

## FACTORS AFFECTING FOREIGN TEACHER'S TURNOVERS' IN BANGKOK - CASE STUDY: PRIVATE SCHOOLS

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### Abstract

Addressing the teacher turnover issue stands to be one of the important issues for the society and future of the country. This research paper reviews the available literature review on teacher turnovers. The objective of this study is to identify all the possible determinants which influence teacher's turnovers in schools. Many schools suffer from high teacher turnovers in their organizational structure and human resource management. This situation has a negative impact on students learning and in their academic achievement. Besides, addressing the issue is greatly important for school effectiveness, school human resource management, and the school's budget. After the existing literature review identifies influencing determinants on teacher turnovers, it will be clear to understand which factors are vital to address as an issue to improve students learning and academic achievement. This study will provide directions to the Ministry of Education, school presidents and other managers who play the main role in retaining teachers in schools together with further studies to understand and make possible solutions for the issue.

**Keywords:** Determinants of Teacher Turnovers, Teacher Turnovers, Foreign Teacher Turnovers, Private Schools.

### 1. Introduction

Bangkok Thailand is one of the biggest cities in East Asia with its population and where many foreigners come to visit and work. From an education perspective, the city stands to have the most significant number of private schools, both International and Bilingual schools. Having a high number of schools creates high market supply and demand for the country. Students and teachers are the primary resources for the schools that the pool of students and teachers need to understand very well in order to get the best resource allocation. Unlike many other contexts, Bangkok has a different context on school management. From the perspective of private schools, those schools are different from English speaking countries or countries where English is a second language speaking countries. In Thailand, a high number of Thais cannot speak English very well and cannot understand either. So, this is a non-native country where international schools and English program schools stand to be indifferent rankings for society. Because Thailand is a non-native country, there is a big problem of foreign teachers supply for the high demand of schools and similar to several other neighboring countries such as; Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, and Laos. Because of its non-native country, supply must be from native spoken countries such as; USA, Canada, UK, New Zealand, and Australia. Unless the school has a big-budget, many schools hire teachers locally, who comes walk-in, by conducting an interview, demo class, etc. For example, Bangkok international schools have a competitive market in hiring quality foreign teachers, and teacher retention has competitive benefits in order to get the best-qualified teacher. Sometimes, one school can offer a better contract agreement for another school's teacher, and teachers move from one place to another. Those schools that are not able

to compete has difficulty in keeping the teacher in their schools. Therefore, they are dependent on the resource pool, and there are many cases of these situations happen in different schools. As a result, the resource dependency of schools and poor resource allocation and management in Bangkok cost teacher turnovers. From that perspective on, this paper will study teacher turnovers on foreign teachers in Bangkok in private schools.

Education policies studied as one of the significant areas to focus on and improve. In the schools especially, teachers are the main actor who prepares the young generation for the future and teaches them education. Teacher turnovers are one of the areas which should be studied and learned deeply with their different perspectives. It is essential to understand that teacher's job satisfaction and their continuity in schools for an effective and efficient job perspective. Through many studies of past years and decades, there have been continuous studies on how to achieve better teaching jobs from teachers with lower teacher turnover for the schools. From continuous studies through these days, there are several studies mentioned their argument on teacher turnover. Murnane et al. (1990) argued that estimating appropriate salary and compensation has an effect on teachers in academic ability and staying longer in one school. The study of Kelley (2004) shows that it is essential to retain teachers with capable ability in teaching for the current needs of the education system in schools. Her problem with the statement was that it is not worth doing to train teachers who are not in the field yet. Instead of focusing on the teachers who are already in the field will bring better effectiveness and efficiency in schools. If there is enough support to teachers from training, policies, regulations, compensation, and professional development, it will reduce the number of turnover teacher and brings efficiency to schools.

In several decades, the demand for teachers has been increased highly, due to turnover rates of teachers get higher. There are numerous concerns grown by both public and private schools on teacher replacement issue and its nature to the school, education in school, and teacher itself (Boe et al. 2008). Maintaining the effectiveness of schooling and productivity in education brings a great future to the people and country. From that perspective on, teachers stand to be core players in the production and function of effectiveness in education. This study believes that there are several important aspects of teacher turnover, which is highly discussed through studies in different perspectives. Such reasons include compensation and benefit, employee relation and administrative support, students' characteristics, teacher characteristics, different circumstances of teachers, involuntary turnover, etc.

