

STAYING IN THE PRIVATE CATHOLIC SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY OF TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES

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Abstract

Private schools in the Philippine often experience the frequent transition of teachers due to lower compensation compared to public schools. However, there were still teachers who remained teaching in private schools. This study identified teachers' experiences in choosing to stay teaching in a Catholic Private School. The study used the qualitative case study method in exploring the experiences of ten teachers who chose to stay teaching in the private school. Significant findings include positive experiences while serving the school, reasons for staying, challenges, and the teachers' strategies in dealing with the challenges. Promising benefits outside, personal growth and a sense of contentment are common reasons to stay longer. The working environment became the private institution's strength that builds a harmonious relationship with one another. Nevertheless, teachers also experienced lack of support is felt and the pressure and demands of its stakeholders. Thus, private school needs to address the concerns raised by the teachers to encourage teachers stay in them.

Keywords: *Benefits, Private Catholic School, Teacher, Experiences*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the most responsible and influential members of society, as their professional efforts affect the fate of every student (Neugebauer, 2019). Teacher impacts students in different ways. They significantly contribute to students' achievement (Hanushek, 2016). Teachers help develop students' skills to prepare them for their chosen careers (Karbownik, 2020). They motivate, lead, educate, and inspire students. They even work beyond working hours. They remain teachers even when they are at home. Teaching is the noblest profession that needs sacrifice, giving oneself, and, contrary to merely a source of income (Gumarang, 2022).

Teaching is art itself (Üztemur et al., 2022). A teacher must be creative in dealing with stakeholders, such as parents, students, and administrators. Moreover, teaching in private catholic schools is a significant challenge because the stakeholders' expectations are high. Some teachers experience difficulties dealing with their parents (Erdogan & Sezgin, 2020). Teachers encounter pushy parents who place significant demands on teachers' time and expect them to obtain particular academic outcomes with their children since parents pay a high amount of education to their students. Fee-paying parents believed and anticipated good academic results as evidence of teachers delivering money. Too much pressure is on the teachers' shoulders as the financial success of private schools is contingent on customer satisfaction (Brady & Wilson, 2021).

For professional development, for example, many teachers of private colleges and universities in Kenya still need further studies (Mwita, 2012). Engaging in future studies can

help teachers to upgrade their expertise. In the Philippines, a new set of teachers every year in private schools is a common scenario, primarily when K to 12 curricula have been implemented. Teachers who are honed by personal ideologies will transfer to other better opportunities through good salaries and benefits (Hernando-Malipot, 2018). Private catholic school teachers frequently leave and transfer to public schools due to the higher pay and perks available, a problem that schools frequently deal with (Hernando-Malipot, 2018). They make private schools as training grounds (Aduna et al., 2020). Teacher turnover is a significant concern in education because of its impact on student learning outcomes (Grant et al., 2019). It will reduce the quality of education in many ways. The turnover intention in the country is higher among private-sector employees due to a lack of security and tenure than among public-sector employees. Furthermore, turnover among teachers is more likely to quit school than abandon the teaching profession (Oberes & Tan, 2022).

Some factors influence teachers to quit their jobs, such as school administration and policy, interpersonal relations, job security and pay benefits, and work assignments (Legaspi & Fernandez, 2022; Tual & Omandam, 2023). A teacher may leave the organization when stressed by work and demands (Khan et al., 2017). A teaching job can be dangerous and stressful. There are common causes of teachers' stress on the job due to teaching loads, demands of society, adopting and embracing new full-blast face-to-face from the two-year modular class, and the rapid change of students' values and attitudes in the classroom.

To encourage teacher retention, the administrator and the management in private schools should consider the teachers' mental health. Teachers are experiencing a deficit in emotional intelligence due to excessive workload, leading to severe burnout (Suhaime, 2022). Teachers can give their best when they are healthy. If they are not in good shape, they tend to complete the task expected rather than go the extra mile. When management is attentive to workers' health, it could be mental, physical, and spiritual. Employees can focus more on giving their best (Omoera & Adegoriola, 2021). Furthermore, offering a good salary can boost teachers' performance (Hill & Jones, 2020).

The institution's ability to retain employees depends on many indicators (Wang & Yuan, 2018). Effective school leadership is one of the most effective indicators of teacher retention (Mews, 2019). Teachers stay in private catholic schools despite the promising opportunities from the outside when they feel that they are treated well by the school's leaders (Ching et al., 2023; Dela Peña, 2018). Simple gestures and appreciation of work by management can also have a significant impact on teacher retention. There will be happy and effective employees if individual needs are addressed (Agha, 2017; Iradel et al., 2021). Managerial influences the teacher to leave the organization (Kotze et al., 2020).

