

Teacher Migration and the Jamaican Education System

Exploring Push and Pull Factors and Policy Options

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Abstract

The movement of teachers from classrooms in developing and under-developed countries in the global south, to classrooms in developed countries, is a decades-old phenomenon. The data suggests, however, that the level of teacher migration has intensified with the resumption of face-to-face schooling in September 2022, following the period of school closures and online school resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic which began affecting schools in March 2020.

With teacher migration being a longstanding phenomenon, which has implications for the sustainable development of lesser developed countries, this study examines some of the push and pull factors driving teacher migration in Jamaica, which is a small island developing country.

This quantitative study was conducted between August and September 2022, using a sample of one hundred and fifty-eight teachers.

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The sample consisted of teachers who had left Jamaica and were working overseas (45.9%) and those who were seriously planning on leaving (41.4%). The study found that there are ten factors driving teacher migration, with the top four being low wages, lack of resources, the quality of leadership and management, and working conditions.

The study, while conducted in a single developing country, is relevant to other countries which are faced with the phenomenon and thus makes recommendations concerning policy actions which may be taken to address the issue.

1.0 Introduction

The Academic Year 2022/23 marks the first year of full resumption of face-to-face schooling in most parts of the world since the global COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March 2020. According to a March 29, 2022, report, as at that March date, some twenty-three countries were yet to fully re-open, but most were expected to resume full face-to-face classes by the end of July 2022. One of the salient features of this full resumption of schooling, globally, is a teacher shortage, on the one hand, and, for countries like Jamaica, an apparent increase in teacher migration.

A cursory glance at news reporting across selected countries paints the picture. On August 14, 2022, columnist Jessica Wong, writing in the CBC newspaper, quoted the education dean from the University of British Columbia, saying that the ongoing teacher shortage is ‘a significant crisis...’ for Canada.

The *Economist* magazine, in an August 21, 2022 article, contends that the shortage of teachers being reported was not a new phenomenon (Reefer, 2022). However, Cardona and Trotter (2022), and Benson and Brown (2022) appear to view the level of teacher shortage in the United States as being at an unprecedented high. Cardona and Trotter point to the fact that the shortage across the United States was severe and highlight the fact that in the state of Florida Governor Ron DeSantis was turning to the US Military to fill some gaps. Meanwhile in an article entitled “California public school system faces massive teacher shortage”, Benson and Brown note that for the 2022-23 Academic Year, the State of California was facing an unprecedented level of teacher shortages amounting to over fifty thousand (50,000) teachers. The causes of this shortage, they argue, while worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic (which saw teachers being forced into crowded classrooms and many contracting COVID-19) were rooted in a decade-long series of problems including budget cuts, uncompetitive wages, and declining working conditions for teachers.

The problem of teacher shortage extends beyond North America. Wade (2022) reports that in New Zealand, the shortage is so acute that schools are cannibalizing each other's staff, as reported by one school principal. Reports out of the United Kingdom suggest that there is an "acute" crisis, driven by factors such as inflation, according to Adams (2022), writing in the Guardian Newspaper. UNESCO (2021) reported that India faced a deficit of over one million teachers and in 2022 the deficit had grown by an additional two hundred thousand teachers to one million, two hundred thousand. Datta and Kingdon (2021) dispute the level of the deficit claimed by UNESCO in relation to India, arguing that the vacancies should not be confused with shortages as there are trained teachers in India who opt not to be employed as teachers.

Jamaica, which is the focus of this study, is currently experiencing what appears to be an increase in teacher migration. The degree to which the 2022 level of migration represents a departure from historical trends is disputed. The Minister of Education contends that the level of migration in 2022 is no different from previous years, while the main teachers' union, the Jamaica Teachers' Association (JTA), contends that there is an increase. An August 5, 2022, report in the *Jamaica Observer* newspaper quotes the President of the JTA, Winston Smith as contending that there has been an increase in the number of teachers leaving Jamaica, and he cites several factors for this. Some schools are reported to have experienced higher than normal levels of teacher resignations, and among them are some of the higher performing secondary schools.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Jamaica education system has been faced with the problem of teacher migration for decades. However, data on the trending levels of migration are not available from the Ministry of Education. The level of migration appears to have increased in the Academic Year 2022/23, but the facts around this issue are contested. In the absence of empirical data on the level of migration, analysis of the scope of the problem and the proposing of sector-wide policy solutions are impossible. While it is possible to ascertain from individual schools the nature of their experience with teacher migration, and thus contemplate solutions which may be relevant to individual schools, a sector-wide intervention remains elusive.

This article seeks to establish whether there is a teacher migration crisis facing Jamaica and specifically whether the levels of migration experienced in the 2022-23 year represent an uptick over previous

years. It is recognized that even if the levels of migration in 2022-23 are higher than previous years, a single year's experience does not constitute a trend, even if it is experienced as a wave. However, the level of public discussion in Jamaica about teacher migration is resuscitated and might be unprecedented. In addition to the unprecedented levels of public discussion, the Ministry of Education has introduced seventeen measures to deal with teacher shortages, including the re-hiring of retired teachers to fill vacancies and giving powers to schools to fill vacancies without waiting on prior approval from the Ministry of Education (*Jamaica Observer*, August 30, 2022). Against the background of global teacher shortages, the increased levels of public discussion on the issue in Jamaica, and the range of measures taken by the Ministry of Education, it can be conclusively asserted that there is either a present crisis in teacher migration or an emerging crisis.

