

Professional Development and Working Conditions in Relation to Teacher Retention in Public Schools

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.10100436>

Received: 19 January 2026; Accepted: 24 January 2026; Published: 10 January 2026

ABSTRACT

The primary objective of the study was to assess the professional development and working conditions in relation to teacher retention in the public schools. It employed descriptive- documentary and survey methods with aid of questionnaires to three hundred eighty-one (381) elementary and secondary teachers and twenty-eight (28) school heads fully enumerated in this study. The results revealed that teachers' have a positive relationship on retention strategies and professional development which directly contribute to the growth and development of teachers. Also, when schools implement effective retention practices, teachers are more likely to experience improved working conditions. This study concluded that public school teachers report that teachers enjoy ideal working conditions and exhibit a very advanced level of professional development across all domains. Moreover, positive feedback on pay, administrative assistance, working conditions, and professional development indicates very high teacher retention. Additionally, professional development and working conditions all have a positive impact on teacher retention; the strongest correlation is found in working conditions. These results demonstrate that high levels of satisfaction, ongoing professional development, and supportive environments are important factors in maintaining teacher retention.

Keywords: Public School, Professional Development, Teacher Retention, Working Conditions,

INTRODUCTION

Several teachers choose to leave the teaching profession nowadays; teacher retention merits closer attention. The issue of teacher retention in public schools is one of the most critical challenges facing educational systems today. Teacher turnover has a significant impact, affecting the quality of education, student achievement, and the overall functioning of schools. To address this issue effectively, it is crucial to understand the factors that influence teacher retention. The most considered factors are professional development, working conditions, and job satisfaction.

Globally, there are persistent issues with teacher retention, resulting in the loss of valuable experience and knowledge. Policy and research frequently focus on the professional development and retention of early-career teachers, while teachers at later phases of their careers are underrepresented (Booth et al., 2021).

According to Cella et. al. (2023), employee turnover among teachers is a widespread trend in schools. Teachers frequently quit the sector during their first three to five years of employment due to increased workloads, a lack of support and professional growth opportunities, and excessive expectations from their principals. This contributes to an annual cycle of recruiting and hiring teachers, which adds stress on school administrators at both the building and district levels. Examining specific reasons why instructors leave and stay may lessen the need for continuous recruiting and retention.

Retaining teachers poses a significant challenge for schools today. The need to attract and retain more educators has reached a critical point. While government efforts in England have primarily focused on bringing teachers

into the state sector, insufficient attention has been paid to the number of teachers exiting the profession or the factors contributing to their departure (Doherty, 2020).

According to Basalamah and Asád (2021), a well-managed organization is essential for meeting its needs and fostering growth. The university functions as an institution that provides educational services. Faculty members and various study programs are also required to effectively manage their human resources in a precise and optimal manner. As an entity in the service sector, human resources play a crucial role within the institution.

Additionally, retaining employees is a critical issue for an organization's competitive edge, as it affects the organization's efficiency, productivity, and long-term sustainability. Specifically, employee retention involves encouraging staff to stay with the organization for the longest duration possible or until a project is completed. Although maintaining employee retention has become increasingly challenging, it offers advantages to both the organization and the individual employee (Biaison, 2020).

The degree of assistance teachers receive early in their careers has a significant impact on how successful they perceive their long-term jobs to be. Three schools with diverse demographics and socioeconomic backgrounds in a sizable public school district in Central Florida were the focus of this study on teacher retention and the factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in the field after their first five years of employment. The primary conclusion was that instructors are more likely to stay in the teaching profession when they feel supported by autonomy, professional growth, and time for collaboration with peers (Sabina et al., 2023).

According to a study by dela Rosa and See (2020), the teaching profession in the Philippines is predominantly female, with younger teachers comprising a significant portion of the workforce, primarily due to ongoing recruitment efforts aimed at meeting the needs of the K–12 curriculum. The study also emphasized that a majority of public-school teachers hold a Bachelor's degree, and that there are limited numbers who pursue graduate studies or hold higher teaching positions such as Master Teacher ranks. Moreover, many newly hired teachers begin at Teacher I, with relatively slow promotion due to limited mobility within the rank system.

