

# **Career Prospects and Professional Development of Private Elementary School Teachers in Lingayen, Pangasinan**

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**Abstract** – This study explored the career prospects and professional development engagement of private elementary school teachers in Lingayen, Pangasinan. The research aimed to examine their demographic and professional profiles, perceived career opportunities, level of involvement in professional development initiatives, and the relationship between these factors. Findings revealed that the majority of the teachers are young (aged 21–30), female, and single, primarily teaching in the primary grades with a bachelor's degree. Most are employed on a contract basis, have limited teaching experience, and receive modest salaries ranging from Php 7,501 to Php 12,500. Professional training exposure among respondents was moderate. Teachers perceived moderate to high levels of career opportunity, particularly in professional development and leadership. However, transparency in promotion processes was a noted concern. While satisfaction with salary and benefits was relatively low, job security and work-life balance were rated positively. The level of engagement in professional development initiatives was notably high. Teachers actively participated in both formal and informal training, especially in collaborative, school-based activities, and were able to apply new knowledge to their teaching practice. Statistical analysis showed no significant relationship between teachers' demographic profiles and their perception of career opportunities, suggesting a relatively equitable environment. However, a significant positive relationship was found between the number of seminars attended and the level of engagement in professional development. In response to the findings, the study proposed a comprehensive faculty development program designed to strengthen support systems, enhance career growth opportunities, promote recognition, and improve institutional policies in private elementary schools. The program features clear objectives, structured implementation plans, and a monitoring framework to ensure sustained impact and continuous improvement.

**Keywords** – Career Prospects, Professional Development, Private School Teachers, Faculty Development, Employment Conditions, Contractual Teachers, Teacher Motivation

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the landscape of Philippine education, private school teachers play an essential role in shaping the foundational competencies of young learners. In municipalities like Lingayen, Pangasinan, where both public and private educational institutions coexist, the career prospects and professional development of private elementary school teachers deserve closer academic attention. Unlike public school counterparts, private school teachers often face limited access to government-funded development programs, promotion pathways, and

salary grades mandated under the Magna Carta for Public School Teachers (Republic Act No. 4670).

A study by UNESCO (2022) highlights that in many low- and middle-income countries, private school teachers often work under precarious contracts with limited access to benefits, job security, or state-recognized teaching credentials. For instance, in countries like India and Kenya, private school teachers are typically paid significantly less than public school

teachers and often lack access to structured professional development or tenure-based promotion systems (UNESCO, 2022; Bold et al., 2017).

These disparities contribute to a fragmented career outlook, where many private educators do not envision long-term professional growth within the sector. However, some governments have made strides in integrating private school teachers into national frameworks. In Finland, for example, private and public-school teachers are entitled to equal pay and access to national training programs, promoting equitable career progression and retention (Sahlberg, 2015). Such models demonstrate that legal frameworks and institutional policies play a crucial role in shaping the career outlook of private school teachers. Hence, to support the sustainable career development of private educators, especially in the Philippines, it is essential to align legal provisions, institutional policies, and support programs with inclusive and equitable education policies adopted globally.

A crucial avenue for private school teachers aiming for more secure and better-compensated positions lies in their potential transition to the public school system under the Department of Education (DepEd). However, the application and promotion process is highly structured and competitive. Based on DepEd Order No. 007, s. 2023, one of the key criteria in the hiring and promotion of Teacher I positions is "teaching experience." DepEd's point system grants up to 15 points for teaching experience, depending on the number of years and the relevance of experience to the teaching position being applied for. For instance, applicants with one year of full-time teaching experience in a DepEd-recognized private school may be awarded 1.5 points, while those with five years may receive 7.5 points (Department of Education, 2023).

Despite this provision, private school teachers often encounter systemic barriers. These include lower compensation, lack of tenure security, and limited opportunities for funded training or scholarships (Montemayor, 2018). According to a study by Castillo

(2021), many private school teachers perceive their career growth as stagnant due to restricted promotion mechanisms and fewer incentives for continuous learning. Additionally, the Philippine Business for Education (PBE) noted in 2020 that while private school teachers are equally qualified, they are less likely to be prioritized in government training and capacity-building programs, widening the professional development gap between them and public-school teachers.

