

ARTICLE

Understanding the Turnover Intentions among African Chinese Language Pre-Service Teachers Trained in China: Professional Factors (Un)fulfilled Basic Needs

Roland Naguydem Mabiala 

School of Chinese Language and Literature, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing 100089, China

ABSTRACT

For decades, numerous studies have widely examined teacher turnover intention by identifying the leading professional factors. Yet, comparatively less attention has been paid to examining how these factors contribute to (un)fulfilling basic needs, which lead to pre-service language teachers' turnover intentions. To fill this gap, this study examined professional factors leading to turnover intentions among African pre-service teachers of the Chinese language trained in China, whose professional preparation is embedded in multiple national and linguistic contexts. The study aimed to identify the most influential professional factors that (un)fulfilled basic needs and led to pre-service teachers' intentions to stay or leave teaching. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 13 Francophone African pre-service teachers enrolled in the Chinese Language Teaching programme in China (FAPT-CLTs) and analysed using inductive thematic analysis. As a result, the findings revealed that salary and employment stability were the most influential factors in shaping pre-service teachers' career decisions. Most pre-service teachers highlighted that this profession did not offer competitive salaries and lacked stability, which led to their unmet basic needs due to professional dissatisfaction and socioeconomic reasons. Findings also revealed a high rate of turnover intentions among teachers, driven by extrinsic motivations. Unlike turnover, a weak retention intention was identified among a small group of teachers, based on intrinsic motivations—a passion for the teaching profession. Despite their passion, they were open to other career opportunities if no reforms were made. These findings have implications for enhancing professional development trajectories of transnational language teachers.

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Roland Naguydem Mabiala, School of Chinese Language and Literature, Beijing Foreign Studies University, Beijing 100089, China;
Email: mabialaroland@hotmail.com or mabialaroland@bfsu.edu.cn

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 10 April 2026 | Revised: 8 June 2026 | Accepted: 15 June 2026 | Published Online: 22 June 2026
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63385/cces.v2i1.101200>

CITATION

Mabiala, R.N., 2026. Understanding the Turnover Intentions among African Chinese Language Pre-Service Teachers Trained in China: Professional Factors (Un)Fulfilled Basic Needs. *Cross-Cultural Education Studies*. 2(1): 104–123. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63385/cces.v2i1.101200>

COPYRIGHT

Copyright © 2026 by the author(s). Published by Nature and Information Engineering Publishing Sdn. Bhd. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Keywords: Teacher Turnover Intentions; Professional Factors; (Un)Fulfilled Basic Needs; African Pre-Service Teachers; Chinese Language

1. Introduction

Teacher turnover is a global issue that impacts the entire educational system in many countries^[1,2]. Existing studies have widely identified many factors related to teacher turnover, including job satisfaction, school environment, working conditions, family and personal issues, and feelings of disrespect^[3–5]. These previous findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how organisational and personal factors influence teachers' decisions to leave or remain.

However, these previous studies focused more on in-service teachers. Meanwhile, research on pre-service teachers has received little attention and remains comparatively underdeveloped, despite their considerable impact on the supply of future personnel. This gap is becoming increasingly visible in the Chinese language teaching programme. Although many studies have addressed the professional training of African pre-service Chinese language teachers, comparatively little has focused on how these pre-service teachers intend to remain in or leave the profession of Chinese teaching. This study focuses on Francophone African pre-service teachers enrolled in the Chinese Language Teaching programme in China (FAPT-CLTs), by examining how professional factors influence their intentions to become teachers or leave the teaching profession.

In this perspective, the study draws on Nguyen and Springer's^[6] teacher turnover framework, which conceptualised these professional factors as employment factors—including employment rate, teacher salary, non-teacher salary, late hiring, retention incentives, union presence and tenure. These factors may be perceived as the most influential factors among the FAPT-CLTs' turnover intentions.

In the African context, existing research on teacher turnover appears linked to professional factors, given the local sociocultural and socioeconomic realities in many countries^[7,8]. The quality of these professional factors often influences teachers to meet their basic needs, particularly physiological and safety needs^[9,10]. In other words, meeting basic needs is a challenging daily hurdle for most teachers in many African countries. The usual response to this issue is often to

leave the profession entirely in search of positions that better meet their needs^[9]. This situation has, in some way, influenced the perspectives of most pre-service teachers, who observe the circumstances of their older peers firsthand or indirectly.

Most FAPT-CLTs may contemplate switching to careers in Chinese multinational companies or elsewhere. With China's economic growth, many Chinese companies are expanding across Africa and actively seek talented individuals who possess not only proficiency in Chinese but also a deep understanding of Chinese culture^[11,12]. In particular, FAPT-CLTs seem to be ideal candidates for employment in these companies. Although FAPT-CLTs have educational backgrounds, the existing research indicates that many young African Chinese language teachers have transitioned into industrial roles. Others have undergone additional training to meet the demands of their new careers, because these companies aim to provide them with suitable professional factors^[13–15]. Despite a large pool of FAPT-CLTs, fewer may intend to engage as teachers in the Francophone African context, where professional expectations and future career paths seem uncertain in fulfilling basic social needs. Examining FAPT-CLTs' turnover intentions matters because they may reveal the motivational forces driving their career choices.

As stated earlier, this study explores the turnover intentions of FAPT-CLTs by examining how professional factors lead to their turnover intentions. Drawing on Nguyen and Springer's workforce framework—professional factors, which relate to fulfilling basic needs in Maslow's hierarchy—this study emphasises (1) identifying the professional factors that count the most to FAPT-CLTs and (2) examining how these factors (un)fulfilled their basic needs and led to their turnover intentions. By shifting the focus from in-service teachers to FAPT-CLTs, from traditional turnover factors to underdeveloped professional factors, and from general education subjects to the second-language teaching field, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamic forces influencing pre-service teacher turnover in language education.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Teacher Turnover, Professional Factors, and Basic Needs

This study draws on Nguyen and Springer's^[6] theoretical framework of teacher turnover. This framework identifies factors influencing teacher turnover across personnel, school, and external correlates. Most notably, external correlates address workforce factors that include the "employment rate, late hiring, teacher salary, retention bonus, non-teacher salary, union, tenure, and pension"^[6] (p. 1005). Following Nguyen and Springer, this study uses professional factors to align with FAPT-CLTs' professional experiences, rather than workforce factors, which may go beyond this study's focus. This shift emphasises terminology rather than theory; the analytical framework remains the same.

Critically, these professional factors seem to fulfil teachers' physiological and safety needs. That is, a teacher's salary may serve to fill physiological needs, such as food, housing, and clothing. Employment rates, late hiring, and retention bonuses are closely tied to safety needs, including job security, income, and access to healthcare. In this sense, professional factors appear significant in meeting the pre-service teachers' basic needs. Maslow's hierarchy^[16] of basic needs may refine these professional factors by demonstrating how they interact with the (un)fulfilment of basic needs in a specific sociocultural context. Since these factors reflect basic needs, fulfilling them is necessary. Otherwise, when they are unmet, pre-service teachers are less likely to consider teaching a viable career and may opt to leave.

Overall, professional factors appear to align with the basic needs. The (un)fulfilment of these needs may lead to turnover intentions, particularly in the FAPT-CLTs context. Building on this foundation, the study examines how these forces shape FAPT-CLTs' turnover intentions and highlights the underlying reasons. This offers a comprehensive understanding of teacher turnover intentions in general and helps predict pre-service teacher turnover in the specific Franco-phone African contexts.

2.2. Teacher Turnover Intentions

Teacher turnover was identified in empirical research as external, referring to teachers who leave the teaching

profession for a specific reason, and internal, referring to teachers who move to another educational organisation with or without switching to a different subject. Internal turnover also includes teachers who switch to another teaching subject but remain at their initial school^[17]. In this study, external teacher turnover was defined as teacher turnover.

Turnover intentions are considered a predictive factor among teachers who have an intention and a deliberate decision to pursue another position^[18,19]. In other words, intention serves as an indicator that highlights factors leading to teacher turnover^[20]. Several studies have been conducted to identify factors influencing teacher turnover intentions^[21,22]. The intention to depart or diverge from the teaching profession is driven by multifaceted factors^[2,23,24], such as professional conditions^[3,25], which are often seen as "highly predictive of an individual teacher's intentions to leave"^[3] (p. 251), especially for in-service teachers, who are more likely to leave schools where the working conditions are poorer. For example, Räsänen et al.^[2] investigated Finnish teachers' job satisfaction and turnover intentions, revealing that 50% of teachers intended to leave the profession, with most of these being young teachers^[24]. Regarding pre-service teachers, turnover intention is often linked to the training process, during which many trainees may develop intentions to leave the teaching profession for the reasons mentioned above. In Nigeria, a sample of 404 pre-service teachers was examined to predict their intentions, revealing that only 29% intended to pursue a career in teaching^[10].