Job satisfaction is essential for teachers' decisions to stay in the institution, whether long-term or short-term (Madigan et al., 2021). Professional acknowledgment and respect are overwhelmed with responsibility, organizational communication, and a non-supportive working environment for teachers. The evaluated recruitment mode helps retain long-term and empowerment dimensions on teachers' career commitment over and above the satisfaction of basic work needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Atmaca, 2022).

Rewards have a significant influence on employee retention. They are the primary reason former employees leave the institution—extraneous awards in the structure of pay, the school environment, and working conditions as necessary. The employee also chooses to stay because of intrinsic motivations (Üztemur et al., 2022). In addition, if the institution has policies that are employee-friendly, that is beneficial to the employees will increase job satisfaction and develop the sense of the organization's commitment (Agha, 2017; Iradel et al., 2021). Especially in private catholic schools, teachers are given a chance to grow in personal and professional growth (Tindowen, 2019). Teachers will be honed and developed holistically by Catholic private institutions in a favorable, wholesome environment (Milian & Rizk, 2018). Furthermore, they can freely practice Catholic and social traditions (Brigham & Soltis, 2018).

Despite the adversities of teaching in private catholic schools, some teachers stay because of resilience. The teacher's resilience in their work is one of the factors in how they are practical and efficient in their job and how they portray themselves as excellent educators. Being able to teach in a Catholic school motivated Catholic instructor, who reported higher internal satisfaction with their self-esteem than non-Catholic teachers (Legaspi & Fernandez, 2022). This study can be an eye-opener to all private catholic school teachers, those working in private schools and those looking for teaching jobs, to dig into the experiences of the teachers who stayed in the private catholic school and opportunities that no money can compensate for.

This study is anchored on Meyer and Allen's theory of commitment (1991), as they believed that time goes by, and commitment grows in one's heart. A three-component model of organizational commitment, such as affective commitment, involves the employee's emotional commitment to the organization. Their identification and involvement in the organization made the employees stay longer. Second is the continuance commitment; the employee remains in the organization for compliance or because of the rewards and punishment. Commitment to the organization is one of the reasons to stay and continue to be part of the organization. The extent to which employees feel committed to their organization by the costs that they think are associated with leaving". Lastly, a normative commitment is an obligation to stay in the organization. Their sense of responsibility to the organization keeps them going. Furthermore, the study is also anchored on the self-determination of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Controlling mandates, institutional pressures, and leadership styles have influenced teachers' motivation to do their jobs.

This study then identified the teachers' positive experiences staying in a catholic private school. This study explored the reasons for staying in the private Catholic school, the challenges of staying in the private catholic school, and the different ways to deal with these challenges. This study will help us understand and dig into the lives of private Catholic school teachers' experiences. Despite a low salary, some teachers devote their time and energy to Private Catholic Schools.

METHOD

Research Design

This study utilized the qualitative method and focused on the benefits and drawbacks of the teachers' experiences teaching in private schools. Using Merriam's approach, the research determined influences gave meaning and interpretation to the data gathered and created themes for this case study. The case of the study is a private Catholic school in Zamboanga Sibugay, Philippines. Many private schools, especially in the provinces of the Philippines, struggled to retain efficient teachers due to salary considerations. Compared to big private schools in the country's capital city that can compete with the teacher's salaries and benefits in public schools, private schools in the provinces offer lower salaries. Thus, after earning some years of experience in private schools, many teachers transferred to public schools. However, some teachers chose to stay serving in the private schools for many years.

Research Environment

This study was conducted in one of the Catholic private schools in the municipality of Ipil province of Zamboanga Sibugay, Philippines. It is a religious school claimed by the Diocese of Ipil. The school offers elementary, secondary, and tertiary. It is governed and directed by the bishop in the Diocese of Ipil. It is formerly an academy, originally a Jesuit-owned school established in 1958, responding to the need for Catholic Education in the small town. The school aims to prepare its students and personnel to meet daily challenges with virtues, optimism, and hope in loving God and being contemporary disciples of God.

Despite having Basic education until college departments, the school cannot compete with the pay offered by nearby public schools. Thus, it always experienced teacher turnovers. Teachers usually worked in this private school to earn teaching experience. After some years, teachers migrated to public schools. However, despite this reality, some teachers chose to stay working in this private Catholic school. Thus, this study explored the experiences of those stayers.