This disparity raises concerns not only for individual career fulfillment but also for broader educational outcomes, as teacher motivation and growth are directly linked to student achievement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). While numerous studies have explored teacher development in public institutions, there is limited local literature focusing specifically on the experiences, aspirations, and challenges of private elementary school teachers—particularly in regional areas such as Lingayen, Pangasinan.

Most research on teacher professional development in the Philippines tends to generalize across the teaching profession or focus exclusively on public schools (Brillantes & Fernandez, 2019). The voices of private elementary school teachers, especially outside urban centers—remain underrepresented in both national education policy dialogue and scholarly literature. Moreover, there is a scarcity of data on how teaching experience in the private sector translates into actual mobility or promotion within the DepEd framework. These gaps hinder effective policymaking and limit the ability of private institutions to support their teaching personnel in building sustainable, rewarding careers.

Educational institutions in Pangasinan are proactive in enhancing the skills of their faculty. For instance, the Pangasinan State University, Lingayen Campus the lone SUC in the municipality, organized a two-day Professional Development and Orientation Program for its new faculty members. This program covered various topics, including university policies, teaching strategies, and stress management, aiming to

equip educators with essential tools for effective teaching and personal well-being (Pangasinan State University, 2020). The event aims to support teaching personnel in the municipality and other education professionals by providing additional training opportunities and enhancing faculty development among teachers.

A study conducted in Bukidnon, though not specific to Pangasinan, provides valuable insights into private school teachers' perceptions. The research highlighted that teacher generally felt positive about their professional development opportunities, working environment, and retention. Factors such as school leadership, teacher empowerment, and available resources were identified as significant contributors to job satisfaction. However, challenges like workload management and time constraints were also noted, suggesting areas for improvement to enhance teacher retention (Alarcon & Monterola, 2024).

Teachers in Pangasinan, as in many regions, face challenges such as limited resources, inadequate support, and relatively low compensation. These issues can lead to burnout and affect the quality of education. Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from both government and educational institutions to invest in teacher training, improve working conditions, and offer competitive salaries.

The increasing integration of technology in education presents an opportunity for teachers in Pangasinan to enhance their teaching methods and access to resources. Participating in workshops and training sessions on digital tools can aid teachers in adopting innovative teaching strategies, thereby improving student engagement and learning outcomes.

To further elevate the teaching profession in Lingayen and the broader Pangasinan province, the following strategies are recommended. Continuous professional development, which is to implement regular training programs that focus on both pedagogical skills and personal development. Further, improved working

conditions which will enhance classroom resources, reduce excessive workloads, and provide administrative support to create a conducive teaching environment.

Competitive compensation that review and adjust salary scales to reflect the importance of the teaching profession and retain qualified educators. Lastly, is community engagement that foster partnerships between schools, local communities, and government agencies to build a support system for teachers.

Addressing these areas, private school teachers in rural areas, specifically Lingayen, Pangasinan, can experience enhanced career satisfaction and contribute more effectively to the educational development of their students.

Hence, this study is timely and relevant. It aims to explore the career prospects and professional development initiatives of private elementary school teachers in Lingayen, Pangasinan. This research will aim to identify, existing challenges, and the degree to which their current teaching experience and development efforts prepare them for possible upward mobility—whether within the private system or through a transition to the public sector.

This research further seeks to inform stakeholders—school administrators, policymakers, and educators—on how to better support private school teachers in their professional journey, ensuring more equitable access to career advancement opportunities regardless of institutional affiliation.

