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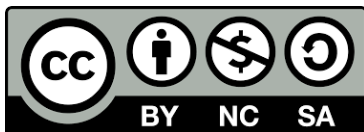
Teacher Motivation for Staying in the Profession: Insights from Vietnam

Katherine P. Torralba, Hiyas S. Clamor-Torneo,
Sherlyne A. Almonte-Acosta, PhD, Lee Thunder T. Bernasor,
and Erlene G. Umali

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Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1101, Philippines
Contact: info@seameo-innotech.org

Lead Author: Katherine P. Torralba

Co-authors: Hiyas S. Clamor-Torneo, Sherlyne A. Almonte-Acosta, PhD,
Lee Thunder T. Bernasor, and Erlene G. Umali

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Contents

Acknowledgements	5
Abstract	6
I. Introduction	7
II. Results and Discussion	12
<i>Level of Motivation of Teachers to Remain in the Profession</i>	12
<i>Factors Relevant to Teacher Motivation in Staying in the Profession</i>	13
<i>Relationship Between Factors of Motivation and the Level of Motivation of Teachers</i>	34
<i>Relationships Between Other Indicators and Level of Motivation of Teachers</i>	35
<i>Predictive Model of Teacher Motivation in Staying in the Profession in Vietnam</i>	47
III. Conclusion	50
References	54
Appendix	56
<i>Statistical Results of the Study</i>	56

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Abstract

Understanding what motivates teachers to stay is crucial for ensuring the continuity and commitment of the teaching workforce. Recognizing its importance, this study examined the factors influencing teachers' motivation to remain in the teaching workforce. Descriptive statistics revealed that teacher respondents in Vietnam were highly motivated to stay. They also perceived the motivational factors – sense of purpose and fulfillment, interest and passion for teaching, sense of growth and development, sense of being respected and valued, school environment, well-being, salary, incentives and benefits, and government laws and policies – as relevant to their context. Inferential statistics unveiled that all of these factors are associated with motivation to stay. Length of teaching, hours spent teaching, travel time, and grade levels taught were also correlated with motivation. Teachers reported varying levels of motivation based on the frequency of salary increases, engagement in nonteaching-related tasks, access to instructional resources and school facilities, highest educational attainment, engagement in graduate studies, promotion history, and frequency. A predictive model for teacher motivation to stay was also developed. Policy recommendations were proposed based on the research findings.

I. Introduction

Vietnam has a total of 1,234,124 teachers in public and private pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools based on 2023 data. The Vietnamese have a high regard for teachers as they view teaching as the most noble profession. Teachers are well respected and are considered role models and mentors. Their status is mostly influenced by cultural factors such as belief in Confucian values and adherence to principles, among others (Vinh, 2023).

Teachers play a pivotal role in their students' education, especially in Vietnamese society where education is highly valued. Hence, it is crucial to explore how they can be better supported to ensure quality teaching and learning. A key aspect is gaining a deeper understanding of what motivates them to stay in the profession.

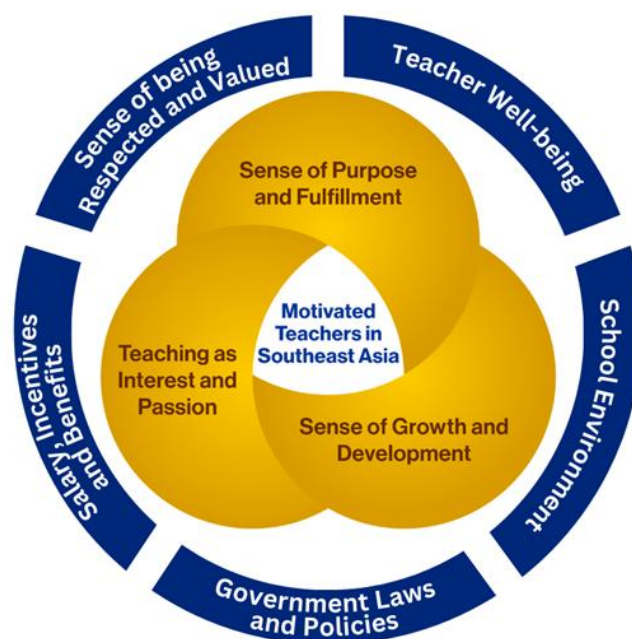
Motivation is defined differently by several researchers. Dörnyei (2001, as cited in Syamananda, 2017) provided a definition early on, seeing it as the "driving force behind all actions, influencing "why people decide to do something, how long they are willing to sustain the activity and how hard they are going to pursue it" (p.121). Han and Ying (2016) also view the concept as "reasons that emanate from individuals' intrinsic values to choose to teach and sustain teaching... influenced by a number of contextual factors" (p.3). Moreover, Richardson (2014, as cited in Mangaleswarasharma, 2017) describes it as "internal and external factors that stimulate desire or energy in teaching to be continuously interested and committed to make their best effort to support students' learning goals" (p.2). These definitions depict the variety of intrinsic and extrinsic drivers that encourage teachers to continue serving in education.

Motivation, in this study, refers to the factors that influence teachers' decisions to remain in the teaching profession. The study utilizes the factors

identified in the Southeast Asian Framework on Teacher Motivation in Staying in the Profession, comprising core and contributing factors (Umali et al., 2024). Core factors are key drivers that make teachers stay, such as sense of purpose and fulfillment, interest and passion for teaching and sense of growth and development. Contributing factors, on the other hand, are those that can enhance the core factors, which include a sense of being respected and valued, teacher well-being, school environment, salary, incentives and benefits, and government laws and policies (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Southeast Asian Framework on Teacher Motivation in Staying in the Profession



Several researchers have investigated teacher motivation in Vietnam. Although most studies were conducted in tertiary education, they offer a glimpse into teachers' motivation in the country. Firstly, various researches suggest that university teachers are highly motivated (Hang et al., 2025; Hung, 2020; Tran, 2022). Secondly, several studies also indicate factors that influence motivation. Intrinsic factors found were “responsibility for work”, “sense of achievement”, and “potential

for professional growth”, while extrinsic ones include “salary” and “job security and stability” (Hung, 2020, p.22). Likewise, Tran and Do (2020) discovered that “work characteristics, wage and welfare, social recognition, peer relationships, training and promotion opportunities, leader caring and teacher–student interaction and students’ attitude” (p.603) were factors affecting lecturers’ work motivation; most influential of these is the last factor (teacher–student interaction and students’ attitude) while the factor with the least impact is peer relationships. A couple of studies, on the other hand, deal with work motivation and organizational justice, investigating the effects of “justice in income level, distributive procedures, recognition, promotion opportunities, collegial treatment, leadership support, student evaluations, and societal valuation of teaching” (Hang et al., 2025, p.202). Hang et al.’s (2025) study found that procedural justice regarding promotion opportunities and income has the strongest effect on work motivation among university teachers across several higher–education institutions in Hanoi. Similarly, Pham et al.’s (2025) work revealed that physical education lecturers in Ho Chi Minh City are influenced by perceived fairness from direct supervisors and students, as well as by justice regarding income and rewards. Lastly, Tran’s (2022) dissertation discussed a variety of factors that affect English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers entering, continuing in, and leaving the teaching profession. Among the factors that influence their decision to stay are their passion for the subject matter, joy and interest in teaching, and a desire to help others, as intrinsic motivators, while personal beliefs, family influence, job benefits, stability, and social status are among the extrinsic motivators for staying.

Acknowledging the importance of motivation in sustaining teachers’ commitment, the Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology (INNOTECH) of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) partnered with the Vietnam National Institute of Educational Sciences (VNIES) on

the Regional Teacher Motivation Study. The study aims to 1) determine the relationship among the different factors that motivate teachers to stay in the teaching profession; 2) develop a per-country framework for the motivations of teachers in Southeast Asia to stay in the profession; and 3) provide policy recommendations.

The study employed a quantitative approach. A survey questionnaire was developed, validated by content experts and country representatives, and translated into the local language. Data were collected via the SurveyMonkey platform and yielded 39,460 valid responses via convenience sampling. Table 1 shows the profile of survey respondents. Majority are female, married, aged between 35 to 44 years old, and teaching in rural schools. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Lastly, hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to develop a predictive model for Vietnam.

Table 1
Profile of Survey Respondents in Vietnam

	Count	Percent
Age in years		
18-24	513	1.3
25-34	6094	15.4
35-44	16459	41.7
45-54	14526	36.8
55-64	1863	4.7
65-74	4	0.0
75 and older	1	0.0
Gender		
Male	8823	22.4
Female	29958	75.9
Prefer not to say	239	0.6
Other	440	1.1
Marital status		
Single	2427	6.2
Married	34690	87.9
Divorced/ Annulled/ Separated	1317	3.3
Widowed	453	1.1
Prefer not to say	573	1.5
Highest educational attainment		
Secondary Level	131	0.3
Associate Degree	1975	5.0
Bachelor's Degree	33988	86.1
Master's Degree	3317	8.4
Doctoral Degree	49	0.1
Type of school		
Public	39268	99.5
Private	192	0.5
School location		
Urban	14112	35.8
Rural	25348	64.2
Length of teaching		
Early Career (1 to 5 years)	3515	8.9
Mid-Career (6 to 10 years)	4161	10.5
Experienced (11 years and up)	31784	80.5
Total	39460	100

II. Results and Discussion

The sections below highlight the key findings of the study in Vietnam. Teacher respondents' level of motivation is presented first, followed by their views on the core and contributing factors of motivation. Afterward, the association between motivation levels and the factors is discussed. The relationship between motivation levels and indicators on salary, working conditions, professional development, and career progression are also presented. This section ends with the predictive model for teacher motivation to stay in Vietnam.

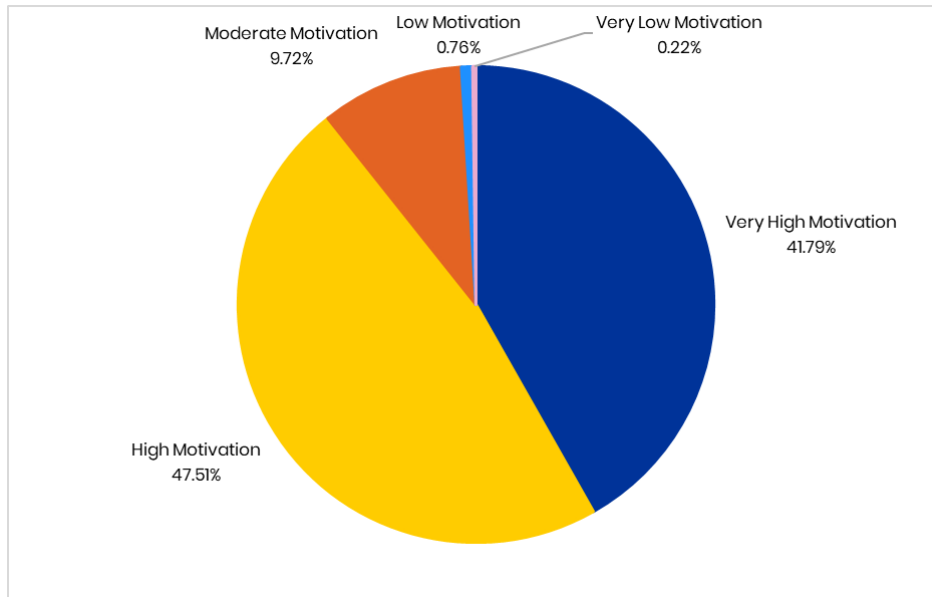
Factors in this study refer to the motivational factors as identified in the Southeast Asian Framework on Teacher Motivation in Staying in the Profession. Indicators, on the other hand, are either those that could be influenced by policies related to salary, working conditions, professional development, and career progression, or demographic characteristics.

Level of Motivation of Teachers to Remain in the Profession

Teacher respondents in Vietnam are very highly motivated based on a mean rating of 8.22. As shown in Figure 2, 42% of the respondents have very high motivation, 47% are highly motivated and 10% are moderately motivated. In contrast, only less than 1% have low and very low motivation.

Figure 2

Percentage of Vietnamese Teachers According to Their Level of Motivation to Stay in the Profession



These findings suggest that majority of teacher respondents in Vietnam are motivated to stay in the teaching profession. These results also align with studies on teacher motivation, albeit at the tertiary level, indicating high motivation among educators at higher education institutions (Hang et al., 2025; Hung, 2020; Tran, 2022).

Factors Relevant to Teacher Motivation in Staying in the Profession

To further understand the level of motivation of teacher respondents in Vietnam, the core and contributing motivational factors were assessed using a six-point Likert scale (where 1 corresponds to "strongly disagree" and 6 to "strongly agree") for statements specific to each factor.

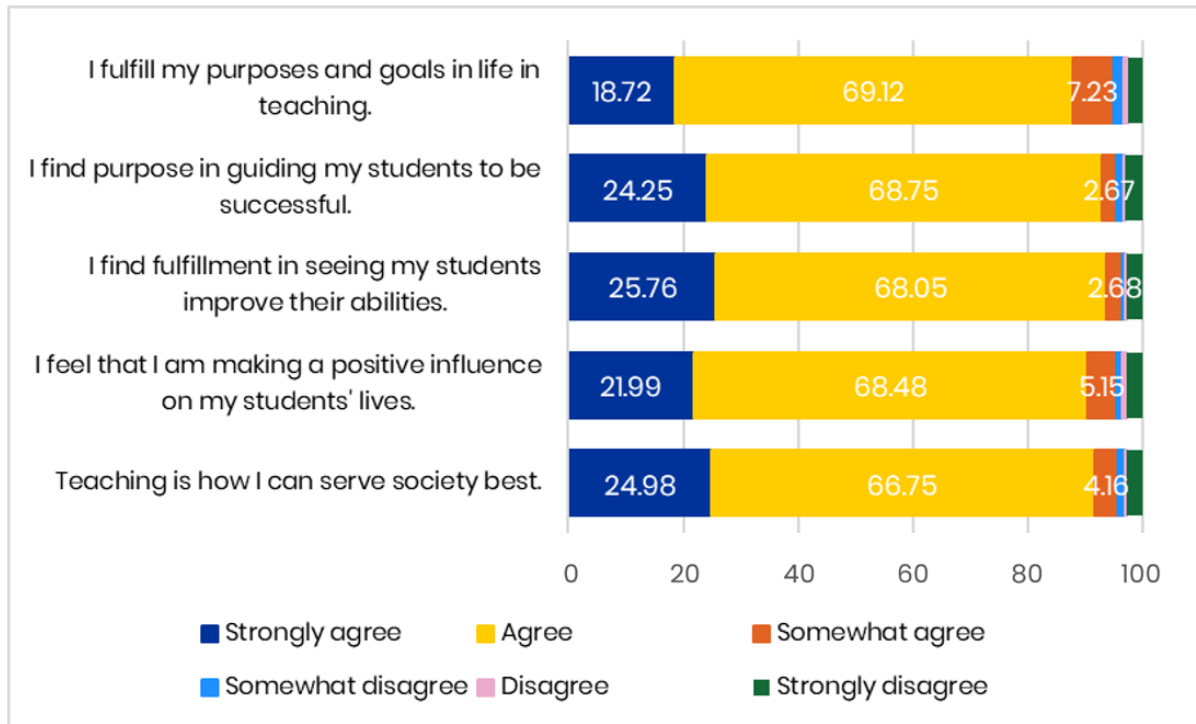
Core Factors of Teacher Motivation. The following sections present teacher respondents' agreement levels with statements related to the three core factors of motivation to stay. These are sense of purpose of fulfillment, teaching as interest and passion, and sense of growth and development.

