

Professional Learning Community and Organizational Culture on Teachers' Attrition in Catholic Schools

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.100500671>

Received: 10 May 2026; Accepted: 15 May 2026; Published: 10 June 2026

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between professional learning community (PLC) practices and organizational culture in relation to teacher attrition in Catholic schools. A total of 287 teachers from Bukidnon participated during the school year 2025–2026 through a structured survey questionnaire. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression. Results indicated that Catholic school teachers reported high levels of PLC practices, as reflected in the overall mean, and demonstrated a strong organizational culture characterized by a mission-oriented environment that fosters teamwork and institutional effectiveness. Despite the presence of a supportive and spiritually grounded culture, teachers exhibited moderate to high levels of attrition, influenced by factors such as working conditions, salary, opportunities for professional growth, and job satisfaction. Correlation analysis confirmed a significant relationship between PLC practices and organizational culture with attrition. Regression analysis further revealed that shared personal practices within PLCs and coordinated teamwork within organizational culture were significant predictors of teacher attrition, highlighting their critical role in shaping teachers' decisions to remain in or leave their institutions. The study concludes that strengthening PLC practices and cultivating a supportive, collaborative organizational culture are essential strategies for enhancing teacher retention and reducing attrition in Catholic schools.

Keywords: Advancement, Leadership, Institutional Goals, Faith-based Education, Shared Commitment, Retention

INTRODUCTION

Catholic schools struggle with teachers' attrition because they wish to retain educators who are committed to the schools' faith-based mission and principles, in addition to being skilled professionals. Several factors, including mission alignment, supportive leadership, collegial connections, professional development, workload, and salary, have been proven to have an impact on teachers' attrition in Catholic schools (Atun & Avergonzado, 2026; Gadingan, 2025). These results suggest that both practical workplace circumstances and the core principles that motivate the school community influence retention in Catholic schools.

In this sense, professional learning community practices are especially relevant since they offer chances for professional development, shared learning, collegial support, and reflective practice. According to research, when Professional Learning Communities are meaningful and well-supported, they can enhance teacher performance, confidence, and well-being, but their impact is diminished when collaboration is shallow or inadequately funded (Waters, 2019). Because it represents the common values, beliefs, practices, and leadership behaviors that influence teachers' experiences at work, organizational culture is also significant. While a weak culture can raise discontent and attrition, a positive and encouraging culture can enhance commitment and lower the risk of turnover (Smiling, 2023; Woodruff, 2024).

Consequently, practical and ethical factors influence teacher attrition in Catholic schools, which is a retention issue. Recent studies have shown that teacher retention is influenced by a variety of factors, including pay, working

conditions, professional development, school support, and alignment with the school's mission (Atun & Avergonzado, 2026; Crespo, 2025). This suggests that the dynamics governing Catholic school retention may be different from those governing other educational contexts. Despite the growing literature, limited research has examined how professional learning community practices and organizational culture relate to teacher attrition in Catholic schools, making it necessary to examine these relationships in selected Catholic schools in Bukidnon.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to assess the influence of the professional learning community and organizational culture on teachers' attrition in Catholic schools. Specifically, it sought to: 1) Describe the level of professional learning community of catholic school teachers' practice; 2) Determine the level of organizational culture of catholic school teachers' experiences; 3) Ascertain the level of attrition that Catholic school teachers exhibit; 4) Assess the significant relationship of teachers' attrition in Catholic schools; and 5) Identify the variable, singly or in combination, that best predicts teachers' attrition in Catholic school teachers.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Locale

This study used a descriptive-correlational design to determine the current situation and examine the correlations between variables. This enabled the examination of how variations in its implementation and organizational culture are associated with changes in teachers' intentions to remain or leave the institution. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson r) was used to determine the relationship between the professional learning community and organizational culture in teachers' attrition in Catholic schools. Regression analysis was used to determine the variables that best predict Catholic school teachers' attrition. The study was conducted in the Catholic schools in Bukidnon that are members and affiliated with the Bukidnon Association of Catholic Schools (BUACS), in Region X, Philippines.

