

Teacher Empowerment, Job Satisfaction and Retention

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Abstract

This study examined the relationships among teacher empowerment, job satisfaction, and retention among 117 secondary school teachers from 10 private sectarian schools belonging to the first district of the Bohol Association of Catholic Schools (BACS), Diocese of Tagbilaran, Bohol, Philippines. Anchored on the participative philosophy of Short and Rinehart, Herzberg's two-factor theory, and Sher's societal model of teacher retention, the study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. Data were collected using the School Participant Empowerment Scale, Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, and a researcher-developed retention questionnaire. Frequency counts, percentages, weighted means, and Pearson product-moment correlation were used for data analysis. Findings revealed generally favorable levels of teacher empowerment ($M = 3.72$) and job satisfaction ($M = 3.82$). Professional status ($M = 4.04$) and responsibility ($M = 4.33$) received the highest ratings, while decision making ($M = 3.28$) and pay ($M = 3.23$) emerged as areas requiring improvement. Retention was associated with personal career choice, professional preparation, supportive administrative relationships, and reasonable compensation. Significant positive relationships were established between teacher empowerment and job satisfaction ($r = 0.495$) and between teacher empowerment and retention ($r = 0.436$). The study concludes that empowering institutional environments are associated with greater professional satisfaction and teacher retention. It recommends strengthening participatory decision making, professional development, stakeholder collaboration, and teacher empowerment initiatives. The findings align with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by addressing teacher development, workplace conditions, and employment stability. The study contributes to institutional sustainability by providing evidence to guide supportive school governance, workforce stability, and continuity in educational service delivery.

Keywords: Bohol Association of Catholic Schools; Job Satisfaction; Professional Development; School Governance; Teacher Empowerment; Teacher Retention; Working Conditions

1. Introduction

Teacher empowerment, job satisfaction, and retention are important factors influencing educational quality, organizational effectiveness, and institutional stability. In the Philippines, educational reforms emphasize developing learners equipped with 21st-century competencies. Achieving these objectives requires empowered teachers, supportive leadership, and favorable working conditions. This study examines the relationships among teacher empowerment, job satisfaction, and retention among 117 secondary school teachers from private sectarian schools belonging to the first district of the Bohol Association of Catholic Schools (BACS) in the Diocese of Tagbilaran, Bohol. The findings aim to provide a basis for institutional improvement measures that strengthen teacher development, professional satisfaction, and retention.

Educational quality depends on teachers' professional competence, motivation, and commitment. Addressing these concerns requires institutional reforms that promote teacher participation and professional development. Teacher empowerment enables educators to exercise professional judgment, participate in decision making, and contribute to school improvement. School administrators therefore play an important role in establishing supportive environments that encourage teacher development, satisfaction, and continued employment.

Teacher empowerment involves professional growth, self-efficacy, decision making, status, autonomy, and impact. Establishing an empowering school environment requires collaboration, trust, and shared responsibility among school stakeholders (Short & Greer, 1997). These factors emphasize the importance of examining empowerment, satisfaction, and retention as interconnected organizational factors.

Republic Act No. 9155, or the Governance of Basic Education Act of 2001, emphasizes instructional leadership, educational accountability, and school management. Similarly, Article XIV of the 1987 Philippine Constitution recognizes the right to quality education and the importance of supporting qualified teachers through appropriate remuneration and benefits. School leadership and employment conditions are important considerations in teacher retention. Within BACS, examining these factors among 117 secondary school teachers may provide institution-specific information for improving teacher empowerment, job satisfaction, and retention.

The study is anchored on the participative philosophy of Short and Rinehart, Herzberg's two-factor theory of job satisfaction, and Sher's societal model of teacher retention. The School Participant Empowerment Scale developed by Short and Rinehart (1992) identifies six dimensions: professional growth, self-efficacy, decision making, status, autonomy, and impact. These dimensions describe teachers' opportunities for professional development, instructional confidence, organizational participation, recognition, professional independence, and institutional influence. Participative management emphasizes teacher involvement in decisions affecting school effectiveness (Maeroff, 1988; Lightfoot, 1986). Herzberg's two-factor theory distinguishes motivators, including achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, and professional growth, from hygiene factors such as supervision, compensation, working conditions, and job security. Accordingly, the study examines job satisfaction through nine dimensions: supervision, colleagues, working conditions, pay, responsibility, work itself, advancement, security, and recognition. Sher's (1983) societal model identifies three retention factors: characteristics, conditions, and compensation. Characteristics involve teachers' backgrounds and professional preparation; conditions concern school and environmental circumstances; and compensation includes salary, benefits, and employment opportunities.

