

Lived experiences of teachers who have undergone attrition in the new normal at a private school

¹Ella Mae V. Salipot & ²Marc Lester F. Quintana

Abstract

Teacher attrition presents a pressing issue for educational institutions, particularly in the new normal. This study delves into the lived experiences of teachers who faced attrition in a private school in Laguna, Philippines, aiming to understand the reasons behind their decision to leave the profession. Through a qualitative phenomenological approach, specifically, transcendental phenomenology, involving key informant interviews with seven former teachers, recurring themes were identified through thematic analysis. Three major themes emerged: (1) Balancing personal and professional realities, which encompasses managing commitments, coping with job demands, and addressing trauma and mental health challenges; (2) Resources and resilience, highlighting the importance of institutional support, compensation, recognition, and professional growth opportunities; (3) Decision dynamics in navigating attrition, involving personal factors, career aspirations, and reflections on the pandemic's impact. These findings underscore the complexity of challenges teachers face in the new normal. Addressing these challenges necessitates a holistic approach that supports teachers' well-being, provides necessary resources, and acknowledges the multifaceted factors influencing their decisions. By understanding and addressing these dynamics, educational institutions can work towards retaining skilled educators and fostering their growth amidst evolving challenges.

Keywords: *teacher attrition, new normal, private school, Laguna, Philippines*

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1. Introduction

Teacher attrition remains a pressing concern for school leaders and policymakers worldwide (Madigan & Kim, 2021). The aftermath of the pandemic has intensified the challenge of attracting and retaining teachers in schools (Brookings, 2023). Despite the increasing demand for teachers, there is a noticeable decline in the number of educators choosing to remain in the profession. Research indicates that the consequences of teacher attrition can lead to long-term issues if the underlying reasons are not thoroughly examined. Tracking attrition can be challenging, but recent estimates show a doubling of rates, particularly at the primary level (UNESCO, 2023). Similarly, in the field of education, staff retention plays a pivotal role in organizational success (Gozon & Yango, 2023). The teaching profession significantly influences the future of individuals and societies, yet it grapples with concerning attrition rates. Ortan et al. (2021) emphasize that teachers must possess the appropriate mindset and perspective to thrive in twenty-first-century classrooms. The maintenance of a highly motivated and satisfied teaching workforce is indispensable for delivering quality education. Understanding the factors contributing to attrition is paramount to developing effective strategies to enhance teacher retention rates.

Teacher attrition poses a significant challenge in educational institutions worldwide, impacting not only teachers themselves but also the students they instruct and the institutions they serve (Brookings, 2022). In the Philippines, like many other nations, the struggle to find and retain qualified and dedicated educators persists, especially in the post-pandemic era. The issue of why teachers opt to leave their profession is urgent and critical in a country that values education highly. Alarming, between 20% and 50% of new entrants into the teaching profession leave within their first five years (Elyashiv, 2019). Surveys conducted in recent years have revealed alarming trends in teacher attrition. Steiner (2021) found that approximately 25% of teachers expressed intentions to leave their jobs by the end of the 2020–21 school year, surpassing pre-pandemic rates. Similarly, Loewus (2022) reported a significant increase in the percentage of teachers likely to leave teaching within the next two years. Factors contributing to attrition encompass a range of personal, professional, and environmental influences, including workload, professional growth opportunities, administrative support, and organizational culture (Räsänen et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated challenges in the education sector, with schools transitioning to various teaching models and educators facing unprecedented demands (Annamalai et al., 2022). Health concerns added another layer of stress for teachers, potentially exacerbating burnout and increasing turnover rates. Additionally, recent reports indicate a notable

rise in the percentage of teachers planning to leave the profession entirely, highlighting the urgency of addressing attrition (Walker, 2021). Despite efforts to address teacher attrition, global estimates suggest a concerning increase in attrition rates, particularly at the primary level (UNESCO, 2023). Gender disparities in attrition rates also exist, with women comprising a significant majority of teachers and experiencing higher attrition rates compared to men (OECD, 2022). Regional variations in attrition rates further complicate the picture, making it essential to consider contextual factors when examining attrition trends (SIGI 2023 Global Report, 2023; Viac & Fraser, 2020).

In particular, the private school sector faces unique challenges in retaining teachers, including differences in educational philosophies, resource availability, and student demographics (Mora-Ruano et al., 2019). Pay, working conditions, institutional ethos, and personal motivations all influence teachers' decisions to stay or leave the profession (Jones & Kessler, 2020). Understanding these factors is crucial for developing targeted retention strategies and mitigating attrition rates. Against this backdrop, this study aims to explore the lived experiences of teachers who have undergone attrition in a private school setting in Laguna, Philippines. By employing a qualitative phenomenology approach and adopting the Job Demands-Resources Model as a theoretical lens, this research seeks to uncover the nuanced factors influencing attrition decisions and provide valuable insights for educational policymakers, administrators, and practitioners. Through an in-depth exploration of teachers' perspectives, this study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on teacher attrition and inform efforts to promote teacher retention and workforce stability in the education sector.

