



Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions of Teachers in Small Public Junior High Schools of Baguio City

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Abstract

This study explored the teacher's working conditions and turnover intentions from six small public junior high schools of Baguio City using a sequential explanatory mixed-method design with 55 survey respondents and 24 interview and FGD participants. Teachers quantitatively described their working conditions as fair, while the majority qualitatively described the same as poor. Quantitative findings also revealed a low level of turnover intentions among teachers, but qualitative data say otherwise. Forcing teachers to pass learners who reasonably need to be retained for the sake of performance-based bonus is one of the cited reasons why teachers develop turnover intentions. However, despite the challenges at work, teachers find fulfillment in their service to young people and 'good working relationship with fellow teachers as important coping mechanism. Overall, the study found no significant difference in the teachers' level of perception of their working conditions when grouped according to sex, years in service, and civil status. The level of prevalence of turnover intentions differs significantly according to years in service, and working condition is significantly related to turnover intentions. Teachers' coping mechanisms such as *pagtitiis*, *malasakit*, and finding comfort from their *kapwa* teachers sustained them in their profession.

Introduction

Poor working conditions, a dim chance at career advancement, and low salaries have continued to push thousands of experienced Filipino teachers to greener pastures abroad (Karsenti & Collin, 2013; Ubalde, 2009). Even then, very little to no information about Filipino teacher turnover statistics is available on the World Wide Web, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), or in the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) websites.

The Department of Education's Division office in Baguio City (DepEd Baguio) does not have a complete record of its personnel who left the organization. Its earliest record entry from June 1996 to 2012 does not distinguish teaching and non-teaching personnel, and for personalities who left the organization by resignation, their reasons were not specified. A total of 668 teaching and non-teaching personnel left DepEd Baguio from 1996-2017. Of this number, 59.88% was due to retirement, 5.79% was due to death, 2.82%

were dropped from the rolls because of absence without leave (AWOL) or failure to return to duty, while a whopping rate of 31.5% was due to resignation. There was only one recorded case of a teacher who availed of early retirement, but the person-in-charge of the records admitted more teachers retired earlier than what is supposed to be (DepEd Baguio, 2018).

Recruiting and retaining talented and effective classroom teachers remains a tough battle. Defined as “a conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization” (Cenkci & Ötken, 2014) or a condition at which an employee has the objective of self-terminating their employment (Detienne et al., 2012), a condition where the following elements are present—thoughts of quitting, the intention to search for another job elsewhere, and the intention to quit (Carmeli & Weisberg, 2006)—turnover intention is a very serious teacher issue that needs to be looked into. In an international study, a local partylist, Alliance for Concerned Teachers (ACT) reported that teachers and education workers in the Philippines are underpaid and overworked (Symeonidis, 2015), while Fuentes (2012) stated that turnover intention among selected secondary school teachers in Davao City is significantly related to burnout and organizational commitment. Her study also found that employees would consider staying in the organization if they experience less burnout and feel that the organization needed their support and participation. Meanwhile, Kukano (2011) and Sapsal et al. (2019) who explored the teacher retention strategies of two separate private schools in Davao del Sur and Davao City respectively found that poor work environment, lack of administrative support, unreasonable fringe benefits, lack of collegial support, unreasonable workload, opportunities outside, lack of appreciation, and unfair treatment were the common and major challenges in successfully retaining teachers.

This paper explored teachers’ perceptions of their working conditions along the following domains: (i) time, (ii) facilities and resources, (iii) community support and involvement, (iv) managing student conduct, (v) teacher leadership, (vi) school leadership, (vii) professional development, and (viii) instructional practices and support. It also examined the level of prevalence of turnover intentions among the teachers along

the following determinants: (a) work-related factors, (b) organization-related factors, (c) job satisfaction, (d) passion, (e) career progression, and (f) determination. The significant differences in the teachers’ responses regarding these two main variables when they are grouped according to sex, years in service and civil status were also examined. Ultimately, this paper investigated the relationship of teachers’ working conditions with their turnover intentions and explored their motivations and coping mechanisms.

Methodology

Research Design and Respondents

This study used the mixed method sequential explanatory research design using the framework of Creswell (2014) with slight modification in terms of the sampling method used. The quantitative method was first applied, followed by the qualitative method involving detailed exploration of the variables being studied; the data collection was conducted from August 2018 to December 2019.

The participants were permanent teachers of six small public junior high schools of Baguio City (regardless of their years in service), namely, Bakakeng National High School, Sto. Tomas National High School, Dominican-Mirador National High School, Baguio City National High School-Hillside Extension, Lindawan National High School, and Happy Hollow National High School. The size of the school was based on the student population that is not greater than 440 based on school categorization of Supreme Student Government (DepEd Baguio, 2019).

Complete enumeration was originally intended for the study's quantitative part, but only 55 teachers out of the total 70 responded to the survey. Of these 55 respondents, 17 were male, and 38 were female; 15 were single, 39 were married, and one is a widower; 34 were novice (0-5 years in teaching), 17 were mid-serving (5 to 10 years in teaching), and four were long-serving (10 years and above in teaching). Meanwhile, 24 teachers participated in the qualitative data gathering phase (9 participated in individual interviews while 15 participated in four separate focus group discussions). Of these 24, five were male, and 19 were female; eight were



single, and 16 were married; eight were a novice, 12 were mid-serving, and four were long-serving. Each participating school was represented in the qualitative data-gathering phase. Participants were conveniently chosen based on the teachers' availability and willingness to participate, a slight modification to Creswell (2014), which suggested that participants for qualitative data gathering should be purposively chosen.