The study by Kushwaha et al. (2020), the productivity and expansion of a company depend on the turnover rate of its employees. A low attrition rate boosts the effectiveness of an organization. Despite the abundance of research on retaining employees, HR managers continue to face challenges in maintaining their workforce for extended periods.

According to Shibiti (2020), a correlational study found strong links between retention characteristics and work engagement. Multiple regression studies demonstrated that retention factors had a substantial effect on work engagement. Organizations should provide their employees with better salaries, training, development, and career prospects, as this may increase employee engagement. As a result, organizations should assess if their employees are satisfied with the retention elements offered by the organization.

On the other hand, the qualitative study collected data from three focus groups, comprising superintendents, principals, and teachers in a program for aspiring administrators, and found that rural schools must work significantly harder and more actively to retain new teachers due to the inherent constraints of rural education. Rural school support for new teachers must be a collaborative responsibility to have a positive impact on new teacher retention. The institutional support, affirmation, and encouragement provided by their organizations serve to increase retention. The study demonstrates that rural school administrators can use leadership behaviors to help retain exceptional teachers (Frahm & Cianca, 2021).

In the study by Shuls and Flores (2020), while low salaries for teachers have been identified as a factor contributing to the departure of young educators from the field, this document deliberately excludes salary increases or benefits as a strategy for several reasons. Firstly, increasing teacher salaries is not always a practical solution to teacher turnover, primarily due to the frequent restrictions on school budgets and the complex nature of school and district funding. Secondly, principals often lack the authority or capability to raise teacher salaries, yet there are other approaches they can implement that may positively influence teacher retention.

Despite not having a trustworthy relationship with their principal, long-term teachers had developed strong bonds with the school, its students, and the community. Teachers who left the school complained about a lack of administrative assistance and felt their efforts were not appreciated. The results of this study indicate that the building administrator has the most control over the key elements influencing teacher turnover in the urban school with the highest rate of poverty. There are also ramifications for administrators and urban schools (Kamrath & Bradford, 2020).

One promising strategy to enhance instructor expertise, teaching methods, and eventually student learning is teacher professional development, or PD. Although studies have shown that programs can have a substantial impact on teachers' knowledge, little is known about how long these impacts remain. The intervention's impact will be lessened if teachers lose sight of what they have learned. However, there is variance in the rate of information loss; teachers who participate in summer programs lose knowledge more quickly than those who attend programs throughout the school year. There is discussion of how these findings may affect the planning and assessment of professional development initiatives (Liu & Phelps, 2020).

The only strategy that appears to be successful at luring teachers to difficult schools is offering financial incentives; however, this strategy is ineffective at keeping them on staff. To retain teachers in demanding schools, a positive and encouraging work environment is essential. Due in large part to the paucity of research on these strategies, other strategies, including teacher development, mentorship, and support, lack solid proof of efficacy. Therefore, it is critically necessary to conduct a more thorough study that can answer causation questions in order to ascertain their influence on luring and keeping qualified educators in places where they are most needed. To prevent staffing issues, a long-term solution would be to revise school allocation procedures and support the local economy (See et al., 2020).

After a factor analysis of the eight factors (components) identified for teacher professional development, which account for 54.69% of the total variance, it can be concluded that the questionnaire is a suitable tool for teacher professional development. Teachers are the primary leaders in the educational system and the teaching-learning process, so they should have professional skills and knowledge (Ayyoobi et. al., 2016).

To retain more teachers in public schools, Kosi et al. (2015) recommended that all parties involved in the education sector provide training and development programs, as well as extrinsic motivation variables. The results showed that motivation made the least significant but significant contribution to intention to quit.

While turnover—the reduction of staff members due to resignation or retirement—occurs often in private schools, it also occurs in public basic education providers. Remarkably, some people who work in public schools have quit their jobs; the quantity and cause of these departures are unknown. Other people transfer to other private basic education providers or higher education institutions. Since the focus of previous studies has always been on the reasons for job changes or turnovers among private education providers, the reasons for such actions have not yet been the subject of any studies (Bulawat, 2020).