Research Participants

The study participants were the teachers mentioned in the research environment. The participants were teachers who had been in the service for more than five years, were licensed, and had no administrative duties. The longer they were in the field, the more experience they gained, which was great use in gathering data.

In the tertiary department, one participant has been in the institution for thirteen years and is currently handling the students in the English language department. There were three participants in senior high, and all had been in the institution for six years; two handled English subjects, and the other one handled all business-related subjects and taught history in Junior high. There were 4 participants in Junior high; two had been in the institution for six years and handled English subjects, and the other one was Filipino subjects. The other one stayed for seven years, teaching science, and the last one stayed for thirteen years, teaching CLE subjects. For the elementary level, there were two participants; the first was in

the institution for eight years as a grade two adviser, and the one who stayed the longest and was about to retire, 29 years in teaching.

Research Instrument

The researchers were the primary instrument supported by the interview guide and faculty manual. The researchers crafted interview questions based on the central question and acquired the data needed. The questions were open-ended since each participant has different experiences staying in a private catholic school. Hence, the questions were engaging, exploratory, and consisted of exit questions so that the information gathered was valuable to answer the problem statement. The questions focused solely on the experiences of private catholic teachers who stayed in the institution for many years.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers followed the fundamental protocols in conducting research. They asked permission to conduct a study with the school's Executive Vice President beforehand and waited for a favorable response. Afterward, the researchers asked for the target participants' consent and set an interview schedule at their convenience. Also, a printed copy of the interview was given ahead of time. The researchers explained the primary purpose of the research, looked for a complete and well-ventilated room to conduct the interview, and assured them of the confidentiality of their answers.

The researchers asked for permission from one of the administrators to have a copy of the faculty manual. After securing the manual, the researchers set an appointment with the administrator, Human Resource Staff, and accounting staff for an interview based on their convenience.

Before the interview, the researchers reminded the participants that the interview process was recorded. They assured them that the information they would share and express was highly confidential.

Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed through Meriam's (1998) data analysis technique. According to Merriam, analysis was making sense of data that involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have answered in the interview. The data gathered will have its sense depending on how it is interpreted and consolidated. The researchers organized the data into categories according to research questions and looked for patterns and connections. Patterns were identified through a process of data familiarization. The researchers began to categorize data based on the typical responses to questions.

Ethical Consideration in Research

Ethical considerations aim to protect the moral and legal aspects of the study, and the researcher followed and observed the whole duration. The researchers acquired consent from the school administrators in conducting this study. The researchers followed the following ethical considerations.

Privacy and Confidentiality. The researchers ensured the participants that information will only be disseminated with their knowledge and not reveal any data, particularly delicate information, to anybody. They were knowledgeable that this research might somehow use for reports and further study and assured them that the researchers used codes instead of their names to protect their identity.

Safety. The interview was conducted in a safe place away from distractions wherein they were able to show comfortability to share with the researchers.

Autonomy. During the interview, the participants were informed that they could still withdraw from participating in the research, and their participation was voluntary.

Informed Consent. Before the interview, the researchers distributed the consent and the interview questions to the participants and let them sign if they agreed with the terms and conditions written in the form.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Positive Experiences of Teachers Staying in Private Catholic School

The teachers shared their positive experiences in staying at Private Catholic Schools. Four categories emerged from the teachers' responses who have been in the institution for a long time: Have *the Avenue for Spiritual and Professional Growth*, *The Joy of Integrating Values in Teaching*, *The Love and Support of the Administrations*, and *a Good Working Environment*.

The Avenue for Spiritual and Professional Growth. Most of the teachers who stayed long in the institution shared their positive experiences in the private catholic school, wherein they will have the avenue for spiritual and professional growth. Retreats, recollections, monthly mass and BEC are examples of spiritual development that the schools offer to the teachers. The institution also offered free Training, workshops and seminars for free for the professional growth of teachers, and some enjoy free schooling. Participant 4 shared retreat as an avenue for spiritual growth saying: "*I like Retreat because I can express myself because, as a teacher, it is not about paper works. They have their personal life. During Retreat, they will realize their journey throughout the school year.*" Participant 6 added: "*We also have recollections and retreat that enable us to grow spiritually. We also had prayer time, which strengthened me and developed my faith in God.*" Participant 7 and 8 stressed about prayer time and regular mass schedules. Participant 7 said: "*We also had prayer time, which strengthened me and developed my faith in God. I am developing not just professional teachers but also, they help me develop spiritually.*" Finally, participant 8 shared: "*We have this regular mass. As a Catholic, it uplifts our faith, and the Cathedral is just near us which is an advantage for me.*"