Sense of Purpose and Fulfillment. Teachers are intrinsically motivated by seeing their impact on learners and by knowing they are contributing to societal and national goals. These aspects comprise the motivation factor, sense of purpose and fulfillment.

Teacher respondents have a high sense of purpose and fulfillment based on a mean rating of 5.04. Overall, almost all teacher respondents (96%) strongly agreed, agreed and somewhat agreed with statements related to their sense of purpose and fulfillment. Around 96% also find fulfillment in seeing their students' improvement of abilities, while 95% believe that they fulfill their life's purposes and goals through teaching.

Figure 3

Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Sense of Purpose and Fulfillment

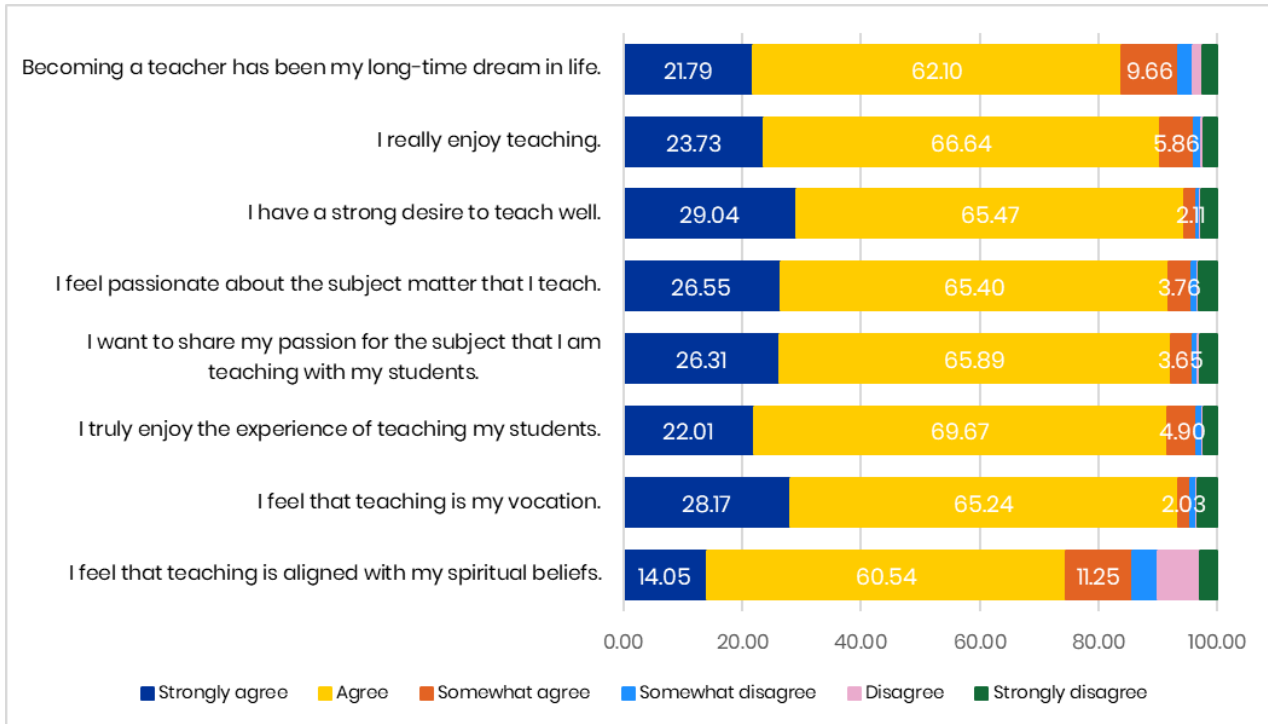


Teaching as Interest and Passion. Interest and passion also play a role in motivating teachers to stay in teaching. This factor includes teaching as an aspiration from childhood, love for the craft, subject matter, and learners, and alignment of the work with one’s belief system.

Majority of the teacher respondents consider teaching as their interest and passion. Around 96% enjoy teaching itself and the experience of teaching their students, while 95% want to share their passion for the subject they teach based on the total proportion of respondents who strongly agree, agree and somewhat agree with the relevant statements. Expectedly, this motivational factor is rated high by the respondents based on a mean value of 5.01.

Figure 4

Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Perception of Teaching as Interest and Passion



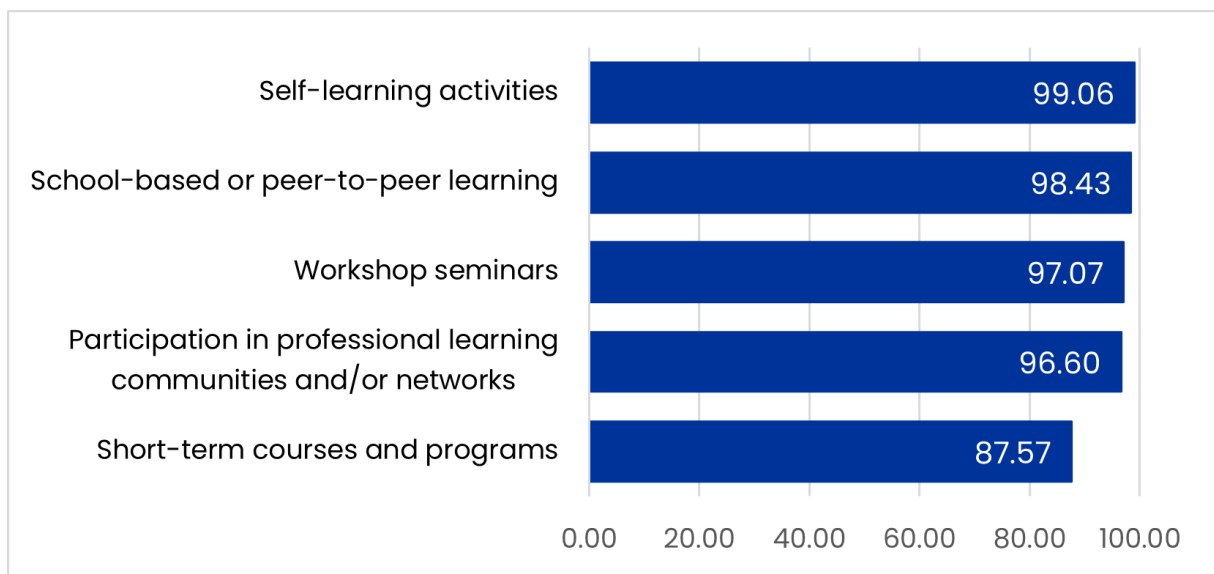
The results are in alignment with Tran’s (2022) dissertation, which highlighted passion and interest as a factor in EFL tertiary-level teachers’ motivation in Vietnam. From the qualitative component of the study, the researcher determined that passion for the English language, joy and interest in the teaching process, and love working with children or adolescents are intrinsic drivers that contribute to teachers entering the profession and continuing in the service.

Sense of Growth and Development. The core factor sense of growth and development revolves around teachers’ desire to be better at their craft. This involve having opportunities for professional development and perceiving challenges as opportunities for growth.

As shown in Figure 5, most teachers participate in professional development activities, such as self-learning activities and school-based activities or peer-to-peer learning. Moreover, out of 39,460 respondents, less than a quarter (16%) are currently taking graduate studies. From this group, 20% have received scholarships for their studies

Figure 5

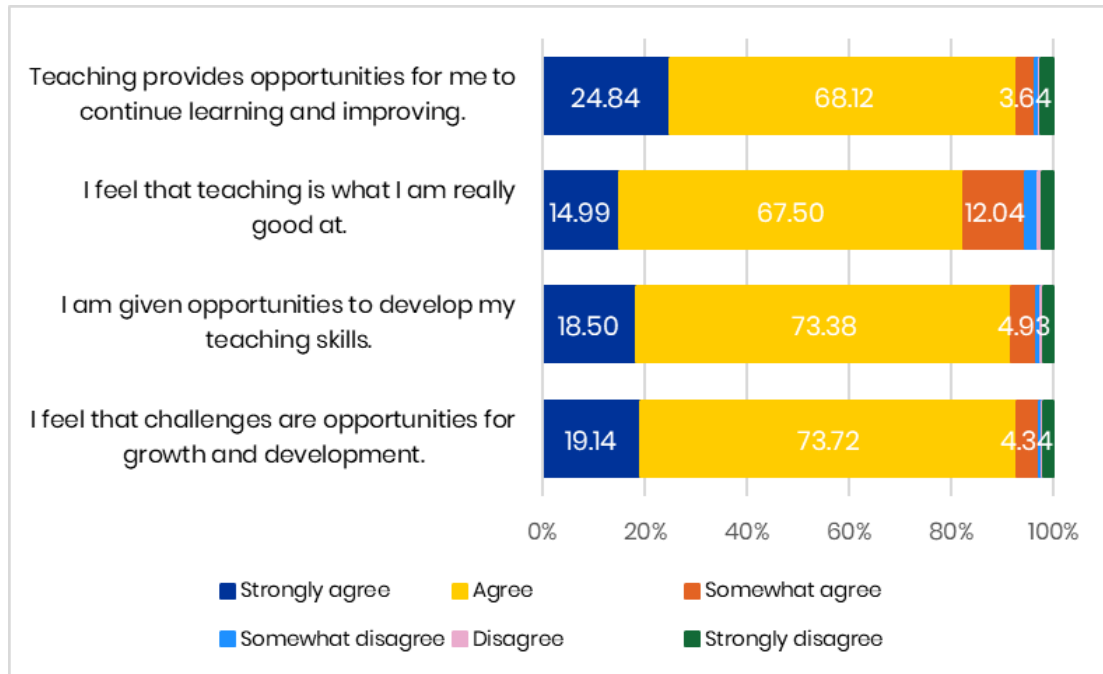
Percentage of Teacher Respondents Engaging in Professional Development



On average, the teacher respondents of Vietnam have a high sense of growth and development (mean rating of 5.01). This is evident in the high proportion of the respondents who strongly agree, agree and somewhat agree with statements about their perceived growth and development in their profession. Majority (97%) feel that the challenges they face are opportunities for growth and development, believe that teaching provides opportunities for them to continue learning and improving and are given opportunities to develop their teaching skills (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Sense of Growth and Development



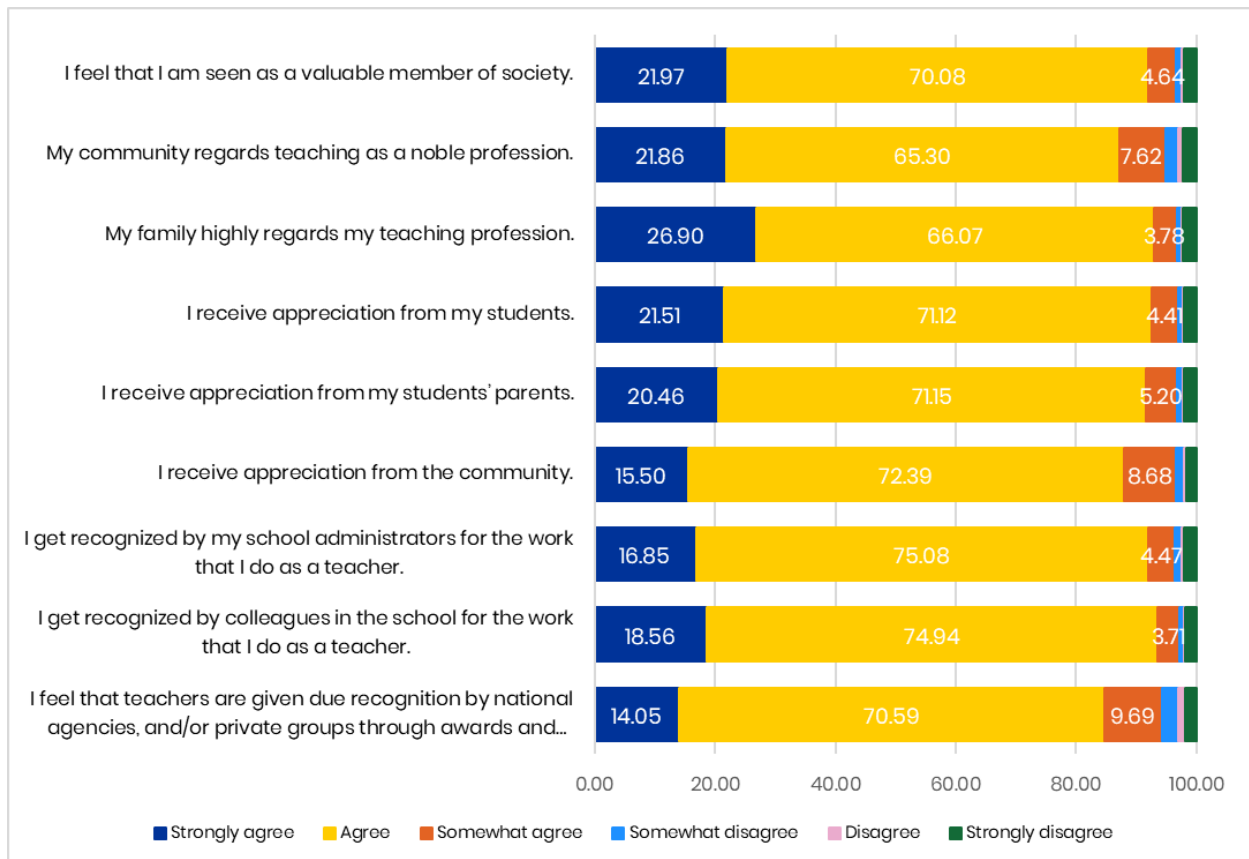
Contributing Factors of Teacher Motivation. The following section presents teacher respondents’ agreement levels with statements related to the five contributing motivational factors, which include sense of being respected and valued, teacher well-being, school environment, salary, incentives and benefits and government laws and policies.