With the results, one can easily identify the organizational climate and component significance that will help in predicting job satisfaction among employees. The analysis will help in understanding and gathering significant knowledge of the perceived work environment, which is being suggested and recognized as one of the most important ways to enhance job satisfaction among employees, providing them with numerous opportunities for professional development. The starter will also contribute to knowledge and understanding of the determinants that will lead to improvement in job satisfaction, as well as a developed economy (Mohan & Lone, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is anchored on Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a psychological theory that proposes humans are motivated by a hierarchy of needs, starting with basic physiological needs and progressing to higher-level needs, such as safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization.

Moreover, job embeddedness theory, which explores why people stay in their jobs, was introduced by Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, and Erez in 2001. The theory posits that employees are "embedded" in their jobs and

organizations due to a combination of factors, including links (relationships), fit (compatibility), and sacrifices (what they might lose by leaving).

Teachers who are embedded in their schools are more likely to remain in their positions as teaching effectiveness does not depend on the tasks and functions given to the teachers (Magalong & Torreon, 2021), hence, they are still achieve satisfactory rating despite the fact that they are bombarded with designation and responsibility. This theory suggests that teachers are more likely to stay if they have strong connections to their colleagues, the community, and the school's mission. Professional development that fosters these connections and provides opportunities for teachers to feel more integrated into the school culture can improve teacher retention.

Regarding teacher retention, the Range of Affect Theory clarifies that teachers' emotional reactions to working environment and professional development have a significant role in determining the propensity to stay in the field. School administrators can have a positive impact on teachers' emotional experiences and increase retention rates by offering opportunities for meaningful professional development, improving working conditions, and ensuring positive job satisfaction. Put another way, instructors are more likely to remain in their positions if they have positive feelings about their profession, whereas negative feelings lead to discontent and, ultimately, turnover.

Thus, this study would be viable, given that teacher retention is a complex issue; however, the relationship between professional development, working conditions, and job satisfaction provides a framework for understanding how to retain educators in public schools. Furthermore, the results of this study will help the researcher propose an enhancement program that leads to higher teacher retention in public schools, promoting better professional development, working conditions, and job satisfaction among teachers.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to assess professional development and working conditions in relation to teacher retention in the public schools.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the professional development of teachers in terms of thematic knowledge, learning environment, cooperation, educational technology, research base, educational planning, evaluation and development of human resources?
2. What are the working conditions experienced by the teachers in terms of recognition, work itself, opportunities for promotion, professional advancement opportunities, responsibility, good feelings about organization, clarity of mission, relationship with co-workers, effective supervisor, salary and presence of core values?
3. What is the perception of the respondents on the teacher retention in the public schools in terms of compensation, administrative support, working conditions and professional growth?
4. Is there a significant correlation between teacher retention in public schools and the
 - 4.1 professional development, and
 - 4.2 working conditions?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design

This study employed descriptive-documentary and survey methods, intended to provide the needed data to determine the relationship between teacher retention in public schools, professional development, working conditions, and job satisfaction.

Professional Development

This research utilized instruments adapted from several related studies to gather the data. The data for the professional development were gathered through a standardized tool based on Ayyoobi et al. (2016).

Working Condition

A standardized questionnaire was used by Mohan and Lone (2021) to assess the working conditions of the teachers. To measure teacher retention in public schools, a standardized questionnaire from Anog et al. (2024) is used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The teachers were assessed as Highly Developed with a composite mean of 3.52, indicating that they demonstrate strong competencies in the different dimensions of professional development. Among the indicators, Cooperation and Educational Technology both obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.54, ranking first. This suggests that teachers excel in collaborative practices and in utilizing technology to enhance teaching and learning processes. Following closely, Thematic Knowledge, Learning Environment, and Evaluation all garnered a weighted mean of 3.53, ranking fourth, which shows that teachers are highly capable of delivering content knowledge, creating conducive learning environments, and assessing student performance effectively. Educational Planning ranked sixth with a mean of 3.51, while Development of Human Resources followed with a mean of 3.49, indicating that teachers are still highly competent in these areas, but with slightly lower emphasis compared to the top indicators. Lastly, Research Base obtained the lowest mean of 3.46, ranked eighth, suggesting that while teachers are still highly developed, this area remains the least strengthened and may require further enhancement through training, workshops, or research-oriented initiatives.

