



Teacher Turnover in the Department of Education, Schools Division of Marinduque: The Selected Cases

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Abstract : This phenomenological study explored the experiences of secondary school teachers in Marinduque, focusing on factors influencing teacher attrition and migration. It examined the perspectives of eight teachers who left the teaching profession in the Department of Education, four of them exit through migration and the other four through attrition. Through thematic analysis of in-depth interviews, the study identified three themes that influenced teacher attrition and migration. Three themes that emerged from their feedback are workload stress, financial strain, and professional growth and career re-alignment. After the analysis, there are three identified factors of post resignation experience: emotional well-being, professional identity, and suggested reforms to promote teacher retention. In each factor, different themes emerged. Each factor revealed distinct themes that offer deeper insight into why teachers leave the Department of Education (DepEd) and how they navigate life after resignation. The study highlighted the need for a holistic approach to teacher retention, addressing financial concerns, workload, professional growth, and emotional support. A proposal entitled Strengthening Teacher Support and Retention through Training, Evaluation, and Well-being Programs was developed in order to bridge skill gaps and to promote teacher well-being and retention through personalized and structural support.

IndexTerms - Factors influencing teacher turnover, teacher attrition, teacher migration.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teacher retention is a critical indicator of the effectiveness and stability of educational institutions. Schools ability to maintain a skilled and motivated teaching workforce is essential to achieving educational goals. However, many private and public education institutions experience significant teacher turnover annually, which challenges the quality and continuity of education.

Teacher turnover is affected by various underlying factors, such as age and gender. A study by Caravatti et al. (n.d.) indicated that 69% of respondents worldwide were female, whereas 31% were male, with migration patterns showing a significant female presence. According to Räsänen et al. (2020), the annual teacher turnover rate in numerous countries falls between 13% and 15%, and of those who leave the field, only about one-third return to teaching; while McCain (2022) found that 44% of teachers exit the profession within their first five years, with a considerable number leaving entirely instead of merely transitioning to different roles as cited by (Caballes and Limos, 2023).

Teacher turnover is a growing global issue affecting the developed and developing countries, according to UNESCO's 2023 Global Report on Teachers, teacher attrition rates increased from 4.6% in 2015 to 9% in 2022. Many educators, especially within their first five years, are leaving the profession regardless of income or pay structures. McLean et al. (2024) mentioned National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) report indicating that over a quarter of a million teachers resign annually, threatening educational quality. Additionally, teacher resignations rose by 44% between the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 academic years.

The need for new educators arises from high teacher attrition rates. To address this challenge, the Sustainable Development Goals of UNESCO highlight the necessity of hiring 69 million new teachers globally by 2030 (Madigan and Kim, 2021). In the Philippines, the turnover of teachers is a notable concern, as numerous educators are pursuing job opportunities overseas or leave the teaching profession altogether. Data provided by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) indicates that from 2013 to 2017, approximately 1,500 teachers left the country annually, with specific counts such as 1,711 in 2013 and 1,328 in 2017 (Mole, 2022). Nonetheless, this information only accounts for teachers deployed via government agencies and does not include those who found private employment or took on non-teaching roles abroad. Uytico and Abadiano (2022) pointed out that the millennial generation, known for its adaptability in the workforce, includes many Filipino educators eager to gain international experience. Recently, the number of Filipino teachers seeking positions in Thailand has increased, with over 23,000 Filipino English teachers currently employed in Thai educational institutions.

In a study on teacher turnover among public schools in Nueva Ecija, Bulawat (2020) found that dissatisfaction with assigned responsibilities, lack of career advancement opportunities, and inadequate resources significantly influenced teachers' decisions to leave public schools. Similarly, Cahilog et al., (2023) asserted that some public school teachers choose to transfer to other schools or pursue opportunities abroad, while others transition to different career paths. Beyond professional and financial reasons, the desire for personal growth and improved quality of life also attracts teachers to foreign countries.

Background of the Study

Teacher turnover was categorized into three types: retirement, migration from one school to another or different districts, and attrition, which refers to teachers leaving the profession entirely. Teacher turnover can create challenges in staffing, hindering the achievement of educational goals. Nguyen (2020) emphasized the correlation between teacher attrition and student learning, asserting that retaining excellent teachers is crucial for student success and the long-term sustainability of the educational pipeline, particularly in rural communities.

In the study of Evangelista (2023) in the Gasan District, Division of Marinduque, public education teachers reported experiencing significant financial difficulties, which contributed to stress and adversely affected their well-being. Heavy workloads and the pressure to complete paperwork often lead to early retirement despite minimal support from the school administration. Many respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their jobs and low morale. These findings align with those of Bulawat (2020), who noted that public school teachers in Nueva Ecija expressed intentions to leave their positions for similar reasons.

The factors influencing teacher migration and turnover among Filipino educators were multifaceted, encompassing economic, professional, and personal dimensions. Understanding these factors was essential for developing effective retention strategies and improving the educational landscape in the Philippines.

Numerous studies have examined teacher turnover globally and within local contexts across various divisions in the Philippines. However, there remained a significant gap in research on teacher turnover in Marinduque. This study sought to fill this gap by focusing on the Division of Marinduque.

As a public school teacher in Marinduque, the researcher was familiar with the difficulties faced by educators, as highlighted in the literature. Due to teacher shortages, it was common for public school teachers to be assigned to positions outside their field of specialization or to teach multiple grade levels, especially in remote schools. Teachers often managed large class sizes, faced urgent deadlines for reports and paperwork, and took on additional responsibilities unrelated to teaching. These stressors acted as push factors for teachers considering resignation or leaving the profession.

This study analyzed the causes of teacher turnover among public schools in the Division of Marinduque from School Year 2012-2013 to 2022-2023. The findings aimed to provide insights regarding the state of teacher turnover, offering implications for schools and administrators. The findings of this study will serve as input to the Human Resource Development (HRD) plan/program of DepEd specifically in the Division of Marinduque.

Statement of the Problem

This study entitled “Teacher Turnover in the Department of Education, Schools Division of Marinduque: The Selected Cases” aimed to explore the factors and dynamics influencing teacher turnover in the public schools within the Division of Marinduque.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How may the demographic and employment profile of the teachers be described in terms of:
 - 1.1 Demographic Profile
 - 1.1.1 sex;
 - 1.1.2 age;
 - 1.1.3 civil status;
 - 1.1.4 highest educational attainment;
 - 1.2 Employment Profile
 - 1.2.1 previous division/station;
 - 1.2.2 length in service in the public school, specifically in the Department of Education (DepEd);
 - 1.2.3 the last position held;
 - 1.2.4 current salary/monthly income (after attrition or migration);
 - 1.2.5 number of workloads when in public school (Department of Education);
 - 1.2.6 years of leaving the public;
 - 1.2.7 current organization/institution;
 - 1.2.8 nature of the current job; and
 - 1.2.9 position at the current job?
2. What is the status of teacher turnover in the Division of Marinduque in terms of:
 - 2.1 teacher attrition
 - 2.2 teacher migration?
3. What factors influence teacher turnover among public school teachers in the Division of Marinduque?
4. What are the post-resignation experiences of teachers in the Division of Marinduque, and how do these experiences influence their professional identity, emotional well-being, and suggested reforms?
5. How can the experiences and perspectives of teachers regarding attrition and migration contribute to the proposed enhancement of the HRM programs of DepEd as intervention plan?

Significance of the Study

This study sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teacher turnover, particularly migration and attrition of teachers, within the Division of Marinduque. The findings were expected to offer valuable insights to inform the development of teacher retention strategies in the region.

The results of this study are especially relevant to the following stakeholders:

Department of Education (DepEd). The results of this study lie in its potential to provide actionable insights into the dynamics of teacher turnover. By examining factors such as attrition, migration, teacher demographics, reasons for leaving, and

post-resignation experiences, the study can guide the Department of Education (DepEd) in developing targeted policies, programs, and interventions to address the challenges associated with teacher turnover. Ultimately, this could foster a more stable, satisfied, and effective teaching workforce, leading to improved educational outcomes and a more supportive work environment for teachers.

DepEd Human Resource Department. The findings of this study served as valuable input to the Human Resource Development (HRD) plan/program of the Department of Education (DepEd) at both the national and local levels. By identifying the key factors influencing teacher turnover in Marinduque, such as inadequate compensation, high workloads, and career advancement limitations, school administrators and HR departments would be better equipped to design more effective retention strategies and professional development programs. A more satisfied and committed teaching workforce would contribute to a more stable educational environment.

Policymakers and Educational Planners. The results of this study were also significant to policymakers and educational planners, as the findings inform policy decisions aimed at improving teacher retention at the national level. By analyzing the trends, causes, and consequences of teacher turnover in Marinduque, the study help shape national educational reforms, particularly those that address systemic challenges in teacher recruitment, training, and retention. Policymakers may use this data to advocate for improved funding for education, professional development programs, and supportive work environments that attract and retain high-quality teachers.

School Administrators. The findings of this research will assist school leaders in identifying the specific factors contributing to teacher turnover, including personal motivations, work-life balance, salary concerns, leadership dynamics, and opportunities for professional development. By grasping these factors, leaders could tackle the fundamental causes of turnover instead of merely responding to its effects.

School leaders can implement targeted strategies to enhance teacher satisfaction. For instance, if work-life balance is difficult for teachers, leaders might consider reducing workloads or offering more flexible scheduling options. By addressing the root causes of teacher turnover, school leaders can improve retention rates, leading to a more stable and experienced teaching staff. A consistent workforce fosters a healthier school climate, enhances student learning, and strengthens community involvement. A supportive teaching environment was linked to a more effective learning experience, thus facilitating educational achievement.

Teachers. The study will benefit teachers in Marinduque by highlighting the factors influencing their job dissatisfaction, stress, and eventual departure from the profession. By identifying these factors, the research will provide insights into creating a more supportive and fulfilling work environment. If implemented, the recommendations from this study could lead to more engaging and rewarding teaching careers, enhancing teacher morale, job satisfaction, and, ultimately the quality of education in the province.

Generally, the results of this study were expected to offer critical insights into the dynamics of teacher turnover within the Division of Marinduque. The results will inform HRD plans and contribute to enhancing teacher retention strategies within the Department of Education, ensuring a stable and effective workforce that supports the long-term success of the education system.

Future Researchers. This study would offer future researchers a deeper understanding of teacher turnover, particularly in rural areas such as Marinduque. By focusing on local and specific factors influencing teacher migration and attrition, this research contributes to the expanding body of knowledge on teacher retention in the Philippines, focusing particularly on Marinduque. The study would offer a valuable framework for further studies that can address similar challenges faced by other regions and educational institutions nationwide and globally.

Scope and Delimitation

This study explored the factors influencing teacher turnover, focusing on attrition and migration in public schools within the Division of Marinduque. It examined teachers who left the Department of Education (DepEd) to work at another educational institution or transitioned to a different profession. Data was collected from teachers in large public schools across Marinduque, specifically targeting those who changed professions or moved to teaching outside DepEd. Participants were selected based on their experiences and roles in Secondary Level, as this group of teachers shows majority of teacher turnover cases through attrition and migration provided by the School Governance and Operations Division–Human Resource Development (SGOD-HRD). The study was conducted during the first quarter of School Year 2024-2025.

It focused solely on Marinduque, excluding other divisions. Due to privacy regulations (Republic Act 10173 – Data Privacy Act), the researcher could not obtain the list of resigned teachers and, therefore, relied on snowball sampling to recruit participants without accessing personal data. The study involved interviews only, without analyzing secondary data such as school records or administrative documents.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology section outline the plan and method that how the study is conducted. This includes Universe of the study, sample of the study, Data and Sources of Data, study's variables and analytical framework. The details are as follows;

3.1 Population and Sample

This study focused on Secondary School teachers who left the teaching position in the Department of Education through migration and attrition. The Department of Education's Schools Division of Marinduque adheres to the provisions of Republic Act 10173, also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, which prevents the researcher from accessing the names of teachers who could potentially participate in the study. Based on the School Governance and Operations Division-Human Resource Development (SGOD-HRD) database there are 15 cases of teacher turnover from School Year 2022-2023 to School Year 2023-2024. From 15 resigned teachers 10 of them left through attrition and 5 migrated to teach to other educational institution. The data from previous school year is unavailable because the said database was only established last April 2023. To address this limitation, the researcher employed snowball sampling, referred to as referral sampling, and was able to gather 8 resigned teachers from DepEd who were willing to share their experiences as teachers and their post-resignation experiences.