Research Instrument

A Likert scale-type survey questionnaire was constructed. It was composed of two parts whose items were a combination of questions adapted from several sources. The first part focused on teachers' working conditions. The North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey of Stewart and Shephard (2016) and the Working Conditions Domains enumerated by Ladd (2009) were used as references. The second part of the survey probes teachers' turnover intentions (influenced by work-related factors, organization-related factors, job satisfaction, passion, career progression, and determination), and the Itemized Turnover Intention Analysis survey of Lee (2008) was used as a basis in crafting the survey questions. All items in both parts of the survey were stated in positive form and were subjected to reliability and validity tests. Participants were given two weeks to answer the paper-based survey questionnaire.

For the qualitative data gathering procedure, a set of open-ended questions relevant to the items in the survey questionnaire described earlier was prepared. During the qualitative data gathering phase, the researcher sought permission to voice record the conversations with every interviewee.

Data Analysis

Following the guidelines of Chin and Lee (2008), nonparametric tests were used to analyze the quantitative data on the premise that "nominal or ordinal measures in many cases require a nonparametric test." Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the teachers' level of perceptions of their working conditions and the level of prevalence of their turnover intentions. Mann-Whitney U-tests were used to test the significant differences in the respondents' perceptions of their working conditions and the prevalence of their turnover intentions when they are grouped according to sex, while

Kruskall-Wallis Tests were used to test the significant differences of the same variables when they are grouped according to years in service and civil status. Spearman-Rho test was used to test the relationship of teacher's working conditions with their turnover intentions. Finally, manual coding and discourse analysis was used to examine the qualitative data. The qualitative findings were used to expound or dig deeper into the quantitative findings.

Results and Discussion

Teachers' Working Condition

According to Sykes (2008), as cited in Berry et al. (2008), there is no commonly accepted set of categories and sub-categories that make up teachers' working conditions (referred to as working environment by other researchers), but throughout the discussion, all definitions of the domains of working conditions are based on the definitions of Stewart and Shephard (2016). Table 1 shows the teachers' level of perception of their working conditions across the different domains.

As seen in Table 1, teachers describe their working conditions as generally fair with an overall mean of 2.72 and a standard deviation of 0.41, but a closer look at the individual parts is more meaningful than an overview of the whole, hence, the subsequent discussions. The participants described only the Use of Time (to plan, collaborate, provide instruction, and eliminate barriers to maximize instructional time during school days) and Facilities and Resources (the availability of instructional, technology, office, communication, and school resources to teachers) as poor, while the rest were described as fair. With a mean of 2.36, teachers described that the use of Time as a domain of their working condition is poor due to more lesson preparations they handle and the numerous non-teaching tasks assigned to them due to their small population. Meanwhile, Facilities and Resources garnered a mean of 2.44, which corresponds to the descriptive equivalent of being poor. This result is supported by qualitative data which states that teachers face problems related to the lack of teaching resources, poor to no internet connection, unavailability of office supplies, and inadequacy of school facilities. As to Community



Table 1

Teachers' Level of Perception of Their Working Condition along Eight Domains, Baguio City Small Public Junior High Schools, 2019

Domains	Mean	SD	DE
Use of Time	2.36	0.40	P
Facilities and resources	2.44	0.46	P
Community support and involvement	2.72	0.55	F
Management of student conduct	2.96	0.34	F
Teacher leadership and empowerment	2.84	0.51	F
School leadership	2.88	0.65	F
Professional development	2.82	0.75	F
Instructional practices and support	2.71	0.67	F
Overall	2.72	0.41	F

Legend:

Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
3.25-4.00	Good (G)
2.50-3.24	Fair (F)
1.75-2.49	Poor (P)
1.00-1.74	Very Poor (V)

Support and Involvement (community and parent/guardian communication and influence in the school), it scored fairly in the survey but participants of the interview have divided opinions based on their experiences. Some teachers are happy with the parents' attitude toward them and their active involvement in learners' academic performance, while some are not.

Management of Student Conduct (policies and practices the teachers' respective schools adopt to address student conduct issues and ensure a safe school environment) earned the highest mean of 2.96 with a descriptive equivalent as fair. Since small schools are usually near to the students' homes and students come from almost the same cultural background, teachers commonly stated, "*Mababait naman ang mga students namin compared siguro sa mga big schools* (our students are well-behaved, as compared maybe to those in the big schools)". However, when it comes to students, teachers do not only deal with practices and policies to manage student conduct. They did not cite major concerns about this aspect but emphatically expressed disappointment and anxiety over the growing culture of students' apathetic attitude toward schooling. What makes this issue even

more troublesome to teachers is the way they are burdened by the perceived consequences of their "failure" to achieve desired learning outcomes and the crucible of meeting expectations. These issues are not captured by Management of Student Conduct as a domain of teachers' working conditions, hence, "Learning Goals and Outcomes" is proposed to be included as one of the domains school leaders should pay close attention to.

