

# Socio-emotional dilemmas in trained teacher retention at the Basic School in Atiwa District of the Eastern Region

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## Abstract

The study examined socio-emotional dilemmas which characterised trained teacher posting and retention in the Atiwa District of the Eastern Region, Ghana. The study further assessed the social and emotional related motives for trained teachers' willingness or unwillingness to accept posting and possibly stay in the district. Two hundred and seventeen (217) trained basic school teachers were randomly selected from Forty (40) basic schools in the district.

The main instrument used in the study was a questionnaire. Both open and close ended items were included in the questionnaire. The items sought to obtain information on the extent to which trained teachers are willing to accept posting to the basic schools in the district regardless its location; whether socio-emotional attachment had influence in posting of trained teachers and their possible retention in the district. The questionnaires were validated and the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.7 was realised indicating that the instrument was moderately reliable. The data were gathered over a period of two weeks by the researcher with a return rate of 87%. The descriptive statistics was used to analyse quantitative data and the quantitative data generated from the open ended questions were grouped according to themes for emerging patterns.

The study found that teachers are willing to stay in the district because they voluntarily opted for posting to the district. This is because of its proximity to either their home towns or market places. Teachers are also comfortable and satisfied with the way teaching and learning is going on in the schools within the district as such, they are ready to stay there for the next four years.

The study found that socio-emotional motive was a major dilemma in trained teacher posting and retention in the Atiwa District and the main socio-emotional motives attracting trained teachers include teachers own desire to work in the district, peaceful social climate within the district, teachers' desire to be away from their home district as well as mandatory Ghana Education Service postings after pre-service training in Colleges of Education.

The conclusions drawn from this study was that because teachers voluntarily choose the district for posting for various socio-emotional reasons, therefore, they are willing to stay in the district for a relatively longer period than they would have stayed if they were not part of the selection process. The recommendation made was that head teachers of the basic schools be given training on management styles on how to keep and maintain hardworking staff. This will enable them to retain qualified and hardworking teachers in the district.

## Keywords

Socio-Emotional Dilemmas: Social and Emotional Driving Forces

## I. Introduction

### A. Background to the Study

There is growing interest in recent times in finding out how to recruit and retain effective teachers for our basic schools. The issue of recruiting and retaining high quality teachers is a global discourse that every country around the world is saddled with. It is often argued that expert teachers are probably the most fundamental resource for improving students learning in schools (Darling-Hammond, 2011). Recruiting quality teachers is a problem, primarily due to the low status of teachers (as evidenced in some countries by very low salaries) and the lack of appeal found in the profession. In Ghana for instance, low morale among teachers, poor conditions of service and low esteem accorded teachers as well as frustration have been identified as the major factors that contribute to the low retention of teachers in the classroom (Antwi, 1992; Morris & Williamson, 2000; Republic of Ghana, 2002).

Literature on teachers' turnover suggests that higher earnings, the nature of school facilities, disagreement with administrative policies as well as personal inability to meet higher professional standards are responsible for teachers' turnover (Adesina, 1990; Hallack; 1990). Lack of basic teaching materials for effective teaching and learning including the frustrations teachers face when unable to put into practice their experiences as a result of lack of good learning environment are some of the challenges teachers face (Hallack (1990). In Ghana, the issue of high teacher attrition captured in 2002 educational review committee report indicates that 652 schools located in various parts of the country have been identified as having no teachers and about 10,000 teachers leave the classroom every year for further studies. These figures according to the report did not take into account the need for specialized teachers (Republic of Ghana, 2002). The committee suggested that secondary school leavers could be recruited, given pre-service orientation and made to teach in order to make for the shortage in teacher supply as a temporary measure.

Literature on teacher retention revealed that understanding why teachers leave is the first step in getting them to stay (Ingersoll, 2001). According to Ingersoll (2001), teachers leave when they encounter environments that lack essential professional supports such as support from school leadership; organizational structures and workforce conditions that convey respect and value for them as well as induction and mentoring programs for new and experienced teachers. The investigation of the socio-emotional dilemma in teacher recruitment and retention hinges on this premise. Literature on career retention and job performance suggests that emotional intelligence is one important predictor of long-term career performance and retention. This includes the ability to restrain negative feelings such as anger and self-doubt, focusing on positive ones such as confidence and optimism (Stupak, 2004). Employees' warm relations contribute in no small

measure to overcoming negative tendencies in the workplace. Studies show that superior-subordinate healthy relationships and relationships among members of an institution as well as with clients contribute to effective on the job motivations of employees. Employees who are pleased with the warm and sincere treatment from their superiors would carry out the orders more voluntarily (Erdoğan, 1996; Sabuncuoğlu & Tuz, 1998).