Sago (n.d.) defines snowball sampling as a distinctive method researchers use to recruit participants for qualitative studies. This technique begins by identifying a small group of initial participants who meet specific eligibility criteria. These participants refer others who meet the requirements, resulting in an expanded sample size that forms a chain-like structure.

Leighton (2021) emphasizes that snowball sampling is a recognized and effective method for recruiting participants who are not easily accessible or known to the researcher. Gierczyk et al. (2023) examine the effective use of snowball sampling in social science research. This method was primarily employed in qualitative studies and may also be used in quantitative research. Despite some limitations and ongoing debates about its suitability, snowball sampling is considered methodologically valid and efficient for accessing difficult-to-reach populations. It provides insights from the existing literature and their practical experience, addressing the contexts and controversies related to its use.

Although there are potential research participants, this study set eligibility criteria for data saturation and an in-depth exploration of their experiences. Initial interviews were conducted through the Messenger mobile application, followed by in-depth interviews using an aide-mémoire interview guide to facilitate further probing.

The study also aimed to include a diverse group of teachers, varying in terms of sex, age, civil status, highest educational attainment, previous division/station, length of service in the Department of Education (DepEd), Division of Marinduque, last position held, current organization, nature of current job, and position in their current job.

Justification for Selection Criteria of Research Participants:

1. **Secondary School Teachers who have Experienced Teacher Attrition or Migration.** The study focused on Secondary School teachers who experienced attrition or migration. Teachers who left the public school system or transferred to another institution during this period were key participants, as their experiences provided direct insights into the factors influencing teacher turnover in Marinduque. The decision to focus exclusively on secondary school teachers as respondents in this study is strongly supported by the data provided by the School Governance and Operations Division–Human Resource Development (SGOD-HRD), which shows that the majority of teacher turnover cases – both through attrition and migration – occurred at the secondary level. In addition, the decision to focus on Secondary School teachers was made based on recommendations from research validators, who noted that different education levels have distinct guidelines, tasks, salary structures, and expectations. Narrowing the participant pool ensured a more accurate analysis of attrition and migration specific to this critical stage in students' learning.
2. **Diversity in Teaching Experience and Career Path:** Participants represented various career stages (e.g., teachers who left after 1-3 years, 3-5 years, or more than 5 years). It allowed a deeper understanding of how the career stage impacted turnover decisions. Teachers with a range of teaching experience, including those who left the profession early versus those who served for several years, provided varied insights into the reasons for turnover. Their professional trajectories helped illuminate if and how career length influenced the decision to attrition or migrate.
3. **Geographical Representation within Marinduque:** The participants were from schools across different districts of Marinduque. Since the Division of Marinduque encompasses diverse areas, teachers from various locations face challenges such as workload, resources, and personal life. By including teachers from different parts of the province, the study explored how geography influenced turnover.
4. **Experience of Post-Resignation:** The post-resignation experience also included understanding the emotional, professional, and social consequences for teachers after leaving the profession or migrating to provide insights into the long-term impact of teacher turnover beyond its immediate causes.
5. **Willingness to Share Detailed Personal Experiences:** Participants were encouraged to engage in detailed interviews about their turnover experiences, focusing on the emotional, professional, and social consequences they faced, such as stress, changes in career trajectory, and impacts on personal relationships. Since the study relied on phenomenological investigation and in-depth interviews, participants appeared willing and able to share their personal experiences, including both positive and negative aspects, in a way that provided deep insights into the turnover phenomenon.
6. **Ethical Considerations:** After giving informed consent, the researcher ensures the participant's anonymity. Snowball sampling, as outlined in the study, allowed participants to refer others who met the criteria and were willing to share their experiences. This method helped the researcher ensure that participants fulfilled the set criteria while maintaining confidentiality. Ensuring ethical participant selection and protecting their privacy was critical, especially given that the study involved personal career decisions and may have included sensitive data.

3.2 Data and Sources of Data

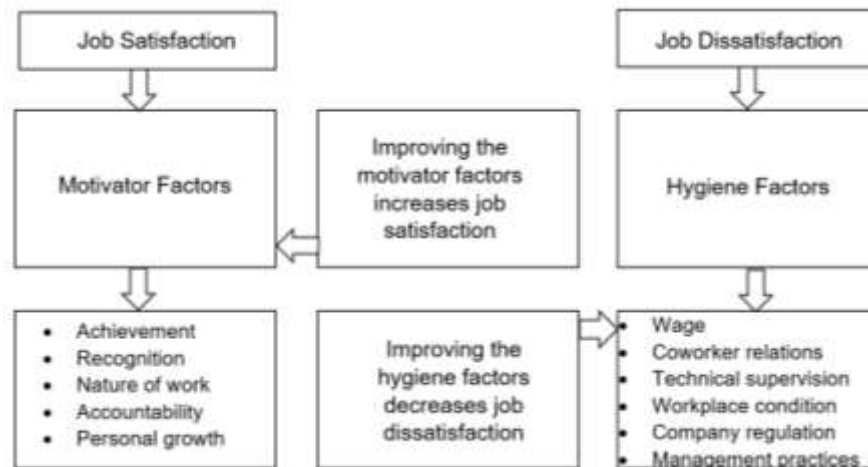
The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with participants to gather qualitative data. The questionnaire was grouped into 3 parts: (1) demographic and employment profile; (2) aide-mémoire interview guide: factors influencing teacher attrition and migration; and (3) post resignation experiences. Participants were interviewed about their experiences in their previous institutions (public schools) and current workplaces, focusing on aspects such as workload, work environment, relationships with colleagues, leadership of the principal, and salary. Since some participants were working abroad, they interviewed online at times convenient for them.

3.3 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework guiding this study is based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Herzberg's Two Factor Theory



Herzberg's theory categorizes factors that influence job satisfaction into two groups. The first group of motivators includes internal elements that boost employees' job satisfaction, such as achievements, recognition, the nature of the work, accountability, and chances for growth. The second group of hygiene factors encompasses external elements that can cause dissatisfaction if absent, like wages, coworker relationships, technical supervision, workplace conditions, company regulations, and management practices.

Various factors impact employees' choices to leave a job voluntarily, but the main driving forces are the motivations that encourage them to stay. Areola and Domalaon (2023) and Dela Cruz (2021) pointed out that in Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, every employee has two types of needs: intrinsic motivators and hygiene needs, which relate to the external factors affecting motivation. When these needs are left unaddressed, it leads to dissatisfaction, increasing the likelihood that employees will resign.

3.4 Data Analysis

The demographic characteristics of the participants were organized and displayed in a table to offer a clear visual overview of the respondents' profiles. The researchers examined the interview data using thematic analysis. The transcripts were coded to identify key themes and patterns related to the participant's experiences and perspectives on the factors driving migration and attrition and their experiences after resignation. This analysis aims to provide insight into the underlying reasons for teacher turnover within the context of Marinduque.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Part 1. Demographic and Employment Profile

In this section, the researcher offers an overview of the demographic and employment characteristics of 8 participants, which provides essential insights into the elements affecting teacher turnover in the Division of Marinduque.

The School Governance and Operations Division–Human Resource Development (SGOD-HRD) strongly supports the decision to focus exclusively on secondary school teachers as respondents in this study. Their data show that most teacher turnover cases – whether through attrition or migration also occurred at the secondary level.

This section presents the overview of the demographic and employment profile of the eight participants, which provide essential details into factors affecting teacher turnover in the Division of Marinduque focusing on the lived experiences of secondary teachers.

The following points were considered in choosing the participants. First, the School Governance and Operations Division–Human Resource Development (SGOD-HRD) strongly supports the decision to focus exclusively on secondary school teachers as respondents in this study. Their data show that most teacher turnover cases – whether through attrition or migration – occurred at the secondary level. This trend indicates that secondary teachers are disproportionately affected by the factors leading to turnover, making them a highly relevant and informative population for this research. Second, each educational level indicates different responsibilities, guidelines, salary and institutional expectation thus focusing in a specific level will give consistent and more focus analysis. By narrowing the scope to secondary teachers, the study aimed to produce a more targeted and meaningful analysis of teacher turnover. Third, the participants in the study were able to share their experiences while working under the Department of Education (DepEd) which offers firsthand insights into the conditions and challenges they had as a public school teachers.

This is vital in conducting a phenomenological analysis, where grasping the real-life experiences of this specific group of teachers is crucial for identifying patterns and themes. Following is a comprehensive description of the demographic and employment characteristics of the eight participants, which laid the groundwork for comprehending the subsequent findings and discussions regarding the factors influencing teacher turnover, along with the experiences of these secondary school teachers after their resignations. The participants in this study came from a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences, and career stages.

Research Participant 1 is a 54-year-old male who is married and with several units completed in his Master's degree. He previously served as a Secondary School Teacher II in Torrijos District, where he worked for five years in the Department of

Education (DepEd). He is a Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) teacher, with additional responsibilities in sports and other non-teaching duties. Participant 1 left his teaching position in 2018 and is currently not teaching. Instead, he has transitioned into a freelance career as a fish farmer and businessman, relying on income from his business ventures. During his time in public school, he held a regular teaching load, but his departure from DepEd marked a significant shift in his professional path toward entrepreneurship.

Research Participant 2 is a 56-year-old married male with several units completed in his Master's degree. He served in the Department of Education (DepEd) for 28 years, from 1995 to 2021, in Santa Cruz North District. In his last role, he worked as a Secondary School Teacher II, specializing in MAPEH (Music, Arts, PE, and Health), while also fulfilling several ancillary duties, including being the BSP (Boy Scouts of the Philippines) Coordinator and the Disaster Risk Reduction Management Coordinator, in addition to other non-teaching responsibilities. Participant 2 left his teaching position in January 2021 and is no longer teaching. He works full-time as a Market Supervisor II in the Market Section of a Local Government Unit, earning a monthly income of around 35,000 pesos. His career shift marks a transition from Education to local government service, where he oversees market operations.

Research Participant 3 is a single 48-year-old male with a Doctor of Education degree. He is currently pursuing another doctorate in Chemistry. With 18 years of service in the Department of Education (DepEd), Participant 3 worked in Boac District, where he last held the position of Master Teacher III. During his tenure at DepEd, he also took on additional responsibilities, including serving as the Officer-In-Charge (OIC) Principal and performing tasks related to his Master Teacher III role. Participant 3 left his teaching position in 2024 and transitioned to a new career in higher Education as an Associate Professor 4 at X University, specifically in the College of Engineering with 78, 162 pesos as monthly income. His move to university-level Education marks a significant career shift from secondary to higher Education, leveraging his extensive academic background and teaching experience.

Research Participant 4 is a 29-year-old female who is married and holds a Bachelor's degree. She served in the Department of Education (DepEd) for three years, working in the Boac North District as a Teacher I. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, participant 4 took on an overload teaching load and served as an advisory class teacher. Participant 4 resigned from DepEd in 2021. She is now working as a contractual Engineer 1 at the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) with a monthly income of 22,260 pesos.

Research Participant 5 is a 57-year-old married male with completed academic requirements for a Master's degree. He served in the Department of Education (DepEd) for 21 years, teaching in the Mogpog District as a Teacher 1. He also held the additional responsibility of being an advisory class teacher. In 2023, Participant 5 resigned from DepEd to pursue a new teaching career in higher education. He now works as a part-time Junior High School Teacher and College Lecturer at X University, specializing in electrical subjects. His present monthly income is 30,000 pesos, reflecting his new professional endeavors. Although he is no longer with DepEd, he continues to be involved in teaching but is now in a different educational setting. This transition indicates his passion for teaching while exploring opportunities outside the public school system.

