

Socio-emotional Competence and Instructional Leadership on Attrition of Teachers

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of socio-emotional competence and instructional leadership on the attrition of teachers. A quantitative research design, descriptive-correlational method was utilized to examine socio-emotional competence and instructional leadership as predictors of teacher attrition among public school teachers in Don Carlos District, Bukidnon Division, Region X for the School Year 2025-2026. Attrition has become one of the most pressing issues facing education system here in Philippines. Findings revealed moderate attrition influence across all domains, with Salary/Benefits and Assignment Factors highest. Despite pressures, teachers maintained high instructional competence. Pearson correlations showed significant negative relationships between attrition and socio-emotional competence and instructional leadership, strongest for Monitoring Instruction. Multiple regression analysis identified four significant predictors: Monitoring Instruction, Responsible Decision-Making, Supporting Teachers, and Relationship Skills, explaining 50.7% of attrition variance. Instructional leadership emerged as the dominant attrition factor. The study concludes that leadership deficiencies, particularly inadequate instructional monitoring, drive rural teacher attrition more than environmental pressures. Recommendations include mandatory principal training in monitoring protocols, socio-emotional competence workshops, structured teacher support systems, and retention-linked incentives.

Keywords: Teacher Attrition, Socio-emotional competence, instructional leadership, DepEd retention.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher attrition has emerged as a critical challenge for education systems worldwide, with the Philippines facing significant shortages where one in eight teaching positions remains vacant, directly impacting over six million students through larger classes and mismatched subject expertise. High turnover rates exceeding 23% reveal deeper issues beyond retirements—teachers leave due to dissatisfaction, burnout, and lack of support, disrupting classroom continuity and forcing DepEd to divert substantial resources to constant recruitment and training. Strong instructional leadership emerges as a proven solution, with the Learning Policy Institute (2023) demonstrating that principals who actively monitor instruction, provide meaningful feedback, and foster positive climates significantly reduce teacher stress and improve retention. In rural areas like Don Carlos, Bukidnon, where workloads intensify and resources dwindle, effective school leadership becomes essential to stabilizing the workforce.

Recent research highlights the powerful interplay between principals' instructional leadership and teachers' socio-emotional competence in combating attrition, particularly in demanding rural Philippine contexts. Studies by Zins et al. (2021) and Jennings & Greenberg (2023) confirm that teachers proficient in self-awareness, emotional regulation, relationship skills, and ethical decision-making exhibit greater resilience against stressors like family separation, salary pressures, and assignment inequities. Local evidence from Flores & Hernandez (2021) and Pasion (2024) shows Filipino teachers trained in socio-emotional learning report enhanced classroom management, professional commitment, and teaching effectiveness. However, these individual competencies thrive within supportive school environments where principals prioritize teacher well-being,

professional growth, and trust-building—creating the conditions where emotional resilience translates into sustained retention. This study examines how instructional leadership and socio-emotional competence interact to reduce moderate attrition pressures (composite $M=3.60$) among Don Carlos secondary school teachers, offering actionable strategies for DepEd policymakers and school heads to address rural turnover through leadership development and emotional skills training.

Objectives of the Study

The study determined the influence of socio-emotional competence and instructional leadership to teachers' attrition among public secondary school teachers in Don Carlos District, Division of Bukidnon. Specifically, it sought to ascertain the level of teachers' socio-emotional competence; determine the level of instructional leadership; assess the extent of teachers' attrition; correlate teachers' attrition to socio-emotional competence and instructional leadership; and identify variables, singly or in combination, that best predict teachers' attrition.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Locale

Employing a quantitative-correlational approach, this investigation explored the association between socio-emotional competence, instructional leadership, and teacher attrition among public secondary school educators in Don Carlos District, Bukidnon Division. The research was carried out across selected public secondary schools situated in Don Carlos District, within the Bukidnon Division, Region X (Northern Mindanao), Philippines.

