ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN ENHANCING TEACHER RETENTION IN PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the educational landscape, fostering intellectual growth, moral values, and personal integrity among learners. Despite their vital contributions, teacher attrition remains a persistent challenge, particularly in private educational institutions, where high turnover affects stability and continuity. This collaborative study, which examines the lived experiences of teachers in private Catholic schools, aims to understand the factors that influence their motivation, sense of support, and commitment to the profession. Using a qualitative research design, face-to-face interviews were conducted with eight (8) teachers from various grade levels and departments. Data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns in their experiences related to organizational support and work-life balance. The study's findings offer a ray of hope in the challenge of teacher retention. The findings revealed that supportive administrative practices, such as professional development opportunities, recognition, and a collegial work environment, significantly promote teacher retention. Additionally, aligning with the school's mission and values fosters a sense of purpose, belonging, and a sustainable work-life balance. The study's practical recommendations, including strengthening recognition and reward systems, enhancing professional and wellness programs, and promoting effective workload management, provide a roadmap to cultivate a supportive and thriving teaching environment.

Keywords: Organizational support; Teacher motivation; Teacher retention; Work-life balance; Private Catholic school

INTRODUCTION

Teaching quality requires a teacher who is motivated, passionate, and dedicated to the teaching profession. Teachers are the most significant factor in achieving students' goals and providing successful learning outcomes Engida et al. (2024). However, teacher turnover across levels is a critical issue in the Philippines. Every year, many teachers decide to leave the profession and the concern about teacher retention becomes even more alarming when combined with the ongoing teacher shortage, Sumipo (2020). These issues are further exacerbated by unequal access to education, which causes many children, teenagers, and adults to fall behind in their learning, unable to keep up with their peers Mendoza (2024).

Thomas (2019) stated that several factors can influence a teacher's decision to leave an institution or teaching profession, including lack of support from the administrative leaders, modest compensation, heavy workloads, and limited opportunities for personal and career development. Particularly teaching in private schools, Ching et al. (2023) highlighted the benefits offered by public schools than in the private schools which also leads teachers to search for new teaching jobs or career opportunities. According to the study by Jordan (2024), teacher retention focuses on creating a supportive environment, offering incentives, and meeting teachers' needs to encourage them to stay in their positions and reduce resignations. This issue is critical specifically in a private educational institution, which faces significant challenges, such as limited budgets and mission-driven expectations, further underscoring the need for effective retention strategies.

Furthermore, the education system in the Philippines fails to provide the primary needs of students and teachers which leads to a serious teacher shortage. In the context of the education sector in the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) sets class size standards for each grade level, aiming for a student-teacher ratio of 30 students per teacher to create an environment conducive to learning. However, due to the present crisis in the shortage of teachers, there are only 20,000 new positions available for 2024 and the actual ratio remains 40 students per teacher. The
teacher shortage is also evident in some private educational institutions, where teachers manage classes of more than 40 students.

Given the ongoing teacher shortage, this study focuses on understanding how educators' organizational support such as resources, administrative leadership, professional development, and work-life balance affects teachers' commitment to staying in Catholic schools. Additionally, the study will gather data to help organizations develop effective strategies that create a more supportive work environment, making teachers feel valued, promoting work-life balance, and reducing turnover. These changes will benefit the teachers and students by improving their learning outcomes, ultimately enhancing productivity and sustaining a positive organizational culture.

The proposed Magna Carta for Private School Teachers seeks to ensure

job security, safeguard against discrimination, and provide benefits related to health and academic freedom. It emphasizes the importance of improving the social and economic conditions of private school teachers, which is vital for attracting and retaining skilled educators. On the other hand, Republic Act No. 4670: this act outlines important rights that could also apply to private educational institutions including provisions for reasonable working hours, a well-defined probationary period, and safeguards in disciplinary processes. These principles can serve as a framework for private educational institutions to enhance job security and improve working conditions. Moreover, the Department of Education Policies (DO 88-2010): the policies support teachers' professional development and establish standards for employment conditions in private schools, fostering an environment that promotes growth—a crucial factor for teacher retention. Therefore, Tambuyat (2022) stated that Private schools can greatly benefit from a job retention program, as it helps address the growing demand for quality education. Using strategies from this study, schools can retain skilled and qualified teachers, ensuring high standards in their institutions.