Research Participant 6 is a 51-year-old married female with a Bachelor's degree. She served in the Department of Education (DepEd) for 13 years, working in the Boac North District as a Teacher 1. Her teaching load was regular during her tenure. In 2017, she decided to leave her position in DepEd and transitioned to a new career path. She is currently a full-time Health Care Assistant at Providence Health Care, earning about 220,000 pesos per month.

Research Participant 7 is a 34-year-old single female with a Doctorate degree. She served in the Department of Education (DepEd) for 8 years, primarily in the Boac District, where she held the position of Teacher II. During her time in DepEd, Participant 7 managed a regular teaching load and took on several ancillary roles, including serving as the ICT Coordinator, Yearbook Adviser, Immersion Coordinator, and Class Adviser. In 2021, she decided to leave her position in DepEd and transition to a career in higher Education. She is now employed full-time as an Instructor 1 at X University, earning a monthly income of 33,000 pesos. She also has hosting and language editing as her part-time job and other businesses.

Research Participant 8 is a 42-year-old female, currently separated, with a Bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management and 23 units in Education. She served in the Department of Education (DepEd) for 5 years and held the position of Teacher I at the Boac District. During her tenure at DepEd, Participant 8 had a regular teaching load. In 2024, she transitioned out of her position in the Philippines and moved abroad to pursue a teaching career in Vietnam. She works full-time as a Kindergarten Teacher at Kinderworld Pre-School in Ho Chi Minh City, earning a salary of 43,000 pesos or more. Her move to Vietnam reflects a shift in both career and geographic location, seeking greater financial opportunities and a different teaching environment.

The demographic profile of the eight participants paints a picture of diverse motivations and career shifts. Out of the eight participants, four teachers experienced attrition as they decided to pursue careers outside of Education. The remaining four participants underwent migration as they continued their teaching careers at other educational institutions. The participants span different age groups, educational backgrounds, and years of service, illustrating the broad range of factors influencing teacher attrition and migration. While some left teaching for better financial opportunities, others decided to follow personal interests, family obligations, or aspirations for career growth in other sectors. This diversity provides a rich context for exploring the reasons behind teacher attrition and migration in Marinduque and the subsequent career paths that former educators choose to pursue.

4.2 Part 2. Status of Teacher Turnover in the Division of Marinduque

Teacher turnover data from the SGOD-HRD database in the Division of Marinduque are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Teacher Turnover Based on the School Governance and Operations Division-Human Resource Development (SGOD-HRD) Database

School Year	Attrition			Migration			Total
	Special Education Teacher	Elementary School Teacher	Secondary School Teacher	Special Education Teacher	Elementary School Teacher	Secondary School Teacher	
2022-2023	0	0	1	0	0	1	2
2023-2024	1	1	7	0	0	4	13
Total	1	1	8	0	0	5	15

The data presented in this section was from the School Governance and Operations Division-Human Resource Development (SGOD-HRD) database for the School Years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. This data is based solely on processed clearances for resignation retrieved from the SGOD-HRD. The Schools Division of Marinduque established the database in April 2023, so data from previous school years is unavailable.

To better illustrate the trends in teacher turnover, Table 1 presents the data on teacher attrition and migration. Table 1 outlines the number of teachers who resigned from different position including the number of teachers who resigned from Special Education, Elementary School Teacher and Secondary School Teacher, providing valuable insight into the status of teacher turnover in Marinduque.

Based on the School Governance and Operations Division-Human Resource Development (SGOD-HRD) database, teacher turnover across School Years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 shows a noticeable increase, particularly among secondary school teachers. In the School Year 2022-2023, only two teachers left—one through attrition and one through migration, both from the secondary level. However, by School Year 2023-2024, the total number of departing teachers rose significantly to thirteen, bringing the overall total for the two years to fifteen. Attrition was the more common type of turnover, with ten cases recorded across all teacher categories—one from special education (SPED), one from elementary, and eight from secondary. There are five cases of teacher migration, all from the secondary level. Notably, there were no cases of migration among SPED and elementary during both years.

This pattern may suggest that teachers at the secondary level are possibly facing job-related stressors, have better opportunities elsewhere, or lack support. These factors will be discussed further in the third part of the results and discussion. Based on the School Governance and Operations Division-Human Resource Development (SGOD-HRD) database, teacher turnover across School Years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 shows a noticeable increase, particularly among secondary school teachers. In the School Year 2022-2023, only two teachers left—one through attrition and one through migration, both from the secondary level. However, by School Year 2023-2024, the total number of departing teachers rose significantly to thirteen, bringing the overall total for the two years to fifteen. Attrition was the more common type of turnover, with ten cases recorded across all teacher categories—one from special education (SPED), one from elementary, and eight from secondary. There are five cases of teacher migration, all from the secondary level. Notably, there were no cases of migration among SPED and elementary during both years.

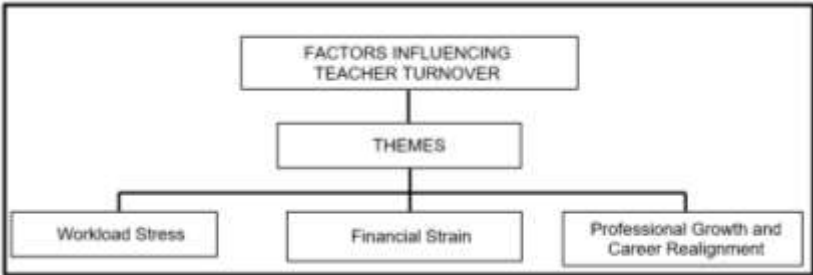
This pattern may suggest that teachers at the secondary level are possibly facing job-related stressors, have better opportunities elsewhere, or lack support. The third part of the results and discussion will discuss these factors further. In contrast, the low turnover in SPED and elementary levels may indicate more stable working conditions or fewer external opportunities for movement. Alternatively, it could also suggest the presence of external or systemic factors—such as limited mobility, financial constraints, or lack of alternative employment opportunities—that are keeping them in service with the Department of Education (DepEd).

4.3 Part 3. Factors Influencing Teacher Turnover

The data were collected using a phenomenological approach through interviews with teachers who left the Department of Education, guided by an aide-mémoire (interview questions), and interpreted using thematic analysis. In particular, they asked about their motivations for career change, work environment, the effects of institutional changes, opportunities for professional development, financial factors, job satisfaction, external job prospects, and personal ambitions. Thematic analysis of their feedback resulted in the identification of three themes: workload stress, financial strain, and professional growth and career re-alignment.

The factors contributing to teacher turnover in the Division of Marinduque are illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4
Factors Influencing Teacher Turnover



Theme 1: Workload Stress

This theme captures the challenges faced by teachers due to excessive workloads, which result in professional and personal strain. Teaching responsibilities become more difficult with administrative tasks and other non-teaching responsibilities. This may influence the teachers ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. In this context, workload refers to the volume and complexity of tasks assigned to teachers.

From the interviews conducted, the theme workload stress emerged as a significant factor influencing their decision to leave teaching. Many of the participants expressed frustration with the sheer volume of tasks even though they had strong support systems at work and home. Below is a breakdown of how this theme surfaced in the interview and its comprehensive analysis:

Excessive Workload and Administrative Tasks

The overwhelming workload, especially during the pandemic, was a consistent issue across the interviews. Participants noted that they were required to create numerous teaching materials, manage administrative duties, and attend to additional responsibilities beyond teaching.

Participant 2, who had been teaching for 28 years, recalled,

"...yung workloads ko syempre MAPEH for grade 9 and 10, ay yung limang MAPEH naku po ginagawan ko pa ng module. Biro mo ay kada section ay apat na section agad yun, may mga ancillary pa"

Participant 7 mentioned how the creation of modules and language critiques added to their already heavy load:

"Aside from that masyadong maraming trabaho because you know during the pandemic, we need to get ready for the transition, we create our own modules so kung ilan subjects ko 'yon ang ginagawan ko. Maliban sa ginagawa ko yung module ko, nag lalanguage critique din ako ng ibang modules na gawa ng ibang teachers dahil konti lamang kaming English teachers noon."

Participant 7 also mentioned,

"Doon lamang ako nag ka problema sa dami ng trabaho, kasi guidance counselor, maliban doon ikaw pa sa 4P's, ikaw pa sa ICT, ang dami mong slash therefore nakakapagod sa dami ng work."

Participant 3 corroborated with this,

"...Then overload ako tapos, OIC Principal pa." (Participant 3)

The constant task juggling, without enough time to focus on their primary responsibility—teaching—was a source of stress. Another participant reflected on the overwhelming workload, stating:

"Oo, naging dahilan din iyon ng pag alis ko, kase ang balita ko noon ay magiging 8 loads ako plus advisory kaya sabi ko 'parang ayoko na'" (Participant 4)

A similar sentiment was expressed by Participant 5, who transitioned to teaching as a college lecturer:

"Sa college madali magturo, sa DepEd maraming trabaho, araw araw ka maga gawa ng lesson plan, sa college maga gawa ka lamang ng course outline buong sem na 'yon, 'yun ang pagkakaiba."

Participant 8 has shared this perspective who transitioned from DepEd to teaching in the Kinder World Pre-School in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam where she compared her task as teacher here in the DepEd, Marinduque.

"...then workloads ko. Naga gawa din naman kami mam ng lesson plan dito pero hindi katulad sa atin, may reporting may feedbacking pero ganon lang. Gumagawa kami ng worksheets pero hindi exams, 'yong worksheets namin as an assessment every term."

Impact on Personal Time

Several participants expressed that their work in DepEd was consuming their time, making it difficult to maintain a balance between their work and personal responsibilities.

Participant 7 shared how the demands of handling different roles in their previous position contributed to the imbalance. Participant 7 shared how the demands of handling different roles in their previous position contributed to the imbalance.

"...actually, madali lamang 'yong work activities niya pero marami. Madali pero madami in short nag pa pile-up, nagiging mapagod siya kasi marami"

This not only increased stress but also led to a diminished sense of well-being and fulfillment outside of work. To reduce work related stress Participant 2 suggested that there should be another personnel doing the administrative work.

"Para less din ang stress ng mga teacher naka focus sa pag tuturo para pati ang edukasyon natin tumaas din ang kalidad. Kase ang mga teacher hindi makapagturo kailangan gumawa ng report. Magapasulat ka na lamang para makagawa ka, syempre iba 'yong pinapaliwanag ng guro."

Participants also express they enjoy their life or they have a work-life balance when they transfer to other organizations to teach or to pursue another career. Participants also expressed that they experience an improved work-life balance or greater personal fulfillment after transferring to other organizations or pursuing alternative career paths. They highlighted that

these transitions have allowed them to enjoy a more flexible schedule, reduced stress, and the opportunity to prioritize personal well-being alongside professional responsibilities.

“Ma’am maraming opportunity dito pwede ka magpa spa ‘yan ‘yong mga hindi nagagawa dyan sa atin”.
(Participant 8)

Participant 2 also reflects on his experience in a Local Government Unit (LGU). Where he compared the workload and overall working conditions in the Department of Education (DepEd) in the LGU, highlighting key differences in the nature of the work and the demands placed on employees in each setting. According to him, the workload in DepEd has higher expectations in terms of hours worked and the pressure to meet various deadlines and requirements. While, working in the LGU allowed for a more manageable workload, often with greater flexibility and less stress.

“malaki ang difference sa trabaho less ang workload, medyo madami ang trabaho sa DepEd, maraming report doon.”

Changes in work environment suggests that teachers leaving their previous positions may provide them with a better quality of life, as they can find a more manageable balance between their work and personal lives. Changes in their work environment may also reflect a desire for roles that support their aspirations, rather than being confined to a demanding work conditions in their former positions.

The Desire for Lower Workload as Age Progresses

Several participants expressed an increasing desire for a lighter workload as they age. Participant 7 highlighted how the demands of teaching, especially in senior high school, contributed to her decision to leave:

“What made me decide, syempre yung workload masyadong madami and when you’re getting older, gusto mo ng medyo lower ang workload.”

Moreover, there are participants who mentioned that changes in DepEd, especially the growing dependence on Information and Communication Technology (ICT), influence their decision to leave the profession. These teachers expressed their difficulty in using new ICT tools and teaching approaches.