2. Literature review

2.1. Impact of Teacher Attrition

Teacher attrition significantly impacts students, schools, and districts. Characterized by voluntary departure of educators from the teaching profession, this phenomenon remains a critical concern in education, especially in the post-pandemic context (Shuls & Flores, 2020; Brookings, 2022). High attrition rates present numerous challenges, including increased hiring costs, larger class sizes, and reduced instructional quality. These challenges ultimately affect student learning outcomes and the stability of educational institutions (Sutcher et al., 2019; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Sorensen & Ladd, 2020). Persistent turnover disrupts school operations, undermines efforts to maintain a cohesive and supportive work environment, and perpetuates cycles of instability (Elyashiv, 2019; Sutcher et al., 2019).

2.2. Factors Contributing to Teacher Attrition

Several factors contribute to teacher attrition. One prominent theme is the work environment, where a lack of administrative support, inadequate resources, and poor school climate drive teachers to leave the profession (Kabia, 2022; Cruz, 2021). Job satisfaction also plays a crucial role; issues such as heavy workloads, low pay, and insufficient recognition significantly affect teachers' decisions to stay or leave (Baluyos et al., Worth, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these problems, leading to increased burnout and turnover among educators (Brookings, 2023; Chalkbeat, 2023). Many teachers have sought better career opportunities in other sectors, where they can find more favorable working conditions and higher pay (Dill, 2022).

2.3. Theoretical Lenses

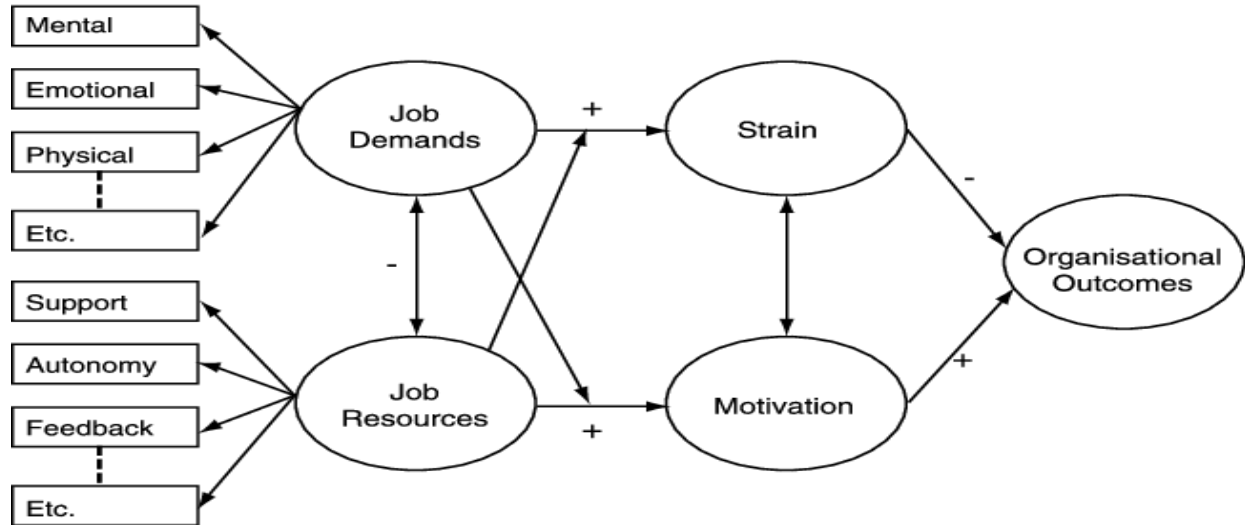
Policy attention has been firmly focused on addressing teacher attrition, with notable media sources highlighting the issue and describing it in terms such as "mass exodus," "in crisis," and "Great Resignation" (Goldhaber & Theobald, 2022). Researchers have used various theoretical lenses, including the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, to analyze the factors influencing teacher attrition and retention (Carroll et al., 2022; Murangi et al., 2022). The JD-R model emphasizes the balance between job demands, which require sustained effort and can lead to burnout, and job resources, which help achieve work goals and mitigate stress (Tummers & Bakker, 2021; Casely-Hayford et al., 2023).