The study addresses these relationships specifically among teachers in the selected private sectarian secondary schools of BACS. This study addresses that contextual gap by assessing teachers' empowerment across six dimensions, job satisfaction across nine dimensions, and retention through characteristics, conditions, and compensation. It further determines whether significant relationships exist between empowerment and job satisfaction and between empowerment and retention. The study hypothesizes that no significant relationships exist among these variables. Its findings will serve as a basis for proposing measures to improve teacher development, workplace satisfaction, and institutional retention.

Recent research provides contemporary context for interpreting the study's earlier survey findings. Teacher empowerment, professional autonomy, and distributed leadership have been associated with job satisfaction (Borrego et al., 2023; Fradkin-Hayslip, 2021; Liu et al., 2021; Peng et al., 2022; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021). Reviews and empirical studies further connect satisfaction, workplace conditions, school leadership, and professional well-being with teacher retention or turnover intentions (Baker et al., 2022; Gillani et al., 2022; Jerrim, 2024; Li & Yao, 2022; Madigan & Kim, 2021; Wartenberg et al., 2023). International reports similarly emphasize teacher development, working conditions, and retention as educational policy priorities (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2025; UNESCO & International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2024). These later sources provide context and do not represent evidence available during the 2013 data collection.

The study aligns with SDG 4 (Quality Education) by examining teacher empowerment, professional development, and institutional conditions that may contribute to effective teaching and educational continuity. It also supports SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) through its focus on workplace satisfaction, professional recognition, compensation, employment security, and teacher retention. Understanding these factors may guide school policies that promote quality education and supportive employment conditions.

The study contributes to educational sustainability by examining factors associated with teacher effectiveness, professional development, and instructional continuity. Its institutional relevance lies in identifying organizational conditions that may strengthen leadership, teacher participation, workplace satisfaction, and workforce stability. From a socioeconomic perspective, the study addresses employment conditions, compensation, and professional opportunities that influence teacher retention. Its findings may assist BACS administrators in developing

evidence-based improvement measures that promote teacher empowerment, job satisfaction, and continued employment, thereby supporting sustainable educational management and institutional effectiveness.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational method to determine the relationships among teacher empowerment, job satisfaction, and retention based on teachers' perceptions and professional experiences. Sociodemographic information was also collected to describe the respondents' characteristics. Data were obtained using the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES), Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ), and a researcher-developed retention questionnaire.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in 10 private sectarian secondary schools belonging to the first district of BACS in the Diocese of Tagbilaran, Bohol. These schools were located in Cortes, Maribojoc, Loon, Balilihan, Poblacion Catigbian, Baang Catigbian, Panglao, Baclayon, Antiquera, and Tubigon. BACS comprised 22 member schools under diocesan administration, with institutional management supervised by school directors, principals, and academic supervisors.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents consisted of 117 secondary school teachers from the participating BACS institutions. Their demographic characteristics included gender, civil status, field of specialization, educational attainment, and teaching experience. Of the respondents, 55 (47%) were single, 55 (47%) were married, and seven (6%) were widowed. Mathematics was the most common specialization (24%), followed by Science (22%), English (20%), Values Education (20%), and Filipino (14%). Regarding teaching experience, 53 teachers (44%) had one to five years of service. Most respondents held Bachelor of Secondary Education degrees (60%), while 22% had master's degree units, 13% were AB-qualifying graduates, 4% held master's degrees, and 1% had doctoral units. These findings indicate that a substantial proportion of respondents were relatively new to teaching and had not completed graduate studies.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study involved 117 teachers from 10 selected BACS secondary schools in the first district of the Diocese of Tagbilaran. The respondents provided information regarding their empowerment, job satisfaction, and retention. The specific sampling technique was not identified in the methodology.