Although several studies have been conducted on teacher attrition in many parts of the world including Ghana, however, not much is known about the socio-emotional motives in trained teacher recruitment and retention in basic schools. Utuka (2000) argues that in the Ashanti Region of Ghana alone, about 72% of the sampled teachers in the rural schools agreed that they would never stay for long on the job. He contends that the longest period majority of teachers stay in the sampled schools ranges from one to three years including the period of national service. He added that the remoteness of the villages and the locations of the schools are the major cause of teachers lack commitment. Utuka (2000) identified the role of poor interpersonal human relations of the heads of the institutions as another possible cause of teacher attrition.

Teacher retention is a major problem in Ghanaian schools and it is more pervasive in the rural areas. This phenomenon can result to imbalance in staffing and possible teacher shortage in the rural areas. Atiwa district is one of the newly created districts in 2005. The district is located below the Atiwa range in the tropical rainforest zone of Ghana where a lot of forest products like cocoa, oil palm and citrus are cultivated. Small scale mining is one of the major business activities in the area. Although the central government and other donor agencies made frantic efforts in addressing the infrastructural needs of the district, however, there are many schools in the district without good classroom blocks. Despite the infrastructural deficit in the district, the problem of attracting and retaining trained teachers is another challenge confronting the district. This study intends to examine whether social and emotional indicators play central roles in trained teacher retention at the Basic schools in the Atiwa district.

## B. Statement of the Problem

In Ghana today, in spite of the growing numbers of public and private tertiary institutions offering Diplomas and Bachelor's degrees in education, teacher shortage still exists in many parts of the country especially in the rural areas. This is perhaps, partly because qualified teachers do not enter teaching profession at all, or a significant number of those who enter the profession, leave within three to five years (Morris & Williamson, 2000). This situation is quite disturbing and calls for an investigation. The lack of corresponding increase in the numbers of competent trained teachers in most basic schools especially in the rural areas tends to adversely affect the increasing enrolment of pupils in basic schools.

Many rural districts in Ghana are characterised by teacher shortage especially the trained ones. Trained teachers often decline posting to the rural districts in Ghana, the few who accept posting to the rural communities only stay there for a while and seek for transfer to the big cities in other parts of the country. This development motivated the conduct of this study in order to ascertain whether socio-emotional motives could explain dilemmas in trained teacher posting and retention at the basic schools in the Atiwa district of

the Eastern Region of Ghana. This is because it seems many of the trained teachers posted to the basic schools in the rural districts do not stay there for a relatively long periods of time.

## C. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine socio-emotional dilemmas in posting and retaining trained teachers at the basic school levels in the Atiwa district. The study intends to assess social and emotional motives that account for teachers' willingness or unwillingness to stay in the district. The study further attempts to ascertain how these socio-emotional motives influence trained teacher retention in the Atiwa district of the Eastern Region if any.

## D. Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do trained teachers willingly accept posting to the basic schools in the Atiwa District?
2. What socio-emotional motives influence teacher retention in the Atiwa district if any?
3. How do these socio-emotional motives contribute to trained teachers retention at the basic school levels in the district?

## E. Significance of the Study

The outcome of study could be of great relevance to the District Directorate of Education because the outcome could provide insight into how socio-emotional motives bring about dilemma in posting and retaining trained teachers at the basic schools so that measures could be adopted for recruiting and retaining them in the district. The findings of the study could also provide useful information for planning strategies to attract and retain competent teachers at the basic schools in the district. Furthermore, the outcome of the study could also equip headmasters/mistresses and all those who by virtue of their position have a role to play in the teacher retention exercise in the district to adopt pragmatic action in dealing with the problem of teacher attrition. Finally the document could serve as a reference material for future researchers.

## F. Delimitation of the Study

Although there are several motives responsible for teacher posting and retention, this study however, focuses on socio-emotional motives that bring about dilemmas in teacher posting and retention at basic schools in the Atiwa district. Other variables that do not touch on the social and emotional motives are not included in the study.

## G. Limitations of the Study

Though the sample size was adequate and representative of the population, the presence of sampling errors, could affect the validity of the findings, however, care was taken to minimise this error. The questionnaire was made up of both open and closed-ended items; as such many teachers were reluctant to respond to the open ended questions, however, participants were, encouraged to respond to the items. The return rate was about 87% which is quite acceptable.

## II. Review of Related Literature

The review of the related literature discusses three main themes and these are: the importance of socio-emotional motives in employees' performance and job retention, role of organisational culture and climate in the performance and job retention of employees as well as the importance of emotional characteristics of employees and job retention.

