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Workplace Predictors of Turnover Intentions and Strategic Retention Measures among Private High School Teachers in Cagayan District 1

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Abstract

This study examined the work-related factors influencing the turnover of private high school teachers in the Province of Cagayan. Using a descriptive-correlational design, it explored how institutional policies, interpersonal relationships, governance, workload, compensation, and professional development affect teacher retention. Findings revealed that while some factors were moderately observed, areas such as interpersonal relationships, school policies, governance, and workload management scored low, indicating a need for improvement. Results emphasize the importance of developing teacher-centered governance policies, improving work environments, and offering strategic retention programs to reduce turnover. The study recommends professional development initiatives for teachers and encourages future research focusing on work-life balance, organizational commitment, and workload strategies using broader scopes. These insights are crucial for institutional reforms that support teacher retention and improve the overall quality of private secondary education in Cagayan.

Keywords: Teacher Turnover, Work-Related Factors, Private High Schools, Governance and Workload, Professional Development

Introduction

Teacher turnover has long been recognized as a pressing issue in the education sector. Decades of data reveal that more than half of newly hired teachers leave the profession within five years, with annual turnover rates stabilizing at approximately 16 percent (Adnot et al., 2017). This high attrition rate has far-reaching consequences, including disruptions in student learning, increased

financial burdens due to repeated hiring and training, and declines in school culture and morale. Teacher turnover is particularly detrimental to low-achieving and high-poverty schools, where consistent staffing is crucial to academic improvement. While this challenge is well-documented in public institutions, private schools face their own unique struggles, often serving as training grounds

for newly licensed teachers who later transfer to public schools seeking better compensation and benefits (Martson, 2014; Michael, 2018).

In the Philippine context, especially in the Province of Cagayan, the migration of teachers from private to public high schools has become a noticeable trend. This phenomenon creates instability that negatively affects students, teachers, administrators, and the overall school ecosystem. The absence of comprehensive data on teacher attrition in private schools complicates the issue further, highlighting the need for focused studies that examine the root causes of turnover in these institutions.

Specifically, St. Anthony’s Academy of Gonzaga Inc. reported that only 14 out of 24 faculty members remained for the 2023–2024 school year, exemplifying the scale of this challenge (Abella, 2024). According to the National Center for Education Statistics, only 77% of private high school teachers stay, while 16% leave and 8% transfer to other schools. These statistics underscore the urgency of addressing teacher retention in private education.

This study seeks to investigate the work-related factors that influence teacher turnover in private high schools in the Province of Cagayan. The inquiry is guided by the need to identify which aspects of the school work environment—including governance, compensation, workload, interpersonal relationships, and professional development—are most influential in teachers’ decisions to stay or leave. The results of this study will provide evidence-based recommendations to help school administrators develop responsive policies and retention strategies aimed at reducing turnover and fostering a more stable, effective teaching workforce.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research aimed to determine the factors related to turnover intentions among the teachers in private High Schools in the District 1 of Cagayan.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

- 1. What is the incidence of teacher turnover in private secondary schools in [Study Area] over the past three school years (2021–2024)?
- 2. What are the common modes of teacher turnover observed in these schools?
- 3. What are the primary reasons reported by teachers for leaving private secondary schools?
- 4. What is the level of turnover intention among teachers in private secondary schools, based on specific organizational and personal factors?
- 5. What implications can be drawn from the turnover trends and intentions to inform a proposed Comprehensive Teacher Retention and Support Framework?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section of the study discusses the methods, procedures, as well as the sources and analysis of data that the study used.

Research Design

This study is quantitative in nature. The study used the descriptive-correlation research design to determine the work environment related predictors of turnover intentions among private high school teachers. It is descriptive because it describes the teachers’ profiles according to their personal, professional, and administrative experience. It also describes the perceptions of the employees and the extent of possibility of the turnover intentions of teachers. It is

also correlational as the study explored how the different aspects of the teacher’s profile are related to the intention of teachers to leave the institution.