2.5 Research Instrument

Three questionnaires were employed: the School Participant Empowerment Scale developed by Short and Rinehart (1992), the Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire developed by Paula E. Lester, and a researcher-developed questionnaire based on Sher's three Cs of teacher retention. The SPES assessed professional growth, self-efficacy, decision making, status, autonomy, and impact. The TJSQ measured satisfaction with supervision, colleagues, working conditions, pay, responsibility, work itself, advancement, security, and recognition. Both instruments used a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The TJSQ contained 22 negatively worded indicators intended to minimize response-set bias. These items required reverse scoring and were excluded from composite mean calculations as described in the methodology. The retention questionnaire assessed characteristics, conditions, and compensation. Permission to use the copyrighted SPES and TJSQ instruments was secured through email correspondence with their respective developers.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection was conducted from the first week of November 2013 to the first week of December 2013. A formal letter requesting permission to conduct the study was submitted to the BACS Superintendent. Questionnaires were subsequently administered to teachers from the participating schools, and the responses were collected, tallied, and organized for statistical analysis.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Frequency counts and percentages were used to describe the respondents' demographic characteristics, while weighted means determined their perceived levels of empowerment, job satisfaction, and retention-related factors. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed to examine the relationships between teacher empowerment and job satisfaction and between teacher empowerment and retention. Statistical significance was evaluated using the critical values of Pearson's r at the 0.05 level of significance.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Teachers' Level of Empowerment

3.1.1 Professional Growth

Professional growth obtained a composite mean of 3.91, interpreted as Agree. Teachers reported being treated as professionals (4.17), having opportunities for professional growth (4.11), and collaborating with colleagues (4.05). Working in a school where students come first received the lowest mean (3.52). These findings indicate that teachers generally experienced professional recognition and opportunities for continuous learning. Such opportunities contributed to their perceived empowerment by supporting professional competence, although further development was needed to strengthen this dimension.

3.1.2 Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy recorded a composite mean of 4.00 (Agree). Teachers strongly agreed that they observed students learning (4.32) and developed professionally through daily interactions with students (4.27). However, their perception of making a difference received a neutral rating (3.38). The findings suggest that teachers associated their professional effectiveness with observable student learning and daily instructional experiences. Nevertheless, their neutral perception of making a difference indicates uncertainty regarding the broader impact of their teaching.

3.1.3 Decision Making

Decision making received a composite mean of 3.28 (Neutral), the lowest among the empowerment dimensions. Teachers agreed that they were responsible for monitoring school programs (4.03), that school personnel sought their advice (3.62), and that they could share innovative ideas (3.47). However, involvement in school budgeting (2.82), teacher selection (2.85), and implementation of new programs (3.05) received neutral ratings. These results indicate that teachers participated in selected school responsibilities but had limited involvement in major institutional decisions. Meaningful participation in decision making strengthens empowerment by allowing teachers greater influence over their working environment. However, teachers may become less willing to participate when administrators solicit their opinions without providing opportunities for actual decision-making authority (Short & Greer, 1997).

3.1.4 Professional Status

Professional status obtained the highest empowerment mean of 4.04 (Agree). Teachers strongly agreed that they received respect from colleagues (4.31) and had earned professional respect (4.23). They also acknowledged receiving collegial support (4.01). These findings suggest that mutual respect and professional recognition contributed to teachers' sense of empowerment. Positive relationships with colleagues reinforced their confidence, professional worth, and perception that their knowledge and expertise were valued.

3.1.5 Autonomy

Autonomy recorded a composite mean of 3.53 (Agree). Teachers reported freedom in deciding what to teach (3.79), choosing instructional approaches (3.56), and managing daily schedules (3.50). However, participation in curriculum decisions received a neutral rating (3.26). The findings indicate that teachers exercised autonomy primarily in classroom instruction rather than curriculum development. Their limited participation in curricular decisions may reflect their responsibility for implementing established educational standards rather than developing institutional curricula.

3.1.6 Impact

Impact obtained a composite mean of 3.58 (Agree). Teachers believed that they influenced school activities (3.89), affected colleagues and students (3.88), and participated in staff development (3.68). However, their perceived role as decision makers received a neutral rating (3.21). These findings indicate that teachers recognized their contributions to student learning and professional collaboration. Their participation in school activities supported their sense of accomplishment, although limited decision-making authority remained an area requiring improvement.

3.2 Teachers' Job Satisfaction

3.2.1 Supervision

Supervision obtained a composite mean of 3.75 (Agree). Teachers reported receiving assistance when needed (4.00), suggestions for instructional improvement (3.95), and support for improving teaching (3.84). They generally disagreed with negatively worded statements concerning inadequate supervisory support. These findings suggest that teachers were satisfied with the assistance, guidance, and recognition provided by their immediate supervisors. Supportive supervision contributed to favorable workplace experiences, although further improvement could strengthen teacher satisfaction.