Research Respondents and Sampling

The participants in this study comprised public secondary school teachers from Don Carlos District in the Division of Bukidnon during School Year 2025–2026. Respondents were chosen through stratified random sampling, ensuring proportional representation across various schools within the district to capture diverse experiences and perspectives.

Research Instruments

This research employed a survey instrument assessing socio-emotional competence, instructional leadership, and teachers' attrition factors. The researcher obtained approval from the authors via electronic mail to modify their survey tools. The instrument consisted of three sections—Socio-Emotional Competence, Instructional Leadership, and Attrition of Teachers. Section I covered Socio-Emotional Competence with 25 items, drawn from proven Montesclaros (2025) showing Cronbach alpha of 0.94. Section II addressed Teaching Leadership with 40 items, sourced from Hallinger et al. (2010) achieving Cronbach alpha of 0.96. Finally, Section III examined Educator Turnover with 25 items, based on NCES (2024) with Cronbach alpha of 0.91.

Data Analysis

Data Analysis Means were used to describe levels of socio-emotional competence, instructional competence attrition of Teachers. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was applied to determine the strength of relationships, and Linear Regression was used to identify the best predictor of instructional competence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After gathering the data, it is being analyzed using SPSS to find the total mean score, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) and regression analysis results.

Table 1: Summary Table on the Level of Socio-emotional Competence

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Self-Awareness	4.42	Agree	High Socio-Emotional Competence

Self-Management	4.38	Agree	High Socio-Emotional Competence
Social Awareness	4.35	Agree	High Socio-Emotional Competence
Relationship Skills	4.36	Agree	High Socio-Emotional Competence
Responsible Decision-Making	4.37	Agree	High Socio-Emotional Competence
Overall mean	4.37	Agree	High Socio-Emotional Competence

Legend:

Rating	Scale	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
5	4.51-5.00	Strongly Agree	Very high socio-emotional competence
4	3.51-4.50	Agree	High socio-emotional competence
3	2.51-3.50	Neutral	Average socio-emotional competence
2	1.51-2.50	Disagree	Low socio-emotional competence
1	1.00-1.50	Strongly Disagree	Very low socio-emotional competence

Teachers exhibit a very high level of socio-emotional competence, with an overall mean of 4.37 interpreted as a Very High Socio-emotional Competence. Among the key domains, self-awareness achieved the highest mean of 4.42, followed closely by responsible decision-making at 4.37, relationship skills at 4.36. social awareness at 4.35, and self-management at 4.38, demonstrating consistent strength in emotional self-perception, interpersonal abilities, and ethical judgment. This suggests that teachers’ robust foundation in managing emotions and relationships effectively within school environments.

These patterns highlight the need for targeted programs reinforcing all five domains equally to sustain teacher resilience. Develop strategies to cultivate socio-emotional competence that balances self-focused skills, interpersonal abilities, and contextual awareness. School leaders are urged to maintain and enhance these areas, especially by boosting practical applications of social awareness in diverse classrooms. The findings also confirm that socio-emotional competence strengthens teachers’ motivation, and retention, ultimately driving better student outcomes. These insights align with prior research emphasizing the value of self-management, relationship skills, and emotional intelligence in teacher effectiveness (Brackett et al., 2019; UNESCO, 2021).

Table 2: Summary Table on Instructional Leadership

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Fostering Positive Learning Climate	4.28	Agree	High instructional leadership
Setting Clear Vision/Goals	4.22	Agree	High instructional leadership
Supporting Teachers	4.18	Agree	High instructional leadership
Monitoring Instruction	4.07	Agree	High instructional leadership
Empowering Staff	4.02	Agree	High instructional leadership
Overall mean	4.15	Agree	High instructional leadership

Legend:

Rating	Scale	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
5	4.51-5.00	Strongly Agree	Very high instructional leadership

4	3.51-4.50	Agree	High instructional leadership
3	2.51-3.50	Neutral	Average instructional leadership
2	1.51-2.50	Disagree	Low instructional leadership
1	1.00-1.50	Strongly Disagree	Very low instructional leadership

School heads demonstrate a high level of instructional leadership, as reflected by an overall mean of 4.15. fostering a positive learning climate led with the highest, mean of 4.28, followed by setting clear vision/goals at 4.22, supporting teachers at 4.18, monitoring instruction at 4.07, and empowering staff at 4.02, indicating consistent strengths in creating supportive environments and guiding teachers.

