

## IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON EMPLOYEE TURNOVER IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS

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The unprecedented global crisis presented by the COVID-19 pandemic has created substantial disruptions across all sectors of society, with education being one of the most profoundly impacted. Specifically, this phenomenon has brought about significant changes in the staffing patterns of educational institutions worldwide, including private schools. Delving into the issues of employee turnover or the rate at which employees leave a company and are replaced in private schools during the pandemic, are often overlooked and are critical component of the educational ecosystem's resilience and adaptability.

Historically, private schools have faced challenges regarding employee retention due to factors such as lower salaries compared to public schools, limited career advancement opportunities, and, at times, demanding work environments. However, the advent of the pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, thrusting them to the forefront of institutional concerns. As schools pivoted to remote learning, educators grappled with new teaching methodologies, technostress, work-life balance issues, and job security, all of which may have intensified the propensity to leave their jobs. With great number of uncontrolled variables in private schools' operations, the worst to happen would be business closure. DepEd spokesperson Michael Wesley Poa said that 425 private schools were permanently closed from school year 2020 to 2022, of which 20,838 students had been affected by such school closures, while around 10,000 transferred to public schools (Mendoza, 2022).

Despite the pervasiveness of employee turnover across sectors globally, the investigation of this phenomenon within the context of Philippine private schools remains somewhat uncharted territory. Cited from an article that it is high time for private schools to set salaries at par with those of public schools. In a survey conducted by ACT Private Schools, the starting salaries for teachers in 58 percent of the private schools that participated in the survey are “even lower” than the minimum wage of workers in Metro Manila at P15,000 or below monthly, ACT Private Schools said (Hernando-Malipot, 2023). Unknowingly, this can be one of the reasons for employees to leave their jobs. By examining various factors contributing to this trend, such as remuneration, working conditions, professional development opportunities, and the potential impact of broader economic or social factors, it can develop a more comprehensive understanding of the issue at hand. Moreover, a nuanced analysis of the issue can aid in crafting effective strategies and interventions to curb turnover rates and retain quality staff, thus ensuring the provision of high-quality education in the private schools.

Motivated by a critical need to understand the scope, underlying causes, and implications of the increased employee turnover during the pandemic period and even to this post pandemic times-- in the province, it was not another story to tell. There should be endeavors to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring the interplay between pandemic/post pandemic-induced stressors and the turnover rate in private schools.

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