1.2 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to ascertain whether there is a teacher migration crisis in Jamaica, and if so, to identify the push and pull factors and possible policy solutions. This article answers the following questions:

1. To what extent do teachers perceive teacher migration as a crisis in Jamaica?
2. What are the main factors driving teacher migration in Jamaica?
3. To what extent do age, qualifications, and experience influence the factors that contribute to teacher migration in Jamaica?
4. What incentives teachers reported would encourage them to remain in teaching in Jamaica?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study is significant for at least four reasons. These are:

1. It clarifies the question of whether Jamaica faces a teacher migration crisis. The clarifying of this issue in the face of dispute opens the gateway for more policy-focused response to a matter that is of tremendous public interest.
2. It conveys the perspectives of teachers and other education stakeholders on what are the factors responsible for the teacher migration crisis.
3. It outlines the parameters for shaping the policy actions necessary for addressing the factors driving teacher migration.

4. In accomplishing the three things outlined above, the study will contribute significantly to how Jamaica, as a country, can deal with what is a clear threat to its development given the centrality of a stable education system to the sustainable development of the country.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Teacher Migration—The Historical Global Context

Appleton, Sives, and Morgan (2006), and later Miller (2007; 2018), have contextualized the global issue of teacher migration. Whereas the first group of authors classify the phenomenon as “international teacher mobility” (p.122), the other author brands it as “OTTs”, meaning “overseas trained teachers”, ...that is, “any teacher who has undertaken teacher training outside of the European Economic Area and Switzerland and has been recognized by the competent authority in their home country” (p.160). Irrespective of the title used, the concept remains unchanged. Since the 1950s, according to Grannum (2002), it has been driven by the push pull factors of the chains of “high demands” by developed countries, and the “unlimited supply” by developing countries. This economic construct has sustained the ebbs and flows, and waves, of teachers making the decision to emigrate for various reasons.

Miller (2018) provides a comprehensive overview of the rise and fall of OTTs in England. He explains that the OTT is an off-spring of International migration, and that in England (and the same is true for the US), economic and demographic interests and nation-building paved the way for the centrality and continuity of migration. And, since OTTs in England came primarily from the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Jamaica (Boffey, 2015), it is unsurprising that England used migration as a means of social, cultural, ideological, racial and symbolic control “to decide who to allow in, and under what conditions” (Miller, 2008, p.162). It is clear then that the conditions and privileges of, as well as the treatment meted out to OTTs—then and even now—are still not reflective of parity and equity.

Therefore, international teacher mobility, while from the outside looks alluring because of the associated economic benefits, OTTs entrenched in the system trace and characterize a typical work day in their classrooms as “hectic, fast paced, tiring, challenging and overwhelming”, despite the period of time they have been teaching in England or the US. The OTTs’ experiences are quite similar, according to Miller (2018, p.162-165) and Britton (2022), a migrant teacher from Jamaica who operates a YouTube channel that provides visuals of “A

day in the life of a Jamaican teacher in the USA: Lessons and Transitions. In fact, Miller assesses the shared experiences of the six (6) participants in his study. His take, based on the evidence that they have personally shared, is that their career progression has “flatlined”. They are merely “surviving and coping”, not “thriving” in their teaching careers as they had hoped when they left their home country (p.164). Actually, only one of Miller’s (2018) participants was actually promoted to a head of year role (ie, a year group supervisor), and this reality he found to be consistent with his 2015 research on OTTs.

Given this historical/global perspective, and its attendant realities, the question of why are the waves of OTTs / international teacher mobility / teacher migration to the UK and US still viscerally strong for so many Jamaican educators is quite telling. Not only is their response to that question complex, but the perspective of the Jamaican government is also nuanced and somewhat confounding. The concern of the latter tends to obsess on the financial fallout of ‘brain drain’, of losing their training investment to the developed countries. Rather, the focus ought to be on assessing the qualitative effects that international teacher mobility can have on the fabric of the nation’s education system, as well as the impairment it will cause to the “transfer of skills to their next generation of citizens”, contend Appleton, Sives and Morgan (2006, p.139).

2.2 Teacher Migration—The Caribbean Context

The International Organisation for Migration (2022) notes that ‘statistical trends show that more people are on the move today than ever before’. According to Parkins (2010), ‘peoples of the Caribbean, in general, and Jamaicans in particular, have always been a migratory people’ (p. 6). Parkins (2010) points out that since 1980, ‘the emigration rates have increased substantially, with alarming rates in particular, of highly skilled individuals’ (p. 6). At the macro level, this trend has been fueled by the following four major factors:

1. Crime, violence, lawlessness and general societal indiscipline
2. Occupation and skill mismatch
3. Lack of economic opportunities
4. Lack of social opportunities

At the micro level of teacher migration, some of the reasons contributing to teacher migration from developing countries, in particular the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS), include the lack of resources, inadequate remuneration, and poor school leadership (Dennis, 2022).

There is a paucity in literature on teacher migration across the Caribbean. It is apparent that Jamaica more than any other Caribbean country struggles with this issue (Caravatti *et al.*, 2014). This could be due to its lower economic status compared to its counterparts. By illustration, there is a significant difference among the following territories with respect to their GDP per capita:

Year: 2020	
<i>Country</i>	<i>GDP per capita (USD)</i>
Barbados	16,319
Jamaica	4,664.53
Trinidad and Tobago	15,384.04

Though Penson and Yonemura (2012) have observed that Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago have lost ‘a large number of teachers through targeted recruitment’ (p. 128), Jamaica appears to be one of the countries that have borne the greatest brunt of teacher migration. According to Penson and Yonemura (2012), ‘Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) reported that between 1999 and 2002, there was a teacher turnover rate of 4.5 per cent at the secondary level and 2.4 per cent at the primary level’ (p. 128). Nonetheless there were factors other than migration that would have contributed to the level of turnover.