Research Respondents and Sampling

The respondents of this study were elementary and secondary teachers from the Catholic schools in Bukidnon who are members and affiliated with the Bukidnon Association of Catholic Schools (BUACS), irrespective of their specialization during the school year 2025-2026. The researcher used simple random sampling to obtain the number of the target population. Of the 402 teachers from the participating schools, 287 voluntarily participated in the survey, representing 100% of the study respondents. This indicates a substantial number of teacher participants drawn from different Catholic educational institutions, allowing for broader representation of perspectives regarding the variables investigated.

Only those who voluntarily agreed to participate were included in the study. They self-rated their experiences through a structured survey questionnaire across professional learning community, organizational climate, and teachers' attrition.

Research Instrument

A structured survey questionnaire comprising three sections was used to collect the study data. The first section assessed the level of professional learning community practices among Catholic school teachers, adapted from Olivier and Hipp and used by Licayan (2025). The instrument was pilot-tested and achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.979, indicating excellent reliability. It was administered to the teacher-respondents to determine the level of professional learning community in Catholic schools. The second analyzed organizational culture in terms of teachers' engagement, adapted from Elona's (2019) study. It had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.696, which is considerably acceptable and reliable. The third examined teacher attrition, particularly factors influencing teachers' intentions to stay or leave the institutions, adapted from Villanueva (2023). The questionnaire was pilot-tested and obtained a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.840, indicating good internal consistency and reliability. It utilized a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) to measure

respondents' levels of agreement with the given statements.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings on professional learning community practices, organizational culture, and teacher attrition in Catholic schools. Results are organized according to the study objectives and interpreted using relevant literature and theoretical perspectives to explain the relationships and predictive influence among the variables.

Table 1: Summary table on the Level of Professional Learning Community

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Shared Values and Vision	3.38	Strongly Agree	Highly Practiced
Collective Learning and Application	3.34	Strongly Agree	Highly Practiced
Shared and Supportive Leadership	3.31	Strongly Agree	Highly Practiced
Supportive Conditions-Relationship	3.30	Strongly Agree	Highly Practiced
Shared Personal Practices	3.28	Strongly Agree	Highly Practiced
Supportive Conditions-Structures	3.27	Strongly Agree	Highly Practiced
OVERALL MEAN	3.31	Strongly Agree	Highly Practiced

LEGEND:

Range	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
3.01 – 4.00	Strongly Agree	Highly Practiced
2.01 – 3.0	Agree	Moderately Practiced
1.51 – 2.00	Disagree	Seldom Practiced
1.00 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree	Not Practiced

All variables are in the same positive range. The chart shows that Catholic school teachers perceived the professional learning community as highly practiced overall (M = 3.31). The highest mean was shared values and vision (M = 3.38), followed by collective learning and application (M = 3.34) and shared and supportive leadership (M = 3.31). Supportive conditions-structures had the lowest mean score (M = 3.27). This pattern suggests that the schools already possess a strong collaborative culture built on a mission and collegiality. However, the structural supports necessary for continued PLC work are still relatively poor.

These findings suggest that Catholic schools may be successful in developing a sense of shared purpose, professional connection, and relational support, but they need more time, space, and organizational frameworks for long-term cooperation. This is consistent with the local study of Gonzales (2020), who found that although instructors acknowledge the benefits of PLC, the implementation of PLC in schools is often impeded by workload, time constraints, and low trust. Further, it supports the findings of an international study by Waters (2019) that relationships within PLCs and useful resources enhance teacher confidence, performance, and well-being, and a more recent cross-study review indicating the effects of PLCs are highly contingent on organizational support and implementation quality. Taken together, the results suggest that Catholic school administrators should strengthen the structural framework for PLCs so that collaboration might be more regular, deep, and beneficial for teacher retention and professional development.