Overall, multifaceted factors shape teacher turnover intentions. Professional factors remained the most predictive factors identified across multiple specific contexts in the previous studies. However, the findings of these studies seemed to focus more on in-service teachers, while overlooking pre-service teachers' context. By exploring FAPT-CLTs' teacher turnover intentions, this study may add nuance to the existing literature.

2.3. Teacher Turnover Problems and Basic Needs

The teacher turnover problem is a significant issue that continues to affect educational performance and growth in many countries. For decades, numerous research studies have been conducted to examine teacher turnover from different angles. Some focus on how teacher turnover impacts

educational outcomes, while others emphasise its effect on students' learning performance^[26–28]. These diverse perspectives contribute to gaining a comprehensive understanding of teacher turnover.

Factors such as salary play a vital role in this issue^[9]. Salary is a key aspect of working conditions and is often considered a significant factor in determining whether teachers stay or leave the profession. Earlier studies have identified salary as the most significant reason for teachers to quit^[22,29]. In essence, salary issues often motivate teachers to seek better positions, either within or outside the education field, in pursuit of opportunities that support their professional, social, and economic growth. In the US, salary increases have led to a reduction in teacher turnover from 65% to 35%^[30,31]. Mpundu et al.^[9] reported that low salaries have driven 78.3% of South African teachers to quit. Overall, salary-related concerns remain a crucial factor among others that must be considered when addressing this teacher turnover problem.

Alongside salary, other factors also influence teacher turnover. Some research studies have identified systematic factors by presenting various theoretical frameworks that address specific causes of teacher turnover^[6,21,32]. Meta-analyses have theorised that variables, such as personal attributes, qualifications, job satisfaction, administrative leadership, and support, are primary drivers of teacher turnover^[2,21,33–35]. Other research indicates that higher rates of teacher turnover are associated with factors such as gender, ethnicity, academic ability, professional experience, student demography, salary, incentives, family responsibilities, and policies^[5,36].

These studies aimed to focus more on identifying factors. Still, they seemed to overlook how these professional factors, which appear significant in meeting basic needs, may contribute to teacher turnover intentions. Following this, the hierarchy of needs serves as a crucial framework for understanding individual motivation, as it highlights that people are driven to fulfil their needs^[16]. In teacher turnover, these basic needs influence whether teachers stay in a teaching setting. When the conditions designed to meet these needs are unsatisfactory, teachers may leave to find a better environment where their needs can be adequately met^[9,37]. Only a few studies have focused on these trajectories by exploring how professional factors contribute to (un)fulfilling

basic needs of teachers. Mpundu et al.^[9], for example, analysed professional factors that affect the basic needs of South African teachers, and reported that when professional factors fail to meet teachers' basic needs, many choose to leave and pursue positions where their needs are better addressed.

Overall, the multifaceted factors drive the teacher turnover issue. Much research has widely focused on identifying factors, while overlooking the examination of motivational forces that rationalise teacher turnover in specific contexts. By examining the FAPT-CLTs turnover, this study seeks to address these gaps by offering new insights into understanding the literature on teacher turnover

2.4. African Pre-Service Chinese Language Teachers Trained in China

Since the 1970s, China has reshaped its position as a global superpower through economic growth and leadership ambitions, while also expanding the international reach of the Chinese language^[11,13].

In the Sino-African context, learning this language is viewed as a gateway to accessing China for educational purposes, and teaching it is regarded as a guaranteed way to create job opportunities and foster entrepreneurial activities between Chinese and African communities. Furthermore, teaching Chinese is viewed not merely as language instruction but as an opportunity for education and employment^[38]. This has attracted many international African students to enrol in Chinese language programmes in China, with the ambition to become teachers and return home to promote the Chinese language locally. Such motivation is often supported by initiatives such as South-South Cooperation, the Belt and Road Initiative, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, and the establishment of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms, all of which contribute to promoting Chinese language teaching across many African nations^[11]. Despite this, many FAPT-CLTs encounter the realities of the teaching profession during their academic careers, such as low salaries, poor working conditions, volunteer work, and inadequate induction, particularly in their home countries. Consequently, many are considering leaving teaching to pursue entrepreneurial or corporate careers with more favourable conditions than those offered by the education sector.

Notably, existing literature tends to focus more on issues related to teaching and learning Chinese, such as grammar, teaching materials, methods, and learners' motivation^[14,39]. At the pre-service teacher level, researchers have extensively engaged in teacher preparation, focusing on pedagogical development, academic knowledge acquisition, and language beliefs and practices^[38]. Although these multiple research outcomes contributed to understanding the Chinese language teacher's situation, the scholars seem to overlook the situations faced by teachers that affect their professional career decisions. By examining how professional factors influence FAPT-CLTs' intentions to become teachers or leave the teaching profession, this study seeks to provide nuanced insights into the current literature on promoting the Chinese language and to raise awareness regarding the experiences of pre-service Chinese language teachers. To this end, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the most influential professional factors in shaping FAPT-CLTs' decisions to become teachers or leave the teaching profession?
2. To what extent do these factors matter in (un)fulfilling the FAPT-CLTs' physiological and safety needs?
3. How do these professional factors (un)fulfilled basic needs influence their intention to become teachers or leave the teaching profession?

3. Methods

3.1. Research Setting and Participants

This research took place at one of China's prestigious and leading universities. Currently, this university excels in the study and teaching of foreign languages and literature,

especially in teaching Chinese. In 2025, QS World University Rankings reports that its subjects, such as linguistics, are ranked in the top 30 worldwide, and the Chinese language is in the top ten nationally. The university comprises several schools, departments, colleges, and research centres, enabling it to enrol students from undergraduate to postgraduate levels. This year, the university enrolled 11,200 students, including 1,200 international students from America, Asia, Europe, and Africa.

The acronym FAPT-CLTs refers to Francophone African international students specialising in teaching Chinese as a foreign language at a Chinese university. They are considered pre-service teachers of Chinese.

Initially, purposive sampling was used to recruit eligible participants. Due to the inaccessibility of other participants, snowball sampling was used to reach a sample size appropriate to the research purpose. Across both samples, 13 FAPT-CLETs were recruited: two were in their third and fourth years of doctoral studies, four were graduate students in various years, and the remaining were undergraduates across different academic years (See **Table 1**).

The sample size was limited to 13 because this appeared to be a sufficiently large group of FAPT-CLTs at this university, representing relevant participants aligned with the research focus.

These FAPT-CLTs hailed from diverse African French-speaking countries. All possessed excellent command of the colonial language—French, and had acquired a solid linguistic and pedagogical knowledge of Chinese. They had started learning Chinese in their home countries at local institutions, such as Confucius Institutes, before undertaking their studies in China. Some had worked as teachers, while others had completed internships related to their academic training.

Table 1. Demographic information of FAPT-CLTs.

ID	Age	Gender	Country	Linguistic Background	Major	Education Level	Academic Year
Participant.1	34	Male	Congo	French	Teaching-Chinese	Doctorate	3
Participant.2	23	Female	Congo	French	Teaching-Chinese	Bachelor	3
Participant.3	27	Male	Benin	French	Teaching-Chinese	Master	1
Participant.4	24	Male	DRC	French	Teaching-Chinese	Bachelor	4
Participant.5	24	Male	Congo	French	Teaching-Chinese	Bachelor	3
Participant.6	24	Male	Congo	French	Teaching-Chinese	Bachelor	3
Participant.7	27	Male	Cameroon	French	Teaching-Chinese	Bachelor	4
Participant.8	28	Female	Madagascar	French	Teaching-Chinese	Master	2
Participant.9	21	Female	Burkina Faso	French	Teaching-Chinese	Bachelor	2
Participant.10	28	Female	Gabon	French	Teaching-Chinese	Bachelor	3
Participant.11	35	Male	Burundi	French	Teaching-Chinese	Doctorate	4
Participant.12	28	Female	Madagascar	French	Teaching-Chinese	Master	1
Participant.13	27	Male	Madagascar	French	Teaching-Chinese	Master	1

Recruitment was based on informed consent, providing sufficient details to ensure that their records would be used solely for research purposes, with assurances that their identities would be anonymised to maintain confidentiality^[40]. Ethical approval was granted by the author's institutions.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

A semi-structured individual interview was conducted to collect data^[41]. Previous research has extensively demonstrated that this approach is highly valuable for understanding teacher professional development research^[9]. The use of semi-structured interviews enabled us to gain insight into the overall landscape of FAPT-CLTs' turnover intentions.

