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## Revisit Attraction–Selection–Attrition Model for Teacher Retention in International Schools

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**Abstract:** The Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) model is a prominent framework for supporting employee retention, stating that organisations attract, select, and retain people who share their values. However, the ASA model only extends to the end of the recruitment stage and lacks clarity on how to assist newcomers in the assimilation process when they first join the organisation. This research proposed a refinement of the ASA paradigm by incorporating the assimilation process of new hires into the new school culture and environment. This study employed a qualitative research approach by interviewing ten participants about the retention process from high teacher retention international schools in Malaysia. Thematic data analysis revealed a new paradigm, 'Attraction-Selection-Onboarding-Retention (ASOR)', designed to increase teacher retention in international schools. The ASOR model could assist school administrators and human resource managers working in a related setting in properly engaging the workforce to increase teacher retention. This would benefit school sustainability, performance and the local community's economy.

**Keywords:** *Attraction, onboarding, selection, talent management.*

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### Introduction

Numerous studies have indicated that teachers leaving schools can adversely affect students' academic performance (Barnes et al., 2007; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). This is because schools may experience a loss of trained teachers and knowledge gaps when teachers leave their positions, especially during the semester. The replacement of teachers can disrupt the continuity of the learning process for students. Literature suggests that the development of teacher-student relationships and trust requires time. Students must adapt to the teaching method employed by their teachers (Aeschlimann et al., 2019; S. Gibbons et al., 2017), which becomes particularly challenging when dealing with inexperienced and ineffective teachers. Thus, retaining experienced and qualified teachers is crucial. Simpson and Rosenholtz (1986) asserted that inexperienced teachers, typically those with less than three years of experience, are generally less effective than their senior teachers. Several studies have reported that teachers with more experience are more effective (Huang & Moon, 2009; Kini & Podolsky, 2016). Consequently, a high teacher turnover rate and low academic achievement can negatively impact the school's reputation.

To address the above issue, this study is grounded in the Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) model, developed by Schneider (1987), who approached human resource issues from a psychological perspective. Schneider (1987) believed that organisations attract, select and retain employees who align with their values, personalities, and attitudes, thereby shaping their culture. The ASA model explains the process of staff homogeneity by suggesting that homogeneity arises when established members encourage the departure of newcomers who are incompatible with their culture and practices (Alderfer, 1971). However, staff homogeneity may only be suitable for certain organisations, particularly those with diverse workforces, such as international schools where teachers, parents, and students come from different countries and cultures. Moreover, the modern workplace increasingly values heterogeneous employee compositions because they are a powerful tool for enhancing customer experience and employee productivity (Makudza et al., 2020).

According to Schneider (1987), leaders naturally affect organisational culture and the environment by selecting individuals who share similar assumptions, attitudes, and views. While the ASA model effectively explains the reasons for employee turnover, it needs further clarification on the role of a leader and organisational rules or practices to assist newcomers in the assimilation process when they initially join the organisation. Consequently, there is a need for

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additional frameworks that guide leaders in the proper recruitment, selection, and assimilation of individuals into an organisation's culture and environment, how to promote longer retention,

Although the ASA model has been used to understand processes leading to employee homogeneity within an organisation, further refinement is necessary for its application in heterogeneous workforce organisations. The new model should outline how school leaders guide newcomers to assimilate into the school culture and environment within a diverse workforce, fostering longer-term commitment. Additionally, revisiting ASA model guidance on staff recruitment, selection, and retention is essential for a lasting impact on strengthening organisational culture and performance. This research proposed redesigning the traditional ASA framework for the international school teacher retention model. This research offered insights into increasing international school teacher retention by emphasising the importance of newcomers' integration into the new school culture and environment. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following research questions:

- What teacher retention model can be proposed to retain international school teachers?
- To what extent does the school support incoming teachers in assimilating into the school culture and environment?

### Literature Review

#### *Teacher Retention in International School*

According to the Council of British International Schools (COBIS, 2018), the retention rate of international teachers in Asia was reported to be only 41.3%. This figure represents the lowest retention rate not only among Asian countries but also worldwide. Numerous teachers, including those from the British International School of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, have expressed that they relocated or returned to the UK, resulting from the insufficient acknowledgement of the skills they gained in an international context (COBIS, 2018).