### **A. Importance of socio-emotional motives in employees' performance and job retention**

Good employee relationship is an important factor in overcoming negativity in the workplace. Superior-subordinate relationships and relationships between members of the organisation and customers are effective ways of on the job motivations of employees. Studies revealed that when employees are pleased with warm and sincere treatment from the superiors, they would carry out the orders more voluntarily. Friendly environment has been found to have a direct impact on the job performance of employees in service organisations. Chen and Lien (2008) argue that a large number of employees are likely to change their jobs when they are under pressure. Friendly environment at work is able to influence employees to commit themselves to carrying out their tasks and duties effectively. Similarly, respect among colleagues and management assists in creating a good work environment thus serves as an incentive for keeping employees in workplaces (Halbesleben et al., 2007; Woods, 2002; Erdoğan, 1996; Sabuncuoğlu & Tuz, 1998). Good teamwork is essential to job satisfaction. If workers are a part of properly functioning teams, then they feel that they are needed. This suggests that along with the sense of belonging is a sense of accomplishment. Team members need to feel that they are actually contributing to the collective goal of the team. If a team member feels as though he or she is doing trivial work while others are doing more meaningful work, then team unity will deteriorate (Milinichik, 2011).

### **B. Role of organisational culture and climate in the performance and job retention of employees**

Roca et al (2006) found a significant correlation between friendly environment and job performance factor in the multinational organization. In an empirical study, Jamal (2007) examined the correlation between stressful work environment and the level of a person's work ability among workforce of North American companies. The results showed that in 90% of the companies, there was negative association between stressful work environment and job performance. This suggests that if the work environment seems stressful, managers must make effort to develop and implement programmes that can foster a friendly job environment and motivate the employees (Hourani et al, 2006). Management could therefore, play a constructive role in creating a harmonious work atmosphere in order to motivate and retain hardworking staff. The implication of this in educational institutions especially at the basic school level is that, one way to retain qualified teachers is to ensure mutual and healthy relationship among staff members and between the staff and the community. Inman and Marlow (2004) argue that one method of retention of qualified staff is for the community to treat the faculty of their local schools with respect, teachers are more likely to stay.

To promote respect and healthy relationship among faculty members and the community, management could provide the community with newsletters noting the accomplishments of both students and the faculty. Short biographical essays noting a particular teacher's endeavours, undertakings, and educational history could be circulated in order to introduce him or her as a professional to the community. Similar findings were realised in places such as in England (Rhodes, Nevill, & Allan, 2004. Minerik, Thornton, and Perreault (2003) also address the importance of community interaction. They argue that it is vital to "enhance relationships within the educational community and promote connectedness with the larger community" in order to

retain teachers (p. 231). Buttressing the issue, Richard (2004) added that rural areas can be "renewed...by drafting members of the community into more active roles in the schools" (p. 5). The relationship between socio-emotional motives and job performance has been captured in the work of Nooraee and Arasi (2011), which determined possible relationship between faculty's social competencies and their academic performance in Iran and found that social competencies are significantly associated with the level of faculties' academic performance.

### **C. Importance of emotional characteristics of employees and job retention**

Work engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). (1) Vigour is characterised by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, not being easily fatigued, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. (2) Dedication is characterised by deriving a sense of significance from one's work, by feeling enthusiastic and proud about one's job, and by feeling inspired and challenged by it. The last, (3) absorption is characterised by being totally and happily immersed in one's work and having difficulties detaching oneself from it. In short, highly engaged employees have high levels of energy and are enthusiastic about their work. Moreover, they are often fully immersed in their work so that time flies (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Engagement focuses on work performed and represents the willingness to dedicate physical, cognitive, and emotional resources to this work. Work engagement has become a well-known construct to both researchers and practitioners. An emerging body of research is beginning to converge around a common conceptualization of work engagement as connoting high levels of personal investment in the work tasks performed on a job (Macey & Schneider, 2008; Rich et al., 2010).

Many researchers argued that engagement, as a motivational variable, should lead to high levels of job performance (Rich et al., 2010; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Work engagement represents a commonality among physical, emotional, and cognitive energies that individuals bring to their work role. In this sense, work engagement is more than just the investment of a single aspect of the self. It represents the investment of multiple dimensions (physical, emotional, and cognitive), leading to the simultaneous and holistic experience (Rich et al., 2010). This is largely achieved through the organisational culture. Organisational culture is a system of values, beliefs and habit which shapes behavioural norms designed to realise the same goals and activates mutual perception between members of the organisation (Mandy & Noe, 1987, p. 132). Organisational culture is shaped by the organisational experiences of the employees (Telman and Unsal, 2004, pp. 49-51). Another important factor affecting job motivation is organisational climate which is closely related to organisational culture. These systems influence the output of employees. In a meta-analytic study testing the role of engagement as a mediator of the relation between antecedents and job performance, it was found out that there is a direct link between work engagement and contextual performance (Christian et al., 2011).