Such proposal came from teachers sharing about their struggles on addressing learners' special learning needs (even when they do not have adequate training), filling in the learning gaps (specifically on high school learners who have poor 3R skills), battling against student apathy, and having to be evaluated and incentivized based on their learners' grades, passing rate, and promotion rate. One teacher said, "The most painful and most insulting part is being asked to promote a child who is not deserving, and yet when you meet that child elsewhere, he will not even greet you. Sometimes, the children purposely neglect their studies, yet, the higher-ups indirectly make us reward them by promoting them to the next level." Some teachers described their working conditions as "stressful" and "disappointing". As one teacher said, "when



students fail, they ask you what have you done when in fact, we already did our part. Even if the students are lazy and irresponsible, it is still our fault when all we want is to teach them to be responsible and value education". Another teacher testified, "The school leaders tend to believe that the number of student-passers reflects the quality of education-- no child left behind policy--when we have a high passing rate, we receive high performance-based bonuses (PBB). But in reality, are we really helping the child?"

PBB is intended to act as a motivator for teachers to perform well, but the practice (or the inevitable consequence) of equating teachers' performance with learners' grades has complicated the situation. This system poses detrimental effects on teachers' working conditions in which, in line with the Marxist perspective of proletarianization and intensification of teacher work in Giroux (1985), in exchange for salary increase and PBB, teachers are expected to respond to greater pressures and to comply with multiplying innovations to achieve set of learning outcomes (even if it means practicing mass promotion of learners to achieve zero failure rate) and "satisfactorily comply" to their work responsibilities. This situation is particularly true when teachers are told, "the problem is, we keep on demanding for a salary increase, yet our learners' performance is constantly deteriorating"- a phenomenon that forces teachers to work under "interventionist styles of management" where they are now made to follow what "experts" or their bosses tell them to do, and lose confidence on the expertise they have developed over the years (Apple & Jungck, 1992; Gitlin, 2001; Hargreaves, 1992). The reality of passing learners who failed (based on the experience of teachers in the small schools of Baguio City) demonstrates further how the education sector may be reduced into worse than a factory, where its crude outputs are the learners whose quality is based on their quantity and grades, and where teachers are reduced into workers hired by a capitalist employer in a factory where full-time work means over-work (Zipin, 2002). With the current student performance-based measure, teachers are evaluated based on zero dropout rates, passing rates, and promotion rates instead of the actual quality of student learning (Albano, 2019). Accordingly, these measures lead to the practice of mass promotion, wherein even students who failed exams and skipped half of the year's

school days can be promoted.

Teacher Leadership and Empowerment (teachers' involvement in decision-making that impacts classroom and school practices) is quantitatively described by teachers as fair with a mean of 2.84. Qualitative findings revealed that some of the advantages of having a small teacher population are that teachers' ideas matter, and they are exposed to many tasks and responsibilities, making them big fishes in a small pond. These findings support the proposition of Kleinfeld (1993), as cited by Sergiovanni (1995), that small schools create "undermanned settings," where there are not enough people to fit all the available leadership roles, thereby forcibly creating leaders out of its employees. However, this can also pose a great challenge as more is asked of everyone, and teachers' performance curves are steeper as they must accept new challenges and master new ideas introduced to them. As a result, teachers become multitaskers or jack-of-all-trades and hardly find specific areas where they could put in more focus. School Leadership (the ability of school administration to create trusting, supportive environments and address teacher concerns) is also rated as fair, garnering a mean of 2.88. Qualitative data revealed that teachers find it essential to have leaders who are appreciative, supportive, systematic, professionally in-control, and fair and transparent most especially when it comes to evaluating teachers' performance. Some shared about how they felt their performance is not being fairly evaluated by their school leader which impacts their motivation and overall work behavior.

Meanwhile, teachers did not mention major problems in their respective schools concerning Professional Development (the availability and quality of learning opportunities for educators to enhance teaching), which they have described as fair with a mean of 2.82. Teachers also described Instructional Practices and Support (data and support available to teachers to improve instruction and student learning) in their respective schools as relatively high with a mean of 2.71. They did not cite major issues under this domain, instead, they raised more concerns related to facilities and resources that result to their having a hard time to teach. Lastly, most of them expressed dissatisfaction over the widespread practice of correlating student grades or



performance with their effectiveness as teachers. This finding confirms the conclusion of Shavelson et al. (2010) that there is a growing problem of using student test scores and grades in evaluating teacher performance.

Working Conditions: Significant Difference According to Sex, Years in Service, and Civil Status

There is no significant difference in the male and female teachers' perceptions of their working conditions (overall p -value of 0.276). Similarly, there is no significant difference in the teachers' perception of their working conditions when grouped according to years in service (overall p -value of 0.059) and civil status (overall p -value of 0.930).

Teachers' Turnover Intentions

This study explored the teachers' turnover intentions characterized by the eight determinants as identified through the combined theses of Cencki and Ötken (2014), Karsenti and Collin (2013), and Lee (2008). It answered the question on challenges in the teachers' working conditions that cause their turnover intentions. For the quantitative aspect, positive statements were used in gathering data; therefore, a higher mean signifies that teachers' turnover intention is low. As for the qualitative aspect, participants were asked if they ever thought about quitting the profession and they were asked to share the reasons that made them contemplate on it. Quantitative data are presented on Table 2 which is followed by brief qualitative discussions.