Teacher retention in international schools is highly complex, given the diverse origins of educators, with some coming from different countries and others being locals (Ledger, 2016). Foreign teachers bring with them various cultures, values, and beliefs. The Malaysian government also encourages international schools, especially those targeting the middle-income market, to recruit Malaysians as teachers (Jabatan Perdana Menteri [Department of Prime Minister], 2013). In schools that integrate international and private academic curricula, a higher proportion of Malaysian teachers may be tasked with delivering both international and Malaysian syllabuses. Consequently, teacher retention practices applicable to foreign teachers may differ from those in the context of Malaysian international schools. Research indicates that foreign teachers are inclined to stay in a school that offers suitable opportunities to showcase their skills. Conversely, Malaysian teachers prefer to remain in schools that provide comfort to individuals within and outside the organization and foster a positive work environment (Juhdi et al., 2018). This situation demonstrates that different perceptions of teacher retention strategies may impact local teachers differently than their international counterparts.

Retaining long-term teachers poses a common challenge for international school administrators. Many organisations struggle to retain their employees due to the ineffectiveness of a management team in identifying retention factors and practices (R. R. Sims, 2002). The literature also underscores the role of school leaders in teacher retention (Boel, 2020; Bolden, 2019). However, to date, little is known about the perspective of other school management members, such as heads of departments, human resource (HR) managers, and vice principals, on this issue.

#### *ASA Theory to Teacher Retention*

Schneider (1987) defined it as an organisation's process of attracting and selecting individuals with similar ideals, personalities, and attitudes. People who do not align with these criteria will leave the organization (attrition), resulting in low employee retention.

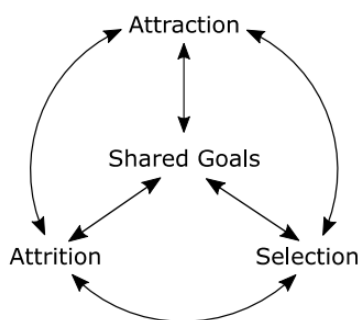


Figure 1. The Attraction-Selection-Attrition Model (Source: Link & Jeske, 2017)

The organisation attracts only certain prospective employees in the first two stages of the ASA model, selecting individuals believed to be compatible with achieving shared goals and forming a homogenous workforce. The ASA model emphasises a homogeneous workforce, aiming to reduce employee turnover. However, workforce diversity has garnered increasing attention in human management research over the past two decades due to its positive impact on organisational performance and productivity (Dudau & McAllister, 2010; Lee & Zhang, 2021; Moon & Christensen, 2020; Vangen & Winchester, 2014). In contemporary organisations, the trend is to hire individuals based on the perceived compatibility between their personalities and the organisation's needs (Goldstein et al., 2017). In this case, recruiters are crucial in ensuring their messages effectively reach the right individuals and persuade them to apply for open positions.

Person-Environment fit (P-E fit), which is 'broadly defined as the compatibility between an individual and a work environment that occurs when their traits are well matched' (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005, p. 281), is closely related to ASA theory. P-E fit is more suitable to be used in employee recruitment and retention because "organisations select persons who will best meet the demands of the job" and "prospective employees want to find organisations that make use of their specific abilities and meet their specific needs" (Caplan, 1987, p. 248). As a result, organisations with a good P-E fit with their personnel have a high retention rate.

According to Erasmus et al. (2005), the selection task is challenging because judgments cannot rely solely on a single selection method, leaving recruiters in the dark during this complex process. Solid selection criteria guide process participants and ensure adherence to excellent practices. Abdou (2012), who was an Egyptian researcher interested in understanding teacher recruiting and selection practices, found that all international schools in Egypt require credentials and seek qualities such as self-confidence, communication and interpersonal skills, attitude, self-composure, content, and pedagogical competence. According to Bogatova (2017), employers use various tests, including ability tests, integrity tests, personality tests, group situational tests, and work simulation tests, to better understand applicants and assess their abilities, talents, skills, and qualifications for the open position.

Attrition refers to individuals leaving an organization over time if they are skilled and congruent with the culture. However, in a diverse workforce environment, we hypothesised that individuals who successfully integrate into the workplace culture and contribute to homogeneity with the workforce might stay longer. According to Goldstein et al. (2017), an organisation tends to keep personnel who are compatible with its qualities and composition, while those who are not may leave. A longitudinal study involving 140 participants by De Cooman et al. (2009) revealed that socialisation promotes staff homogeneity following enrolment into the organisation. The results confirmed that a low attrition effect could contribute to a high retention rate. Nevertheless, this study required further investigation of how leaders and groups could promote socialisation in a diverse workforce.