For any educational system to succeed, the position of the teacher is crucial. Carron and Chau (1996) argue that the quality of education depends on the quality of teachers. Excellent teachers are self-motivated and encouraged to continue teaching in the

face of difficulties because they are able to achieve their personal accomplishment by seeing students' successes. According to Kusereka (2003), the primary factor that contributes to good performance of teachers is strong inspiration. Enthused teachers are often associated with producing motivated students with high achievements (Atkinson, 2000). Motivation is therefore, associated with satisfaction (Dinham & Scott, 2000).

The success of education depends on the conditions of service of the teacher, teachers' conditions of service should be attractive in order to motivate and guarantee job satisfaction and teacher retention. In Ghana, owing to poor conditions of service and low esteem accorded teachers, teachers are frustrated and suffer low self-esteem (Republic of Ghana, 2002). It is therefore, becoming increasingly difficult to attract and retain teachers at all levels. In order to encourage teachers to accept postings to the deprived areas, and to ensure national equity in quality education, the following recommendations were proposed:

- Twenty percent of basic salary should be paid to teachers who accept postings to deprived areas as hardship allowance;
- Teachers who offer to serve in deprived areas must be given accelerated promotions;
- The GES should give priority to teachers in deprived areas when considering applications for study leave;
- Teacher education universities should reserve a quota of admission for teachers in deprived areas;
- District Assemblies and communities should provide decent accommodation to teachers posted to deprived areas;
- The Government's scheme for providing staff accommodation should be expanded to cover more teachers;
- Government must provide the necessary facilities as well as teaching and learning materials, to enhance teachers' job satisfaction.

**D. Methodology**

The main population for the study comprised all the teachers of the 145 public basic schools. Cluster sampling was used to obtain a representative sample for the study. The district was clustered into eight circuits with an average of 19 schools per circuit. Five out of the 19 schools in each circuit were randomly selected for the study. All the teachers of the selected schools were included. This type of sampling was adopted to give a fair representation of schools from all the eight circuits within the district. In effect, the study focused on 217 teachers of the basic schools in the Atiwa district. The main instrument used in the study was questionnaire comprising both open and close ended items in different sections. The items sought information from participants in the following areas:

1. The extent to which trained teachers willingly accept posting to the basic schools in the Atiwa district.
2. The socio-emotional motive influencing teacher retention in the Atiwa district if any.
3. The manner by which these socio-emotional motives influence trained teachers' posting and retention at the basic school levels in the district.

The final version of the questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure its validity and reliability. The pre-testing of the instruments was conducted in eight (8) public basic schools within the Fantekwa district. The district was selected because it shared similar characteristics with the Atiwa district where the main study was done. The analysis of the pre-test indicated that the instrument was moderately reliable with the Cronbch Alpha Reliability Coefficient of 0.7.

Written permission was sought from the Atiwa District Director of Education before the administration of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher. Participants' confidentiality was assured. At the school level, permission was sought from the headmasters/headmistresses before administering the instrument on the staff. In each school, the administration of the instrument was done after a short briefing. The completed questionnaires were retrieved during the break time. Out of the total of Two Hundred and Fifty (250) copies of questionnaires administered, Two Hundred and Seventeen (217) were retrieved representing 87% of the total. The descriptive statistics was used to analyse the quantitative data. The main statistical tools used in the analysis of the quantitative data were frequencies and percentages. The qualitative information generated through the open-ended questions was analysed by grouping the responses into themes supported with direct quotations.

**E. Results**

The results were presented according to the research questions one after the other using different analytical tools. The biographic data of the participants was presented first and preceded by the main data with their respective research questions. Table 1 presents information about the gender distribution of the participants.

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Participants in the Study

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	127	58.5
Female	89	41.0
No response	1	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field data, 2014

Analysis of Table 1 indicated that majority of the participants representing 59% were males while 41% were females. However, 1 of the participant did not indicate whether the person was either a male or a female. The academic qualification of the participants is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of Participants by Qualification in the Study Area

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
WASSCE	18	8.3
Cert A	43	19.8
Diploma	131	60.4
Higher National Diploma	5	2.3
First Degree	17	7.8
No response	3	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field data, 2014

Table 2 showed that the majority of the participants representing 60.4% obtained diploma in education, and about 20% had Cet A, while about 8% had first degree and WASSCE. However, less than 3% of the participants had HND. Table 3 presents information on the length of time participants' stay in the district.