In treating with teacher migration, T&T offered a ‘package of incentives’ in an attempt to retain their teachers. This offer ‘included revision of the teachers’ compensation, introduction of professional development programmes, introduction of sabbatical leave, revision of the school management systems, modernisation of schools and teacher training institutions, and teacher assistance programmes’ (Penson and Yonemura, p. 48). Between the late 1990s and 2002, Jamaica experienced a similar trend of teacher recruitment and migration to the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA). In 2001, three hundred and fifty (350) teachers migrated to New York and one hundred (100) to the UK. Therefore, while a turnover rate of 9.8 per cent was recorded in that same year in Jamaica (Penson & Yonemura, 2012), in Barbados the teacher turnover rate oscillated between 2.6 per cent in 1999 and 3.5 percent in 2001.

Dennis (2022) explains that ‘Jamaica, like other nations worldwide, is experiencing a catastrophic exodus and shortage of teachers’. According to him, ‘this is perhaps the single largest migration of teachers that we have experienced as a nation within the last decade’. Hordatt-Gentles (2020) asserts that within the Jamaican context, efforts are directed at replacing teachers instead of trying to retain them. This reality she interprets as a ‘resignation to the notion that Ja-

maica cannot compete with overseas salaries' (p. 197). Hordatt-Gentles (2020) describes this practice as an 'inefficient and wasteful strategy' (p. 201). Neufville (2016) notes that a teacher who is recruited to the United Kingdom could be paid up to five times the compensation that is received in Jamaica. Certainly, Jamaica, a developing country that has had little to no economic growth since it gained political independence in 1962, cannot make an appropriate counter offer. Efforts to retain teachers include offering government-funded scholarships for training in key areas such as Mathematics and Science and contractual bonding. These strategies have proven to be ineffective since there are reports of persons who migrate shortly after the government-sponsored training is complete, bonding arrangement notwithstanding. There are overseas recruitment agencies that buy out the bonds of the scholarship recipients to facilitate quicker recruitment. The lure of 'higher levels of income, increased purchasing power, along with the more attractive lifestyle of developed countries' (p. 200), as explained by Hordatt-Gentles (2020), is significant enough for many Jamaican educators to opt to offer their skills to overseas territories.

Dennis (2022) observes that 'we are treating the symptoms instead of the source of the malady' because the strategies which the government has employed over the years for addressing teacher migration are reactive, at best, and have demonstrated no urgency and genuine appreciation for the challenges that result from the loss of experienced educators. Hordatt-Gentles (2020) posits that among other things, the loss of seasoned teachers 'has serious negative implications for our capacity to provide effective education' (p. 197). There are schools that have had to remove certain subjects from their slate of offerings due to the inability to retain specialists in those disciplines, according to the report, along with the claim that results of external examinations are highly likely to experience decline as there is increased burden on those teachers who have remained behind. (Jackson, 2019).

2.3 Teacher Migration—The Jamaican Context

The recruitment and migration of teachers from developing to developed countries continue to be as much of a concern today as they were two decades ago. In 2002, Jamaica, after losing over one thousand (1,000) teachers to the United Kingdom and the United States (JIS, 2004), scheduled a meeting with representatives from seven Caribbean countries to discuss the problem of teacher loss (Ochs, 2009; Pen-son & Yonemura, 2012; UNESCO, 2021). This meeting resulted in the Savannah Accord at the Sixth Commonwealth Research Symposium,

which saw Jamaica at the forefront of Commonwealth countries advocating for a protocol to be drafted which would govern the recruitment of teachers (JIS, 2004; Commonwealth Secretariat, 2004, as cited in Penson & Yonemura, 2012). After two meetings with the committee, the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol (CTRP) was adopted by Jamaica and other member states of the Commonwealth on September 1, 2004 (Ochs, 2009; Penson & Yonemura, 2012; UNESCO, 2021).

Today, almost twenty years after the adoption of this protocol, Jamaica still grapples with teacher loss. Dubbed as the “*modern day exodus*” for Jamaicans, the word “migration” in 2022 is almost synonymous to the word “teacher” (Ming & Christian, 2022). As reported by Appleton, Morgan and Sives (2006), the global shortage of teachers has posed a negative threat on developing countries such as Jamaica. Hordatt-Gentles (2020) and Rudder (n.d.) posit that aggressive foreign recruiters are now using attractive salary packages to lure teachers into overseas teaching jobs. Graham (2022) shares that former JTA president, Owen Speid, in his television appearance, supports Hordatt-Gentles’ (2020) and Rudder’s (2011) position that the teacher’s salary in Jamaica is not livable, and is a high driver for teachers to leave Jamaica for “greener pastures”. Speid also suggested that the quality of leadership offered by some principals is a disincentive to teachers, as some principals are uncaring (Graham, 2022). Likewise, Ochs (2007) and George et al. (2021) support Speid’s claims, and further highlight several disparities in source countries as it relates to teacher migration, including remuneration, incentives, and retention strategies. Appleton, Sives and Morgan (2006) also address these factors as they solidified Ochs’ (2009) and George, Rhodes and Laptiste’s (2021) perspectives on the negative impact migration has had on source countries.

On the contrary, Minister of Education, the Hon. Fayval Williams speaking at a press conference at the Ministry of Education in August 2022, denies claims that Jamaica is having a teacher shortage problem due to migration (Williams, 2022). She further qualifies her point, that every year the education sector loses educators, and that 2022 is no different (Williams, 2022). However, Opposition Spokesperson on education, Damion Crawford, criticizes Minister Williams over her denial or seeming lack of concern regarding the migration of teachers (Morgan, 2022). In support of Crawford’s position, Junior Spokesperson on education, Roper Robinson, expresses that the Minister’s disregard is not only hurtful, but disrespectful to the country’s educators (Thomas, 2022).