### *Onboarding and Teacher Retention*

When a school successfully hires teachers who are the right fit, the goal is to retain them longer, reducing hiring costs and minimizing the negative impact on student achievement. A study conducted by Papay et al. (2017) revealed surprisingly high turnover rates among US teachers in their first three years, with the percentage of early career teachers turning over ranging from 46% to 71%, depending on the district. Alam (2018) noted that one of the reasons new teachers leave schools is the lack of help and support. Newly hired teachers are often left alone to navigate the challenges of their new situation, which can lead to stress and reduced job satisfaction. Other challenges identified by scholars include establishing a teaching identity, meeting performance expectations, managing job-related stress and work demands, coping with heavy teaching loads and tough competition, navigating relationships with colleagues, administrators, parents, and students, as well as experiencing a general lack of self-efficacy (Atteberry et al., 2015; Banville, 2015; Headden, 2014; Ingersoll, 2012; Ren, 2016; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

In the past, onboarding programs have been shown to help retain new teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Maready et al., 2021; Zembytska, 2016). A study by Ronfeldt and McQueen (2017) showed that teachers who receive consistent levels of induction support in their first year experience less teacher migration and attrition, particularly among teachers who are Black and work in schools with a higher proportion of students who speak English as a second language. This is significant because these groups of teachers often require higher levels of induction support. Onboarding new hires is crucial as it facilitates their integration into the organisation, culture, and information access, ultimately enhancing their productivity in day-to-day tasks (Becker & Bish, 2021).

Some studies, however, question the impact of onboarding programs on teacher retention (Bowden & Portis-Woodson, 2017; Wiens et al., 2019). For example, Vittek (2015) suggested that school onboarding programs could be more effective if they focus on integrating new teachers into their residential communities adequately. Schools must either provide adequate mentoring to new teachers or ensure that administrators offer limited assistance. Other researchers emphasised that the quality and efficiency of teacher onboarding programs should take precedence over the quantity of time and people involved. Wasburn-Moses (2006) stated that a typical onboarding program should include mentoring from experienced teachers and professional development based on the challenges faced by early career teachers. However, a recent study focused narrowly on limited topics and content, highlighting the growing need for additional research into the content and effectiveness of teacher onboarding programs, particularly regarding teacher retention (L.

K. Gibbons & Cobb, 2017; Kraft et al., 2018). Given that schools invest a substantial amount of time, money, and energy in recruiting the best workers, it is crucial for schools to establish high-quality onboarding programmes to ensure that employees are up and running as soon as possible (Becker & Bish, 2021).

## Methodology

### Research Design

This exploratory study employed a qualitative case study using semi-structured interviews to collect data to address the research questions. A qualitative case study was chosen to explore school administrators' perspectives, feelings, and experiences and the practices related to teacher recruitment and retention (Mohajan, 2018). The case study approach facilitated the researcher in learning from the participants as they described and made sense of their own experiences with educational issues (Lucas et al., 2018).

### Sample and Data Collection

The population for this study comprised school administrators, including principals, vice-principals, heads of departments, and HR managers from 205 international schools in Malaysia (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia [Ministry of Education Malaysia], 2019). The sample of this study consisted of individuals directly involved in the human resource management process and shaping school policies that affect teacher recruitment and retention in international schools in Malaysia. These individuals are well-versed in the process and procedures, serving as decision-makers and practitioners. The sample selection for this study was purposive and based on five criteria: a) school administrators from high teacher retention international schools, b) current employment at one of the international schools in Malaysia, c) involvement in the recruitment process, d) close working relationships with teachers, and e) a minimum of five years of experience working in international schools. These criteria aim to gather meaningful information from participants to answer the research questions. The participants included six principals, three HR officers, and one head of department, all currently employed at international schools in Malaysia.

This study utilised semi-structured interviews, complemented by various data sources, including school job advertisements, written documents, and audio or video materials related to recruitment and retention provided by the interviewees. Additional information was gathered from school websites, social media platforms, and job posting platforms.

### Analyzing of Data

The interviews conducted on the Zoom platform were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and subsequently provided to each participant for review. The transcribed interviews were then analysed using a thematic analysis approach based on the 6-step framework outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The themes, categories, and codes derived from thematic analysis are shown in Figure 2.