Table 3: Length of Stay in the District

Number of years in the District	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	147	67.7
6-10	49	22.6
11-15	10	4.6
16-20	5	2.3
21-25	3	1.4
26-30	1	0.5
No response	2	0.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field data, 2014

Table 3 indicated that the majority of the participants representing 67.7% stayed in the district for periods ranging between 1 and five years. Similarly 23% of the participants stayed in the district for a period ranging from 6 to 10 years. Those who stayed in the district

Table 4: Extent of Teachers' Willingness to Accept posting to the District

Teachers willingness to accept posting	SA%	A%	D%	SD%	NR%
I am comfortable teaching in the district	18.4	63.1	13.4	5.1	-
I am ready to stay here for the next four years	16.6	30.4	31.3	20.7	-
I am motivated to stay in the district because I hailed from the district	7.4	15.7	36.1	38.9	1.9
I prefer teaching in the district to any part of the country	11.5	26.3	34.6	27.2	0.5
I voluntarily opted for posting to the district	27.6	48.4	14.3	7.8	1.8
I was posted to the district against my will	6.9	11.5	31.8	48.8	0.9

Source: Field data, 2014

Analysis of Table 4 revealed that about 82% of the participants admitted the fact that they were comfortable teaching in the Atiwa district. Participants were however, divided over the assertion that they were ready to stay in the district for the next four years. Participant representing 52% debunked the notion that they were ready to stay in the district for the next four years, while 47% affirmed their stay there for the next four years. Participants representing 75% also disagreed that the motive for their stay in the district was the fact that they hailed from the district. Similarly, 70% of the participants disagreed that they preferred teaching in the district to any other part of the country. However, 76% held the view that they voluntarily sought for posting to the district and refuted 80.6% the assertion that they were posted to the district against their will.

The open ended responses revealed that several social and emotional attachments influence teacher posting and retention in the Atiwa district. For some teachers, they just like to be there. A participant remarked:

*"I prefer teaching in the district till I retire from active service".*

Another participant said:

*"Because of the proximity of the place to the banks and market centres, I am ready to stay in the district for many years".*

Others thought that they were ready to stay in the district for

more than 11 years constituted less than 5%. The participants in the study belong to occupied different ranks in the GES; Table 4 presents information on the rank distribution of the participants. The participants in the study belong to occupied different ranks in the GES; Table 4 presents information on the rank distribution of the participants.

**1. Research Question 1: To what extent do trained teachers willingly accept posting to the basic schools in the Atiwa District?**

In answering this research question, data from section 'B' of the questionnaire were employed. The statistical tools used in analysing the data were frequencies and percentages. The five point likert scale used was coded as follows: Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3 Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1 and No Response = 0. To make the presentation of the results simple and meaningful, responses such as Strongly Agree and Agree were combined to give an impression that the participants agreed while Disagree and Strongly Disagree were also combined to create an impression that the participants disagreed. The open ended questions were grouped according to themes and for emerging patterns. Table 4 presents information about the extent to which trained teachers are willing to accept posting to the district.

some time because they thought that the place is closer to their home towns.

A participant remarked:

*"I am satisfied and ready to stay in the district because it is closer to my home town as such I can travel from the district to my home town and can attend to family issues".*

From the analysis of the data, it could be said that participants are willing to stay in the district because they voluntarily opted for posting to the district as a result of the proximity of the district to either their home towns or market places. For these reasons, they are ready to stay there for the next four years.

**2. Research Question 2: What socio-emotional driving force influence teacher retention in the Atiwa District if any?**

This research question sought to find out the socio-emotional dilemmas that influence teacher posting and retention in the district. In answering this research question, data from section 'C' of the questionnaire was employed. The statistical tools used in analysing the data were frequencies and percentages. Table 5 presents information about the age distribution of the participants.

Table 5: Socio-emotional Forces Driving Teachers to the Atiwa District

Factors	SA%	A%	D%	SD%	UD%
I choose to teach because I come from this district	7.4	13.4	33.6	45.6	-
I was sponsored and bonded by the district	12.0	22.1	22.6	39.6	3.7
I went there to join my husband and wife	9.2	13.8	21.7	55.3	-
I wanted to be away from my relatives	14.7	33.2	31.3	20.7	-
I just like to work in the district	17.1	53.9	18.9	9.7	0.5
I chose to teach in the district because of the peaceful social climate there	14.7	48.8	20.7	14.3	1.4
I had no choice than to go there	15.2	20.3	31.8	31.8	0.9
Get support from the district education officials	3.2	13.8	33.2	47.5	2.3

Source: Field data, 2014

Table 5 revealed that 79.2% of the participants disagreed with the notion that they teach in the district because they hailed from the district. Similarly, 62% of them disagreed with the assertion that they were sponsored and bonded by the district and also denied 77% the claim that they went to the district to either join their husbands or wives.