Stating points above as primary reasons for teacher turnover, what is turnover is? From an organizational perspective, labor turnover is a measure of movement in and out of the employment period within a particular organization. There are some low degrees of turnovers considered to be healthy, as well as high degrees of turnover accepted to be a significant problem for the organization. A high degree of labor turnover harms an organization, and it brings less effectiveness and less efficiency to the organization (Ongaki, 2015). According to the data, in 2016, the turnover rate of the US industry was at 17.8%, and whereas in 2011, the turnover rate of the US industry was at 14.4%, which is getting a higher degree of labor turnover over five years. Besides, the rate for teacher turnover for the US was 5.8% in 1988-1999, but in 2012-2013 turnover rate was 8%. There was a particular amount of teacher turnover since 1988, which shows concern to the field of education in school. In general, the term teacher turnover refers to the teachers who move to another profession from their teaching profession (leavers) or who move from one school to another (movers) (Boe et al. 2008). In the last fifteen years, the teacher turnover rate was 17% across the US, together with \$7.3 billion costs a year (Yesil, 2012).

Several studies address the teacher turnover issue from different perspectives. Yesil (2012) stated that problems associated with teacher turnover are lower student achievement, lower teacher, and program quality, especially related to low-performing schools with high poverty. Lower salary, reward system, the poor working environment was one of the significant

determinants of teacher turnover reasons in private schools. Besides, a minority of teachers were seeking better career opportunities or just not satisfied with the teaching profession and moving from the field of teaching. Another main reason for teacher turnover is due to family and personal considerations, respectively. Some teachers have no choice left at all when there is a matter of moving or migrating from one city to another. So, this is the point where a teacher needs to consider whether to stay or carry on. This study reviews the available literature review on teacher turnovers. The objective of this study is to identify all the possible determinants which influence teacher's turnovers in schools for the productivity of teachers at schools, students' achievements, decent resource allocation, and a better understanding of teacher turnover. Also, from an organizational perspective, it is an exceedingly essential issue to address the issue of teacher shortages in order to aspects which organization plays in this matter.

The methodology for this study has chosen carefully with close consideration. First, this paper is a 'meta-analytical' study to some extent, and it studies thirty-five important papers on literature review. In the process of studying those papers, two different approaches considered to study papers on literature review; 'successive approximation' and prioritizing the literature, which speaks directly to the teacher turnover (Ansell et al., 2008). This paper chooses the second strategy to study the literature review that more relevant literature review on teacher turnover on foreign teachers in private schools. First strategy not chosen because it has a less systematic way of arranging relevant literature review to the topic studied. Also, majority of literature review papers found through online sources and searching keywords such as; foreign teacher turnover in private schools, teacher turnover private schools, foreign teacher turnover, teacher turnover, labor turnover in private schools, teacher turnover in Asia, teacher turnover in international schools, labor turnover intention, foreign teacher turnover international schools.

## **2. Objective of Paper**

The main objective of this paper is to identify determinants of teacher turnovers in schools. There are a numerous studies on teacher attrition, retention and teacher turnover, nevertheless there are a smaller number of studies in systematic approach to teacher turnover agenda. This topic is chosen to study because creating effective learning environment is important for high quality education it is important to achieve effectiveness in education. Also, education is path that all of us walk through and it's important to understand and raise awareness of obstacles on that path which young generations will have great and deep understanding of real education. In the end, this study will have contribution to existing literature of teacher turnovers. Discussion and recommendation part give better understanding of solutions and ways to deal systematically with teacher turnovers.

### **Defining Turnover**

Understanding the turnover and application in methodological terms always challenges researchers in the field. There is a lack of consistency in keeping and maintaining the accurate record for finding the turnover rate and its determinants as the reliability of turnover determinations varies according to methods of record keeping. There are various definitions of turnover, such as; turnover is leaving one profession or transfer within the school environment. The turnover definition includes voluntary and involuntary definitions, together with internal and external turnovers (Hayes, 2005). Boe et al. (2008) define turnover in three aspects; leaving the profession, teacher migration or transfer, and transfers within the teaching area. In the teaching field, moving teachers from a particular section to another section tends to bring big concern for teachers in their profession as a teacher. When considering turnover, it is essential to mention that to some extent of a number, and turnover rate is considered to be healthy to an organization, which cannot be a concern for an organization (Ingersoll, 2001).

