connections and relationships with their teachers. These findings demonstrate the importance of maintaining quality relationships within the different levels of the ecological systems to guarantee that the parents, school leaders, communities, teachers, and the students are able to grow together and attain success in

the long run (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017; Newland, 2015).

This research study contributes to positive social change for several reasons. This research could be a resource for educational entities that serve urban private early childhood schools. The findings in this study demonstrate the need to have schedule flexibility. Schedule flexibility may be related to teaching freedom and independence, in that teachers might need to balance their school and personal schedules (exosystem). If overwork is contributing to attrition, the empirical data here indicate that school leaders must be open and willing to reduce workloads despite the barriers in resources. Although the school leaders in this study did not see schedule flexibility and teaching independence as important, they might still promote these policies so that teachers feel less stressed, pressured, and overworked.

To counter the emotional frustration, depersonalization, and demoralization, the themes that the teachers identified as significant need to be examined and incorporated by the school leaders and teachers as much as possible. The results presented in Chapter 4 of this study show that school leaders and teachers agree with the teachers on some themes, but also have differing views on which factors they believe are important in retaining teachers. The theme that teachers, school leaders, and parents all agree on is that salaries need to match workloads.

In these findings, the parents were not concerned with heavy teacher workloads and believed that better monetary compensation would offset the greater burden; the school leaders, in contrast, appeared to better understand the teachers, agreeing on the

view that workloads need to be reduced. However, school leaders and parents shared the belief that additional rewards and compensation would motivate teachers, whereas this was not important to the teachers. School leaders and parents also supported minimum teaching contract lengths as important for retention, whereas the teachers did not. To mitigate teacher attrition, key school stakeholders can consider incorporating the themes reported above in order to have a starting point for their challenging job of reducing teacher attrition in their respective schools.

In summary, the following suggestions may be employed by the key policy and school decision-makers: reducing teachers' workloads, increasing salaries to match increased responsibilities, and fostering positive school and teaching environments. While increased salaries are important for teachers who must meet greater responsibilities, they are not a solution for teacher retention because, for some, the workloads are part of their responsibilities. Therefore, increased salaries commensurate with increased responsibilities should be considered to moderate the stress of increased workloads. Listening to teachers' concerns and taking positive actions to help them could help foster positive workplace environments. With the application of these recommendations or the study results, school leaders may try to resolve the looming teacher attrition rates they are faced with. It is expected that once these recommendations have been formally incorporated, combined with the continuous improvement and effort from the school management; teacher attrition can be resolved and decreased in the long run.

In particular, the results of the current study are most suitable in the Indian education system. These findings have the potential to generate positive social change that fosters an environment in which teachers are treated as professionals by their school management and given respect and support. This could inspire teachers to translate their positive energy into effective classroom instruction, which will help early childhood schools to improve their sustainability, promote organizational growth, and be more profitable.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the perspectives of teachers, parents, and school leaders in India regarding how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences all stakeholders, as well as the schools overall. The study also identified the factors that stakeholders identify as important for retaining teachers. Consistent with the conceptual framework and literature review for this study, I found similarities between findings from Western contexts and my findings from an Indian context. The expectations prompted by the conceptual framework and literature review were generally met by the results of this study, which present a nuanced reality of how teacher attrition is perceived in the Indian context.

In conclusion, the study highlighted the current barriers and issues faced by the local teachers in the Indian early childhood schools with the continuous growth of teacher attrition. The report of teachers, school leaders, and parents on their perceptions permitted me to develop several recommendations that can improve the current experiences of the stakeholders affected by teacher attrition. The results of the current

study have the potential to develop a better workplace environment for the remaining school members and teachers, which may also lead to the development of a conducive learning environment for the children. Ultimately, the findings of the study will enhance the overall experiences, not only of the teachers but the parents and students in the Indian early childhood schools, as teacher attrition can be slowly, but surely resolved in the long run. I am hopeful that the findings of the current study will improve the quality of early childhood education schools in India with the application of the recommendations and suggestions.