Based on Table 2, teachers cited that they have low turnover intention in reference to Work-related Factors. Under this determinant, the statement, "The salary and other monetary incentives I receive equally compensate the works I do making my job more attractive to me," garnered the lowest mean at 2.47. The statement, "In general, the works I do are intrinsically rewarding, making my job more attractive to me," garnered the highest at 2.83. There is a very little difference in the mean, but at a closer look, 51% or 28 of the 55 participants agreed that salary and other monetary incentives make the teaching job appealing, while 78% or 43 said it is the intrinsic rewards that make the teaching job more attractive.

Table 2

Level of Prevalence Teachers' Turnover Intentions, Baguio City Small Public Junior High Schools, 2019

Determinants	Mean	SD	DE
Work-related factors	2.67	0.60	LTI
Organization-related factors	2.99	0.53	LTI
Job satisfaction	2.58	0.55	LTI
Passion and enjoyment	2.65	0.61	LTI
Career progression	2.52	0.56	LTI
Determination to succeed	2.65	0.56	LTI
Overall	2.68	0.47	LTI

Legend:

Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
3.25-4.00	Very Low Turnover Intentions (VLTI)
2.50-3.24	Low Turnover Intentions (LTI)
1.75-2.49	High Turnover Intentions (HTI)
1.00-1.74	Very High Turnover Intentions (VHTI)

Table 2 further showed that Organization-related factors garnered the highest mean at 2.99, which conveys that circumstances within the organization significantly impact teachers' decision to stay on the job. The specific statements, "I have established a very good relationship with my colleagues, which influences my decision to stay in my workplace" and "My students in this school are a treasure to me, they greatly influence my interest in this job and my decision to stay in my workplace" garnered the highest means at 3.15 and 3.11 respectively. Of the 55 participants, 75% or 41 agreed that their school culture is suitable and pleasant, 95% or 52 said they have good relationships with their workmates, 89% or 49 agreed that their students are one of the reasons why they stay on the job. In contrast, only 51% or 28 said they had established a good relationship with their school head. During the interview, most teachers shared how happy they are about their relationship with their workmates.

One teacher said, "*Kahit nakakadismaya ang boss at kahit nakaka-stress ang trabaho, masaya pa rin naman kasi mas marami naman kami na joined forces. Ang dami naming comedian na kasama kaya dun ako natutuwa... dinadaan na lang nila sa joke ang stress, tapos nakikinabang na din kami kasi nakikitawa kami.*" (Even if the boss is disappointing or the work is so stressful, I am still happy because



my workmates and I have healthy working relationship. Many of my workmates are comedians; they always find something to laugh about, which makes us forget about the stress. In a way, we benefit from it."

As Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015) concluded, working conditions and organizational factors positively impact employees' job satisfaction. Therefore, these aspects should be taken seriously to increase teachers' motivation and commitment levels. The findings of this study support the conclusion of Kukano (2011), Vassallo (2014), and Cabigas (2019) that even with lack or poor administrative support, Filipino teachers are more likely to stay at a school where they felt a connection with their students and their colleagues. These findings further back the suppositions of Ilagan et al. (2014) that Filipino workers value the quality relationship with co-workers and the sense of belonging to an organization (Pangan et al., 2008). Filipino teachers' supportive relationships with colleagues are an integral component of the teaching profession as the satisfaction they derive from such kind of relationship far outweigh the frustrations that result from any conflict (Viernes & Guzman, 2005). These findings only elucidate further the innate Filipino value and culture known as *kapwa* among teachers.

Of the six determinants of teachers' turnover intentions, job satisfaction garnered the second lowest mean at 2.58, implying that it can be one reason that can make teachers think about quitting the job. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the participants said they are satisfied with their job, and they are confident about themselves in relation to performing their job. Forty-five percent (45%) think there could be a better work or career for them other than teaching, and a whopping 42% said they would not choose to work as a teacher again. In the interview, several teachers admitted they have been considering other job opportunities, and if they see a high chance, they said, "*I will definitely leave DepEd, goodbye DepEd!*" One teacher shared how her circumstances at work now made her regret choosing teaching over another job opportunity that offered higher pay. She said, "*pinili ko ang DepEd noon kasi nga ito ang tinapos ko eh, at akala ko magtuturo lang ako, 'yun pala mas marami ang paperwork kaysa actual na pagtuturo, tapos ganito pa ang school admin* (I chose DepEd

because I finished education course, little did I know that our job is more of doing paperwork than actual teaching, and then the school admin is like 'this')". She added that as their school's condition gets worse, the more she regrets her decision and is currently seriously considering a different career outside DepEd. These findings concur with those of Roxas (2009), Pagayanan (2016), and Rabago-Mingoa (2017) that many Filipino teachers suffer from stress due to excessive paperwork or documentation, work pressure, and incompetent superiors.