In choosing to stay in the private schools, teachers also experienced professional growth. Professional growth is evident in their sharing. Participant 1 shared: "*The faculty development programs that I like most are the seminars, In-Service Training (INSET), and any related activities that can enhance our knowledge and skills.*" Participant 5 also added: "*I have experienced different travels not only here in the Zamboanga Peninsula but I can say in the Philippines they send me to different trainings and seminars, and workshops that could help me develop and grow professionally without spending any penny or money.*" Participant 6 highlighted free training saying: "*I consider the free*

training and seminars that I was able to attend and will be attending as an advantage being a private school teacher." Finally, teachers also experienced in service training as participant 8 shared: *"We have our In-Service Training (INSET), which help us in molding ourselves and gives us additional learnings that mold us as an educator."*

The secondary participants affirmed these responses by the participants through data triangulation. One of the admins shared: *"There is a monthly celebration of Eucharist, two recollections for our employees per year, and then we have BEC sessions and the monthly mass with the student."* He also stated: *"One of the common benefits that I can mention is that the teachers particularly in high school they were given a chance to attend seminars outside of Ipil without spending a single centavo. There are book companies that sponsored their seminar."* This was also affirmed during data mining by examining the administrative manual. It was written the employees are entitled to enjoy the different development programs that aim to instill the Christian religious and moral dimensions necessary for effective Christian Witnessing. One of these programs is faith life formation. The personnel are provided with opportunities for faith life formation through an annual retreat, recollection, Monthly Eucharistic Celebrations, and Basic Ecclesial Community (BEC) activities. Another Personnel Development Program that the employees enjoy is the professional Formation is In-Service Training. The employees are sent for seminars/workshops sponsored by professional groups and establishments, which is stated in the Administrative Manual under Professional Formation.

According to Tindowen (2019), private catholic school teachers are given a chance to grow in personal and professional growth. Teachers will be honed and developed holistically by Catholic private institutions and with a favorable wholesome environment (Milan & Rizk, 2018.) Furthermore, one can freely practice Catholic and social traditions (Brigham & Soltis, 2018), like attending mass and sharing the word of God through Basic Ecclesial Community or BEC.

Moreover, the teachers were sent to Training and seminars in other places within the Philippines without spending a single penny. According to Evers et al. (2016), For teachers to be effective, they have to undergo Training and workshops. So being in a private school helps the teacher develop professionally without spending money. In the fast evolution of the learners from traditional to the application of technology and the demands of 21st-century learners, the school needs to invest in professional development by sending the teachers to study further. Owusu (2020) states that a continuous development program should be a priority since more than pre-service Training is needed. The institution indeed prioritizes the professional growth of its teachers for them to deliver lessons competently. Thus, they invest in the development of the teachers. However, this is the advantage of the teachers to go for material or further studies for free. Moreover, the teacher is more qualified for the job as they go for further studies (Begna, 2017).

The Joy of Integrating Values in Teaching. In a private catholic school, Christian values are part of the teaching and learning process. The teachers enjoy teaching as they integrate values into it. They teach more than the context, and it does not limit the four walls of the classroom. Hence, students were honed and developed to be better members of society.

Participant 3 shared: *"What I enjoy being a private school teacher is teaching kids with different behavior while molding them into better citizens."* Participant 4 also added: *"I can see my improvements and I used it as stepping stone to be a better teacher thought I have lot of mistakes and failures that I have done but it makes me a better teacher and it makes me a better person."* Participant 6 shared the joy of integrating values in teaching mentioning: *"Seeing my students succeed gives me joy, and I am so happy about what they have become. I am one of the important parts of their success because I have been their teacher in my high school years."* Lastly, participant 7 shared: *"Since we are a catholic school, we also teach values, and we are looking to the student's welfare and their relationship with their families. We are looking at how they will grow holistically."*

Based on the researchers' observation, students are honed to become better Christians in a private Catholic school. They have Christian Living Education (CLE) and the Revitalized Homeroom Guidance subject (RHGP), and every subject integrates values aligned with the institution's CORE Values. Students magnify the Lord in everything they do; they can be an agent of transformation, they should be responsive to the signs of the times, and lastly, they should yearn for the fullness of life. The administrative manual shows that the institution believes in the parents' partnership to develop their children. The teachers and the guidance counselor always have contact with the parents regarding their academic performance and character. In addition, the school has a Campus Ministry office wherein the students can develop spiritually and make sure to receive the sacrament needed. This is beneficial to the teacher because it could be a great help in developing the student.