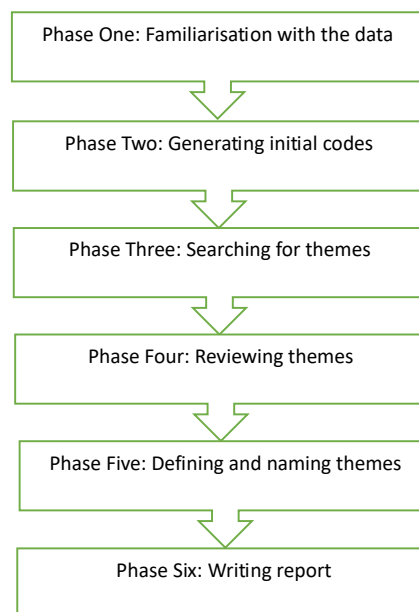


Figure 2. 6-Step Thematic Analysis Framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

The validation of the interview was ensured through the member-checking technique to mitigate researcher bias. This study used a thick description to enhance transferability and confirmability, with detailed information provided on

sampling selection criteria, geographical location, the number and characteristics of participants, data collection, and analysis method used in the study. Besides, methodological triangulation was used by collecting data from interviews and other sources such as school job advertisements, written documents, audio or video materials related to retention from interviewees, school websites and school social media. All interviews were recorded using the Zoom platform, thus providing a reliable basis for this study.

### Findings/Results

Ten key thematic categories emerged from the analysis of this study: (a) selected best-fit recruitment platform on target people traits, (b) selected best-fit attraction techniques, (c) promoting the school brand to attract individuals with similar attributes, (d) pre-selection based on information in CV/resume, (e) impression formation during the interview, (f) conducting pre-employment screening, (g) selection for desired competences, (h) offering pre-arriving support, (i) providing local support, and (j) preparing mentoring programs developed based on the three themes or elements in the new retention model. These are summarised in Table 1, which outlines the themes and their corresponding codes and categories.

Table 1. Themes, Categories, and Codes Derived from Thematic Analysis

Themes	Categories	Codes	Excerpt examples
Attraction	Selected best-fit recruitment platform on target people traits	Traditional platform	<i>Newspaper; internal recruitment; teacher database</i>
		School website	<i>School's website</i>
		Independent recruitment sites	<i>JobStreet; Jora; Indeed; Times Educational Supplement (TES); Teacher Horizon</i>
		Social networking sites (SNS)	<i>Facebook; LinkedIn</i>
	Selected best-fit attraction techniques	Internal sources	<i>We encourage our staff to refer friends for any open positions, especially for primary school teachers. Applications can also come from assistant teachers, and we promote internal advertisements.</i>
		External sources	<i>To reach a wider audience, we utilize various channels such as local newspapers and online platforms.</i>
		prioritized specific recruitment source	<i>We inform our existing staff about available positions through email, emphasizing our preference to promote from within first. If internal recruitment proves impractical, we then consider external candidates.</i>
	Promotion school brand to attract people with similar attributes	Teacher's testimonials	<i>Reflecting on my experience, RAS has provided an excellent environment for continuous learning and professional growth. The school encourages creative thinking, and I've always felt challenged here.</i>
		School attractiveness	<i>I wanted to tell the story of living in Malaysia as well as (school name), and to attract people.</i>
	Selection	Pre-selection based on information in CV/resume	General review
Comprehensive review			<i>we will also look at their CV because we want to determine whether there are any gaps in their working practice because we want to make sure that they are teachers who have not moved around from one school to the next school; To the resumes, you need to see what are the detail.</i>
Impression formation during the interview		Phone interview	<i>Our HR Executive will then give a phone call to the candidates to assess their language proficiency, willingness to relocate, and salary expectations.</i>
		Physical/ virtual interview	<i>When we meet, I tend to get them to talk a little bit about themselves, know what's your background; interviews are all online.</i>