Respondents and Sampling Techniques

Respondents of this study were Private High School Teachers for School Year 2024 – 2025.

From the 157 total teacher–population of the respondent schools, 132 respondents were chosen using stratified sampling technique. The said value was calculated using the Lynch formula broken down as follows:

Table 1. Respondents of the study

Schools	Actual number of teachers	Sampling
1. Lyceum of Aparri	15	12
2. Lyceum of Camalaniugan	11	11
3. Lyceum of Lal – lo, Inc.	11	11
4. Northeastern Academy	16	12
5. Northern Philippines Academy Inc.	17	12
6. St. Anthony’s Academy of Gonzaga, Inc.	22	19
7. St. Anthony’s College of Sta. Ana	25	21
8. St. Francis Academy of Sta. Teresita, Inc.	20	19
9. St. Philomene of Alcala Inc.	23	15
TOTAL	157	132

Research Instruments

A survey questionnaire (close-ended and checklist) and an interview were used to collect data. The questionnaire will be filled out by the private high school teachers as respondents and an interview from Registrar or Principal since there were no HR from the target respondent schools, was also conducted to validate the questionnaire and to assess their work environment.

The questionnaire has the following parts:

Part I. The profile of teachers as the following: a) personal profile, b) professional characteristics, and c) administrative experience.

Part II. The turnover history of the schools for the past three years in terms of the different aspects: a) incidence of turnover b) mode of turnover c) reasons

Part III. How do teachers assess the following work environment-related factors? With the following factors: a) workload and instructional support; b) workspace c) school policies and governance; d) school facilities and resources; e) interpersonal relationships and culture; f) salary, welfare and benefits. And, Part IV on the level of turnover intentions of teachers in the private high schools in the Province of Cagayan Valley particularly in the District 1.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher requested an approval to conduct the study from DepEd, Division Office of Cagayan through the Schools Division Superintendent Reynante Z. Caliguiran, PhD, CESO IV. Next was

a protocol letter personally forwarded by the researcher to the school Director/Directress, forwarded to the Principal offices of the respondent Private High Schools in District I of Cagayan. A letter with the attached data gathering tool (questionnaire) will be sent to the participants and all parties concerned about the legality and process of documentation.

For the instrumentation and validation, the researcher made questionnaires, was forwarded to the expert critique of the adviser for evaluation of its presentation and for answering the given questionnaire with regard to the validity of its content.

The researcher personally conducted the questionnaire to explain the nature of the study and to build up rapport relationships. Some of the schools had immediately completed answering the questionnaire after being given enough time to fill it up but some respondent schools need to be given enough time to answer, tabulate the data gathered, and then process the results for discussion, making use of the appropriate statistical equations for statistical analysis and interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Turnover History of the Schools for the Past Three Years

Turnover Incidence

The data revealed that St. Francis Academy of Sta. Teresita recorded the highest teacher turnover rate over the past three years at 34.9%, while St. Philomene Academy had the lowest at 5.9%. This suggests that a significant proportion of teachers in St. Francis

Academy opted to leave, likely due to common challenges faced by educators in private schools—such as low compensation, limited institutional support, heavy workloads, and better opportunities elsewhere.

Supporting this, a 2024 report by the National Center for Education Statistics indicated that among teachers who voluntarily transferred schools from the 2020–21 to the 2021–22 academic year, 31% of public school teachers cited school-related factors as their primary reason for leaving, compared to 20% of private school teachers. In contrast, 36% of private school teachers cited salary and other job-related benefits as their main motivation for the move, a figure significantly higher than the 9% reported among public school teachers.

Leng and Phillips (2024) emphasize that teacher turnover is a global issue that remains under-examined in certain contexts, such as Macau. Their findings revealed that although school-related factors contribute significantly to turnover, personal reasons were often cited as the primary motivator. Their study underscores the multifaceted nature of teacher attrition, which stems from a complex interplay of both direct and indirect factors—often functioning in unidirectional or reciprocal ways.