In January 2025, face-to-face interviews were held, lasting approximately 80–120 min per participant. Given that French was the native language of participants, all interviews were held in French. Chinese was occasionally employed when either the researcher or the participants referred to a Chinese word without a direct French equivalent (e.g., 汉教, 本土, 语合中心) to keep conceptual clarity. Additionally, we began the interviews with questions about professional factors, followed by questions about basic needs, and concluded with questions about turnover intention (See **Appendix A.1**). The participants' responses were audio-recorded. During the interviews, we kept a notebook to systematically record all relevant details that audio recordings could not fully capture. Afterwards, the French transcripts were translated into English. Moreover, scholars with trilingual experience (French–Chinese–English) reviewed the transcripts by systematically rereading them and checking the consistency and accuracy between the transcript data and the audio recordings. Then, each participant received a copy of their transcript. A back-translation process was undertaken collectively to ensure that meaning was preserved and to minimise any biases caused by translation. Once completed, the participants reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts^[41,42].

Our insider position with the participant group facilitated access to the participants^[43]. We also recognised that our sociocultural, socio-ethnic, and socio-educational backgrounds might have influenced the data collection process. This position heightened our awareness and likely enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the data.

The analysis process began with preparing the tran-

scripts. We anonymised the participants' identities and renamed the transcripts accordingly. Subsequently, NVivo-15 software was employed for manual coding^[42].

With our research questions and goals in mind, inductive thematic analysis was chosen to identify codes and themes directly derived from the dataset^[44–46]. That is, meaningful messages were semantically and latently extracted across the dataset to assign codes “without trying to fit it into a preexisting coding frame, or the researcher's analytic preconceptions”^[44] (p. 83). Through a rigorous and consistent reading, the six-phase approach was employed^[44]. We familiarised ourselves with the data, developed initial codes, searched for potential themes, reviewed and defined themes, and reported the findings^[44]. This enabled us to thoroughly read our transcripts, gain insights, and select meaningful messages for coding.

To capture participants' attribute values, a “case classification” strategy was employed during the process to link the transcripts with participants' demographic information, ensuring gender balance and voice representation. At the same time, we established containers to hold all extracted messages from each case, creating a coding system in which new codes were systematically checked to determine whether the existing code covered the selected extracts. Initial and analytical memos were used to examine the relationship between research methods and data analysis techniques^[42].

Once the coding process was complete, the coded data were sorted to form categories. We then investigated potential relationships between categories and codes. Categories were classified into preliminary themes and compared with each other. Ultimately, three main themes were identified and evaluated based on their accuracy and reliability in addressing our research questions.

Finally, tools such as Word Frequency, Matrix Coding Query, and others were employed to visualise and represent participants' voices in our data report. Concurrently, we retrieved and exported our codebook to a Microsoft Word spreadsheet to ensure consistency between codes and themes.

Our reflexivity helped us set aside our positionality and minimise influence on the data findings. As we worked closely with the data, efforts were made to reduce all possible biases and prioritise participants' voices throughout the analysis. This reflexivity also enhanced the trustworthiness of our approach by ensuring transparency and credibility in

our analysis^[47].

4. Findings

Based on the research purpose and research questions, three themes were developed throughout the data analysis:

1. Selective prioritisation of professional factors,
2. Professional factors (un)fulfilled basic needs and underlying socio-professional and economic reasons,
3. Turnover intentions and underlying motivations behind them.

4.1. Selective Prioritisation of Professional Factors

The current theme focused on identifying professional factors. The data analysis explained that this identification process remained selective. That is, FAPT-CLTs tended to prioritise factors they considered directly affecting their career decisions, while disregarding factors perceived as unnecessary and having less influence on their decision to become a teacher or leave the profession.

The former were identified as “crucial factors” in shaping the FAPT-CLTs’ career aspirations due to their relevance to the FAPT-CLTs’ socio-economic and professional growth. The analysis revealed that all FAPT-CLTs perceived salary and employment stability as the most significant factors. While other factors, such as recruitment and the low social status of teachers, were associated with crucial factors, salary and employment stability remained the most dominant themes. Throughout the coding process, all participants were involved and provided 46 pieces of relevant information out of 56, emphasising good salaries and stable employment (**Appendix B.2**). This reflected how FAPT-CLTs consistently emphasised that salary and employment stability significantly influenced their decision-making. Participant.5 stated:

In the teaching Chinese profession, I consider the most important for my future career are employment stability and a good salary. I know that other items like primes, working conditions, and professional opportunities are also useful, but stability and salary are the most important for me, I think. Because the stabil-

ity will guarantee my job security and a good salary, what I want will help me to meet my needs, to flourish, to buy a car, to live normally, to enjoy, to travel...

The expressions, including ‘job-security, meet-my-needs, flourish, buy-a-car, enjoy, travel’, demonstrate that FAPT-CLTs require not only a permanent salary but also a well-paid salary. A relevant salary that allows them to enjoy their social life adequately and permanently in the local context of their countries.

While all participants consistently emphasised employment salary and stability, the Madagascan participants overemphasised employment stability over salary. This appeared relevant compared to other nationalities. An analytical memo was created to document this Madagascan particularity systematically. The analysis highlighted that, although salary is essential, these participants believed that a stable job is more important. Because they have a permanent position where they are paid each month consistently, even during critical moments in social life. One Madagascan participant, who has experience teaching Chinese, revealed that stable employment provides her with a certain degree of social security and helps alleviate the psychological pressure associated with job seeking when needed. To this end, this Madagascan participant valued stable employment with a modest salary over an unstable, highly paid job.

The salary is important, but what matters most is job stability. So, once I return to Madagascar, if I’m offered another job that pays me more than 10,000 yuan, it’s not a permanent job. And I don’t even know if I will finish the month without getting fired. Alongside, I have a teaching Chinese as a permanent job with, for example, 5,000 yuan per month; I will directly choose the teacher’s job, because it guarantees me a stable job and stable income per month. (Participant.8)

Conversely, other factors such as bonuses, prizes, incentives, professional growth, and local working conditions were identified as ‘peripheral factors’—having less influence on the decision-making of FAPT-CLTs to become teachers or to leave the teaching profession. The data analysis revealed that nine FAPT-CLTs recognised the importance

of these factors but considered them unnecessary. They believed that these peripheral factors could not significantly affect their long-term professional decisions. For example, Participant.4 noted that “*Professional bonuses, promotion opportunities, and professional growth don’t have much influence or determine my decision to stay in teaching Chinese. I don’t think there are great advantages.*” This excerpt highlights how peripheral factors were perceived as not influencing FAPT-CLTs’ decisions to become teachers. Meanwhile, participants did not view these factors as essential to fulfilling their professional needs, compared with factors such as salary and employment stability. The Participant.1 emphasised, “*Compared to our local reality, the working conditions, bonuses, and incentives are important, but they are not a priority in my career decision. They take second place.*”

Overall, FAPT-CLTs identified professional factors by assessing their perceived relevance in shaping their decision to become teachers or leave the profession. Subjectively, FAPT-CLTs regarded ‘crucial factors’ as influential and relevant, while ‘peripheral factors’ were seen as unnecessary and having little impact on their decision-making.

4.2. Professional Factors (Un)Fulfilled Basic Needs and Underlying Socio-Professional and Economic Reasons

4.2.1. Professional Factors (Un)Fulfilled Basic Needs

This pattern emphasises how professional factors provide FAPT-CLTs with feelings of being (dis)satisfied, especially in meeting their physiological and safety needs. Throughout the data analysis, compensation—salary in the Chinese teaching profession—has been identified as the most significant factor in satisfying basic needs (Appendix B.2). As a crucial factor, the FAPT-CLTs place salary at the centre of fulfilling their basic needs.