## **Teacher Turnover Determinants**

Close attention has been committed to an understanding of organizational, individual, and economic factors that influence teacher turnover behavior. Administrative and organizational factors on teacher turnover tends to be more prior comparing to economic factors take prior place in teacher turnover.

### **Administrative Support and Workplace Condition**

Studies reveal that perceived school climate, and work condition stands to be one of the factors on teacher turnovers. Studies on perceived school climate and work condition (Yesil, 2012), indicating four support-related factors has been highlighted related to teacher turnover; administrative support, colleague support, professional support, interference with-teaching. It's obvious that if a teacher is lack of administrative support and class autonomy tent to change school or leave the teaching profession. Leadership style and legitimacy of support give teachers support on their profession as teachers and gives them more chance to supporting organization outcomes. Thomas' (2019) work also supports that teachers have high turnover when a lack of administrative support and leaders have less ability to motivate, communicate the vision and mission of schools properly. If the communication goes not proper between teacher and leader, teachers have more intention to leave compared to other related factors; salary, benefits, and student characteristics. Also, Ongaki's (2015) study reveals that due to a lack of adequate workplace conditions, teachers leave their job on that current place and seek adequate workplace conditions to fulfill their satisfaction. After three consecutive years of study, Garcia (2009) concluded that poor working conditions, along with compensation and benefit, are the primary reason for teacher turnover. Dissatisfaction with the working condition is the primary reason why the teacher leaves a profession or move to another school (Stuit et al. 2010). Moreover, Ingersoll (2001) has deep studies on turnover in organizational and individual aspects. He indicates that there are several fundamental factors on teacher turnovers, including a lack of administration support, low salaries, and student discipline problems. Though inadequate workplace conditions and lack of administrative support on teachers, it is notably important to know the perception of leaders on their support to their subordinates and factors on creating healthy workplace conditions for teachers both from organizational and administrative perception.

### **Student Characteristics**

Through several studies of teacher turnovers, student characteristics stand to be another important factor in teacher leaving profession or migration. Hasnon (2013) studied stress and burnout as major factors for teacher turnover. Along with that, the misbehavior of students in schools gives negative motivation to teachers and stress on their profession as a teacher. In the end, they have unhealthy and stressful work-life, which causes them to leave jobs. Study (Hanushek, 2004) revealed that students' achievement had been affected by teacher turnover and transfers, which brings another turnover to the newly started teacher due to the low achieving of students. However, there are other factors that affect student's achievement, such as; school curriculum, school policies on subjects, and its implementation. Study (Yesil, 2012) also reveal that teachers are more likely to leave the profession or migrate from one school to another if a teacher is involved in teaching greater percentage of poor achievement students along with not considering school poverty. Studies of several types reviewed that student with poor characteristics and lower achievement is more likely to affect as a factor of teacher turnover though there can be other arguments. In this case, it is vital to consider the school curriculum, subject implementation plan, unit plans, and lesson plans, along with the orientation of academic processes to teachers.

## **Supervision**

Another determinant for teacher turnover has been highlighted in several studies. The study reveals (Elfers, 2006) that poor supervision of teachers and in their work might lead to having turnover in schools along with several factors, such as; appropriate assignments, schoolwide structures to support student learning, adequate resource, and opportunities for growth. Odland's (2009) study found that due to a lack of definite communication among administrative leaders themselves, they don't have enough time to focus on the problem of teachers are facing. Hanson (2013) study indicate that a teacher who is assigned with an inadequate schedule of lessons, mentor working loosely with a teacher creates more chance of moving to another school or leave the profession. Another support on teacher turnover determinant by Ongaki (2015) is a supervisor with poor interpersonal skills and inflexible manner leads turnovers in schools. In the understanding of turnovers in school, it is important to study and measure supervisors of each section with the standards set to achieve school vision and mission.