Participants 5 and 7 expressed similar sentiments regarding the challenges they face in utilizing Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in their daily teaching tasks. Both participants emphasized that the integration of ICT in education is an important part of modern teaching to keep up with the evolving demands of the educational system.

“Kasi alam mo naman sa DepEd ngayon, katulad ninyo mga bata pa walang problema, pero yung mga matatanda na hirap sila pag dating sa computer, sa ICT kahit ako hirap. Kaya marami ang naga early retirement. Sa paggawa ng lesson plan di ba, syempre noong araw puro visual ngayon hindi na. Yung edad kong ganito mahirap na mag-aral ng ICT.” (Participant 5)

“Nakita ko ang hirap sa DepEd, isa rin siguro sa inisip ko noon, sa katulad kong nagkaka edad na syempre computerized na ngayon, although marunong ako sa laptop syempre sa panahon ngayon marami kinakailangang na aralan sa paggamit, baka hindi na kami makasunod yung mga nagaka edad na guro ganyan ang reklamo. Lalo na yung mga may edad, na hanggang ngayon hindi pa marunong mag laptop.”
(Participant 2)

Emotional and Physical Fatigue

Beyond the time constraints, the emotional and physical toll of managing such a demanding job was also evident. Teachers in the interviews mentioned feelings of exhaustion, and this was exacerbated when their responsibilities felt unmanageable.

For example, Participant 7 expressed the weariness caused by the demanding workload and multiple roles they had to juggle:

“... ‘yong work itself para lang bumilis ang trabaho mo nag cheat ka na... hindi mo na ginagawa ina estimate mon a lang to lessen the time and work.”

This statement resonates to the viewpoint of other participants.

“Isa din pala sa reason ko ay hindi ko gusto ‘yong mass promotion, actually may binagsak talaga ako kaya lamang nag summer class ako rin ang nahirapan ay noong andami ko ng load kaysa ibagsak ko pa ta ako rin ang mahihirapan pinasa ko na, pero mabigat sa loob ko.” (Participant 4)

“Busy talaga ang mga teachers lalo na ngayon, inabot ko din naman, mga pag gawa ng mga reports, halos hindi na kita makapag turo. Yan dapat ang mawala sa teacher.” (Participant 2)

Educators play a crucial role in shaping students’ futures and requiring them to perform various tasks to support their development. However, the heavy workload and additional responsibilities are mostly factors driving teachers to leave public schools in Marinduque. The emotional drain came from constantly balancing multiple tasks, feeling that the quality of work was compromised, and facing limited support from the administration.

These findings are consistent with, Evangelista (2023) who found out that a teacher’s responsibilities, such as class size, administrative duties, and extracurricular commitments, are significant contributors to burnout and the desire to leave the profession. An increased workload can produce mental and physical health issues, including burnout. Similar to the findings of Räsänen et al. (2020) who identified how burdensome teachers perceive their workload fluctuated over the school semester, with an uneven distribution of responsibilities among educators leading to heightened stress and a higher likelihood of leaving the profession. In

their series of case studies, 23.3% of participants reported in 2010 that an increased workload resulted in mental and/or physical health issues, which influenced their desire to leave the profession. In the follow-up data collection in 2016, 20.6% of the respondents indicated similar concerns regarding their intentions to exit the field due to stress associated with their workloads.

There are efforts made to lessen the load of supplementary tasks on teachers. Vice President and former DepEd secretary Sara Duterte signed DepEd Order No. 2, Series of 2024, titled Removing Administrative Tasks from Teachers Workload, on January 26, 2024. This order mandates the immediate removal of administrative duties from teachers and assigns them to school heads and non-teaching personnel. Following this, DepEd Order No. 5, Series of 2024, further refines teachers' workload by allocating six hours for classroom teaching and two hours for specified ancillary tasks such as curriculum planning and assessment. Non-teaching staff are to handle tasks outside these categories. These reforms are part of the DepEd's effort to improve teachers' welfare and enhance learning outcomes by allowing teachers to focus more on teaching. However, there are concerns about the implementation of these policies at the school level. Teachers are concerned that local management may continue to assign extra duties or that reducing the workload may be impossible due to limited resources or support. In some instances, other staff members handled administrative tasks without adequate training. This is consistent with the findings of Francisco et al., (2024), who identified the need for institutional support and techniques to manage more duties. To avoid burnout, secondary teachers must communicate, manage their time effectively, solve problems proactively, prioritize their well-being, remain positive, and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

Additional issues came with the introduction of DepEd Order No. 5, which caused a misunderstanding regarding lesson delivery hours. Later, the Department published MATATAG Curriculum guidelines under DepEd Order No. 12, Series of 2024, allowing schools to tailor the curriculum to their circumstances, such as class size, geography, and teacher availability. However, this flexibility resulted diversely in how the curriculum was applied across schools, making it difficult for teachers to guarantee that adaptations were consistent with the general goals of MATATAG.

Ongoing support, precise guidelines, and better resource allocation for successful implementation are needed. This aligns with the conclusions of Pabiona (2024) who emphasized the significance of revising policies to promote collaboration and equitable resource allocation in educational research. Teachers can be better supported by establishing targeted policies that address existing gaps, resulting in more effective teaching methods and better student outcomes. These results echo the findings reported in Daffon (2024) recommended that the Department of Education encourage public schools to participate in the quality assurance process through the school-based management program. To ensure the sustainability of quality practices, school leaders should communicate the job descriptions for each special assignment given to teachers and document to promote better understanding and accountability.

Across all participants, the impact of workload stress on work-life balance was clear. This theme is related with financial concerns and professional development, resulting in a complicated web of causes for teacher turnover. Teachers were not only driven to quit because of the stress, but they were also looking for alternatives that would allow them to strike a better balance between personal and professional lives. In particular, Participant 5's response reflects a perspective of resignation after years of managing a high workload:

"... ako ay hindi na naga hangad pa, kung ano na lamang inabot ko. Naga hintay na lamang ako ng retirement."

This comment implies that, after enduring years of excessive workload, some teachers, particularly those nearing retirement, disengage from professional development and long-term careers as rations. Moreover, it is important to highlight that while some participants, like Participant 7, were able to find other career opportunities or part-time jobs that reduce financial pressures, for others, the issue of workload stress was exacerbated by financial anxiety.

A similar answer to Participant 1, who decided to pursue fish farming and business instead of continuing in their teaching career. Reflecting on this transition, Participant 1 remarked that the career shift allowed him to explore a different path that provided greater personal and financial fulfillment.

Participant 1 mentioned:

"Ang gawain ng guro ay hindi para sa mga taong tamad. Teaching is truly a noble profession."

The theme of workload stress highlights one of the biggest reasons why teachers choose to leave the profession. Many of the participants shared how the volume of task in teaching, paperwork, extracurricular duties, and more—left them exhausted and with little time for themselves or their families. This constant pressure took a serious emotional toll, often leading to burnout. If we want to keep teachers in the classroom, we need to take a hard look at how responsibilities are shared, find ways to support a healthier work-life balance, and create real opportunities for growth and development. Teachers, especially those in senior positions, are increasingly seeking roles that offer less stress and greater balance.

Theme 2: Financial Strain

Financial strain was a common thread in many teachers' stories. For most, the salary just was not enough to keep up with daily expenses, loan payments, or the needs of their families. With little to no additional support or incentives, many felt they were giving so much—time, energy, and emotional labor—for too little in return. Over time, financial pressure became too much to bear, pushing some teachers to look for better-paying jobs outside the teaching profession.

From the interviews conducted, the theme of financial strain emerged as a significant reason behind teachers' motivation to resign. The participants openly shared how inadequate salary affects their decision-making, with several pointing out that the emotional and physical demands of teaching were worsened by insufficient pay. It creates frustration and dissatisfaction with their careers. Below is the breakdown of the discussion surrounding financial strain as shared by the participants:

Insufficient Salaries and Economic Pressures

One of the most recurrent themes in the interviews was dissatisfaction with teachers' salary considering the nature of the job of the teachers. Several participants, such as Participant 8, expressed that while teaching is a noble profession, the financial rewards are not proportional to the amount of work and responsibility they carry.

"Money (laugh) ay nako mam kung ikaw ang tatanungin ko mayroon kang pagkakataon na mag trabaho sa ibang bansa, malaki ang sahod, ipag papalit mo ba ang DepEd. Money talaga ang isa sa key factors ko and then workloads ko."

Participant 7 shared:

"Kung nag simula ka sa DepEd and after few months nag loan ka na talagang burden sayo. Kaya ang nangyayari sa mga teacher ang anxiety nila about finances. Nahihirapan sila to juggle everything work and finances."

Similarly, Participant 1 noted,

"Sa katotohanan, pag dating sa salary ng teacher hindi talaga sapat. It's important to learn how to budget and live within your means."

Most participants mentioned that the salary of public school teachers in the Philippines is not enough to support a family, especially in the current economic climate, where the inflation rate is high. Although the Department of Education (DepEd) has tried to raise salaries, these increases indicate higher taxes and other government deductions. Many teachers shared that even with salary increases, they still struggle to make ends meet. The cost of living keeps going up, and with more deductions and new tax policies. Their take-home pay is not enough to cover basic needs. This aligns with the conclusion of Bulawat (2020) that supports the idea that teachers with higher qualifications may look for positions with more responsibility or better pay, which can lead to turnover, especially when advancement opportunities are limited.

Strain on Mental Health Due to Financial Stress

Teachers expressed how the stress of not having enough money to cover basic needs affected their emotional well-being and their capacity to perform their duties effectively. Some participants indicated that their stress was primarily due to an adequate salary.

"Wala naman. Ang stress lang naman ay nanggagaling lang pag wala kang pera. May pera pero pag may loan, sino ba namang walang loan sino ba namang teacher ang walang loan not unless ang asawa mo ay malaki and sweldo." (Participant 8)

Similarly, Participant 7 noted,

ss "...tanggapin na natin na ang problema talaga at ang nagtatanggal ng peace natin ay pera. Pag nabayaran natin ang bills hindi ba okay ka na."

The constant pressure of financial insecurity created a sense of hopelessness for many teachers, discouraging their motivation to continue working in the Department of Education and, worst of all, in the teaching profession.

Teachers Seeking Better Financial Opportunities

The financial strain led many teachers to look for better-paying opportunities in other educational institutions. They look for teaching jobs that provided a more comfortable standard of living and better benefits.

As Participant 3 remarked:

"Pag dating sa salary, of course as Associate Professor mas mataas ang sweldo ko compare noong Master Teacher 3 ako sa DepEd. Ito rin yung reason kaya tinanggap ko ang offer from the University"

Participant 8 who is teaching in Vietnam also shared the same sentiment:

"Vietnam offers bigger salary compare to the Philippines, financially mam mas ano dito kase kung masipag ka kahit may full time job ka na pwede ka pa din mag part time ka sa gabi or sabado at linggo pwede ka mag earn ng 200, 000 pesos to 300, 000 pesos depende sa school. Mas marami opportunity dito."

The financial strain and lack of economic growth within the Department of Education made it difficult for teachers to stay in the public school that offered limited financial rewards. Many sought career shifts in industries that provided more lucrative compensation.

Comparison with Other Professions

Several participants compared their earnings in public school to their new careers. This disparity made it harder for teachers to stay in the profession. Several participants highlighted how dissatisfaction with compensation and overall job fulfillment significantly influenced their career transitions. For example, Participant 6, who is a Health Care Assistant abroad approximately earning 220, 000 pesos noted,

"Regarding financial matters, my current job in medical care abroad is much better compared to my previous work as a teacher."

Similarly, Participant 2, who is a Market Supervisor, shared,

“Katulad ng sinabi ko sa iyo kanina, medyo mas maganda ang opportunity pag dating sa sweldo dito sa LGU.”

Participant 1, who is a Municipal Agriculture Supervisor, shared this sentiment.

“Sa katotohan, pag dating sa salary ng teacher hindi talaga sapat. It’s important to learn how to budget and live within your means.” (Participant 1)

The constant comparison with other higher-paying roles, especially in the private sector, fueled the desire for a career change. Some participants noted how they work multiple jobs outside of teaching, as Participant 7 shared:

“Naghosting ako., nag mamanager ako ng team building, language editor ako I also venture to business at naga vlog ako. In short nag “raraquel” ako, not because wala akong pera but because sustainability. Hindi ako ma i-stress na wala akong pera, mag enroll ako wala akong pera, mag travel ako wala akong pera, gusto kong kumain sa Balar wala akong pera not because sundin ko ang layaw ko.”