This study aims to raise awareness in India regarding the difficult job that preschool teachers do and make the education field appreciate their contribution to the development of our children, thus providing them with positive teaching experiences that will prevent them from leaving their jobs. We need to show the importance of the preschool teaching profession in order to recruit and retain skilled teachers long-term. This study also aims to promote a positive atmosphere in Indian preschools that is conducive to learning and development, aided by motivated teachers who are given due recognition for their work. Perhaps this will dissuade them from leaving. It is indeed a daunting task, but not impossible. If we are able to convince even a small number of teachers to stay, and make even a few school boards and administration recognize the immense input of these teachers, it is a step in the right direction. Then the problem of teacher attrition that has assailed the field of early childhood education schools can be alleviated to some extent.

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Appendix A: Invitation to participate

My name is Swathi Menon, a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am working on my dissertation in which I will focus on the perspectives of teachers, parents and school leaders regarding teacher attrition and retention in private early childhood education schools in Mumbai, India. I hope you will consider working with me.

I believe you can provide valuable information that will help educators' analyze the problem of attrition accurately and help us take positive steps to alleviate the problem. This study will consist of one-on-one interviews during which you will be asked to share your experiences and opinions. We will meet for the interview at a time convenient for you in the school library.

The interview should take no longer than 60 minutes. Interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed. You will have an opportunity to review your interview transcript and later themes from data for accuracy. Please be assured that your identity will be protected and you may withdraw from the study at any time. If you agree to participate in this study with me, I shall be furnishing you with an informed consent form (attached) which will explain your rights, the purpose of the study, the process, and the potential benefits and risks of participation.

If you have any study related questions, please contact me at swathi.menon@waldenu.edu, or the Research Participant Advocate at my university at 001- 612-312-1210 . If you are willing to participate in this research study or would like

more information, please email within seven business days. I hope you will agree to work with me.

Sincerely

Swathi Menon

Appendix B: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study about Stakeholder Perspectives of Teacher Attrition and Retention in Private Early Childhood Schools in India. The researcher is seeking teachers and school leaders who have a minimum of two years of experience in private early childhood schools in Mumbai, and parents of children attending these same schools, to participant in this study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" that allows you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part. This study is being conducted by Swathi Menon, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You might already know the researcher as an ex-employee from Universal Education Group 10 years ago, but this study is separate from that role.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to explore the perspectives of school leaders, teachers, and parents in India as to how teacher attrition in private early childhood schools influences the students, teachers, parents, school leaders, and the school, as well as the factors that stakeholder identify as important to retain teachers.

Procedures:

Your contact information will be obtained from the school management. If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Meet at a private area in the school library as per your convenience, where you feel assured about privacy and where you feel comfortable.

- Participate in a one-one-interview session lasting approximately 60 minutes with the researcher, who will ask you open-ended questions (12 to 13) on teacher attrition and discuss your experiences and opinions regarding the topic.
- Participate in a member-checking activity via email to review the transcript of the interview and later examine the themes noted by the researcher to verify the accuracy of each and provide additional information, if needed.

Here are some sample questions:

- In your opinion, what effect does teacher attrition have on children in the early childhood education setting?
- What can be done to reduce teacher attrition in early private education schools?
- What can be done to reduce teacher attrition in your school?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is voluntary. You are free to accept or turn down the invitation. No one at your school will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to be in the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

There are almost no risks of being in the study, barring the possibility of a certain level of stress from being reminded of unpleasant experiences regarding the problem. You may withdraw from the process anytime during the interview if you are feeling stressed, or let some questions remain unanswered if they seem too personal or invasive

to you. In case you encounter severe stress, you may want to call Nirmay clinic (Phone no 08879746976) if you feel you need counseling services.

On the other hand, the benefits of being a participant are that you have an opportunity to express your ideas and feelings regarding an important aspect of early childhood education. This may help educators analyze the problem accurately and take positive steps to alleviate the problem. This can benefit the children who attend these schools in terms of a positive educational experience, as well as benefit those who work in these schools. You will receive a summary of the research findings.

Compensation:

There is no financial remuneration or gifts of any kind for your participation in this study.

Privacy:

Reports coming out of this study will not share the identities of individual participants. Details that might identify participants, such as the location of the study, also will not be shared. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purpose outside of this research project. Data will be kept secure by placing it under lock and key in the researcher's home. The transcribed notes will be password protected and will be only accessed by the researcher. Names of the participants will not be used; instead code numbers and pseudonyms will be used. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university, then destroyed.