Table 1. Continued

Themes	Categories	Codes	Excerpt examples
Selection	Conduct pre-employment screening	Evaluation of job-related abilities	<i>Conduct the mock teaching in front of the head; Personality test is to check the attitude and trait they have</i>
		Verification process	<i>submit a medical report; background check is police check and embassy check. It also referencing from current and previous employment.</i>
	Selection for the desired competences	Person-job fit	<i>we are looking for people who are suitably qualified and well qualified, we are looking for people with good experience and solid experience as well.</i>
		Person-organization fit	<i>we are looking for people who will fit the way we are in school</i>
		Person-supervisor fit	<i>Work closely with the Head of the Department; one common personality trait among my teachers in the staff room is that they usually, when they come to see me, they really have a solution to the problem they face.</i>
		Internationalism mindset	<i>their capability to communicate and the mindset of mixing around with different cultures and different ethnics.</i>
		High commitment	<i>Somebody who's moving on every year. I wouldn't interview them, and I wouldn't employ them.</i>
Discrimination	<i>We typically don't get a lot locally as we need to hire native English speakers for the most part, so we want people from native English-speaking countries.</i>		
Onboarding	Offer pre-arriving support	Give details of the job, school, and country	<i>HR department gives them lots and lots of information, gives them lots of advice, looks after lots of the practical legal things about immigration.</i>
		Mobility support	<i>Helps them with things like a 'What are the telephones like in Malaysia, the housing in the area; helps them with their flights or their transport arrangements and with their shipping</i>
	Provide local support	Assimilate into local culture and facilities	<i>Introduces Western expats to Malaysia; introduction to language, to culture; shows them the area, making sure that they know where things like the hospital and the supermarkets are.</i>
		Building social network	<i>We arrange social events to meet up with another staff; make stronger bonds during the orientation program and then they're more likely to stay longer; set the buddy system.</i>
	Prepare mentoring program	Formal training	<i>receive induction training that will include the school's safeguarding policies and guidance on safe working practices.</i>
		Assign a mentor	<i>Allocate a senior to guide in the first week of teaching.</i>

Three themes emerged from the interview data: Attraction, selection, and onboarding, contributing to teacher retention. Administrators acknowledged that attracting appropriate candidates is critical for future retention. Various recruitment platforms offered in the market, such as traditional platforms, school websites, independent recruitment sites, and social networking sites (SNS), can be used to attract individuals with target traits. While participants showed interest in online platforms for external recruitment, some still preferred internal recruitment and employee referrals because they found candidates' qualities more trusted and were more familiar with the school culture. Besides, some interview participants promote their school branding to differentiate themselves from competitors in the talent market. They typically promote school branding through the school website, which includes general information about the school along with posted teacher reviews and testimonials. Recruiters expect serious candidates to access school details on the website so that candidates can self-select if they fit well with the job and school, increasing the effectiveness of the recruitment process.

Although the interview data revealed a common selection process similar to conventional organisations, participants emphasised the importance of the interview session for the interviewers to assess the candidates. Interviewers aim to gauge how candidates would handle hypothetical situations by presenting specific scenarios as interview questions, assessing problem-solving abilities and later verifying them during teaching demonstration sessions. Recruiters often establish a pre-determined selection of desired competencies to guide recruitment judgments. During the selection process, applicants are evaluated based on how well they meet the selection criteria to decrease prejudice and maximise the likelihood of hiring the best candidate. One of the specific selection criteria for international school teachers is an

international mindset, which recruiters find important for teachers to integrate well into a diverse work environment. However, some selection criteria may result in unjust or prejudiced treatment of individuals. In this study, some schools prefer to employ a high percentage of foreign teachers (about 90%) due to parental expectations. Since parents contribute to school funding, parental pressure significantly impacts education. To maintain the school's (white) identity, ensure that the personnel represents an international mix without a single majority group, and compete in a high-tuition-cost market, substantial numbers of expatriates may be required.

Following the selection of the ideal candidate, the school must continue to support teachers' onboarding experiences throughout their tenure. According to the interview data of this study, most international schools, particularly those that hire people from all over the world, take the pre-arriving onboarding process seriously. It takes time for school administrators to establish relationships with new hires. To alleviate the stress and anxiety caused by unfamiliar environments, language barriers, and cultural differences, school administrators provide information about the job, the school, and the host country, including language, culture, customs, law, politics, and the cost of living.