The results highlight critical role of school heads in cultivating instructional excellence to enhance teachers' socio-emotional competence and reduce attrition in Don Carlos District schools. Their strengths in positive climates, vision-setting, and teacher support enable them to model effective instructional guidance for teachers. However, the slightly lower performance in monitoring instruction and staff empowerment points to the need for targeted professional development focused on advanced observation techniques, feedback delivery, and collaborative decision-making skills. Strengthening these areas can help school heads create more engaging and innovative teaching environments, enhance leadership effectiveness, and support teachers in developing essential instructional competencies (Leithwood et al., 2021).

Table 3: Summary Table on the Level of Teachers' Attrition

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Personal Life Factors	3.58	Neutral	Moderate Attrition Influence
Salary/Benefits Factors	3.62	Neutral	Moderate Attrition Influence
Career Factors	3.59	Neutral	Moderate Attrition Influence
Assignment Factors	3.61	Neutral	Moderate Attrition Influence
School Factors	3.60	Neutral	Moderate Attrition Influence
Overall mean	3.60	Neutral	Moderate Attrition Influence

Legend:

Rating	Scale	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
5	4.51-5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High Attrition Influence
4	3.51-4.50	Agree	High Attrition Influence
3	2.51-3.50	Neutral	Moderately Attrition Influence
2	1.51-2.50	Disagree	Low Attrition Influence
1	1.00-1.50	Strongly Disagree	Very Low Attrition Influence

Teachers perceive a moderate level of attrition influence across all factor with an overall mean of 3.60 rated as "Neutral," indicating Moderate Attrition Influence. Salary and benefits factors registered the highest mean at 3.62, followed closely by assignment factors at 3.61, suggesting these areas exert slightly greater pressure on turnover intentions among public secondary school educators in Don Carlos District. Career factors (3.59),

school factors (3.60), and personal life factors (3.58) showed comparable moderate impact, reflecting balanced yet persistent challenges that neither strongly push nor deter teachers from staying.

These findings show that teachers experience moderate attrition influences rooted in personal circumstances, compensation structures, career trajectories, placement challenges, and institutional conditions. Educators in Don Carlos District appear tough to these pressures overall, with no domain exerting dominant pull, yet salary/benefits and assignments remain key sensitivities requiring vigilance. However, the uniformly neutral ratings across factors suggest opportunities for proactive mitigation, particularly via enhanced financial incentives, flexible postings, and wellness support systems. Addressing these elements can further reduce turnover risks, boost socio-emotional competence, and reinforce instructional leadership synergy, consistent with studies highlighting multifaceted retention strategies for sustained educator stability (Ramirez, 2020)

Table 4: Correlation Analysis on Instructional Competence of Teachers

	r-value	Probability
Socio-emotional Competence	-.548	.000**
Self-awareness	-.489	.000**
Self-management	-.512	.000**
Social awareness	-.523	.000**
Relationship skills	-.537	
Responsible Decision-Making	-.545	
Instructional Leadership	-.602	.000**
Setting Clear Vision/Goals	-.578	.000**
Supporting Teachers	-.591	.000**
Fostering Positive Learning Climate	-.575	.000**
Monitoring Instruction	-.619	.000**
Empowering Staff	-.564	.000**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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

The results reveal that both socio-emotional competence and instructional leadership exhibit negative and statistically significant relationships with teacher attrition. Socio-emotional competence demonstrates a moderate negative correlation ($r = -.548$), suggesting that greater proficiency in domains such as responsible decision-making, relationship skills, social awareness, self-management, and self-awareness are linked to reduced attrition intentions. These patterns imply that teachers with stronger emotional regulation, interpersonal abilities, and ethical judgment are less inclined to leave their positions.