Contacts and Questions:

You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via swathi.menon@waldenu.edu .If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call the Research Participant Advocate at my university at 001- 612-312-1210 Walden University's approval number for this study is **09-11-18-0576538** and it expires on **September 10th, 2019.** The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

☐ I have read the above information. I have received answers to any questions I have at this time. I am 18 years of age or older, and I consent to participate in the study.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Date of consent _____

Participant's Signature _____

Researcher's Signature _____

Appendix C: Interview Protocol for Early Childhood Teachers

Informant: Code: Date:

Time: Location:

Introduction: I would like to thank you for consenting to be a participant in this interview process. The interview will be on a one-on-one basis, and will be for a maximum of 60 minutes. The data collected will be used for my research study with Walden University. I assure you that your identity will not be revealed under any circumstances.

1. First and foremost, please share something about yourself with regards to you being an educator. How and when did you decide to be one, and how long have you been associated with this particular private school?

2. Please tell me some of the memorable experiences that you have had as a teacher of this school.

3. What, in your opinion, are the positives of this school and its operations?

4. What, in your opinion, are the drawbacks of this school and its operations?

5. Please describe your experiences, including advantages and disadvantages, of working in a preschool?

6. In your opinion, what effect does teacher attrition have on children in the early childhood education setting?

7. How are children affected when their teachers leave? Elaborate.

8. When a teacher leaves the school, how does it affect you as a remaining teacher? (Morale?) When you are assigned to teach a class where the teacher has left, what are the challenges you face? (Class size, scheduling, and planning of the curriculum, etc.)

9. When you are assigned to teach a class where the teacher has left, how do you address the challenges you face?

10. What factors do you perceive to be responsible for high teacher attrition in the private early childhood education setting and in your school?

11. What can be done to reduce teacher attrition in early private education schools? What can be done to reduce teacher attrition in your school?

12. What positive steps in terms of policies and administrative steps may be taken by the management of this school to ensure that teachers do not leave?

13. Please feel free to share any concerns that you may have regarding the issue that we have not already discussed

Conclusion: I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to get to know you and your ideas about the topic. The transcripts of the interview will be returned to you within 72 hours of the interview for you to review it for accuracy. I will analyze the data and submit the results to you for checking. This process, called member checking, will

allow you to note down any inaccuracies or discrepancies, and point them out to me, which I will then rectify appropriately.

Appendix D: Interview Protocol for School Leaders

Informant: Code: Date:

Time: Location:

Introduction: I would like to thank you for showing interest in the research study and voluntarily agreeing to take part in the interview process. The main objective of the interview is to understand your views, as a school leader, on teacher attrition. All information and opinions thus procured will be used for my doctoral studies that I am doing from Walden University. The interview process will be for a maximum of 60 minutes, and I assure you that your identity will not be revealed under any circumstances.

1. Please share something about yourself as an educator. How and why did you decide to enter the academic field as an educator, and how long have you been associated with this particular private school?

2. Mention some of the memorable experiences that you have had as a leader of this school.

3. What, in your opinion, are the positives of this school and its operations?

4. What, in your opinion, are the drawbacks of this school and its operations?

5. Narrate your experiences, including advantages and disadvantages, of working in a preschool?

6. In your opinion, what effect does teacher attrition have on children in the early childhood education setting?

7. How does teacher attrition affect the resources of the private early childhood education school? (Finance, manpower)

8. How does teacher attrition affect the efficiency of the private early childhood education school as a system? (Organization, consistency in practices, distribution of communal responsibility, relationship with parents)

9. When teachers leave your school, what challenges do you face as an administrator?

10. How do you address the challenges you face as an administrator when teachers leave the school?

11. What factors do you perceive to be responsible for high teacher attrition in the private early childhood education setting and in your school?

12. What can be done to reduce teacher attrition in early private education schools? What can be done to reduce teacher attrition in your school?

13. Please feel free to share any concerns that you may have regarding the issue that we have not already discussed

Conclusion: I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to get to know you and your ideas about the topic. The transcripts of the interview will be returned to you within 72 hours of the interview for you to review it for accuracy. I will analyze the data and submit the results to you for checking. This process, called member checking, will allow you to note down any inaccuracies or discrepancies, and point them out to me, which I will then rectify appropriately.

Appendix E: Interview Protocol for Parents

Informant: Code: Date:

Time: Location:

Introduction: I would like to thank you for showing interest in the research study and voluntarily agreeing to take part in the interview process. The main objective of the interview is to understand your views, as a parent, on teacher attrition. All information and opinions thus procured will be used for my doctoral studies that I am doing from Walden University. The interview process will be for a maximum of one hour, and I assure you that your identity will not be revealed under any circumstances.