3.2.2 Relationships with Colleagues

Satisfaction with colleagues recorded a composite mean of 3.68 (Agree). Teachers reported positive relationships with coworkers (4.04), lasting friendships (3.97), and favorable interpersonal interactions (3.94). However, feedback from colleagues received a neutral rating (3.40). The findings indicate that positive collegial relationships contributed to job satisfaction. Cooperation, friendship, and mutual support strengthened the working environment, although instructional feedback and professional collaboration could be further developed.

3.2.3 Working Conditions

Working conditions obtained a composite mean of 3.53 (Agree). Teachers acknowledged that school conditions could be improved (3.68), while generally describing their workplaces as satisfactory (3.63) and comfortable (3.61). These findings suggest that teachers were generally satisfied with their working environments but recognized opportunities for improvement. Better facilities, organizational policies, and workplace conditions could further enhance their professional experiences.

3.2.4 Pay

Pay recorded a composite mean of 3.23 (Neutral), the lowest among the job satisfaction dimensions. Teachers agreed that their compensation was proportionate to their abilities (3.44) but remained neutral regarding financial security (3.35), adequacy for normal expenses (3.29), and comparison with compensation in other schools (3.06). The findings indicate uncertainty regarding the adequacy of teacher compensation. Although respondents did not express strong dissatisfaction, their neutral responses suggest that pay remained an area of concern in their overall job satisfaction.

3.2.5 Responsibility

Responsibility obtained the highest job satisfaction mean of 4.33 (Strongly Agree). Teachers strongly agreed that teaching allowed them to help students learn (4.51), that students respected them (4.42), and that they were responsible for their teaching (4.32) and daily lesson planning (4.25). These findings demonstrate that teachers derived considerable satisfaction from their instructional responsibilities. Their commitment to student learning, accountability, and positive classroom relationships contributed to their professional fulfillment.

3.2.6 Work Itself

Satisfaction with work obtained a composite mean of 4.23 (Strongly Agree). Teachers considered teaching interesting (4.50), creativity-enhancing (4.39), and professionally satisfying (4.21). They also recognized opportunities to apply different instructional skills (4.03). The findings suggest that teaching provided intrinsic satisfaction through creativity, meaningful work, and professional engagement. These experiences strengthened teachers' appreciation of their profession and contributed positively to job satisfaction.

3.2.7 Professional Advancement

Professional advancement recorded a composite mean of 4.13 (Agree). Teachers strongly agreed that teaching provided opportunities for professional development (4.41), while advancement (4.12) and promotion (3.87) also received favorable ratings. These findings indicate that teachers valued opportunities for professional growth and career progression. However, neutral responses concerning limited advancement opportunities suggest that some aspects of promotion and professional mobility could be strengthened.

3.2.8 Job Security

Job security obtained a composite mean of 3.85 (Agree). Teachers agreed that teaching provided a secure future (4.01), although they also expressed concern about potentially losing their positions (3.68). The findings suggest that teachers generally perceived teaching as a stable profession while recognizing uncertainties surrounding employment continuity. Such concerns reflect the importance of institutional policies regarding tenure, employment protection, and professional security.

3.2.9 Recognition

Recognition recorded a composite mean of 3.68 (Agree). Teachers reported receiving acknowledgment for successful teaching (3.68) and generally disagreed with statements indicating insufficient recognition. These findings suggest that teachers felt their instructional contributions were appreciated by administrators, colleagues, and students. Professional acknowledgment reinforced their sense of achievement and contributed positively to job satisfaction.

3.3 Factors Influencing Teacher Retention

3.3.1 Personal Characteristics

Among the 117 respondents, 87 indicated that remaining in teaching reflected their personal career choice, while 30 reported otherwise. Additionally, 73 teachers identified pre-service training and work experience as supporting their professional competence, while 71 considered these experiences important in sustaining their commitment to teaching. These findings indicate that personal motivation, professional preparation, and teaching experience

influenced retention. Some teachers who initially pursued education through family influence eventually developed satisfaction and commitment through actual teaching experiences.

3.3.2 Working Conditions

Positive relationships between teachers and administrators ranked first among working conditions influencing retention, receiving 70 responses. Proximity to family residences followed with 44 responses, while supportive colleagues received 40 and peaceful surroundings received 39. School facilities and proximity to a spouse's workplace were also identified as considerations. These findings suggest that interpersonal relationships and family-related circumstances were important in teachers' decisions to remain employed. Supportive administrators, collegial relationships, and favorable school environments contributed to their willingness to continue teaching.