This research aimed to determine the career prospects and professional development of private elementary school teachers in Lingayen, Pangasinan. Specifically, the study examined the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender, marital status, grade level taught, highest educational attainment, number of years of teaching experience, employment status, number of seminars or training programs attended, and monthly salary range. It also assessed the

level of career prospect opportunities available to private school teachers with respect to professional development opportunities, promotion and career advancement, salary and benefits, job security and stability, and work–life balance. In addition, the study investigated the level of teachers' engagement in professional development initiatives, focusing on their participation in formal professional development activities, engagement in informal learning activities, involvement in school-based professional development programs, administrative support for professional development, and the application of learned knowledge and skills in classroom practice. Finally, the research sought to determine whether there is a significant relationship between the level of career prospect opportunities and the professional development engagement of private elementary school teachers, as well as whether a significant relationship exists between teachers' level of engagement and their profile variables.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study utilized a descriptive research design to determine the career prospects and professional development of private elementary school teachers in Lingayen, Pangasinan. This design is appropriate as it allows for the collection of quantifiable information that describes existing condition. Data was gathered through a structured survey questionnaire, and results was analyzed using descriptive statistics to interpret patterns and trends related to the respondents' professional development and aspirations. The target participants of this study are private elementary school teachers in Lingayen, Pangasinan. A probability sampling technique – specifically purposive sampling be employed to support the inferential of the study.

This approach is chosen due to the manageable population size and the aim of capturing a comprehensive representation of the perspectives and experiences of private school teachers in the area. While the intention is to include the entire population, participation remains voluntary, and the actual number

of responses may be affected by non-response or availability constraints. The target population includes all full-time private elementary school teachers currently employed in Lingayen, excluding part-time, substitute teachers, administrative personnel, and those on extended leave during the data collection period.

Target population refers to the specific individuals or groups of people who are selected as the focus of a research study (McCombes, 2019). While the study will employ a purposive sampling technique involving the total 98 private school teachers in Lingayen, Pangasinan, it is recognized that the actual number of respondents may vary.

Participation in the survey is voluntary, and response rates can be influenced by several factors, such as availability of the teachers, support from school administrators, and the perceived relevance of the study. In educational research, response rates typically range from 50% to 90%. A high response rate of around 90% may be attained with strong administrative support and consistent follow-up, resulting in approximately 121 respondents. A more moderate and realistic response rate is around 70%, which is considered acceptable and common for self-administered questionnaires in school settings (Baruch & Holtom, 2008)

On the lower end, a response rate of 50% would result in around 67 participants. Given these variations, the researcher anticipates a 70% response rate as the most probable scenario, balancing feasibility with expected engagement from the target population. Further, the academic year 2024-2025 for the private school teachers in the municipality ends in April to May 2025. This may tend to other teachers to be in vacation leave that leads to fewer respondents. The table presents the target respondents of the study.

The study utilized a structured survey questionnaire as the primary data-gathering instrument. The questionnaire was composed of three parts: Part I gathered the demographic profile of the respondents, including age, gender, marital status, grade level taught,

educational attainment, teaching experience, employment status, number of seminars or trainings attended, and monthly salary range, which provided a basis for analyzing patterns in career prospects and professional development. Part II assessed the level of career prospect opportunities of private elementary school teachers in Lingayen in terms of professional development, promotion and career advancement, salary and benefits, job security and stability, and work–life balance, offering insights into teachers’ career aspirations and professional growth. Part III determined the level of teachers’ engagement in professional development initiatives, focusing on participation in formal and informal learning activities, involvement in school-based programs, administrative support, and the application of learned knowledge and skills in classroom practice to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Data collection was conducted through the administration of the validated questionnaire to private elementary school teachers in Lingayen, Pangasinan, following approval from school heads and informed consent from the respondents. The survey was distributed through face-to-face or online means, and all responses were treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Profile of the private elementary school teachers in Lingayen, Pangasinan**

The demographic profile of private elementary school teachers is essential in establishing a comprehensive context for analyzing their career prospects and professional development. In the municipality of Lingayen, Pangasinan, private school teachers play a vital role in shaping foundational education. This study examines key characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, grade level taught, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, employment status, number of seminars or trainings attended, and monthly salary range. It highlights key variables such as age, gender, marital status, grade level taught, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, employment status, number of seminars or

trainings attended, and monthly salary range. These data offer a foundational understanding of the respondents’ backgrounds, which is essential in analyzing their professional development and career prospects

The demographic profile of the 98 private elementary school teacher respondents was examined in terms of age, gender, marital status, grade level taught, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, employment status, number of seminars or trainings attended, and monthly salary range.