Of the six determinants of turnover intention, organization-related factors scored higher with a mean of 2.99 over passion and enjoyment with 2.65. Ninety-five percent (95%) or 52 of the teachers said their good relationship with colleagues had influenced their decision to stay on teaching, while only 53% or 29 said that being a teacher has been their passion and dream profession that influenced their choice to pursue this career. Seventy-one percent (71%) or 39 stated they find teaching fun and enjoyable, 84% or 46 find deeper meaning in their line of work, while only 40% or 22 like the idea of growing old as a teacher. These statistics are astounding as they convey that when teachers struggle with turnover intentions, factors within the organization have a greater impact than passion and enjoyment when deciding whether they should leave or stay on the job. It is interesting to note that the nature of relationship with *kapwa guro* matters most to teachers which further implies that no matter how strong a teacher's passion is, s/he may still give up on teaching if she/he finds themselves struggling with poor relationships with colleagues.

Career progression garnered the lowest mean at 2.52 from among the determinants of turnover intentions. It should be noted that of the 55 study participants, 75% are Teacher I, 5% are Teacher II, 20% are Teacher III, and no one holds a Master Teaching position. The statistic that only 25% of the teachers have progressed from the Teacher I position suggests a need to raise teachers' awareness of career advancement schemes. Furthermore, the revelation that more long-serving teachers are left out when it comes to promotion while young teachers are shamed and tagged by their school leaders as "aggressive" calls for the need to develop a culture of support and encouragement. Self-qualification rather



than competition is also raised by teachers as an important aspect to consider when promoting.

Determination and passion tied at a mean of 2.65, both having lower scores than organization-related factors. The survey revealed that 45% of the participants would trade teaching to another career (if they see another opportunity), and 67% have considered leaving the profession once in their entire career. Meanwhile, out of the 24 participants in the interview and FGDs, 83% emphatically said they have several times considered quitting the job, and only 21% would enthusiastically encourage learners to follow their path. When asked if they have ever thought of quitting, many teachers almost similarly responded, "Every time, every day, many times. Because of students' discipline, teachers' workload, expectations from other school stakeholders, administration and parents." One teacher also said, "Yes, 100% yes! Given a chance, or if there are other opportunities, I will definitely leave. I have had almost 13 years of teaching experience in a private school, but today, it is very different. Before, things are bearable, but now, I can no longer bear with paperwork and student behavior." These statements explain to some extent why the results suggest that organization-related factors have a greater impact than determination and passion when it comes to teachers' decision to stay or quit on the job. These results are similar to the findings of PDK International's poll on 556 American teachers, where 50% said they have considered quitting the teaching job (Hess, 2019), and teachers who also have had turnover intentions are less interested in encouraging others to follow them in the profession.

Many of the interview participants said they would definitely quit teaching if there are other job opportunities. Still, most of them had not yet found such opportunities, and none of them is deliberately looking for other job opportunities. Some expressed they tend to compare themselves with other professionals who seem more relaxed yet are paid better than they are while some also said that they once considered going abroad. When asked why they are still in the profession, their common response is, "*Saan ako pupulutin kung aalis ako? Ano ipapakain ko sa pamilya ko? Kahit gusto mo nang umalis, kung walang opportunity, magtitiis ka na lang muna.*" (Where will I go when I quit? What

will I feed my family? No matter how much you want to quit, if there is no other job waiting for you, you have no choice but to bear with everything). This explains the finding that 85% of the survey participants said getting a teaching job is as difficult as losing it, so they have to employ *pagtitiis* as a coping mechanism.

Turnover Intentions: Significant Difference According to Sex, Years in Service, and Civil Status

This study found significant differences in the level of prevalence of teachers' turnover intentions when grouped according to years in service, but not in terms of sex and civil status. With a *p*-value of .015 and .026, respectively, there is a significant difference in job satisfaction and work determination between new and long-serving teachers. Of the 34 novice teachers (involved in public school teaching in not more than five years) surveyed, 62% have considered quitting the teaching profession. Meanwhile, of the 21 mid to long-serving teachers surveyed, 76% said they had turnover intentions. On the qualitative side, out of the 24 participants of the interview, eight are young in terms of service and age (not older than 30 years old) and are all unmarried. Of these eight novice teachers, 75% or six of them said that quitting has not yet crossed their mind, and their common reasons are: they are still having fun, and they find salary and other benefits more than enough for them. On the other hand, of the sixteen (16) mid to long-serving teachers (engaged in public school teaching for more than five years) who participated in the interviews, only 12.5% or two of them said they have not yet contemplated on quitting the teaching job. Most of the mid to long-serving teachers said that "teaching work today is very different," and that they have been struggling with frequent changes in the curriculum and the education system in general.

Both the quantitative and qualitative findings that novice teachers are more likely to stay on the job are opposite to the US's common scenario that novice teachers are more likely to leave their jobs than veteran teachers (Glennie et al., 2016). Though thinking about quitting and actually doing it are two different things, it should be noted that a higher percentage of novice teachers (who have more opportunities to look for greener pastures) are more optimistic about their jobs.



This result suggests that if teachers' working conditions are improved, teachers' overall outlook about the teaching job and its overall impact on the education sector may also improve.