To address teacher attrition, various strategies have been suggested, including improving working conditions, providing professional development, reducing workloads, and offering financial incentives (Balow, 2021). Ensuring that all students receive quality education from highly qualified teachers remains a significant concern, especially in the face of substantial teacher turnover. Policy interventions must be context-specific, considering local and regional issues to effectively increase retention rates (Shuls & Flores, 2020). Despite the insights provided by these studies, gaps remain in the literature. There is a pressing need for further qualitative research, particularly focusing on the Job Demands-Resources Model, to understand the intricacies of teacher attrition. This review underscores the importance of conducting in-depth qualitative studies to explore the lived experiences of teachers who have left the profession, offering a more nuanced perspective on this critical issue in education.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

Figure 1

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model by Bakker & Demerouti (2006)



This JD-R model suggests that job demands, and job resources are two key factors that influence employee well-being and performance (Granziera et al., 2020). Job demands refer to the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of a job that require sustained effort or skills and are associated with certain physiological and psychological costs. Job resources, on the other hand, refer to the physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of a job that are functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands, and are associated with certain physiological and psychological gains (Admiraal & Røberg, 2023).

3. Methodology

The study employed purposive sampling to select participants deliberately based on specific characteristics or experiences relevant to the research topic. A diverse range of experienced teachers who had decided to leave the profession were targeted. Inclusion criteria encompassed former employment in the private school under study, resignation within the new normal period, transition to other fields of work, willingness to share experiences, and varied demographic representation. A sample size of 7 participants was chosen, guided by the concept of saturation, where no new information is obtained from participants.

A qualitative phenomenological approach applying transcendental phenomenology was utilized to delve deeply into the lived experiences of teachers facing attrition. Transcendental phenomenology aims to understand the intrinsic structures of consciousness through the contents of experience transcendent to the structures of consciousness. Key informant interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide validated by three experts and the ethical committee on research. The guide consisted of open-ended questions aiming to explore teachers' experiences, perceptions, and emotions related to attrition.

After obtaining approval from the administration of the specific private school, potential participants were identified, ensuring diversity in age, sex, teaching experience, and educational levels. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, and key informant interviews were conducted face-to-face, recorded with consent, and supplemented with detailed field notes. The recorded interviews were transcribed, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity.

Thematic analysis was conducted using Moustakas's method to explore and understand the lived experiences of teachers facing attrition. The analysis involved familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, writing descriptions, checking consistency, seeking feedback, and finalizing the analysis.

The study adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring participants' rights, anonymity, and confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained, and participants had the freedom to withdraw at any point without consequence. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained through pseudonyms or codes, and data were stored securely. Potential risks were assessed and mitigated, and participants were treated with fairness, respect, and dignity throughout the research process. Transparent and accurate communication of the research purpose, methods, and findings was ensured, acknowledging any limitations or biases.

4. Findings and Discussion

This contains annotated excerpts presenting the collected testimonies of teachers who have undergone attrition in the new normal and a thematic chart revealing the themes that emerged from the qualitative data analysis.

Central Question: What are the firsthand encounters and perspectives of teachers who have undergone attrition in the context of the new normal in terms of job demands, job resources, and attrition decision?

Table 1

Codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of teachers who have undergone attrition in the context of the new normal in terms of job demands – balancing act: personal and professional realities

Coded Response	Number of Interview Occurrences	Participant ID	Exemplar from the Interview
Sub-theme 1. Juggling Personal Life and Professional Commitments			
Personal Life	3	6.2	<i>“You know, ahh... try to at least consider that we are talking about health here... take a rest first, let others handle that for now... so, I hope they would have some consideration for teachers' personal time.”</i>
Student Factor	4	4.4	<i>“It's still bearable even if the salary is small, even when there's no support from the admin, and the attitude is bad and everything, as long as my students... they're like, well... they're the ones I hold on to... it's like they're the ones I cling to”</i>
Working Environment	4	3.5	<i>“It's still bearable even if the salary is small, even when there's no support from the admin, and the attitude is bad and everything, as long as my students... they're like, well... they're the ones I hold on to... it's like they're the ones I cling to”</i>
Work Schedule	5	3.2	<i>“Oh my, job demands, wait, first of all, I don't like the policy in late, they don't want late, and I was always late. Then, second, when I first started, I thought it would be like the government, where you come in at 7 and leave at 4 or 5. So I went home at 5 for a week and then there was a meeting. I was like, what? They said to the new ones, you're not in public school, you don't get to leave at 5 just because you clock in at 7. How was I supposed to know? I was getting ready to leave at 5.”</i>

In examining the experiences of teachers who have undergone attrition in the new normal under the job demands category, multifaceted challenges that educators face in balancing their personal and professional spheres unfold. Teachers express the need for consideration towards their health and personal time, urging administrators to acknowledge the importance of rest and a balanced lifestyle. Despite challenges, the connection with students serves as a source of strength for teachers, highlighting the importance of nurturing relationships. Colleagues provide emotional support, serving as friends who offer encouragement during challenging times. Challenges with

adapting to work schedules lead to miscommunication and heightened stress among educators. These findings reveal the intricate challenges teachers face in harmonizing personal and professional commitments, necessitating a holistic approach to support their well-being.