The Love and Support of the Administration. The teachers stayed when they felt the love and support of the administration by providing things that could be easier for them to deliver the lessons. The support from the administration is manifested through providing materials for teaching. Participant 5 shared: *"We have Smart TV in every classroom, so it is easy for the students to connect to the topic and as well as it is for teachers to introduce the lessons"* Participant 7 added: *"Everything we need is well provided by the management. The facilities and equipment are available."* The administration showed their love and support to teachers through responsiveness in addressing issues. Participant 8 mentioned: *"The responsiveness regarding issues will easily be addressed, especially since we have these clear communication channels between the administrators. It's like there's no barrier to the admin; that's why you will not get intimidated to raise especially dealing with issues."* The support also includes financial support. Participant 6 said: *"I received my compensation or salary on time."* Participant 9 added: *"We have easy access to the finance office. We can avail of the Palawan and loan. We also have this 13th month's pay."*

This sharing of experiences is supported by one of the administrators, as he added that schools provide every need of teachers for the effective delivery of lessons as he shared that: *"The other one is our school provides school supplies to our teachers, for example, bond paper, pilot pen, ballpen, these are given for free to our teachers. We also SMART TV in every classroom so that teachers can easily integrate ICT in their lessons"*. In addition, the accounting staff personnel shared: *"The employees can avail of loans and PALUWAGAN with no interest"*. The administrators have an intervention for those in need without interest. Lastly, the HR personnel discusses the Private Education Retirement Annuity Association (PERAA) benefits. This retirement plan was established for Marian College to benefit its employees. It is stated in the administrative

manual that the employee who leaves before the retirement age is entitled to re-purchase 100% of the employee's contribution subject to the existing taxation laws. During the data mining, the researcher found out that there are mandatory and other benefits that the employees of the private catholic school enjoyed.

Effective school leadership is one of the most effective indicators of teacher retention (Mews, 2019). Teachers stay in private schools despite the promising opportunities from the outside when they feel that they are treated well by the school's leaders (Dela Peña, 2018). Supported in the administrative manual that there are benefits and privileges for personnel. The three secondary participants also supported that the teachers enjoyed the different benefits and privileges in school.

Good Working Environment. There is another category developed, which shows that most of the positive experiences of the teachers were from the good environment they belong to. Good working environment includes having small classes. Participant 8 shared: *"We have small classes, so with the population of the students, you can cater to their needs. You can have individual time with them. You can entertain them, especially in grade 12. With their age, they have different needs, and you can give your time to each one of them. Unlike the public school have a high population. As educators, especially in private schools, we can teach effectively with small class sizes. We can give our students individual attention."* Moreover, teachers loved the working environment as they treated each other in the school like a family. Participant 6 shared: *"The company is between the teachers because we treat each other in our school as a family."*

The mentioned statements were supported by the HR staff as she stated: *"Since we are in a Catholic school, we are shaped to become better individuals and build good relationships with others in the community."* Based on the researchers' observations, most of the teachers who stayed in private schools are those who have children who are studying in the school. They can personally monitor their children as well they are enjoying the free tuition fee as faculty scholars to their children.

According to Cheng et al (2018), private school teachers found a good working environment. Teachers are happy and content with their colleagues and the support they receive from the administration. Teachers in private schools enjoyed the small classes. The classroom is conducive to learning, everything is provided, and it's easier for the teachers to deliver the lesson. They can be effective in teaching. Their professional efforts affect the fate of every student (Neugebauer, 2019). A happy environment will indeed radiate to the relationship with others. And in college, they have flexible time, but in junior high school, teachers follow the scheduled time. However, based on the researcher's evaluation, there is a vacant time for the teacher to rest for a while. This shows that the private school has a healthy environment.

Overall, the four categories highlight the different positive experiences of the teachers who stayed in private school. They enjoy having an avenue for spiritual and professional growth, wherein they can have a deeper relationship with themselves and the creator as they join the retreats and recollections. Also, they experience joy in integrating

values into teaching. The love and support of the administrations are also one of the positive experiences of the teachers, and lastly, having a good environment.