On top of that, before they arrive in Malaysia, school administrators will arrange lodging, shipping, and transportation. Once the newcomers arrive at the schools, school administrators will provide local support to assist new teachers, particularly expatriates, in assimilating into local culture and amenities. Additionally, school administrators will assist newcomers in creating their social network within the schools by assigning them a buddy, enabling them to easily form friendships and bonds with colleagues during the onboarding process. Participants believed that this would make new teachers happy and enhance retention rates. Aside from that, most of the school samples included in this study have official programs that connect newly hired teachers with senior teachers to serve as mentors and set specific guidelines for consistent communication between the two sides. This approach aims to accelerate new teachers' personal and professional growth by offering them experienced mentors to provide guidance, feedback, and direction. In addition, some schools maintain a record of new teacher development as proof of their learning outcomes.

### Discussion

The findings of this study shed more light on how the ASA model might be utilised to improve teacher retention. Attraction and selection are both important processes in teacher retention, which were highlighted in this study and aligned with past findings (Loeb & Myung, 2020; Van Overschelde & Wiggins, 2020). However, little attention has been paid to how teacher attraction and selection should be conducted effectively to increase teacher retention, especially in the international school context. Jacob (2016) conducted a study to investigate the teacher selection process in the District of Columbia Public Schools. He aimed to understand how various measures might be used to improve teacher hiring. He believed that the teaching hiring process significantly affects the quality and attrition of teachers. His findings suggested that a well-prepared application system by the government is insufficient to hire good teachers; authorities must also pay careful attention to how principals access and utilise the information generated by the system. However, his study did not thoroughly describe the attraction and selection process thoroughly. Hence, this study filled this gap by providing a detailed plan on how the hiring process should be conducted, and the findings have shown the elements that school administrators should consider during the hiring process.

Secondly, the findings of this study not only highlighted the attraction and selection process but also suggested the third process, known as onboarding. Induction and socialisation practices at the start of an appointment can often help new hires decide whether to continue after training or probation (Link & Jeske, 2017). The findings revealed that high teacher retention schools implemented a comprehensive approach that included providing local assistance and a mentorship system to aid teachers in adjusting to their new working environments. Local assistance is essential for international school teachers to assimilate into the cultural and social life of the host country. Bornay-Barrachina (2019) asserted that expatriates' inability to remain in occupations abroad is due to a lack of adaptation to the cultural context of the host country, in which expats try to impose their values rather than learn to operate in the new culture. Along with adjusting to the host country, teachers must also acclimatise to the working culture of the school through a mentoring plan, which is critical for teacher retention. The findings of this study were consistent with those of Ingersoll and Strong (2011), who discovered that schools that implement new teacher mentorship programs boost teacher retention.

The ASA model emphasises the role of attraction and selection in employee retention. However, this study found that retaining teachers requires more than just the attraction and selection process; it should incorporate an 'onboarding' component to achieve teacher retention. The researchers claimed that teacher retention nowadays is more challenging than Schneider's initial definition of the ASA model implied because of workforce diversity. The ASA model tends to create a homogeneous workforce to reduce attrition. This model describes that employee mismatches are more likely to make mistakes in their work and will either choose to leave the organisation or be forced to do so (Sumantri, 2017). However, according to Saxena (2014), the world is changing now as barriers to cross-border trade and investments are decreasing, and perceived distance is shrinking due to advances in transportation and telecommunications technology. The workforce nowadays is more heterogeneous. Thus, the researchers proposed a framework called 'ASOR,' which was adapted from the traditional ASA paradigm by including onboarding. This inclusion is important to assist teachers from different backgrounds in assimilating into the school culture.

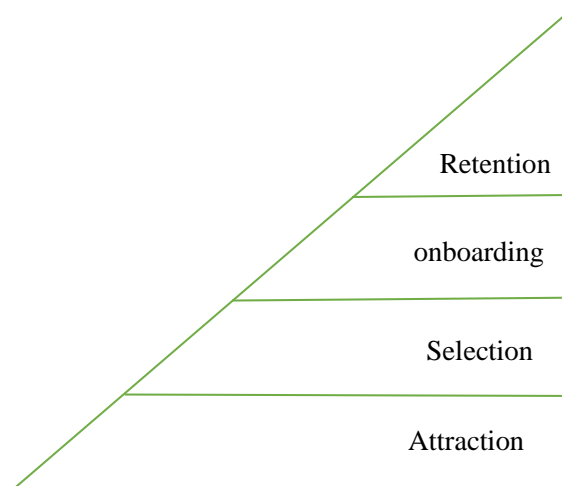


Figure 3. The Attraction-Selection-Onboarding-Retention Model (ASOR)