1. Please share something about your decision as a parent to enroll your child in this particular school, why did you choose this school and how long have you been associated with this particular private school?

2. Mention some of the memorable experiences that you have had as a parent of a student in this school.

3. What, in your opinion, are the positives of this school and its operations?

4. What, in your opinion, are the drawbacks of this school and its operations?

5. What are the concerns that you as a parent have when your child's school faces frequent teacher attrition?

6. Was the behavior of your child affected after his or her teacher left? If yes, can you describe in what ways?

7. Was the performance of your child affected after his or her teacher left? If yes, can you describe in what ways?

8. How did teacher attrition (when your child's teacher left) affect your relationship with the teachers and school leader?

9. How did you resolve those challenges that you faced as a parent after your child's teacher left?

10. What factors do you perceive to be responsible for high teacher attrition in the private early childhood education setting and in your child's school?

11. What can be done to reduce teacher attrition in early private education schools? What can be done to reduce teacher attrition in your child's school?

12. Please feel free to share any concerns that you may have regarding the issue that we have not already discussed

Conclusion: I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to get to know you and your ideas about the topic. The transcripts of the interview will be returned to you within 72 hours of the interview for you to review it for accuracy. I will analyze the data and submit the results to you for checking. This process, called member

checking, will allow you to note down any inaccuracies or discrepancies, and point them out to me, which I will then rectify appropriately.

Appendix F: Coding Tables for Research Questions 1-3

Table F1

Coding of Research Question 1

Participant Group	Codes	Themes	Sample Responses
Group 1: Teachers	Additional work, additional responsibilities, additional classes, time constraints, physical and emotional well-being	Managing increased work responsibilities (MI, EX) **Affects teachers' mental and physical health* **Time constraints*	T2: "It impacts the other teachers as well because they start to get additional responsibilities and we get additional classes." T1: "This [teacher leaving abruptly] in turn affected me. I felt sick and my BP used to shoot up and I used to just keep on thinking like my K1's I have to do this…."
	Flow, continuity, policies, programs, knowledge, planning	Affects schools' knowledge flows and process continuity (MI)	T3: "On the basis of a teacher she will also find it a little difficult because she is entering in between. So, she has to know all the curriculum, what has been taught, getting to know the planner."
	Trust, confidence, issues, problems	Affects parents' trust and confidence in schools (MI, ME)	T3: "The parents must be thinking why the teachers are changing their school... is there something wrong inside?"
Group 2: School Leaders	Increased work, additional work, additional responsibilities, mental health, physical health	Managing increased work responsibilities (MI, EX) ** Affects teachers' mental and physical health* ** Affects teachers' productivity and competence*	SL2: "It affects her mental health and physically she is exhausted and that leads to a lot of other things as well." SL2: "It's all in this answer like the teacher's efficiency is reduced."

	Trust, confidence	Affects parents' trust and confidence in schools (MI, ME)	SL4: "It brings down the morale of the remaining teachers, the manpower is compromised on, we incur a loss because you will see a drop-in admission as parents of and talk about it."
	Time, resources, finances, overwork, need for constant training	Misuse of schools' resources (MI) * *Requires constantly training irregular staff and faculty* * *Requires overworking other school staff members*	SL: "A lot of time is wasted; efforts and money are wasted …. we have a lot of training."
	Knowledge, processes, training	Affects school's knowledge flows and process continuity (MI)	SL: "A lot of time is wasted; efforts and money are wasted …. we have a lot of training."
Group 3: Parents	Fear, trust, confidence	Affects parents' trust and confidence in schools (MI, ME)	P1: "One teacher left and she was the teacher who had settled my child. So, after that, he came every day to school and asked: "where is that teacher?"
	Absence, missing, attachment	Affects children's behavior when teachers depart (MI, ME)	P3: "The reason is at this age they get attached too soon to somebody... like when she was joined in Jan, she had a teacher who left after June... so she just used to ask where is that teacher... she did feel the absence and she did miss her."