Table 2

Codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of teachers who have undergone attrition in the context of the new normal in terms of job demands – balancing act: personal and professional realities

Coded Response	Number of Interview Occurrences	Participant ID	Exemplar from the Interview
Sub-theme 2. Coping with Evolving Job Demands			
Using Technology and Shifting to Distance Learning	12	3.2	<p><i>“There was a big impact with technology because before, I could personally handle the student. The child was used to different kinds of engagement at school, playing, etc. But when we switched to online, the student wasn’t paying attention anymore. It was so difficult to tell the student, ‘Listen, look at your teacher’. I felt like I became the student, listening, writing things down, then discussing it with the child. If the child listens, it’s different because they’re splitting the screen, watching videos while listening to the teacher, so there’s no focus. And when I’m absent, the student doesn’t listen at all, the camera is off, and they don’t even open it from 1-4. So it’s really difficult online. It’s much better when you have face-to-face interaction with the child.”</i></p>
Extra Works	11	2.2	<p><i>“Every Friday, would you really be motivated to clean if, after cleaning the classroom, they tell you, ‘teacher, please clean again... teacher, the materials aren’t arranged properly.’ Then after that, they tell you to come back on Saturday to clean again. I had to go back on Saturday to clean. Would I still be motivated? It felt like I was going to school just to vacuum, always vacuuming. I’d even make sure they heard me vacuuming in the office.”</i></p>
Class Preparations	4	3.5	<p><i>“During the New Normal, it was really difficult, especially with making so many modules. At that time, I was assigned to MAPEH (Music, Arts, PE, Health), so I had to make four modules per, per, per week. It got to the point where I was making 42 modules per week, and it was really tough.”</i></p>
Heavy Workloads	12	4.4	<p><i>“The workloads were overwhelming, like you can’t even imagine. I said to myself, it’s okay if I have to teach a lot of sections, like before. But this was different. They gave me six different subjects and levels. Each subject is different, so there’s a lot of preparation. And aside from that, we had to input grades—first in Excel, then the school’s system—I can’t remember the name exactly, but we had to do all that before putting it in the transcript.”</i></p>

This highlights the complexities of managing personal and professional responsibilities amidst technological shifts, increased workload, and the demands of distance learning. Transitioning to distance learning adds another layer of complexity, requiring teachers to navigate virtual environments while maintaining engagement and effectiveness. Educators find themselves undertaking additional tasks beyond traditional teaching responsibilities, contributing to an already heavy workload. Effective teaching requires thorough preparation, especially in the context of shifting instructional modalities, demanding time and energy from educators. The culmination of technological demands, extra work, and class preparations results in heavy workloads for educators, and balancing teaching responsibilities with personal commitments becomes increasingly challenging. These findings underscore the need for adequate support and resources to help educators cope with evolving job demands effectively.

Table 3

Codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of teachers who have undergone attrition in the context of the new normal in terms of job demands – balancing act: personal and professional realities

Coded Response	Number of Interview Occurrences	Participant ID	Exemplar from the Interview
Sub-theme 3. Shifting Perspectives: The Role of Trauma and Mental Health			
Traumatic Experience	3	4.4	<i>"I'm not completely closing the door on teaching. But not for now, because... teaching really became traumatic for me. It's like... I can't... even after years, I still can't bring myself... to go back, especially now when I have a much lighter workload"</i>
Extra Works	11	2.2	<i>"Because, ahhh, it was really hard... it was really hard at that time, really. I had never broken down before in anything related to studies or academics, never. As long as I could do it, I would push through, because when I love what I'm doing, I'll really do it. But during that time, I started questioning whether I really wanted it, because why couldn't I handle it anymore, right? That's it."</i>

This delves into how traumatic experiences and mental health challenges can disrupt the balance between personal and professional realities. Traumatic experiences profoundly affect individuals, disrupting their balance between personal and professional spheres. Mental health plays a pivotal role in individuals' capacity to navigate the balancing act between personal and

professional realities. These findings underscore the importance of addressing trauma and mental health challenges to support educators in maintaining a healthy work-life balance. The results highlight the multifaceted challenges faced by educators in balancing personal and professional responsibilities amidst the evolving landscape of the new normal. From juggling personal life and professional commitments to coping with evolving job demands and shifting perspectives on trauma and mental health, teachers encounter a myriad of challenges that impact their well-being and attrition decisions. These findings underscore the importance of implementing targeted interventions and providing adequate support and resources to help educators navigate the complexities of their profession effectively.