Lured by the benefits of remittances from teachers who migrate, and being resigned to the notion that Jamaica cannot compete with overseas salaries, government initiatives have focused on replacing

rather than retaining its teachers (Hordatt-Gentles, 2020). The Ministry of Education has put in place several strategies to mitigate any potential challenges from the mass migration of teachers. Minister Williams also reveals that 964 specialist teachers who have just completed their studies are now available for employment in the national school system (Grizzle, 2022). On the contrary, whilst there are sufficient teachers available to replace those who have left (Appleton et al., 2006), teacher migration does not only impact the absolute numbers of available teachers; it also results in the depletion of the more experienced and knowledgeable teachers who are more sought after abroad.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive quantitative design. The key purpose of the descriptive design is to show the associations between the variables and describe and interpret said associations (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the findings are determined by the conditions associated with teacher migration and the extent to which these conditions influence teacher migration in Jamaica.

3.2 Sample

A total of 158 teachers participated based on convenience to provide insights on teacher migration. Convenient sampling allows the researcher to select participants based on their availability (Creswell 2015). The questionnaire was sent to teachers who have migrated and those who intend to migrate in the future. This sample consisted of teachers from all levels of education. Of the sample 38 are males and 120 are females. The highest qualifications of teachers were mainly bachelors and master's degrees, representing 75 and 65 respectively.

3.3 Description of Instrument

To collect data for this study, a survey instrument (see Appendix 1) was used. According to Fowler (2009), a survey is economical and results in the timely receipt of data from respondents. The items for the survey were developed solely for the purpose of this research. There was a combination of Likert-Type using a scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree) and open ended responses. The other questions were designed to collect demographic information and provided research participants with responses from which to choose. The instrument consists of twenty-four (24) open and closed-ended items. Items

1-15 are closed ended, 16-18 are open-ended and 19-24 are items that focused on demographics. The closed ended questions captured teachers' perspectives on migration and some of the contributory factors. A total of 10 questions looked at the perceived impact of teachers teaching in Jamaican classroom, the benefits, leadership and support, while five captured responses on the influence of the government.

3.4 Validity and Reliability of Instrument

To ensure the validity of the instrument, it was designed by an expert in the field and later reviewed by members of the research team. The members of the team evaluated whether the survey items were aligned to the research purpose, as well as whether the items were clear and specific so as to obtain responses that answer the research questions. The reliability analysis conducted on the 10 questions that looked at teachers' perspective on the contributory factors of migration was .781, which suggests consistency of the measure.

3.5 Procedure

To collect data for this study, a survey instrument was used. The items developed for the survey were transferred to the Google Forms platform to create an online survey. A link was generated for the survey to be administered online. The distribution of the instrument was done via email, WhatsApp and other online platforms to 158 research participants. The survey was cross-sectional and allowed for respondents to complete the questionnaire over a one to two-week period: The Google Forms was closed to collecting responses after the two weeks. The excel spread sheet and graphs were downloaded in preparation for further analysis.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The principle that underpins ethical research is the view that research is not just a matter of collecting information, but is also concerned with the dignity, rights, safety, and well-being of everyone who takes part in research (Leacock, Warrican & Rose, 2015). Consequently, prior to the collection of the data, consideration was given to the confidentiality, safety, and anonymity of all participants. The participants were given a brief description of the study and the intended purpose for the findings was made clear. Consent was sought from all participants, and they were made aware of their option of withdrawing from the research at any time. In addition, participants had to agree

to participate by clicking yes on the Google form for them to continue the survey. The anonymity and protection of the participants' responses were also taken into consideration where they were not required to provide their names or e-mail addresses; instead ID numbers were assigned to each respondent. The data collected from the survey were uploaded to a password protected Google drive accessible only by the research team.

4.0 Results

4.1 Research Question 1:

To what extent do teachers perceive teacher migration as a crisis in Jamaica?

The finding showed that approximately 94% of the respondents perceive that Jamaica has a teacher migration crisis. Likewise, 89% of the respondents believe that the teacher migration crisis has become more acute in the last two years (see Figure 1).

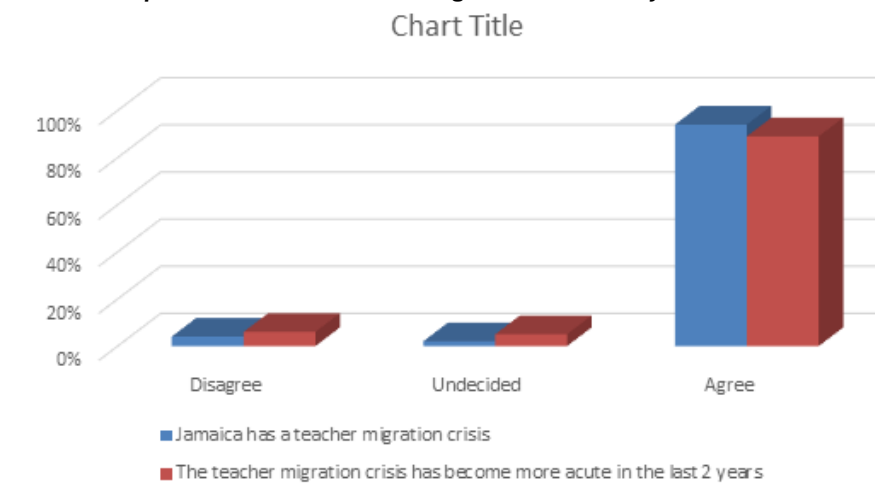
The study also found that 41.4% of the respondents are seriously contemplating migration as shown in the pie chart below (see Figure 2).

4.2 Research Question 2:

What are the main factors driving teacher migration in Jamaica?