Lack of Financial Incentives and Benefits

Participants also felt that despite working long hours and taking on additional roles like guidance counselor or language editor, there were no corresponding incentives or additional pay. For example, Participant 7 mentioned that even though she created modules and at the time served as language critique of other modules made by other teachers alongside different ancillary, she did not receive an incentive:

“Wala naman...wag kang umasa unlike dito sa University mandated.”

When cross-referencing this theme with others, such as workload stress, professional growth, and career re-alignment, financial strain is both a catalyst and a byproduct of these other themes. Teachers facing high workloads and stress without corresponding financial compensation feel further devalued, leading them to question the sustainability of their careers. The interconnectedness of financial strain with workload and emotional burnout highlights the systemic issues within the education sector that are contributing to teachers leaving the profession to pursue other careers, teaching at other educational institutions like universities, or teaching abroad.

Moreover, when financial strain is coupled with a lack of recognition or career growth opportunities, teachers are left with little motivation to stay, which is evident in Participant 3’s words:

...mas mataas ang sweldo at higher position ang ina-offer sa akin sa University. Then overload ako tapos, OIC principal pa. Then pakiramdam ko parang hindi ako masyadong gusto sa Division office. Ako kung ayaw mo sa akin ayaw ko din sa iyo. Alis na lang ako para walang gulo.”

It reinforces the idea that financial challenges are not isolated but rather part of a broader set of issues that influence teachers’ decisions to leave the profession. The theme financial strain underscores how low salary, lack of incentives, and pressures of financial responsibilities lead to teacher dissatisfaction to their profession and eventual resignation. The inability to perform financial obligations, lack of career advancement, and emotional support drive many to seek better financial opportunities in other sectors. Addressing the financial challenges of teachers is, therefore, a crucial step in improving teacher retention and ensuring a sustainable and motivated workforce in the education sector.

The difference in salaries between teaching in DepEd (from P25,000 to P35,000) and the earnings from new professions (with one participant making P220,000 in healthcare) implies that financial incentives played a crucial role. This circumstance might contribute to teacher migration or attrition—educators pursuing more profitable avenues outside the education sector, especially when these options provide better financial security and career stability. Job satisfaction and economic factors are key reasons for teacher turnover. Most of the participants expressed that low salaries and a lack of fulfillment in their roles within DepEd pushed them to look for other opportunities. This is aligned with existing research on teacher turnover. For instance, the main reasons teachers departed from the public education system are financial strain and reduced job satisfaction to improve economic security and job satisfaction.

Similar with the findings of Deloso and Bongcac (2020) who identified financial factors as the main reason for teacher turnover, followed by family commitments, difficulties with school leadership, and a lack of mentoring support. Similar to the findings of Aduna et al. (2020) pointed out that salary and benefits were the primary drivers of turnover among Senior High School (SHS) educators. It is consistent with the results from a 2018 study by Essays, UK, which found that 75% of workers viewed inadequate pay as a significant factor contributing to turnover. In the Philippines, public school teachers experience financial hardships due to their relatively low salaries concerning the demands of their jobs. For instance, the initial salary for a teacher holding a bachelor’s degree is considerably lower than that of other professionals, making it challenging for educators to fulfill their financial obligations. This is also supported by the work of Allegretto and Mishel (2020) who discovered that public school teachers earn about 20% less weekly wages than their non-teaching college graduate peers.

Furthermore, current findings reinforce previous research by Aerola and Domalaon (2023) who pointed out that the second aspect of Herzberg’s Two-Factor Theory, the hygiene factor, encompasses external elements such as salary, interpersonal relationships, supervision, working conditions, company policies, and administrative practices. The financial strain became more evident as teachers noted the increasing cost of living, inflation, and personal obligations (e.g., supporting a family), which made it difficult to continue in the profession.

The combination of low salaries and difficulty in promotion made the participants feel stagnant in their profession contributing to their decision to resign and pursue higher-paying jobs in other fields. The intersection of workload stress and financial strain plays a crucial role in their decisions to leave the profession or move to another educational institution.

Theme 3: Professional Growth and Career Realignment

Professional growth and career realignment refers to participants desire for personal and career development that goes beyond the limitations of their career in the Department of Education.

Many of the participants shared that they left not because they stopped caring about education, but because they were looking for something more—growth, new challenges, or a fresh direction in their careers. Some wanted to study further, others hoped to apply their skills in different industries, and a few were aiming for leadership roles beyond the classroom. Over time, staying in the same position with limited chances to move up or grow professionally became frustrating.

Their decision to resign wasn't just about leaving a job—it was about realigning their careers with where they saw themselves in the future. For many, it was about finding work that allowed them to keep learning, take on new responsibilities, and feel more fulfilled in what they do. The following shows the breakdown of the key aspects of this theme:

Challenges in Career Progression in DepEd

Teachers frequently mentioned that one of the most compelling reasons they considered leaving the public school was the lack of professional growth within DepEd's educational system. The limited opportunities for career advancement were often cited as barriers to long-term satisfaction. Teachers shared that after reaching a certain level within the system, it was difficult for them to advance.

"Kaya ako nag masteral syempre para mag pa promote. Nabagalan ako sa promotion, mabagal sa Highschool hindi katulad sa Elementary, sabi ko malapit na akong mag 60 kailangan ko namang umangat ang career, naka 28 years na ako hindi pa ako umaangat, so kinakailangan ko mag isip na paraan for professional growth." (Participant 2)

Participant 4 also has the same difficulty in the promotion, according to her:

"Ako for career change, for career growth and also I am adulting so therefore I want lesser work but at the same time growing also as professional. Sometimes it is politically govern, it is my experience I tried na lumipat ng Junior High School that time para lang ma promote ako. Pero ang sabi nila there is no position na pwede kong pag lipatan, willing ako na ibaba ang posisyon ko from Teacher II to Teacher I kaya lang there is no posisyon daw na available."

Many teachers were seeking opportunities to use their skills in new and challenging roles that would allow them to grow professionally, but the rigid structure within the education system seemed to stifle this desire for progress.

Professional Development and Continuous Learning

Teachers who were motivated by career growth felt that the opportunities for continuous learning and professional development were either inadequate or limited in scope. Although they were passionate about teaching, many teachers expressed the desire to pursue additional studies or earn trainings, which would help them transition to more specialized roles or higher position in and outside the Department of Education.

For example, participant 1 shared:

"Personal reason ang dahilan ng paglipat ko sa LGU, para sa professional and career growth. After kong mag resign sa DepED, nakakuha agad ako ng trabaho as municipal agriculturist at ngayon ay isa akong fish farmer"

Participant 4 also wanted continuous learning, she stated:

"Madami akong dahilan una gusto ko sana i-pursue yung pinag-aralan ko"

Work-Life Balance and Career Realignment

In some cases, the pursuit of professional growth was linked to a desire for better work-life balance. Participants who had been in the profession for many years often found themselves juggling heavy workloads and emotional stress, which impacted their ability to pursue other interests or personal goals. The lack of resources, support for further education, and time to pursue additional qualifications or certifications were major barriers that left many teachers feeling stagnant in their careers.

Participant 7 shared her sentiment regarding this, Participant 7 shared her sentiment regarding this,

"Kasi sa DepEd kailanangan marami kang researches, marami kang training pero dahil marami akong workload, I don't have time, tinatamad ako. Parang feeling ko kapag mag reresearch ako nganga 'yong mga bata."

The need to realign their careers to achieve a better balance between work and personal life became a significant factor in their resignation.

"Nag migrate kami ng family abroad and also to have a better paying job... now I work here as Health Care Assistant." (Participant 6)

In this context, career realignment was not just about finding a new job but about finding a career that allowed for more personal freedom and fulfillment. Participant 8 shared that she enjoyed having a work-life balance when she worked as a kindergarten teacher in Vietnam.

"Ma'am maraming opportunity dito pwede ka magpa-spa 'yan 'yong mga hindi nagagawa diyan sa atin tapos makakapag pa rebond ka lamang during bonus dito kahit pag ka sweldo pwede, go."

Participant 3 expressed this sentiment, he accepted a higher position offered by the University:

"...mas mataas ang sweldo at higher position ang ina-offer sa akin sa University."

For many teachers, career realignment involves considering opportunities outside of education entirely. Highly qualified and experienced teachers felt they could make a significant impact in other fields where their skills, such as communication,

organization, and management, would be better compensated and recognized. The idea of realigning their careers allowed these teachers to explore new paths in business, health care, or other sectors where they could apply their skills and potentially earn a higher income.

When cross-referencing this theme with other themes, such as workload stress and financial strain, pursuing professional growth appears as a complementary motivator for resignation. Teachers experiencing high workloads and financial stress feel trapped in their current roles, with little room for advancement or skill development. The intersection of these challenges made it clear that many teachers sought new opportunities for growth in careers that offered greater satisfaction and a better balance between work and personal life.

For instance, the combination of workload stress and the desire for career advancement shows that the pressures of teaching with the lack of growth opportunities made them feel stagnant which motivate them to seek alternative paths. It is particularly evident in statements like Participant 7's:

"Kasi sa DepEd kailanangan marami kang researches, marami kang training pero dahil marami akong workload, I don't have time, tinatamad ako. Parang feeling ko kapag mag rerereasech ako nganga 'yong mga bata."

Participants also noted that job satisfaction was much higher in positions outside DepEd. Participant 6, who is teaching in the University, he rated his job satisfaction as 10:

"Syempre, sabi ko ngani iba yung trabaho sa college mas magaan compare sa DepEd. Sa teaching I rate it 10"

Participant 8 shared the factors that contribute to level her level of satisfaction:

"Work environment, marami akong natututunan, ang hawak ko kase ngayon ay mga equipment kaya new experience sa akin."

The theme "Professional Growth: Career Realignment" underscores how teachers' aspirations for career development, new challenges, and more fulfilling professional opportunities drive them to resign such as lack of advancement opportunities, stagnation in their current roles, and the desire for better work-life balance. Addressing these needs by creating opportunities for growth, offering leadership opportunities, and supporting continuous professional by fostering a culture of career progression within the education sector, it may be possible to keep talented teachers engaged and committed to the profession.

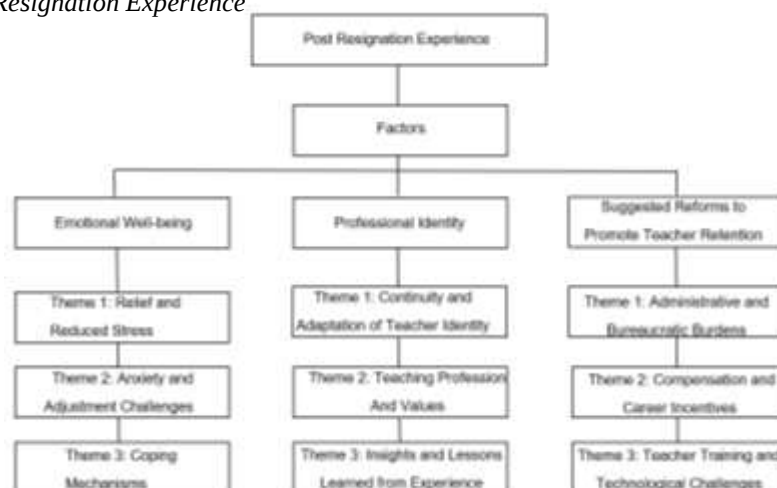
The common factor among these responses is that the participants found career growth outside DepEd. Although the study involved eight respondents, their answers matched recent studies. This aligns with the conclusion of Cahilog et al., (2023), the division or station where a teacher works could influence retention, as teachers who feel their current assignments do not align with their professional goals or personal needs may be more likely to resign. Similar to the findings of Bulawat (2020) who claimed that teachers with greater degrees may pursue positions with more responsibility or more income, resulting in turnover, particularly if possibilities for progression are limited. Tackling obstacles within the workplace and enhancing organizational effectiveness has resulted in a greater emphasis on the quality of teachers' work lives. These findings are consistent with those of Arslan (2018) who found that this idea includes multiple dimensions, such as work-life balance, autonomy, job stability, incentives, and career advancement in today's work environment as cited by (Ertürk, 2022). These studies align with the first motivators of Herzberg's Two-Factor theory, which includes intrinsic factors like achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, and advancement, as noted by (Aerola and Dumalaon, 2023).