Table 2: Summary of the Level of Organizational Culture Assessment

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Customer Orientation	4.06	Agree	Highly Engaged
Cultural Strengths	4.03	Agree	Highly Engaged
Achieving Goals	3.99	Agree	Highly Engaged
Managing Change	3.95	Agree	Highly Engaged

Coordinated Teamwork	3.87	Agree	Highly Engaged
OVERALL MEAN	3.98	Agree	Highly Engaged

LEGEND:

Range	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
4.51 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very Highly Engaged
3.51 – 4.00	Agree	Highly Engaged
2.51 – 3.00	Undecided	Moderately Engaged
1.51 – 2.00	Disagree	Low Engaged
1.00 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree	Very Low Engaged

The overall mean rating for the organizational culture of Catholic schools was 3.98, which indicated that the teachers generally viewed the values, norms, and practices of their schools in a positive light. Customer orientation was the indicator with the highest mean (4.06), followed by cultural strengths (4.03) and achieving goals (3.99). This shows that the schools are highly committed to service, shared mission, and continuous improvement. This model is consistent with Sullivan's (2019) belief that Catholic education is based on the dignity of the person and the holistic development of learners. Romano (2023) further stated that community and collegiality are hallmarks of Catholic school culture that can support teacher well-being when intentionally developed.

However, the lower mean for coordinated teamwork (3.87) suggests that although teachers value cooperation, they lack confidence in the practical skills and structures necessary for effective teamwork. This finding suggests that Catholic schools may do a better job of articulating shared values than translating them into consistent collaborative practice, particularly in the interpersonal coordination and technical teamwork skills required in the workplace. The finding has important implications for retention, since a positive culture can only underpin commitment to the extent that it is accompanied by everyday practices of trust, participation, and shared responsibility. Romano (2023) cautioned that positive cultural perceptions can mask underlying dysfunctions, particularly in relational school settings, where teachers may be hesitant to share negative experiences.

Table 3. Summary table on the level of Teachers' Attrition in Catholic Schools

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
Spiritual Growth	4.41	Strongly Agree	Very High Attrition
Salary	3.79	Agree	High Attrition
Working Conditions	3.63	Agree	High Attrition
Professional Growth	3.27	Agree	High Attrition
Job Satisfaction	3.06	Neutral	Moderate Attrition
OVERALL MEAN	3.63	Agree	High Attrition

LEGEND:

Range	Descriptive Rating	Qualitative Interpretation
4.51 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High Attrition
3.51 – 4.50	Agree	High Attrition
2.51 – 3.50	Neutral	Moderate Attrition
1.51 – 2.50	Disagree	Poor Attrition
1.00 – 1.50	Strongly Disagree	Very Poor Attrition

Catholic schools showed a high overall Teacher attrition rate with an overall mean of 3.63, suggesting that teachers are seriously considering leaving across several dimensions. The primary concern was spiritual growth (M = 4.41) interpreted as very high attrition, then salary (M = 3.79), and working conditions (M = 3.63), and both were in the high attrition range. This pattern indicates that attrition in Catholic schools is influenced by a combination of material concerns and the tension between spiritual dedication and the realities of work. This finding is in line with Riola's (2024) statement that teachers with a strong vocational commitment can experience internal conflict if practical difficulties are not handled. And this is consistent with the findings of Arcay et al.

(2024), who found financial motives as one of the major reasons for leaving Catholic schools. This aligns with Banusing and Bual (2020), who highlighted the importance of continuous faith formation and professional development in retaining Catholic school personnel.

Lower means for professional development ($M = 3.27$) and job satisfaction ($M = 3.06$) suggest they remain relevant but are relatively less dominant drivers of attrition compared to spiritual and financial concerns. But a strong concern was the indicator of whether teacher suggestions were recognised and implemented, indicating that teachers' sense of voice and participation remains important for retention. The finding supports Riola's (2024) emphasis on professional empowerment as a significant factor in teacher persistence and aligns with Castillo and Barrameda's (2024) claim that Catholic school teachers often struggle to balance values, time, energy, and resources. Finally, the results imply that lowering attrition in Catholic schools will necessitate more than spiritual formation; it will require fair compensation, supportive working conditions, recognition of teacher voice, and organizational practices that honor the dignity and professional growth of teachers.

Table 4. Correlation Analysis between variables.