Sense of Being Respected and Valued. Teachers are motivated to stay in their profession if they feel that they are respected and valued by the different stakeholders with whom they interact. This factor includes the appreciation they receive from learners, parents, and the wider community, through awards and recognitions. It also deals with how they feel their profession is perceived and regarded by society at large.

On average, respondents have a high sense of being respected and valued based on a rating of 5.02 (teachers agree with related statements). Figure 7 reveals that majority of the teacher respondents agree with statements (“strong agree, agree, somewhat agree”) related to their sense of being respected and valued where the highest percentage (97%) said that they are recognized and appreciated by both teachers and students.

Figure 7

Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Sense of Being Respected and Valued



The importance of recognition has been highlighted in a couple of studies in Vietnam. Hang et al. (2025) identified it as one of the dimensions that influence tertiary teachers' work motivation. This finding was also supported by Tran and Do's (2020) research, which identified it as one of the factors that shape motivation. Moreover, the value placed on the profession and the high status of teachers were deemed important for research participants entering and continuing in the profession, according to Tran's (2022) work.

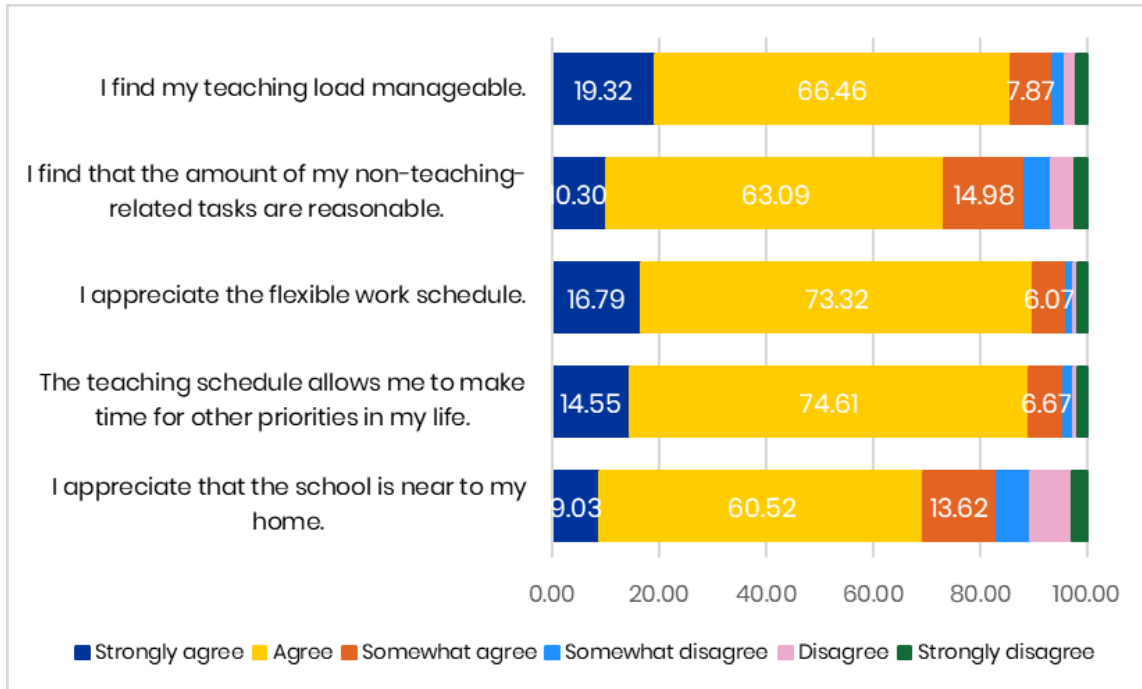
Teacher Well-being. Teacher well-being, in this research, only dwells on three aspects: work-life balance, having a flexible schedule, and home-school proximity.

On average, the respondents positively perceive their well-being based on a rating of 4.80. This is evident in the high proportion of teachers who somewhat agreed, agreed and strongly agreed with statements related to teacher well-being (Figure 8). Moreover, teacher respondents spend around 30 hours per week in their teaching and 93% agreed that their teaching load is manageable (Figure 8). Nearly all (96%) respondents appreciate the work schedule they have because it is flexible and allows them to make time for other life priorities.

In addition to teaching, more than half of the respondents (64%) are engaged in nonteaching-related work where about 13 hours are spent, on average, performing these tasks.

Figure 8

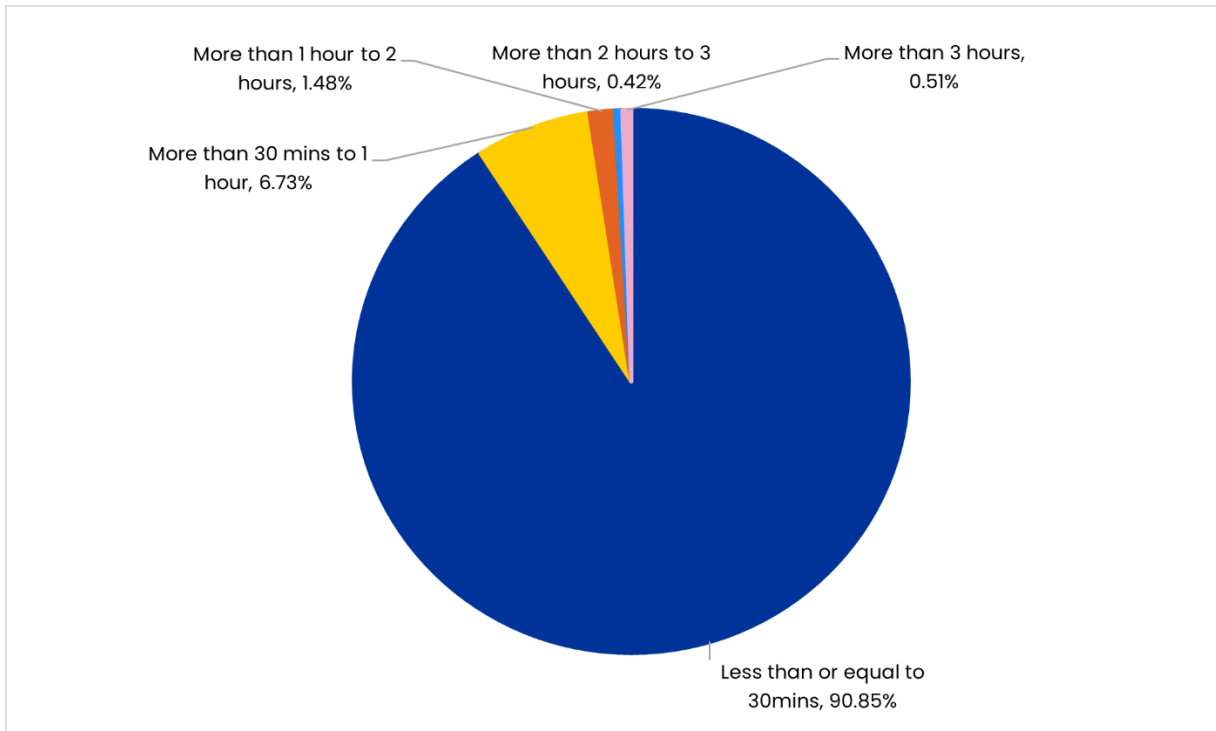
Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Sense of Well-being



Based on Figure 9, majority of teacher respondents (91%) spend 30 minutes or less in going to their schools, while about 7% travel for more than 30 minutes to 1 hour. On average, it takes about 21 minutes for teachers to travel to their schools.

Figure 9

Percentage of Teachers Based on Their One-way Travel Time to School

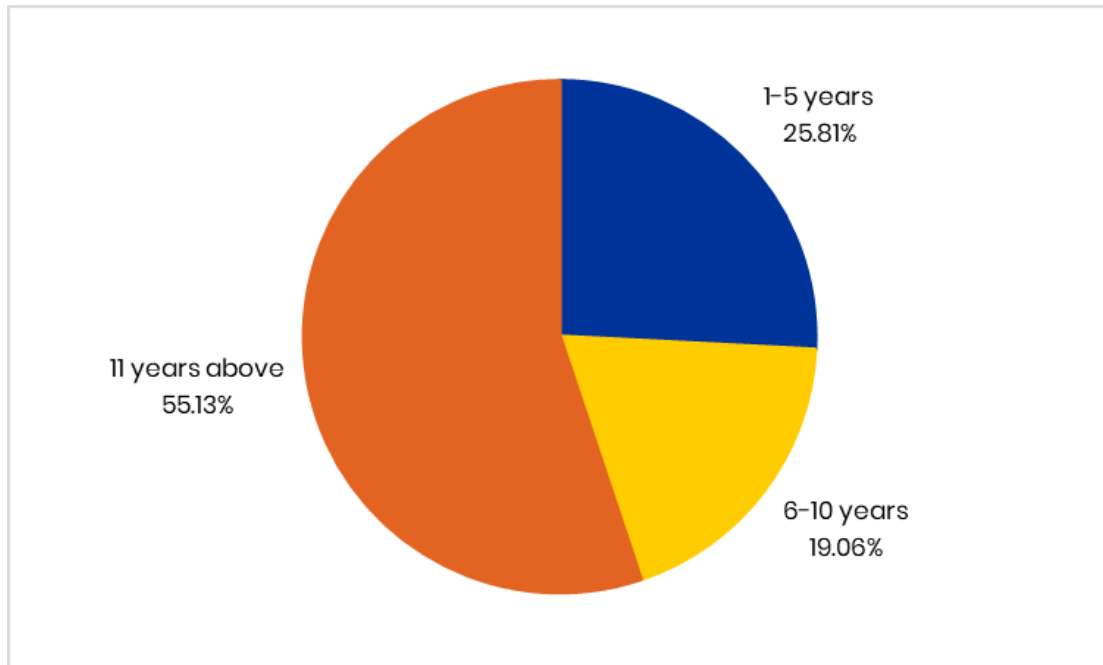


School Environment. The school environment, as a motivational factor in staying, looks into teachers’ perceptions of the atmosphere at work, including having supportive policies, practices, and activities, opportunities for self-expression and innovation, good working relationships with colleagues, and adequate instructional resources and facilities.

More than half (55%) of the teacher respondents have been in their schools for more than a decade, while a quarter are relatively new (Figure 10). On average, though, respondents have been assigned in their current school for 13 years.

Figure 10

Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Length of Teaching in Current School



With regard to their schools' environment, majority of the teacher respondents reported having at least adequate (adequate and more than adequate) teaching materials (84%, Figure 11) and facilities in school (76%, Figure 12).

Figure 11

Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Perception of Adequacy of Teaching Materials in School

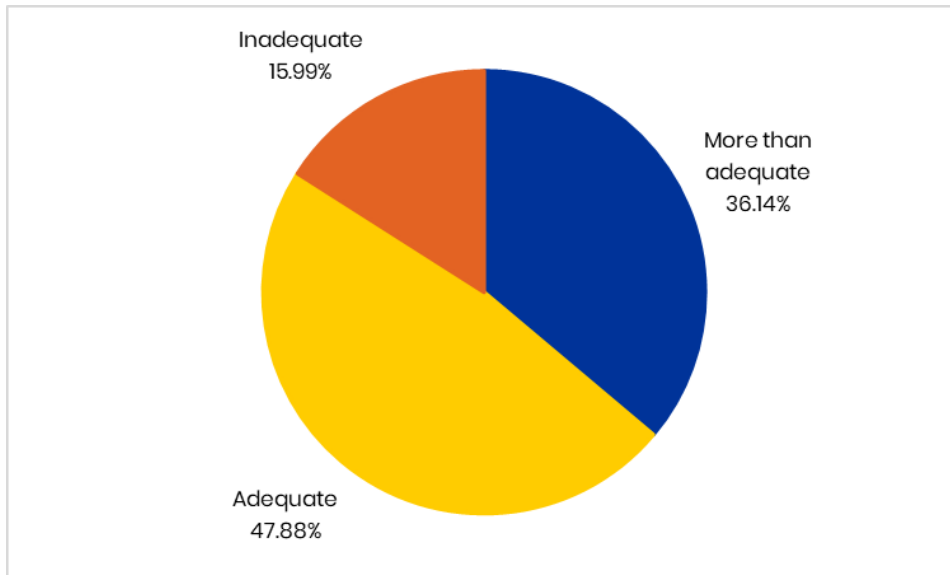
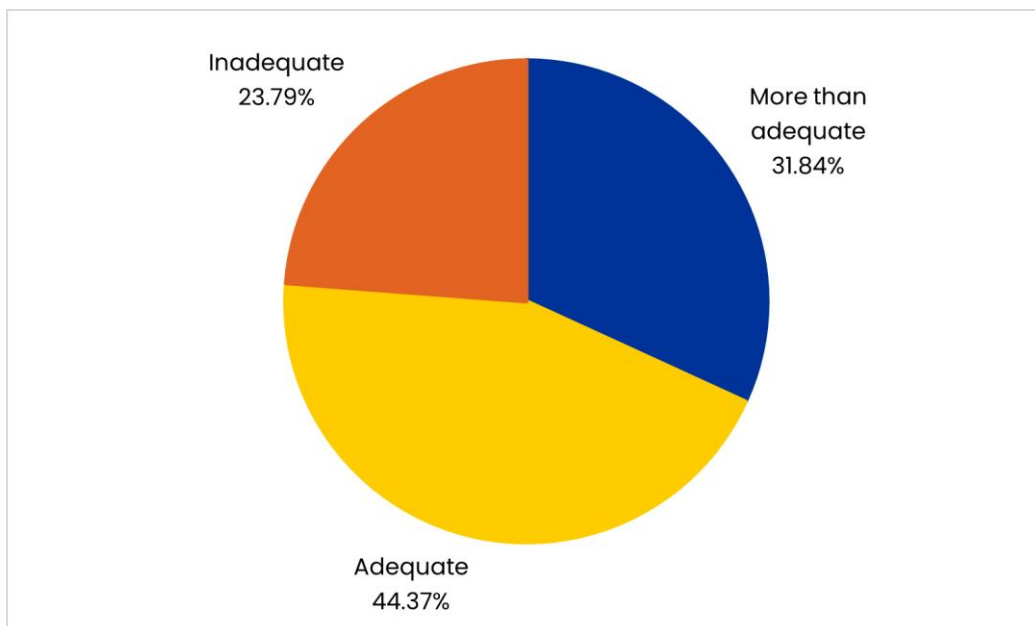