In terms of age, a significant majority (67.3%) of the respondents were between 21 to 30 years old, followed by 16.3% who were aged 31 to 40 years. Only 13.3% were between 41 to 50 years old, while a small fraction (3.1%) were aged 51 years and above. These findings indicate that the teaching workforce in private elementary schools in Lingayen is predominantly young and in the early stages of their professional careers.

Regarding gender, the data reveal that 73.5% of the respondents were female, while only 26.5% were male. This reflects a common trend in the Philippine elementary education sector, where teaching remains a female-dominated profession (DepEd, 2022).

As for marital status, most of the respondents were single (66.3%), while 30.6% were married, and a minimal percentage (3.1%) were widowed or separated. The high proportion of single teachers may correlate with the age distribution, as the majority are relatively young. When it comes to the grade level taught, the distribution was varied: 25.5% taught Kindergarten, 10.2% taught Grade 1, 9.2% handled Grade 2, 10.2% were in Grade 3, 14.3% in Grade 4, 11.2% in Grade 5, and 19.4% in Grade 6.

This diverse spread across grade levels suggests a balanced distribution of teaching assignments in private schools. In terms of highest educational attainment, 70.4% of the respondents held a Bachelor’s degree, 21.4% had earned units in a Master’s program, 7.1% had completed their Master’s degree, and 1.0%



held doctorate units. These data show that while the majority have attained the minimum qualification for teaching, only a small percentage have pursued advanced graduate studies, which may impact their eligibility for higher positions and salary grades (CHED, 2020).

With regard to teaching experience, 63.3% of the respondents had five years or less of teaching experience, 17.3% had 6–10 years, 9.2% had 11–15 years, and only 10.2% had been teaching for more than 16 years. This aligns with the earlier observation that most teachers are in the early stages of their careers, which may imply a relatively high turnover or a preference for younger, less expensive labor in private institutions.

In terms of employment status, a large portion (58.2%) were employed under a contract of service, while only 38.8% held permanent positions and 3.1% were under temporary status. The prevalence of contract-based employment reflects limited job security, a common issue in private educational institutions (Bernardo et al., 2021).

When asked about the number of professional development seminars or trainings attended, 37.8% reported having attended 1–3 trainings, 24.5% attended 7–9 trainings, 14.3% had more than 10, and 23.5% had not attended any professional development activity. These figures indicate that while many have engaged in some form of professional growth, a notable segment lacks sufficient exposure to such development opportunities.

As for monthly salary range, the majority of respondents (40.8%) earned between Php 7,501 and Php 10,000. A quarter (25.5%) earned Php 10,001–Php 12,500, while smaller percentages received either less than Php 7,500 or more than Php 15,000. Only 6.1% reported earning above Php 22,500. These figures suggest that most teachers in the private sector earn well below the government-prescribed salary for public school teachers, which may affect job satisfaction and retention. The data reflect a profile of a predominantly young, female teaching workforce with limited tenure,

modest salaries, and a relatively low level of permanent employment status. These findings align with previous studies by Tullao and Rivera (2021), which indicate that private school teachers in the Philippines often face challenges related to professional stability and access to continuous development.

### **Level of Opportunities of Career Prospects for Private School Teachers**

Career opportunities are vital in shaping the professional growth, job satisfaction, and retention of teachers, particularly in the private education sector. This section investigates the level of career prospects available to private elementary school teachers in Lingayen, Pangasinan. It specifically examines five sub-variables: (1) professional development opportunities, (2) promotion and career advancement, (3) salary and benefits, (4) job security and stability, and (5) work-life balance. These dimensions are critical in understanding the factors that contribute to a sustainable and fulfilling teaching career.

To evaluate the teachers' perceptions, a 5-point Likert scale was employed, with response options ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The statistical treatment used includes the computation of weighted means for each sub-variable to determine the overall level of career opportunities as perceived by the respondents. The analysis aims to provide data-driven insights that can inform institutional policies and strategies for supporting the career growth of private school teachers Table 1 shows the summary level of career opportunities for private school teachers.