As shown in figure 3, the factor of low wages is ranked first as the factor that is accounting for teacher migration in Jamaica. All (100%)

Figure 1
Teachers' Report on Perceived Teacher Migration as Crisis in Jamaica



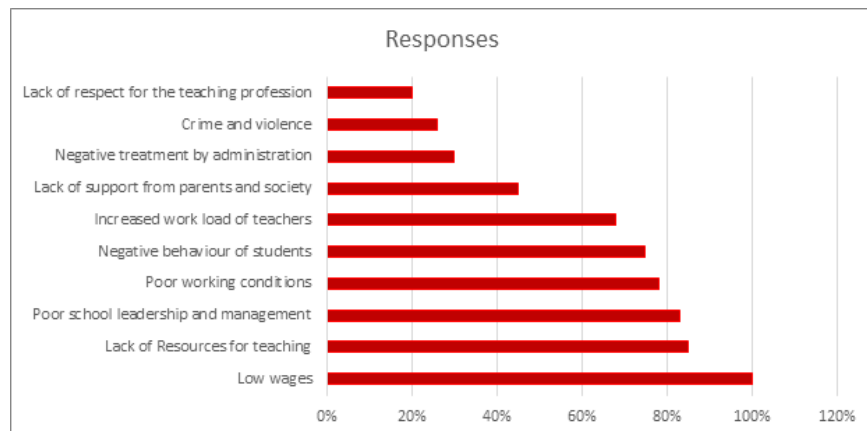
of the respondents reported that the low wages that are being paid to teachers is the number one factor that has influenced their decision to migrate. Lack of resources for teaching was ranked second as their reason for migration. Eighty-five per cent (85%) of the respondents reported that lack of resources for teaching was their second reason for their decision to migrate from Jamaica. Another major factor influencing teacher migration is poor school leadership and management. Eighty-three per cent (83%) of teachers reported that their third reason for their decision to migrate is poor school leadership and management. Other factors reported high on the list of teachers' reasons for migrating are poor working conditions, the negative behaviour of students, and the increased workload of teachers.

Figure 2
Respondents' Current Status and Percent Contemplating Migration

Please indicate your current status
157 responses



Figure 3
Main Factors Driving Teacher Migration in Jamaica



4.3 Research Question 3:

To what extent do age, qualifications, and experience influence the factors that contribute to teacher migration in Jamaica?

The analysis of Chi² square test revealed similar responses for all groups, and no significant difference across the groups in their responses to the factors that contribute to teacher migration in Jamaica.

4.3.1 Factors that influence migration in Jamaica

Approximately 94% of the 158 respondents were of the agreement that low salaries are a main factor in driving teacher migration, with the majority, 67.1%, indicating strongly agree. In assessing the results based on the age group of respondents, all in agreement that low salary is a main factor linked to teacher migration (see Appendix 4).

Of the 158 respondents, approximately 83% were of the agreement that the physical conditions of the Jamaican classroom influence teachers' willingness to leave, with 43.7% of that having strongly agreed. Further assessment of the results revealed that between 71% and 100 % of teachers, across the age cohorts used in this study agree that the physical conditions of the classroom influence teacher migration (see Appendix 4).

Over 50% of the teachers agree that students' behaviour and deportment influenced teachers' decision to leave, as against 32.9% were in total disagreement. In assessing the result based on the age group of respondents, approximately 67% of respondents in the 20-30 age group agreed, while approximately 21% disagreed that the students' behaviour and deportment influenced teacher migration. For those in the 31-40 age-group, 58% agreed, and 26% disagreed that the students' behaviour and deportment influenced teacher migration; conversely, 51% of the teachers ages 41-50 agreed and 36% disagreed. Respondents in the 51-60 age-group agreed, accounting for 61%, while 33% disagreed that behaviour and deportment influenced teacher migration. All the respondents in the 60+age-group, agree that students' behaviour and deportment influenced teacher migration.

Of the 158 respondents, approximately 60% were in agreement that the level of support the school received from parents has an impact on teachers' decision to leave, whereas 29.1 % of the respondents disagreed with this statement. Further analysis of the data revealed that of the age cohorts 20-30 and 31-40 years, 67% and 58% respectively agreed that the inadequate level of support received from parents has influenced their decision to leave. For those in the age-group 41-50, approximately 43% agreed while 40% disagreed, as against 61% of those ages 51-60 who agreed and approximately 33% reported dis-

agreement. All respondents over 60 agree that the level of support the school received from parents has an impact on teacher migration

4.3.2 The role of the quality of leadership

The quality of leadership offered by the principal played a role in the decision of 72.1% of the respondents' decision to leave, of which 40.5% were in strong agreement. In assessing the results based on the age groups of respondents, the percentage of those who agreed ranged between 61% and 75%.

4.3.4 Cross-tabulations of teaching experience and various factors

The cross-tabulations for teaching experience and low salaries, showed that between 89.3% and 96.5% of teachers in the various years of experience categories agreed that low salaries are the main factor in teacher migration. The lowest, 89.3%, was among teachers with over 20 years' experience while the highest 96.5% among teachers with 11-15 years' experience, followed closely by those with 6-10 years' experience at 96.4% (see Appendix 4)

In assessing teaching experience and lack of resources, all the teachers with 5 years or less experience agreed that the lack of resources to support teaching and learning contribute significantly to teacher migration. For those in the other categories, the levels of agreement ranged from 82.2% (11-15 years) to 93% (6-10 years' experience).

An assessment of the results of the cross-tabulation for teaching experience and the physical conditions of classrooms revealed levels of agreement between 72.8% and 96.6%. In assessing teaching experience and students' behaviour and deportment, between 53.6% and 63.6% of teachers, across the experience ranges, agreed that physical conditions of classrooms influenced migration. The levels of disagreement ranged between 18.2% and 37.5%.