The current teacher shortage in the Philippines presents a significant concern for all stakeholders, including teachers, students, policymakers, government officials, and school administrators in private educational institutions. As an educator working with young learners, I am directly impacted by some factors contributing to this shortage. Additionally, other factors influence teachers' decisions to leave the institution or the teaching profession, which require further investigation to understand their impact. Therefore, this study aims to identify the positive factors that can improve educational programs, administrative support, and a healthy work balance for teachers, ultimately contributing to strategies that support teacher retention and strengthen the educational system.

RELATED LITERATURE

Teachers' Professional Growth Opportunities

Wenning (2020) stated that ongoing professional development helps teachers enhance their knowledge, improve their teaching skills, and foster innovation. It also encourages them to become passionate educators and reflective practitioners. Whether new or experienced, all teachers should seize opportunities to prepare themselves as professional leaders, capable of imparting knowledge and skills to other stakeholders. In addition, developmental programs for teachers' professional growth play a significant role in shaping their actions, decisions, and progress by encouraging them to adopt new methods or enhance their skills Taylor (2017). Besides, teachers, like students, are continuous learners. This helps them improve their skills and grow professionally to meet the needs of today's rapidly changing society Sprott (2018).

Teachers' Job Security and Satisfaction

Tiangco (2018) suggests that the management should maintain fair opportunities, transparent policies, clear communication, and regular feedback to boost employees' sense of security and job satisfaction. Furthermore, improving teachers' commitment and job satisfaction is an effective way to enhance teacher retention. Creating a positive work environment can foster commitment, satisfaction, and long-term retention, Anog, et al, (2024). Indeed, job satisfaction influences individuals and is likely to lead to higher morale in their overall life, Flordeliz (2020).

Teachers' Morale

Teacher morale has a significant impact on the overall performance of schools and the education system. However, the current situation in education shows that many teachers are feeling discouraged and stressed, which negatively affects their well-being and performance, MboweniMatshidiso, L., & Joyce, M. (2022). On the other hand, teacher morale is strengthened when positive factors, such as support from parents and administrators, are present, alongside a shared goal and collective purpose aimed at creating a better educational environment Sabin (2015).

Teachers' Salary and Benefits

Salary levels influence teacher performance. When teachers receive higher salaries, they are more likely to be motivated and perform well in the classroom, Rosmanida, et al, (2022). Hence, Harutyunyan, et al, 2023 stated that, teachers who engage in productive teaching and research should be rewarded with higher pay.

Related Studies

Organizational support

This refers to the resources, policies, and initiatives that reflect an institution's commitment and concern for the well-being of its employees. In private Catholic schools, this includes cultivating a supportive work environment, providing opportunities for professional growth, and ensuring alignment between institutional and teacher values. At the same time, achieving a healthy work-life balance is crucial for teachers who manage both demanding professional roles and personal responsibilities.

This section examines relevant literature to investigate the connection between organizational support and work-life balance in shaping teacher retention within private Catholic schools. By analyzing existing research, theoretical perspectives, and practical frameworks, the review aims to identify strategies that educational leaders can adopt to reduce teacher turnover and build a resilient teaching workforce in these institutions.

In the context of Organizational support, a study conducted by Rustom M. Padios, Et al, (2022) suggests that, when faculty members perceive strong organizational support, it tends to exhibit higher job resilience, which is closely linked to improved work-life balance and alignment with work values. This indicates that when teachers feel adequately supported by their institution, they are more likely to stay dedicated to their roles. Hence, organizational support lessens the level of work-related stress that leads to resilience among faculty members.

Teacher's Commitment

In addition to that, teachers' commitment and loyalty to an institution remains when they do have high levels of motivation Maria Domnena I. Anog, et al, (2024). It aligns with the study of Trista Casey, 2024 in the University of Portland where "Teacher preparation programs" were examined among the Association of Catholic Schools in Portland which concluded that teachers who completed a yearlong student teaching program across diverse classroom settings, received consistent feedback, and were held to high expectations were more likely to stay in the teaching profession beyond their first two years.