**Table 1.** Summary Level of Career Opportunities for Private School Teachers

<b>Level of Career Opportunities along:</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Description</b>
A. Professional Development Opportunities	4.11	Agree

B. Promotion and Career Advancement	4.03	Agree
C. Salary and Benefits	3.93	Agree
D. Job Security and Stability	4.09	Agree
E. Work-Life Balance	4.18	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>4.07</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Legend:

1.00-1.50 (SD- Strongly Disagree); 1.51-2.50 (D- Disagree); 2.51-3.50 (MA- Moderately Agree); 3.51-4.50 (A- Agree); 4.51-5.00 (SA- Strongly Agree);

Private elementary school teachers in Lingayen generally perceive moderate to high levels of opportunity in their professional settings. Support for professional development and work-life balance is evident and well-received. Promotion and career advancement systems are present but could benefit from increased transparency and stronger recognition programs. Salary satisfaction remains an area of concern, consistent with national and regional findings about the private education sector.

While policies on job security exist, full assurance of stability remains uneven, particularly where schools operate on year-to-year contract renewals. These findings underscore the need for school administrators and policymakers to create more consistent and transparent mechanisms for promotion, improve salary structures, and ensure that job security policies are clearly communicated and fairly implemented. Addressing these factors could enhance teacher motivation, institutional loyalty, and ultimately, educational outcomes.

#### **Level of engagement in professional development initiatives of the teachers in private elementary schools**

The engagement of teachers in professional development (PD) initiatives plays a critical role in enhancing their instructional competencies, career growth, and overall job satisfaction. For private

elementary school teachers in Lingayen, Pangasinan, active participation in PD activities can be indicative of institutional support and personal motivation for continuous learning. This section investigates the level of engagement in professional development initiatives, focusing on five sub-variables: (1) participation in formal professional development activities, (2) engagement in informal learning activities, (3) involvement in school-based professional development programs, (4) support for professional development from school administration, and (5) application of learned knowledge and skills in teaching practices.

Table 2 summarizes the overall engagement of private school teachers in professional development initiatives across five dimensions. The data reveals a grand mean of 3.71, which falls within the “Highly Engaged” range. This suggests that teachers in private elementary schools in Lingayen exhibit a consistent and commendable commitment to their professional growth across multiple domains.

**Table 2.** Summary Level of Engagement in professional Development for Private School Teachers

<b>Level of Engagement along:</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Description</b>
A. Participation in Formal Professional Development Activities	3.64	Highly Engaged
B. Engagement in Informal Learning Activities	3.84	Highly Engaged
C. Involvement in School-Based Professional Development Programs	3.53	Highly Engaged
D. Support from School Management	3.69	Highly Engaged

E. Application of Acquired Knowledge and Skills in Classroom Practice	3.86	Highly Engaged
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>Highly Engaged</b>

Legend:

1.00-1.50 (NE- Not Engaged); 1.51-2.50 (RE- Rarely Engaged); 2.51-3.50 (ME- Moderately Engaged); 3.51-4.50 (HE- Highly Engaged); 4.51-5.00 (VHE- Very Highly Engaged);

Among the dimensions, the highest engagement was reported in Application of Acquired Knowledge and Skills in Classroom Practice (3.86), followed closely by Engagement in Informal Learning Activities (3.84). These findings indicate that teachers are not only participating in learning activities but are also actively integrating new knowledge into their instructional practices. This aligns with the goals of the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), which emphasize the importance of reflective practice and the ability to translate professional learning into effective teaching (DepEd Order No. 42, s. 2017).

Similarly, the teachers' engagement in Support from School Management (3.69) and Participation in Formal Professional Development Activities (3.64) further underscores the supportive role of school leadership and the value teachers place on structured, credential-based learning opportunities such as seminars, workshops, and graduate studies. These components reflect how private school teachers are making deliberate efforts to enhance their competencies despite the common limitations in financial and systemic resources in private institutions.