These findings collectively highlight the urgent need for private educational institutions, particularly those with high turnover rates, to assess and address both structural and personal factors influencing teacher retention.

Table 2a. Heat map of the turnover incidence of the schools for the past three years

School	Turnover Incidence (No. of Turnover/Teacher Population)			
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	Average
Lyceum of Aparri	7 (35.0%)	4 (22.2%)	2 (11.8%)	23.0%
Lyceum of Camalaniugan	3 (27.3%)	2 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)	15.2%
Lyceum of Lallo	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (30.0%)	13.7%
Northeastern Academy of Buguey	1 (6.3%)	6 (37.5%)	5 (31.3%)	25.0%
Northern Philippines Academy	3 (20.0%)	5 (31.3%)	7 (41.2%)	30.8%
St. Anthony Academy of Gonzaga	0 (0.0%)	11 (50.0%)	10 (47.6%)	32.5%
St. Anthony College	2 (8.7%)	6 (24.0%)	5 (20.8%)	17.8%
St. Francis Academy of Sta. Teresita	6 (33.3%)	7 (33.3%)	8 (38.1%)	34.9%
St. Philomene Academy	1 (4.5%)	1 (4.5%)	2 (8.7%)	5.9%
Overall	15.5%	25.9%	26.3%	22.6%
Legend:				
	Low	Moderate	High	

Mode of Turnover

Based on the table, resignation emerges as the most prevalent mode of turnover, accounting for 99 cases or 91.7%, while termination due to failure to obtain a license is the least common, with only 2 cases or 1.9%. This indicates that teacher resignations in secondary schools are a multifaceted issue driven by a combination of personal, institutional, and external or policy-related factors.

Sonmezer and Eryaman (2008) identified several key contributors to teacher turnover, including salary dissatisfaction, low social status, lack of professional development opportunities, limited use

of individual skills, strained administrator-teacher relationships, and restricted opportunities for creativity. These factors underscore the complexity and layered nature of the turnover phenomenon.

In a more recent study, Cakir et al. (2024) emphasized that among teachers in private educational institutions, professional role transformation, excessive workload, and inadequate compensation were significant reasons for leaving the profession.

Furthermore, Sage Vlog (2018) noted that a teacher’s intention to leave often reflects negative perceptions or experiences within their

school or the teaching profession at large. This intention has been recognized as a strong predictor of actual turnover, making it a critical area of concern for school administrators and policymakers seeking to improve retention.

Table 2b. Mode of turnover of the teachers

Mode	Frequency (n=108)	Percentage
Resignation	99	91.7
Retirement	3	2.8
Termination (Failure to obtain license)	2	1.9
Absent without official leave	4	3.7

Reported Reasons of Turnover

The data indicated that financial concerns, particularly low salary, are the leading cause of teacher turnover, cited by 68 respondents or 63.3%. Conversely, employment status or job security was identified by fewer respondents, though it still contributes to turnover. These findings suggest that many teachers are dissatisfied with their current compensation and that some feel insecure about the stability of their employment in private schools.

Although work-life balance is typically viewed as a positive factor, Agustin et al. (2024) emphasized that issues related to organizational management, limited career advancement opportunities, and inadequate compensation (including wages and benefits) continue to affect teacher retention. The study highlights the need for private school policies to prioritize teacher welfare, rather than focusing solely on changes to the learning environment. Addressing these issues is essential to improving teacher satisfaction, retention, and overall performance.

In support of this, Baffoe (2021) argued that private school teachers should receive the same level of job satisfaction as their counterparts in public schools, given their equally important role in education. However, findings from Shikshan (2018) revealed that private school teachers were generally less satisfied with their jobs compared to public school teachers. Similarly, Leon (2021) found that more than half of private school teachers expressed dissatisfaction in their work.