Table F2

Coding of Research Question 2

Participant Group	Codes	Themes	Sample Responses
Group 1: Teachers	Closeness, effective teachers= greater attachment, emotional connection	Aftereffects of extreme attachment and closeness (MI, ME) **Feeling uncomfortable and unstable during the transition (crying, unsettled)* ** Socialization and communication skills are affected*	TC2: "The teacher is very attached to the class. She has made the class very interesting." TC2: "The kid was so attached to the teacher and the teacher left the job in three months had my sister's daughter didn't speak for the last 6 months."
Group 2: School Leaders	Aftereffects, closeness, relationships, adjustments	Aftereffects of extreme attachment and closeness (MI, ME) **Feeling uncomfortable and unstable during the transition*	SL1: "Because he has created that rapport with her, then he will find difficulty in adjusting."
Group 3: Parents	Attachment, acceptance, varying teaching methods, varying practices, adjustments	Child's learning perspective is confused (MI)	P2: "Especially if the kids attached to a teacher then it is very difficult for them to get attached or accept another teacher. So, the teaching methods are different of different people so this affects performance."
	Attachment,	Aftereffects of	P1: "He used to miss her but there was

	closeness, looking for the missing teacher, emotional impact	extreme attachment and closeness (MI, ME) * *Socialization and communication skills are affected* **Feeling uncomfortable and unstable during the transition (crying, unsettled)*	another teacher who was getting close and handling him very well. Still today he asks me that "where is that teacher"?"

Table F3

Coding of Research Question 3

Participant Group	Codes	Themes	Participant Responses
Group 1: Teachers	Positive, workplace relationships, teamwork, communication, fairness, equality, treatment	Promoting positive workplace relationships (MI) **Build good teamwork and relationships among staff members* **Communicate openly with the teachers* **Practice fair and equal treatment*	T3: "Secondly, I think the environment should be happy for them. Actually, when you leave your home and come to a job and when you find stress in the environment...it is very difficult to stay there."
	Fair salaries, fair pay, balancing of work and compensation	Match teachers' workloads with proper salaries (MI, ME)	T1: "Some of them were finding that there was too much of workload... the log book, the newsletter, whatever was there... They were finding it a little bit too

			much.” T2: “You don't get 6th pay commission. You do not get all kinds of leaves like the Diwali holidays.”
	Schedule flexibility, work life balance	Be flexible with teachers’ schedules (EX) **Provide work-life balance for teachers*	T1: “We should be given off on Saturdays instead of alternate Saturday because the full week becomes a little more tedious.”
	Reduction of work	Reduce workloads (logbooks, events) (MI)	T2: “The negatives are…. like we are teachers and we have a lot of things to do. Next day for events and preparations.”
	Autonomy	Provide teaching freedom and independence (MI) **Prevent pressure from management and parents*	T4: “Secondly, a healthy environment I would say, a positive environment, approachable environment where a teacher is free to enter the school leader’s office and discuss this is the challenges that I am facing in the class.”
Group 2: School Leader	Rewards and compensation, motivation	Motivate teachers through rewards and compensation (MI)	SL1: “Adequate compensation and giving them that recognition...give them that word of appreciation.”
	Fair salaries, fair pay, balancing of work and compensation	Match teachers’ workloads with proper salaries (MI)	SL1: “They feel that the salary is less and the amount of work that they are supposed to do is more.”
	Reduction of work	Reduce workloads (logbooks, events) (MI)	SL2: “But there are some who cannot literally finish all that in a limited period of time... that's why they find the workload is too much.”
	Positive, workplace relationships, teamwork, communication, fairness, equality, treatment	Promote positive workplace relationships (MI) **Build good teamwork and relationships among staff members*	SL2: “They expect a helping hand in terms of taking care of the classrooms, they expect some kind of empathy from the school leader, and they expect the school leader to be on their side when it comes to.”

	Contract stipulation of stay	Stipulate teachers' minimum lengths of stay in contracts (MI)	SL4: "So ideally there should be a bond that you need to complete an academic year and then only move...you cannot move in between like this; you cannot take a holiday and just because they have not served a notice period."
Group 3: Parents	Fair salaries, fair pay, balancing of work and compensation	Match teachers' workload with proper salary (MI)	P2: "They should be paid well because handling so many kids is definitely a challenging task."
	Development, training	Provide proper training programs for teachers (MI)	P4: "You need to train them and mould them; you need to give them the confidence from time to time."
	Contract stipulation of stay	Stipulate teachers' minimum lengths of stay in contracts (MI)	P2: ""I think there should be some system of a bond being signed by the teachers from the centre itself. That once the academic year has started you cannot leave."