The lowest yet still highly rated dimension is Involvement in School-Based Professional Development Programs (3.53). While still categorized as "Highly Engaged," this area may benefit from improvement, particularly in fostering teacher leadership roles within

internal PD programs such as Learning Action Cells (LACs), peer mentoring, and facilitation of in-service training. Previous literature (e.g., Desimone & Garet, 2015; Rajapakse et al., 2024) confirms that teacher efficacy and engagement are significantly enhanced when educators are given opportunities to lead and co-design professional learning.

The consistently high levels of engagement reflect a professional culture in which private school teachers value continuous learning and are supported—formally and informally—in their career advancement. These findings affirm the need for sustained investment in professional development systems that are aligned with national teaching standards, such as the PPST, and responsive to the needs of educators in private institutions.

Moreover, with many teachers in the private sector earning modest salaries, professional development becomes not just a pathway to instructional excellence but also a mechanism for career progression, empowerment, and retention. For level of engagement in professional development initiatives among private school teachers in Lingayen is promising and reflective of a maturing professional environment. Sustained institutional support, along with the encouragement of teacher leadership and reflective practice, will be key to maintaining this momentum and ensuring its long-term impact on teacher performance and student outcomes.

### **Relationship between the level of opportunities of career prospects for private elementary school teachers and their profile**

This section aims to determine whether a significant relationship exists between the level of career opportunities available to private elementary school teachers and their demographic profile. Examining variables such as age, gender, marital status, grade level taught, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, employment status, number of seminars/trainings attended, and monthly salary range, the study seeks to identify patterns that may influence perceptions of career prospects.



The findings are expected to inform targeted interventions and policy adjustments to address disparities and support equitable opportunities for all private school teachers.

Table 3 presents the relationship between the level of opportunities of career prospects for private elementary school teachers and their profile.

**Table 3.** Relationship between the level of opportunities of career prospects for private elementary school teachers and their profile

Profile	Level of Opportunities	Sig.
Age <sup>a</sup>	.029	.778
Highest Educational Attainment <sup>a</sup>	-.080	.431
Number of years of Teaching Experience <sup>a</sup>	-.050	.626
Number of seminars/ training on professional development attended <sup>a</sup>	.080	.436
Monthly Salary Range <sup>a</sup>	.032	.753
Gender <sup>b</sup>	1.138	.768
marital status <sup>b</sup>	3.183	.786
Employment Status <sup>b</sup>	5.339	.501

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). <sup>a</sup> Spearman rank correlation <sup>b</sup> Chi-square test

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

To determine whether there is a significant relationship between the teachers' demographic profile and their perceived level of opportunities for career prospects, both Spearman rank correlation (for ordinal data) and Chi-square tests (for nominal data) were employed. The profile variables examined included age, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, number of seminars or trainings attended, monthly salary range, gender, marital status, and employment status.

The results revealed that none of the profile variables showed a statistically significant relationship with the level of opportunities of career prospects, as all p-values were above the 0.05 threshold. Specifically, age ( $r = .029$ ,  $p = .778$ ), highest educational attainment ( $r = -.080$ ,  $p = .431$ ), teaching experience ( $r = -.050$ ,  $p = .626$ ), seminars/trainings attended ( $r = .080$ ,  $p = .436$ ), and salary range ( $r = .032$ ,  $p = .753$ ) yielded weak and non-significant correlation values. This suggests that

individual attributes such as academic background, teaching tenure, and income do not strongly influence how teachers perceive their career prospects within their respective schools.

Similarly, the results from the Chi-square tests for categorical variables—gender ( $\chi^2 = 1.138$ ,  $p = .768$ ), marital status ( $\chi^2 = 3.183$ ,  $p = .786$ ), and employment status ( $\chi^2 = 5.339$ ,  $p = .501$ )—also showed no significant association with perceived opportunities. These findings indicate that both male and female teachers, regardless of their civil or employment status, view career opportunities in similar ways.

This lack of significant relationship may point to a relatively uniform professional experience among private school teachers in the study area, possibly due to standardized employment conditions or organizational structures that provide the same opportunities across demographic groups. The findings are consistent with

those of Madalum et al. (2024), who found that in certain private school settings, professional advancement and development opportunities were often based on school-wide policies rather than individual qualifications or background.