Varthana (2022) identified several key factors influencing job satisfaction among private school teachers, including work environment, collegial relationships, competitive salary, recognition, effective management, reasonable workload, career development, work-life balance, and job security. Furthermore, Leon et al. (2021) emphasized that providing incentives for excellent teacher performance is a critical factor in boosting job satisfaction.

These findings collectively reinforce the idea that financial incentives, job security, and opportunities for professional growth are essential to improving teacher morale and reducing turnover in private educational institutions.

Table 2b. Reasons of turnover of the teachers

Reasons	Frequency (n=108)	Percentage
Financial Concerns	68	63.3

<i>Low Salary, Salary</i>		
Family-Related Reasons	32	30.0
<i>Family Obligations, Applied to Public School for the family</i>		
Career Advancement	32	30.0
<i>Applied to DepEd, Transferred to DepEd, Applied in Public School, Volunteer in Public School, Transferred to Public School, Applied in another private school</i>		
Burnout / Workload	22	20.0
<i>Feeling of Burn out, Heavy Workload</i>		
Relocation Issues		
<i>Change of Residence, Residence Far from home</i>	18	16.7
Benefits		
<i>No benefits</i>	11	10
Employment Status / Job Security	7	6.7
<i>Non-renewal of contract due to being non-license, Lack of Job Security</i>		

Level of Turnover Intentions of the Teachers

The table presents the level of turnover intention among teacher respondents. The item "new openings in other organizations will be more attractive alternatives" received the highest category mean of 2.55, with a descriptive value of high, indicating that teachers are actively seeking better opportunities elsewhere, particularly those offering more attractive compensation packages and career prospects. In contrast, the item "the nature of work is uninteresting/boring" received the lowest mean of 1.97, with a descriptive value of low, suggesting that boredom or lack of interest in teaching is not a primary reason for their intention to leave.

According to the Department of Education (DepEd), administrative reports show a steady stream of transfers and resignations among high school teachers in private schools in some areas of Cagayan. Common reasons cited include the lack of career development opportunities, unclear school policies, and insufficient administrative support—factors that contribute significantly to turnover intentions.

These findings align with national trends, which reveal high attrition rates in low-resource schools where teachers frequently express dissatisfaction due to inadequate teaching materials, inconsistent school policies, and limited involvement in school governance.

Similarly, Seiph (2021) reported that in Kilolo District, factors such as low pay, insufficient equipment, and employee dissatisfaction significantly affect teacher turnover. Even though some private schools in Kilolo have adequate infrastructure, external factors such as economic conditions, family responsibilities, and health issues also push teachers to seek employment elsewhere. Moreover, motivating factors such as recognition, professional growth, and support systems are largely absent in these schools.

The study by Leng and Phipps (2014) further underscores the complexity of teacher turnover, which stems from both single and multiple causes, operating through direct and indirect, unidirectional or reciprocal relationships.

In support of this, Muhammed (2024) found that job satisfaction is significantly and negatively associated with turnover. Major determinants of teacher satisfaction include salary, job security, and opportunities for career advancement. In private secondary schools in Kaduna State, these factors were shown to greatly influence a teacher's decision to stay or leave.

Taken together, the findings suggest that turnover intention among private school teachers is strongly linked to external opportunities, perceived lack of professional growth, and inadequate compensation, rather than dissatisfaction with the core nature of teaching itself.

Table 4. Weighted means and level of turnover intentions of the teachers

Statements	Category Mean	Descriptive Value
1. Nature of work is uninteresting/boring.	1.97	Low
2. The supervision is indifferent.	2.20	Low
3. Performance appraisal techniques are ambiguous.	2.35	Low
4. The organization has undefined work structure.	2.24	Low
5. Higher management positions are unattainable.	2.22	Low
6. The pay structure does not provide for future security.	2.53	High
7. There is role ambiguity in the organization.	2.40	Low
8. Organizational communications are ineffective/insufficient.	2.22	Low
9. The organization does not provide sufficient opportunities for development of skills.	2.20	Low
10. Interpersonal relation with co-workers are unsatisfactory.	2.21	Low
11. Relations with the boss/manager are disagreeable.	2.17	Low
12. The organization has an inappropriate reward structure.	2.24	Low
13. The pay package is insufficient (e.g. salary and benefits)	2.49	Low
14. High accountability creates feeling of insecurity.	2.29	Low
15. Promotion policy is not based on any specific criteria	2.24	Low
16. Different job opportunities will be more attractive than the	2.45	Low