Work-Life Balance

Meanwhile, as work-life balance is defined, it is a proper division of

one's time between working and personal time. According to Ramel C. Muria, 2020, Catholic Schools possess distinct characteristics when it comes to work-life balance, one of these is the supportive family culture. Ramel C. Muria, 2020 on Happiness at Work, Organizational Climate, and Turnover Intention: Implications for Human Resource Management of Archdiocesan Schools considered three (3) components of Job happiness at work which are, Job satisfaction, Work engagement, and affective commitment. Furthermore, Rustom M. Padios, Et al, 2022 suggests that educational institutions should implement policies to reduce workload while maintaining productivity. Such measures help teachers balance their professional and personal responsibilities, ultimately leading to improved retention rates which was inclined with Arianne Dj. Lacorte, et al, 2024 suggest a constant qualitative study that can predict job satisfaction not only for faculty members of Catholic Institutions but for the rest of the employees. However, Ramel C. Muria, 2020, mentioned that Institution leaders and School Administrators must be careful in introducing changes in the workplace to ensure employee's job satisfaction, happiness, and a sense of stability.

Key Characteristics of Effective Leaders

On the other hand, the qualities of a good leader(s) in an institution contribute to fostering employee engagement. Damianus Abun, et al, (2017), demonstrate that an eligible leader in an institution has the following characteristics: Strategic Planning Skills, Motivating People Skills, and team-building skills. Strong leadership hinges on the ability to plan strategically, motivate effectively, and build strong teams. Leaders should be able to anticipate their organization's future direction and convey this vision clearly to inspire and guide their teams. Recognizing and addressing the varied motivational needs of employees, as outlined in Maslow's hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's two-factor theory, is essential for boosting engagement and performance. The findings suggest that leadership training programs should focus on enhancing these critical skills among administrators. By doing so, educational institutions can improve not only their leadership effectiveness but also overall employee satisfaction and engagement.

Furthermore, Dite (2020) stated that the success of an institution is driven by the exceptional leadership that manages it. Strong leadership inspires teachers to perform at their best in the classroom, ultimately establishing the school as a symbol of quality and excellence. Ball (2023) added that a positive school environment significantly impacts teacher satisfaction, morale, and commitment to staying in the institution or the teaching profession. It also plays a crucial role in fostering student success. The principal plays a pivotal role in shaping teacher effectiveness, academic achievement, and a positive school environment. Through effective management and leadership, they ensure the school becomes a better place for learning and growth Kerins (2019).

Challenges Faced by Private Educational Institutions

Challenges encountered by private schools often include keeping the tuition fee low with fair pay for its workers, which becomes even more challenging considering the institution's adherence to Catholic values. Principals are not only knowledgeable and skilled but also passionate about leading the organization with a positive outlook and providing support to other stakeholders Silveira (2021). On the other hand, employees who practice spirituality usually stay in the institution. They seek guidance with everything in life through prayer. They will become more confident and find their purpose, enjoy the benefits they are given, and appreciate all the blessings they receive in their lives Maidom (2023). Organizational culture is the way things get done in a group. It consists of the common values and practices of the people in the organization. It is the way all people in an organization work together in line with common beliefs and practices Munster (2022).

In summary, the interplay between organizational support and work-life balance is pivotal in shaping teacher retention within private Catholic schools. The literature reviewed highlights that when educators perceive strong institutional backing, they experience enhanced job resilience, which directly correlates with improved work-life balance and alignment with their professional values. This supportive environment fosters a sense of commitment and loyalty among teachers, ultimately leading to lower turnover rates. Moreover, effective leadership plays a crucial role in this dynamic; leaders with strategic planning, motivation, and team-building skills can create an atmosphere that nurtures employee engagement and satisfaction. By implementing policies that prioritize workload management and fostering a supportive culture, educational leaders can significantly enhance the teaching experience. As private Catholic schools strive to retain dedicated educators, it becomes essential to cultivate an environment where teachers feel valued and supported, thereby ensuring the sustainability of a resilient and committed teaching workforce.

General Objectives

Teacher retention and satisfaction remain important concerns in private institutions, where the integration of faith, values, and academic excellence depends greatly on committed and motivated educators. However, teachers often face challenges related to work-life balance, recognition, and institutional support, which may influence their decision to stay or leave.

This study seeks to explore the lived experiences of teachers in a private institution to understand the factors that shape their motivation, sense of support, and commitment to their profession. By examining their perceptions and personal insights, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how administrative practices, school values, and working conditions affect teacher well-being and retention.