Participants were however divided over the assertion that they teach in the district because they wanted to be away from their relatives. While 47.9% agreed with the proposition that they teach in the district because they wanted to be away from their relatives, 52% disagreed. About 72% of the participants attributed their stay in the district to the love they had for the district.

The Table further showed that 63.5% of the participants admitted that the relatively peaceful social climate within the district attracted them to the district and 63.6% of them also denied the claim that they had no option than to accept posting to the district. Similarly, participants disagreed that the support they get from the district education officials as the majority of them representing 80.5% opposed the claim with 17% only admitting the claim and 2.3% remaining silent on the claim.

Responses to the open ended question were not many. However, the responses brought forth patterns that were quite different from the close ended question with few additions. Participants admitted proximity to their home districts, volunteering to serve in the district as well as sponsorship package participants received during their course work at the various tertiary institutions as the factors that sent them to the district. A participant said:

*"I willingly opted to work in this district; I liked the idea as being part of the pioneer group to start the development of education in the district".*

Another person remarked:

*"I was sponsored by the district when I was in the training college".*

A teacher remarked:

*"Incentive packages such motivation allowances, fast promotion, study leave, free accommodation (teachers bungalow) availability of social amenities such electricity, hospitals, police station, market centres and portable water".*

From the analysis of the data, it was found out that the major socio-emotional motives attracting trained teachers to the Atiwa district are teachers own desire to work in the district, peaceful social climate within the district, teachers' desire to be away from their home district as well as mandatory Ghana Education Service postings after teachers have completed their course of study at the Colleges of Education.

### 3. Research Question 3: How do these socio-emotional forces contribute to trained teachers retention at the basic school levels in the district?

#### (i). Socio-emotional motives driving teachers to the district

In answering this research question, the open ended data from section 'C' of the questionnaires were employed. The open ended questions were grouped according to themes and subheadings for emerging patterns.

The analysis of the qualitative data gathered from the open ended questions revealed the following pattern. Generally, participants are of different views regarding what they like most about the district. Many of them claim that peaceful social climate, availability of food stuffs, favourable climatic weather condition, community participation in the School Performance Appraisal Management (SPAM), the understanding nature of the circuit supervisors, the way teaching and learning is carried out, the cordial relationship between the district educational officers and teachers in the district are some of the things that teachers like about the district.

#### (ii). Training programmes for teachers

Many of the teacher like the district for the frequent manner they conduct In-service training for teachers in the district. According to the participants, the frequency in which the district conducts in-service training for the teachers is something teachers like most about the district and this makes them accept posting to the district. On this issue a teacher remarked:

*"The district always conducts in-service training for the teachers and this enlightens and exposes them to modern challenges; for this reason, I like the district".*

Participants said these training programmes include: the orientation given to newly trained teachers, how examinations are conducted at the end of the term and the relatively shorter intervals for organisation of workshops for teachers. Buttressing this point, a teacher noted:

*"I like the way they conduct workshop and the way we receive information from officials; there is always enough teachers on staff to ease the work".*

The analysis further revealed that participants did not just indicate what they like about the district; they indicated the reasons for which they liked some of the identified things in the district. According to them the in-service training in particular, really equips them with requisite skills on the job and broadens their knowledge and skills for teaching. Others thought that the in-service training and workshops organise in the district enabled them to share their problems with others for effective solution

and also to enhance their professional competence. Some other teachers held the view that the workshops and the in-service training help them get information on time and also help them acquire more knowledge about the work they do. Elaborating the issue, one of the teachers explained:

*"I like the workshops and the in-service training because they help me improve upon my teaching and preparation of teaching and learning materials".*

Other teachers also thought that the workshops and the in-service training help them to modify their methodologies of teaching and make them to become more efficient. One of the teachers said:

*"It enables me contribute to the development of education in the district". "Attending workshops will make me update my knowledge and also help me in teaching and learning".*

Some others thought that the organisation of workshops and in-service training for teachers in the district helps in uplifting the academic performance of pupils in the district. This reduces boredom in teaching. Teachers are therefore able to cover the syllabus within the term. On this issue a teacher made a comment:

*"I like working in the district because I receive the necessary support and supervision from the district office and also enjoy a peaceful social climate within the district".*

Participants also claim that they like the type of supervision that is going on in the district. They like it because the supervision helps teachers to put up their best in terms of teaching performance. A teacher remarked:

*"Because of the help and support given to me by my circuit supervisor, I like to stay in the district"*

According to some other teachers, perhaps these teachers come from other districts where scheme of work are not supplied had this to say:

*"Others do not supply scheme of work to their teachers, hence this district is not like those districts".*

### (iii). Relative Peaceful Social Climate

From the analysis made, it was realised that one of the major things participants like about the Atiwa district is the peaceful social climate within the district. A participant acknowledged:

*"I like the peaceful and calm atmosphere which is good for working".*

Another one said:

*"I like the peaceful atmosphere in the district, the district officials are hard-working and the people in the district are sociable".*

Analysis of the justifications made by the participants suggests that the participants are much particular about the peaceful and conducive environment that characterised the district which according to them makes life enjoyable and peaceful for teachers to stay. According to them there are no disturbances in the district and the officers are working hard. They contend that the peaceful environment helps teachers to do their work well adding that the district is very safe and a peaceful place to live in and work.