The results of the cross-tabulation on teaching experience and the level of support the school received from parents revealed levels of agreement ranging from 53.2% to 63.6%, while disagreements ranged from 25% to 36.2%. In respect of quality of leadership, those in the various experience categories who agreed it was a factor, ranged from a low of 60.7% to a high of 81.9%.

4.3.5 Qualification and factors that influence migration in Jamaica

The data show that the 75 respondents who had a bachelor's degree, 96% agreed that low salaries is the main factor driving teach-

er migration, while approximately 91% of the 64 respondents with a master's degree agreed. All the teachers with post-graduate certificate agreed that low salaries drive teacher migration. For the four respondents with a doctorate, 75% each agreed (see Appendix 4). With respect to the impact of lack of resources on migration, between 75% and 91.7% of teachers in the various categories agreed that lack of resources played a part. The factor of physical conditions also showed high levels of agreement among most categories with responses at or above 80% in all except those with doctorates which was at 50%.

The levels of agreement that students' behaviour and deportment influenced teacher migration were comparatively low, ranging from 56% among teachers who hold bachelor's degrees, to 62.4% among teachers with master's degrees and 66.7% of those with postgraduate certificates. Similar ranges of agreement were found in relation to the factor of support the school received from parents.

An assessment of qualifications and the quality of leadership revealed that approximately 75% of those with a bachelor's degree agreed that the quality of leadership offered by the principal played a role in teacher migration. Approximately 72% of the educators with a master's degree agreed, while approximately 77% of those with post-graduate certification in education agreed. However, 50% of the four respondents with a doctorate agreed and disagreed that the quality of leadership offered by the principal played a role in teacher migration (see Appendix 4).

4.4 Research Question 4:

What incentives teachers reported would encourage them to remain in teaching in Jamaica?

Figure 4 demonstrates that all (100%) teachers believe that **improved salaries** would be the main incentives that would encourage teachers to remain to teach in Jamaica. Other incentives that were reported high on the list that would encourage teachers to remain in teaching are having access to more resources for teaching, and providing affordable housing.

5.0 Discussion

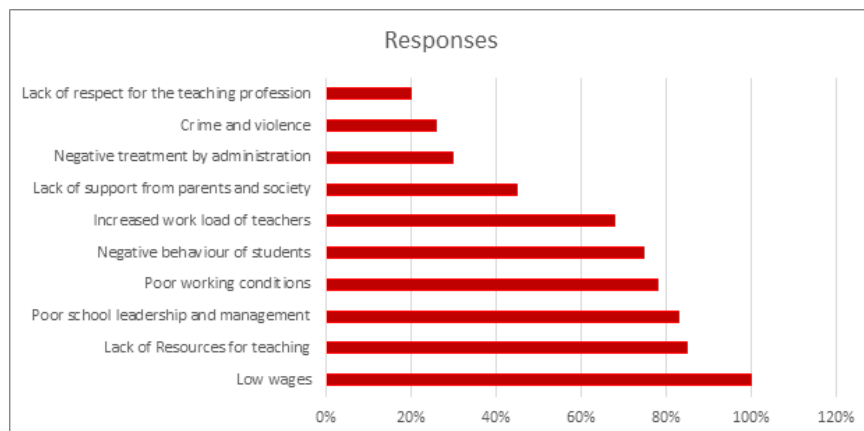
The findings of this study show that most teachers (more than 80%) believe that Jamaica has a teacher migration crisis, which has become more acute in the last two years. While there are opposing views concerning the nature of the phenomenon of teacher shortage and the consequential issue of migration, as to whether it is a recent crisis, the

majority opinion appears to lean towards viewing teacher shortage as a crisis, as argued by Cardona and Trotter (2022) and Benson & Brown (2022), who examined the situation in the United States of America. In respect to other parts of the world, Wade (2022) Adams (2022), and Datta & Kingdon (2021), who examine the issue of teacher shortages in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and India, respectively, all argue that there is an intensification in the severity of teacher shortage. The inevitable consequence of teacher shortage is inducements of teachers to emigrate, effected by states experiencing these shortages, and which have the capacity to offer attractive inducements.

The study found that there are at least ten (10) factors driving Jamaican teachers to migrate, the top four of which are low wages, lack of resources, poor leadership and management, and working conditions. The other six factors on the list include concerns about crime and violence and perceptions of lack of respect from society. These factors are generally aligned to what the literature shows. Parkins (2010) identifies several factors driving teacher migration which include crime, violence, lawlessness, and lack of economic opportunities. Dennis (2022) made similar findings, identifying lack of resources, inadequate remuneration, and poor school leadership. While there are variations in the levels of agreement when cross tabulations are done using age, years of experience, and qualifications, the overwhelming direction of the findings show that these factors are implicated in the decisions of a majority of teachers to leave Jamaican classrooms.

Thus, with the push factors of teacher migration being identified as shown above, the next consideration is what are some of the possi-

Figure 4
Incentives That Would Encourage Teachers to Remain in Teaching in Jamaica



ble policy options that the government may employ. The options are self-evident, based on the specificity of the identified causes. The study found seven factors, the top four of which include improved salaries, which is directly aligned to the top driver of migration. Similarly, the issue of resources as the second driver. The somewhat surprising factor is housing. While seemingly surprising, the issue of housing aligns with economic opportunities as explained by Parkins (2010) and feeds into a point of view raised by Hordatt-Gentles (2020), who argues that not enough has been done by Jamaican governments to retain teachers, as efforts are directed at replacing them. While Hordatt-Gentles (2020) did not mention housing as a consideration, her interpretation of the issue of teacher migration as being affected by failure to take steps to retain, shines the spotlight on this finding which teachers have advanced as one of the initiatives that would make them less likely to migrate.