Figure 12

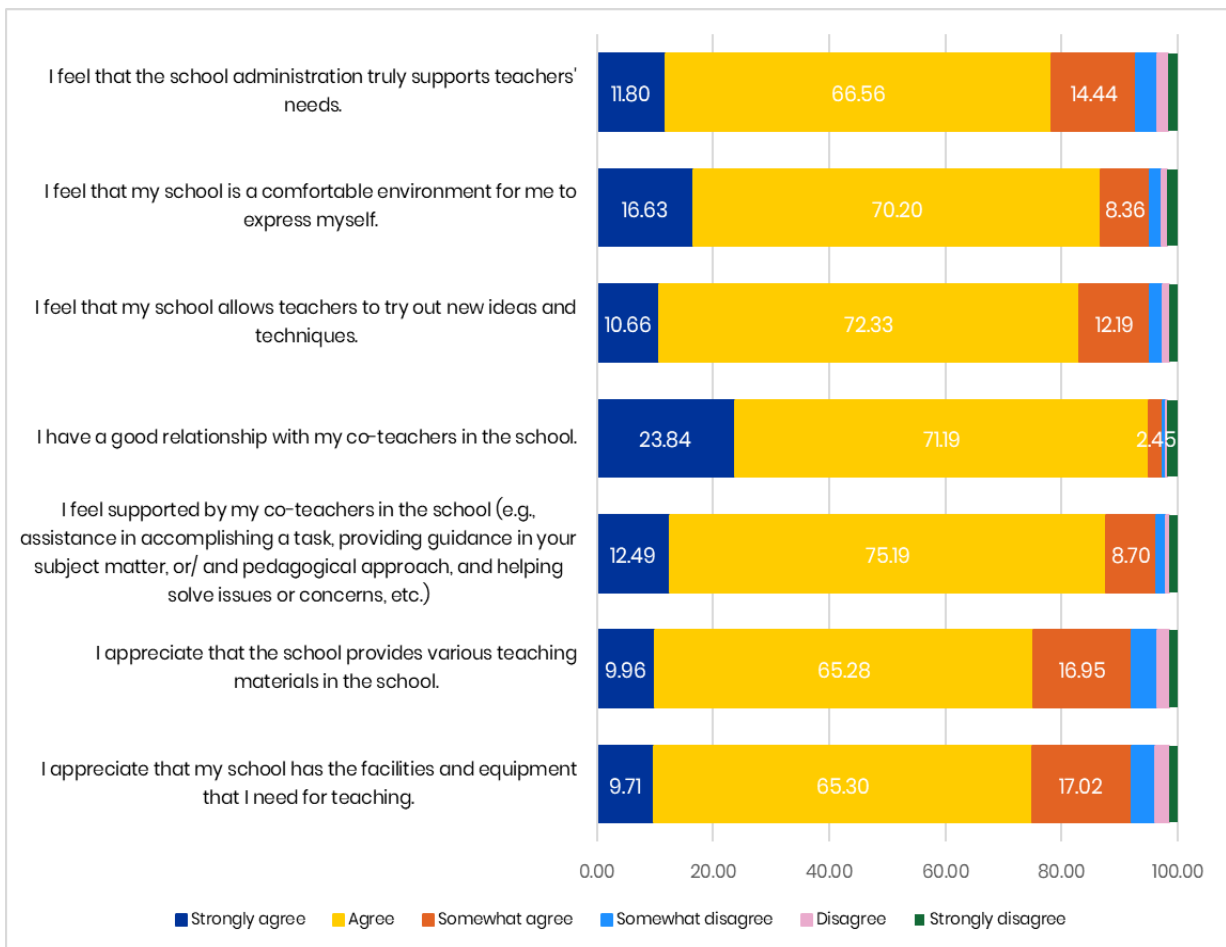
Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Perception of Adequacy of Facilities Available in School



Teacher respondents have a good perception of their school environment (4.87 mean rating). As presented in Figure 13, most teachers agree about the positive indicators in their school’s environment (e.g., availability of facilities & resources, good working relationships). In terms of working relations, 97% of teachers have a good relationship with their co-teachers in the school, and 96% feel supported by their peers based on the proportion respondents who strongly agree, agree and somewhat agree.

Figure 13

Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Perception of School Environment



The importance of the school environment has been highlighted in Tran's (2022) dissertation, especially the role of one's colleagues. For instance, teacher respondents in his study were motivated by the support of their colleagues and by the positive relationship with them but having unproductive peers and seeing inappropriate work behavior were demotivating.

Salary, Incentives and Benefits. Extrinsic aspects, such as salary, incentives and benefits, also influences teachers' decision to remain in the profession. Part of this motivational factor includes having a good source of income, financial security and being compensated by benefits and incentives.

Half of the teachers reported receiving a monthly salary of USD 347 or less, while the other half reported an income of more than USD 347. In Figure 14, around 76% agreed ("strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree") that their salary is sufficient to support themselves and their families, and 83% agreed that the teaching profession is a good source of income. Many teachers (92%) also believe that the incentives and benefits compensate their salaries. However, more teachers (94%) felt that their salaries will increase if they stay as a teacher.

Overall, the respondents' perception of their salary, incentives and benefits is high based on a mean rating of 4.51.

Figure 14

Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Perception of Salary, Incentives, and Benefits

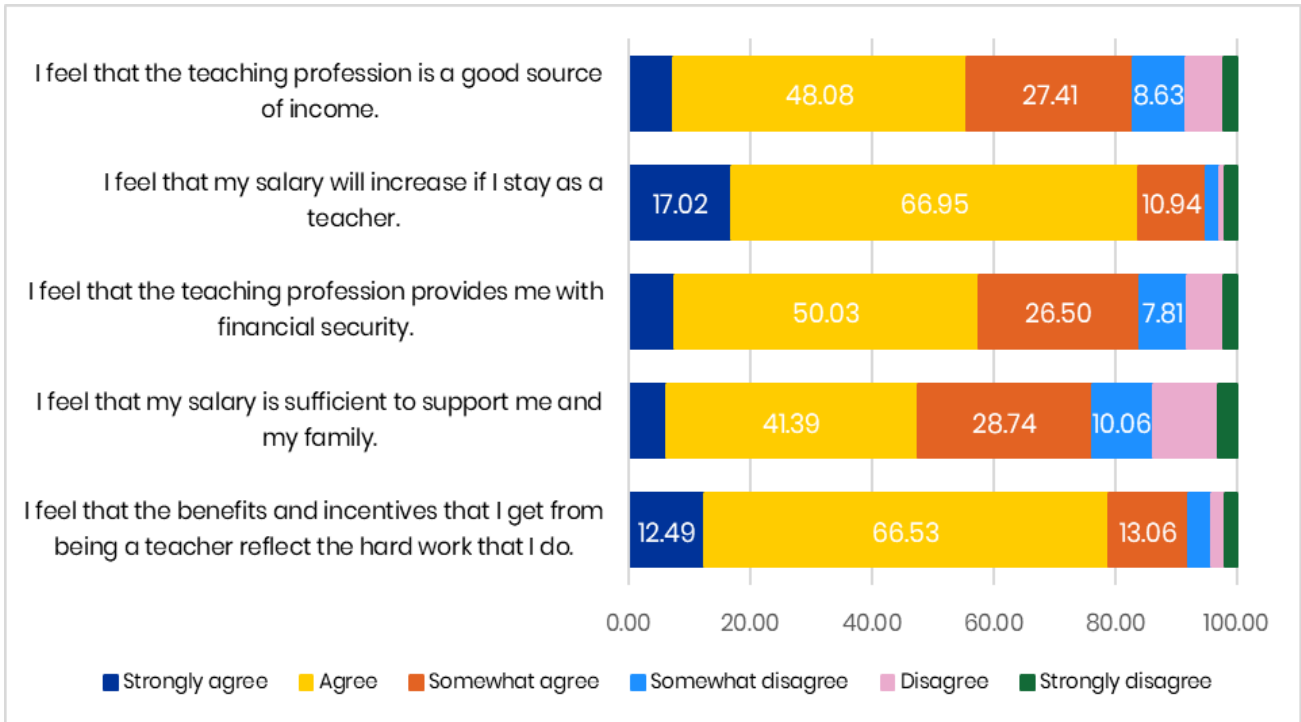


Figure 15 shows that majority (89%) of the teacher respondents are their families' main financial provider. Furthermore, a little over half of the respondents said that they have one to two family members who depend on their financial provisions, while about a third have around three to five dependents (Figure 16).

Figure 15

Percentage of Teacher Respondents as the Main Financial Provider

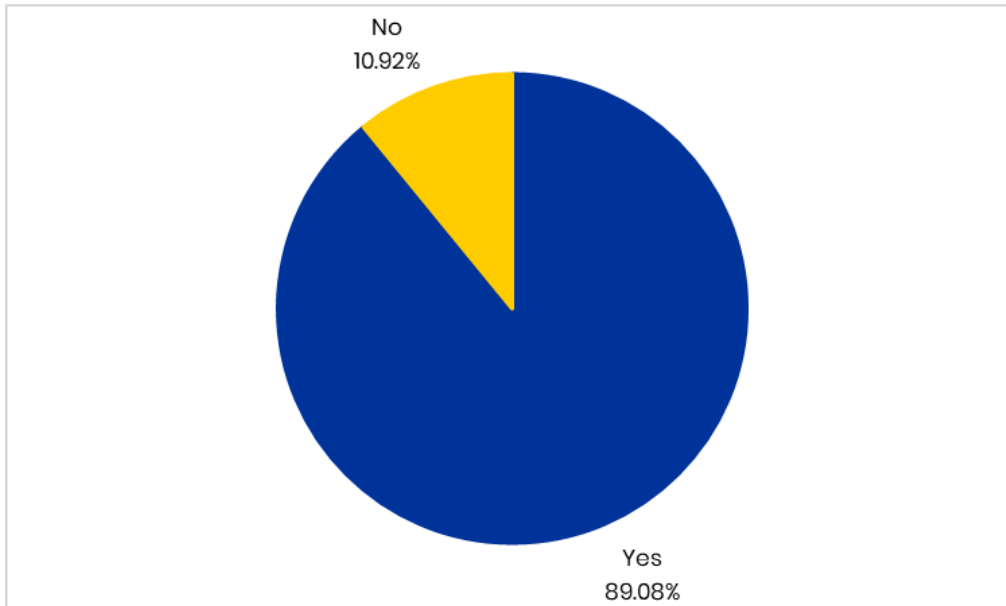
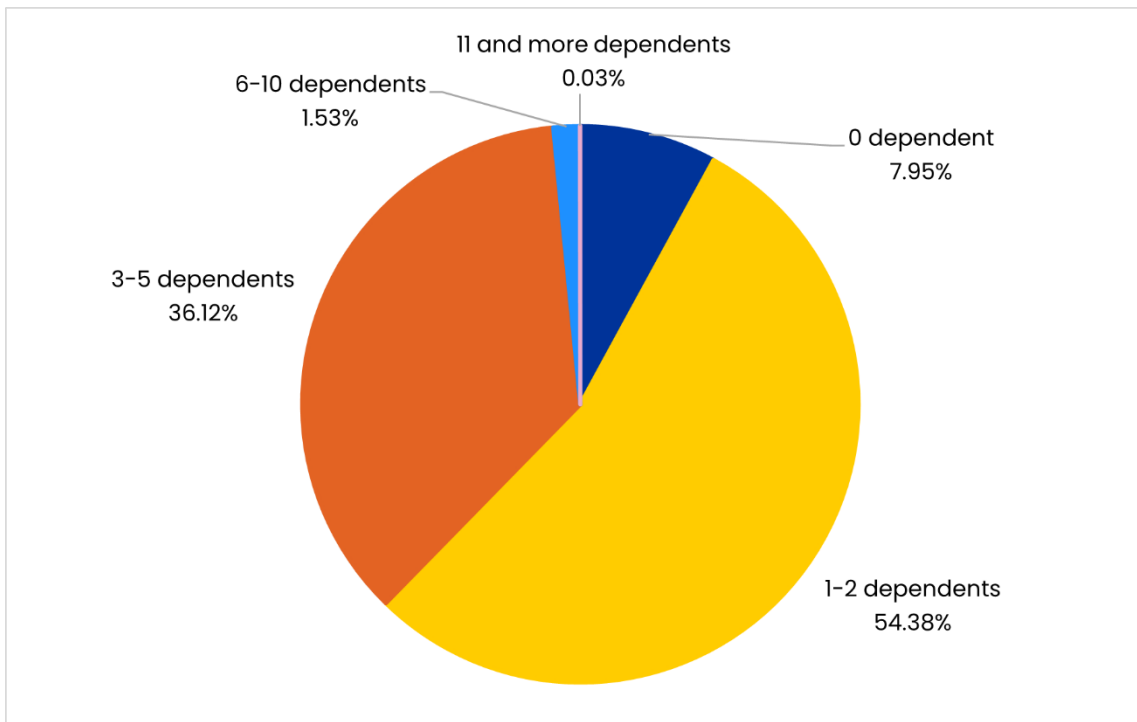


Figure 16

Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Number of Dependents

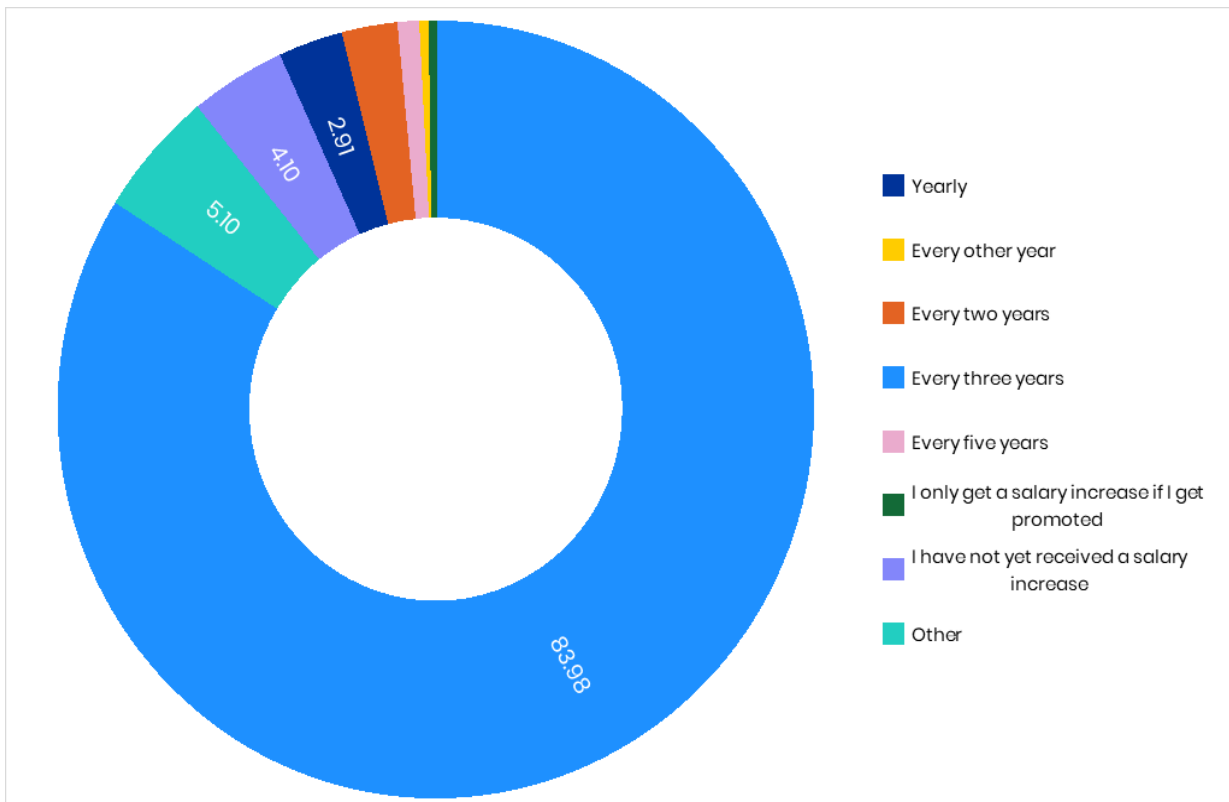


Government Laws and Policies. Teachers are affected by government laws and policies. As such, this is considered a motivational factor for them in staying. Six aspects were examined under this factor, including teacher deployment, professional development, career progression, working conditions, salary and benefits and incentives.