Despite this, the data analysis revealed that all participants believed teachers earn low salaries in their home country contexts. They emphasised that their peers who teach Chinese locally often face salary issues (Appendix B.2). In other words, in-service teachers are inadequately paid, which leads to chronic socioeconomic difficulties in meeting their basic needs in their daily lives. Given that, most participants

(70%) noted that the income of the Chinese teaching profession remains insufficient to adequately cover their basic needs, such as clothing, food, and housing, in the context of their local social life. A cohort of transcripts stated:

I think the gain of Chinese teaching can’t meet my basic needs, such as housing, clothing, food, moving, taking care of my parents, my community, and so on. When I consider the socio-cultural reality in Benin, teaching is not a job that will enable me to meet all these needs, even by dreaming. (Participant.3)

Because it won’t even help me move forward. I can’t move forward with it. I can’t build or buy a house with it. I don’t think such a salary can meet my basic needs. (Participant.5)

The transcripts highlight that these participants are fully aware of their local sociocultural and economic realities in their countries, where the profession of teaching Chinese is unlikely to meet their physiological needs. One participant highlighted that the local income for this profession remains insignificant; consequently, it can only cover the limited daily needs of an unmarried novice teacher. In other words, this cannot guarantee teachers’ other safety needs, such as financial, familial, social, and healthcare security. Another participant from Congo-Brazzaville highlighted that the current local financial income for Chinese language teachers would only allow for survival rather than enjoying life. This situation may hinder teachers from saving and planning for a better future, especially when social responsibilities emerge. A cohort of transcripts explained:

If I become a teacher and pay me as my peers, that salary will cover my elementary needs only if I live alone, or I have not yet a family. I can’t live well, or even meet my family’s needs. My financial security is not guaranteed, even my plans for a better future. (Participant.6)

I remember when I taught Chinese in Congo. At the beginning, I thought that the salary seemed to cover my rent and food needs, but very quickly, at the end of a quarter, I realised that it didn’t. I can’t save; it was difficult for me to live. (Participant.1)

The local social situation varies from country to country, which creates some atypical contexts. The data analysis indicated that the FAPT-CLTs from Madagascar (Participant.8, Participant.12 and Participant.13) believed that the teaching Chinese profession could sufficiently provide a state of being satisfied, in terms of salary and stability. That is, this profession could adequately cover their basic local needs, notably working in Confucius establishments. Compared to civil servant teachers, these Madagascans have experienced their in-service peers being well-paid and enjoying permanent employment, and having a stable financial position. This drives a particular dream for these Madagascans, who not only envy their in-service peers but also strongly wish to become teachers in local Confucius establishments. Participant.8 stated:

When I was still studying at Confucius in Madagascar, I saw that my teachers had good living conditions. They have food to eat, clothes to wear every day, and they have children. I saw others have cars. I think it's a very stable job and provides more financial security compared to other jobs. Even if it's not the best salary, it's enough to live on every day in Madagascar. So, I think becoming a teacher in Madagascar is very stable.

4.2.2. Underlying Socio-Professional and Economic Reasons

The data analysis reported that all FAPT-CLTs have provided diverse reasons for which the teaching profession could or could not adequately respond to their basic needs. FAPT-CLTs highlighted multiple factors beyond employment, salary and stability (Appendix B.2). The 'socio-professional' factors were the most recurrent reasons underlying the (un)fulfilled basic needs across the dataset. The patterns, such as employment instability, low salaries, lack of recruitment, insecure careers, and limited future growth, were systematically identified as the main socio-professional reasons underlying the (un)fulfilled basic needs (See Appendix B.2).

Most notably, low salaries and low levels of education significantly contributed to teachers' inability to meet their socio-professional needs. The data analysis indicated that low salaries and low education levels are socially underval-

ued at the local level, especially among teachers holding only (under)graduate diplomas and working in primary and secondary schools. The Participant.1 from Congo-Brazzaville noted, *"You have to take into account what diploma you have for Chinese language teaching in Congo. Having a higher degree, such as a doctorate, improves social status and also makes it easier to enhance one's financial resources. Teaching at universities also opens up other opportunities. You can teach, do research, write books, and do conferences. So, these several sources can help with income and improve your social status. Not for those in high school."* Conversely, FAPT-CLTs felt that teaching Chinese would not sufficiently increase their perceived socio-professional status or improve their financial situation, which is likely necessary to adequately meet their basic needs.

Socioeconomic factors also play a role in explaining the (un)fulfilment of basic needs in the contexts of FAPT-CLTs' home countries. Through the data analysis, participants associated unmet basic needs with the current socioeconomic circumstances of their peers involved in teaching Chinese locally. With the rising cost of living locally, six participants were consistently questioned about whether undertaking Chinese as a means of employment could adequately cover their basic needs. Regarding socioeconomic aspects, Participant.3 remarked, *"It's a utopia to think that the socioeconomic aspects of teaching Chinese may cover my basic needs, it's no and no, honestly speaking."* Alongside this, ten other participants emphasised that this employment could meet only some individuals' basic needs, such as clothing, food, and transportation, in small local cities where the cost of living remains modest. They also expressed concern that this might expose them to potential social risks and hinder their chances of achieving significant social advancement projects. Participant.5 and Participant.11 stated:

Chinese as a profession may not allow me to earn 10 million in four years for my social plans as building a house. Otherwise, I must go to the bank, borrow money, and struggle for lifelong with my poor salary to pay the loan back. It's really difficult. I don't wish to live like the way Congolese teachers are surviving now.

The income from teaching the Chinese language, currently, can cover a few needs, such

as housing, clothing, and moving. But, when it comes to, for example, saving or doing projects, for example buying a car or a house, it becomes almost impossible.

Other participants explained that the insignificant socioeconomic income of this profession also prevents them from providing consistent and permanent financial support to their local community, including their own (in)direct relatives. Participant 1 explained that work seems to be viewed as synonymous with social success; once community members become “workers”, they need to contribute in diverse ways to the community’s growth. Participant 1 stated:

We are Africans, we live in a community, the more you work, the more people think you have succeeded, so as a teacher, I should support my community financially, and provide social support.

The data analysis has identified similar observations among the Madagascan participants who wish to work in local Confucius establishments to avoid facing a low socioeconomic situation.

4.3. Turnover Intentions and the Underlying Motivations behind Them

4.3.1. FAPT-CLTs’ Turnover Intentions

The data analysis revealed two primary intention trajectories among FAPT-CLTs: the intention to become teachers (Becoming-teachers) and the intention to leave the teaching profession (Leaving-teachers). However, the map that emerged from these intentions explained diverse tendencies related to FAPT-CLTs’ turnover intentions.

Through the data analysis, the Becoming-teachers were identified as the smallest group of FAPT-CLTs (Participant.8; Participant.1; Participant.10, and Participant.11), intending to stay and work as teachers of the Chinese language. While this retention force was evident, the data analysis revealed that most of the Becoming-teachers intended to teach Chinese only temporarily. In other words, they were driven by short-term professional motivations, using teaching Chinese as a preparatory stage before transitioning to desirable occupations. The Participant.7 explained, “It’s just in the short term, maybe one month, one year, to find

the best plan to leave.” Given the critical recruitment state in the employment market in their home countries, the data emphasised that some Becoming-teachers would perceive teaching Chinese as a potential entry point to acquire professional experience by waiting for other career opportunities. Participant.3 stated:

I see myself still working as a teacher in the short-term to have experience, not more than five years. This is possible only if there are really no other opportunities, let’s say, the last option, I can consider doing Chinese in the short-term, in order to find better career opportunities.

During the interview, Participants were asked to rate their turnover intention on a 10-point scale, where 1 indicated the lowest intention to leave the teaching profession, and 10 indicated the highest. The ratings were used as an indicative measure of participants’ self-perceived turnover intention and were interpreted alongside their interview responses. Indeed, on this 1–10 turnover intentions scale, the data revealed that only four participants were driven by medium- and long-term motivations to continue teaching Chinese, notably two bachelor’s students (Participant.6 and Participant.10) and two doctoral trainees (Participant.1 and Participant.11; See **Appendix B**). Most remarkably, these four Becoming-teachers expressed their intentions intrinsically for choosing to teach Chinese over other professional occupations, despite the factually inadequate conditions. One doctoral participant indicated that to alleviate inadequate local conditions related to this profession at the local level, they intended to work in China for two to three years, for financial reasons. Then, this participant will invest these resources in teaching Chinese locally by creating relevant conditions. Otherwise, the participants can develop entrepreneurial initiative to create a private centre for teaching Chinese. Participant.1 stated:

If I see that there is an option to work here in China to make a little money, I will put the Chinese teaching aside. I go to work, even for two or three years, I make a few million, and I go back home to teaching Chinese, but it’s not to be recruited for the mediocre salary, maybe to start my own teaching Chinese business.

However, the other participants thought the entrepreneurial ideas seemed unlikely to be implemented because consistent reforms related to teaching Chinese locally had not been implemented, which could prevent them from developing their entrepreneurial activities peacefully. Given that, they intended to work as teachers for a medium- to long-term period while remaining open to other, potentially better professional careers. Participant.11 stated:

I define myself as a teacher of the Chinese language in the medium term, while leaving the door open, in case the local reforms are not implemented. If there are opportunities, I have the right to leave or to undertake other business.