## **Lack of Professional Development**

Lack of professional development stands to be one another determinant for teacher turnover. In fact, there are fewer studies support this factor as a major factor, and it could be argued conditionally. Boe et al. (2008) argue that supporting professional development for teachers as not a major determinant as seeking better career opportunities or dissatisfying with teaching. Another supporting argument on the lack of professional development is by Elfers (2006), which draws a lack of professional development is one aspect of teacher turnover determinants. Ingersoll (2001) reveals in his study the lack of professional development as a minor and weaker factor affecting on teacher turnover in schools. Therefore, a lack of professional development aspect in teacher turnover determinant considers having a weaker influence and not takes one of the major roles to turnover happen.

### **3. Compensation and Benefits**

The economic factor on teacher turnover determines whether a teacher leaves a profession or transfer to another place. Ingersoll (2001) concludes several crucial aspects of teacher turnover through an organizational perspective, including compensation structure for teachers. Though several cases argue compensation is not the main factor why teacher leave their job, there is a strong argument on the literature review of teacher turnovers as compensation and benefits is major reasons for turnover. Morris et al. (2018) study indicate that salary doesn't play an important role in teacher turnover from one teaching job to another. In their study, though there were some teachers who move from low paid to a high paid teaching job, there is still a lower levels of salary teacher who does continue their job. On the other hand, Ongaki (2015) argues that seeking better pay and benefits, poor remuneration, and lack of career planning indicates teacher turnovers in private schools, which 98% of teachers replied to survey. The question raises at this point is to what extentd teachers can satisfy their financial needs and how to set a standard based on their needs in private schools? Garcia (2009) studies teacher turnover in Texas school and finds one of the primary reason for turnover is the lack of adequate compensation and benefit for teachers in Texas schools. Moreover, in the studies of Thomas et al. (2019), there is significant statistical relationships have been found with teacher turnover and compensation. Again, with the qualitative method studies of Odland et al. (2009), there is significant relation have been found with turnover and compensation factor as one of the main reason for turnover to happen. Another argument supported by Elfers (2006) on the influence on teachers' decisions to leave a school was a low salary. So, salary is seen to be one of strong factors which influence teacher's decision in leaving or staying. As a result of arguments based on teacher turnover literature review, compensation, and benefit for teachers stand to be the strong factor which influences their decision on staying or moving from one place to another. Additionally, it is strongly stated that in order to achieve the great performance of teachers in

schools, one of the very primary points to start is a consideration of competitive compensation and benefits of a teacher to influence them with strong organizational policy and structure.

#### **4. Personal Circumstances**

What general literature review on teacher turnover indicates is personal circumstances take a lower level of determinants on teacher turnovers. Together with a study of teacher attrition and teacher turnover, Boe et al. (2008) indicate that teacher attrition takes less percentage as determinants of teacher turnover. Though teachers might have some personal reasons (personal and retirement) to leave or transfer their job, a high percentage of turnover is by organizational policy consideration in schools. On the other hand, Odland (2009) argues that personal circumstances are most of the strong factors influence teacher decided to leave or stay. He draws his arguments through the lack of support from school leaders, contractual issues, and conflict among teachers themselves. Those three strong factors bring personal circumstances to influence teacher's turnover decision-making. Ingersoll (2001) reveals that these kinds of turnover stand to be accepted as normal though it is considered to be under the teacher turnover category. There are some unavoidable circumstances of teachers that teachers should accept and take action, such as pregnancy, child-rearing, health problems, and family moves. However, there is a difference in a turnover on personal circumstances between private and public schools. Private schools tend to have a higher rate of turnover due to personal circumstances comparing to public schools. It can be said that there are two different ways of studying personal circumstances determining teacher turnovers, factors affect from teacher's personal life, and factors affect teacher's life at the organization. Those two aspects of teacher turnover on personal circumstances could be studied separately.