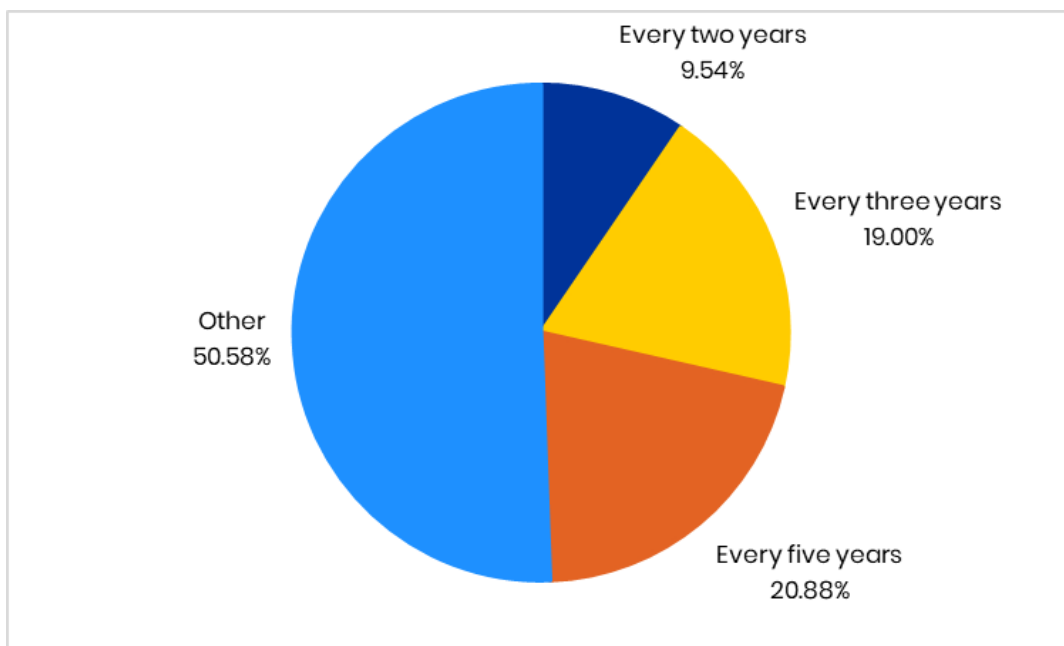
In Figure 17, most teachers (84%) receive a salary increase every three years, while only a small percentage (around 2%) have had an increase more frequently (e.g., yearly, every two years). About 4%, however, reported having received no salary increase yet.

Figure 17

Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to the Frequency of Salary Increase



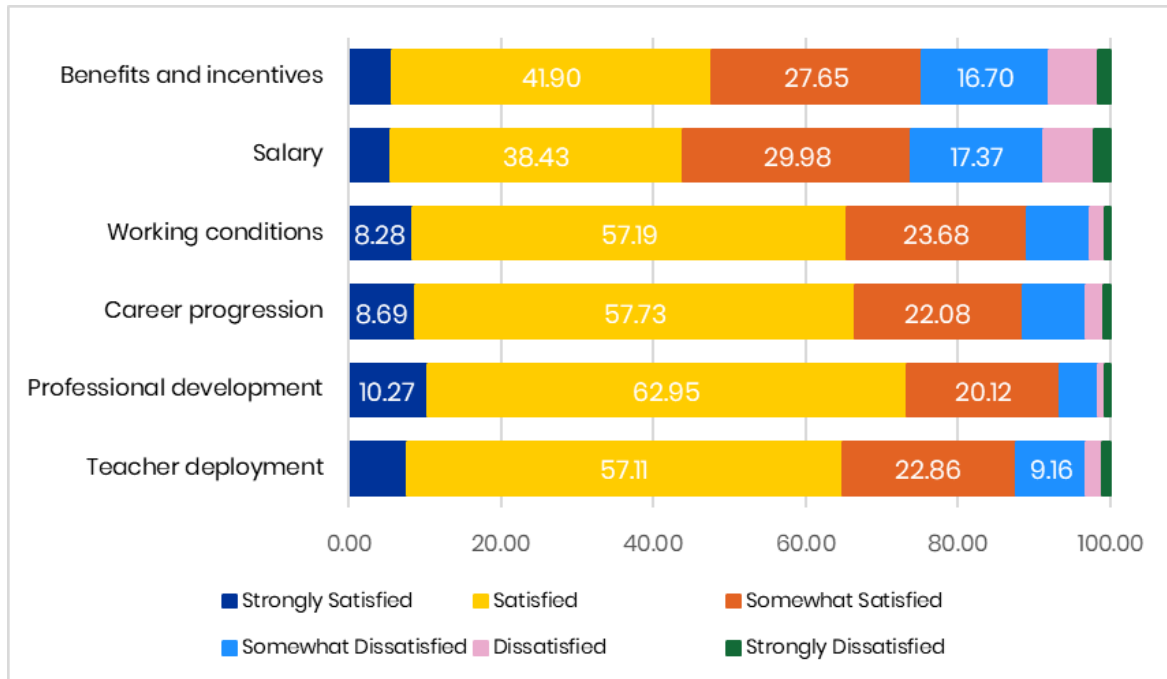
Moreover, only two in every ten teachers have been promoted in their teaching career. In Figure 18, around 19% and 21% have received promotion every three and five years, respectively. On the other hand, half have reported having a different number of frequencies in their promotion (i.e., Other – not every 2, 3, 5 years).

Figure 18*Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Frequency of Promotion*

Despite the low proportion of those who have received a promotion, 88% of teacher respondents are satisfied (“strongly satisfied, satisfied, somewhat satisfied”) with government policies and laws on career progression (Figure 19). Moreover, a lower percentage of respondents were satisfied with policies on teacher salary (74%) and teacher benefits and incentives (75%). On the contrary, 93% of respondents expressed satisfaction over legislations and policy guidelines on professional development (Figure 19).

Figure 19

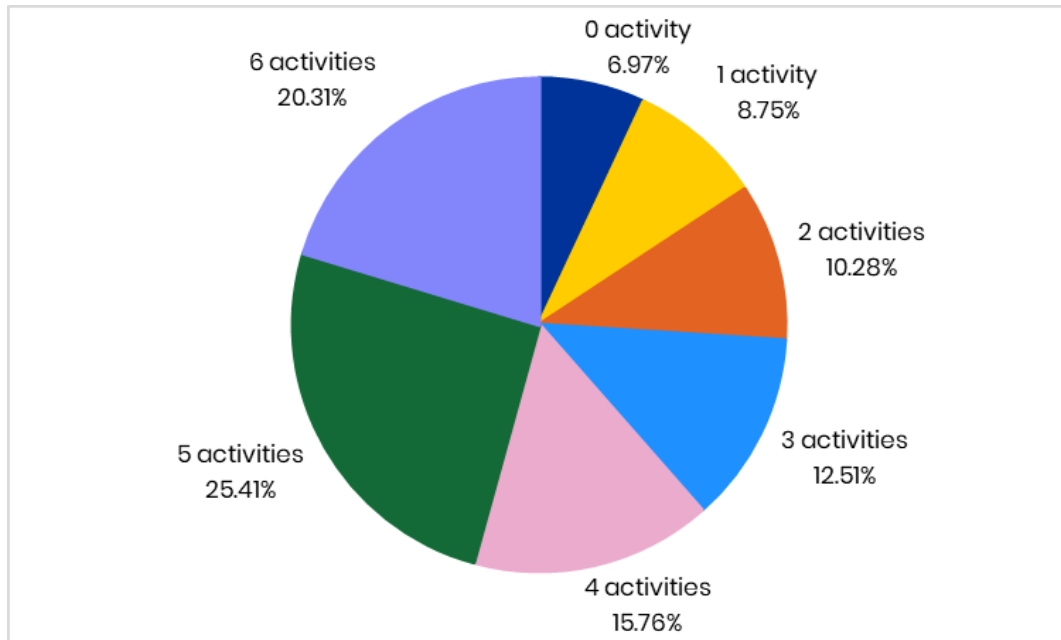
Percentage of Teacher Respondents According to Their Perception of Government Laws and Policies



In Figure 20, nearly all respondents (93%) have used their personal money in availing one or more professional development initiatives such as workshop seminars, self-learning activities, school-based or peer-to-peer learning, professional learning communities or network events, short-term courses and programs or graduate studies.

Figure 20

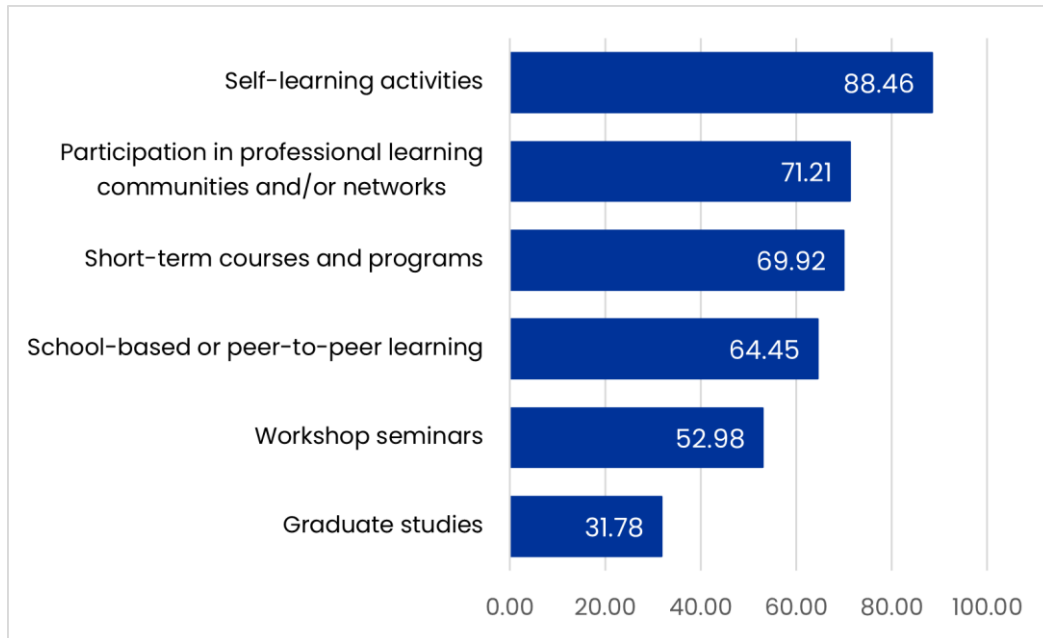
Percentage of Teacher Respondents Who Used Personal Money for Professional Development Activities



Of those who used their own money, majority spent it in doing self-learning activities such as watching videos, reading relevant references, among others, while about three-fourths of teacher respondents spent it on engaging in professional learning communities or in short-term courses and programs (Figure 21).

Figure 21

Percentage of Teacher Respondents Who Used Personal Money According to Professional Development Activities



Overall, Vietnamese teacher respondents have a high perception of government laws and policies based on a mean rating of 4.47.

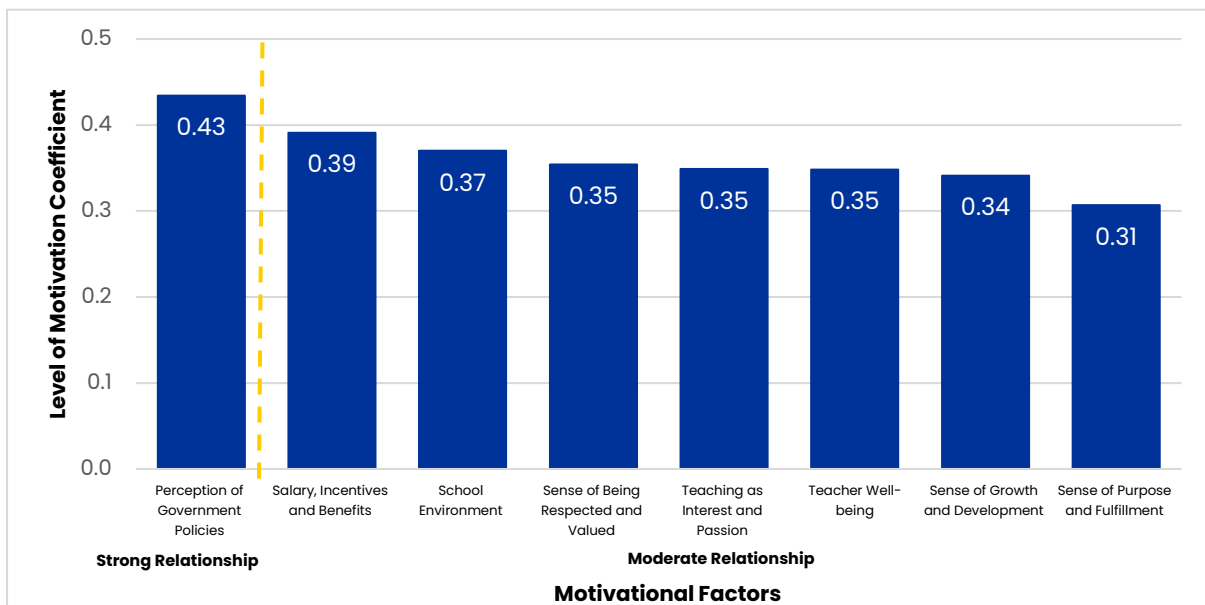
Summary. Summarizing the results of the descriptive statistics, teacher respondents in Vietnam were found to be highly motivated to remain in the teaching profession. They also perceive all the core and contributing factors in this study as relevant to supporting their motivation to remain in the profession.