Indicators	R-value	Probability
Professional Learning Community	.395	.000**
Shared and Supportive Leadership	.309	.000**
Shared Values and Vision	.312	.000**
Collective Learning and Application	.382	.000**
Shared Personal Practices	.436	.000**
Supportive Conditions-Relationship	.286	.000**
Supportive Conditions-Structures	.327	.000**
Organizational Culture Assessment	.366	.000**
Managing Change	.249	.000**
Achieving Goals	.353	.000**
Coordinated Teamwork	.368	.000**
Customer Orientation	.323	.000**
Cultural Strengths	.315	.000**

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

The correlation analysis showed that professional learning community and organizational culture were significantly correlated in Catholic schools, with a moderate positive correlation of $r=.395$ at the 0.01 level. This suggests that schools with stronger professional learning community practices tended to have a more positive organizational culture, but the two constructs were not the same. This pattern is consistent with the work of Turner et al. (2018), who suggested that the development of a school as a professional learning community enhances the organizational culture by fostering cooperation, shared accountability, and continuous professional growth.

Of the dimensions, shared personal practices were most strongly related to organizational culture ($r = .436$), followed by collective learning and application ($r = .382$) and coordinated teamwork ($r = .368$). This suggests that the more teachers experience peer observation, feedback, collaborative review of student work, and shared enquiry, the more positively they perceive their school culture. The findings are in line with Riola (2024) on the importance of positive relationships and professional empowerment to teacher persistence in Philippine Catholic schools and Castillo and Barrameda (2024) on the need for coaching, mentoring, and recognition to reinforce teachers' core values and professional commitment.

The weakest association was for managing change ($r = .249$). This suggests that perceptions of change management were less closely related to the larger professional learning community than practice-based dimensions. This suggests that teachers may see change initiatives as less collaborative and more imposed from

outside than emerging from collective professional processes. As Romano (2023) observed, community and collegiality are distinctive features of Catholic school culture; however, the current findings suggest that these values are more strongly embodied in tangible collaborative practices than in processes related to change. Overall, the modest but significant correlations suggest that teacher attrition in Catholic schools is determined by multiple interacting organizational and professional factors, consistent with Arcay et. al. (2024), who found that attrition is caused by personal and financial motivations along with school conditions.

Table 5. Regression Analysis on Teachers’ Attrition in Catholic Schools

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	2.218	.177		12.514	.000
	Shared Personal Practices _Professional Learning Community	.277	.056	.335	4.946	.000
	Coordinated Teamwork _Organizational Culture Assessment	.130	.048	.185	2.730	.007
		R = .463 ^b R ² = .214 F-Value = 33.230		Prob = .000***		

The regression analysis indicated that personal practices and coordinated teamwork shared by teachers significantly predicted teacher attrition in Catholic schools, accounting for 21.4% of the variance in attrition ($R = .463$, $R^2 = .214$, $F = 33.230$, $p = .000$). Shared personal practices appeared as the stronger predictor ($\beta = .335$, $p = .000$), followed by coordinated teamwork ($\beta = .185$, $p = .007$). This means that the more the teachers engaged in collaborative practices and teamwork, the higher their reported attrition tendencies were. The finding implies that collaboration may enhance teachers' awareness of instructional gaps, workload disparities, and unmet professional needs when organizational support is insufficient, although the direction of the coefficients is counterintuitive. This interpretation is consistent with the qualitative study of Riola (2024), who found that Philippine Catholic school teachers were often committed even with strong professional engagement, but experienced internal conflict when practical difficulties were not addressed.

These findings indicate that collaborative structures do not in themselves automatically decrease attrition unless accompanied by adequate support systems, recognition, and workload adjustments. Castillo and Barrameda (2024) state that Catholic school teachers need continuous formation, coaching, mentoring, and recognition to reinforce core values and maintain commitment, which may partly explain why shared practices become stressful instead of protective when resources are insufficient. Similarly, the risk of attrition may be higher for team-based work if responsibilities are distributed unevenly, if there is limited voice in decision-making, or if there are other coordination costs. The message for Catholic school leaders is that shared practices and collaboration need to be paired with clearly delineated structures, manageable workloads, and worthwhile professional support so collaboration becomes a retention strategy, not a source of strain.