Table 1. Level of Professional Development of Teachers

Indicators	WM	DI	Rank
2.1 Thematic Knowledge	3.53	Highly Developed	4
2.2 Learning Environment	3.53	Highly Developed	4
2.3 Cooperation	3.54	Highly Developed	1.5
2.4 Educational Technology	3.54	Highly Developed	1.5
2.5 Research Base	3.46	Highly Developed	8
2.6 Educational Planning	3.51	Highly Developed	6
2.7 Evaluation	3.53	Highly Developed	4
2.8 Development of Human Resources	3.49	Highly Developed	7
Composite Mean	3.52	Highly Developed	

Legend:

Rating Scale	Descriptive Value	Interpretation
4	Strongly Agree	Highly Developed

3	Agree	Developed
2	Disagree	Less Developed
1	Strongly Disagree	Not Developed

The results confirm that teachers are well-rounded professionals with high levels of development, particularly in areas such as cooperation and technology integration. However, continued support in research engagement would further elevate their professional growth.

The overall composite mean of 3.48 for Table 2 indicates that teachers generally “Strongly Agree” that their working conditions across various dimensions, such as recognition, job enjoyment, opportunities for growth, relationships with co-workers, supervisory support, and the presence of core values, are optimal. This suggests that the organization provides a supportive and motivating work environment that fosters professional satisfaction and commitment. Although all areas are rated positively, the slight variations in composite means suggest that some aspects, such as salary and the dissemination of promotion-related information, could be further improved. Overall, the high rating reflects a well-balanced and conducive workplace that not only values teachers’ contributions but also supports their professional growth, engagement, and long-term retention.

Table 2 presents the level of job satisfaction among teachers in Candijay District, focusing on their professional fulfillment, interpersonal relationships, autonomy, compensation, recognition, and opportunities for career growth. The data reveal that teachers generally expressed positive views, with weighted means (WM) ranging from 3.42 to 3.54 and a composite mean of 3.47, which falls within the descriptive interpretation of “Strongly Agree” or “Extremely Satisfied.” This overall result suggests that teachers are generally satisfied with their roles and responsibilities within the school system.

The highest-rated items, both with a WM of 3.54, were the statements “Teaching is an interesting job for me” and “I am satisfied with the cooperation I received from the school management team.” These results suggest that teachers find their profession both intellectually stimulating and well-supported by their school administrators. Another aspect that received a high rating was satisfaction with peer relationships, such as the cooperation with workmates and recognition within the community, showing that teachers feel a strong sense of collegiality and social appreciation in their roles.

Table 2. Teachers’ Level of Working Conditions

Indicators	WM	DI	Rank
3.1 Recognition	3.49	Optimal	5.5
3.2 Work Itself	3.51	Optimal	1.5
3.3 Opportunities for Promotion	3.45	Optimal	9.5
3.4 Professional Advancement Opportunities	3.45	Optimal	9.5
3.5 Responsibility	3.47	Optimal	8
3.6 Good Feelings about Organization	3.50	Optimal	3.5
3.7 Clarity of Mission	3.50	Optimal	3.5
3.8 Relationship with Co-workers	3.51	Optimal	1.5
3.9 Effective Supervisor	3.49	Optimal	5.5

3.10 Salary	3.41	Optimal	11
3.11 Presence of Core Values	3.48	Optimal	7
Composite Mean	3.48	Optimal	

Legend:

Rating Scale	Descriptive Value	Interpretation
4	Strongly Agree	Optimal
3	Agree	Satisfactory
2	Disagree	Average
1	Strongly Disagree	Poor

On the other hand, the lowest-rated items, both with a WM of 3.42, were related to financial matters: “The monthly salary is sufficient to meet all important expenses” and “I feel comfortable with my future income.” These ratings suggest that while teachers enjoy their work and feel respected, they are less confident about the sufficiency and stability of their income. Other moderately rated aspects include satisfaction with promotion opportunities and rewards for good performance, which may indicate a need for clearer systems of recognition and professional mobility.