Table 4

Codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of teachers who have undergone attrition in the context of the new normal in terms of job resources – resources and resilience: nurturing a supportive environment

Coded Response	Number of Interview Occurrences	Participant ID	Exemplar from the Interview
Sub-theme 1. Institutional Support and Leadership Practices			
School Administration	11	4.2	<i>“The admin, the admin is really a big factor, because, somehow, if... if the work is hard, but you get support, you get enough support systems from the administration, somehow, it's manageable. But if they themselves—when they see that we're doing our best, and they don't acknowledge it, or they're the ones who bring you down—during that time, we were always the ones volunteering or the ones always being assigned to different things like the newspaper, the exercises, and they still didn't appreciate that.”</i>
Concern for Teachers	7	5.4	<i>“Then, there was this time when I was hospitalized, and they were like, 'Teacher, where's your lesson plan?' When I was in the hospital, I cried to my mom because... my mom was like, 'What happened to you?' Then Cher ***** called, 'Teacher, how are you? Where's your stuff?' Right? Insensitive. When I had COVID, I didn't get anything from them, not even a single peso.”</i>
Peer Support	4	6.2	<i>“There were collaborative opportunities with workmates, yes. A good thing about working with my colleagues is that we were on the same wavelength. We're on the same page, like... when we had a great project, we agreed on that part. And it was easy to talk to them, if one teacher was okay with it, we implemented it. I'm thankful because we were all together at that time.”</i>

Institutional support and leadership practices play a crucial role in fostering resilience and nurturing a supportive environment for teachers. Effective leadership and support from school

administrators significantly influence the working environment for teachers, impacting their morale and job satisfaction. Acknowledging teachers' efforts and providing adequate support systems are essential for creating a positive organizational climate. Demonstrating genuine concern for teachers' well-being, especially during challenging times such as illness or emergencies, is crucial for fostering a supportive environment. Compassionate leadership enhances trust and strengthens the bond between administrators and teachers. Collaborative work environments where colleagues offer support, understanding, and assistance create a sense of belonging and solidarity among educators. Peer support networks contribute to resilience by providing emotional and practical assistance. These findings underscore the significance of institutional support and leadership practices in mitigating job demands and promoting teacher well-being.

Table 5

Codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of teachers who have undergone attrition in the context of the new normal in terms of job resources – resources and resilience: nurturing a supportive environment

Coded Response	Number of Interview Occurrences	Participant ID	Exemplar from the Interview
Sub-theme 2. Compensation and Recognition			
Salary and other Financial Concerns	13	4.4	<i>“Then, of course, salary is a factor, right? Because even if you say teaching is your passion, you still need money. There was a time when we were only getting paid 1k or a little more. What can we do with just 1k, right? And I can’t forget that time when they didn’t even want to give us our 1k salary because we hadn’t finished our clearance. It’s payday, doesn’t matter if the clearance isn’t done or whatever—salary is salary. Just give us our pay because it’s payday today...”</i>
Health and other Basic Benefits	3	2.2	<i>“I had an accident... I had an accident before, the vehicle we were in crashed, and I hit my head. So I was asking for help to reimburse my expenses with social security, but I didn’t get anything. I asked for help so many times, went back and forth, spent money on fares of course. In the end, I got nothing. If you were going to help me, you should have really helped me all the way.”</i>

Performance Appraisal	4	7.4	<p><i>“I really appreciate the help of our mentor and the administration... in school. Ahm, they support me and help me in all aspects of teaching, like communication skills... everything, so every aspect of teaching; however, I feel that I deserve more than... more than that, since I have already served almost a decade in that particular school. Like, ahm... a little appreciation would mean a lot to me.”</i></p>
Incentives and Bonuses	2	1.4	<p><i>“Here, there are quarterly incentives aside from the yearly ones, real weekends off, and then I have a fixed two paid leaves... I'm salaried, so if I work on a holiday, I get additional leave, and I can save up my leaves and use them all at once. The regular leave is 24 paid leaves in a year, but holidays don't count, so it adds up, and I can use them all at once. In the school, you only enjoy 3 days after three years. And when there's a storm, haha, why do they deduct from my pay? I experienced that too. Was that my fault? Haha, and teachers get paid monthly, either mid-month or something...”</i></p>

Compensation and recognition strategies are vital for nurturing a supportive environment and enhancing teacher morale. Fair compensation is essential for ensuring teachers feel valued and appreciated for their work. Inadequate salary can lead to dissatisfaction and financial stress, impacting teacher well-being and job performance. Access to health benefits, including medical insurance and reimbursement for medical expenses, is crucial for supporting teachers' physical and mental well-being. Providing comprehensive health benefits demonstrates an organization's commitment to prioritizing employee welfare. Effective performance appraisal systems recognize teachers' contributions and provide constructive feedback for growth and development. Appreciating teachers' efforts and acknowledging their tenure within the institution fosters a culture of recognition and appreciation. Offering incentives and bonuses motivates teachers and reinforces desired behaviors and outcomes. Additional perks such as paid leaves and flexible work arrangements contribute to work-life balance and job satisfaction.