Similarly, Mendoza and Quiambao (2022) noted that private educational institutions, particularly in small municipalities, tend to offer equal access to professional activities regardless of demographic distinctions, although these opportunities may still be limited in scope overall.

These results may also reflect the influence of institutional factors rather than personal characteristics. According to Desimone and Garet (2015), the availability and quality of career development opportunities are often shaped more by leadership support, school policy, and funding than by teacher-specific attributes. This interpretation is supported by Rajapakse et al. (2024), who argued that systemic and structural variables, such as school size, budget, and culture, have a greater impact on career trajectories in private schools than do individual qualifications.

### **Relationship between the Level of engagement in professional development initiatives of private teachers and their profile**

This section explores the relationship between the level of engagement in professional development

initiatives and the demographic profile of private elementary school teachers in Lingayen, Pangasinan. The study examines whether personal and professional characteristics—such as age, gender, marital status, grade level taught, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, employment status, number of seminars or trainings attended, and monthly salary range—are significantly associated with teachers' involvement in professional development activities.

Through statistical analysis, this inquiry aims to reveal patterns that may influence or predict teachers' participation in both formal and informal learning opportunities. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of which groups may require more support or encouragement in pursuing continuous professional growth.

Table 4 presents the relationship between level of engagement in professional development initiatives of private teachers and their profile. The relationship between the level of engagement in professional development initiatives among private school teachers and their profile was examined using Spearman rank correlation for ordinal and interval data and Chi-square tests for categorical variables.

**Table 4.** Relationship Between Level of Engagement in professional development initiatives of private teachers and their profile

<b>Profile</b>	<b>Level of Engagement</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Age <sup>a</sup>	-.047	.643
Highest Educational Attainment <sup>a</sup>	.161	.113
Number of years of Teaching Experience <sup>a</sup>	-.090	.380
<b>Number of seminars/ training on professional development attended <sup>a</sup></b>	<b>.281</b>	<b>.005</b>
Monthly Salary Range <sup>a</sup>	-.046	.653
Gender <sup>b</sup>	3.069	.546

marital status <sup>b</sup>	5.889	.660
Employment Status <sup>b</sup>	6.811	.607

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).<sup>a</sup> Spearman rank correlation<sup>b</sup>

Chi-square test

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

The analysis revealed that among the different profile variables, only the number of seminars or training sessions attended related to professional development had a statistically significant relationship with the level of engagement, with a Spearman correlation coefficient of **0.281** and a **p-value of 0.005**, indicating a moderate and positive correlation at the 0.01 level of significance. This suggests that teachers who have attended more professional development activities tend to be more engaged in such initiatives, highlighting the reinforcing nature of participation and interest in professional growth.

On the other hand, no significant relationships were found between the level of engagement and other profile variables, including age ( $r = -0.047$ ,  $p = 0.643$ ), highest educational attainment ( $r = 0.161$ ,  $p = 0.113$ ), years of teaching experience ( $r = -0.090$ ,  $p = 0.380$ ), and monthly salary range ( $r = -0.046$ ,  $p = 0.653$ ). These results imply that these demographic and professional characteristics do not meaningfully influence teachers' engagement in professional development activities.

Additionally, Chi-square tests showed no significant associations between level of engagement and categorical variables such as gender ( $\chi^2 = 3.069$ ,  $p = 0.546$ ), marital status ( $\chi^2 = 5.889$ ,  $p = 0.660$ ), and employment status ( $\chi^2 = 6.811$ ,  $p = 0.607$ ). These findings suggest that neither personal background nor employment type plays a statistically significant role in influencing a private school teacher's involvement in professional development.

The analysis indicates that actual participation in seminars and training is the strongest and only significant predictor of a teacher's level of engagement in professional development initiatives, while other profile factors show no meaningful correlation. This

underscores the importance of providing frequent and accessible professional development opportunities to foster deeper engagement among private school teachers.

To determine whether engagement in professional development initiatives is associated with the demographic and professional characteristics of teachers, both Spearman rank correlation and Chi-square tests were utilized. The profile variables analyzed included age, highest educational attainment, years of teaching experience, number of seminars or training attended, monthly salary range, gender, marital status, and employment status.