The Leaving-teachers constituted a larger group of FAPT-CLTs who were strongly intent on quitting the profession. 10 of 13 participants expressed a vehement necessity to leave teaching Chinese after graduation to seek positions offering better employment conditions and long-term stability. The 1–10 turnover intention scale revealed that the Participant.5, Participant.8, and Participant.9 excluded teaching Chinese from their professional plans by orienting their motivation largely towards other occupations (See **Appendix B.1**). Participant.P5 noted that, even though teaching Chinese was excluded from his mind, it is essential to continue working in the Chinese language area, such as translation and Chinese overseas enterprises, where he could not only have better working conditions but also permanently improve his Chinese language proficiency. Participant.5 stated:

I think, to be honest, I like the Chinese language, but the reality on the ground is a fact in Congo. I'll leave teaching just after my graduation. It's mandatory. So, what I'm doing is looking for other opportunities. I can be an interpreter and translator; it's possible. I can also work in Chinese companies, using Chinese.

4.3.2. The Underlying Motivations Shaping FAPT-CLTs' Intentions

The data interview revealed that FAPT-CLTs' turnover intentions were driven by diverse motivational reasons. The data identified that Becoming-teachers were motivated by in-

trinsic forces, notably those intending to teach Chinese for a lifelong period. Throughout the coding process, they consistently employed the expression 'passion' to rationalise their main motivations for their retention intentions. Three participants decided to choose teaching Chinese as their leading profession, while setting aside other careers (See **Appendix B.2**). The data indicated that these Becoming-teachers considered teaching Chinese as a valued and long-term vocation, in which they can significantly contribute to educating their local peers. Their engagement in teaching Chinese provides them with a path to be permanently connected with people from diverse social levels, with whom they can build particular social interactions. Through 'passion' and 'love', they feel socially and personally fulfilled. Participants stated:

With the current situation of teachers in Congo, the only thing that makes me want to stay is the love that I have for teaching Chinese, which is much more personal. I love teaching it because when you transmit the knowledge, you see someone flourishing, and this creates a kind of esteem, honour, joy, because you have contributed to the development of the human being. (Participant.1)

For the long term, what will motivate me is if I would be the passion for life. The passion and the love of work, I would say to myself, the conditions are not goods, but I really like the work, I do I find myself; I am constantly in contact with students. (Participant.6)

Alongside passion or love, other Becoming-teachers highlighted motivations such as temporarily experiencing pedagogy, gaining professional experience, and enjoying holidays (See **Appendix B.2**).

The Leaving-teachers were contrastingly opposed to the intrinsic motivations of becoming-teachers. The latter highlighted the extrinsic motivations to rationalise their intention to leave teaching after graduation. Through the data analysis, they emphasised the socioeconomic situation and professional dissatisfaction among Chinese teachers on the ground. The focus was on the low salary and insignificant income compared to colleagues with similar diplomas who were recruited in the banking, industrial, science, and technology sectors. The data also revealed unattractive working

conditions, limited space for professional development, and a lack of employment stability (See **Appendix B.2**). The participants (9, 2 and 5) felt frustrated after observing the socio-professional and economic status of their in-service peers. Participant.9 stated that *“The local teachers’ status is creating a kind of frustration, a kind of injustice. I want to be a teacher, but status, it’s not changing, I can’t really.”* The participant (P5) viewed this situation as condemning himself to social inequality while having better professional opportunities. Participant.5 stated:

As you know, I took risks leaving my family to pursue higher education abroad. My parents took money from the bank, even sold our piece of land to buy me a flight ticket, and I teach Chinese, a job, you are unable to feed yourself with your own salary, unable to buy a car, a house, or support your parents. No, I can’t do it.

The data indicated that the latter participants felt frustrated, whereas others felt marginalised when comparing themselves to Chinese expatriate trainee-teachers working in local Confucius centres. The data identified some participants who taught locally, highlighting that they were not treated equally with their Chinese expatriate teachers, whose benefits were viewed as significantly higher. That is, they were well-paid, well-housed, well-treated, even well-moved, while the locals working in a similar centre were low-paid, even with their master’s degrees from Chinese universities. Most unimaginably, these Chinese expatriate teachers were simply trainees working for academic internship purposes; most did not have bachelor’s or master’s degrees. Given that, two participants were expected to continue teaching only if some reforms could be made; otherwise, they were still open to embracing other positions offering better conditions than teaching Chinese. A cohort of transcripts stated:

There’s a form of marginalisation. Because you’ve studied in China and received your diplomas. You’ve had the chance to become a Chinese language teacher in Confucius Institutes and found that Chinese native teachers working as trainees are more privileged than locals. In our case, they live in a hotel, and they are paid better than we are. Of course,

it’s not the same treatment we locals receive when we teach Chinese, even in the Confucius Institute. This is creating a kind of frustration and injustice. You see, I want to be a teacher. I think that policies must be changed. (Participant.12)

I think some measure about salary. Because, for example, there are Chinese teachers in Madagascar; I think their salary is higher than that of Madagascar teachers. So I think if we can be like them, it will be better for us, but it depends on the government. (Participant.13)

5. Discussion

For decades, numerous studies have employed diverse theoretical frameworks to examine teacher turnover. These theoretical frameworks have focused on large-scale in-service teachers by identifying leading factors, such as professional factors, while overlooking the underlying motivational forces that drive teachers’ turnover intentions^[6,21,32,48,49] and tend to overlook pre-service teacher turnover, despite its increasing relevance as more future teachers consider leaving the profession. To fill this gap, this study, through thematic analysis, examined FAPT-CLTs’ turnover intentions by identifying the most significant professional factors and revealing the motivational forces driven by (un)fulfilment of basic needs. This study is significant for enhancing the professional development trajectories of transnational language teachers and for promoting the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language, particularly in specific African social contexts.

The findings revealed that employment, salary and stability were perceived as the most significant factors. The relevance of salary and the conditions of stability drive FAPT-CLTs’ decisions after graduation to become teachers or to leave the Chinese teaching profession. Concerning other factors, FAPT-CLTs perceived them as insignificant factors having less influence on their career decision. However, the consideration of these factors was not perceived to the same extent among FAPT-CLTs, particularly among the Madagascan participants, who prioritised stable long-term employment in the Confucius Institutes over highly paid employment. This preference seems to be associated

with the complexity of the teaching profession in Madagascan contexts. It is reported that 83% of teaching personnel have been trained pedagogically, and many are known as '*Fram*'—non-civil-servant and working in distant community areas. Learners' parents provide much of *Fram*'s financial support, while a few are recruited as contractual teachers with salaries of around Ariary 150,000–200,000 per month (USD 36–48), depending on the education category. Alongside *Fram*, regular teachers, as civil servants, are hired and remunerated with salaries ranging from Ariary 300,000 to Ariary 900,000 per month (USD 71–241), depending on the education category^[50,51]. Despite this, Madagascar faces significant salary inequality across ministries, with the Ministry of Education less well-funded than others. As a consequence, the teaching profession appears unstable, with lower salaries, including in private establishments. To this end, the government promulgated a policy that determines the salary at Ariary 250,000 per month (USD 55)^[52,53]. Concurrently, the government implemented '*Politique enseignante*' (Teaching policy)—an equitable pay measure for teachers across different employment categories^[54]. Alongside this, an announcement of a 14% increase in teachers' salaries was made to cover teachers' cost-of-living expenses^[55]. Building on these incongruities, these Madagascan participants may not wish to encounter similar situations, even though some reforms were made. Instead, they hope to join the Confucius Institute, where, through the Centre for Language Education and Cooperation (CLEC), they may receive a stable position with financial assistance from the local volunteer teacher programme, which may appear more significant in covering their cost-of-living expenses.