Challenges in the Working Conditions that Cause Teachers' Turnover Intentions

As mentioned earlier, 67% of the survey participants and 83% of interview participants said they have once thought about quitting the teaching job. When asked about their reasons, they cited some of their experiences on marrying their expectations with the realities at work, things related to practices within the school (particularly on promoting learners who actually failed, which teachers find degrading), and dealing with poor school leadership, burnout, work-related issues and the desire to provide more for the family. The findings support those of local researchers that Filipino teachers suffer from stress due to excessive paperwork or documentation, the inadequacy of resources or materials to do their job, work pressure (Roxas, 2009; Pagayanan, 2016), and incompetent superiors (Rabago-Mingoa, 2017). Aside from these, Filipino teachers are overworked, yet underpaid (Symeonidis, 2015; Bay et al., 2014), have relatively low opportunities for promotion and professional growth (Langguyuan-Kadtong & Usop, 2013), and are unhappy with their work environment (Romero & Bantigue, 2017). One teacher said, *"Because our job is getting more and more complex that even when we have attended seminars or trainings, it takes time for us to master what we have learned, and sometimes, just when you have gotten comfortable with a new system, it will be changed again."* This illustrates the complexity of structures surrounding the work of every Filipino teacher across different school environments, which makes mastering work systems difficult due to frequent changes.

Significant Relationship of Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions

Findings revealed a highly significant relationship between the teachers' working conditions and turnover intentions (Table 3). The positive R-value indicates that better perception of teachers' working conditions is associated with lower turnover intention (equivalent to higher retention intention) among teachers. With all the realities in the teachers' working conditions

discussed in the preceding pages, which set the ground for a deeper understanding of why teachers develop turnover intentions, it can be argued that improving working conditions will have a positive impact on teacher retention. This finding is similar to the propositions of many studies, specifically those of Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015) and Sims and Jerrim (2020). It also coincides with the earlier thesis of the American National Education Association [NEA] (2006) that if public education is to retain high quality teachers in all schools, comprehensive and systematic efforts to ensure that all schools become good workplaces are critical.

Table 3

Significant Relationship Between Working Conditions and Turnover Intentions

Factors	R-value	P-value
Working condition: turnover intentions	0.552***	<0.001

Significant at 0.01 level

Teachers' Motivations and Coping Mechanisms

Based on the interviews, more teachers stated that they are either motivated by benefits or are being held off by risks associated with quitting the job. Fewer teachers stated they are driven with a purpose concerning their retention intentions. However, this does not necessarily mean that most small school teachers are no longer intrinsically motivated.

Quantitative data revealed that 78% of the survey participants still find their job intrinsically rewarding. The overall qualitative data also imply that teachers calculate their pre-existing conditions vis-à-vis the conditions they imagine in an outside environment. In the words of one teacher, *"Even when we think about quitting, we do not pursue it because of doubts and worries—what will happen to you when you quit? It is not easy to take a risk"*. Another teacher stated, *"Where will I go if I quit? I am already old. If I will quit, I should have done it when I was still younger."* All these indicate that teachers are able to make do of their conditions at work for as long as they have yet no choice because it's better to have a job than nothing. However, if any sure and better



opportunity knocks at any time, some signified there is no doubt they will quit.

Overall, teachers' coping mechanisms can be classified into individual and group strategies. They employed individual strategies, such as adjusting to the working environment, proper mind-setting before entry to the service based on pre-orientation, taking a leave from work, and doing self-reflection for self-improvement. Their group strategies, on the other hand, seem homogenous where good relationships with workmates and a sense of belonging seem to stand out and play significant roles in their coping mechanisms, which even impact how they describe their working conditions. For example, one teacher said, "*Teachers are united, and because we are small in number, getting along is usually not a problem; we are happy, and we have good working relationships*". Another stated, "*Sometimes it is surprising because, just when you think nobody is there to help you, the colleagues are there*". These findings support the propositions of Ilagan et al. (2014) and Pangan et al. (2008) that when it comes to choosing or deciding to stay in a workplace, Filipino workers are attracted to that which can provide their organization-related need—a workplace where they find *malasakit* or concern and a sense of belongingness. This finding is also in consonance to the Filipino hierarchy of needs theory of Andres (1989) in Mosura (2012) and Geraldo (2017), which states that the values *kapwa* (shared identity) and *pakikipagkapuwa-tao* (maintaining smooth interpersonal relationship), which describe the need for social acceptance, are integral factors in a Filipino worker's motivation.

This study was also able to recover some evidence of the teachers' need for familism, reciprocity, social mobility, and heroism, which motivate them to stay or influence their turnover intentions. However, such findings are limited as this study did not intend to extensively explore *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* vis-à-vis teachers' coping mechanisms. This topic is recommended for researchers who wish to explore further the Filipino teachers' motivations and hierarchy of needs. Based on this study's quantitative and qualitative findings, only one thing has been clearly established, that is, workmates and family are the two most important *kapwa* in a teacher's "work life." Teachers decide to stay in a workplace where they have found a sense of belongingness. However, when things become complicated at