4.4 Part 4: Post-Resignation Experiences of Teachers in the Division of Marinduque

The key themes that emerged from the teachers' post-resignation experiences are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Themes Emerged in Post-Resignation Experience



Teachers experience emotional and professional shifts after resigning as they transition to new career paths. The analysis of the participants' post-resignation experiences shows a complex picture of the emotional processing of the resigned teachers.

For some, leaving the DepEd offers relief and personal growth. For others, it triggers feelings of loss, guilt, or uncertainty. Teaching is more than just a job, it is a core part of a teacher's identity and it made it difficult to step away from this role which lead to reevaluation of self-worth and professional purpose. Many participants, leaving the profession requires a shifting sense of self. Their professional identity, once so closely tied to teaching, must be redefined in a new context. In this section the post resignation experience of how teachers navigated these changes, particularly the impact of resignation on their emotional health, and how these experiences shaped their career change.

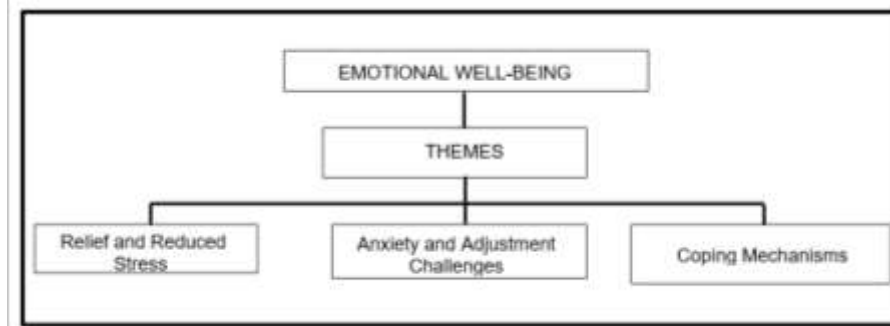
It highlights the complexities of adjusting to life after teaching, understanding their evolving professional identity, and how these shifts influence the paths they choose afterward. After the analysis, there are three factors of Post Resignation Experience: Emotional Well-being, Professional Identity, and Suggested Reforms to Promote Teacher Retention. In each factor, different themes emerged.

Emotional Well-being

Teachers shared insights into their emotional well-being as part of the analysis of post-resignation experiences. The themes that emerged from these narratives are presented in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Themes Emerged in Emotional Well-being of Teachers during Post-Resignation



Theme 1: Relief and Reduced Stress`

This theme refers to the feeling of relief and reduction in stress that participants experienced after leaving their teaching positions, often due to workload stress and financial strain in the Department of Education (DepEd). Many participants felt a sense of freedom, relief, and happiness after transitioning out of teaching. The stress associated with paperwork, workload, and expectations in the teaching profession was a common reason for their emotional burden while teaching in DepEd. After resignation, most participants shared that their stress levels decreased significantly, especially after securing new, less demanding jobs.

For some teachers, resigning brings a sense of freedom and excitement, especially when they immediately secure new jobs after resigning. However, this transition is challenging, leaving them uncertain about their future career endeavor and as the provider of the family. Participants show remarkable resilience, finding ways to cope with these emotions through self-regulation or the support of family and new job opportunities. The emotional experience after resignation is not simple; it is full of ups and downs that show how complex the transition can be.

Several participants expressed relief and excitement after leaving DepEd because they could quickly find new work. Thus, teachers moving away from a stressful teaching environment and into something new seemed like a fresh start.

Participant 1 shared,

"Masaya ako kasi hindi ako na bakante...kailangan mo mag provide para sa pamilya."

His transition to a municipal agriculturist brought satisfaction and purpose.

This response shows that leaving teaching brought relief, with the new role offering a better work-life balance and much-needed peace of mind. It is corroborated by Participant 2, which narrated that the LGU environment was perceived as less stressful.

"Syempre happy ako at excited. Iba na ang environment...less stressful sa LGU"

It is corroborated by Participant 6:

"Happy, I secured a job a few months after my resignation and makakasama ko ang pamilya ko abroad."

Another participant had a similar smooth transition, saying,

"Wala akong naramdaman kase automatic tinanggap ako ng university. Nasa DepEd pa lamang ako ay inatawagan na ako. Hindi naman sa masaya, yung ano ko sa sarili ko na anytime pala na gusto kong lumipat, ego yon, syempre yung alam ko kailangan pala nila. Hindi ko ina-stress ang sarili ko, madali ang buhay ko 'non. (Participant 5)

He viewed his career transitions as empowering and stress-free. The fact that this participant did not feel any emotional strain during their transition shows that for some, the change brings a sense of stability and confidence in their next step. This remark echoed to Rosillo (2023) noted the experiences of teachers who resigned from service in the Department of Education (DepEd) showed that with the challenges they encountered during post-resignation establishing the plans, managing the challenges, and working with encounters. The swift transition and family proximity contributed to his positive well-being. These reflections reveal how resignation from teaching opened new doors for emotional relief, especially in work environments that were perceived to be more manageable or aligned with personal values.

Theme 2: Anxiety and Adjustment Challenges

This theme refers to the participants' emotional difficulties, especially uncertainty, sadness, or fear, that accompanied the resignation process, particularly for those who had long teaching tenures or no immediate job lined up.

While some participants experienced relief, others struggled with uncertainty and anxiety, especially during transitional periods. Emotional attachment to the teaching profession and its routines, as well as the fear of the unknown, contributed to their discomfort. For some, the anxiety was short-lived and tied mostly to initial adjustments. After spending so many years in teaching, they found it hard to let go of the career they had built.

"At first, medyo malungkot ako 18 years is 18 years. Iiwanan ko 'yong nakasanayan ko, daily routine, mga taong nakatrabaho of course, new adjustment, new environment, with new responsibilities and kailangan kong mag-aral pa, aral pa ng aral" (Participant 3)

Leaving behind established relationships and routines created emotional strain. It is corroborated by Participant 7:

"Usual anxiety of moving... National High School is my comfort zone... Kahit anong pasikot sikot, mga tao kaya kong laruin..."

Transitioning from a known environment to a new one was emotionally difficult.

"Noong una relieve ako tapos dahil biglang nag resign ako ng wala pang trabaho medyo na worried ako."

These responses highlight that emotional transitions are not linear—relief and anxiety can co-exist, and individuals cope based on their attachments, tenure, and available support systems.

Theme 3: Coping Mechanisms

Coping mechanisms is the strategies used by participants to manage stress, anxiety, and other negative feeling after resignation. It includes self-reflection and external supports from their family, other source of income and hobbies.

The participants have their own ways to face the result of their resignation from DepEd. Through the interviews the participants shared that positive thinking ,and self-awareness helps them a lot to process their life and in decision making.

Participant 3 shared:

"I am a positive person... May mindset ako na kung ayaw nila sa akin hindi ko pinipilit ang sarili ko."

This shows strong self-boundaries and positivity as a way to cope. The same sentiment shared by Participant 4. Her coping was internally guided:

"More on self-regulation dahil mataas naman ang self-awareness ko."

Diversifying her income was also a form of emotional outlet, Participant 7 shared:

"yon ang kagandahan pag may part-time ka. Hindi ka concentrated sa work mo so 'yon ang outlet mo. Pag na stress ako pwede ako mag hosting, kapag stress ako sa hosting I can go to other businesses. Hindi lamang isa source of income mo."

Emphasizing mindset adjustment as a core tool in maintaining well-being, Participant 8 remarked:

"Change your mindset, your attitude the way you think about things."

These coping mechanisms underscore the participants' resilience and self-reliance. It shows that post-resignation adjustment is greatly influenced by how individuals manage their personal and external realities. This shows how complex the emotional experience of resigned DepEd teachers could be. At first, they felt relieve after resigning however the financial and pressure to support their family causes anxiety. Participant's strong sense of self-awareness and the support of family helped them navigate these feelings.

Finding a new position is not always as simple or straightforward as one may think. Even if one has good abilities and is in a high-demand sector, the interview process may take a significant amount of time, and they will need to find means to sustain themselves financially until they begin a new career. Even in a strong labor market, the duration of a job hunt might be unexpected. It may be prudent to begin the search for a new employment before officially resigning. Similar to the findings of Rosillo (2023) who noted that once a job offer is received, one can go on to the next employment without worrying about managing finances.

The results also corroborate the findings of Doyle (2021), leaving a job without a plan can be daunting due to the many uncertainties involved. An individual might not know how long it will take to secure a new position; financial resources could run out quicker than expected, and it is unclear where the next job will come from. It is wise to investigate the job market in advance to discover which positions fit qualifications, what salary can be expected, and which employers are hiring.

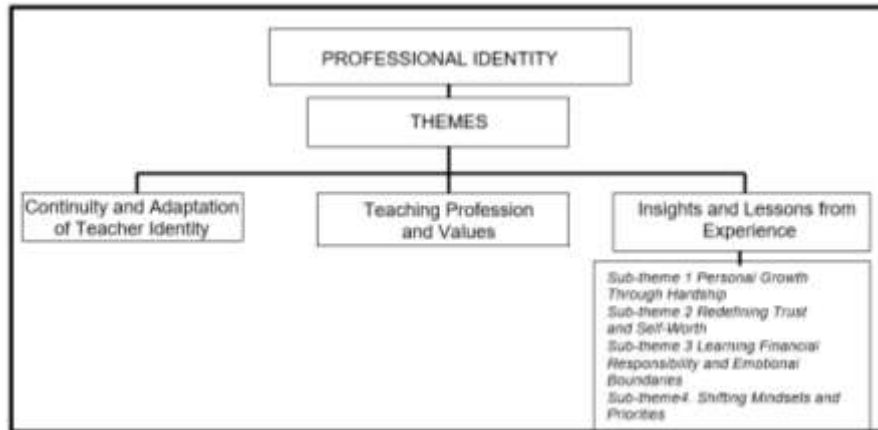
Surprisingly, several people had very little emotional distress. They saw their career transfers as an exciting new chapter, rather than a difficult change. For these teachers, the post-resignation period seemed to be about confidently embracing new opportunities rather than addressing emotional difficulties. This observation is consistent with Rosillo (2023) who reported that having a carefully crafted exit strategy will help facilitate a seamless transition to a new job. The findings of this study provide a valuable glimpse into how teachers manage their emotions after resigning and develop resilience during job changes.

Together, these themes paint a vivid picture of the emotional aftermath of teacher departure. Some people found rapid relief and reduced stress, which was generally linked to faster employment or healthier work situations. Others struggled with adjustment, experiencing worry and fear, particularly when shifts were rapid or unexpected. Coping techniques were critical in determining how individuals negotiated this life upheaval, highlighting the value of a positive mentality, social support, and adaptability.

Themes related to teachers' professional identity during the post-resignation period are illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7

Themes Emerged in Professional Identity of Teachers during Post-Resignation



Teaching is more than just a job for many teachers. It is an integral part of their identity. When teachers resign, they often experience a change in how they see themselves; however, their experience and the values they earn as a teacher influence their new jobs. The responses shared by the participants illustrated how their professional identities have changed after resigning from DepEd. There are also various perspectives shared by the participants on how they adapted to new careers while holding on to the values influenced by their role as a teacher. In this factor there are three themes that emerged, namely, Continuity and Adaptation of Teacher Identity; Teaching Profession: Values and Critique; and Insights and Lessons Experienced.