On this issue a teacher remarked:

*"I have peace of mind to do my work as a teacher here".*

Another teacher said:

*"Progressive development takes place in a peaceful climate; I have peace of mind to do other things here".*

### (iv). Proximity to places of importance and good road network

Another thing that participants like about the Atiwa district is the fact that most of the villages in the district have good road

network and are closer to places of importance to the teachers such as proximity to home town or Accra Kumasi. To this effect, a participant said:

*"It is close to the Kumasi – Accra main road".*

Another person said:

*"I was attracted to the district because it is closer to my home town and most of the big towns and the schools are situated along the main Accra-Kumasi road".*

Participants advanced reasons to justify their claim on this issue. According to them, the proximity of Atiwa to other major places of interest as a result of accessible road network makes the place worthy of living. A teacher said:

*"It makes travelling somewhat easy".*

Another person said:

*"As a result of the good road network, I can travel home to take care of my ageing mother".*

Another teacher reported: *"I can attend to family issues home with ease".*

### (v). Healthy working relationship among stakeholders in education

The analysis of the data further revealed that participants like the healthy working relationship that exists among the stakeholders in education within the district. These stakeholders are the district officials, teachers and the community. Commenting on the good working relationship, a teacher remarked:

*"The Officers are sociable and are ready to assist teachers; the healthy – school community relationship is very strong".*

Another teacher said:

*"One of the things I like about the district is the good officials handling the affairs of the district".*

A participant gave a testimony, according to him, he like the district because the community-school relationship is very good. He added:

*"Some of the officers assist us when we are in need. For instance when I have problem with my salary, the way and manner they assisted me made me like the district. The officials are willing to accept professional teachers irrespective of where they are coming from, I like their monitoring ability too".*

### F. Key Findings

From the analysis of the data, the following findings emerged:

1. The study found out that participants are willing to stay in the district because they voluntarily opted for posting to the district because of its proximity to either their home towns or market places. They are also comfortable and satisfied with the way teaching and learning is going on in the schools within the district as such, they are ready to stay there for the next four years.
2. Also, it was found out that the major socio-emotional motives that attracted trained teachers to the Atiwa district are teachers own desire to work in the district, peaceful social climate within the district, teachers' desire to be away from their home district as well as mandatory Ghana Education Service postings after teachers have completed their course of study at the Colleges of Education.
3. Although teachers within the Atiwa district like various aspects of the community such as healthy relationship among the stakeholders in the district, relatively cheaper cost of living as well as the strategic location of the place, these motives are not uniform among teacher in all parts of the district.

## VI. Discussion

From the analysis of the data, it could be said that participants are willing to stay in the district because they voluntarily opted for posting to the district as a result of the district's proximity to either their home towns or market places. For this reason, teachers are ready to stay in the district for the next four years. The issue of high teacher attrition captured in 2002 educational review committee report indicates that 652 schools located in various parts of the country (Ghana) have been identified as having no teachers and that about 10,000 teachers leave the classroom every year for further studies. These figures did not take into account the need for specialised teachers (Republic of Ghana, 2002). As a short term measure, the Committee suggested that secondary school leavers could be recruited, given pre-service orientation and made to teach in order to make for the shortage in teacher supply. However, to understand why teachers leave is the first step in getting them to stay (Ingersoll, 2001). Ingersoll (2001) argues that teachers leave when they encounter environments that lack essential professional supports that include: (1) support from school leadership; (2) organizational structures and workforce conditions that convey respect and value for them; and (3) induction and mentoring programs for new and experienced teachers. All these are social emotional issues that hinge on teacher retention. This study contradicts Utuka's (2000) argument that the longest duration teachers stay in schools ranged from one to three years with national service inclusive. In this study, teachers in the Atiwa district voluntarily opted for posting to the district, hence are ready to stay there for many years. Although, Atiwa district is one of the rural districts, teachers are willing to stay there for more than four years. This suggests that when teachers are allowed to make their own choices they are likely to stay for many years than if they were posted against their will. The claim Utuka (2000) made about the remoteness of the villages and the locations of the schools as the major causes of teachers' lack of commitment does not hold in this case. Because teachers voluntarily chose the district, they are committed to staying there. However, Utuka (2000) also acknowledged the role of poor interpersonal human relations of the heads of the institutions as another cause of teacher attrition. This is consistent with the findings in this study. The implication of this finding is that socio-emotional motives are very important in teacher retention. When people have social and emotional security, they feel safe to stay in a given place for a long period of time.