Satisfaction with these factors may help achieve stable retention of FAPT-CLTs. Ingersoll^[32] emphasised that, regardless of how teachers are trained or recruited, their job satisfaction should be taken into account. The profession of teaching Chinese does not offer a sufficiently competitive salary and remains far from guaranteeing employment stability in the FAPT-CLTs' context. Given local socioeconomic realities, this profession can only address a limited number of physiological needs. In contrast, the safety needs of FAPT-CLTs remain unmet due to socio-professional, socioeconomic, and community support reasons. Concurrently, FAPT-CLTs highlighted other reasons, including a lack of recruitment and insecurity about career

and future growth. This is evident among some participants from Congo-Brazzaville, who highlight dissatisfaction with working conditions. This seems to stem from the Congolese internal educational policy. Joncheray and Dorier^[56] stated that the social decay of the Congolese educational system was due to the unsuccessful previous educational policy, such as the Education Act of 32/65, 12 August 1965, which implemented free education for all under government control. This policy increased the number of learners, necessitating a large pool of qualified teachers and sufficient infrastructure. Alongside the imposition of the structural adjustment plan on many underdeveloped countries, this has exacerbated the Congolese government's inability to meet this funding obligation. In addition, other problems have emerged, such as the complex and lengthy process of recruiting and deploying teachers, and the lethargy of administrative staff in engaging teachers in the education system^[57]. In this perspective, Dzanvoula^[58] reported that many Congolese abstain from entering the teaching profession because of poor working conditions for teachers stemming from inadequate educational system facilities and infrastructure. Subsequently, in-service teachers are increasingly absent from the teaching service for other professional reasons, while pre-service teachers, in turn, are notably reluctant to enter this profession in such contexts. Previous research has reported that many African teachers working in public schools appear to face similar factors due to the local socio-educational contexts, therefore creating an inability of the teaching profession to cover their basic needs, such as food, shelter, and financial security^[7–9].

The findings also revealed a high rate of turnover intention among FAPT-CLTs, driven by unmet basic needs in their home country context. Most FAPT-CLTs express a vehement desire to leave the teaching of the Chinese language after graduation to pursue other occupations offering better work opportunities. This high rate of turnover intentions is driven by extrinsic motivations, which are oriented towards unmet socioeconomic needs and professional dissatisfaction. Additionally, this high rate of turnover intention reflects frustration stemming from observing the poor socioeconomic situation of in-service local teachers, as well as a sense of perceived inequality—in-service teachers compare themselves to expatriate Chinese teachers. Conversely, the findings revealed weak retention intentions among a small group of

FAPT-CLTs. Unlike extrinsic motivations, this retention intention reflects intrinsic motivations based on a passion for the teaching profession, a valued commitment to educating others, and a desire to contribute to local development. Despite these positive intentions, most highlighted concerns about salary and employment stability, and they remain open to the possibility of departure. The professional factors are among the most predictive indicators of teacher turnover intentions^[24,59]. FAPT-CLTs' turnover intentions demonstrate two opposed ideological orientations, explaining how professional factors—salary and job stability—shape pre-service teachers' turnover intentions in specific local contexts. This indicates that satisfaction with these factors remains decisive in determining whether FAPT-CLTs view Chinese teaching as a guaranteed path to long-term employment.

6. Conclusions

The study aimed to identify the most influential professional factors that (un)fulfilled basic needs and led to pre-service teachers' intentions to stay or leave teaching. Through inductive thematic analysis, the findings revealed that salary and employment stability were the most influential factors in shaping pre-service teachers' career decisions. The findings also revealed a high rate of turnover intentions among teachers, driven by extrinsic motivations; a small group of teachers showed weak retention intentions, driven by intrinsic motivations—a passion for the teaching profession.

This study has theoretical implications. By combining Nguyen and Springer's factor framework with basic needs in Maslow's hierarchy, this study offers a nuanced perspective on teacher turnover, highlighting that this issue should be considered not only with professional factors but also in how these factors respond to teachers' basic needs. Combining these two dimensions could provide a significant framework for capturing teachers' career decisions in a deep and nuanced manner. Additionally, the study has some practical implications. Although the study revealed a high rate of turnover intentions, a small group expressed retention intentions. Specific initiatives, such as motivational career and retention strategy courses, should be integrated into these teachers' training programmes, which may contribute to consolidating their passion for the profession. Cui^[60]

emphasised that the most important thing for teaching Chinese sustainably is the teacher's passion, love, as well as the will to embrace teaching as a lifelong career. Finally, policy implications. African local authorities and Chinese institutions, including the CLEC, should increase collaborative efforts and work together by reassessing the socioeconomic conditions of teachers. The African side should implement policies to improve salaries, enhance job stability, and working conditions that meet teachers' basic needs. The Chinese side should continue to expand and increase "Funding the Recruitment of Qualified Full-time or Part-time Local Chinese Language Teachers"—an allowance to support local volunteer teachers' initiatives. In other words, this Chinese institution is a non-profit platform that aims to deepen language exchange and oversee and support Chinese language teaching programmes and projects, including the Confucius Institute (See <https://sta.uwi.edu/fhe/cil/memberships/clec/>). Although many local teachers already benefit from this initiative, it should be inclusive and sustainable, rather than focusing solely on teachers holding master's and doctoral degrees within a limited timeframe. At the training level, the Chinese side might focus more on doctoral students, provide them with more educational opportunities, such as increasing the number of scholarship applications, and monitor those nearing graduation by creating favourable working conditions that adequately meet their basic local needs. This study has demonstrated that doctoral students have strong intentions to remain. If they are offered good salaries and lifelong jobs working locally in their country, they could train local peers for bachelor's and master's degrees while contributing to academic research that enhances global understanding of Chinese teaching and literature. This holds promise for sustainable Chinese language education locally.

This study has some limitations that should be considered when exploring these findings. First, the sample size was small, and the study focused on a single Chinese university and a specific demographic pool. These findings should not be generalised to the whole African continent due to the limited sample size of participants. Furthermore, the study did not explore other factors influencing teacher turnover and other hierarchical needs, concentrating solely on basic needs. The study overlooked the consideration of teachers' interest in studying Chinese, which would be a significant factor in deepening the understanding of their turnover in-

tentions. This could serve as a potential avenue for further research.

Funding

This work received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Ethical review and approval were waived for this study in accordance with the institutional regulations of the author's university. The study received verbal authorisation from the relevant institutional authority prior to participant recruitment. Under the institution's internal procedures, written ethical approval is not issued for research involving non-Chinese participants.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Before each interview, participants were provided with clear information regarding the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, the voluntary nature of participation, their right to withdraw at any time without any consequences, and the measures adopted to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. All participants confirmed their willingness to participate and gave their informed consent before the interviews commenced.

Data Availability Statement

The data used in this study were collected from participants' interviews based on consent; due to their confidentiality, the data cannot be shared publicly, but access may be granted on reasonable request and with the permission of the organisation concerned.

Acknowledgments

The author thanks all participants for their significant involvement.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

AI Use Statement

The author declares that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the preparation of this manuscript.

Appendix A. Interview Questions and Consent

Appendix A.1. Interview Guide: Pre-Service Teacher Turnover

Part 1: Professional Factors

1. What aspects of the teaching profession do you consider most important for your future career (salary, job stability, incentives/bonus)? Why?
2. How do the financial aspects (such as pay or pension) of teaching expectations influence your decision to remain in or leave the profession after graduation?
3. Do you think incentives such as professional bonuses, promotion opportunities, and professional growth may affect your decision to stay in teaching or leave teaching after graduation?
4. If working conditions are poor (e.g., low pay, unstable contracts, heavy workload), would you consider leaving the profession? Why or why not?

Part 2: Needs and Security

5. To what extent do you think teaching can provide for your basic living needs, such as food, housing, and daily expenses?
6. Do you believe teaching offers enough financial and job security for your future? Why?
7. Do you feel that the teaching profession allows you to plan for a secure future (e.g., savings, family, health-care)?
8. Looking ahead, in the current situation of teachers in your home country, which of the mentioned conditions would make you feel secure enough to stay in teaching long-term? Why?

Part 3: Turnover Intentions

9. Have you ever thought about leaving teaching before even starting your career? What led you to think that way?
10. If you had another career option available with better

conditions, would you choose it over teaching? Why?

11. On a scale from 1 to 10, how strong is your intention to continue in the teaching profession after graduation? What makes you choose that number?
12. Do you see yourself still working as a teacher for a lifetime? Why or why not?
13. What specific situations might push you to leave the teaching profession in the future?
14. What would have to change in teaching conditions for you to stay committed to the profession?

Appendix A.2. Consent Form for Participation in Research

Title of the study: Pre-service teacher turnover and professional intentions

Purpose of the study: This study seeks to understand the situation of pre-service teachers and their career intentions. By exploring how working conditions influence their decisions to stay in or leave the teaching profession, this research aims

to draw attention to the importance of supporting teachers. The results may help public authorities and Chinese-language organisations better consider the situation of teachers and the conditions needed for them to remain in the profession.

Why your participation matters: Your insights are essential to highlight the realities faced by future teachers. Your contribution will provide valuable evidence to encourage policymakers and educational organisations to take teachers' conditions into account in their decisions.

Confidentiality: All information you provide will remain strictly confidential. Your name and personal details will not appear in any report or publication.