3.3.3 Compensation

Enjoyment of teaching combined with reasonable compensation ranked first among compensation-related retention factors, receiving 86 responses. Professional development seminars received 57 responses, followed by employment benefits with 30. Other factors included educational discounts for teachers' children, opportunities for further studies, and compensation packages. These findings indicate that teachers valued professional fulfillment alongside reasonable compensation. Opportunities for continuing education and employment benefits also influenced retention, suggesting that both financial and nonfinancial incentives contributed to their decisions to remain employed.

3.4 Overall Levels of Teacher Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

3.4.1 Overall Teacher Empowerment

Teacher empowerment obtained an overall composite mean of 3.72 (Agree). Professional status recorded the highest mean (4.04), followed by self-efficacy (4.00), professional growth (3.91), impact (3.58), autonomy (3.53), and decision making (3.28). These findings indicate that teachers generally experienced empowerment through professional respect, competence, and development opportunities. However, the comparatively low decision-making rating suggests that greater participation in institutional decisions could strengthen their overall empowerment.

3.4.2 Overall Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction obtained an overall composite mean of 3.82 (Agree). Responsibility (4.33) and work itself (4.23) received the highest ratings, followed by professional advancement (4.13), security (3.85), supervision (3.75), colleagues and recognition (3.68 each), working conditions (3.53), and pay (3.23). These findings indicate that teachers were generally satisfied with their profession, particularly their instructional responsibilities and opportunities for meaningful work. However, the neutral rating for pay suggests that compensation remained the least favorable aspect of their employment experience.

3.5 Relationships Among Teacher Empowerment, Job Satisfaction, and Retention

3.5.1 Relationship Between Teacher Empowerment and Job Satisfaction

Teacher empowerment demonstrated a positive correlation with job satisfaction, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.495$. The computed t-value of 7.463 exceeded the reported critical value of 1.960, indicating a statistically significant relationship and rejection of the null hypothesis. The findings suggest that teachers who experienced greater empowerment also reported higher job satisfaction. Professional recognition, supportive supervision, opportunities for development, and favorable workplace experiences were relevant to this relationship.

3.5.2 Relationship Between Teacher Empowerment and Retention

Teacher empowerment demonstrated a positive correlation with retention, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = 0.436$. The computed t-value of 6.957 exceeded the reported critical value of 1.960, indicating a statistically significant relationship and rejection of the null hypothesis.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concludes that teacher empowerment is significantly associated with job satisfaction and retention among secondary school teachers of the Bohol Association of Catholic Schools (BACS) in the Diocese of Tagbilaran. Professional growth, self-efficacy, mutual respect, autonomy, recognition, and supportive working relationships contribute to teachers' sense of empowerment and professional fulfillment. Opportunities for professional development, meaningful participation in school activities, and an environment that encourages creativity, innovation, and openness to change strengthen teachers' satisfaction and motivation to remain in the profession. Thus, an empowering school environment plays an important role in sustaining teacher commitment and supporting quality education.

School administrators should continue fostering healthy working relationships characterized by mutual trust, respect, and professional support while strengthening teachers' participation in decision making and school governance. Opportunities for continuous professional development should be sustained to enhance teacher competence and empowerment. Furthermore, an organized and empowered Teacher, Parent, and School Administrators Association should be established or strengthened to facilitate effective communication and constructive feedback among school stakeholders. The proposed teacher empowerment enhancement program should also be implemented to improve job satisfaction and retention.

The study was limited to secondary school teachers from selected member schools of the Bohol Association of Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Tagbilaran, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other educational institutions and settings. The descriptive-correlational design and reliance on self-reported questionnaire responses examined teachers' perceptions and relationships among empowerment, job satisfaction, and retention but did not establish causal relationships. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted within the context of the participating schools and respondents.

5. Compliance with ethical standards

The author acknowledges the participation of 117 secondary school teachers from 10 selected member schools of the Bohol Association of Catholic Schools (BACS), Diocese of Tagbilaran, Bohol, Philippines, and the cooperation of the participating school administrators. Prior to data collection, the researcher sought formal permission from the BACS Superintendent and secured authorization to use the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) and Teacher Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (TJSQ) through correspondence with their respective developers. Upon obtaining the necessary permissions, data were collected through non-invasive, questionnaire-based methods. The available documentation does not confirm voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality safeguards, conflict-of-interest declarations, or external funding status.

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