Specific Objectives

1. To explore the reasons why teachers choose to work in a private Catholic school.

2. To understand how teachers perceive the support, recognition, and appreciation provided by the school administration.

3. To examine teachers' experiences and challenges in maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

4. To identify the factors that influence teachers' decisions to stay or consider leaving the school.

5. To gather teachers' insights and suggestions for improving support systems and retention practices in private Catholic schools.

METHODS

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design, employing interview questionnaires to obtain in-depth insights from the participants. This approach enabled the researcher to explore the participants' perceptions, experiences, and opinions related to the research topic. The primary instrument used in this study was an interview questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions. These questions were designed to elicit detailed responses and allow participants to freely express their thoughts and experiences regarding the phenomenon being investigated.

This chapter presents the methods and techniques of the study, population and sample, data gathering procedure, research instrument, validity and reliability, and statistical treatment of data employed in the study.

Participants and Setting

The participants in this study were teachers from private educational institutions. They were purposively selected based on their relevance to the research topic and their willingness to participate. The interviews were conducted within their respective school environments at a time most convenient for them to ensure comfort and openness during the discussion.

Philosophical Underpinning/ Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the constructivist paradigm, which emphasizes understanding individuals' lived experiences and the personal meanings they attach to their social and professional realities. Constructivism assumes that knowledge is co-constructed through interaction and reflection, allowing participants to share their unique perspectives based on personal experiences and social contexts.

In this research, teachers' perceptions of organizational support and work-life balance are explored through their own narratives and interpretations. The constructivist approach enables a deeper understanding of how teachers make sense of their working conditions, sources of motivation, and the institutional practices that influence their professional commitment and well-being. This philosophical stance supports the qualitative nature of the study, focusing on understanding "how" and "why" teachers experience support and balance rather than measuring these factors quantitatively. The findings of this study, guided by the constructivist paradigm, will provide rich, nuanced insights into the subjective experiences of teachers, which can inform the development of more effective support and balance strategies in educational institutions.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws upon three key theories—Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Social Exchange Theory (SET), and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory—to provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the relationship between organizational support, work-life balance, and teacher retention. These theories not only enrich our understanding of these dynamics but also offer practical insights for improving teacher satisfaction and retention in educational institutions.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943)

Abraham Maslow's theory posits that human motivation is driven by the fulfillment of a hierarchical set of needs, ranging from basic physiological necessities to self-actualization. For teachers, achieving a work-life balance satisfies basic needs, including job security, a manageable workload, and adequate rest. Meanwhile, organizational support addresses higher-level needs such as belongingness, recognition, and professional growth. When these needs are met, teachers are more likely to experience satisfaction, motivation, and long-term commitment to their institutions.

Social Exchange Theory (SET) Proposed by George C. Homans, this theory explains human behavior through reciprocal relationships based on trust, respect, and mutual benefit. Within the school context, teachers' willingness to remain in their jobs is influenced by the perceived fairness, appreciation, and support they receive from administrators and colleagues. When teachers feel valued and supported, they are more likely to reciprocate through loyalty, dedication, and sustained engagement in their work.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1959)

Frederick Herzberg's theory distinguishes between hygiene factors (e.g., salary, job security, working conditions) that prevent dissatisfaction and motivators (e.g., recognition, achievement, growth opportunities) that promote satisfaction. In the teaching profession, a healthy work-life balance serves as a fundamental factor contributing to well-being, while organizational support—such as professional development and recognition—acts as a motivator that enhances job satisfaction and retention.

Data Collection

The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with the selected participants. Each interview was recorded with the participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim for analysis. Prior to data collection, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw at any point. The entire process was carried out with strict adherence to ethical research standards, ensuring voluntary participation and respect for participants' privacy.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the interviews were analyzed using Thematic Analysis, guided by the framework of Braun and Clarke (2006). This analytical approach was employed to systematically identify, organize, and interpret patterns or themes emerging from the qualitative data. The researcher began by thoroughly familiarizing herself with the transcribed interviews through repeated reading to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' responses. Initial codes were then generated to capture meaningful features of the data that were relevant to the research questions. These codes were subsequently examined and grouped to form potential themes that represented recurring ideas and insights. The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure that they accurately reflected the data set and captured the essence of the participants' shared experiences. Each finalized theme was then clearly defined and named to convey its underlying meaning. The final stage involved synthesizing the themes into a coherent narrative that addressed the research objectives and provided a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Prior to the interviews, the participants were informed about the objectives of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation,

and their right to withdraw at any stage without any consequences. Informed consent was obtained before each interview, ensuring that participants fully understood the scope and purpose of the study. All data collected were treated with the highest level of confidentiality, and participants' identities were kept anonymous through the use of pseudonyms or coded identifiers. The researcher also ensured that the findings were reported honestly, without any form of data manipulation or misrepresentation.