The issue of retention strategies involves both leadership practice and policy. The study found that one of the contributing factors to teachers leaving is the quality of leadership at the school level. This finding suggests that how principals engage members of staff is a critical variable in their level of commitment to remaining in their jobs. These findings are supported by Speid, reported by Graham (2022). Addressing the issue of leadership is both a practice and policy matter, and while the Jamaican government has a leadership training college for principals, it is yet to be determined whether those trained in this college are making the kind of impact that is needed in terms of quality leadership, and thus whether the existence and operation of the college can be positioned as part of the policy response as part of a strategy of retention. Speid, reported by Graham (2022), Ochs (2007) and George et al. (2021) all share the view that remuneration, along with other incentives represent effective retention strategies.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this study show conclusively that Jamaica faces a major crisis of teacher migration, and the evidence further suggests that this problem is likely to remain for the foreseeable future. The factors largely responsible for this phenomenon are related to salaries, resources, working conditions, and leadership. The cure for this problem is likely to be found in improving salaries, creating incentives related to housing and other socio-economic benefits, as well as addressing the problem of leadership and general safety in the society.

Further study is needed to understand how these incentives and

issue of leadership would work and how they would impact the problem as well as on how education sector managers, including school leaders, are managing the challenges posed by the migration of teachers, at both the policy and practitioner levels.

With respect incentives, it is to be noted that several political administrations have promised to address the issue of housing by allocating a specified number of housing solutions to teachers, but the need to do similarly for other public sector workers has seemingly stayed the process. On the question of leadership, there is need for a study to be done on how teachers view the leadership skills and the effectiveness of principals who have undergone the leadership training programmes of the Ministry of Education.

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Appendix I

Survey Questionnaire Instrument

Dear Colleague: The Caribbean Centre for Educational Planning (CCEP) is undertaking research to acquire a better understanding of the factors driving teacher migration from Jamaican classrooms. The findings of the research are intended to assist the CCEP in formulating policy proposals to help address the problem. Your responses will remain anonymous and your views will not be identifiable with the institution with which you work or have worked.

Please use the key below to answer the questions that follow:

SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; U=Undecided; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree

- (1) Jamaica has a teacher migration crisis.
- (2) The teacher migration crisis has become more acute in the last 2-4 years.
- (3) Low salaries are the main factor in driving teachers into migration.
- (4) Lack of resources to support teaching and learning contribute significantly to teachers' decision to migrate.
- (5) The physical conditions of Jamaican schools, influence teachers' desire to leave.
- (6) The quality of leadership offered by the principal plays a role in teachers' decision to leave.
- (7) Students' behaviour and deportment influence teachers' decisions to leave.
- (8) The level of support the school receives from parents, impact on teachers' decisions to leave.
- (9) Teachers who leave often feel tired and burnt out.
- (10) Most teachers who leave would have stayed if general working conditions were better.
- (11) Teachers who have left would have stayed if salaries were better.
- (12) Government has control over the major factors which drive teachers to leave.
- (13) Government has no control over the major factors which cause teachers to leave.
- (14) Government has done its best to address the issues which affect teachers and result in them migrating.
- (15) Government has tried its best to address the issues which affect teachers but external factors overwhelm what the government does.
- (16) The Jamaican education sector has changed drastically and there is very little the government can do to discourage teachers from migrating.

- (17) What would you regard as the top six pressing problems affecting the education sector in Jamaica which contribute to teachers migrating (Please list in order of strength)
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.

- (18) What incentives would encourage you to remain in teaching in Jamaica? (Please list in order of importance)

Please answer the following questions:

- (19) Please indicate your current status:
- (a) You left the Jamaican classroom and are now teaching overseas.
 - (b) You left the Jamaican classroom and are now working overseas in a non-teaching role.
 - (c) You left the Jamaican classroom and are now working in another sector in Jamaica.
 - (d) You left the Jamaican classroom, worked overseas and have returned to Jamaica and are back in the classroom.
 - (e) You left the Jamaican classroom, worked overseas and have returned to Jamaica and are working in another sector.
 - (f) Seriously contemplating migrating.
- (20) You migrated:
- (a) Less than one year ago.
 - (b) Between 1 and 5 years ago.
 - (c) Between 6 and 10 years ago.
 - (d) Over 10 years ago.
- (21) Your age group is:
- (a) 20 – 30.
 - (b) 31 – 40.
 - (c) 41 – 50.
 - (d) 51 – 60.
 - (e) 60+
- (22) You have been a teacher for:
- (a) 5 years or less.
 - (b) 6 – 10 years.
 - (c) 11 – 15 years.
 - (d) 16 – 20 years.
 - (e) Over 20 years.
- (23) You have been / were at your current institution for:
- (a) 5 years or less.
 - (b) 6 – 10 years.
 - (c) 11 – 15 years.
 - (d) 16 – 20 years.
 - (e) Over 20 years.

(24) Your highest professional qualification is:

- (a) Bachelor's Degree.
- (b) Master's Degree.
- (c) Postgraduate Cert in Education.
- (d) Doctorate.

(25) You are:

- (a) Male.
- (b) Female.

(26) You are / were employed to the institution:

- (a) Full-time.
- (b) Part-time.