Overall, the regression model suggests that teacher attrition in Catholic schools is more than a function of collaboration and culture, as the model fails to explain more than three-fourths of the variance. This implies that other factors, such as salary, working conditions, and personal circumstances, which are not captured in the present analysis, influence the outcome. The findings point to the importance of retention efforts that blend professional collaboration with concrete organizational support, especially in mission-driven Catholic schools where demands for service and commitment are great.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research objectives and the analysis of the collected data, the following findings were derived and concluded:

The research found that Catholic school teachers perceived the professional learning community as very well developed, with an overall mean of 3.31, and organizational culture was perceived as highly engaged, with an overall mean of 3.98. Teacher attrition was also high, with an overall mean of 3.63, suggesting that although the schools were generally perceived as collaborative and mission-driven, many teachers still considered leaving due to concerns about spiritual growth, salary, working conditions, professional growth, and job satisfaction.

Correlation analysis showed a significant and moderate correlation between professional learning community and organizational culture, indicating that a more positive school culture was associated with stronger collaborative practices. Among the dimensions, shared personal practices had the strongest relationship with organizational culture, while managing change had the weakest. These results suggest that teachers' collaborative practices are closely related to their perceptions of the school culture in general, but the relationship is not perfect, and other factors probably influence their experiences as well.

Regression analysis indicated that common personal practices and coordinated teamwork were significant predictors of teacher attrition. Together, these variables accounted for 21.4% of the variance in attrition, indicating that they meaningfully contributed to the model, but not the majority of the variation. Although the reported output had positive coefficients, the results are still indicative that collaboration and teamwork are important variables in understanding attrition, especially when teachers are faced with unmet needs, unequal workloads, or limited support.

The findings suggest that Catholic schools have relatively strong cultural and collaborative foundations, but these alone are not strong enough to stop attrition. High attrition rates, especially regarding spiritual growth and salary, indicate that teachers remain sensitive to the gap between mission and practice. This requires school leaders to enhance both the spiritual and material conditions of work so that collaboration, shared mission, and teacher support translate into actual retention.

Overall, the study concludes that professional learning community, organizational culture, and practical work conditions interact to influence teacher retention in Catholic schools. The findings imply that if Catholic schools are to reduce attrition and keep committed teachers, it will be necessary to improve collaboration, strengthen teamwork structures, and address compensation, workload, and recognition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

School administrators of Catholic schools might consider continuously strengthening professional learning community structures by promoting shared and supportive leadership among teachers, which may further strengthen structural support and may enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of these practices.

Policies may establish clear pathways for career advancement by providing sustained professional development opportunities such as seminars, workshops, mentoring, and coaching, while also recognizing teachers' achievements. These efforts can strengthen motivation, enhance professional competence, and foster long-term commitment to the institution. Scheduled learning sessions, peer observations, and reflective practices may be institutionalized to sustain continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

Catholic school teachers may take the initiative to build positive relationships through open communication, mutual respect, and teamwork among peers, strengthening these relationships and contributing to a more supportive and collaborative school environment. They may also consider actively engaging in school initiatives and contributing to organizational goals, as stronger alignment with the school's mission and culture enhances commitment and reduces intentions of leaving the profession.

The policy-makers may review and prioritize policies that improve organizational working conditions in schools, leadership support, resource allocation, and institutional climate, creating standards for a positive, supportive

school culture that may help enhance teacher engagement and retention.

As school leaders, Catholic schools are mission-driven institutions; it is recommended to deepen spiritual formation activities that nurture teachers' faith and sense of vocation. Retreats, recollections, and faith-based programs may be sustained to reinforce alignment with the schools' Catholic identity and mission in partnership with the parents, stakeholders, and the community.

For future researchers, it would be valuable to explore other factors that may influence teacher retention and attrition, such as teacher motivation or leadership styles. Exploring these areas can provide a more complete understanding of why teachers choose to stay or leave. In addition, using longitudinal or experimental research designs may help uncover clearer cause-and-effect relationships, the long-term impact of professional learning community practices and school-based initiatives on teachers' commitment, job satisfaction, and overall decision to remain in Catholic schools.

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