Relationship Between Factors of Motivation and the Level of Motivation of Teachers

Based on statistical tests, the level of motivation of teacher respondents has a strong positive relationship with their perception of government policies and laws. Moreover, it has a moderate and positive relationship with their perception of salary/incentives/benefits; school environment; teaching as their interest and passion; sense of being respected and valued, growth and development, and purpose and fulfillment; and their well-being. Figure 22 illustrates that teachers' motivation among respondents in Vietnam increases when these factors are high (e.g., high perception of legislation and policies, and salary/incentives/benefits; strong sense of being respected and valued).

Figure 22

Relationship between Factors of Motivation and Level of Motivation of Teachers



Relationships Between Other Indicators and Level of Motivation of Teachers

To determine the relationships among the factors affecting teacher motivation in staying in the profession, statistical tests related to correlation (e.g., Spearman's rho correlation) and mean differences (e.g., Mann-Whitney U test, ANOVA) to assess whether there are significant differences across the factors were conducted. For this portion, attention was given to factors that have potential implications for policy recommendations, and findings with only significant results are reported. Table 2 shows the list of indicators examined.

Table 2
Indicators Covered in Inferential Statistical Analysis

Salary	Working conditions	Professional development	Career progression
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of salary increase* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length of teaching* • Total grade levels taught* • Hours spent teaching* • Having nonteaching-related tasks* • Hours spent traveling to school* • Adequacy of teaching and learning resources* • Adequacy of facilities in school* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of personal money for professional development* • Highest educational attainment* • Currently taking graduate studies* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of promotion* • Frequency of promotion*

* indicators with significant results

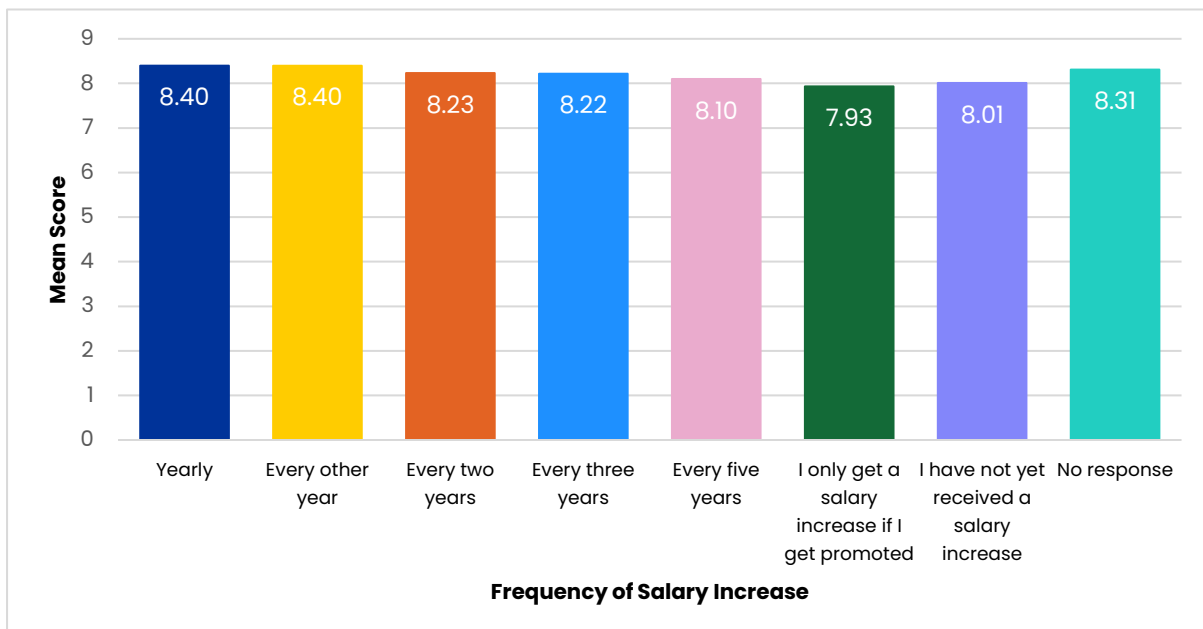
Indicators Related to Salary. An indicator, frequency of salary increase, was looked into to determine the relationship between salary indicators and teachers' level of motivation. It was revealed that this particular indicator is significantly related to the level of motivation among teacher respondents in Vietnam.

Difference in Teachers' Motivation Based on Frequency of Salary Increase.

Further test was done to find out if the levels of motivation of teachers were statistically different between those who often, sometimes, or rarely receive a salary increase. Results yielded significant differences (also see Table 5 in Appendix) where those who had yearly salary increase had higher motivation (M=8.40) as well as those who had it every other year (M=8.40) and every two years (M=8.23). Figure 23 shows a pattern where higher mean values of motivation were observed among those with frequent increases in their salaries.

Figure 23

Differences in Teachers' Motivation Based on Frequency of Salary Increase



Indicators Related to Working Conditions. Seven indicators were examined to determine the relationships between working conditions and teachers' level of

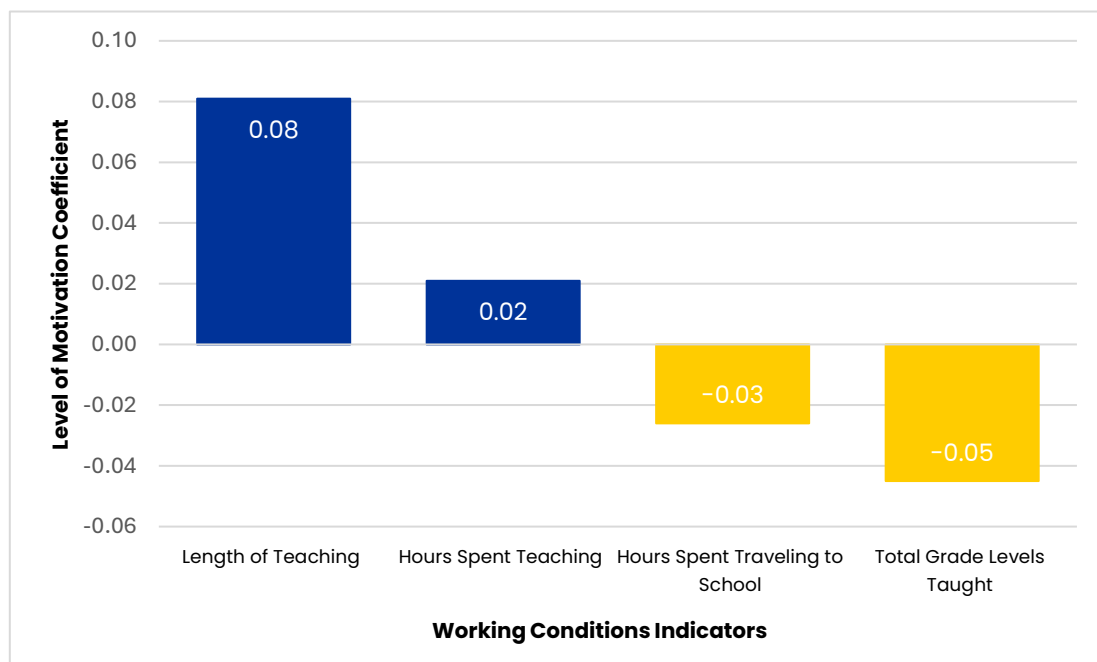
motivation. All these indicators were found to be significant to the level of motivation.

Relationship between Four Indicators and Level of Motivation of Teachers.

The level of motivation among teacher respondents had a very weak and positive relationship with the length of teaching and hours spent in teaching. Though the strength of such relationships was very weak, it is statistically significant (Figure 24). Teachers who have been teaching for many years already or are spending more hours teaching are likely to have higher motivation. On the other hand, the total grade levels taught as well as the hours spent travelling to school had a significantly very weak and negative relationship with motivation. This meant that teacher respondents who are teaching in more grade levels or who have longer travel time to school tend to have lower motivation.

Figure 24

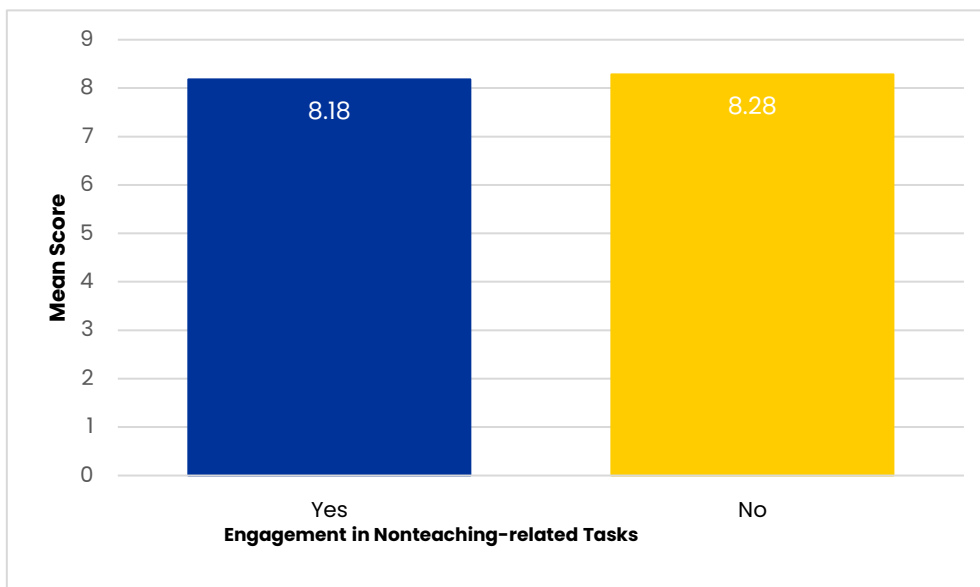
Relationship Between Indicators of Working Conditions and Level of Motivation of Teacher Respondents



Differences in Teachers' Motivation Based on Engagement in Nonteaching-related Tasks. Results show that there is a significant difference between the level of motivation of teacher respondents who are engaged in nonteaching-related work and those who do not have such tasks. Figure 25 shows that the level of motivation was higher among teacher respondents with no nonteaching-related work ($M=8.28$) than those involved in these kinds of tasks ($M=8.18$) (also see Table 6 in Appendix).

Figure 25

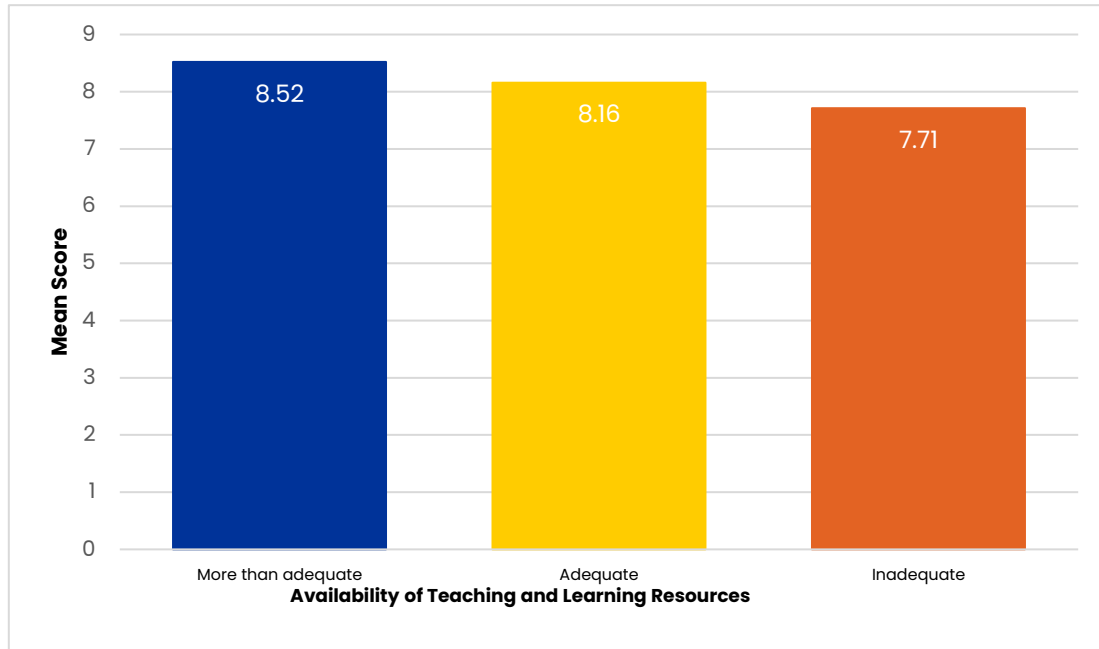
Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on Engagement in Nonteaching-related Tasks



Differences in Teachers' Motivation Based on Provision of Teaching and Learning Resources. Similarly, the level of motivation among teacher respondents significantly differed according to the quantity of resources provided to their schools. Figure 26 shows a pattern where higher motivation was noted among those with more than adequate ($M=8.52$) and adequate ($M=8.16$) resources (also see Table 7 in Appendix).