#### **Escape Teaching**

One another determinant of teacher turnover is teachers leaving their profession. Lately, teachers leave their profession due to several reasons, teachers who can seek a better-paid job and a higher level of opportunities for their career path. In a study of Yesil (2012), school poverty factor has no relation to teachers leaving profession, teacher who has four or more years of experience has more likelihood of leaving their teaching profession than teachers who has three and fewer years of experience. Together with teachers who had high job satisfaction, they were less likely to leave their profession if they have a certificate of teaching profession comparing to those who don't have a certificate of the teaching profession. Another study by Stuit et al. (2009) states that teacher who has strong academic background are more likely to leave the profession and move to other better opportunities because they can seek for better jobs in other places of education field together with their remarkable knowledge outside of school. Ingersoll's (2001) studies show that a high percentage of turnovers leave their profession in seeking a better job, another career, and to have better career opportunities for their job life. Also, there can be different arguments on education policy and development for teachers to have strong career planning and opportunities to make them settle their profession at a similar level with other professions, such as; IT, business, and other related fields.

#### **Involuntary Circumstances**

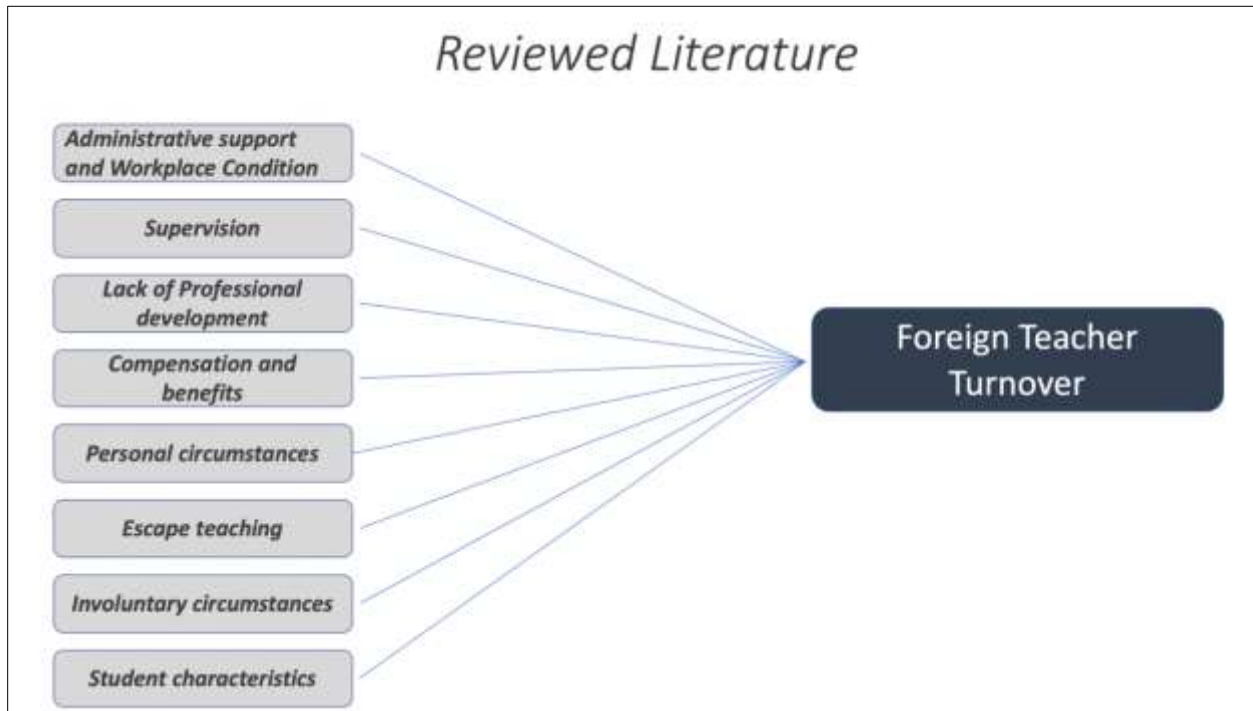
Another remarkable determinant of teacher turnover is circumstances that are done involuntarily. Several studies address the issue of involuntary circumstances of teacher turnover as one of the primary reasons to make turnover happen. In the case of public schools, between the district or within the district can have migration of teachers from one school to another. Those types of turnovers happen because of the staffing actions of administrative leaders (Boe et al., 2008). Another study reveals that due to the status of uncertified teachers or less regulatory barriers to less-performing teachers, involuntary turnover happens. Therefore, it is broad to study this aspect of turnover on teachers due to difficulty in collecting data, nevertheless school

administrative leaders should manage involuntary turnover with less effect to school and teachers themselves through the best resource allocation and effective decision-making process.