Likewise, instructional leadership shows a moderately strong negative relationship with attrition ($r = -.602$), underscoring its protective role against educator departure. Key dimensions like monitoring instruction, supporting teachers, fostering positive learning climate, setting clear vision/goals, and empowering staff, all contribute significantly, with monitoring instruction displaying the strongest inverse association. Collectively, these insights affirm that strong socio-emotional skills and effective school head leadership serve as vital buffers, with instructional leadership exerting a somewhat greater influence in reduction attrition through

structured guidance and support.

These outcomes align with research by Brackett et al. (2019), which stresses that socio-emotional competence, including self-awareness and relationship skills, significantly lowers teacher stress and turnover by enhancing resilience and workplace satisfaction. Similarly, findings echo Leithwood et al. (2021), emphasizing that principals' instructional leadership practices—such as monitoring and teacher support—foster retention by building professional commitment and school efficacy.

Table 5: Regression Analysis on Attrition of Teachers

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.847	0.312		9.127	.000
Monitoring Instruction	-0.324	0.071	-0.298	-4.563	.000
Responsible Decision-Making	-0.256	0.068	-0.245	-3.756	.000
Supporting Teachers	-0.221	0.074	-0.193	-2.986	.003
Relationship Skills	-0.189	0.065	-0.172	-2.908	.004
R = 0.712 R2 = 0.507 F-value = 62.184 Probability = 0.000					

Multiple regression analysis assessed the predictive influence of instructional leadership and socio-emotional competence domains on teacher attrition in Don Carlos District public secondary schools. The predictor variables encompassed instructional leadership dimensions and socio-emotional competence. The model indicated a strong relationship between predictors and attrition ($R=0.712$), explaining 50.7% of the variance in attrition intentions ($R^2 = 0.507$), and proved statistically significant ($F = 62.184, p = 0.000$).

Among predictors, monitoring instruction appeared as the strongest significant negative predictor ($B = -0.324, \beta = -0.298, t = -4.563, p = .000$), followed by responsible decision-making ($B = -0.256, \beta = -0.245, t = -3.756, p = .000$), supporting teachers ($B = -0.221, \beta = -0.193, t = -2.986, p = .003$), and relationship skills ($B = -0.189, \beta = -0.172, t = -2.908, p = .004$). These results highlight monitoring instruction's crucial role in reducing attrition through enhanced accountability and feedback. The regression equation, Attrition = 2.847 - 0.324 (Monitoring) - 0.256 (Responsible Decision-Making) - 0.221 (Supporting Teachers) - 0.189 (Relationship Skills), confirms these factors meaningfully lower attrition risks.

Overall, parallel to the study of Leithwood et al., (2021), bolstering school heads' monitoring, teacher support, and socio-emotional training—especially decision-making and relationship skills—offers an effective strategy to limit attrition. Prioritizing these predictors adopts resilience and retention, aligning with studies affirming instructional supervision's impact on performance and ethical skills' role in teacher stability.

CONCLUSION

In summary, teachers in Don Carlos District face moderate attrition pressures from factors like salary gaps, tough assignments, career hurdles, personal life strains, and school conditions—nothing overwhelming, but enough to nudge some toward leaving (overall $M=3.60$, neutral range). What stands out as protective are their strong socio-emotional skills across all domains (high competence) and principals' solid instructional leadership in vision-setting, climate-building, and teacher support, which keep instructional quality high ($M=4.44$ proficient) despite rural challenges. Key insights show these strengths inversely linked to turnover ($r=-.489$ to $-.619$), with monitoring instruction, responsible decision-making, supporting teachers, and relationship skills as top predictors ($R^2=0.507$)—basically, better leadership and emotional savvy cut attrition risks significantly. Ultimately, boosting principals' supervision and teachers' interpersonal/ethical skills is key to locking in retention, resilience, and better education in rural DepEd schools, echoing broader research on

leadership and SEL as retention game-changers.

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