In conclusion, teachers in Candijay District exhibit a high level of job satisfaction, especially in terms of the intrinsic value of teaching, supportive management, and professional relationships. However, consistent with findings in working conditions, salary and career advancement remain areas of concern. Addressing these factors could help strengthen long-term teacher morale and retention.

Table 3. Level of Teacher Retention in Public Schools

	WM	DI	Rank
5.1 COMPENSATION	3.44	Very High	3
5.2 ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	3.46	Very High	2
5.3 WORKING CONDITIONS	3.47	Very High	1
5.4 PROFESSIONAL GROWTH	3.43	Very High	4
Composite Mean	3.45	Very High	

Legend:

Rating Scale	Descriptive Value	Interpretation
4	Strongly Agree	Very High
3	Agree	High
2	Disagree	Moderate
1	Strongly Disagree	Low

Table 3 summarizes the level of teacher retention in public schools across four key dimensions: compensation, administrative support, working conditions, and professional growth. All areas received a descriptive interpretation of “Strongly Agree,” indicating that teachers generally view these factors as favorable to their retention. The highest composite score was for working conditions (WM = 3.47), suggesting that a positive school culture, supportive policies, and adequate teaching resources are the strongest drivers for teachers to remain in their positions. This was followed by administrative support (WM = 3.46), which underscores the importance of supportive leadership, recognition, and inclusive decision-making. Compensation ranked third (WM = 3.44), indicating that while teachers are generally satisfied with pay and benefits, these factors are less influential compared to environmental and leadership factors. The lowest rating, though still high, was for professional growth (WM = 3.43), indicating that while opportunities for training and development are valued, they may need further enhancement to maximize their impact on retention.

In conclusion, the overall composite mean of 3.45, interpreted as “Strongly Agree,” shows that teachers perceive the school environment, leadership support, compensation, and professional development opportunities as generally favorable. Prioritizing continuous improvements, especially in professional growth and compensation, could further strengthen retention and sustain long-term teacher commitment.

Table 4.1. Test of Relationship Between the Teacher Retention and Teachers’ Professional Development

Variables		r	df	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Teacher Retention	Professional Development of Teachers	0.534	184	<.001	Significant	Reject H ₀

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.1 presents the test of the relationship between teacher retention and teachers’ professional development among 386 participants. The Pearson correlation coefficient revealed a moderate positive relationship between teacher retention strategies and the professional development of teachers, $r(184) = 0.534$, $p < .001$. This result is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), indicating that as teacher retention strategies improve, the professional development of teachers also tends to increase. The significant positive relationship between teacher retention strategies and teachers’ professional development suggests that well-designed retention strategies can directly contribute to the growth and development of teachers.

Table 4.2. Test of Relationship Between the Teacher Retention and Teachers’ Working Conditions

Variables		r	df	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Teacher Retention	Teachers’ Working Conditions	0.617	184	<.001	Significant	Reject H ₀

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4.2 shows the results of the correlation test between teacher retention strategies and teachers’ working conditions among 386 respondents. The analysis revealed a strong positive correlation, $r(184) = 0.617$, $p < .001$. This correlation is statistically significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), indicating that enhanced teacher retention strategies are associated with better working conditions for teachers. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, supporting a significant relationship between the two variables. This suggests further that when schools implement effective retention practices, teachers are more likely to experience improved working conditions.

CONCLUSION

According to the study, the public-school teachers exhibited a very advanced level of professional development across all domains. The positive feedback on pay, administrative assistance, working conditions, and professional development indicates a very high factors on the retention of teachers. Additionally, professional development and working conditions all have a positive impact on teacher retention. These results demonstrate that high levels of satisfaction, ongoing professional development, and supportive environments are important factors in maintaining teacher retention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Department of Education may consider providing differentiated learning opportunities tailored to teachers' needs and career stages.
2. The school may support in providing avenues for teachers to share feedback and participate in decision-making processes.
3. The administrators may help in ensuring adequate teaching resources, manageable workloads, and a collaborative school culture to sustain optimal working conditions.
4. Since working conditions have the strongest link to retention, the school may prioritize initiatives that enhance the teaching environment.
5. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct related studies to help and enhance teacher retention in public schools and the conditions related to it.

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