Voluntary participation: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to answer any question and can withdraw from the interview at any time without any consequences.

Consent: By signing below, you confirm that you have read and understood the purpose of this study, and you agree to take part in it.

Date: _____

Appendix B

Appendix B.1. Intention Scale of the Participants

Table A1. FAPT-CLTs' intention scale.

Scale 1–10	Bachelor		Master		Ph. D		Short Term		Medium		Long Term	
	Become	Leave	Become	Leave	Become	Leave	TC	Oth.J	TC	Oth.J	TC	Oth.J
P1					8	4	No	Yes			Yes	No
P2	5	6					Yes	No			No	Yes
P3			5	8			Yes	No			No	Yes
P4	5	7					Yes	No			No	Yes
P5	1	9					No	No			No	Yes
P6	5	5					No	No			Yes	No
P7	5	8					Yes	No			No	Yes
P8			6	9			Yes	No			No	Yes
P9	3	9					Yes	No			No	Yes
P10	9	2					No	No			Yes	No
P11					7	2			Yes	No	Yes	No
P12			6	8					Yes	No	No	Yes
P13			3	6					No	No	Yes	Yes

Note: TC = Teaching Chinese; Oth.J = Other job.

Appendix B.2. An Analysis of the Codelist Related to Teacher Turnover Intentions

Table A2. Analysis of the codelist.

Patterns	FC	MC	Patterns	FC	MC
Theme 1: Selective Prioritisation of Professional Factors	13	77	Uncertainty of the local job market	3	3
Subtheme 1: Crucial Factors	13	56	Unsecure career	8	10

Table A2. *Cont.*

Patterns	FC	MC	Patterns	FC	MC
Low status compared to other jobs	2	2	Unsecure future	3	3
Need for job stability	11	23	Socioeconomic Life and Community Reasons	9	21
Recruitment problems	2	2	Assistance to the local community	1	1
Relevant job salary problems	11	23	Having a survival life	2	2
Retirement pensions	1	3	Healthcare	3	3
Self-growth	3	3	Low perception of teachers' social status	2	4
Subtheme 2: Peripheral Factors	9	21	Madagascar local peers influence job stability	1	2
Bonuses and prizes	2	2	Personal life pressure	1	1
Incentives	3	3	Unmet socio-economic needs	6	8
Local conditions are not ideal	1	1			
Professional development	3	6			
Working conditions	8	9			
Theme 2: Professional Factors (Un)Fulfilled Basic Needs and Underlying Socio-Professional and Economic Reasons	13	96	Theme 3 : Turnover Intentions and the Underlying Motivations behind Them	13	142
Subtheme 1: Professional Factors (Un)Fulfilled Basic Needs and Reasons	13	43	Subtheme 1: Turnover Intentions	13	78
Context of (un)fulfilling specific basic needs	8	26	Intention of becoming teachers	13	26
Burundi meets basic needs	1	2	Become a teacher scale	8	8
Congolese meet daily, not long-term	1	1	Intentions to stay	6	7
Congolese civil servants' basic needs are covered	3	3	Long-term	3	3
Congolese meet the short-term needs of a single teacher	2	3	Medium-term	2	2
Congolese only meet my basic needs, not savings	4	5	Scale neutral	5	6
Madagascan local peers influence job stability	1	2	Leave the teaching profession	13	52
Madagascar: Meet basic needs	3	6	Intention to leave	10	13
Madagascar: Provide a secure future	1	1	Intention to pursue another career	12	16
Madagascar: Work at Confucius fully meets needs	2	3	Leaves scale	11	11
Irrelevant salary (un)fulfilment of basic needs	10	17	Scale neutral	5	6
Cannot save money	2	3	Short-term	5	6
Financial income does not meet daily needs	7	8	Subtheme 2: Motivations behind Turnover Intentions	13	64
Salary unmet needs	5	6	Motivations behind intentions to become a teacher	5	23
Subtheme 2: Professional Reasons	9	29	Chinese is my first choice	3	5
High degree for a secure job	1	1	Contributing to human education	1	1
Insignificant finances	3	3	For social interactions	1	1
Job instability	1	1	Love teaching Chinese for the short term	1	3
Low salary	3	8	Loving this profession	5	7
Love teaching Chinese	1	1	Lack of locally relevant institutions for teaching Chinese	1	1
Passion for teaching Chinese	1	1	Locals are marginalised	3	7
Teaching for the long term	2	3	Low salary triggered the intention to quit	4	7
Teaching for the short term for experience	1	1	No guarantee for social development	1	1
Motivations behind leaving intentions	12	41	Other careers are optional	5	6
Better conditions than the Chinese language	3	3	Salary comparison to other careers	2	2
Desirable positions for Chinese teaching	4	6	Shifting to another country	1	1

Table A2. *Cont.*

Patterns	FC	MC	Patterns	FC	MC
Developing one's own business	1	1			
Frustration of Teachers	5	5			
Insignificant benefits	1	1			

Note: FC = File counts; MC = Message counts.

References

- [1] Heikonen, L., Pietarinen, J., Pyhältö, K., et al., 2017. Early career teachers' sense of professional agency in the classroom: Associations with turnover intentions and perceived inadequacy in teacher–student interaction. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*. 45(3), 250–266. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2016.1169505>
- [2] Räsänen, K., Pietarinen, J., Pyhältö, K., et al., 2020. Why leave the teaching profession? A longitudinal approach to the prevalence and persistence of teacher turnover intentions. *Social Psychology of Education*. 23(4), 837–859. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-020-09567-x>
- [3] Loeb, S., Darling-Hammond, L., Luczak, J., 2005. How teaching conditions predict teacher turnover in California schools. *Peabody Journal of Education*. 80(3), 44–70. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327930pje8003_4
- [4] Ingersoll, R., Merrill, L., Stuckey, D., 2014. *Seven Trends: The Transformation of the Teaching Force*. Consortium for Policy Research in Education, University of Pennsylvania: Philadelphia, PA, USA.
- [5] Carver-Thomas, D., Darling-Hammond, L., 2019. The trouble with teacher turnover: How teacher attrition affects students and schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*. 27(36), 1–32. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.27.3699>
- [6] Nguyen, T.D., Springer, M.G., 2023. A conceptual framework of teacher turnover: A systematic review of the empirical international literature and insights from the employee turnover literature. *Educational Review*. 75(5), 993–1028. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2021.1940103>
- [7] Ajayi, S.O., Olatunji, O.A., 2017. Demographic analysis of turnover intentions amongst Nigerian high school teachers. *Australian and International Journal of Rural Education*. 27(1), 62–87. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47381/aijre.v27i1.120>
- [8] Adeleke, M.A., Adesina, B.A., Salami, M.O., et al., 2011. Influence of teaching practice exercise on accidental teacher education candidates at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. *Review of Higher Education in Africa*. 3(1), 3–16.
- [9] Mpundu, M., Assan, T., Mokoena, M., 2023. An analysis of high teacher turnover and attrition in the North-West Province of South Africa. *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*. 4(4), 404–414. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20234413>
- [10] Oyetoro, O.S., Adesina, B.A., Salawudeen, M.O., 2018. Assessment of pre-service teachers' turnover intentions in relation to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals through teacher preparation in Southwestern Nigeria. *Scholedge International Journal of Management & Development*. 5(12), 132. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.19085/sijmd051201>
- [11] Xu, W., 2024. Chinese language ideologies reflected in African students' discourses. In *Linguistic Entrepreneurship in Sino-African Student Mobility*. Palgrave Macmillan: Singapore. pp. 113–145. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-2175-7_5
- [12] Mabiala, R.N., 2025. Status, initiatives, and challenges of Chinese language education in the foreign language education policy of the Republic of the Congo. *African Language and Culture Studies*. 2025(1), 107–120. Available from: <https://www.hssonline.cn/en/article/125425807/> (in Chinese)
- [13] Wang, Y., 2023. Opportunities and challenges for the new development of Chinese language education in Congo-Brazzaville. *African Language and Culture Studies*. 2023(1), 101–116. Available from: <https://www.hssonline.cn/zh/article/68633547/> (in Chinese)
- [14] Mabiala, R.N., 2025. “Three Teaching” issues in teaching Chinese as a foreign language in Congo-Brazzaville universities: The CLIL approach. *International Chinese Language Education Communications*. 3(1), 46–59. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46451/iclec.20251129>
- [15] Mabiala, R.N., 2025. A study on the acquisition of Chinese potential complements by African French-speaking learners: A case study of Congo-Brazzaville. *Sinolingua: Journal of Chinese Studies*. 3(1), 87–101. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20961/sinolingua.v3i1.99090> (in Chinese)
- [16] Maslow, A.H., 1987. *Motivation and Personality*, 3rd ed. Longman: New York, NY, USA.
- [17] Ruby, A.M., 2002. Internal teacher turnover in urban middle school reform. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*. 7(4), 379–406. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327671ESPR0704_2
- [18] Pomaki, G., DeLongis, A., Frey, D., et al., 2010. When the going gets tough: Direct, buffering and indirect effects of social support on turnover intention. *Teach-*