From the analysis of the data made, it was found that the major socio-emotional factors that attracted trained teachers to the Atiwa district are teachers own desire to work in the district, peaceful social climate within the district, teachers' desire to be away from their home district as well as mandatory Ghana Education Service postings after teachers have completed their course of study at the Colleges of Education. This finding is consistent with literature on employee's retention. The literature identifies friendly environment at work place as an important factor that influences employees to commit themselves to carrying out their tasks and duties effectively. The literature also acknowledges the relevance of respect among colleagues and management in creating a good work environment thus serves as an incentive for keeping employees in workplaces (Halbesleben et al., 2007; Woods, 2002; Erdoğan, 1996; Sabuncuoğlu & Tuz, 1998). Teachers are therefore, motivated to serve in the district because of collegiality. This finding also confirms that of Milinichik (2011) which identifies good teamwork as an essential component of job satisfaction. If workers are a part of properly functioning teams, then they

feel that they are needed. Furthermore, along with the sense of belonging is a sense of accomplishment. Team members need to feel that they are actually contributing to the collective goal of the team. If a team member feels as though he or she is doing trivial work while others are doing more meaningful work, then team unity will deteriorate (Milinichik, 2011). This suggests that the work environment should not be seen as stressful, managers must make effort to develop and implement programs that can foster a friendly job environment to motivate employees (Hourani et al, 2006). Management should play a constructive role in creating a harmonious atmosphere.

In educational institutions, especially at the basic school level, one way to retain qualified teachers is to ensure mutual and healthy relationship among staff members and between the staff and the community. Inman and Marlow (2004) argue that one method of retaining qualified staff is for the community to treat the faculty of their local schools with respect, teachers are more likely to stay put. The school could provide the community with newsletters noting the accomplishments of both students and the faculty. Short biographical essays noting a particular teacher's endeavours, undertakings, and educational history will introduce him or her as a professional to the community. Similar findings were realised in places such as in England (Rhodes, Nevill, & Allan, 2004; Minerik, Thornton, & Perreault, 2003). It is vital to "enhance relationships within the educational community and promote connectedness with the larger community" in order to retain teachers (p. 231).

The issue of teacher retention is a major problem in Ghanaian schools; it is much more a problem in the rural areas. The general observation is that teachers are deployed to the communities which the teachers have no social and emotional attachment. Because of this, retention is always a problem. This situation often leads to imbalances in staffing in the country and consequent teacher shortage in the rural areas (Republic of Ghana, 2002). Contrary to this report and its subsequent proposal that the conditions of service of the teacher must be attractive in order to motivate and guarantee job satisfaction and teacher retention, some schools still grapple with teacher retention. The condition is not much a problem than social and emotional attachments which can be obtained by given the neophyte teachers the option to choose possible places they would like to be posted to. Therefore, issues related to social and emotional concerns of the teachers must be given priority.

## H. Conclusions

It can be concluded from the findings that because teachers voluntarily choose the district for posting, they are willing to stay in the district for a relatively longer period than they would have stayed if they were not part of the selection process.

It can also be concluded that the advantageous location of the district attracted many of the professional teachers to the district. This is because the district is either closer to teachers' home towns or market places as such, they are ready to stay there for the next four years.

Another conclusion that can be drawn from the study is the fact that the availability of training programmes for teachers as well as the existence of relatively peaceful social climate motivated teachers to prolong their stay in the district. Besides, the proximity of the district to other places of importance and healthy working relationship among stakeholders in education, are the other reasons



for teachers willingness to stay in the district. This suggests that when these incentives are withdrawn the possibility of the district facing teacher attrition is more likely.

### I. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. It is recommended that the head teachers of the basic schools be given training on management styles and how to keep and maintain hardworking staff. This will enable them to help in retaining qualified teachers in the district.
2. The District Assemblies could construct an estate for teachers to avoid possible challenges teachers may face in terms of searching for accommodation when posted to the district.
3. It is also recommended that incentive packages be given to teachers who stayed in the rural areas for a number of years. These packages could be free medical care, fee waiver for undertaking courses in tertiary institution etc.
4. Seminars could be organised occasionally by the GES to sensitise the community on the need to be part of the school programmes so that the community will be abreast of what is going on in the school and thereby forging school community participation.

### J. Suggestion for Future Research

Future researchers who might want to replicate this study in other areas or expand the frontiers of the study could consider comparative study of the native and non native teachers' willingness to stay in the rural areas.

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