Figure 26

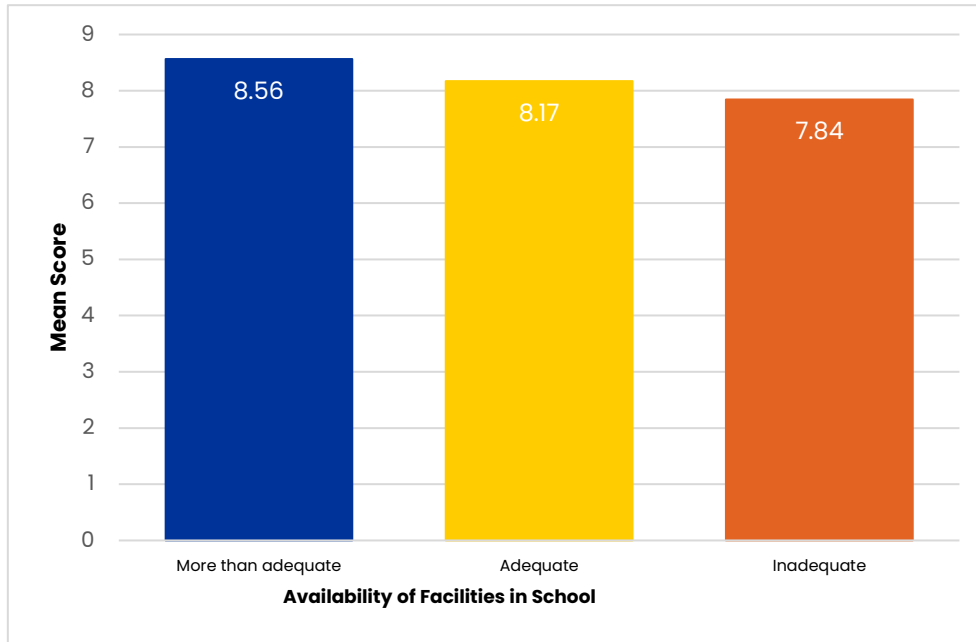
Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on Availability of Teaching and Learning Resources



Differences in Teachers' Motivation Based on Availability of Facilities in School. The motivation among teacher respondents also varied significantly in relation to the availability of school facilities. As shown in Figure 27, those with more than adequate facilities had higher motivation ($M=8.56$) compared to those who had limited facilities ($M=7.84$) (also see Table 8 in Appendix).

Figure 27

Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on Availability of Facilities in School



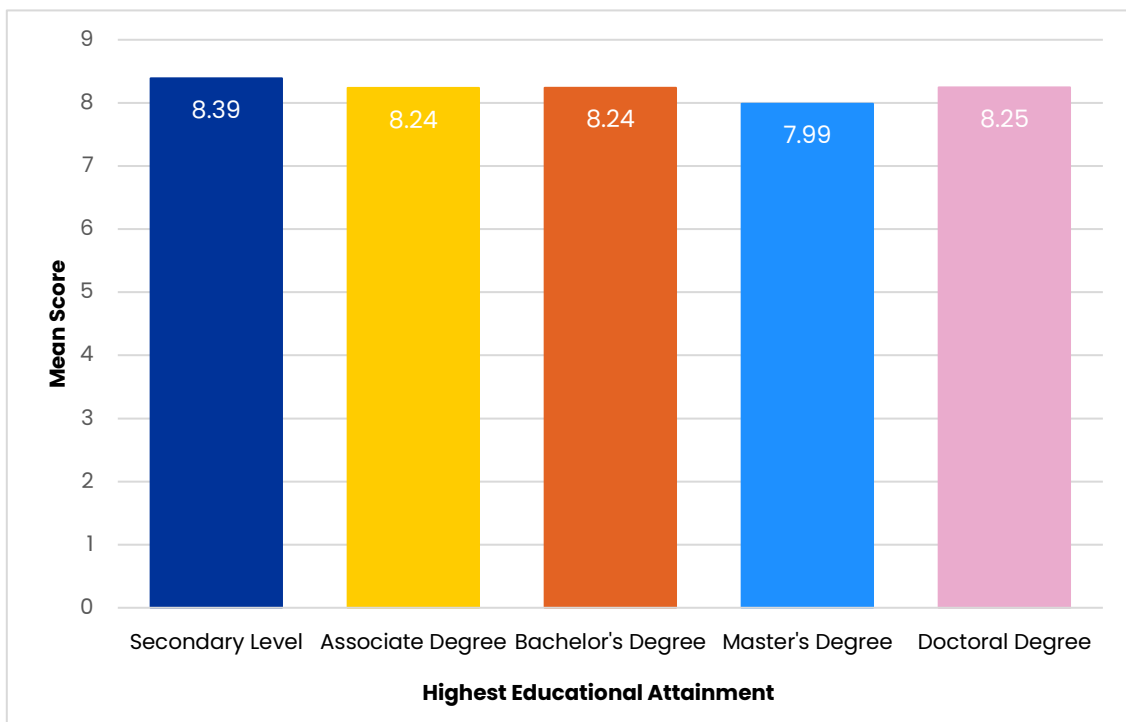
Indicators Related to Professional Development. Professional development was also assessed through three indicators: use of personal money for professional development, highest educational attainment, and current engagement in graduate studies. Based on the survey results, all these indicators were found to be significant to the level of motivation.

Relationship Between Use of Personal Money for Professional Development and Level of Motivation of Teachers. Firstly, there was a very weak positive relationship between respondents' motivation and the use of their personal money in enhancing their capabilities. Teacher respondents who actually spend their own money to participate in professional development activities were likely to be more motivated to remain as teachers.

Differences in Teachers' Motivation Based on Highest Education Attainment. Secondly, motivation significantly differed depending on the highest educational level attained by respondents. Based on Figure 28, it appears that generally those who graduated from a lower academic degree, such as secondary level (M=8.39), associate level (M=8.24) and bachelor's degree (M=8.24) had higher motivation. However, respondents with a doctoral degree also had a relatively high motivation (M=8.25). Surprisingly, respondents with a master's degree were the least motivated among the groups, but motivation level is still considered high based on a mean rating of 7.99 (also see Table 9 in Appendix).

Figure 28

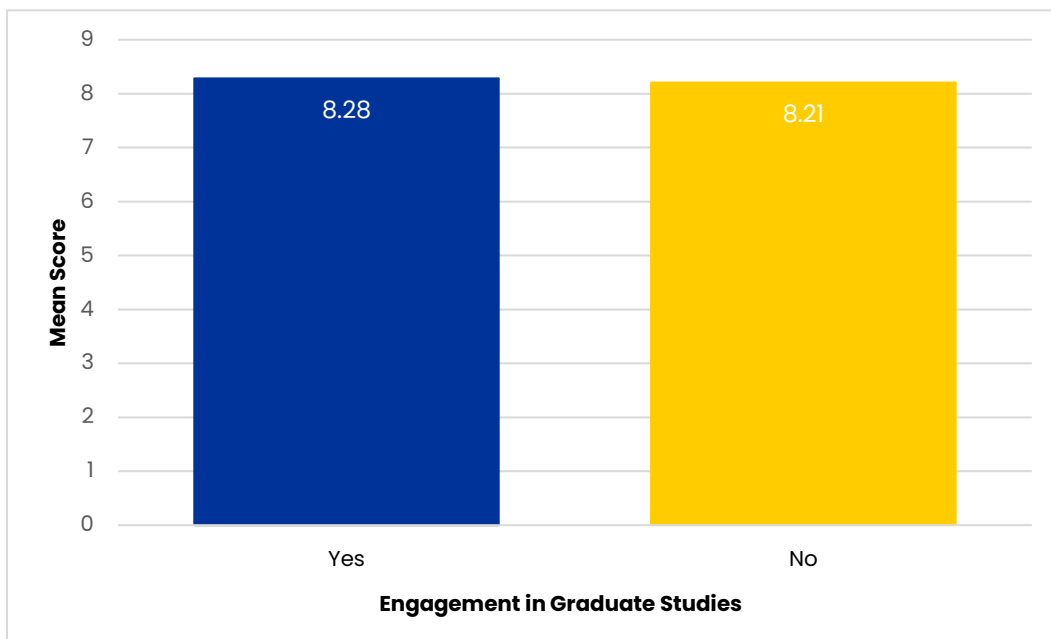
Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on Highest Educational Attainment



Differences in Teachers' Motivation Based on Engagement in Graduate Studies. Thirdly, the level of motivation among the teacher respondents was also significantly different between those who were currently engaged in graduate studies and those who were not. Figure 29 shows that respondents who were studying under a graduate program were more motivated to stay in the teaching profession ($M=8.28$) than those who were not taking graduate studies ($M=8.21$) (also see Table 10 in Appendix).

Figure 29

Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on Engagement in Graduate Studies



Interpreting these results under professional development, findings show that respondents with lower academic degrees (i.e., secondary, associate, and bachelor's degree) report higher motivation levels than those with masteral degree. However, at the same time, those currently pursuing graduate studies indicate higher motivation levels than those who are not enrolled. This seeming contradiction might be explained by the context. For instance, those with a master's

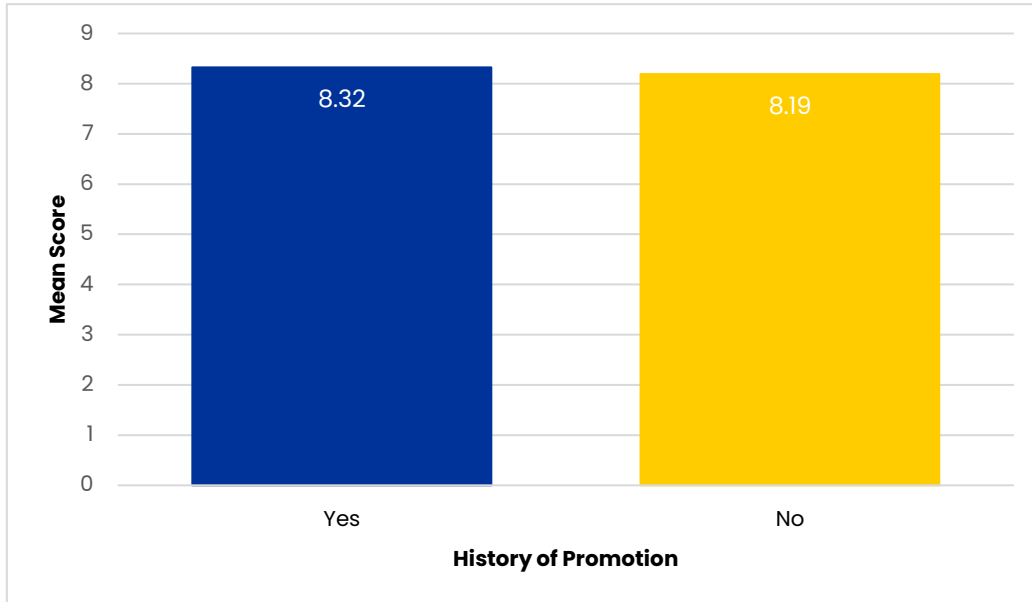
degree may have unmet expectations, perceiving that their advanced qualifications do not always lead to promotions and salary increases, and, at times, may even bring heavier workloads without equivalent rewards. In contrast, teachers engaging in graduate studies often experience renewed optimism, a sense of growth, and career aspirations that boost their motivation. Hence, policymakers can consider that teachers' advanced qualifications need to be matched with clear pathways for career progression, incentives, and support so that motivation seen during graduate studies is not lost once teachers complete their degrees.

Indicators Related to Career Progression. Two indicators of career progression were also examined, namely, history of promotion and frequency of promotion. Both yielded significant results in relation to the respondents' motivation.

Differences in Teachers' Motivation based on History of Promotion. Results suggest that promotion is important in keeping teacher respondents motivated. In Figure 30, respondents who have been previously promoted were more motivated to remain in their profession ($M=8.32$) as compared to those who have had no promotion ($M=8.19$) (also see Table 11 in Appendix).

Figure 30

Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on History of Promotion

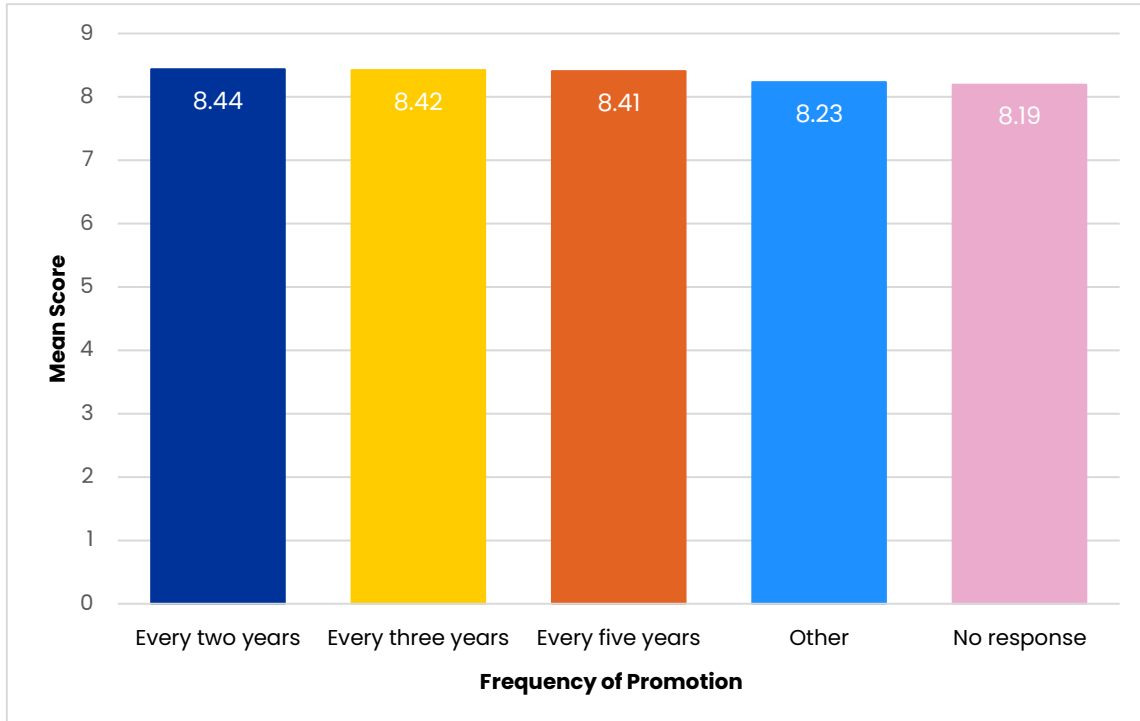


Differences in Teachers' Motivation based on Frequency of Promotion.

Additionally, the results imply that a more frequent promotion is also vital in fostering teacher motivation. Figure 31 shows that respondents who receive promotion every two years were more motivated (M=8.44) as compared, for example, to those who get promoted every five years (M=8.41) (also see Table 12 in Appendix).

Figure 31

Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on Frequency of Promotion



Summary. All motivational factors involved in this research were found to be positively correlated with teacher respondents' motivational levels. Teachers' perception of government laws and policies were strongly associated while the rest of the factors were moderately associated with motivation to stay.

In addition, several indicators were examined to determine their relationships with motivation levels. Correlation analyses found that length of teaching and hours spent on teaching were positively associated with teacher motivation. Alternatively, travel hours and total grade levels taught were negatively correlated with motivation to stay.