Table 6

Codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of teachers who have undergone attrition in the context of the new normal in terms of job resources – resources and resilience: nurturing a supportive environment

Coded Response	Number of Interview Occurrences	Participant ID	Exemplar from the Interview
Sub-theme 3. Professional Growth and Adaptability			
Professional Development Opportunities	11	6.2	<i>"The main way of adapting through professional opportunities was through webinars because face-to-face was not allowed... so, webinars. Well, at least, the webinars were a big help."</i>
Provision for Teaching Materials	3	2.2	<i>"During that time, even though we were staying at the school, we were also limited in materials because we weren't allowed to just take the books, even though we were already there. We couldn't just, like, if I needed something, I had to... unlike later on, maybe after a few months when the owner came back. Because then, they would say, 'Why don't we have this? Give this out, provide that.' It was only during that time that the resources became accessible to us. It was difficult, let's say, for a subject, like for me in MAPEH, there were... there were some... some subjects or topics that were hard to find in the book... that let's say should follow the DepEd curriculum guide, but the topic wasn't in the book, so I had to search for many books. And our type of resources were manual, so they weren't really accessible at first."</i>

Fostering professional growth and adaptability among educators is essential for navigating the challenges of the new normal. Providing avenues for ongoing professional development, such as webinars and training programs, equips teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to changing educational landscapes. Investing in professional growth demonstrates an organization's commitment to supporting its employees' continuous learning and improvement. Ensuring educators have access to adequate teaching materials is essential for effective instruction. Access to textbooks, resources, and curriculum guides enables teachers to deliver comprehensive lessons aligned with educational standards, fostering student learning and engagement. By prioritizing professional growth and providing necessary resources, institutions can empower educators to navigate the complexities of the new normal effectively.

The results highlight the importance of institutional support, compensation and recognition, and professional growth opportunities in nurturing a supportive environment for

teachers amidst the challenges of the new normal. Effective leadership practices, fair compensation, access to health benefits, and opportunities for professional development contribute to teacher well-being, job satisfaction, and retention. By addressing these key areas, educational institutions can create a positive work environment conducive to teacher resilience and success. Moreover, aligning these practices with theoretical frameworks such as the Job Demands-Resources (JDR) model provides a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teacher experiences and outcomes. Overall, investing in supportive practices and resources is essential for fostering a resilient and adaptable teaching workforce capable of meeting the evolving demands of education in the new normal.

Table 7

Codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of teachers who have undergone attrition in the context of the new normal in terms of attrition decision – decision dynamics: navigating attrition in the new normal

Coded Response	Number of Interview Occurrences	Participant ID	Exemplar from the Interview
Sub-theme 1. Personal Factors and Evolving Motivations			
Personal Reasons	11	2.2	<i>“Well, at the time, my departure was rather easy because I was about 8 months pregnant, maybe 7 months at the time, because it was February, March, April, and it was becoming hard for me to travel. Of course, from Alaminos to the school, it was really difficult, and the elders would say it's really risky to travel when you're pregnant, especially when you're already 7 months along.”</i>
Change of Heart	7	4.2	<i>“For me, as a person, even back in college, my classmates knew that as long as I could handle it, I would push through. Like, yeah, just keep going. I wasn't someone who would easily give up, especially compared to my classmates in college. But when I started working there, everything was tested—everything, really. Sometimes, I couldn't even think about how I got through the challenges.”</i>
Loss of Motivation to Work	2	2.4	<i>“Even though they really needed help, I just didn't feel the excitement to go to work anymore. I didn't want to go. It's because of what the administration was showing, you know? The work... it wasn't that healthy anymore. Let's just say it had become toxic.”</i>

The decision dynamics behind attrition in the new normal are influenced by personal factors and evolving motivations. Employees often cite personal reasons such as pregnancy or family responsibilities as significant factors in their decision to leave a job. Balancing work commitments with personal obligations can become increasingly challenging, leading individuals

to reconsider their employment situation. A change of heart refers to a shift in attitudes or priorities that prompts individuals to reassess their current employment situation. Factors such as job satisfaction, organizational culture, and career trajectory play a role in shaping employees' perceptions and decisions regarding their work. Declining engagement, enthusiasm, and commitment to the job can signal a loss of motivation among employees. Toxic work environments, lack of recognition, and job dissatisfaction contribute to diminished morale and productivity, prompting individuals to consider alternative employment options.

Through the lens of the Job Demands-Resources (JDR) model, personal factors such as family obligations and health concerns act as demanding factors influencing attrition decisions, while the evolving nature of work itself can lead to a change of heart. Addressing these factors requires organizations to prioritize employee well-being and create supportive work environments conducive to motivation and engagement.