present job.		
17. It is difficult to adjust in the present job.	2.20	Low
18. New openings in other organizations will be more attractive alternatives.	2.55	High
19. Personal growth is not encouraged in the organization.	2.17	Low
20. The social and personal life is disrupted because of taxing work schedule/work hours thus considering leaving my current job.	2.36	Low
21. Considering resigning from my current position is an option.	2.52	High
Overall Mean	2.30	Low

Implications can be drawn from the turnover trends and intentions.

Thus, based on the findings of this study, a Comprehensive Teacher Retention and Support Framework is proposed to address the high turnover rates among private school teachers. The framework integrates key components such as competitive compensation, career development pathways, workplace well-being, job security, and a monitoring system. The study revealed that financial concerns, particularly low salaries (63.3%), are the most cited reason for turnover, emphasizing the need for salary adjustments and better benefits (Agustin et al., 2024). Additionally, the lack of career advancement opportunities and administrative support contributes to teachers' intention to leave (DepEd, 2023; Muhammed, 2024).

This framework advocates for structured professional growth, improved communication between administrators and teachers, and teacher involvement in decision-making processes (Leon et al., 2021). It also highlights the importance of job stability and the creation of retention policies that mirror public school support systems (Varthana, 2022). As suggested by Leng and Phipps (2014), teacher turnover is multi-faceted and requires coordinated interventions. The proposed framework serves as a strategic guide for private school administrators to enhance teacher satisfaction, reduce attrition, and ensure continuity in instructional quality. Ultimately, strengthening the professional environment for teachers supports not only retention but also student learning outcomes.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the turnover intentions of teachers in the District 1 of Cagayan shows a substantial percentage. Turnover of teachers are done in a mode of resignation with reasons of financial concerns such as low salary and family-related reasons such as applying to public school for better financial stability, career advancement and high workloads.

Moreover, on the level of turnover intentions of teachers in the Province of Cagayan, District 1 which has an overall mean of 2.30 and has a description of low which means that teachers in private schools remain employed at the school even though some indicators scored high in which teachers are considering to resign from their current position if given an option and an opportunity to

apply in another organization due to pay structure which does not provide for future security.

Finally, significant variations were observed across civil status, religion, school employed in, monthly salary, class size, and employment experience are factors that significantly influence teachers' perceptions of their work environment. And, the correlation analysis between various work-related factors in schools and the level of turnover intentions of teachers suggests that to reduce turnover intentions of teachers, predictors should be delivered with fair compensation, effective governance, adequate facilities and a positive work culture.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that private high schools in the Province of Cagayan enhance work environment factors that were rated low, particularly interpersonal relationships, school policies and governance, and equitable workload distribution. Institutions should develop responsive, teacher-centered policies aligned with DepEd and DOLE standards to create a more supportive and conducive environment. School administrators are encouraged to focus on areas with lower ratings by strengthening governance practices, improving interpersonal relations, and addressing workload concerns, alongside reviewing and upgrading salary scales and compensation packages through strategic retention plans. For private high school teachers, active participation in professional development programs, such as commitment training, team-building activities, and workload management workshops, is vital to enhancing skills and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to explore further the work-related factors contributing to teacher turnover using a moderating research design, including aspects such as organizational commitment and work-life balance, and to consider a broader scope for validation and generalization of results.

Declaration of No Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that this article is her original work and that there were no conflicts of interest.

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