Moreover, significant differences were found for frequency of salary increase, with teachers receiving yearly increases reporting having higher motivation levels. Teachers who do not have nonteaching-related tasks, have

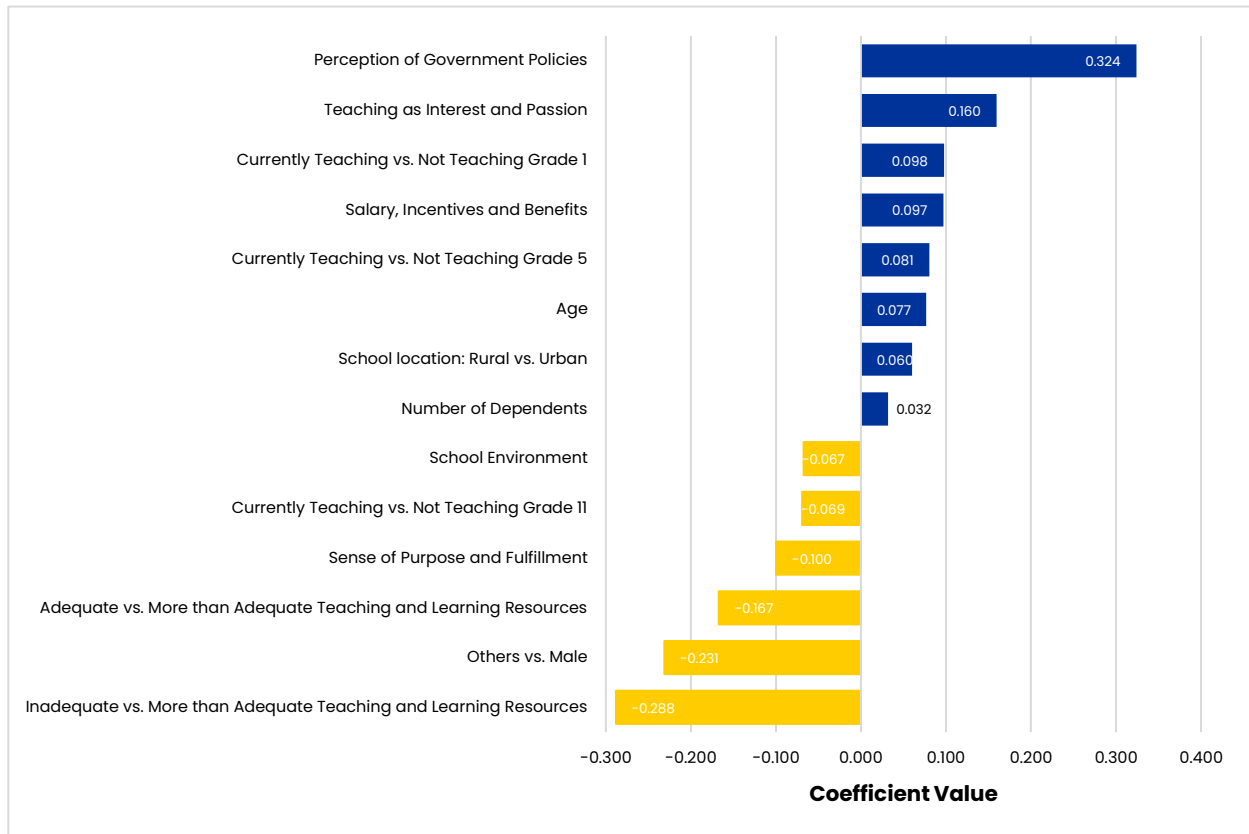
more than adequate instructional materials and school facilities, indicate higher motivation as well. Differences were also seen across the highest educational attainment, engagement in graduate studies, promotion history, and frequency.

Predictive Model of Teacher Motivation in Staying in the Profession in Vietnam

Figure 32 shows the combination of factors and indicators that predicts the Vietnamese respondents' motivation to stay in the profession based on regression analysis. Motivational factors such as perception of government policies, teaching as an interest and passion, and of salary, incentives and benefits positively predicts the level of motivation, along with respondents' age, number of dependents, location of assigned school, and teaching in certain grade levels. On the other hand, motivational factors such as sense of purpose and fulfillment and perception of school environment as well as reported adequacy or inadequacy of teaching and learning resources negatively predicts the respondents' motivation (also see Table 13 in Appendix).

Figure 32

Combination of Factors and Indicators that Predict Teachers' Motivation to Stay in the Profession



Teacher respondents who were satisfied with the legislation and guidelines, were positive about salary, incentives and benefits, and those who highly regarded teaching as their passion and interest tended to be more motivated to stay in their job. Older teachers, those who have more family dependents, and those who are assigned to rural schools were likely to have higher motivation as well.

Although the descriptive statistics revealed high levels of sense of purpose and positive school environment and despite Figure 22 showing an observable positive relationship between motivation and sense of purpose and fulfillment as well as the respondents' perception of their schools' environment (e.g., resources, school leadership, co-worker relationship), the predictive model above indicated that

these two factors negatively contribute to motivation levels. These findings may be explained by statistical overlaps among the factors: teachers who feel a sense of purpose also tend to feel respected, passionate, and supported, making their unique contribution less visible when all variables are analyzed together. In regression, this overlap (multicollinearity) and suppression effects can cause coefficients to appear negative, even when the raw correlations are positive. These findings suggest that purpose and fulfillment, and the school environment, remain in foundational baseline conditions, while policies, salaries/benefits, and professional recognition provide stronger, unique leverage to sustain motivation to stay.

Integrating all the factors and indicators shown in Figure 32 determines the overall level of motivation of teacher respondents.

Summary. Teacher respondents' motivation to stay is influenced by a combination of motivational factors and demographic characteristics. Among the factors found to be relevant are their perception of government laws and policies, passion and interest for teaching, salary incentives and benefits, school environment, and sense of purpose and fulfillment.

On the other hand, demographic characteristics that shape motivation include grade level taught, age, school location, number of dependents, gender, and allocation of instructional resources.

III. Conclusion

In general, the teacher respondents of Vietnam were very highly motivated to stay in the teaching profession. More than 90% of them resonated with statements related to six of the eight motivational factors (e.g., sense of growth and development and sense of being respected and valued). Surprisingly, their sense of purpose and fulfillment, and even their perception of their schools' environment (e.g., teaching and learning resources, peers' and leaders' support) were found to be negative contributors to their level of motivation.

While only around 85% had a positive perception of government laws and policies, and the salary, incentives and benefits, these two factors positively contributed to the respondents' motivation level based on a regression analysis. Those who were satisfied with existing policies and their current compensation tended to have higher motivation.

Moreover, results showed that the respondents' level of motivation varied significantly depending on the frequency of salary increase and promotion, length of service and teaching time, travel time to school, workload (i.e., number of grade levels taught), assignment of non-teaching tasks, and engagement in graduate studies. Interestingly, teacher respondents who used their personal money for professional development and who graduated from lower academic degrees had higher motivation to remain as teachers.

In conclusion, the research highlights that a large majority of teacher respondents in Vietnam are highly motivated to remain in the teaching profession. Their commitment is shaped by both core and contributing factors. The inferential analyses suggest a few areas for possible interventions that may be considered by education policymakers and decision-makers to sustain the motivation of the teaching workforce for future generations. However, the study's findings have some

limitations. Despite having a large sample size, its representativeness cannot be established due to the use of convenience sampling via SurveyMonkey. The sample may also be biased towards teachers who are more active online or are engaged with VNIES networks.

Based on the findings of the research, the following recommendations may be considered by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) of Vietnam:

- Strengthen mechanisms to support new legislation. The recently passed Law on Teachers comprehensively covers several areas relevant to the teachers of Vietnam, aiming to improve their working conditions and uphold their dignity as respected members of society (Thanh, 2024). This law will significantly address many challenges and issues faced by teachers in Vietnam, including elevating the level of their motivation to remain in teaching. As the MOET and other agencies are set to commence efforts in support of the new law, the results from this study can serve as evidence for targeted mechanisms or interventions not only for teacher motivation but for other facets of the teaching profession.
- Implement differentiated salary increase schedules based on years of service. Salary, incentives and benefits, as a factor, have been identified as one of the predictors of teacher motivation to stay. In addition, ANOVA revealed that teacher respondents who receive regular salary increases are more motivated than those who do not. As such, the MOET may consider implementing salary increase schedules based on educators' years of service. Ensuring that teachers' salaries increase as they stay on may help strengthen their decisions to remain in the profession, as wage is a factor that has been identified in other studies as well (Hang et al., 2025; Hung, 2020; Tran, 2022).

- Reduce nonteaching workload through the provision of support staff. Teacher respondents who do not engage in nonteaching tasks reported having higher motivation levels than their counterparts. This finding suggests that teachers' administrative burdens and other nonteaching-related workload may be lessened. The provision of support staff assigned to schools may help in accomplishing administrative duties that are often delegated to teachers. This intervention would also enable educators to fully focus their energies and time on teaching.
- Ensure the provision of instructional materials and facilities in schools. The school environment is one of the predictors that influences teachers' motivation to stay. Furthermore, respondents with more than adequate teaching and learning resources and school facilities reported higher motivation than those without. Hence, education decision-makers, planners, and school administrators must ensure that the resources teachers need to effectively perform their duties are made available to them. This measure lessens their burden to think of ways where and how to access these instructional materials and affords them to implement teaching strategies that they deem most beneficial for their learners.
- Conduct further study of educational attainment among teachers. The general trend on educational attainment revealed that respondents with lower academic degrees were more motivated to stay in teaching. However, the results also showed that teacher respondents who were currently engaged in graduate studies also had higher motivation level over those who were not. Despite this, only 16% of the respondents were taking a graduate course. The contradicting findings may need further examination to understand how teachers can be supported in their academic pursuit as part of their professional development.



- Provide targeted support for teachers pursuing graduate studies. The results related to educational attainment suggest the need to provide support to teachers who are taking graduate degrees. Support may take the form of financial assistance, workload consideration, and flexibility in the work schedule. Providing these scaffolds to teachers would help them continue serving in education and grow professionally at the same time.

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Appendix

Statistical Results of the Study

Table 3

Relationship Between Factors of Motivation and Level of Motivation of Teachers

Factors of Motivation	Level of Motivation		Interpretation
	ρ	p	
Perception of Government Policies	0.43	< .001	Strong Relationship
Salary, Incentives and Benefits	0.39	< .001	Moderate Relationship
School Environment	0.37	< .001	
Sense of Being Respected and Valued	0.35	< .001	
Teaching as Interest and Passion	0.35	< .001	
Teacher Well-being	0.35	< .001	
Sense of Growth and Development	0.34	< .001	
Sense of Purpose and Fulfillment	0.31	< .001	

Table 4

Relationship Between Working Conditions and Level of Motivation of Teachers

Working Conditions	Level of Motivation		Interpretation
	ρ	p	
Total Grade Levels Taught	-0.05	< .001	Very Weak Relationship
Hours Spent Teaching	0.02	< .001	
Hours Spent Traveling to School	-0.03	< .001	
Length of Teaching	0.08	< .001	

Table 5

Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on Frequency of Salary Increase

		Availability of Facilities in School					Effect size interpretation
		M	df	F	p	η^2p	
Level of Motivation	Yearly	8.40	7	9.941	<0.001	0.002	Small
	Every other year	8.40					
	Every two years	8.23					
	Every three years	8.22					
	Every five years	8.10					
	I only get a salary increase if I get promoted	7.93					
	I have not yet received a salary increase	8.01					
	No response	8.31					

p < .05

Interpretation is based on National University's (2025) interpretation of ANOVA's partial eta-squared:

- $\eta^2p = 0.01$ indicates a small effect

- $\eta^2p = 0.06$ indicates a medium effect
- $\eta^2p = 0.14$ indicates a large effect

Source: <https://resources.nu.edu/statsresources/eta>

Table 6

Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on Engagement in Nonteaching-related Tasks

Nonteaching Tasks	N	Mean	SD	p	Effect
Yes	25277	8.18	1.45	< .001	-0.037
No	14183	8.28	1.41		

Table 7

Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on Availability of Teaching and Learning Resources

Provision	N	Mean	SD	p	η^2_p
More than adequate	14259	8.52	1.39	< .001	0.037
Adequate	18893	8.16	1.38		
Inadequate	6308	7.71	1.54		

Table 8

Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on Availability of Facilities in School

Availability	N	Mean	SD	p	η^2_p
More than adequate	12564	8.56	1.37	< .001	0.035
Adequate	17508	8.17	1.39		
Inadequate	9388	7.84	1.51		

Table 9

Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on Highest Educational Attainment

Highest Educational Attainment	N	Mean	SD	p	η^2_p
Secondary Level	131	8.39	1.52	< .001	0.002
Associate Degree	1975	8.24	1.45		
Bachelor's Degree	33988	8.24	1.43		
Master's Degree	3317	7.99	1.46		
Doctoral Degree	49	8.25	1.23		

Table 10

Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on Current Engagement in Graduate Studies

Graduate Studies	N	Mean	SD	p	Effect
Yes	6135	8.28	1.55	< .001	0.049
No	33325	8.21	1.41		

Table 11

Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on History of Promotion

History of Promotion	N	Mean	SD	p	Effect
Yes	7713	8.32	1.43	< .001	0.057
No	31747	8.19	1.44		

Table 12

Differences in Teacher Respondents' Motivation Based on Frequency of Promotion

Frequency of Promotion	N	Mean	SD	p	η^2_p
Every two years	739	8.44	1.50	< .001	0.002
Every three years	1471	8.42	1.48		
Every five years	1617	8.41	1.39		
Other	3917	8.23	1.41		
No response	31716	8.19	1.44		

Table 13

Regression Estimates of Factors Affecting the Teacher Respondents' Level of Motivation in Vietnam

Factors and Indicators	p	β
Sense of Purpose and Fulfillment	0.003	-0.100
Teaching as Interest and Passion	< .001	0.160
School Environment	0.002	-0.067
Salary, Incentives and Benefits	< .001	0.097
Perception of Government Policies	< .001	0.324
Age	< .001	0.077
Gender: Others	0.009	-0.231
Number of Dependents	0.007	0.032
School location: Rural	0.015	0.060
Currently Teaching Grade 1: Yes	0.014	0.098
Currently Teaching Grade 5: Yes	0.04	0.081
Currently Teaching Grade 11: Yes	0.033	-0.0691
Adequate Resources	< .001	-0.167
Inadequate Resources	< .001	-0.288
	$R^2 = 0.202$	



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Centre Director

Editorial Coordinators
Atty. Christopher Lawrence S. Arnuco
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Design and Layout
Mary Margarete M. Crisostomo