Table 8

Codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of teachers who have undergone attrition in the context of the new normal in terms of attrition decision – decision dynamics: navigating attrition in the new normal

Coded Response	Number of Interview Occurrences	Participant ID	Exemplar from the Interview
Sub-theme 2. Career Prospects and Aspirations			
New Work Environment	3	4.4	<i>"It's really different, the feeling when you're being paid well but you're not tired. It's like you're not responsible for other people's lives, you're only thinking about yourself. Because when you're a teacher, you think about your students, and then you bring your work home with you. ..."</i>
Going Back to the Profession but Not the Same Institution	2	1.4	<i>"That's why I said earlier that I miss it, but going back full-time, probably not, maybe part-time. Or if I return to teaching, maybe abroad because of the compensation... because, you know, with what you're experiencing now compared to before, if your goal is higher or you need to save, probably not at the same level of institution, maybe higher. I'm not sure if universities have the same pay."</i>

Career prospects and aspirations play a significant role in shaping employees' decisions regarding attrition in the new normal. The transition to a new work environment offers

opportunities for adaptability, improved work-life balance, and novel professional experiences. Employees may seek environments that provide greater autonomy, flexibility, and financial stability, influencing their decision to explore alternative career paths. While individuals may consider returning to their profession, they may opt for different institutions or roles that offer enhanced career prospects and align better with their aspirations. Factors such as compensation, organizational culture, and growth opportunities influence employees' decisions regarding their career trajectories.

Within the JDR Model framework, transitioning to a new work environment can provide employees with additional resources such as flexibility and autonomy, contributing to overall well-being. However, changing institutions may introduce challenges related to adapting to new cultures and leadership styles, highlighting the importance of considering both demands and resources in attrition decisions.

Table 9

Codes and annotated exemplars on the experiences of teachers who have undergone attrition in the context of the new normal in terms of attrition decision – decision dynamics: navigating attrition in the new normal

Coded Response	Number of Interview Occurrences	Participant ID	Exemplar from the Interview
Sub-theme 3. Reflecting on the Pandemic: A Catalyst for Change			
Pandemic as a sign to leave the institution	2	3.5	<i>“When the pandemic happened, generally speaking, when the pandemic hit, it was my chance to leave. Because we were supposed to sign another contract, so if the pandemic hadn't occurred, we might still be there today. But the pandemic happened, and it was... a chance.”</i>

The pandemic has acted as a catalyst for change, prompting individuals to reconsider their alignment with their current institutions. Heightened stress and uncertainty during the pandemic have led many educators to question their connection to their current institutions. Factors such as inadequate support, ineffective leadership, and organizational responses to crises influence individuals' decisions to seek opportunities elsewhere.

Applying the JDR Model reveals how increased job demands and decreased resources during the pandemic contribute to burnout and diminished job satisfaction among educators.

Addressing these challenges requires institutions to prioritize support, recognition, and well-being initiatives to sustain employee engagement and retention during times of crisis.

Table 10

Description of the theme balancing act: personal and professional realities and its sub-themes

Themes	Description
Major Theme:	
1. Balancing Act: Personal and Professional Realities	This theme explores the intricate balance that teachers must maintain between their personal lives and the professional commitments demanded by the teaching profession.
Sub-themes:	This subtheme explores how teachers navigate and balance their personal life responsibilities alongside the demands of their teaching profession. It provides insights into the challenges they face in managing both aspects of their lives.
1.1 Juggling Personal Life and Professional Commitments	
1.2 Coping with Evolving Job Demands	This subtheme delves into the impact of high expectations, heavy workloads, and changes in the work environment on teachers. It seeks to understand how teachers cope with these evolving job demands and adapt to the dynamic nature of their roles.
1.3 Shifting Perspectives: The Role of Trauma and Mental Health	Focused on the psychological aspect, this subtheme explores the influence of traumatic experiences and mental health on teachers' perspectives and decisions. It aims to uncover the emotional toll of such experiences and their implications for the teaching profession.

The theme of "Balancing Act" encapsulates the struggle teachers face in harmonizing personal and professional obligations. Sub-themes such as "Juggling Personal Life and Professional Commitments" underscore the challenges of maintaining work-life balance, with participants expressing the need for personal time and consideration. Additionally, "Coping with

Evolving Job Demands" highlights the impact of high expectations and heavy workloads on teachers' well-being, emphasizing the need for moments of respite. Furthermore, "Shifting Perspectives: The Role of Trauma and Mental Health" delves into the emotional toll of traumatic experiences on teachers, emphasizing the importance of addressing mental health in the profession. The discussion emphasizes the importance of recognizing and addressing the intricate challenges teachers face in balancing personal and professional responsibilities. Strategies to support teachers in managing work-life balance, coping with job demands, and addressing mental health concerns are essential for enhancing teacher well-being and retention.