Appendix 2
Results of Cross Tabulation Between Age-Group
and Factors Influencing Teacher Migration

		<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
Low salaries are the main factor in driving teachers into migration	20-30	0	4.2%	95.9%	24
	31-40	1.5%	1.5%	96.9%	65
	41-50	4.3%	4.3%	91.5%	47
	51-60	11.5%	5.6%	83.4%	18
	60+	0	0	100%	4
	Lack of resources to support teaching and learning contribute significantly to teachers' decision to migrate	20-30	0	4.2%	95.8%
31-40		3.1%	7.7%	89.2%	65
41-50		8.5%	2.1%	89.3%	47
51-60		22.3%	5.6%	78.2%	18
60+		0	0	100%	4
The physical condition of Jamaican classrooms influence teachers' willingness to leave		20-30	4.2%	25%	70.5%
	31-40	4.8%	3.1%	92.3%	65
	41-50	14.9%	6.4%	78.7%	47
	51-60	22.3%	5.6%	72.2%	18
	60+	0	0	100%	4
	Students' behaviour and department influence teachers' decisions to leave	20-30	29.1%	4.2%	66.7%
31-40		29.3%	12.3%	58.5%	65
41-50		42.4%	6.4%	51%	47
51-60		33.3%	5.6%	61.1%	18
60+		0	0	100%	4

The level of support the school receives from parents, impact on teachers' decisions to leave	20-30	20.8%	12.5%	66.7%	24
	31-40	26.1%	16.9%	58.4%	65
	41-50	40.4%	6.4%	53.2%	47
	51-60	33.3%	5.6%	61.1%	18
	60+	0	0	100%	4
The quality of leadership offered by the principal play a role in teachers' decision to leave	20-30	12.5%	4.2%	83.4%	24
	31-40	9.2%	18.5%	72.38%	65
	41-50	17%	17%	66%	47
	51-60	22.2%	5.6%	72.5%	18
	60+		25%	75%	4

Appendix 3
Results of Cross-Tabulation of Years of Experience
and Factors Influencing Teacher Migration

	<i>Years of Exper</i>	<i>Dis-agree</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
Low salaries are the main factor in driving teachers into migration	5 years or less	0	4.5%	95.4%	22
	6-10 yr.	3.5%	0	96.5%	29
	11-15 yr.	3.1%	0	96.9%	32
	16-20 yr.	3.6%	3.6%	92.9%	28
	20+ yr.	4.3%	6.4%	89.3%	47
Lack of resources to support teaching and learning contribute significantly to teachers' decision to migrate	5 years or less	0	0	100%	22
	6-10 yr.	0	6.9%	93.1%	29
	11-15 yr.	6.3%	9.4%	84.59%	32
	16-20 yr.	12.3%	3.6%	84.2%	28
	20+ yr.	8.6%	4.3%	87.2%	47
The physical condition of Jamaican classrooms influence teachers' willingness to leave	5 years or less	4.5%	22.7%	72.8%	22
	6-10 yr.	0	3.4%	96.6%	29
	11-15 yr.	6.3%	3.1%	90.7%	32
	16-20 yr.	14.3%	7.1%	78.6%	28
	20+ yr.	17%	6.4%	76.6%	47

Students' behaviour and department influence teachers' decisions to leave	5 years or less	22.7%)	13.6%	63.6%	22
	6-10 yr.	27.6%	13.8%	58.6%	29
	11-15 yr.	34.4%	0	65.6%	32
	16-20 yr.	35.7%	10.7%	53.6%	28
	20+ yr.	38.3%	6.4%	55.3%	47
The level of support the school receives from parents, impact on teachers' decisions to leave	5 years or less	13.6%	22.7%	63.6%	22
	6-10 yr.	31%	10.3%	58.6%	29
	11-15 yr.	31.3%	15.6%	53.2%	32
	16-20 yr.	25%	10.7%	64.2%	28
	20+ yr.	36.2%	4.3%	59.5%	47
The quality of leadership offered by the principal play a role in teachers' decision to leave	5 years or less	13.6%	4.5%	81.9%	22
	6-10 yr.	13.8%	13.8%	72.7%	29
	11-15 yr.	9.4%	15.6%	75%	32
	16-20 yr.	17.9%	21.4%	60.5%	28
	20+ yr.	12.8%	14.9%	62.4%	47

Appendix 4

Results of Cross-Tabulation on Qualifications and Factors Influencing Migration

		<i>Dis-</i> <i>agree</i>	<i>Unde-</i> <i>cided</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Total</i>
Low salaries are the main factor in driving teachers into migration	Bachelor's Degree	2.7%	1.3%	96%	75
	Master's Degree	3.1%	6.3%	90.7%	64
	Postgrad. Cert in Ed.	0	0	100%	15
	Doctorate	25%	0	75%	4
Lack of resources to support teaching and learning contribute significantly to teachers' decision to migrate	Bachelor's Degree	4%	5.3%	90.7%	75
	Master's Degree	9.4%	3.1%	87.5%	64
	Postgrad. Cert in Ed.	0	13.3%	86.7%	15
	Doctorate	25%	0	75%	4

The physical condition of Jamaican classrooms influence teachers' willingness to leave					
Bachelor's Degree	9.3%	6.7%	84%	75	
Master's Degree	7.9%	7.8%	89.4%	64	
Postgrad. Cert in Ed.	6.7%	13.3%	80%	15	
Doctorate	50%	0	50%	4	
Students' behaviour and deportment influence teachers' decisions to leave					
Bachelor's Degree	36%	8%	56%	75	
Master's Degree	28.1%	9.4%	62.5%	64	
Postgrad. Cert in Ed.	26.7%	6.7%	66.7%	15	
Doctorate	75%	0	25%	4	
The level of support the school receives from parents, impact on teachers' decisions to leave					
Bachelor's Degree	29.3%	9.3%	61.3%	75	
Master's Degree	31.3%	10.9%	57.8%	64	
Postgrad. Cert in Ed.	13.3%	26.7%	60%	15	
Doctorate	50%	0	50%	4	
The quality of leadership offered by the principal play a role in teachers' decision to leave					
Bachelor's Degree	10.7%	14.7%	74.7%	75	
Master's Degree	12.5%	15.6%	71.9%	64	
Postgrad. Cert in Ed.	2 (13.3%)	2 (13.3%)	6 (40%)	15	
Doctorate	2 (50%)	0	1 (25%)	4	