FINDINGS

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS
Summary of Findings

This qualitative study explored how organizational support and work-life balance contribute to teacher retention in a private Catholic school setting. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with eight teachers from various grade levels and departments. The following key findings were identified:

1. Organizational Support
Teachers reported that the institution provides a supportive environment through accessible leave policies, professional development opportunities, recognition programs, and logistical assistance. Programs such as retreats, recollections, and wellness activities contribute positively to their sense of value and belonging.

2. Work-Life Balance
Most participants expressed satisfaction with their work-life balance, citing structured schedules and respect for personal time. However, this balance is occasionally disrupted by high workload demands during peak academic periods, such as examination weeks and major school events.

3. Motivators for Retention
Teachers are motivated to stay due to collegial relationships, alignment with the school's mission and values, opportunities for professional growth, and perceived administrative support. Recognition through awards and affirmations from both management and students also enhances job satisfaction.

4. Challenges to Retention
Some challenges cited include limited financial support for external professional development, interpersonal conflicts within departments, overwhelming workload for those with additional responsibilities, and occasional inconsistencies in recognition systems.

DISCUSSION

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the interview data, the study arrives at the following conclusions:

1. Supportive Organizational Practices Foster Retention
The presence of consistent administrative support, including access to training, flexibility in leaves, and employee recognition, significantly contributes to a positive work environment that encourages teachers to remain in the institution.

2. Work-Life Balance is Maintained but Needs Strengthening
While generally satisfactory, work-life balance is sometimes compromised by tight deadlines, overlapping responsibilities, and high expectations, especially for those in multi-faceted roles. This can lead to stress and burnout if not properly addressed.

3. Spiritual and Cultural Alignment Reinforces Institutional Loyalty
The school's Catholic mission and values influence teacher retention by providing a sense of purpose and spiritual fulfillment. This alignment fosters a shared identity and deeper commitment among faculty members.

4. Recognition and Professional Growth Opportunities Are Essential
Teachers feel motivated and valued when their efforts are recognized. However, recognition must be timely and equitable. Similarly, teachers appreciate the encouragement for professional development, but financial limitations can restrict access.

5. Healthy Interpersonal Relationships Impact Retention
Positive collegial relationships enhance job satisfaction, while conflicts or negative dynamics can discourage long-term commitment. A harmonious work culture is essential to sustaining teacher morale.

Recommendations

Considering the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Standardized Recognition and Reward Systems
Ensure that awards such as the "Dakilang Guro" and service recognitions are consistently implemented and well-documented.
Create informal appreciation mechanisms (e.g., "Teacher of the Month," public shout-outs) to reinforce positive behavior regularly.

2. Enhance Financial Support for Professional Development
Allocate more funding for CPD activities and national/international seminars.
Consider partnerships or sponsorships to subsidize the cost of external training programs.

3. Reinstate and Expand Wellness Programs
Reintroduce initiatives such as the "Ginhawa Program," sports activities, and mental wellness workshops to promote holistic well-being.
Provide access to confidential counseling services for faculty.

4. Improve Workload and Role Distribution
Assign academic and extracurricular responsibilities more evenly, with specific preparation time for those with additional tasks.
Train coordinators and new teachers more comprehensively to reduce stress and confusion.

5. Foster Collegiality and Conflict Resolution
Offer regular team-building and emotional intelligence workshops to enhance interpersonal relationships.
Establish clear protocols for addressing internal conflicts professionally and constructively.

6. Promote Continued Mission Integration
Deepen the integration of the school's mission and values through curriculum design, faculty formation programs, and shared advocacy.
Highlight the role of faith and service in education during faculty retreats and recollections.

7. Proposed Enhancements for Future Studies

Conduct a quantitative study to further broaden and strengthen the findings and outcomes of this research.

To make the study more comprehensive and engaging, future participants should be drawn from different Catholic schools across Bataan.

By addressing these areas, school administrators can further strengthen the institutional environment to ensure that teachers not only stay longer but thrive in their roles within the Catholic educational community.

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