Table 11

Description of the theme resources and resilience: nurturing a supportive environment and its sub-themes

Themes	Description
Major Theme	
2. Resources and Resilience: Nurturing a Supportive Environment	This theme centers on the resources and supportive elements that contribute to teachers' resilience in their professional roles.
Sub-theme	
2.1 Institutional Support and Leadership Practices	Investigating the impact of school administration, peer support, and institutional practices in creating a supportive environment for teachers. It aims to understand how these factors contribute to teachers' resilience and job satisfaction.
2.2 Compensation and Recognition	This subtheme focuses on the influence of incentives, bonuses, and performance appraisals on teachers' motivation and their perception of their value within the institution. It explores how these factors contribute to a sense of recognition and satisfaction.
2.3 Professional Growth and Adaptability	Examining the role of teaching resources, professional development opportunities, and other support mechanisms in enhancing teachers' adaptability to new teaching modalities. It seeks to understand how these resources contribute to their professional growth.

The theme of "Resources and Resilience" highlights the pivotal role of institutional support, compensation, and professional growth opportunities in fostering teacher resilience. Sub-themes such as "Institutional Support and Leadership Practices" underscore the importance of genuine concern from administration and supportive practices in creating a nurturing work environment. Additionally, "Compensation and Recognition" elucidates the significance of tangible expressions of appreciation in enhancing job satisfaction and well-being. Moreover, "Professional Growth and Adaptability" emphasizes the importance of ongoing professional development in enabling teachers to adapt to new teaching modalities.

The discussion underscores the importance of investing in resources and creating a supportive environment to enhance teacher resilience and satisfaction. Strategies such as providing adequate support, recognizing teachers' contributions, and offering professional development opportunities are crucial for nurturing a resilient teaching workforce.

Table 12

Description of the theme decision dynamics: navigating attrition in the new normal and its sub-themes.

Themes	Description
Major Theme	
3. Decision Dynamics: Navigating Attrition in the New Normal	This theme delves into the decision-making processes that teachers undergo when considering attrition, particularly in the context of the New Normal.
Sub-theme	
3.1 Personal Factors and Evolving Motivations	This subtheme explores the personal factors, student influences, and internal motivations that influence teachers' decisions, including changes of heart and personal reasons. It aims to understand the intricate web of influences on attrition decisions.
3.2 Career Prospects and Aspirations	Investigating how future professional prospects, better offers, and considerations for returning to the profession impact teachers' decisions regarding attrition. It aims to provide insights into the external factors shaping their career trajectories.
3.3 Reflecting on the Pandemic: A Catalyst for Change	Understanding the role of the pandemic as a decisive factor prompting teachers to reconsider their institutional affiliations. This subtheme explores how the unique circumstances brought about by the pandemic have influenced teachers' reflections on their careers and decisions to stay or leave.

The theme of "Decision Dynamics" explores the multifaceted factors influencing teachers' attrition decisions, particularly in the context of the new normal. Sub-themes such as "Personal Factors and Evolving Motivations" highlight the dynamic nature of personal priorities and life circumstances that influence attrition decisions. Additionally, "Career Prospects and Aspirations" underscores the role of future professional prospects and opportunities in shaping career trajectories. Furthermore, "Reflecting on the Pandemic" elucidates the transformative impact of the pandemic on teachers' career reflections and decisions.

The discussion emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing the diverse factors influencing attrition decisions. Strategies such as personalized support mechanisms, robust career development opportunities, and adaptive policies are essential for mitigating attrition and fostering a sustainable teaching workforce in the new normal.

The essence of the lived experiences of teachers who have undergone attrition serves as a foundation for developing a strategic plan to prevent attrition among educators. The themes highlight the importance of recognizing and addressing the challenges, supporting teachers, and understanding the multifaceted factors influencing attrition decisions. By prioritizing work-life balance, fostering a supportive environment, and addressing evolving needs, the strategic plan aims to cultivate a resilient and fulfilled teaching workforce capable of navigating the challenges of the new normal.

5. Conclusion

This research has explored the multifaceted experiences of teachers facing attrition in the new normal, with a focus on balancing personal and professional life, the necessity of a supportive work environment, and the complexity of decision-making processes. The main argument underscores the critical interplay between job demands and resources, highlighting the need for systemic support to mitigate stress and enhance job satisfaction among teachers.

Key conclusions include the identification of significant stressors such as evolving job demands and mental health challenges, which are balanced by the necessity for institutional support and professional growth opportunities. Recommendations emphasize the implementation of flexible work policies, continuous learning initiatives, mental health programs, and recognition systems to create a more supportive and resilient educational environment.

Implications for further research involve a deeper investigation into specific support mechanisms that can be tailored to different educational settings, as well as longitudinal studies to

track the effectiveness of implemented strategies over time. Additionally, exploring the impact of technological advancements and remote learning on teacher attrition could provide valuable insights for future educational policies.

While this research has addressed many critical aspects of teacher attrition, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The study's scope was confined to specific region and educational levels, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the rapidly changing educational landscape due to the pandemic necessitates ongoing research to adapt to new challenges as they arise. Overall, this research provides a foundational understanding of the factors influencing teacher attrition and offers actionable recommendations to support educators, ultimately aiming to enhance the stability and quality of the teaching workforce.

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