The results revealed that only one variable—number of seminars or training sessions attended—had a statistically significant relationship with the level of engagement in professional development initiatives. This variable yielded a Spearman correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.281$  with a p-value of 0.005, indicating a moderate and positive correlation at the 0.01 level of significance. This suggests that teachers who have previously attended more training sessions or seminars are significantly more engaged in ongoing professional development. This reinforces the idea of a self-sustaining cycle in which initial exposure to training fosters further interest and motivation to participate in future professional learning activities.

This finding aligns with the work of Guo et al. (2024), who highlighted that early participation in PD activities enhances both self-efficacy and long-term engagement. Similarly, Cukurova et al. (2023) argued that exposure to continuous learning environments helps create a feedback loop in which positive experiences in professional development inspire ongoing participation. These results affirm the importance of ensuring consistent and accessible training programs as a way to

cultivate an enduring culture of professional growth among educators.

In contrast, no significant relationships were found between engagement levels and other demographic or professional profile variables. These include age ( $r = -0.047$ ,  $p = 0.643$ ), highest educational attainment ( $r = 0.161$ ,  $p = 0.113$ ), years of teaching experience ( $r = -0.090$ ,  $p = 0.380$ ), and monthly salary range ( $r = -0.046$ ,  $p = 0.653$ ). This indicates that neither length of service nor academic background strongly influences teachers' involvement in professional development activities. Similarly, the Chi-square tests for categorical variables such as gender ( $\chi^2 = 3.069$ ,  $p = 0.546$ ), marital status ( $\chi^2 = 5.889$ ,  $p = 0.660$ ), and employment status ( $\chi^2 = 6.811$ ,  $p = 0.607$ ) revealed no significant associations with engagement.

These findings suggest that the motivation to engage in PD is driven more by actual exposure to development opportunities rather than by inherent demographic traits or employment characteristics. This is consistent with Viberg et al. (2023), who emphasized that while personal background may influence initial attitudes toward PD, consistent participation and organizational support are more crucial predictors of sustained engagement. It also supports the idea presented by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), that high-quality PD systems must be inclusive and proactive in reaching all teachers—regardless of age, status, or qualifications—because engagement is best nurtured through access, encouragement, and relevance of content.

The findings for SOP 5 indicate that among all profile variables, the number of seminars and training sessions attended is the only factor significantly related to higher engagement in PD initiatives. This highlights the reinforcing nature of participation, where exposure to meaningful training increases the likelihood of continued involvement. School leaders and policymakers should thus focus on expanding access to high-quality PD programs and encouraging initial participation, especially among early-career teachers, to stimulate long-term professional engagement.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that the teaching workforce in private elementary schools in Lingayen is largely composed of young, female, and early-career teachers who are mostly bachelor's degree holders, have limited teaching experience, and are employed under contract-based arrangements with relatively low salaries. These conditions raise concerns about job security, compensation, access to advanced career development, and their possible effects on teacher motivation and long-term retention. Teachers generally perceive moderate to high career opportunities, particularly in professional development and work-life balance; however, dissatisfaction persists regarding salary levels, unclear promotion systems, and insecure employment, especially among contractual teachers. While access to career opportunities appears consistent across demographic profiles, this uniformity does not equate to adequacy or satisfaction. Teachers show strong engagement in professional development, especially in applying learned skills and informal learning, yet participation in school-based initiatives such as Learning Action Cells remains limited, indicating the need to strengthen teacher leadership and peer-driven programs. No significant relationship exists between demographic variables and perceived career opportunities, suggesting standardized employment conditions across private schools. Notably, the number of professional development seminars attended is the only variable significantly associated with engagement, highlighting the motivating effect of sustained exposure to growth opportunities. Based on these findings, it is recommended that private schools implement structured induction and mentoring programs, transparent promotion and salary systems, fair employment pathways, and stronger school-based professional development led by teachers. School leaders and policymakers should prioritize inclusive, institution-wide improvements and design a comprehensive faculty development plan aligned with the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers to support continuous growth, leadership development, and instructional quality.

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