### 5. Discussions and Implications

This study was intended to study the determinants of foreign teacher turnovers in private schools in Bangkok. After a systematic study of related literature reviews on teacher turnover, seven common determinants have been identified, and those include administrative support and workplace condition, supervision, lack of professional development, compensation and benefits, personal circumstances, escape teaching, involuntary circumstances. Those determinants studied to have a significant relation with teacher turnover showed in Table 1.

Table 1.



Purposed model, as a result of a literature review study, stands to be a not sufficiently applicable model to Bangkok context of foreign teacher turnovers in private schools. It's because those determinants go along with the more different context of countries such as native English language is spoken countries where the schools can hire native speaker teachers locally. Those countries have an English language environment, and schools have no difficulty in allocating teachers as the main resource. However, that issue is a different context in the Southeast Asia context as Bangkok has a similar context with several countries in SE Asia. Those countries have a smaller number of locally qualified teachers in which private and international schools can meet their needs. As a result, those schools depend on another context in which they can meet their needs. Europe, the USA, UK, New Zealand, and Australia, South Africa, are the main suppliers of those private and international schools where they can meet their needs. Therefore, Bangkok private schools have a different context, and in their supply of teachers, they have different resource dependency than other contexts such as; USA and Europe, and the proposed model is not sufficient to study real determinants on foreign teacher turnovers in Bangkok in private schools.

From that perspective, the model proposed by seven different literature reviews cannot be applied to this Bangkok private school's foreign teacher context. Those determinants are very common factors, but in order to study the foreign teacher turnovers in private schools in Bangkok, it needs a different model of study, and a new model needs to include factors related to the local context. This is the point where a new model is going to run and test foreign teacher turnovers in private schools in Bangkok. The purposed model will be studied through a questionnaire and survey adapted from the USA context. However, questionnaires and surveys will be adapted to the Bangkok context by adding and editing measurements such as; adding pm 2.5 issue, coronavirus, cultural behavior, teacher-student relationship, the intention of willingness on social responsibility, government role in teacher turnover, cultural and environmental differences, and others.

The theoretical background for this study will include different theories from different areas because of the Bangkok context. Foreign teachers in private schools in Bangkok deal with different cultures of students and different behaviors of students where values, thinking, views differ. Therefore, this paper will study teacher turnover through expectancy theory from sociology. Expectancy theory focuses on the motivation of individuals, why they do what they do, and what motivates them what they do. For the continuous productivity of the individual, it is important to know their expectational determinants. Second, another aspect that Bangkok differs from other contexts is the organizational perspective of those supplying foreign teachers in private schools in Bangkok. There is a scarce resource for schools, and it needs the strategical allocation of resources and minimizes the dependence on their needs. Therefore, another theory that will be used in this paper is Resource Dependency Theory from organization theory. Resource dependency theory states that the goal of the organization is to minimize its dependencies on other organizations for the supply of resources and to find ways to influence others with available resources. Lastly, the motivational theory will be applied by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This is one of the common theories that can be applied in both the SE Asian context and the USA and Europe context because it is based on the motivation and studies the motivation of people.

Furthermore, a model developed as a result of this study will be greatly useful for the Bangkok context of issues related to teacher turnover in schools. First, this study will show ways for private schools to keep stability on their teachers and in school management. It will help to increase the learning quality of students and making learning environment for students. Foreign teachers will be studied more deeply so that private schools can meet their needs and make a strategic plan in their resource allocation. Second, this model can be used in expanding schools in neighboring countries with the same context of Bangkok, such as; Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam. For the investors on education and building schools, organizational survival stands to be core beliefs and expectations. Also, this new proposed model will be useful for those who invest in schooling in the future to find out determinants of teacher turnovers.

Since several years ago, Thailand boosted its economic project area for investors of every nation and welcoming them for economic development for Thailand and for their investment. The main action was taken is the 'free zone' idea, and it's now applied by many investors. Once you have an investment in the Eastern economic corridor, this is a very good chance for some investors of school also and they will be exempted from paying tax, and that is what real investors are looking for. Truly, this new model will help investors in establishing their school system and help to maintain fruitful teachers for the learning of students.



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