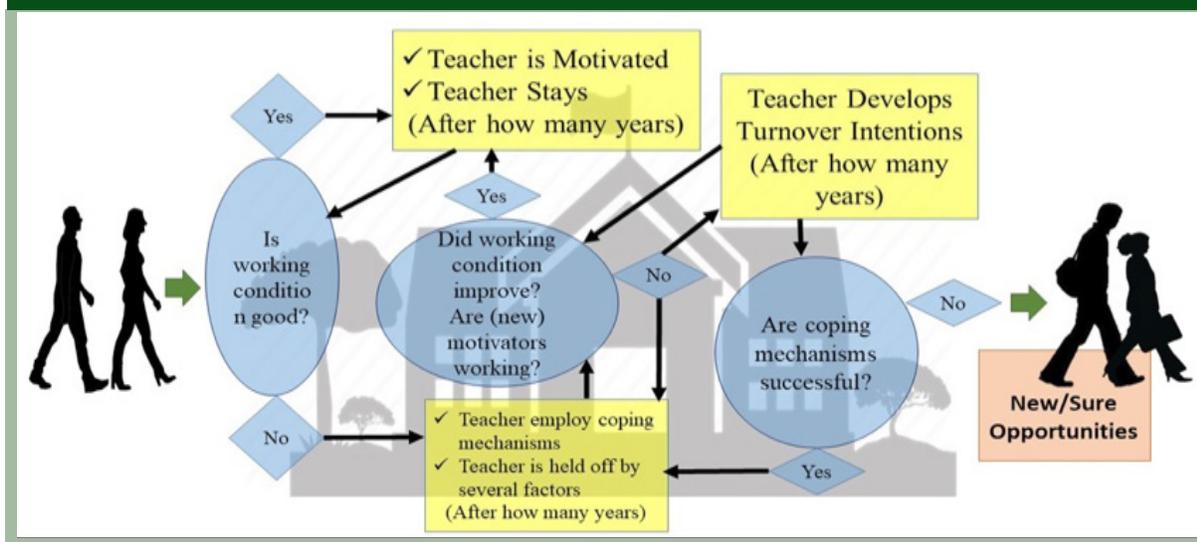
work, their ability to provide for their family may have the strongest influence on their decision to leave or stay. This result also implies that even if working conditions are challenging yet there are no other opportunities in the meantime, and teachers will have to employ *pagtitiis* or acts of tolerance or endurance for the sake of their families.

Working Conditions, Turnover Intentions, Motivations, and Coping Mechanisms

Based on this study's overall findings in the context of small public junior high schools, the interrelationship of working conditions, turnover intention, and the roles that motivation and coping mechanisms play can be illustrated in Figure 1. When the working condition is less favorable than expected, teachers hang on to whatever motivations that remain or employ coping mechanisms. When their coping mechanisms fail, their stress levels increase, which leads them to develop turnover intentions. When they cannot cope with their turnover intentions, they will eventually quit, leading to an actual turnover. This means that teachers may decide to stay on the teaching job if (1) they are motivated because the working condition is good or has improved, (2) they are able to cope with their working conditions, or (3) they are able to cope with their turnover intentions, or several factors hold them off. When the working condition is good or has significantly improved, teachers are motivated and are less likely to develop turnover intentions. However, the good working condition does not necessarily mean there are no challenges that confront teachers. Minor problems may still arise which, if effectively coped with, may not be enough to develop turnover intentions, which could ultimately lead to actual turnover of teachers.

When working condition deteriorates or does not improve, teachers employ varied coping mechanisms. They may find encouragement through effective motivators, but if working conditions still do not improve, they now begin to develop turnover intentions. In the case of teachers in the small public junior high schools of Baguio City, quantitative data revealed that 67% of participants had developed turnover intentions. This study found that some teachers are able to cope with their turnover intentions by



Figure 1*Teacher Turnover Theorem*

self-reflecting or asking themselves, “Are there no other solution to the problem?” and weighing the risks and opportunities outside of teaching. Meanwhile, some teachers are held off by the need for employment (to provide for the family), benefits (like work tenure and salary loan privileges), and the lack of other opportunities. All these suggest that when teachers’ working condition does not improve, when motivations or reward systems do not work as planned, when coping mechanisms fail, and when sure opportunities arise, nothing will hold teachers off from eventually quitting the profession.

Conclusions

Overall, teachers in the small public junior high schools of Baguio City described their working conditions as fair in six out of the eight domains, while the majority of the teachers interviewed used adjectives that connote negative perceptions such as difficult, challenging, stressful, and disappointing. Findings revealed that the domains, teacher leadership, and school leadership interact with each other as the first may be affected by the latter. This is partially evident as some teachers cited that incompetent school leadership contributes to the dying out of their passion and interest to be actively involved in school programs

and activities. However, more extensive studies need to be done to probe the relationship between these two variables further. Overall, quantitative results indicate no significant difference in the teachers’ level of perception of their working conditions when grouped according to sex, years in service, and civil status.

Qualitative data, supported by specific quantitative data, revealed that majority of the teachers had developed turnover intentions. This study found a significant difference in the level of prevalence of teachers’ turnover intentions when they are grouped according to years in service. Qualitative data reveal that novice teachers’ favorable work experiences during the past school years motivate them to stay on the teaching job.

There is a strong relationship between the teachers’ working conditions and turnover intentions. If teachers enjoy good working conditions and their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are reinforced, they may not develop turnover intentions.

Quantitative data revealed that more teachers are intrinsically motivated, while qualitative data revealed that extrinsic benefits hold most teachers off from actually quitting their job. Before actual turnover occurs, a teacher goes through two stages of coping—coping with the working



condition and the turnover intention; a sure work opportunity outside of teaching may significantly impact their final decision to quit.