The Reasons for Staying in Private Catholic School

The three categories developed for staying longer in private schools are a *healthy environment, the benefits they enjoy and a sense of contentment*. These categories focus on the extrinsic and intrinsic reasons teachers stayed longer in the private catholic school as they shared their experiences.

Healthy Environment. Teachers stay in the private school due to a healthy environment. There is a sense of acceptance and belongingness when there is unity and equality. The participants described that the private school is a healthy environment. From the good relationship with coworkers, administrators and stakeholders. Participant 1 shared: *“With all their patience during that time that I was down and I did not experience to be bullied and neglected it strengthened my will to serve this institution.”* Participant 3 added: *“In our institution, I believe that we are closer. The bond is there, and the bond is tight; that is something that I look forward to everyday as I enter the gate of the institution. The smiles of those coworkers that I have, the employees that we, every day that we go to school, and that is something that made me stay in a Catholic institution or private institution.”* Furthermore, participant 4 shared: *“I can feel a sense of belongingness in the community. There is unity. And the environment is not toxic. Maybe there’s a toxic situation, but it is not that worst compared to what I observed in another field. That’s why the teacher stays in a community that is not toxic even though the salary is not high; there’s a feeling of peace in the community.”* Finally, participant 7 shared: *“I still hold on to this institution because of the good relationship between the coworkers, the administration, and to the students as well.”*

These statements were supported by the HR staff. According to HR staff, teachers stayed because they felt happy, contented, belong and accepted by the students, colleagues, parents and the administration. She stated that: *“Since we are in the catholic school, we always give importance to people to the values that we teach, and with that, we build the connection with our students, parents and, of course, coworkers. And when we are attached to working with good people, it gives us the joy to serve the institution.”*

As the researchers dug into the administrative manual, it was stated that Employees are expected to practice being considerate to others. When co-employees are laden with work, a considerate employee finds time to help them. This attitude will lead to higher employee morale, further promoting committee work and greater productivity.

According to Agha (2017) and Iradel et al. (2021), there will be happy and effective employees if individual needs are addressed. They stay when they feel they belong and are accepted. They enjoy the company of harmonious people, and it creates unity, understanding, and peace.

The Benefits That They Enjoyed. The teachers stayed in private schools because of the advantages and benefits they enjoyed. There are benefits given by the institution to the teachers as part of the personnel development program as found in the administrative manual and supported by the three secondary participants. This theme emphasizes the teachers'

personal growth, such as spiritual and professional growth, who choose to stay. Aside from personal growth, they also enjoy different benefits, like the scholarship of their children and the mandated benefits. As they serve the school, they can also feed and provide for the needs of their families. Participant 1 shared about the scholarship that her children enjoyed as she shared: *"I have kids, and the school offers a scholarship not just ESC for my high school but also a faculty scholar for my elementary grade child so then I decided to stay."* Participant 9 mentioned of the opportunity to have seminars funded by the school saying: *"The opportunity to have seminars that is free maybe it's quite difficult will spend your own money just to attend that kind of seminar but here in Marian College as private school we have that for free maybe that's also the thing that makes me stay here in this school."*

The sharing of the participants is supported by the accounting staff as she shared: *"There are mandatory benefits given to the employees, and one of the best things in private school is the chance to experience retreats and recollections."* According to the administrative manual, each employee is entitled to enjoy different personnel programs, such as the Faith-Life Formation, which aims to develop the spiritual nourishment of every employee. The next is the Professional Formation which is employees, especially the teachers, are sent for In-Service Training and seminars, most specifically outside the province. In addition, the married teacher or a teacher with a niece and nephews can enjoy the scholarship given to the faculty members.

Sense of Contentment. Teachers stay in private schools because they feel a sense of contentment in their work. They manage their income, believing God brought them to private school, and feel at peace. The teacher who stays in the private school is happy in everything they do, and basically, it radiates to how they teach the students and deal with other people. The participants shared: Participant 5 shared: *"But despite the problems, I can feel contentment. And now, my life is peaceful, and my salary is enough to provide for our needs. The salary may not be the same as Department of Education, but it's a matter of managing your income."* Participant 9 added: *"I do not create my plans to find greener pastures so everything follows God's will in staying in private school. I am contented staying in the private school"*

The teacher's statements were synonymous with the response of one of the administrators. He stated that: *"the sense of commitment and the belief of the school that teaching is a vocation. I think these are the two reasons for the sense of commitment to the teachers and being able to know that the school has value-laden vision, mission and goals. If you want to stay longer, you have to realize that teaching is a vocation, and you have to serve others. You should not think only about how much you can receive, but you have to consider also that there is more to life than what you receive monthly."* Based on the researchers' observation that teachers stayed in private catholic schools because they were contented with the salaries and other benefits. Based on the observation, contentment comes when you are happy with your work. The school continuously supports the growth of its employees. Their development is important to the institution. Thus, they are sent to retreats to uplift their soul and seminar to enhance the abilities and skills needed in the future.