- ing and Teacher Education. 26(6), 1340–1346. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.03.007>
- [19] Liu, H., 2024. Uncovering the mediating role of resilience between EFL teacher turnover intention and wellbeing: A conservation-of-resources theory perspective. *System*. 124, 103394. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2024.103394>
- [20] Liu, S., Onwuegbuzie, A.J., 2012. Chinese teachers' work stress and their turnover intention. *International Journal of Educational Research*. 53, 160–170. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2012.03.006>
- [21] Borman, G.D., Dowling, N.M., 2008. Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*. 78(3), 367–409. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308321455>
- [22] Brill, S., McCartney, A., 2008. Stopping the revolving door: Increasing teacher retention. *Politics & Policy*. 36(5), 750–774. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-1346.2008.00133.x>
- [23] DeAngelis, K.J., Wall, A.F., Che, J., 2013. The impact of preservice preparation and early career support on novice teachers' career intentions and decisions. *Journal of Teacher Education*. 64(4), 338–355. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487113488945>
- [24] Carver-Thomas, D., Darling-Hammond, L., 2017. *Teacher Turnover: Why It Matters and What We Can Do About It*. Learning Policy Institute: Palo Alto, CA, USA. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54300/454.278>
- [25] Martinsone, B., Rutkienė, A., Žydzūnaitė, V., 2024. Factors associated with teachers' intention to leave their profession: Teacher portraits from two European countries. *Frontiers in Psychology*. 15, 1450424. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1450424>
- [26] Falch, T., Rønning, M., 2007. The influence of student achievement on teacher turnover. *Education Economics*. 15(2), 177–202. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09645290701263104>
- [27] Stock, W.A., Carriere, D., 2021. Special education funding and teacher turnover. *Education Economics*. 29(5), 443–460. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09645292.2021.1914001>
- [28] Li, R., Liu, H., Chen, Y., et al., 2021. Why teachers want to leave? The roles of achievement goals, burnout and perceived school context. *Learning and Individual Differences*. 89, 102032. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2021.102032>
- [29] Mabila, R.N., 2026. Chinese language education policy in Congo-Brazzaville: Teachers' perceptions on policy gaps, difficulties and future directions. *Bilingual Research Journal*. 1–20. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15235882.2026.2699343>
- [30] Phillips, D., Mekos, D., Scarr, S., et al., 2000. Within and beyond the classroom door: Assessing quality in child care centers. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*. 15(4), 475–496. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0885-2006\(01\)00077-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0885-2006(01)00077-1)
- [31] Whitebook, M., Sakai, L., Gerber, E., et al., 2001. *Then and Now: Changes in Child Care Staffing, 1994–2000*. Center for the Child Care Workforce: Washington, DC, USA. Available from: <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/publications/report/then-and-now-changes-in-child-care-staffing-1994-2000/>
- [32] Ingersoll, R.M., 2001. Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*. 38(3), 499–534. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312038003499>
- [33] Darling-Hammond, L., 2003. Keeping good teachers: Why it matters, what leaders can do. *Educational Leadership*. 60(8), 6–13.
- [34] Tomas, M.A.S., 2024. Factors influencing fast turnover of teachers: Impact on personnel's satisfaction. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*. 24(2), 1676–1685. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2024.24.2.3507>
- [35] Farahmandpour, Z., Voelkel Jr., R.H., 2025. Unraveling the causes of teacher turnover: A meta-analysis of global literature. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*. 1–17. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2025.2458610>
- [36] Guarino, C.M., Santibañez, L., Daley, G.A., 2006. Teacher recruitment and retention: A review of the recent empirical literature. *Review of Educational Research*. 76(2), 173–208. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543076002173>
- [37] Bennell, P., Akyeampong, K., 2007. *Teacher Motivation in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia*. Department for International Development: London, UK.
- [38] Mabila, R.N., 2026. Understanding the language ideologies and language practices of African pre-service teachers enrolled in the teaching of the Chinese language programme in China. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. 29(7), 923–942. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050.2026.2620139>
- [39] Tao, W., Liyanage, I. (Eds.), 2020. *Multilingual Education Yearbook 2020: Teacher Education and Multilingual Contexts*. Springer: Cham, Switzerland. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-41211-1>
- [40] Creswell, J.W., Poth, C.N., 2018. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA.
- [41] Kvale, S., 1996. *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA.
- [42] Adu, P., 2019. *A Step-by-Step Guide to Qualitative Data Coding*. Routledge: London, UK; New York, NY, USA. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351044516>
- [43] Banks, J.A., 1998. The lives and values of researchers: Implications for educating citizens in a multicultural

- society. Educational Researcher. 27(7), 4–17. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X027007004>
- [44] Braun, V., Clarke, V., 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. 3(2), 77–101. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- [45] Braun, V., Clarke, V., 2013. *Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners*. SAGE Publications: London, UK.
- [46] Guest, G., MacQueen, K.M., Namey, E.E., 2012. *Applied Thematic Analysis*. SAGE Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, USA. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483384436>
- [47] Probst, B., 2015. The eye regards itself: Benefits and challenges of reflexivity in qualitative social work research. *Social Work Research*. 39(1), 37–48. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/swr/svu028>
- [48] Aulia, N., Haerani, I., 2022. Teacher retention and turnover: Exploring the factors that influence teacher decision-making. *Journal of Education Review Provision*. 2(2), 54–64. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55885/jerp.v2i2.155>
- [49] Federičová, M., 2021. Teacher turnover: What can we learn from Europe? *European Journal of Education*. 56(1), 102–116. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12429>
- [50] Safin, D., 2024. Teachers for All: Unpacking Primary Teacher Deployment in Madagascar. UNICEF Innocenti—Global Office of Research and Foresight: Florence, Italy.
- [51] Ralitera, M., 2023. Education staff—Housing allowance increases by 50,000 Ariary. Available from: <https://www.lexpress.mg/2023/12/personnel-de-leducation-lindemnite-de.html> (cited 5 April 2026). (in French)
- [52] Ministry of Labour, Employment, Civil Service and Social Legislation, 2022. Decree No. 2022-626: Setting the Minimum Starting Wage for the Private Sector. Available from: <https://cnlegis.gov.mg/uploads/D2022-626-VF.pdf> (cited 5 April 2026). (in French)
- [53] UNESCO IIEP Regional Office for Africa, French Development Agency, 2022. *An Assessment of Practices in Managing the Quality of Education in Madagascar*. IIEP-UNESCO Dakar: Dakar, Senegal. Available from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000383916> (in French)
- [54] Teacher Task Force, 2017. Madagascar. Available from: <https://teachertaskforce.org/fr/country-story/madagascar> (cited 5 April 2026). (in French)
- [55] Republic of Madagascar, 2017. Sectoral Plan for Education (2018–2022). Available from: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/fr/library/plan-sectoriel-de-leducation-2018-2022-madagascar> (cited 5 April 2026). (in French)
- [56] Joncheray, M., Dorier, E., 2010. Education in crisis in southern Congo-Brazzaville: What level of state investment is required? *Autrepart*. 54, 97–117. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3917/autr.054.0097> (in French)
- [57] Gouédard, P., 2024. Teachers for All: For a More Equitable Distribution of Teachers in the Republic of Congo. UNICEF Innocenti—Global Office of Research and Foresight: Florence, Italy. Available from: <https://hal.science/hal-04580654v1/file/UNICEF-Innocenti-Teachers-for-All-Congo-2024.pdf> (in French)
- [58] Dzanvoula, C.T.G., 2020. Cause of teachers and learners absenteeism: A case study of high schools in Brazzaville. *International Journal of Current Research*. 12(7), 12923–12928. Available from: <https://journalcra.com/article/causes-teachers-and-learners-absenteeism-case-study-high-schools-brazzaville>
- [59] Ladd, H.F., 2011. Teachers’ perceptions of their working conditions: How predictive of planned and actual teacher movement? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. 33(2), 235–261. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373711398128>
- [60] Cui, X.L., 2010. On the “Three Concerns” of teaching Chinese as a second language. *Chinese Teaching in the World*. 24(1), 73–81. (in Chinese)