Theme 1: Continuity and Adaptation of Teacher Identity

This topic illustrates how resigned DepEd teachers still reflect qualities of the teaching function even after changing careers or pursuing a teaching profession outside DepEd. Many participants still have a great internal link to being a teacher, even if their official professional identity changes. The following is the conversation and analysis of how this topic appeared in the interview:

Changing one's identity to fit new responsibilities but keeping fundamental teaching beliefs. For several attendees, the change away from teaching did not mean giving up the function of the teacher completely. Rather, they adjusted and discovered methods to show their teaching persona in other areas of their life. Participant 1 explained,

"Ibang iba na sa pagtuturo, being an agriculture technician at fish farmer, malayo sa pagtuturo. Sa profession, hindi na syempre teacher pero teacher ako in my own way. Sa mga anak ko at sa mga naging ka trabaho ko kapag sila ay naga paturo at alam ko ay na tulong ako."

This answer shows that even with a complete change of career, the participants maintained values and ideals of teaching, especially the dedication to responsibility and a strong work ethic. In contrast to Pantić and Wubbels (2021) who found that many instructors experience a change in their professional identity once they depart from education. Many still consider themselves teachers and apply their teaching skills to other jobs, even if they change careers. Participant 2 shared,

"Wala naman, simple lamang naman ako, hindi naman ako nag bago, porket boss ka na magiging mayabang kana. Iba na ang nature of work ko, pero pag may nagatatanong sa akin, nagpapatulong katulad ng mga J.O., secretary ko syempre lumalabas ang pagiging guro ko."

Despite transitioning to completely different jobs, their basic professional identity as teachers still shows in their current profession, like assisting their co-workers and their new daily responsibilities. It also shows how teaching skills and values are profoundly ingrained in a person's life and how they may still influence their values and ideals even when they are no longer in a teaching position. Consistent with the results of Schmidt and Lee (2023) who investigated how teachers transfer aspects of their professional identity into leadership and non-teaching roles, where they continually apply the abilities they developed as educators.

Theme 2: Teaching Profession and Values

Participants reflect deeply on the nobility of the teaching profession while also offering candid criticisms, especially regarding bureaucratic challenges and misaligned priorities in the education system.

Some participants noted that, although their careers had changed, their core values and approach to work had remained consistent. One participant stated:

"Even though I have achieved what I have now, I remain the same person noong nasa DepEd ako. I don't mind kung tawagin ako sa first name ko, as long as it is done with respect. (Participant 3)"

This response suggests that, regardless of career changes or changes in the work environment, the participant's values—such as humility, respect, and staying grounded—remain unchanged. It emphasizes that professional identity is not solely defined by the title teacher but by one's character and the values they carry with them into every situation. Additionally, the participant's reflection on the importance of listening and consulting with seniors highlights the value of continuous learning and growth—a mindset cultivated in teaching that carries over into other professional environments.

Some participants expressed a shift away from identifying as a teacher in a formal sense but acknowledged the profound influence teaching had on their lives. Participant 4 shared:

"Hindi ko na ina-consider ang sarili na teacher in terms of profession, pero ang laking factor 'nya kung sino ako ngayon lalo na at nanay na ako ngayon."

This participant indicates that while they no longer see themselves as a teacher in a professional capacity, their identity is still shaped by the teaching experience, particularly in terms of nurturing and guiding others. The participant could also relate the teaching function to parenting, therefore showing how personal experiences combine with professional identity. The change shows how professional identity changes; past occupations affect future personal and professional choices. Though based on a small group of participants, Schmidt and Lee (2023) support this view, showing that teachers' professional identities are not static but are reconstructed when transitioning to leadership or non-teaching roles. The transition often involves redefining how teachers perceive themselves and their contributions to education. This mirrors the experiences of participants, who explored new roles but continued to hold on to the core values and skills developed during their teaching careers.

Lastly, another participant reflected on their ability to adapt while maintaining humility and simplicity, regardless of their professional environment:

"Ganito lamang ako kung ano nakikita mo, 'yon na 'yon, kung ano ako noon wala namang pagbabago, madali ako mag adjust kahit sino makatrabaho ko." (Participant 5)

Participant 2, Participant 7, and Participant 8 shared the same sentiment:

"Wala naman, simple lamang ako naman ako, hindi naman ako nag bago, palibhasa ay nagging boss ka na magiging mayabang ka na. Mas maganda 'yong simple ka lang." (Participant 2)

"I think wala naman kasi I reconnect with my student at co -teachers, kasi napaka importante noon. Iyon ang napaka importante wherever you go." (Participant 7)

"Mam, there is a saying na keep your feet on the ground tsaka matuto kang lumigon sa pinanggalingan mo humility real go far." (Participant 8)

This response underlines the participant's consistency in values and implies that they should keep their identity across different professional settings—whether they are teaching in schools, working overseas, or taking on new responsibilities. It emphasizes professional adaptability, whereby the person's character stays constant as they alter to fit different career routes. Additionally, all the participants touched on the importance of having a supportive family as part of their post-resignation experience:

"Supportive ang pamilya ko sa mga desisyon ko, syempre 'yong asawa ko." (Participant 1)

"Oo naman, suportado ako ng pamilya ko." (Participant 2)

"I have a supportive family." (Participant 3)

"Supportive naman ang aking pamilya" (Participant 4)

"Ang asawa ko supportive sa akin, hindi naman ako magiging teacher kung hindi sa kanya, sa kanya lahat galing" (Participant 5)

"I am in a different profession now. I have a supportive family; they supported me throughout the process." (Participant 6)

"Iba kasi love language ng family ko hindi sila nag tatanong kung kumusta ka, bibigyan ka nila ng pagkain, out of town kita, kasi alam nila na stress ako." (Participant 7)

"I have a supportive family, and gained few trusted friends." (Participant 8)

These brief responses underscore the importance of support systems in shaping the participants' professional identity. A supportive family can offer emotional anchoring, helping people to negotiate changes in professional identity and accept new responsibilities without losing touch with their fundamental principles.

Many participants still identified themselves as a teacher, however in different ways. While some shifted away from the profession entirely, they still embraced the core values and principles of teaching in their new roles and personal lives. This shift highlights that professional identity is not tied to a specific job but also shaped by the values, skills, and experiences gained throughout the career. This support the work of Teagle (2024) who explored the multifaceted nature of teacher identity and its influence on self-efficacy and professional development throughout a teaching career. Personal factors (such as family and health), workplace dynamics, educational policies, and broader social and structural elements (including age, social class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality) shape a teacher's personality. These aspects collectively impact job satisfaction and teaching effectiveness.

For some, the shift was seamless and there was no major change to their identity. They stayed personable and humble, qualities usually associated with education, and brought these into their new positions. For certain attendees, particularly those adjusting to new surroundings and duties, the change was more difficult. But, especially the need of lifelong learning and humility, even these people brought knowledge from their teaching professions into their new directions. This aligns with the work of Gimbert and Kapa (2022) who argued that teacher identity often persists after individuals leave the classroom and transition to non-teaching roles. It supports the experiences of participants who moved away from teaching but still see themselves as educators in many ways. The study suggests that teachers' principles and teaching skills are often carried over to new roles, influencing how they interact with others, mentor, and share knowledge.

The responses also showed that while their professional identity may change, the core of who they are—shaped by their teaching careers—stayed the same. Their ability to adapt and remain grounded despite career changes reflects teachers' resilience and deep connection to the values of their profession.

Theme 3: Insights and Lessons from Experience

This theme captures wisdom participants gained through teaching and post-teaching experiences. It includes personal development, professional redirection, financial awareness, and emotional boundaries. The insights drawn from participants' reflections reveal a powerful narrative of transformation shaped by hardship, disillusionment, and personal re-evaluation. Their voices highlight a pattern of inner awakening, as life challenges—particularly those involving career disruption—became catalysts for significant growth in self-trust, emotional regulation, financial literacy, and spiritual grounding. This discussion examines how experiences of struggle prompted participants to shift their mindset, redefine their values, and construct a stronger sense of identity and purpose. Below are the sub-themes that emerged:

Sub-theme 1 Personal Growth Through Hardship

A recurring theme is the value of adversity as a source of insight and strength. Participants describe their struggles not as endpoints, but as formative experiences that reshaped their perspectives and character. This aligns with the psychological concept of post-traumatic growth, where individuals emerge from hardship with greater appreciation for life, strengthened relationships, and a renewed sense of personal resilience.

Participant 7 encapsulates this with the statement,

"Problems and challenges will bring you to opportunities... bawat araw ay parang huling araw—best mo lagi."

Participant 3 shared, how to handle new work environment,

"Don't stress yourself. When you see an opportunity for growth, seize it. Consult your seniors often, sila yung magiging source of information and knowledge mo sa iyong bagong environment."

Participant 2 shared the same sentiment,

"If there is an opportunity, have the courage to grab it."

This reflects a shift toward daily intentionality and the recognition that adversity can be an opportunity for character refinement and renewed purpose. These reflections emphasize a deeper philosophy of living, where life's hardships become lessons rather than burdens—promoting resilience and emotional maturity.

This advice speaks to the importance of developing a deeper understanding of one's capabilities and continually seeking growth opportunities. The recommendation to "consult your seniors" highlights the value of mentorship and learning from others, which is critical for career advancement and navigating new professional environments. It reflects an ongoing process of personal and professional development, even in the face of career changes. Similar to the work of Eren and Zeybek (2020) who emphasized the importance of personal reflection and career planning for teachers considering career changes. They suggested that teachers who proactively reflect on their career choices and align their goals with professional growth are more likely to experience successful transitions.

The recurring themes of self-reflection and careful planning suggest that teachers viewed their career transitions as personal and professional milestones that require careful consideration. It is evident in the emphasis on evaluating capabilities, aligning career choices with individual and family goals, and preparing for professional growth. Additionally, the responses highlighted the emotional complexity of teacher turnover, where relief, regret, and adaptation are intertwined. Teachers are not simply leaving one job for another; they are navigating the emotional challenges of stepping away from a role that has shaped their identity for years. At the same time, there is a strong undercurrent of resilience in the participants' responses, with many emphasizing their ability to adapt and new opportunities while still holding on to the core values of teaching.

The experiences shared by the participants are similar to Rossilio (2023) mentioned finding a new job is not always as simple or straightforward as one might believe. It could be a better idea to start looking for work before resigning. While looking for a job offer, it will be easier to go on to the next position without worrying about paying bills, as cited (Alison, 2020); it can be frightening to quit without a strategy. It also corroborated with Doyle (2021), a well-thought-out exit strategy will ensure a smooth transition to a new job. Finally, mentorship and seeking guidance from experienced colleagues emerged as a critical factor in the transition process. The recommendation to seek advice from seniors and create a professional portfolio highlights the continued importance of professional development, even beyond traditional teaching positions. It also reflects on Tompkins (2023) who emphasized that educational leadership should include creating hands-on, practical experiences before and in the early years of teaching and having better relationships with all staff members, including mentors. It supports the participants' emphasis on mentorship and the importance of supportive professional relationships during career transitions.

Sub-theme 2. Redefining Trust and Self-Worth

A critical psychological turning point for many participants was the redefinition of trust—both in others and in themselves. After professional transitions, particularly involving disillusioning or toxic work environments, participants became more guarded and introspective.

Participant 3 notes,

"Don't trust anyone 100%, only trust God completely... be reflective—listen more than you talk."

This suggests a spiritual re-centering, where faith becomes a stable source of trust in the face of relational and systemic unpredictability. Participant 8 supports this theme with a bold declaration of emotional self-reliance:

“Change your mindset... trust your instincts. Don’t trust people, trust yourself and love yourself.”

This marks a move toward internal validation over external affirmation, a powerful form of psychological empowerment. These responses indicate that trust, once broken in professional settings, is not abandoned entirely but rather recalibrated—placed in more reliable sources like spirituality, intuition, and self-awareness.

Sub-theme 3. Learning Financial Responsibility and Emotional Boundaries

Another emergent theme is the intersection of financial responsibility and emotional boundaries, particularly after experiencing manipulation or exploitation. Participant 8 candidly reflects,

“Lessons in life—wag ka mag-loan, manage your finances wisely... generous akong tao, kaya madali ako maloko.”

This line underscores the emotional cost of generosity without boundaries, suggesting a hard-earned lesson about protecting oneself from financial and emotional exploitation. Financial literacy is presented not just as a practical skill, but as a moral and emotional learning, tied to self-respect and personal discipline. The recognition of vulnerability here speaks to a maturing self-awareness—learning to give without losing oneself, and to be kind without being taken advantage of.