Contented faculty members are commonly effective in the field (Celesio, 2020). Teachers became more and engaging and can give impact on the field when they are happy and contented in what they are doing. Having a sense of contentment can lead to a longer

stay in the institution. To sum up, there were reasons teachers stayed long in private schools: they stayed in a healthy environment that was not toxic and felt a sense of belongingness in the community. Teachers stayed because of the benefits that they enjoyed, such as the salary being received on time. Lastly, teachers stayed because they felt a sense of contentment, they experienced peace in having a good relationship with others, and they were happy with what they were doing when the employees were happy. They were content in the field.

Challenges of the Teachers in Staying in a Private Catholic School

If there are positive things or advantages to teaching in private schools, there are also challenges that the teachers face every day. The categories include *the Pressure from Parents and Students and The Unfelt Support*.

The Pressure from Parents and Students: Since teaching is a collaborative effort, teachers have a close relationship with the parents for the improvement and development of their children. Teachers and parents are partners in every child's development. However, it creates pressure on the teachers' side, mainly because of parents' high expectations of sending their children to private schools. It could be exhausting if the institution can't achieve its expectations. Participant 3 shared: "I have a personal encounter with parents, and that is something that up to now I will never forget it's because we all know that the social status of our students in a Catholic institution are different from those who are in non-private schools and for most of them if they have encountered small things, for example, you scolded your students for some reasons, parents will automatically go to school and complain, and that's something that I will never forget." Participant 4 added: "The challenges that I encountered are the students and parents. Parents put pressure on their children, and the student also has a problem with their parents. Especially those parents whose children excel academically, it's like they have the standard to follow, like grades should belong in the honors list, wherein their children can't reach it, and they will scold them." Participant 5 added on the challenge to deal with attitudes of parents saying: "The different attitudes as well of our parents when they thought that since it is a private school, they have high expectations of all the teachers. It is very hard for us because we need to consider the different ways, strategies, and standards that we need to set to attain the expectations of our parents and learners. Since we have diverse learners, we have different rich kids, especially disciplining them. We cannot easily implement our disciplinary action, especially when we cannot explain it to our parents. Our first opponent is the parents." Participant 7 had a difficult time dealing with parents: "Some parents are hard to deal with. And most of our parents in private school are expected to be like that. They are sending their children. The parent should be counseled too. In terms of student behavior, they are manageable, but you should be consistent, especially those students who come from a broken family because it's difficult to handle." Participant 9 shared difficulty in satisfying the parents about the grades of their children. She shared: "Most of our students came from affluent They are very particular with grades. Even though their children just got 89, 88, and 90, they will come to school and complain about their grades. That could be the first one. Sometimes we can see that some of the teachers they get will make mistakes, but some also will complain that they are out of place even though their children's grades are big enough, and some come from public schools."

The statements by the participants were not mentioned by the secondary participants which is the challenges is the parents. However, the accounting staff narrated that she thinks: "Their challenge is how they will handle the student, how they will handle the students wherein the students

can learn, if the students learned from them so it means they are effective in teaching. Their challenge is to improve their teaching.” Based on the researchers’ observation that the parents in catholic private school are considered to be challenging as they have high demands and expectations.

Some teachers experience difficulties dealing with their parents (Erdogan & Sezgin, 2020). Dealing with the stakeholders can be exhausting and create pressure on teachers. Teachers encounter pushy parents who place significant demands on teachers' time and expect them to obtain particular academic outcomes with their children since parents pay a high amount of education to their students. Fee-paying parents believed and anticipated good academic results as evidence of teachers delivering money. Too much pressure on the teachers is on their shoulders as the financial success of private schools is contingent on customer satisfaction (Brady & Wilson, 2021). Teachers' pressure to work, workmates, admins, parents, and students can lead to somehow change to another pasture. Hence it should be analyzed and considered by the administration.