The performance-based bonus (PBB) as a reward mechanism was cited several times by the teachers for being unsuccessful in serving as a motivator. PBB is even perceived as something that further intensifies teachers' work. PBB requirements make teachers' performance evaluation densely evidence-based and students' grades-based. This results in cases wherein teachers are compelled by their school leaders to pass learners who actually failed or reasonably need to be retained. Some teachers call the act as mass promotion, and though DepEd denies the presence of such policy, teachers testified several times that it does happen and lamented how degrading this has been to their work and their professional self. Majority of the teachers who have developed turnover intentions have decided to stay in the profession because they are being held off by benefits of having a job, the risks they perceive should they decide to leave, and the unavailability of sure opportunities outside. These considerations subtly imply that teachers employ *pagtitiis* to keep their job for the sake of their family while they find comfort with their workmates at the same time.

Overall qualitative findings contradict overall quantitative findings concerning teachers' level of perception of their working condition and the level of prevalence of their turnover intention. Despite this, findings in both phases revealed interesting information that provided a nuanced perspective and understanding of the compelling concerns of teachers.

Recommendations

For Policy

Teachers' teaching loads and actual teaching hours are dependent on the number of sections in their respective schools. Still, to reduce their non-teaching tasks and paperwork and to give them sufficient time for preparation, the possibility of creating plantilla items for administrative assistants for small schools should be studied. Teachers appreciate internal service credit schemes but not all of the small schools that participated in this study adopt such

mechanism. Further study is recommended to check the possibility of institutionalizing such a service credit scheme through a DepEd order.

Small schools may lay a fertile ground that cultivates every teacher's leadership skills. Teachers cited that they value their school leaders' appreciation, supportiveness, systematized planning and management, professional leadership, fairness, and transparency. DepEd may then devise mentoring of mentors programs that aim at developing or nurturing such qualities of school heads. Doing so may also help train mentors on mentoring further teachers who expressed their enjoyment of being teacher-leaders in their respective schools. Furthermore, the issue of incompetent school leadership, the cases where school leaders shame young teachers who aspire for promotion, and the cases where teachers feel their performance evaluation is not fair can be reduced if peer-evaluation and school administration-evaluation schemes are devised. Additionally, DepEd can devise a peer evaluation schemes that give credit to working relations teachers value the most and acknowledge their leadership skills and other accomplishments that cannot all be documented or be put on paper. Such evaluation scheme can have a percentage on teachers' performance evaluation.

For Further Studies

There is a need to give considerable attention to the condition of teachers in other small public schools in other parts of the country through the conduct of separate sets of studies. The provisions of DepEd Memorandum 291 s.2008 and DepEd Order No. 16 s.2009 may be reviewed more extensively in another research where the angles between teaching hours and teaching preparations are explored. Time-use analysis studies that will tackle how the number of lesson preparations and appended/auxiliary duties affect teachers' efficiency and full potential can also be a good topic for research.

More studies need to be done to further explore the factors that influence teachers' turnover intentions according to the findings of this study, particularly on forcing teachers to pass learners who actually failed or reasonably need to be retained for the sake of PBB, and unfair performance evaluation. A study that probes on the qualifications for and the performance evaluation schemes directed to the



head teaching positions may also be conducted in the quest to identify ways in resolving these issues. It is a significant find that many novice teachers have not yet developed turnover intentions and that they are more intrinsically motivated despite the challenges they face and the higher chance that they can find other job (compared to their older colleagues) should they decide to quit. Further research needs to be done on this that may help identify more meaningful programs to reinforce their intrinsic motivations.

The concept of “being held off” apart from “being motivated” is a significant revelation of this study, and more research needs to be done to support or deny such findings. Exploring the commitment and performance levels of teachers who had been deliberating on their turnover intentions but are only being held off by several factors can also be an interesting topic for research. The prevailing systems in determining and providing extrinsic rewards should be reviewed through more extensive studies, and mechanisms to ensure that these rewards actually motivate teachers rather than further aggravate their working conditions should be devised. A check-and-balance mechanism may also be necessary to ensure that the purpose of PBB is not compromised by its indicators that are prone to falsification.

In using *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* and Filipino motivation theories in analyzing the qualitative findings of this study, two concepts emerged that are nowhere to be found in the said school of thought- the concept of appreciation and *pagtitiis*. It was found that acts of appreciation impact teachers’ motivation and commitment, while the lack of other work opportunities and the need to provide for family lead teachers to employ *pagtitiis* so that they can cope with their turnover intentions. This interplay and how these two concepts impact teachers’ work performance and work values are interesting topics for research. Though this study’s findings on “appreciation” and *pagtitiis* are limited to a certain extent, the observed gap that they are nowhere to be found in the *Sikolohiyang Pilipino* school of thought calls for scholars to conduct more studies to investigate these two concepts’ worth as Filipino values. Meanwhile, the analysis on Filipino teachers’ motivation and hierarchy of needs, and the proletarianization and

intensification of teacher work theories were likewise limited because of the limited findings of this study.

The qualitative aspect of this study has brought out salient realizations that could not have been generated if a pure quantitative research design has been otherwise adopted. It is highly recommended for anyone who wishes to pursue any of the research topics enumerated above to use any suitable mixed methods research approaches.

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