Sub-theme 4. Shifting Mindsets and Priorities

Resignation, often viewed negatively in career discourse, is reinterpreted here as a moment of liberation and recalibration. Participants speak of life after resignation as more than just an escape from toxicity—it’s a gateway to clarity and purpose.

Participant 2 shared:

“Timbangin mo ng husto kung makakatulong бага ito sa iyong professional growth, sa iyong sarili, at sa pamilya mo. Kung hindi ‘yan makakatulong ay ‘wag ka ng lumipat, mag hintay ka ng panahon para sa iyo.”

Participant 4’s statement, warns against the trap of over-functioning in environments that exploit competence. It reflects an emerging awareness of how overcommitment can compromise personal well-being.

“Huwag mong ipakita na magaling ka at kaya mo lahat... sa ‘yo lahat iaasa ang trabaho,”

The data reveal that participants, after leaving their jobs, often restructured their priorities around balance, authenticity, and internal peace, rather than performance or external validation. This shift marks a reorientation from productivity-driven identity to a values-driven identity. As participants faced betrayals of trust, burnout, or unfulfilled expectations, they began the process of rebuilding their identity from the inside out.

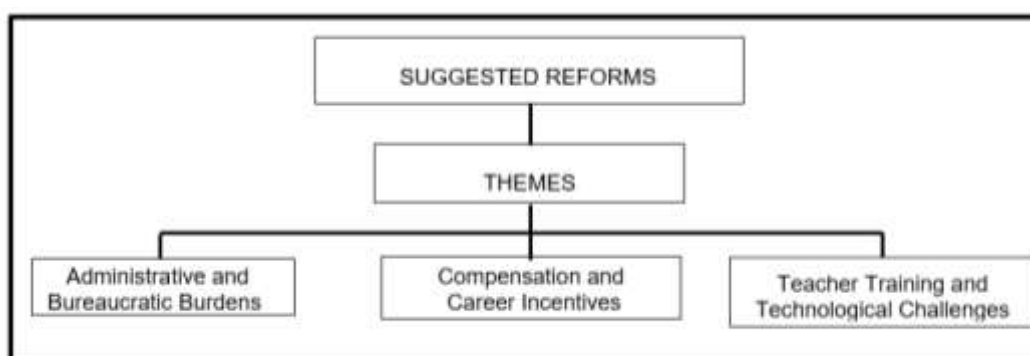
In sum, this analysis affirms that hardship can be clarifying; trust must be earned and often begins within; boundaries protect generosity; and growth requires both release and redefinition. Ultimately, the participants’ voices echo a universal truth: real insight comes from lived experience—especially when we dare to examine it honestly and use it to evolve.

Suggested Reforms to Promote Teacher Retention

Based on the participants’ insights, several reforms were suggested to improve teacher retention in the Division of Marinduque. Figure 8 presents the major themes from these suggestions.

Figure 8

Themes Emerged in Suggested Reforms to Promote Teacher Retention



By sharing their experiences, participants offered valuable viewpoints on the elements that affected their choice to leave the teaching profession. Furthermore, their reform proposals emphasized potential modifications within the educational system that could enhance support for teachers and mitigate the loss of talented educators.

The recommendations provided by the participants reflected a diverse range of experiences and perspectives based on their time teaching in the Department of Education (DepEd) and the factors influencing their decision to leave the profession. All participants in this study are High School teachers from Marinduque, and their insights offered valuable reflections on the challenges and opportunities within the educational system. These recommendations are rooted in their specific experiences.

This factor provides a deeper understanding of how teachers perceive their roles in the system and the changes needed to create a more supportive and sustainable environment. Consequently, three themes emerged:

Theme 1: Administrative and Bureaucratic Burdens

This theme refers to the excessive non-instructional responsibilities assigned to teachers—such as paperwork, report-writing, and involvement in non-teaching events—that detract from their core function of classroom instruction. These tasks contribute to increased stress, diminished teaching quality, and burnout.

Teachers strongly expressed frustration over excessive paperwork, non-teaching tasks, and administrative overload that hinder their ability to teach effectively. This is one of the most consistent and pressing issues mentioned.

Participant 1 mentioned:

“Lessen the ancillaries (non-teaching related tasks)... assign other personnel during sports tournament.”

Other four participants corroborated with this.

“Dapat may personnel para sa mga reports... para less stress ang mga teacher, naka-focus sa pagtuturo.”

(Participant 2)

“Eliminate unnecessary tasks... teachers should be allowed to focus on teaching.” (Participant 3)

“Less paper works for the teacher...” (Participant 6)

“Iba ‘yong administrative work at iba ‘yong teaching load... para si teacher turo lang ng turo.” (Participant 7)

These responses highlight the significant burden of administrative tasks, particularly the responsibility of completing reports and paperwork. By suggesting other non-teaching personnel should have this task, Participant 2 underscored the need to free teachers from additional duties that detract from their primary role: teaching. Furthermore, Participant 1’s suggestion to reassign sports activities to other personnel reflected the importance of allowing teachers to prioritize their teaching responsibilities, thus contributing to a more balanced workload.

This recommendation is consistent with findings from various studies, including Marinette and Hui (2021), which indicate that increased workloads and emotional exhaustion contribute to teacher dissatisfaction. Robosa et al., (2021) discovered that teachers encounter challenges like limited resources, student management issues, and excessive workloads, resulting in stress and burnout. It is also similar to Räsänen et al., (2020), a heavier workload, which presents mental and physical symptoms, significantly affects the intentions of teachers to exit the profession. Factors contributing to this situation include work-related stress, emotional fatigue, and feelings of inadequacy.

By alleviating non-teaching duties, teachers can concentrate on lesson planning and engaging with students, fostering a more rewarding teaching experience that enhances retention rates and improves the quality of education for Filipino learners. Likewise, it is consistent to the findings of Dela Cruz (2021) who emphasized that teacher attrition would continue until the issues driving teachers out of the profession are addressed.

Participants expressed strong concern over how these bureaucratic demands interfere with meaningful instruction. Several called for the clear division of labor between teaching and administrative roles. This burden contributes directly to teacher burnout and attrition. Participants consistently call for systemic support through dedicated non-teaching personnel, allowing them to reclaim their instructional focus. There’s also a desire to value teaching time more than compliance work.

The recurring themes in the teachers’ recommendations emphasize that teacher retention extends beyond salary considerations. It is the overall structure of the educational system, including factors such as workload, leadership, and support systems. Several participants stressed the importance of reducing non-teaching tasks to allow teachers to focus on their core role: fostering student growth and development. Moreover, the suggestions regarding career advancement and professional development, particularly for school leaders, highlight the critical role of leadership in creating a positive school environment. A collaborative leadership style based on mutual respect and shared responsibility could help reduce teacher turnover.

Theme 2: Compensation and Career Incentives

This theme encompasses issues related to teachers' salaries, benefits, financial security, and access to professional advancement. It captures the perception that teaching is undervalued economically, which contributes to attrition or migration.

The participants emphasized that raising salaries and creating clear career growth pathways are essential for motivating teachers and retaining talent in the education sector. Several participants mention that low salaries and lack of financial growth are reasons why teachers either leave or are demotivated. Improving economic rewards was framed as both fair and necessary.

Participant 8 suggested:

“Magkaroon ng financial growth ang mga teachers... batas talaga na maga-secure sa mga teacher.”

Participant 3 echoed this statement

“Kung seryoso talaga ang gobyerno sa quality education at ma-inspire nila ang mga teacher, taasan ang sweldo...”

This response advocates for higher salaries, the elimination of unnecessary tasks, and the promotion of career growth. The concern over teacher compensation, particularly the issue of underpaid, had long been associated with teacher attrition. This observation is consistent with prior research conducted by Deloso and Bongcac (2020) identified monetary concerns as the primary factor influencing teacher turnover, followed by family obligations. Although DepEd had recently made significant strides in increasing teacher salaries, the simultaneous increase in mandatory government contributions—such as tax, PAG-IBIG, and PhilHealth deductions—remains a concern.

Economic insecurity is a significant push factor. Participants connect financial respect to professional dignity, and believe financial incentives would also help retain and inspire teachers.

Theme 3: Teacher Training and Technological Challenges

This theme captures the challenges faced by teachers, particularly older ones, in adapting to evolving educational technologies and pedagogical requirements. It also addresses the imbalance between theoretical training and practical classroom application. Older teachers in particular highlighted struggles with technology integration. Participants also emphasized the need for practical training instead of focusing on theoretical frameworks.

Participant 2 and Participant 5 have the similar sentiments:

“... sa katulad kong nagkaka edad na syempre computerized na ngayon, although marunong ako sa laptop syempre sa panahon ngayon marami kinakailangang na aralan sa paggamit, baka hindi na kami makasunod yung mga nagaka edad na guro ganyan ang reklamo. Lalo na yung mga may edad, na hanggang ngayon hindi pa marunong mag laptop” (Participant 2)

Participant 5 highlights the need for training with empathy and tailored pacing, especially for older teachers who still want to teach but are intimidated by technology. Participant 5 mentioned:

“Kasi alam mo naman sa DepEd ngayon, katulad ninyo mga bata pa walang problema, pero yung mga matatanda na hirap sila pag dating sa computer, sa ICT kahit ako hirap. Kaya marami ang naga early retirement. Sa edad kong ganito mahirap na mag-aral ng ICT.”

Many participants pointed out that the digital divide, especially for older educators, is a barrier to effective teaching. They also advocated for more relevant, teaching-focused training instead of compliance-based tasks. The generation gap in tech skills is contributing to early retirement or exit. Participants want training to be focused on teaching improvement, not on compliance with tech or policy changes.

On the other hand, Participant 7 stated:

“Maraming nang pagbabago, mga technological advancement at na left behind ‘yong pagiging creative ng teachers. Mag bigay sila ng training pang turo hindi na ‘yong other too general trainings, kasi for me masyado ng toxic, para makapag-isip pa si teacher.”

In connection with this, in any educational reform, teachers training must be connected with instructional realities. It should promote practical, subject-specific, and classroom-based training over broad, one-size-fits-all seminars that simply complying with policies. This findings are in agreement with the study of Tompkins (2023), who emphasized that the effective leadership includes creating hands-on, practical experiences for teachers, fostering better relationships among staff, reducing the general workload for teachers, and improving communication and transparency across all stakeholders in the educational system.

The participants’ suggestions addressed several challenges contributing to teacher attrition and migration. They also offered valuable insights into potential changes that could improve teacher retention by fostering a more supportive and sustainable environment for educators.

4.5 Part 5. Proposed Enhancement of the Human Resource Management Programs of DepEd

Considering the findings of this study, the researcher developed a proposal that outlines a Human Resource Development initiative designed to address the key factors contributing to teacher turnover within the Department of Education (DepEd), specifically at the secondary level. The findings identified three primary drivers of teacher turnover: workload stress, financial strain, and the pursuit of professional growth and career realignment.

This research designed a proposal for strengthening teacher support and retention through training, evaluation, and well-being programs.

This proposal considers DepEd Order No. 5, Series of 2024, which redefines teachers’ workload by allotting six hours for classroom instruction and two hours for ancillary tasks such as curriculum planning and assessment—delegating non-teaching responsibilities to appropriate support personnel. In alignment with this policy, the proposed HRD program introduces targeted training, continuous monitoring, and retention-focused strategies to address systemic inefficiencies and individual teacher needs in public schools.

This executive brief includes training and upskilling, mentorship, monitoring and evaluation system, and retention-focused Human Resource Practices. The goals of this program are to address specific skill gaps—particularly in technology—while supporting teachers’ personal and professional development holistically, to assess the effectiveness of support programs, understand teacher needs, and guide HR policy improvements, and to increase teacher retention by building a responsive, human-centered work environment.

This program directly supports the implementation of DepEd Order No. 5 by complementing workload reduction with skills training for increased teaching efficiency, ensuring that newly freed-up ancillary time is used meaningfully through training and mentoring, and supporting older teachers through digital upskilling to avoid early exit due to tech pressure.

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