Unfelt Support. This challenge refers to both unfelt administrative and government support. When teachers feel supported, they are motivated to pursue and be successful because someone believes in them. Still, when they feel a lack of financial support, they might think of looking for better opportunities outside. Participant 8 shared: *“Maybe in terms of admin leadership, that changes. We are still determining what will happen. Some administrators have less support to us.”* Participant 9 did not feel the support of the administrators as she has many preparations in her subjects taught. She said: *“One of the demands is the number of preparations in terms of teaching and the number of loads because there are many, but it became perfect little by little. Everything is prepared, and every challenge is tolerable.”*

One of the administrators added that the challenge of teaching in private schools is the transition of teachers since the school accepts new applicants now and then. Teachers left the institution when they gained experienced. They make private schools as training grounds (Aduna et al., 2020). Private school teachers frequently leave and transfer to public schools due to the higher pay and perks available, a problem that schools often deal with (Hernando-Malipot, 2018). But based on the result, it's not the salary that is the drawback of the teachers teaching in private schools but rather the pressure from the parents and students as well as the feeling of lack of support from admin and the government.

Ways of Dealing with Challenges in Staying in Private School

Challenges are inevitable in life, whether it is in the organization, community, or institution. As teachers in private schools, dealing with different unique individuals is challenging. Shaping the minds of the students is a tough job, so it is important to consider the skills in handling challenges. The researchers found that one essential category to cope with the challenges through staying positive.

Staying Positive. This category highlights the common ways of dealing with the challenges of teachers who chose to stay in private catholic schools. A positive attitude is necessary in dealing with the challenges. Teachers in the private school used this coping strategy to address the pressure and unfelt support they experienced. Participant 3 said: *“I handle those challenges by looking at the positive side of everything. Understanding that everything has*

its purpose may result in a beautiful impact on myself and the institution. Those challenges shaped me to be better in the field.” Participant 8 added: *“What I usually do about it is face what’s in front of me, be positive with that I can overcome it with confidence and motivate myself not to allow challenges hinder me in going through.”* Furthermore, Participant 6 continued: *“By having a positive attitude towards work, living a simple life, knowing my priorities, prioritizing my needs than wants.”*

The statements by the participants are synonymous with one of the administrators as he stated: *“The challenges we face every day will make us stronger; that’s part of life, so as teachers, we can deal with the challenges by being optimistic and asking help if needed.”* As the researchers observed, the teachers in Catholic private school have a deeper connection with themselves, in the church and in the community. The church is near, and they can go to the church and as well as can share their problems and struggles during the BEC sessions, recollections and retreats wherein they have the avenue to voice out. And teachers from private institutions are optimistic in life; you can see them with their happy faces as they conquer the individual differences of students' parents, administrations and colleagues.

A teacher may leave the organization when they are stressed with work and demands (Khan et al., 2017), but the participants of this research choose to deal with the challenges than stressing themselves and leaving. They choose to be optimistic about the situation and remain focused on their goals. Being able to teach in a Catholic school was motivating to Catholic instructors, who reported higher internal satisfaction with their self-esteem than non-Catholic teachers (Legaspi & Fernandez, 2022). The result shows that staying positive in life is the common way of dealing with the challenges in life. Despite adversities and difficulties, one can conquer and overcome them as long they have a positive mindset.

The study results show that the teachers stayed in private catholic schools because of the commitment they developed and created. According to Allen and Meyer's theory of commitment, the employee will remain in an organization because of the linkages he builds over the years, like knowledge, expertise, emotions and time, which have been at stake in leaving the organization. The teachers who stayed commonly in the private school are those who have been enjoying the benefits that have been given to them. Like their spiritual and professional growth, the opportunities to develop themselves, their relationship with one another, and the sense of contentment they build and create will surely make them stay in private school. They have developed this sense of commitment as they have been in the institution. The more they appreciated the institution, the more they stayed. Looking beyond the salaries, the teachers in private schools stayed.

CONCLUSION

Private schools encountered high faculty turnover due to the search for greener pastures. However, few teachers chose to stay working in private schools. They have their reasons for choosing to stay, such as a good working environment and the opportunity given by the school to grow. They also appreciated the different activities related to spirituality. However, they also needed help dealing with the attitudes of parents and students and the unfelt support of the administration. Moreover, they stayed positive in dealing with the challenges they encountered. Therefore, there is a need for the institution to emphasize more

on the reasons for the teachers to stay working in the private school. Lastly, further studies can explore the perspectives of those who chose to depart from the private school to explore what they missed in working at the private school.

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