This main idea of the model is akin to the ASA model, where 'people make the place.' The recruitment process can determine the people and culture of a school, but the onboarding program allows new employees to integrate with the current people and culture, thus leading to retention. Both new and competent teachers contribute to developing a distinct working culture. The researchers hypothesised that if new hires successfully assimilated into the culture, they would stay at the school for a more extended period, resulting in high retention due to job satisfaction. Previous research revealed that teacher cooperation and the working environment are important factors in teacher job satisfaction (Ingersoll, 2017; S. Sims, 2017; Toropova et al., 2021). In their meta-analysis of 63 factors that moderate teacher attrition in the United States, Borman and Dowling (2008) discovered that schools with administrative support, mentoring programs at early career stages, and opportunities for networking and cooperation had lower attrition rates than schools without these features. As a result, the ASOR model is more feasible than the ASA model for addressing teacher turnover. This model benefits the education context and can be expanded in any industry with workforce diversity.

### Conclusion

The classic ASA paradigm was revisited in this study to enhance teacher retention in international schools in Malaysia. Based on the findings of this study, four recommendations were proposed. Firstly, by utilising the ASOR model, school administrators can retain their teachers. This model integrates appropriate attraction, selection, and onboarding strategies to achieve teacher retention. Recognizing that teacher retention requires continuous effort, these methods collectively contribute to keeping teachers firmly attached to the school. Secondly, to increase the likelihood that a new hire will stay longer at the school, administrators should leverage various recruitment platforms and strategies to attract target prospects, including active and passive job seekers. Thirdly, implementing a systematic and documented recruitment policy is crucial to ensure consistency in the selection process. Such policies help eliminate recruiter bias and guarantee that new hires are well-suited for both the position and the school. Fourth, a well-designed onboarding program should consider the needs of both the school and the new hires. Once an appropriate person is hired, it is critical to familiarise teachers with the new work environment and culture, which contributes to higher job satisfaction.

The proposed ASOR model could provide valuable insights for school administrators and human resource managers working in related environments, aiding in the engagement of newcomers within a diverse workforce environment to increase teacher retention. Besides, teachers can experience increased comfort in such an environment. Given that teachers constitute a significant portion of a school's workforce, implementing this study's findings could substantially impact business sustainability through enhanced teacher retention techniques. The findings of this study may contribute to the existing body of knowledge on staff retention strategies within the private school business. These findings could assist new and aspiring school administrators understand the importance of employing effective strategies and best practices to foster teacher retention. Such retention efforts would benefit the school's sustainability and performance and positively impact the local community's economy.

### Recommendations

School leaders and administrators must reconsider their recruiting, onboarding, and retention practices to enhance teacher retention. It is suggested that they scrutinise their existing attraction and selection processes more thoroughly by establishing a formal recruitment policy. Additionally, they are advised to implement a rigorous and consistent onboarding program for new teachers, ideally lasting at least a year.

This marks not the end but rather the commencement of further studies for Malaysia's international school environment. Given the rapid expansion of international schools in Malaysia, additional research is needed to employ a larger sample



size and alternative research methodologies, such as quantitative and mixed methods, to test the ASOR model. Future research endeavours will contribute to a concrete retention framework by addressing all aspects of international teacher concerns.

### Limitations

The empirical data presented in this study should be interpreted cautiously due to various limitations. Firstly, data for this study were collected during the 2020-2021 Malaysia Government Movement Control Order (MCO) period, when all schools were closed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This closure made it challenging to reach many potential responders as communication was limited to online channels such as the school website, potentially impacting the recruitment rate. Additionally, all research interviews had to be conducted online via platforms such as Zoom. This mode of interviewing may lead to weakened relationships, communication breakdowns, and the loss of nonverbal cues during interactions. Some participants might have faced accessibility challenges, experienced a weak internet connection, and occasionally missed vital information. According to Mohajan (2018), qualitative research often requires multiple data-gathering methods, such as interviews and observation. However, the researchers could not collect field data or physically access records due to school closures. Instead, they had to rely on online and softcopy versions of the documents provided by the participants.

### Ethics Statements

The Universiti Teknologi Malaysia reviewed and approved this study involving human participants. Before the data collection phase, the researchers ensured that participants were well-informed about their rights. An informed consent letter gave participants detailed information about this study and their rights.

### Authorship Contribution Statement

Leong: Conceptualization, design, analysis, writing. Said: Reviewing, supervision.

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